



Mustang Coach Willie Gaston (red shirt, left) & Thomas Dunson, Eagles linebacker coach handshake after hard fought game. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

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Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City
VOLUME 11, NO. 47 (#497) THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

Holiday Events

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7
North Shore Sr. HS Dance Winter
Showcase
353 Castlegory, Houston, TX
77049
Gymnasium (Door #19)
6 p.m. (\$5)

Galena Park HS Choir Winter
Concert
1000 Keene St., Galena Park, TX
77547
GPHS Auditorium (Door #4)
7 p.m.

King Middle School Choir Winter
Concert
KMS Auditorium
8540 C E King Pkwy, Houston,
TX 77044
6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8
North Shore Sr. HS Theatre
Winter Student Showcase
353 Castlegory, Houston, TX
77049
NSSH Auditorium (Doors #1,
#14)
7 p.m. (\$3)

King High School Theatre
Presents Chicago
King High School Performing
Arts Center
11433 East Sam Houston Pkwy
N, Houston, TX 77044
7 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9
King High School Theatre
Presents Chicago
King High School Performing
Arts Center
11433 East Sam Houston Pkwy
N, Houston, TX 77044
7 p.m.

Crenshaw Elementary Mural
Completion Project
Channelview ISD in partnership
with the Houston Loves
Teachers campaign and the
2024 Houston College
Football Playoff Committee
hosts a community painting
day of a commissioned mural
beginning at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
at Crenshaw Elementary
School, 16204 Wood Drive, in
Channelview, TX 77530. The
project consists of a unique
opportunity for the
Channelview community to
help complete a mural design
that will be a permanent
fixture of Crenshaw
Elementary School. No
additional tools are necessary
as all the tools will be provided
on site. The painting of the
mural will need to be
completed by hand.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10
King High School Theatre
Presents Chicago
King High School Performing
Arts Center
11433 East Sam Houston Pkwy
N, Houston, TX 77044
7 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11
Mike Null Middle School
Beginner Band Informance
12117 Garrett Rd, Houston, TX
77044
NMS Cafetorium
5:30 p.m.

King High School Band Holiday
Concert
King High School Performing
Arts Center
11433 East Sam Houston Pkwy
N, Houston, TX 77044
6:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12
Woodland Acres MS Choir
Christmas Concert
GPHS Auditorium (Door #4)
1000 Keene St., Galena Park, TX
77547
6 p.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Powerhouse Mustangs beat Atascocita in Quarter-Finals, Remain Undefeated

By Allan Jamail

Pasadena, TX. – December 2, 2023 – The #1 State ranked 14 – 0 North Shore Mustangs (NS) varsity football team playing at the Pasadena Memorial Stadium on a neutral field ended the season for the 11 – 3 Humble ISD Atascocita Eagles. This was the 8th straight time they've defeated the Eagles and twice this season. The game earlier played in October NS won 61 to 35. The quarter-final game is a part of the 2023 UIL Texas Football State Championships Football Conference 6A D1 tournament.

NS is advancing to the semifinals for the sixth consecutive year to play Austin's West Lake Chaparrals, both teams are undefeated 14 – 0. The win-or-go-home game is Saturday, December 9th at 3 pm in Pflugerville a suburb of Austin in Travis County, Texas; 175 miles from NS and a three hour trip. This will give the home field advantage to the Chaparrals



NS #93 Cedric Henderson, defensive lineman sacks Eagles QB Zion Brown.(Photo by Allan Jamail)



#2 Christopher Barnes, Mustang receiver scores on a 55 yd pass play from QB Kaleb Bailey. Barnes scored later on another pass play of 75 yds.(Photo by Allan Jamail)

tradition in tack.

The 'Stangs and Eagles annual classic matchup game was everything the local sports world predicted; it was a slugfest down to the wire. The never die Eagles ran out of time 6 points behind and the Eastside Boys knew they'd been in one heck-of-a fight. Fans for both teams stayed on their feet cheering their players. It was a close game, see stats below.

The Eagles offense started off fast putting together two touchdown (TD) drives in the first quarter giving them a 14 to 0 lead over the defending champion 'Stangs. Kaleb Bailey, NS quarterback scampered 12 yds late in the second quarter, Jonathan Soto's extra point was blocked by Ea

Continued. See NORTH SHORE 34 - ATASCOCITA 28, Page 5

Atascocita Cheerleaders Aerial Performances Shine



Atascocita Cheerleaders Aerial Performance. L – R: Girls in the air are: Michaela Welch, Kailey Soterhou, Riley Ledbetter, Ashley Alfaro, Kaylie Garza and Ava Phillips. Others: Addie Wooten, Katie Cerling, Magnolia Cox, Ena Spence, Simone Nichols, Laurin Ransom, ReGinae Smith, Kendall Brozgal, Amelia Toney, Gabby Lilley, Taylor McIntyre, Alyssa Rodriguez, Isabella Hogarth, Gabby Thomas, Mackenzie Middleton, Jordan Lee, Katlyn Baker, Payton Stewart, Casey Wheeler, Hope Butterwick, Ella Kovacic.(Photo by Linda Jamail)

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. ~ Friday, November 24, 2023 at Houston's NRG Stadium the Atascocita cheerleader athletes put on performances equal to

professional cheerleaders. They were at their football teams, (Eagles) playoff game. The fans appearing to be bored with the lack of scoring since the game was a defensive battle with the Lamar

Texans, 0 to 0 at halftime.

I noticed fans cheering and applauding and upon a closer

Continued. See ATASCOCITA CHEERLEADERS AERIAL PERFORMANCE, Page 5

HPD Recruitment Goes To Church



HPD recruitment staff at the Fifth Ward Church of Christ.

L – R: Church Elder Leroy Mobley, Fifth Ward Church of Christ, Commander H. H. Conn, Officer M. Enriquez, Officer B. Reese, Officer S. Jones, Officer C. Mendoza, Sergeant J. Lewis, Officer D. Moore, Sergeant J. Ramos. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. ~ November 17, 2023 ~ The Houston Police Department's (HPD) Recruitment Division and the

Fifth Ward Church of Christ combined their activities to benefit the North Channel

Continued. See HPD RECRUITMENT STAFF GOES TO CHURCH, Page 5

Vice President Harris visits Houston

Holds Forum discussion at Hardy Senior Center with Hispanic Caucus

Kamala Harris touts
White House record

ALDINE – Vice President Kamala Harris visited Houston on Monday, speaking at a Forum held at the Harris County Hardy Senior Center in Aldine. She pitched Latino Texans on the White House's record of advocacy for them, as President Joe Biden prepares to face voters again next year. Several hundred invited guests listened to the Forum speakers, which lasted for over 30 minutes before Harris left for a fund raiser in Houston.

"We are living in a moment where there is a full-on attack on hard-won freedoms and rights," Harris said, addressing the challenges ahead. "In the next 11 months, we've got



Vice President Kamala Harris, at right, participates in Congressional Hispanic Caucus event at Hardy Senior Center in Aldine. At left, US Congresswomen Sylvia Garcia, and Nanette Barragan, chair. Also participating with opening remarks were Mayor Sylvester Turner, and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo.

a lot of work to do to make true the promise of who we are as America."

Harris spoke as part of a moderated conversation with U.S. Reps. Sylvia

Garcia, D-Houston, and Nanette Barragan, D-Calif., chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Harris attended a Biden campaign fundraiser after

ward.

Harris specifically touted the administration's efforts to help minority-owned businesses, saying she and Biden



Vice President Kamala Harris spoke at a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Forum at the Hardy Senior Center in Aldine.

"understand the history of disparity." She noted the White House has committed to a 50% increase in federal contracts for such businesses and has invested \$12 billion in community lenders to expand access to capital for entrepreneurs.

But Harris also spoke

Continued. See VICE-PRESIDENT IN HOUSTON, Page 5

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HCC student team wins national community college Innovation Challenge

Team’s plan for device would help firefighters “see through smoke”

HOUSTON – A Houston Community College (HCC) team has won the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Community College Innovation Challenge.

The HCC team was pitted against community colleges from across the nation, competing to develop ideas for useful and innovative devices using science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The students – Kaitlin Asch, Nyah Lovick and Neeko Phelps – presented their idea known as “Project Eagle Rescue,” a hands-free sensor array that might be attached to gear carried by firefighters to allow better visibility and safety. As envisioned, their hands-free device would allow firefighters to “see through” smoke and haze to observe structural hazards or obstacles that might be a danger to themselves or others.

Each individual team member received a \$3,500 prize in the contest that was held in partnership with the National Science Foundation.

“I think the greatest thing about being a part of this team is affirmation for me about going a non-traditional route: staying home and studying at a community college presents great opportunities,” Lovick said. “I loved my HCC experience and the support of my fellow students and HCC’s great faculty. It was a perfect choice for me.”

Lovick studied in HCC’s Honors College and graduated with high-

The students – Kaitlin Asch, Nyah Lovick and Neeko Phelps – presented their idea known as “Project Eagle Rescue”

est honors in May with an associate degree in chemistry and will move to the University of Texas at San Antonio this fall to study chemical engineering. Asch is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in computer science and applied physics and plans to go on to obtain a doctorate. Phelps graduated in May with an associate degree in mechanical engineering and will enter Minnesota State University to study mechanical engineering in the fall.

“These are extraordinary students, and we are extremely proud of their work on this project,” said Ravi Brahmabhatt, HCC director of Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship, who served as the team’s mentor. “They showed that developing a STEM-based solution can help to solve a real-world problem in a truly meaningful way.”

The HCC team was among a dozen community college finalists to present their ideas in Washington D.C. There, they attended an Innovation Boot Camp where they learned from entrepreneurs and experts, STEM leaders and congressional stakeholders. The team presented a

five-minute presentation to a panel of industry and entrepreneurial professionals who then named HCC the winning team.

“These project ideas showcase the outstanding educational opportunities provided at our nation’s community colleges,” said Walter Bumphus, president and CEO of the association. “On behalf of AACC, congratulations to the team from Houston Community College... the innovation and creativity shown by these students clearly indicates that our future is in good hands.”

-30-

ABOUT HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Houston Community College is composed of 14 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country’s largest singly accredited, open-admission community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities.

Painting the Halls Blue

The C.E. King High School campus is sporting some new artwork on its cafeteria walls. A mural designed in collaboration with Mrs. Roades’ Art 4 class began to take shape this Thanksgiving break when local artist Alex “Zu” Arzu started to paint. The art project is a collaboration between Sheldon ISD and the 2024 College Football Playoff National Championship Game, which is being played in Houston in January.

The College Football Playoff foundation paid local artists to design and paint murals with high school art teachers/students/programs in Houston. C.E. King High School art students were approached to come up with ideas that should be included in the mural at their campus. They wanted to encompass their Panther mascot, sports, academics, career and technology education, teachers, and students. It was then up to the mural artist Alex Arzu to bring all these elements together and balance out the final look.

In a walk-through of his process with the students, he explained the various softwares that he uses to

combine images inspired by the students’ own artwork sketches and the overall mural shape. Zu showed the students how he then set to work on the actual painting once the design was approved. In a time-lapse video they saw how he used a scissor lift, tape and various markers to block in major shapes. Then Zu blocked in the

whole art piece over a three day span and used only three brush sizes and a lot of blue paint.

Zu asked the students to name the mural. They chose the title “Eminence” for the overall crown shape, the regal panther, and their school pride. The mural is nearly finished and expected to be completed in December.

KHS Panthers finish 2023 Football Season

Congratulations to the C.E. King High School Varsity Football team for their amazing season. The Panthers scored 28 points to Hightower’s 31 on Friday, November 24 at NRG Stadium.

Sheldon ISD is so proud of all student organizations involved in making the football season a success.

STEM Students Inspired by New Community Partner

Approximately 30 STEM students traveled to SI Group to receive first-hand exposure to the world of chemistry and problem-solving through scientific exploration. The students engaged in a day filled with interactive sessions and practical demonstrations that highlighted the impact of chemistry in applications such as safer can coatings, asphaltene dispersion in crude oil production and performance enhancement of car tires. The visit included a guid-

ed tour of SI Group’s state-of-the-art research facility including the analytical and application development laboratories. Furthermore, SI Group’s scientists participated in a discussion with the students about choosing a career in STEM and job opportunities once joining the workforce.

“Taking our STEM Academy to SI Group was eye opening for the students. They were able to interact with STEM pro-

fessionals and see the innovative work in the laboratories that produce many of the items we use every day,” said Becky Zalesnik, Executive Director of Innovative Programs at Sheldon ISD. “Events like these help students make life-changing career decisions. The partnership between our school and industry partners such as SI Group provides much more than a lesson, we are building the future workforce together.”

You can read the North Channel Star current and back issues on our website:
www.northchannelstar.com

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Generations of Gratitude

This past weekend, I was invited to an annual event filled with love, laughter, homemade crafts, and great food. As my mother and I walked into Terri's home, we were met with hugs from those of my mother's generation, as well as hugged by Terri's granddaughter as she toddled through the maze of four generations of family and friends. No sooner did one lady explain her craft made from fishing boat lights, than I turned around to see one of my former coworkers who offered a hug. As a newcomer admired the handcrafted furniture, someone else began to explain that Terri's log cabin home had suffered major damage from Hurricane Harvey, but through it all, there were generations of love and prayers being sent her way.

Our next stop was to pick up my soon to be fifteen-year-old granddaughter, to drop her off to volunteer with the Annual NEGAMI Toy Drive and Concert. While we were waiting for her to get in the car, my daughter in law began to share details of her being present the night before for the arrival of her first niece. It was an emotional time for the two sisters, as it was the first birth since they lost their mother in 2022. Kristen was more than thankful that a friend had driven her to the hospital in time to be with her youngest sister.

Later in the day, we stopped to pick up some homemade Tea Cakes from a lady I recently met. Originally, I purchased them to take to the Houston Eastside Prayer Gathering, but thanks to car issues and not feeling up to par, my coworkers will enjoy them. More importantly, my new friend Pamela was beaming with pride as she answered questions from my mom about her love for baking. She had shared with me that she lost her mother in 2022 and since then, she has poured her heart into baking. She shared that she was thankful that her mother had shared recipes with her that she can now share with others.

Later in the day, after 33 years of serving customers in the North Channel Area, Muffler King Muffler Shop entered the Annual Jacinto City Christmas Parade. Not only entered but won an award for the hard work of the employees decorating the truck, passing out candy to the families and friends along the parade route and showing their appreciation for the community that has helped them become one of the most respected automotive shops in the area. Alecia and Sam Gonzalez, owners of Muffler King were not only thankful for the opportunity to participate and win, but thankful that it was a family affair. God has truly answered their prayers of using the business not only to employee family members but to minister to so many families over the years. And to see their sons Joe and Andy, as well as their daughter Hannah as well as to have their grandbabies and employees present and smiling gave them many more reasons to be grateful.

Take a moment and look around, we have many reasons to be grateful and to share love with others.

ROTARY CLUB NEWS



North Shore Rotary Annual Christmas Party



Grateful for the warm hospitality and magical moments at our annual Christmas party held last night. Heartfelt thanks to our wonderful party host, Dr. Hallisey and family. Your creativity and attention to detail turned the gathering into a festive masterpiece. Cheers to Doc and Danna Nino for your work on executing this event! Here's to a year of success and more joyful moments!!

North Shore Rotary helps Toy Drive



Supporting those that support our community! We are proud to sponsor the Negami Toy Drive. The Negami Toy Drive and Concert is more than just a show. It's a community effort to bring smiles to the faces of children in need. All the toys collected will be donated to underprivileged kids in our community. We applaud you and support you, Carlos Villegas!!

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "What's Your Favorite Christmas Story Experience?"

Diamond Jim:

Actually, I have several favorite Christmas stories. I'll post one each week over the next three weeks. The second is a story about Henry and his grandma.

As a lifetime member of Rotary International, and a life member of the North Shore Rotary Club, our motto is "Service Above Self". This happens to be my personal motto as well. The following is yet another Christmas story that is indelibly etched into my mind's eye forever.

For several years we watched a frail little elderly grandma pushing her grandson in a wheelchair through the neighborhood. The boy had little control of his arms and hands and could not walk. This little lady could hardly walk, much less push that wheelchair. Her face had the deep wrinkles that only a life of hard work, heartbreak, and struggle could chisel. She always wore a faded dress that reached halfway to her ankles, and always wore her apron. She trudged down the street daily, on their way across the Uvalde Road "Speedway" to Seller's Grocery Store.

Over the years we noted that the young boy was becoming a young man. It appeared to become more and more of a chore for grandma to push him to the store from their home. Her gait became shorter, her back more bent, and their speed slower and slower. They came into our store one day and we struck up a conversation. We met Henry...and with us in our store. We offered them drinks as is part of our "WOW Experience" with everyone who enters. Henry spoke about how his father was a long-haul truck driver, and about how he did not see the boy much. He also spoke about how his mother had left him when he was an infant. But the especially sad part of his story about how he very nearly had not survived...and was left with severe dysfunction in his arms and hands...and no use of his legs. His grandmother had taken it upon herself to raise him since childhood. And although he knew his wheelchair lacking power was a struggle for his grandma, they had no choice if he ever intended to be able to leave his home at all. He told us he wanted to enter college. But there was no way for him to transport himself in a chair without power.

As chance would have it, a member of our staff had lost her father and was wondering what to do with his brand new unused motorized scooter. I suggested that we buy it from the employee and give it to Henry for Christmas. Everyone agreed. The staff chipped in, Pineforest Jewelry paid the remaining balance, and we tied a big bow on that red scooter! A friend of mine ran the local food bank and had allowed us to give out huge Christmas boxes to our customers who knew of needy folks. So, we collected several months' supply of food, and placed it around the scooter in front of our Christmas tree.

We invited Henry and his grandma to our store. We did not tell them what was happening. When grandma struggled to push Henry through our front doors, and we guided them over to the Christmas tree...they did not know what to say. They were at a loss for words. We had to explain that not only was the brand-new red scooter being given to Henry, but also grandma could spend far less time pushing him to the store...and instead use her time cooking meals with the food supplied. Henry was moved onto the scooter. All he could do was grin and smile. Again, grandma couldn't speak English...but she KNEW what was happening...and WE knew she understood the long-range impact of our gift. We took photos of them with our entire staff to preserve this heart-wrenching testament to the season of giving. The grandma, Henry, and our entire staff and family will never forget that moment frozen in time.

And the epilogue to this story is that Henry did eventually enter college... and even became a mascot in the athletics department!

Now THAT was another great Christmas story that I will never forget! Remember to read the North Channel Star. Christmas Story 3 is in the works...

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**



A House Divided

“Our politicians draw their strength from the division between us. They take the 10%-20% disagreement between us and turn it into the main thing, because that’s what gives them a mandate to ‘represent’ us, to fight in our name. They do it at the expense of our security, our welfare, our taxes, and our freedom.”

When you read this quote, I am guessing that you expected I was going to tell you it was from a contemporary commentator on the state of American politics. Rather, it is a quote from an Israeli tank commander currently in combat against Hamas, writing about his concerns over the divisions in his country.

Israel has a storied military and intelligence history. Its agencies have executed spectacular operations, such as the stunning 1976 rescue of over 100 hostages at Entebbe Airport in Uganda after their plane had been hijacked by Palestinian terrorists. The contrast of that vaunted history with the utter failure to detect or counter Hamas’ attack on Oct. 7 could not be more stark.

While we do not know the details of the intelligence and military response failure that led to the Oct. 7 massacre, the letter from the tank command clearly attributes the deep divisions within Israel as part of the reason for the failure. His words are a cautionary tale for America.

Our country faces unparalleled challenges. These challenges mostly arise from truly epic demographic and technological changes that are spreading across the world. However, our dysfunctional political system, based on an anachronistic two-party system, is utterly impotent to marshal a fact-based, logical approach to addressing those challenges. Instead, we have devolved into a bizarre world of conspiracy theories and petty, partisan blame-gaming.



At the Republican convention in 1858, Abraham Lincoln told the conventioners that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” The issue upon which our country was so divided at that time was slavery. Lincoln predicted that “I do not expect the house to fall – but I do expect it will cease to be divided.” His prediction was proved by history although it took a bloody civil war to do so.

Today, we do not face an issue with the moral imperative of the abolition of slavery. But we do face demographic and technological changes that will upend existing social and economic norms that in some ways will be at least, if not more, disruptive. Americans can embrace those changes and lead the world through them, or we can continue our inane partisan bickering and suffer the consequences.

Lincoln ended his speech with a political call to arms. “To meet and overthrow the power of that dynasty is the work now before all those who would prevent the consummation [of the abolition of slavery]. This is what we must do.” The “dynasty” to which Lincoln referred was the corrupt, morally bankrupt Whigs and Democratic parties of his day. It took the nascent Republican Party to disrupt that dynasty by electing Lincoln as president just two years later and eventually making the abolition of slavery a reality.

Does America still have the character and fortitude to throw off the current corrupt and intellectually bankrupt two-party dynasty that refuses to address the challenges of the 21st century? That is the task I believe Lincoln would be laying before us today.

EDITOR’S NOTE: *Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.*



Letters to Santa will appear in our next two issues. Your child can write a Letter and send it to SANTA, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 for possible publication. See Form in this issue, or use your own format.





STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By **Gary Borders**



Texas Supreme Court Hears Abortion Ban Challenge

The Texas Supreme Court heard oral arguments last week in a case that could decide whether medical exceptions to the state’s abortion ban are written clearly enough to protect pregnant women who face serious health risks, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

The 22 plaintiffs include women who contracted sepsis while waiting to terminate a nonviable pregnancy, and women who traveled hundreds of miles for abortions of a non-viable twin in order to protect the healthy fetus. An attorney for the plaintiffs argued the vague language in the law has left doctors unable or unwilling to perform abortions.

An attorney for the state argued the law is clear and that doctors are responsible for denying abortions allowed during medical emergencies.

“Some of these women appear to have fallen within the exception but their doctors still said no. That’s not the fault of the law, that’s a decision of the doctor,” Beth Klusmann, assistant solicitor general, said.

An opinion in the case is likely to take several months.

BORDER CAR CHASES LED TO 74 DEATHS IN TWO YEARS

At least 74 people have been killed and 189 injured during high-speed car chases near the U.S.-Mexico border since Gov. Greg Abbott launched Operation Lone Star, a multi-billion dollar border security initiative, according to a report published by Human Rights Watch, a nonprofit agency.

The group analyzed data obtained from the Texas Department of Public Safety from March 2021, when Operation Lone Star began, through July 2023. It indicates more than two-thirds of vehicle pursuits conducted in the state during that period occurred in the 60 counties involved in Operation Lone Star.

“Operation Lone Star puts undue pressure on law enforcement to chase cars, sometimes with very little basis, resulting in deaths of drivers, passengers, and even bystanders,” said Norma Herrera, a Texas-based consultant to Human Rights Watch. “Our review of the cases over 29



months identified at least 7 bystanders killed in these car crashes, including a 7-year-old girl out to get ice cream with her grandmother.”

Col. Steve McCraw, DPS director, in an interview with The New York Times, said the department relies on its own troopers to decide when it is appropriate to give chase, and that a trooper who did not use appropriate caution would be held accountable.

FOOD BANKS UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE

A study from the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicates that 15.5% of Texas households are “food insecure,” meaning they lack consistent access to health and affordable food – the second-highest rate in the nation. Food banks across the state are warning those challenges could get worse, the Texas Tribune reported.

About 3.3 million Texans receive assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, with the number of older Texans getting SNAP benefits rising. From January 2020 through October 2023, the number of Texans aged 65 and older rose 28%, while the increase was 19% for those aged 60-64.

Operators of food banks, which are nonprofit organizations, blame rising housing costs during the pandemic for the increase in demand for its services.

“The rising cost of housing is the problem,” said Teresa Jackson, founder and CEO of Sharing Life, a Mesquite charity that offers food, clothing, medicine, and educational programs. Sharing Life distrib-

utes food to more than 100 food pantries around southeast Dallas.

Adding to the distress is that thousands of Texans are waiting for months to receive new food stamp benefits, according to the Statesman. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is supposed to process applications within 30 days but is only hitting that target about 75% of the time. That leaves about 138,000 unprocessed applicants who must wait longer for benefits.

Food stamp recipients are required to work unless they are elderly, disabled or caring for children. Nearly 80% of Texas food stamp recipients are in families with children.

REAL CHRISTMAS TREES BOOST STATE ECONOMY

More than four million real Christmas trees are sold in Texas each year, providing nearly \$400 million in direct contributions to the state’s economy, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. The Texas Christmas tree industry employs nearly 4,000 people with a payroll of more than \$97 million.

“The process of going as a family to pick out a tree is a fun activity that supports rural economies across the state,” Aaron Stottlemeyer, with the service, said.

Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states, with the first recorded tree planting in Texas occurring in Jasper in 1935. Texas ranks second in the South in Christmas tree production.

FIRST-EVER SIGHTING IN TEXAS OF RARE BIRD

Bird watchers recently flocked to a state park in hopes of seeing a little bird only rarely seen in the United States and for the first time in Texas. The gray-collared becard is a tropical bird that lives in Central America. Texas State Parks posted a “Rare Bird Alert” that alerted bird watchers of the sighting at Resaca de la Palma State Park in Brownsville, The News reported.

The bird has only been seen in the United States twice before, both times in Arizona.

MEANWHILE, SCORPIONS ARE IN STRONG SUPPLY

Texans are reporting an invasion of scorpions in their homes, according to numerous online reports. Wizzie Brown with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service told the Houston Chronicle that these distant cousins to spiders often move indoors with changing weather conditions, such as rainfall or dropping temperatures.

The striped bark scorpion is the most common and one of the most venomous in Texas. They measure about 3/8 inches in length and are yellowish tan in color. While venomous, scorpions found in Texas are not considered lethal.

Brown advises sealing cracks and crevices on the outside of homes, not stacking firewood or other items against the house, and trimming trees and shrubs so they don’t touch or hang over the roofline.



THE POSTSCRIPT

By **Carrie Classon**

A Few Words

We had dinner with friends last night.

There is nothing unusual about that, except these were all people I did not know; people my husband, Peter, had met while taking his daily hike in Mexico.

This was not the first gathering of Peter’s friends we’ve had. My self-professed introvert of a husband has become something of a social butterfly outside of the U.S. He goes to the same botanical nature reserve to hike every day and he meets new people and forms new friendships. Peter still professes to be a shy person. He is not.

But last night was particularly special because these were not visiting Americans or Canadians or even Norwegians—all of whom Peter has met and introduced me to. These friends were the Mexican employees of the nature reserve.

We invited them over to our hotel, which usually serves only breakfast and lunch. But our kind host, Jorge, insisted they would love to serve dinner to us, and they put together a feast. The temperature was cool, but everyone brought a coat (they know the climate, after all). There was a tasty appetizer and fish tacos and a chocolate mousse for dessert, and it was a perfect night—in spite of the fact that Peter really speaks no Spanish at all, I only speak a little, and three of our four guests spoke either very little English or none at all.

It helped that there was one truly bilingual person. Emiliano is only 18, but he speaks excellent English, and when conversation got completely gummed up, he would sort things out. But it was astonishing how few words we needed to have a good conversation.

I am all about words. Words are what I do, so I am used to thinking that having precisely the right word is important. And sometimes it is. But there are many ways to say the same thing, and a few hand gestures, a facial expression, maybe a moment of pantomime, and the missing word can be guessed, and the conversation can continue. Most of the time, Emiliano didn’t have to bail us out at all.

What did we talk about for this two-hour dinner? We talked about our families, of course. We talked about what Emiliano was going to study at college (he still doesn’t know). We talked about this town and the celebrations that had just passed and the celebrations that were about to begin. Peter asked if anyone had pets, and Marcela laughed and said she had 11 dogs.

“You have 11 dogs?” I asked Marcela in Spanish, sure I must have misunderstood.

She nodded and laughed again. “And three cats! All from the streets.”

And all the while, I wished I had a few more words. I wished I could understand just a bit better. I no longer care if I use the wrong form of a verb, or forget a word, or say something embarrassing. It makes no difference at all. What I care about, more than ever, is being able to understand these people—my new friends.

We said goodnight. Marcela gave me a headband and a pair of fingerless gloves she knitted herself. Peter said he would see them all the next morning at the nature reserve. Jorge was pleased that the dinner went well, and took some pictures of the beautiful meal to put on his website.

It was a wonderful night and, for a person who is always trying to find the best words, a reminder of how much can be said using very few words at all.

Till next time,
Carrie

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SPORTS PAGE

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SEASON FOOTBALL WEEK 15

Texans look to remain in AFC Wild Card race against Jets:
Cowboys host Eagles in key NFC East game in prime time

The 2023 NFL season is heading into the home stretch as the calendar has turned to December and a number of teams are still alive in the playoff hunt, just what the NFL wants.

One of those teams is the hometown Houston Texans who despite losing a tough 24-21 decision to Jacksonville two weeks ago at home, are very much alive in the AFC Wild Card race.

DeMeco Ryan's' team can help their cause this Sunday with a win against a struggling New York Jets team at The Meadowlands.

The AFC South is probably out of reach for the Texans due to their loss to the Jags. That defeat left the Texans two games behind in the division with just five games left to play. The Jags are rolling and could cause trouble in the playoffs.

Although the Jets are having a rough season, especially on offense, they are solid on defense and will be ready for rookie QB C.J. Stroud on Sunday. The NY offense could get a big boost if Aaron Rodgers, their big acquisition in the offseason, returns from the Achilles injury he suffered on his fourth play as a Jet. If I'm New York management, I would hold the future Hall of Famer out for the remainder of the season because the Jets aren't going to the playoffs and if Rodgers reinjures his Achilles, he might be gone for next season as well.

While the Texans hit the road to New Jersey, the Dallas Cowboys host the Philadelphia Eagles in a key NFC East game on Sunday Night Football. Like the Texans, the Cowboys chances of winning the division are slim, but a win over their heated rivals would do a lot for their confidence down the stretch and could position them as the fifth seed in the NFC playoffs.

But it won't be easy. Two weeks ago, the Eagles overcame a 10-point halftime deficit (they trailed at KC 17-7 on Nov. 20 before rallying for a 21-17 win) to defeat a game Buffalo team 37-34 in overtime in the rain in Philly.

The Cowboys have been tough to beat at home and took a 13-game home winning streak into last Thursday night's home game against Seattle.

This should be one of the best regular season games to watch come Sunday night.

Other key games this weekend



have the Lions taking on the Bears in Chicago, while Jacksonville visits Cleveland in a key game for the Browns and their playoff hopes. For the second time in two weeks, Seattle takes on the 49ers, this time in San Francisco. The 49ers dominated the Seahawks in Seattle on Thanksgiving night, 31-13, and can pretty much wrap up the NFC West with a win on Sunday. Buffalo visits Kansas City in what should be an offensive shootout, while the hot Denver Broncos take on the disappointing Los Angeles Chargers. For the third time this season, we get two Monday Night Football games as the Packers visits the Giants (yawn), while the Titans visit the Dolphins.

By this time next week, we should know the four teams that will make up the College Football Playoffs (CFP). There are a number of contenders for the four spots and once the dust settles from last weekend's conference title games, the four CFP spots should be decided.

Off the field, Texas A&M hired Duke head coach (and former Aggie defensive coordinator) Mike Elko to replace Jimbo Fisher. I think it's a good hire. Elko won at Duke, and if he could win at a basketball school, imagine what he can do at a place like A&M and all of the resources that will be available to him.

Locally, the University of Houston fired head coach Dana Holgerson, which many thought was coming at UH finished 4-8 in its first year in the Big 12. It will be interesting to see who the powers that be at UH select to succeed Holgerson. My pick would be UTSA head coach Jeff Traylor, but they aren't asking me.

Before we take a look at this weekend's NFL games, let's review last week's record. A 9-3 week brought the season record to 91-43 (669%).

Now, onto this week's game.

NFL

Detroit at Chicago: Two weeks ago, the Lions lost at home on Thanksgiving to a sub-500 Green Bay team, so look for Detroit head coach Dan Campbell to have his troops focused when they face NFC North rival Chicago on Sunday in the Windy City. The Lions will look for a big game from their potent offense led by QB Jared Goff (3,075 yards, 18 TDs), and running backs David Montgomery (648 yards, 8 TDs) and Jahmyr Gibbs (566 yards, 5 TDs). Once those two soften up the Bears defense, look for Goff to make plays down field to wide receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown (82 receptions, 993 yards, 5 TDs) and tight end Sam LaPorta (55 receptions, 539 yards, 5 TDs). The Bears, once again, are simply playing for next season. My pick, Detroit 33, Chicago 18

Houston at New York Jets: If the Texans are going to continue to have postseason dreams, they need to win games they are supposed to win and that will be the case on Sunday when they face the Jets. Stroud (3,266 yards, 19 TDs) will face a tough Jets defense, but he has shown thus far he is up to the task. He almost brought the Texans back two weeks ago against the Jags and this week he will continue to need to make plays downfield to Nico Collins (50 receptions, 899 yards, 5 TDs) and rookie Tank Dell (47 receptions, 709 yards, 7 TDs). Look for the Houston defense to get after a putrid Jets offense as the Texans pick up a nice road win. My pick, Houston 26, New York Jets 13

Jacksonville at Cleveland: This will be a tough road test for the Jags when they face a very good Cleveland defense and the Cleveland December weather. This game will test Jacksonville's mettle. Jags QB Trevor Lawrence (2,746 yards, 12 TDs) has been on a roll as of late, but he will face a solid Browns defense that is led by defensive end Myles Garrett (13

sacks, team has 34). Look for the Jags to feature running back Travis Etienne (726 yards, 8 TDs), which should open up Lawrence to make plays to wide receivers Christian Kirk (56 receptions, 761 yards, 3 TDs) and Calvin Ridley (47 receptions, 663 yards, 5 TDs). The Browns are down to their third QB, so they will hope running back Jerome Ford (628 yards, 3 TDs) has a big day. The Jags continue their roll as they get a big road win in Cleveland. My pick, Jacksonville 23, Cleveland 20

Seattle at San Francisco: The beat up Seahawks visit the surging 49ers on Sunday as SF looks to take control of the NFC West. Seattle will have three extra days to prepare for this one having played a Thursday nighter two weeks ago at Dallas. QB Geno Smith (2,584 yards, 12 TDs/8 interceptions) can use the extra time to mend his injured elbow, and it would help if running back Kenneth Walker III (613 yards, 6 TDs) is back from an oblique injury he suffered three weeks ago. It might not matter against 49ers team that is playing well on defense and has an explosive offense led by QB Brock Purdy (2,871 yards, 19 TDs), running back Christian McCaffrey (939 rushing yards, 11 TDs/48 receptions, 389 yards, 5 TDs), and wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk (45 receptions, 881 yards, 5 TDs). Look for the 49ers to roll on Sunday. My pick, San Francisco 36, Seattle 17

Buffalo at Kansas City: When the season began, many thought these two teams would once again be in the hunt for the AFC title. Well, the Chiefs certainly are, but the Bills are on the cusp of not even making the playoffs. Injuries on the defense have had a lot to do with Buffalo being a 6-6 team heading into last week's bye week. They trail Miami by two games in the AFC East and after the KC game, they will still have to face Dallas, the Chargers and Miami. To say head coach Sean McDermott's seat is getting warm would be an understatement. This should be a high-scoring game as Josh Allen (3,214 passing yards, 24 TDs/342 rushing yards, 9 TDs) and Patrick Mahomes (2,917 yards, 21 TDs) trade big plays. Both teams have decent running games, with the Bills being led by James Cook (731 yards, 1 TD) and the KC being led by Isiah Pacheco (669 yards, 5 TDs) and both have big-play receivers in Buffalo's Stefon Diggs (83 receptions, 969 yards, 8 TDs) and KC's Travis Kelce (70 receptions, 732 yards, 5 TDs). KC has the better and healthier defense and they will be the difference maker at the Bills fall to below .500 on Sunday in KC. My pick, Kansas City 32, Buffalo 26

Denver at Los Angeles

Chargers: Don't look now, but the Denver Broncos are the hottest team in the NFL. Two weeks ago, Sean Payton's team won its fifth straight game to move within two games of the Chiefs in the AFC West. Denver has received solid play from QB Russell Wilson (2,199 yards, 209 TDs) and big plays from wide receiver Cortland Sutton (48 receptions, 560 yards, 8 TDs) and an opportunistic defense. This week, they visit the underachieving Chargers, who have a load of talent but just can't seem to win close games. LA has a talented QB in Justin Herbert (2,826 yards, 209 TDs), a versatile running back in Austin Ekeler (428 rushing yards, 4 TDs/29 receptions, 286 yards, 1 TD) and a big-play wide receiver in Keenan Allen who is having one of the best years of his nine-year career (97 receptions, 1,117 yards, 7 TDs). This one should be close, but look for Wilson to make one or two more plays than will Herbert as the Broncos keep on rolling. My pick, Denver 26, Los Angeles Chargers 23

Philadelphia at Dallas: The Game of the Week and a good one for the Sunday Night Football crew pits the Eagles against the Cowboys. These two teams don't care one bit for one another and this is one of the most heated rivalries in the NFL. A year ago, the Eagles jumped out to a 10-0 lead, but the Cowboys rallied for a 40-34 win. This game features two of the hottest QBs in the NFL in Philly's Jalen Hurts (2,697 passing yards, 18 TDs/410 rushing yards, 11 TDs) and Dallas' Dak Prescott (2,935 yards, 23 TDs). Both teams have explosive receivers as the Eagles feature A.J. Brown (73 receptions, 1,050 yards, 7 TDs) and DeVonta Smith (55 receptions, 738 yards, 5 TDs) and the Cowboys will counter with CeeDee Lamb (78 receptions, 1,066 yards, 6 TDs) and Brandin Cooks (33 receptions, 452 yards, 4 TDs). After a slow start to the season, Cooks has been on fire the last four weeks. Dallas has the edge at tight end with second-year man Jake Ferguson (40 receptions, 421 yards, 4 TDs). Two weeks ago, the Eagles rallied in the rain at home to defeat Buffalo on Hurts TD run in overtime, while the Cowboys dominated Washington 45-10 on Thanksgiving Day. There should be plenty of big plays in this one, so the team that plays the best on defense should come out on top. The Eagles are beat up on that side of the ball, while the Cowboys are rolling behind Micah Parsons (11.5 sacks, team has 37). Dallas knows if it hopes to catch the Eagles in the NFC East race they must win on Sunday and it says here they will get the job done. My pick, Dallas 31, Philadelphia 27

Tennessee at Miami: The Dolphins high-scoring offense gets to strut its stuff in prime time on Monday Night Football and I have a feeling they won't disappoint those who will be watching. Miami has weapons all over the field led by QB Tua Tagovailoa (3,177 yards, 22 TDs), running back Raheem Mostert (785 yards, 15 total TDs) and speedy wideouts Tyreek Hill (88 receptions, 1,324 yards, 10 TDs) and Jalen Waddle (52 receptions, 691 yards, 3 TDs). The Titans are in rebuild mode, which means this one could get ugly early. My pick, Miami 36, Tennessee 13



FOOTBALL
SCORES &
SCHEDULES

LAST WEEK'S RESULTS

North Shore 34, Atascocita 28

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Galena Park North Shore Mustangs (14-0, 7-0) vs. Austin Westlake Chaparrals (14-0, 8-0) on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 3 p.m. at the Pfield in Pflugerville, Texas for the State Semifinal title in UIL Class 6A Division 1. For ticket information, call the Galena Park ISD Athletics Office at 832-386-4330.

HOW THEY GOT HERE:

North Shore 38, The Woodlands 17*
North Shore 53, Spring 0*
North Shore 45, Spring Westfield 9*
North Shore 49, Beaumont United 7
North Shore 42, C. E. King 6*
North Shore 31, Summer Creek 21*
North Shore 62, Beaumont West Brook 14
North Shore 38, Humble 24
North Shore 61, Atascocita 35*
North Shore 55, Atascocita 7
PLAYOFFS
North Shore 42, Deer Park 14
North Shore 49, Clear Springs 21
North Shore 45, Cy-Fair 9
North Shore 34, Atascocita 28

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

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WELL, JUST REMEMBER IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS.

OH SURE. WHEN BUYING FOR YOUR MOTHER, SHE ALREADY WONDERS WHAT I WAS THINKING.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

OFF THE BEP STRIPE!

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

ALEXA!

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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5				8	6		3	
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTONOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

1. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." 2. Arctic and Pacific. 3. Fear of good news. 4. 742 Evergreen Terrace. 5. Generally between 300-500. 6. Third. 7. Surname. 8. Internal organs of a young animal. 9. Late 14th century. 10. Copernicus.

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December 4, 2023 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 "Kapow!"

4 British ref. work

7 Holler

12 Director Spike

13 Chemical suffix

14 Fall sign

15 Nest egg acronym

16 Large, luxurious car

18 Brooch

19 Range

20 Collections

22 — tear (ragging)

23 First lady of scat

27 Earth Day mo.

29 Transparent

31 Dolphins' home

34 Traces of smoke

35 Agile

37 Obtained

38 Bygone

39 Peruvian

39 Flamenco cheer

41 Vacillate

45 Quick trip

47 Shoe width

48 Pungent cheese

52 Aachen article

53 Sports figures?

54 Zsa Zsa's sister

55 Speck

56 Dunkable treat

57 River blocker

58 Actor Brynner

7 Pivot

8 That guy's

9 Kimono sash

10 Samovar

11 — kwon do

17 Ellipse

21 Ballroom dance

23 Radiates

24 Vinyl records

25 Back talk

26 Billboards

28 Picnic dessert

30 — Jima

31 Roman 1051

32 "There's no — team!"

33 "Better Call Saul" network

36 Bellow

37 Swiss metropolis

40 Sledded in the Winter Olympics

42 Like a neglected garden

43 Vowel group

44 Streisand title role

45 Equitable

46 Streetcar

48 Leary's drug

49 Jurist Lance

50 Justify

51 A/C meas.

DOWN

1 Radar dots

2 High nest

3 Signified

4 Fixes a squeak

5 Newspaper chief

6 Fiend

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King Crossword

Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

Trivia Test Answers

1. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." 2. Arctic and Pacific. 3. Fear of good news. 4. 742 Evergreen Terrace. 5. Generally between 300-500. 6. Third. 7. Surname. 8. Internal organs of a young animal. 9. Late 14th century. 10. Copernicus.

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