NORTH CHANNEL *STAR

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Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City www.northchannelstar.com THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024 VOLUME 12, NO. 5 (#504)

CHANNEL **CURRENTS**

EVENTS



Send your Valentine a Special Message in our Feb. 14 issue. Details on Page 5.

NCA Chamber Luncheon Feb. 2

North Channel Chamber will hold the first monthly luncheon of the New Year on Friday, February 2nd at the Monument Room of San Jacinto College North, 5800 Uvalde Road. Meeting starts at 11:30am.

Speaker is Bill Eckert, Executive Director of the Bay Area Homeless Services.

Presenting Sponsor is Houston Heart Health. Guests are encouraged to "Wear Red" for Heart Awareness Month. Reservations 713-450-3600. Members cost \$25, Non-member \$35.

North Shore Rotary FISH FRY Saturday April 20

North Shore Rotary will hold its 49th Annual Catfish Fry, Shrimp and Crawfish Boil. Serving from 11:00am to 3:00pm, at the Rotary Pavilion on Wallisville Road behind the Courthouse.

Also a Live and Silent Auction, and a Raffle to award a lucky ticket holder a new Toyota Tundra Pickup truck, or a Toyota Rav4 SUV, from Community Toyota*Honda*Kia. Raffle tickets \$100, Food Tickets \$15, available from all North Shore Rotarians.

North Channel Chamber changes Leadership, presents Awards

By David Taylor Managing Editor

It was a bittersweet night for Outgoing President Ronny Dwairy. The owner of Bestway Oilfield, Inc. in Channelview has led the chamber to new heights during his reign as leader of the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce.

"You know, a lot of times after you do a big job or a tiring job, you say, thank goodness, this is over. This was completely the opposite," he said. "I'm going to miss it. I didn't want it to be over. This is just such a great association and the best people that are that are involved in this chamber. So a little sad, to be honest, but I'm so grateful for the time I had."

Last Friday night, the chamber swore in a new president, board, and officers and then dished out several community awards to deserving busi-



The new officers and board members for the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce received their oath of office from The Honorable Judge Joe Stephens. Pictured from left to right, Ronny Dwairy, Ramon Garza, Chad Moody, Dr. Tory C. Hill, Robert Perez, Wanna Giacona, Darnald Kimble, Anna Clark, Bill Palko, Erin Kerr, Jim Wadzinski, Ken Wimbley, Erika Koehler, Dr. Allatia Harris, Dr. Alexander Okwonna, Elvira Granados, Nelson Espitia, and Judge Joe Stephens (swearing the board in), Dana Nino, Rubin Shah, Pedro Garcia, lan Adler, Emily Conklin, Lon Squyres, and Linda Tijerina.

nesses and individuals that continue to make the community vital and vi-

Dwairy and his company have been members of the chamber for 10 years and the family's company a part of the community

for three decades.

"We wanted to get involved and find ways for giving back and thanking this community," he said. Four years after joining the chamber, he was elected to the board and has ascended to the presidency.

"It's been a lot of fun. We just show up, have fun, do work for the community, and meet new people," he said.

His parents were born in Nazareth, Israel and he was born in Houston and attended Deer Park High

School becoming a firstgeneration Texan.

He's most proud of being able to network businesses within and without

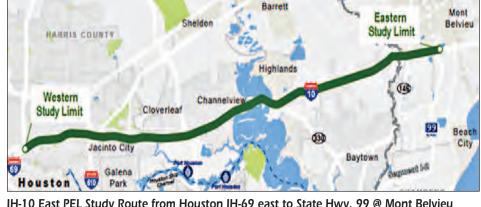
CONTINUED. SEE NCC CHANGES LEADERSHIP, PAGE

TxDOT holds 4 PEL (Planning) Studies for I-10 Improvements

By Allan Jamail Part 1 of a series.

January 30, 2024 -Houston, TX. -As a concerned citizen and writer for the North Channel Star I went to one of the four public in-person PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkage) study informational meetings. My wife Linda attended as well, as the Community Liaison for State Representative Ana Hernandez. We both gained lots of good information some of which I'll share in this article and in another subsequent article.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has been conducting traffic studies identified as



IH-10 East PEL Study Route from Houston IH-69 east to State Hwy. 99 @ Mont Belvieu

Houston IH-69 east to State Hwv. 99 @ Mont Belvieu, Texas, (Harris & Chambers Counties). The study began in 2017 and will help determine the safety and environmental impact on the I-10 East corridor by projecting traffic volumes along the study route into year 2045.

A PEL study is a high-level, early-plan-

the, IH-10 East PEL Study Route from ning study process that represents an approach to future transportation decision making that considers environmental issues, community and economic goals early in the planning stage and carries them through project development, design and construction. The goal is to gather feedback during planning to inform the environmental review process, including the

National Environmental

The purpose of a PEL study is to identify transportation issues and to develop the needs and purpose for proposed improvements. It initiates coordination with oversight agencies, stakeholders and members of the public in order to streamline the overall project's goal and development processes to minimize duplication. It will describe the socio-economic conditions and promote efficient and cost-effective solutions and environmental steward-

ship. It will help to reduce de-

Continued. See I-10 PLANNING STUDIES, Page 6

Justice for Galena Park Cheerleader's 1995 death

Decades after cheerleader's death, her alleged killer extradited from Mexico

By David Taylor Managing Editor

Decades after her 19year-old daughter's death, Judy Martin was notified her daughter's alleged murderer has been extradited from Mexico by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and jailed in Harris

It's a bittersweet present of sorts for Christmas for Martin whose daughter Kristie was a former cheerleader at Galena Park High School gunned down just days before Christmas 28 years ago while she was out with friends celebrating the hol-

Jose Luis Rios, 47, is suspected of murdering Martin at a park in Chan-



KRISTIE MARTIN

Kristie Martin was a cheerleader at Galena Park High School before she was allegedly gunned down by gang member Jose Luis Rios two days before Christmas in

More than 1,000 packed into Woodforest Baptist Church for the funeral of beloved member Kristie Martin. Martin was the victim of a drive by shooting at Riverside Park in Channelview.

nelview on Dec. 23, 1995, in the early hours on Saturday morning while Martin and her friend were outside their vehicle walk-

ing and talking. "I was headed to a basketball game with my other daughter Stephanie last week and when I arrived, she was out front," Martin said. She couldn't understand why her daughter was not inside watching the game, but she soon discovered the FBI was look-

ing for her. "I don't have a landline and they told her not to be alarmed, but that they had good news and wanted to tell me first-hand," she

Her daughter lives in the Memorial area and Martin is a former resident of Crosby and North Shore,

Continued. See JUSTICE FOR CHEERLEADER, Page 6

TEXANS WIN ROOKIE HONORS

By Allan Jamail

January 30, 2024 - The Houston Texans became the National Football League's (NFL) Cinderella Team of the 2023/2024 season. Rookie Head Coach DeMeco Ryans brought the cellar team Texans up in his first season as head coach to win the 2023 AFC South Division. Last season they were one of the worst teams in the NFL and now they're the champs. They were able to achieve far more than anyone would reasonably have expected of them.

Texans legend J.J. Watt showers DeMeco Ryans and C.J. Stroud with praise, Watt had nothing but positive

Continued. See TEXANS WIN **ROOKIE HONORS, Page 5**

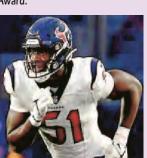
The Pro Football Writers of America named four Houston Texans to get their NFL's Rookies of the Year Awards.



Head Coach DeMeco Ryans won the Rookie Coach of the Year



Award.



Defensive End Will Anderson Jr. won the Defensive Rookie of the Year Award





Bobby Slowick won Assistant Coach of the Year Award, he's also the Offensive Coordinator.

SHELDON ISD NEWS

Construction on 9th and 10th Grade Campus to begin Summer 2024

Construction is on schedule for the additions at Null Middle School and Cravens Early Childhood Academy. Construction is expected to be completed prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year. Cravens ECA will receive eight additional classroom spaces, and Null Middle School will receive ten. The additional classrooms will accommodate campus enrollment growth.

The design phase for the 9th and 10th Grade Campus is nearing completion. with construction expected to begin this summer and plans to open the school in 2026. The facility will be located adjacent to C.E. King High School. The design for capacity will accommodate an enrollment of approximately 2,500 9th and 10th students. The senior campus will serve 11th and 12th grade students, as well as all high school students enrolled in career and technical pro-

Once the new facility has opened, the current 9th Grade Campus will revert back to its original purpose as the Sheldon Education and Community Center. This center would serve as a building for the community with a mobile health unit in partnership with Harris County Public Health as well as opportunities for adult and community education courses.

Additional projects from the 2022 bond election have started and include:

*All elementary schools will receive playground renovations and replacements this spring.

*A roof assessment assessment has been completed and repairs and renovations to facilities will begin this summer.

*New fencing around schools will be installed beginning this spring for added measures of safety.

*Design work has been completed with Exhibit Concepts for both Early Childhood Academies for the pre-kindergarten Fueling Brains classrooms. Classrooms are featured in a variety of thematic designs geared toward gener-

ating creativity to make learning exciting for our younger students.

*The FFA Agricultural Barn will receive new fencing, lighting, building repairs that will assist with upkeep of animals, roof renovations, and more.

*Additional safety and security enhancements will begin in 2024 and include security camera upgrades, new fencing around schools, traffic gates, and door security upgrades.

*In February, the track at Crenshaw Stadium will receive repair work, with a new scoreboard and sound system to complement the new lights installed earlier this school year.

*Additionally the bleachers in the girls' gymnasium at King Middle School will be replaced this year. These items are funded with bond money from 2016.

Follow along our construction progress on our website at www.sheldonisd.com.

King HS "Chicago" Theater Production Receives 25 Tommy Tune Nominations



The King High School theater department has earned 25 Tommy Tune nominations for their winter musical performance of "Chicago." This makes school history for the total nominations earned from Houston's Theatre Under the Stars. The nominations span 15 categories, including Outstanding Musical, Ensemble and Technical Achievement. Individual nominations in-

OUTSTANDING LEAD: Vonta Ward (Amos), Alexandria Cordova (Roxie), Sara Saeed (Velma Kelly), Mellow Alfaro (Mama Morton), Caleb Johnson (Billy Flynn)

clude:

OUTSTANDING SUP-PORTING: Daniel Martinez-Rivera (Mary Sunshine), Lorhii Nelson (June/Squish), Darrell Jackson (Seargent Fog-

OUTSTANDING SING-ER: Alexandria Cordova (Roxie), Mellow Alfaro (Mama Morton), Vonta Ward (Amos)

OUTSTANDING ACTOR: Vonta Ward (Amos), Alexandria Cordova (Roxie), Mellow Alfaro (Mama Morton)

OUTSTANDING DI-RECTOR: Evan Hoffman, Daniel Martinez Rivera

OUTSTANDING MU-SIC DIRECTOR: Taylor Surrat, Crysty Cruz

OUTSTANDING CHO-REOGRAPHER: Erik Perez, Kailah Brown

O U T S T A N D I N G LIGHTING DESIGNER: Josaphine Gonzales-Clawson

OUTSTANDING

SOUND DESIGNER: Kelvyn Amaya

OUTSTANDING SCE-NIC DESIGNER: Evan Hoffman, Hugo Palacios

OUTSTANDING COSTUME DESIGNER: Sam

O U T S T A N D I N G STAGE MANAGER: Joanna Gonzales-Clawson, Alvssa McIntosh

HONORABLE MEN-TION: Aniuska Vilchez / Hunyak

The Tommy Tune Awards (TTA) Program is sponsored by Houston's Theatre Under the Stars and celebrates the educational value, artistry and community of high school musical theater in the Greater Houston Area. Finalists announcements will be made in March.







CHANNELVIEW ISD NEWS

Celebrating School Board Recognition Month!



Lynette Breedlove, was elected to Position 6 in November 2022 to a four-year term, which expires in November 2026. She began working at the age of 14 at a then brand new Dairy Queen in Jacinto City. Lynette is a 1977 graduate of Furr High School and moved to Channelview in 1988 with her husband Danny. They raised six children in Channelview and now have 13 grandchildren. Lynette worked for Channelview ISD for 27 years, mostly as the Financial Secretary at Channelview High School before retiring in June 2022. She enjoys camping, horseback riding, and spending time with her family.

THANK YOU Mrs. Breedlove for your dedication, passion, and hard work

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo selects 8 Sheldon ISD artists for School Art Program

This year, eight students have been chosen by the School Art Committee as winners from across Sheldon ISD for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Art Program. The competition spans all age groups from kindergarten to high school seniors. The Best of Show is the highest recognition, followed by Gold Medal and then Special Merit. Congratulations to the following artists:

Elementary Best of Show: "Countryside Tractor" by Liam Randolph, 5th grade, Monahan Elementary, Mr. Randolph's class

Elementary Gold Medal: "Moo" by Amelie Zelaya, 4th grade, Sheldon Elementary, Ms. Christopher's class

Middle School Best of Show: "Complimentary Cow" by Jasmin Cazaubon, 8th grade, Mr. Cleaves's class

Middle School Best of Show: "Friends in a Field" by Kayla Myers, 6th grader of Ms. Barr's

Middle School Gold Medal: "Cowboy John" by April Phat, 8th grade, Mr. Cleaves's class High School Best of Show: "A Break in the Shade" by Danna Basillo, 9th grade, Ms. Little's

High School Gold Medal: "El Gallo Punk" by Bianca Marin Franco, 11th grade, Ms. Roades's class

High School Gold Medal: "Clouding Cows" by Alani Chavira Bejarano, 11th grade, Ms. Roades's

These students will have their artwork on display during the 2024 Houston Livestock Show.



We're highlighting CISD Board Trustee, Mr. Hector Martinez.

He was elected to Position 2 in November 2020 to serve a four-year term ending in November 2024

THANK YOU Mr. Martinez for your dedication, passion, and hard work.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Dedication

re you someone who is dedicated? Are you dedicated to arriving a few minutes early to work in order to be ready to start working on time? What about at the end your shift, are you ready to "punch out" seven minutes early or are you going to stay late to finish the assignment, even if you will not be paid overtime? Are you someone who goes the extra mile or just does enough?

There was a time where individuals chose a profession and put in twenty or more years to make a career out of it. Individuals would often go to work as a cashier in the retail world and by the time they were ready to retire, they were a manager or perhaps had even moved up in the corporate office. Many teachers stayed in the say profession and went from being a teacher to advancing to be a Department Chair, an Assistant Principal, and the Principal and perhaps into the Administration ranks in the same school district.

There were individuals who committed to marriage and no matter what happened, they remained committed to one spouse. No matter how difficult it was, they continued to be dedicated to making the marriage work. In the early 1980's many high school graduates had parents who had been married for twenty-five years or more. Sadly, today there are many elementary school students who have parents who were never married and the one parent never comes around the child. When this happens, often the children grow up not even knowing the absent parent's family.

Recently, I have talked with so many grandparents who have missed out on seeing their grandchildren grow up as the custodial parent often detaches and the child is the one who suffers. Somehow we must do better. As a nation, we need to stop being dedicated to making money, spending more on entertainment and material things and get back to being dedicated to making a difference. We need children to know their relatives. Children should know both sides of the family. Life is hard enough. For those children who have gaps in their family tree, those of us in the community need to step up and get involved. Over the weekend, I saw a father asking about where he could find out about a Daddy Daughter Dance. He was sincerely wanting to take his daughter and show her not just an evening of fun but to make some memories.

I suggested that he gather some other men and meet with a local organization that works with middle school and high school girls and see if somehow we could put together a fundraising event to help that organization as well as build community support.

There are several homeless individuals in the area that many are concerned about as well as a growing number of unsheltered individuals and groups showing up in the area. While there is a group of about twenty individuals working to provide for one individual, we need more. We need to hear from all sides. Those that are afraid of the homeless, those that see the homeless as an eyesore that will devalue their property, those that have a heart of compassion to feel the homeless. We need to become dedicated to making a difference. Ideas? Please contact me at Chalrotte.Jackson@yahoo.com



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ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "Silver is on Sale"

Silver is underpriced. In other words, <u>silver is on</u> sale.



The current gold-to-silver ratio reveals this. This ratio tells you how many ounces of silver it takes to buy one ounce of gold. Or to put it another way, the gold:silver ratio tells you the <u>price of gold</u> in silver.

In general, the ratio tends to narrow as a precious metals bull market unfolds. In other words, silver outperforms gold. The opposite is true during a bear market for the monetary metals.

The gold:silver ratio currently stands at over 87:1, meaning it requires 87 ounces of silver to purchase one ounce of gold. Historical context reveals the significance of the current ratio. Simply put, it's out of whack. The average gold:silver ratio in the modern era has generally ranged between 40:1 and 60:1. When the ratio widens far beyond that range, as it has in recent years, it typically returns toward that mean. For instance, the ratio fell to 30:1 in 2011 and below 20:1 in 1979.

The pandemic era provides a more recent example. As the Fed cut rates and launched quantitative easing to prop up a shaky economy caused by rate hikes the prior year, the gold:silver ratio climbed to nearly 93:1. At the onset of the pandemic, the ratio rocketed to over 100:1. But as government shutdowns spread economic carnage throughout the world, gold rallied and took silver with it. The price of gold charted a 39 percent gain, rising above \$2,000 an ounce. Meanwhile, silver rallied to nearly \$30 an ounce, a 147 percent increase

The big rally in silver drove the gold:silver ratio down from over 100:1 to just over 64:1, close to the high end of the historical norm. As the Federal Reserve cut interest rates to battle price inflation, the gold:silver ratio widened once again. History indicates that we could be setting up for another big rally in the price of silver. The supply and demand dynamics also look good for silver. Although the official numbers have not yet been released, global industrial demand for silver in 2023 is expected to set a record leading to another big market deficit, according to preliminary projections by the Silver Institute.

According to the <u>Silver Institute</u>, 2023 will chart the third consecutive annual silver supply deficit in a row. The Silver Institute called the 2022 production deficit "possibly the most significant deficit on record." It also noted that "the combined shortfalls of the previous two years comfortably offset the cumulative surpluses of the last 11 years." Silver isn't currently priced for this dynamic. The gold:silver ratio reflects this reality.

Meanwhile, silver premiums are very low. With silver on sale, it might be a good time to buy some. We (Pineforest Jewelry) are bullion dealers offering bulk purchases of both silver and gold at the lowest possible prices! If you're interested in protecting your money by owning silver, call Jim Cihak at (713) 451-1321. He's available to answer all of your questions about silver bullion and prices. Protect your hard-earned money NOW!

Credit to journalist Mike Maharrey for the content of this article

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

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.

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OPINION PAGE \bigstar \bigstar



The Great Hot Dog Chili Taste-Off

It's the time of year when Chili tastes especially good. A warm, tangy bowl heats the body and warms the soul. Appropriately, the local Highlands Rotary Club holds a huge Chili Feast and feeds the whole town, and to top it off they hold a raffle and give away a new Car or Truck or SUV to some lucky sole.

But my interest in Chili goes way back, to the town I was raised in, New Castle, Pennsylvania. You see, we had a Chili tradition, and a leading restaurant was Coney Island, with their special recipe for chili on hot dogs. I grew up eating there, and when my daughters were old enough, they even worked as servers there.

The Chili was especially tangy and delicious, with a thick texture of sauce and meat. I thought it was unbeatable.

Until...



The Great Chili Taste-Off was held in Cincinnati in December, with Hot Dogs garnished with either Cincinnati Skyline Chili or New Castle M&P Coney Island Chili.

My son-in-law and youngest daughter now live in Cincinnati, where the local tradition is known as Skyline Chili. Andy, my son-in-law, swears the Chili is the best, and it is certainly has a long tradition. It's a thin, tomatoey base, and is not only used on hot dogs, but even on spaghetti. It's usually served with a heaping serving of shredded cheese on top.

So, I don't think it can compare or compete with my M&P Coney Island Chili from New Castle. This Christmas holiday, I suggested to Andy that we decide which Chili has the better taste. We would hold a "Taste-Off" and settle which one got the bragging rights.

So, we had M&P Chili flown in from New Castle, courtesy of my middle daughter who was also joining us for a family holiday get-together. Anyone can order the Chili from New Castle, carefully delivered by FedEx in insulated, dry-ice packed containers.

On judging night, we ordered a dozen plain hot dogs from Skyline, and heated up a pot of their Chili, and a pot of M&P Coney Island Chili. Everyone in the family was the judge. Each got a plain half hot dog, covered with Skyline Chili, and another with Coney Island Chili.

And we tasted them, carefully and fully. The family judges varied in age from 7 years old, to 84. We ate. And we voted, with Reed the 4 year old collecting the paper ballots which had been tendered in secret.

And then the count.



The Holiday Family Dinner table was the site of the Taste-Off Judging, with everyone participating from the youngest to the oldest family tasters.

Would it be close? Would everyone have made up their mind beforehand? Would their familiar favorite be the winner?

Reed oversaw the ballot count, and Iris made the announcement.

It was a unanimous vote, 7 to 0, in favor of the New Castle M&P Coney Island Chili. Best flavor, best texture, best color, best aftertaste, according to the discussion following the vote.

Andy led the hometown crowd in accepting a gracious loss.

And then later in the week, we celebrated the fun Taste-Off event with a victory dinner, at of all places the local Skyline Chili Restaurant!

At this point, you may well be asking, how do these Chilis compare with our local Highlands Rotary "Chester's Famous Recipe" Chili? We did not have any to compare or judge, but Rotary's Chili is meant more as a bowlful, not as a topping, and the texture is quite different. But maybe another day we will include it in the judging.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS **By Gary Borders**

DOJ issues Scathing Report on Response to Uvalde Shooting

The U.S. Justice Department issued a scathing report late last week on the May 4, 2022, mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a news conference in Uvalde that officials' response that day and afterward "was a failure that should not have happened."

The Justice Department's nearly 500-page report noted that it took 77 minutes before the shooter was killed, and that officials made the mistake of attempting to negotiate with the killer in the classroom where victims were trapped.

"This was the most significant failure," Garland said. "That failure meant that law enforcement officials prioritized a protracted evacuation of students and teachers in other classrooms, instead of immediately rescuing the victims trapped with the active shooter."

The Uvalde victims' families were first provided copies of the report ahead of its official release.

MEDICAL BOARD PETITIONED TO ISSUE ABORTION **GUIDELINES**

Two Austin attorneys are asking the Texas Medical Board to issue guidelines on abortion laws to clarify the medical exceptions allowed under the state's near total

a the Statesman reported. Steve and Amy Bresnen, who are married, asked the board to devise rules to "ensure critical care to pregnant females and implement medical emergency exceptions to laws that otherwise punish those who perform abor-

The medical board has 60 days to either initiate a rule making process or deny the request.

The Texas Supreme Court made a similar request in December after rejecting the bid of a Dallas mother with a fatal fetal diagnosis to have an abortion in Texas. Kate Cox ultimately traveled to New Mexico to have the pregnancy terminated.

HIGHLANDS

Editor & Publisher.....

Website Editor...

Managing Editor.....

nd address changes to Star-Courier, P. O. Box 405, Highlands,

Assignment Editor.....

Marketing Executive.....

Star*Courier

Barbers Hill ★ Dayton PRESS

NORTH CHANNEL * STAR

Associate Publisher......Mei-Ing Liu Hoffman

Production Manager.....Gerardo Hernandez

Entered as Periodicals Class at Highlands Post Office, Highlands, TX 77562, Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Published 50 weeks per year, on Thursday, by Grafikpress Corp., 5906 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Opinions in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily this newspaper's. Any erroneous statement which may appear

will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to grafikstar@aol.com.

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.....Kristan Hoffman



5TH CIRCUIT THROWS OUT RECENTLY PASSED BOOK

Citing free speech grounds, the conservative 5th Circuit Court of Appeals has halted a Texas law that bans school library books "sexually deemed explicit," The Dallas Morning News reported. Two Texas bookstores and national trade groups representing booksellers, authors and publishers had filed the suit to challenge a law passed in the last legislative session.

The law was to take effect Jan. 1, but a lower court blocked its implementation. It was unclear whether the state would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Texas leads the nation in book bans, according to The News. Approximately 800 books were removed from Texas school libraries from July 2021 to June 2022. The ruling let stand a portion of the new law that requires the State Board of Education to approve standards for Texas school libraries to follow, which it has done. However, without the ratings required by the new law, the statute will not operate as originally intended.

PAXTON: AGENCY WON'T FIGHT WHISTLEBLOWER SUIT

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton announced last week his agency will no longer fight a whistleblower suit filed by four former top attorneys who were fired in 2020 after accusing their boss of corruption, The News reported. Previously the Texas Supreme Court ruled that Paxton and his

CROSBY

Gilbert Hoffman

....Willie Glasgow

.David Taylor

Julieta Paita

aides must testify under oath about what led to the firings. Paxton announced he will accept a trial court judge's final ruling on the lawsuit.

Paxton again criticized the whistleblowers, whom he previously referred to as "rogue employees."

"I will not allow my office to be distracted by these disgruntled former employees and their self-serving sideshow," he said.

The four former employees and their legal team are evaluating their next steps in the case. A settlement was reached last year for \$3.3 million but the Legislature refused to fund it, sparking the embattled attorney general's impeachment in the House and acquittal in the Senate. Joe Knight, one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs, said Paxton's argument against the validity of the case has already been rejected by four previous courts.

Meanwhile, Paxton paid the attorneys who successfully defended him in the Senate impeachment trial \$2.3 million, the Texas Tribune reported. The monev came out of his campaign funds, which is legal under state law.

The trial centered on allegations from the whistleblowers that Paxton abused his office to help a major donor. Nate Paul, who has since been indicted on loan fraud charges.

CHIP POSTPARTUM COVER-AGE EXTENDED TO 12 MONTHS

A law that takes effect March 1 extends Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) postpartum coverage from two months to 12 months, the Texas Health and Human Services commission announced.

As a result, anyone enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP who is pregnant or becomes pregnant is automatically enrolled for 12 months of postpartum coverage.

"I thank Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature for standing by our families," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young. "Twelve months of postpartum coverage will help mothers across this state gain access to highquality healthcare."

The state projects that about 137,000 women will benefit from the extended coverage in fiscal year 2025.

STATE HAS TRANSPORTED MORE THAN 100,000 MIGRANTS TO OTHER CITIES

Since April 2022, the state of Texas has sent more than 100,000 migrants to major cities in other states, the governor's office has said.

The largest number -37,100 - have been sent to New York City, followed closely by 30,800 sent to Chicago. Other cities receiving migrants include Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; Denver; and Los Angeles.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has sued the bus companies paid by Texas to shuttle the migrants to his city.



Still Singing

My dad turned 90 this weekend, and we were all set to drive up north to celebrate his birthday.

He's a hard one to buy a present for. My dad does not need more things. He likes using the things he has until they are completely worn out. He already has a line of slippers on his top shelf, queued up for when the pair he's wearing is threadbare. He wore his last pair of hiking boots until his socks showed through. Besides, he said "No presents!" in a very persistent

So my sister and I decided to give him music. Barbershop music was her idea.

My sister and I went over to my parents' next-door neighbors to talk to Rod about barbershop quartets. "You won't find any," Rod told us. "Barbershop is dead."

Rod is a guy who would know. He's been involved in community groups of all kinds, and he keeps track of these things. We were trying to come up with some other kind of music when our party plans hit another snag.

My brother-in-law, Pepe, recently received a call to work as a pastor. Pepe entered the seminary at 60 years old, deciding-no matter how late it might be—this was the thing he was meant to do. The ordination was a celebration of his new life, and no one wanted to miss it. But it fell on the morning after my dad's birthday. Since both were once-in-a-lifetime events, we had to move the birthday party to my condo in the city so everyone could make it to the ordination the next morning.

"Maybe barbershop is not quite as dead in the city," I suggested to my sister, and I got online to see.

The first group I called would have loved to sing, but their bass was in for a cardiac procedure and was not supposed to exert himself for 24 hours. "It's nothing serious!" said the tenor who took my call. (But you'd expect a tenor to say that.)

The second group answered my call from Florida, where two of the members were, while the remaining members were in the Midwest. "Too bad!" the leader said, "but I've got another name for you!"

The third group said they would love to come and sing. And I was over the moon.

When they arrived, I understood why barbershop music was on the decline. One member was four years older than my dad. But they drove through a snowstorm to make it to the party and, when they came in, my dad was very surprised

They sang for about half an hour and, at the end, they invited my dad to come up and sing bass in "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." And he did. I watched my dad singing and was so happy we were able to do this—to celebrate with our dad on the day of his birthday, to hear barbershop music while there were folks still singing.

I escorted the quartet down to the elevator afterward and thanked them again for coming out on such a snowy night. "I think we should do one

more," the bass suggested.

And, right outside the elevator doors, they started singing the Frank Sinatra tune "Don't Blame Me." The setting might not have been the most romantic, but the acoustics were perfect. Those barbershop singers brought tears to my eyes.

I thought of how wonderful it was to spend this time with people we care about and to remember how fortunate we all are—at least for this day—to still be singing.

Till next time,

Carrie





ROTARY CLUB NEWS



NASA Speaker at Rotary luncheon

Rotary Club of North Shore

Our guest speaker today was Mr. Andrzej M. Stewart, from Mission Control at the Johnson Space Center. Currently, he serves as an Orion spacecraft Navigator for NASA's Artemis missions. He earned his degrees in Aerospace Engineering from the University of TEXAS at Austin and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His program was very informative. He recently served as Chief Engineer Officer of HI-SEAS IV, a year-long Mars simulation in Hawaii.





Speaker Stewart of NASA receives the famous "Gold Rim Cup" of appreciation from Rotary president Lee Brown.

Texans Win Rookie Honors,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

things to say about his former team and Ryans his former Texans teammate after the 2023 sea-

Watt said, "I think it's an incredibly exciting time to be a Texans fan," Watt said. "Obviously, DeMeco did an unbelievable job with that team. And any of us who knew DeMeco, knew exactly what he was going to do, and what he's capable of, because who he is as a person, and also who he is as a football mind. He's brilliant. He also has the ability to communicate and get his message across to players extremely well."

"And then you add in a quarterback like C.J., who not only has all the physical skills and talent to do everything on the field, but he also has the maturity and the leadership to handle that locker room to do everything the right way, along with in the locker room publicly and in his press conferences." Watt concluded.

The Pro Football Writers of America named four Houston Texans to get their NFL's Rookies of the Year Awards. Head Coach DeMeco Ryans won the Rookie Coach of the Year Award (he was the PFWA's Assistant Coach of the Year honoree in 2022. Quarterback C.J. Stroud got both the Rookie of the Year and Rookie Quarterback of the Year Awards. Defensive End Will Anderson Jr. won the Defensive Rookie of the Year Award. And Bobby Slowick won Assistant Coach of the Year Award; he's also the

Offensive Coordinator.

Ryans named the sixth head coach in Texans club history on January 31, 2023, Ryans enjoyed a remarkable first season leading the Texans, finishing with an 11-8 overall record and guiding the franchise to their seventh AFC South title and their first playoff berth since 2019. Under Ryans, the Texans improved their win total by six wins in 2023, making him the seventh head coach since 2019 to improve their club's record by at least six wins compared to the previous year. It also marks the fifth time the Texans have ever recorded 11-or-more wins in a season, and they are the second team in NFL history to have a winning record directly following three straight seasons of less than four wins.

Ryans' success went hand-in-hand with rookie quarterback and PFWA NFL Rookie of the Year QB C.J. Stroud, as the Texans became the first team in NFL history to win their division with a rookie quarterback and a first-year head coach.

C.J. Stroud selected No. 2 overall in the 2023 NFL Draft, he took the NFL by storm, starting in all 15 of his appearances and completing 319-of-499 pass attempts for a rookie franchise-record 4,108 yards, 23 touchdowns, five interceptions and a passer rating of 100.8, marking the third-best passer rating by a rookie in NFL history.

His 4,108 passing

yards rank third in NFL annals among rookie signal callers, while leading all rookies this past season in all major passing categories. Stroud finished the 2023 campaign with 4,557 total passing yards, including the postseason, which is the second-most ever by a rookie.

He also began his career with a record 192 consecutive pass attempts without an interception, the most ever by a player to begin a career. Stroud led the league in passing yards per game (273.9), while also pacing the NFL in touchdown-interception ratio (4.60), becoming just the third player in NFL history to finish first in both categories, joining Joe Montana (1989) and Tom Brady

Among his numerous record-setting performances was his 470-yard, five-touchdown performance in Week 9 that earned him his first of two AFC Offensive Player of the Week honors, as he also captured the award in Week 18 after clinching a playoff spot and division crown for the franchise's first time since 2019. Stroud also won NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month and AFC Player of the Month for November, becoming just the second rookie quarterback in league history to win AFC Offensive Player of the Month and just the fifth player ever to earn NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month in the same month.



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Justice for Galena Park Cheerleader,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

so the FBI wanted to schedule a conference call with the two.

She heard from two agents, one an investigator and the other with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"They told us that he had been arrested in Mexico and the FBI had located him and was bringing him to Houston to be put in Harris County jail," Martin said.

Rios arrived in Houston on Wednesday, according to court records, and was supposed to appear on the docket before a magistrate but for some reason did not appear until Friday in the 339th Criminal Court before Judge Te'iva J. Bell who denied Rios bond.

Investigators have already been in contact with Salvador Barrera and his brother who was with Kristie the night of the shooting.

Martin learned one of Rios's ex-girlfriends allegedly admitted to him that he had killed Kristie.

Prosecutors are already busy building their case against Rios.

"He's in jail, praise the Lord," Martin said, "but I know how long this process can take."

Martin's husband Brian, died 14 years ago from a heart attack. "He went to his grave

"He went to his grave without the satisfaction of knowing her killer hadn't been caught," she said.

After 28 years, Martin herself had resigned herself to the fact the same



Jose Luis Rios was extradited from Mexico to Harris County to stand trial for the murder of Kristie Martin.

may be true for her until the phone call came on Wednesday last week.

"This news came out of nowhere and almost on the 28th anniversary of her death," she said.

Rios, who went by the nickname Flaco, and his accomplice, Jorge Mendez, were reportedly driving a red truck through River Terrace Park and approached Martin and Barrera standing outside of their blue Chevrolet Beretter.

According to the police, Rios called out to the couple, but Martin said they should leave the park. That's when Rios, sitting in the passenger side of the red truck, allegedly opened fire with an assault weapon shooting five times. Martin was struck in the back and died at the scene while her female friend was wounded by one of the



Kristie Martin was a cheerleader at Galena Park High School before she was allegedly gunned down by gang member Jose Luis Rios two days before Christmas in 1995.

bullets while sitting in the back seat of the car.

Barrera positively identified Rios in a photo lineup, according to court documents, and an arrest warrant was issued for Rios and Mendez. Both were allegedly in a gang

I-10 Planning Study,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The PEL study is in Phase 2; Identify Corridor Issues & Concerns. As noted above (green tab). It's behind schedule because of the COVID -19 pandemic.

lays in delivering future I-10 improvement projects.

Conducting a PEL study helps inform engineer planning decisions and streamlines the project delivery process, and can serve as a way for the public to discuss and prioritize transportation issues and project delivery. The public was invited to four PEL meetings in Houston,

Mont Belvieu, Channel-view and Baytown.

In the Public Input stage of our meeting Linda and I were able to suggest and make potential recommendations to try to prioritize and influence the future IH-10 projects. We gave our input on what we felt would be in the best interest of traffic safety, improve traffic flow times

and to consider the environment constraints and issues along the study route.

SEE PART 2 ARTI-CLE FOR ADDITIONAL INFO. ON CURRENT TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND CRASHES (both minor and fatality accidents)

and fled to Mexico. Mendez was arrested in Mexico in 2001, but instead of extradition to the U.S., he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to 31 years in prison. Rios absconded from law enforcement until August.

Detective Chuck Leithner, who worked on the case, retired from the Harris County Sheriff's Office, and later took a job working for the Waller County Sheriff's Office. He retired from there last month.

The case drew national

attention with profiles on Unsolved Mysteries and America's Most Wanted.

Rios was indicted on the charge of murder on May 1, 1996 by the 263rd Grand Jury without him being present. "The FBI has a very long

memory, and the FB has a very long reach," said acting special agent in charge David Martinez, FBI Houston. "Fugitive Jose Luis Rios was arrested in Mexico this past August thanks to the FBI's global

reach and international partnerships. Mexican authories, through coordination by FBI Houston's Violent Crimes Task Force and the FBI's Mexico City Legal Attache Office, arrested Rios. To the victims and their families, you don't forget and neither do we," he said in a tweet on the social media platform X.

"Justice may not always be swift, but as in this case, justice will not be denied," Martinez said.

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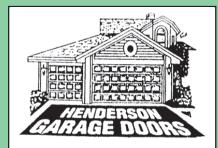
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Chamber Transition: Ronny Dwairy Bids Farewell, Passing Leadership to Bill Palko Amidst Awards and Celebrations,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the walls of the chamber and raise money to give scholarships and sow seeds in the future of the community.

Dwairy said he was also proud of the chamber for enduring the pandemic and the community continues to thrive, including his own business.

"We have six locations, opening a new one in Canada in February, and with existing locations in Texas, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania," he explained. During the pandemic, when the energy sector took a nosedive with 30 percent less demand, Dwairy had temporarily moved to Odessa to oversee the expansion of one of their facilities that finished in April of 2020, just as the pandemic was beginning to rage.

"I'm most proud that we were able to keep all of our employees with no layoffs during COVID, keeping our team together," he said. That move paid off especially this past year when they were able to hire an additional 100 people. That growth has not only helped the community, but also Dwairy who has opened up his pocketbook to give back financially to the Chamber and other organizations in the community.

"As a board member for another two years, I can still be involved in chamber activities. I'll keep coming until they kick me out the door," he laughed.

Incoming President Bill Palko will finish his second six-year term as a board member leading the organization. He has also been the chairman of the board for the foundation twice

"We are so fortunate that COVID didn't really affect us as far as membership and we're still growing," he said.

Palko said he wants to continue the chamber's success in remaining a vital place to live, work, and play.

"The vision for 2024 is to continue to attract businesses, families, add new communities, and keep our school districts in a growth pattern," he said.

Palko has had opportunities to leave the area but refused.

"I've lived here all my life, and even with changing demographics, we remain a very tight knit community that works



Board member Mike Williams has served six full consecutive years on the Chamber Board of Directors. He was gifted a framed copy of the Great Seal of the United States of America adopted in 1782 from early design suggestions by Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin. He is joined by Ronny Dwairy and Margie Buentello.



The Ambassador of the Year is Traci Galyean of Courtyard by Marriott Houston Northeast. Galyean will chair the Ambassadors group this year. She is joined by Ronny Dwairy and Margie Buentello.



2024 Incoming President Bill Palko presents Outgoing President Ronny Dwairy a gift of a gavel for his service to the chamber.



The Committee Member of the Year was awarded to Jim Wadzinski who has been an asset to the chamber.



Board Member of the Year was announced as Chad Moody. He hails from Arkema, Inc. and performed his duties with excellent attendance at meetings and events. He is joined by Ronny Dwairy and Margie Buentello.



Chamber of Commerce, Mo Siddiqui with Bestway Oilfield was awarded the Dr. Ed Lehr Chairman's Award.



The Small Business of the Year Award was given to City Fire Protection. The family business joined the chamber in 2016 and continues to expand and grow. Robert Perez and Melissa Campos are joined by Ronny Dwairy and Margie Buentello.



a laugh as Incoming President puts the pressure on to raise money during the live auction.

and grows together," he said.

He graduated from North Shore in 1973 and is amazed at how the community remains strong even in the face of so many obstacles.

"I've raised my two kids who both graduated from North Shore, and I have no reason to leave. I still like the community and the people here. I'll stay and do my part," Palko said.

Here's the list of award winners:

2024 Board of Directors-Ronny Dwairy, Ramon Garza, Chad Moody, Dr. Tory C. Hill, Robert Perez, Wanna Giacona, Darnald Kimble, Anna Clark, Bill Palko, Erin Kerr, Jim Wadzinski, Ken Wimbley, Erika Koehler, Dr. Allatia Harris, Dr. Alexander Okwonna, Elvira Granados, Nelson Espitia, and Judge Joe Stephens. Not pictured Dana Nino, Rubin Shah, Pedro Garcia, Ian Adler, Emily Conklin, Lon Squyres, and Linda Tijerina.

Incoming Board President—Bill Palko

Outgoing Board President—Ronny Dwairy

Chamber Board Member with Six Years of Service—Mike Williams

William C. Palko Scholarship—Jennifer Gutierrez, Channelview HS graduate and San Jacinto College student, \$5,000

North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation Scholarship— Meah Godfrey, North Shore Sr. High graduate, San Jacinto College student, \$1,500

North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation Scholarship— Cesar Alexandro Lago Alvarez, North Shore Sr. High graduate, San Jacinto College student, \$1,500

Small Business of the Year Award—City Fire Protection, Robert Perez and Melissa Campos

Large Business of the Year Award—Lyondell-Bassell Channelview plant

Ambassador of the Year—Traci Galyean of Courtyard by Marriott Houston Northeast

Board Member of the Year Award—Chad Moody, Arkema, Inc.

Committee Member of the Year Award—Jim Wadzinski, Community auto dealerships

Dr. Ed Lehr Chairman's Award-Mo Siddiqui, Bestway Oilfield



LyondellBassell was announced as The Large Business of the Year. The company has been a member of the chamber since 1988.



Adrian Michael and The Greenway Band, sponsored by Bestway Oilfield, played and sang throughout the awards as chamber membership danced the night away.

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