



FOOD, WATER and ICE were distributed in Jacinto City by State Rep. Ana Hernandez, helped by North Shore Rotary, Pct. 2, and Constable Jerry Garcia

NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

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

Waste Pits SuperFund Update Meeting July 30

THEA and the San Jacinto River Coalition will hold an Update Meeting at the Highlands Community Center, starting at 6:30pm.

NCA Chamber Mixer July 25

Business Mixer. Members Only, Thursday, July 25 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, at Armenta's Mexican Restaurant, 823 Sheldon Road, Channelview.

Back 2 School Drive by Elite Pro Services Saturday, July 27th

Back2School Drive July 27 from 12noon to 4pm, at 13828 Corpus Christi. Free Backpacks, School Supplies, Haircuts/Styles, Food, Games, Fun. Must Register by July 20. www.eliteprosvs.com.

North Channel Chamber Luncheon Friday Aug. 2

Monthly luncheon, at Jacinto City Town Center, 1025 Oates Road. 11:30 to 1:00pm. Speaker: Dave Brady. \$25 members, RSVP yesenia@ncachamber.com

North Channel Chamber Magic Casino Night Aug. 9

Plan for the Magic of the Chamber Casino Fundraiser, Friday August 9th from 7pm to 11pm at the Jacinto City Town Center, 1025 Oates Road, Jacinto City. Sponsorships now available, from \$200 to \$1800, proceeds to NCAF scholarships. Call 713-450-3600.

Area slowly recovers from Hurricane Beryl

Some areas await Electricity for second week: Need food, water, ice

The communities in East Harris County were still struggling to recover from the wrath of Hurricane Beryl, almost two weeks after the storm struck early Monday morning, July 8th.

Initially over 2 million customers of Centerpoint Energy lost power, and even two weeks later they reported 50,000 still out. Traffic lights, A/C units, and no refrigeration added to the misery brought on during the excessive heat.

Authorities reported at least 22 deaths attributable to the storm, including 8 overcome by heat,



Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey helps distribute MRE Food boxes at the Drive Thru Distribution event at the Crosby Community Center.



Precinct 2 Adrian Garcia, State Rep. Ana Hernandez, North Shore Rotary, and Constable Jerry Garcia helped distribute food, water and ice to residents at this Jacinto City event. This was one of several locations helping out.

and several killed by falling trees.

To help those without access to food and supplies, many private agencies and the county and city governments have organized Food Distribution drive-thru aid, with supplies from the state and the Food Bank.

Centerpoint Energy has been strongly criticized for inadequate planning prior to the storm, leading to slow restoration of power to many neighborhoods. Governor Abbott and Harris County have promised to investigate the lack of preparation and the slow recovery of services.

Deputy Esqueda laid to rest in HCSO ceremony

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. ~ Friday, July 19, 2024 about 1,600 mourners joined with the family of Harris County's Deputy Fernando Esqueda at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart downtown Houston for his funeral. The building was filled to overflowing capacity; all aisles were crowded providing standing room only for late arrivals.

Members of Harris County's many police agencies were joined by officers who traveled from Dallas, Corpus Christi, Chicago, Boston, New York and Los Angeles, among many other cities.

As a former police officer and chief of police it was a sad and emotional experience for me to cover for the NC Star. This was my first funeral to write an article about where a law enforcement officer was murdered.

Taking the photos was especially hard for me especially when many of them were of scenes where



EULOGY BY HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ (Allan Jamail photo)

I could see his family in deep emotional grieve. As a former law enforcement officer and now a media representative I felt obligated and the duty to do this story. I hoped my article and photos could possibly benefit other law enforcement officers or even Esqueda's family.

After the funeral I spoke with Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, his swollen tear filled eyes and red nose left no doubt how this was a very sad event for him to endure. The sheriff and I have been friends for over twenty

years, I knew him before he and his wife Melissa were married. It was obvious to me he was shaken by the brutal murder of one of his deputies.

Sheriff Gonzalez gave one of the eulogies and quoted from a note Fernando had written earlier "Your purpose is only known to your heart," Gonzalez said, "Deputy Esqueda had the heart of a lion."

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said

Continued. See ESQUEDA FUNERAL, Page 2



TWO WHITE HORSES PULL THE CARRIAGE WITH ESQUEDA'S CASSET AT THE CEMETERY, WITH COACHMAN DWIGHT RANDALL AND SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ ATOP. (Allan Jamail photo)



A Final Salute from a City in Mourning, as the procession heads to the Co-Cathedral of Sacred Heart. (Allan Jamail Photo)

Houston mourns the passing of Sheila Jackson Lee at 74

By Allan Jamail
A Personal Memoir

Saturday, July 20, 2024 ~ Houston, Texas ~ as a freelance photojournalist often writing for the North Channel Star it's with deep sadness I'm writing this article (part 1.) about yesterday's death (July 19th) of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (S.J.L.). She had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this June; and her breast cancer had been in remission for over a decade.

For sure Jackson Lee was a living legend, well admired all over the globe for her exceptional abilities and accomplishments.

Over the years I've provided Star readers with many news stories of S.J.L.'s successful congressional work. She was able to secure free federal grant funds for Jacinto City a new ambulance as well as one for Galena Park. She's gotten billions of grant funds for Houston including North Channel areas. She always made sure her Congressional District 18 received their share of grant funds to improve the lives and living conditions of her constituents.

Her tireless work ethics produced positive results; but I feel it might have prevented her from taking some time for her own "self-care."



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee
18th Congressional District
January 12, 1950 - July 19, 2024

Sheila's strong relentless work ethics cannot be over stated; she believed a strong work ethic was important for achieving her goals. Her moral principles towards having a strong work ethic guid-

Continued. See SHEILA JACKSON LEE DIES, Page 3

JACINTO RIVER SUPERFUND SITE Remediation completed on Southern Waste Pits Site

By Jackie Young Medcalf

EAST HARRIS COUNTY - We still have a long way to go before the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site is fully cleaned up and area communities are safe from dioxin and other chemicals. However, we don't want to lose sight of a major milestone in the remediation effort.

The EPA announced that the Southern Pit cleanup down to 10 feet has been completed and the final report on the work will be released in August.

Here are some important things to recognize about this cleanup.

It was accomplished on schedule. Superfund projects seem to take for-



ever and include too many delays and too much foot dragging. However, once the project was approved the actual work was done quickly and professionally.

Public involvement doesn't slow down the

process; it improves it. The EPA reached out to consult with THEA and other community representatives several times during the process, including after an incident that Continued. See WASTE PITS SOUTH SITE COMPLETE, Page 5

Deputy Esqueda laid to rest in HCSO ceremony

Continued from Page 1. All photos by Allan Jamail



Deputy Fernando Esqueda

the deputy's dad honored his son with a haircut. "His father was telling me that he would always joke with him because his father wore pretty long hair past his shoulders and Fernando would always tell him, 'Dad, you need to cut the hair,'" Sheriff Gonzalez said. "So today, when you see the father, his hair is now short, shorter than mine, probably. And he's putting some of the locks in this area inside his son's coffin as a final farewell." Sheriff Gonzalez said "Esqueda had one of the most infectious personalities and was the life of the party."

TWO CHARGED WITH CAPITAL MURDER

Harris County Deputy Fernando Esqueda, 28, was killed on Wednesday night July 11, 2024 after officers responded to reports of an aggravated assault at a Little Caesars Pizza on Wallisville Road.

Authorities said Ronald "Ronnie" Palmer Jr. 44, became enraged over an incorrect order, verbally confronting staff before drawing a gun and pistol-whipping an employee. Palmer fled the scene shortly after.

The employee provided detailed information about Palmer's getaway car, including its make, model, color, and license plate number.

HCSO Chief Deputy Mike Lee said deputies used the Flock Camera System to locate Palmer's usual go-to spots. A deputy working undercover found Palmer's vehicle on Italian Cypress Trail.

Esqueda reported the vehicle's location before being ambushed when Palmer attacked and fatally shot him early Thursday morning of July 11th. "The other responding deputies found both his undercover vehicle and body. His vehicle was riddled with bullet holes and he had suffered multiple gunshot wounds. He had severe injuries and died at the hospital," Chief Lee said.

Hours later, Palmer's vehicle was then traced to a nearby neighborhood. Deputies surrounded an acquaintance's house where Palmer was believed to be hiding. Palmer eventually contacted investigators, indicating he was ready to surrender.

"He exited the house, knelt down, and raised his hands before being taken into custody. When he was arrested, he was placed in Esqueda's handcuffs", Sheriff Gonzalez said.

HCSO investigators and District Attorney Chris Condon say a second suspect, Dremone Francis, 26, has been charged in connection with Esqueda's murder. Its alleged Palmer and Francis ambushed the deputy as he sat in his truck waiting for some backup officers to arrive.

"We do know there were two weapons used and we do know after a search of the residence Francis was living or staying at the time of the murder, we did find ammunition that matched one of the murder weapons," prosecutor Chris Condon said.

Francis is also charged with tampering with evidence. According to prosecutors, Palmer gave Francis a pistol and a mini Draco firearm and told him



HCSO Honor Guard to present USA flag that covered Esqueda casket and his uniform's cowboy hat to his family. (Allan Jamail Photo)



Austin Police Department Drum and Bugle Corps. (Allan Jamail Photo)



Pallbearers give Deputy Esqueda's flag covered casket a final farewell salute before it embarks to the Forest Park Lawndale Cemetery on Lawndale. (Allan Jamail Photo)



A Final Salute from a City in Mourning, as the procession heads to the Co-Cathedral of Sacred Heart. (Allan Jamail Photo)



Rider less horse with reverse boots and uniform cowboy hat facing backwards on the saddle horn. These are symbols of a fallen officer's final journey and used at officers funerals. The boots facing backwards represents a fallen officer looking back at their fellow officers for the last time. (Allan Jamail Photo)



Flag covered casket of Deputy Fernando Esqueda lies in state for the family and public viewing in front of Houston's Co-Cathedral of Sacred Heart. Looking on is his family and his tearful fiancée Emily Guerra, a Pasadena police officer, they were to wed in September. (Allan Jamail Photo)



VIPER Unit logo, Deputy Esqueda was a member of the sheriff's Viper unit (violent persons task force). (Allan Jamail Photo)



Austin Police Department Drum & Bugle Corps. (Allan Jamail Photo)



Slain Deputy Esqueda's casket enters the cathedral to begin his funeral. (Allan Jamail Photo)

to get rid of them after the shooting.

"A witness stated the defendant dropped off a pistol and a Draco in a black trash bag and told them the guns were hot," the prosecutor said during Palmer's hearing. They said Francis and Palmer knew each other through their girlfriends and were even neighbors.

Deputy Esqueda was a member of the HCSO VIPER unit... the Viper's focus on tracking down the most dangerous offenders who pose a significant threat to the community.

Beyond his professional life, Fernando loved to hunt, fish, sing and dance.

His laughter, kind heart, loyalty and pure spirit touched everyone who had the privilege of knowing him, loving him, and being near him. In his short time here, he brought so much joy and light into many lives because Fernando had a way of making the world brighter.

As we reflect on his life and mourn his passing, we also celebrate the beauty he brought into the world. Fernando was a gift. A soul who showed everyone who knew him the power of unconditional love and the strength of family bonds. Hold on to the memories created with him. Remember his smile, his jokes, the moments shared with him, the way his

presence lit the room and the love he gave so freely.

DEPUTY FERNANDO ESQUEDA'S DIED AT AGE 28... HE WROTE THIS AT AGE 24:

"I believe I have the strength and ultimate passion in me. For starters, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Fernando Esqueda. I am 24 years old. I began my career in Law Enforcement working for the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) when I was eighteen. I know being a correctional officer is technically not being "in Law Enforcement" but I hope you understand my drift. I was assigned to the Goree Unit in Huntsville

Texas. I have an older sister whom at the time was working as a jailer at the Baker Street jail. We talked about going to the police academy full time together (UHD). I knew I couldn't go because I had an \$800.00 truck note. Shortly after, I was involved in a major accident being hit by a drunk driver. My truck flipped multiple times and thanks to the man upstairs I walked away without a single scratch. My truck was totaled. Little did I know losing my truck was a blessing. Not having that truck note allowed me to work part time at the prison and attend the police academy full time. After what felt like a never-ending struggle juggling work and the academy, I

graduated! I obtained my basic peace officer certification at 21 years old. Harris County Precinct 6 picked up my commission two months after and I officially began my career in Law Enforcement. After one year of being employed with Precinct 6, I lateraled over to the Sheriff's Office where I plan on spending the rest of my career and (if the Lord allows it) retire! I currently work District Three Patrol. I am strong willed and goal oriented. I am a strong believer that your reason is always known by your mind. Your purpose is only known by your heart."

CHARLOTTE'S WEB
By Charlotte Jackson 

Sheila Jackson Lee dies at 74,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Changing Times

When I was a child, school started the day after Labor Day and typically, we were released for Summer after Memorial Day. It appears over the past forty years, there has been a shift towards more breaks during the school year and the start date is getting earlier; thus, the end of school comes later. During the Summer break, children would spend time with grandparents or other family members to enjoy a change in scene.

Times have changed and many children see more of their grandparents, as well as the number of multigenerational homes that are present. With the number of divorces, often children go to spend time with their non-custodial parent. And sadly, with the number of incarcerated parents, many children never get to see one parent.

Our weather has certainly changed over the years. The school age children of today have experienced hurricanes, major floods, derecho and with all of these come challenges. Many families have experienced being displaced due to loss of electricity, flooding and being unable to have repairs done from the storms.

Our communities have changed in that for many years, parents who worked at the various plants encouraged their children to go to college, get a degree and follow a different path. Many parents discouraged their children from learning a technical trade such as carpentry, electrical or HVAC. We witnessed many college graduates unable to use their hard-earned and expensive degree. We saw more and more immigrants willing to go into the construction fields and in the last week, I have talked to several people having issues with contractors who cannot write or speak English to be understood.

I have been a supporter of the classes offered throughout our community to help speakers of other languages learn to read, write and speak English. I have been advocating for those same organizations to offer Spanish for English speakers. I realize that to be the best neighbor I can be, I must accept some changes as well. I may have to learn another language simply to work together to make our community a better community.

Over the past two weekends, America witnessed changes that we have not seen before. A presidential candidate being the target of gun violence and immediately, there was division in the country with the opposite political party being blamed for the action. And for the first time in history, our President has announced that he is withdrawing for the upcoming election. He has put his support behind the Vice President as the Democrats prepare for their national convention to select their candidate for the November election. With these two events, it is more important than ever to register to vote, research the candidates, attend informational events and to vote what your heart tells you to vote for. We cannot allow others to tell us how to vote. We must all get involved in helping to elect the best qualified candidates from the local School Boards, Civic Associations, church councils, PTA Boards and certainly the United States President.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that our nation has lost a dedicated servant leader, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. I pray for those who she represented that they would choose wisely who will represent them in Congress. It will be a change and community members must support the new Representative.

ed her behavior and it enabled her to produce high-quantity, high-quality work to achieve her goals.

She pushed her staff to match her tireless efforts so success not failure would improve her constituent's lives. There are reports some of them filed complaints on her because of her driving them beyond what they thought was their ability to satisfy her.

This PART 1 article will be to give readers the news about her death and a glance into Jackson Lee's roots and public service. My PART 2 article that's coming in the future will enlighten readers about her personal side, her abilities to win the hearts of acquaintances and developing them into true friendships. She and I shared many personal conversations about each other's families, I will surely miss her.

Born in Queens, New York, Jackson Lee earned a scholarship for Black students at New York University before transferring to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Yale University in 1972 and a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1975.

In 1978 she and her husband, Elwyn Lee moved to Houston, he now serves as vice president for community relations and institutional access at the University of Houston. They have two children, Jason Lee, a senior adviser to Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, and Erica Lee, a senior policy adviser for Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis and two grandchildren.

That same year (1987) SJL was appointed municipal judge for the city of Houston by Mayor Kathy Whitmire. In 1989, Lee was elected to the Houston City Council; she served on the council until 1994 when she began her campaign for Congress in the Democratic primary for the 18th congressional district. She defeated incumbent Congressman Craig Washington which he had won the seat earlier in a special election to replace

the sudden and accidental death of Congressman Mickey Leland. That year Lee easily won the general election in the heavily favored Democrat district.

While on the Homeland Security Committee she introduced the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act (TWIC) in 2013. It's critical for the safety of our ports and the maritime industry. The TWIC program provides a tamper-resistant biometric credential to maritime workers requiring unescorted access to secure areas of port facilities, outer continental shelf facilities, and vessels regulated under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) and all U.S. Coast Guard credentialed merchant mariners.

One of Shelia's most sought after goals was to insure every American was given equal rights to succeed and pursue the American Dream. She's stood and fought in the trenches taking up for the poor, underprivileged and those being discriminated on-c she's never been afraid of a fight or getting into trouble if it produced correcting injustices done to others.

In March of 2023 she decided to give up her congressional seat and announced her candidacy for the 2023 Houston mayoral election. In the first round, she placed second behind state senator John Whitmire. Neither Whitmire nor Lee mustered the fifty plus percent votes because of the crowded field of mayoral candidates.

A runoff election occurred on December 9, 2023; she lost the election to Whitmire. Two days before the filing deadline on December 11th Lee filed to run for re-election to get her congressional seat back and won the Democratic primary on March 5, 2024. Now more than likely because of her death they'll be a Special Election to fill the vacated seat.

Read the upcoming NC Star PART 2 article from Allan Jamail of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee; "Up-Close & Personal".

ASK DIAMOND JIM



Diamond Jim: "What is the Rolex spider Dial 16750 GMT Master?"

The Rolex GMT-Master is one of the company's best-known models of their masterfully engineered watches. Rolex introduced the ref. 16750 for its GMT-Master in 1981 and continued producing the model until the late 1980s. With this edition of the GMT-Master, the collection as we know it today started to take shape even more with a higher-beat movement and improved water resistance.

Rolex initially released the ref. 16750 with a matte dial and painted hour markers. This dial variation is rarer than the glossy dial GMTs, especially considering that many of the original matte dials have long since been replaced during routine servicing. Rolex switched to glossy dials decorated with white gold-trimmed applied hour markers around the mid-1980s. Some of the glossy dials made by Rolex during this time developed a defect in the lacquer, causing it to crack, a process known in watch collecting circles as "crazing." These dials are now affectionately referred to as "Spider Dials" and are highly collectible since many were replaced by Rolex during routine repairs and service.



The "crazing" exhibited on spider dials is comprised of fine fractures in the glossy lacquer only. If you look at the dial closely, you'll notice that it does not affect the white text. It might be difficult to see at first, but the spidering in the gloss is the most

visible when the dial is tilted and looked at under a bright light. It didn't take Rolex very long to recognize this flaw, and the original lacquer material was eventually replaced.



Rolex has notoriously high standards for quality, which meant that the company couldn't, in good conscience, allow the watches sporting the spider dials to leave their servicing locations without a new, immaculate glossy dial. For some, this is good news because not every Rolex collector is a fan of the defect. However, some see it as a quirky and rare representation of one of the few times that Rolex made a mistake on a vital component of one of their most iconic timepieces.

For this reason, some collectors will pay a premium over "normal" ref. 16750s for the Spider dial. At the same time, it's still entirely possible to find this rare dial for around the same price as those that don't have it. The GMT-Master 16750 itself is considered a very prized collector's item because it had a relatively short-lived production run. It often commands between \$13k and \$16k on the secondary market. GMT-Master's outfitted with a Spider dial can trade hands for as much as \$16k to \$17k, or even more.

Either way, the Spider Dial Rolex 16750 is a fascinating watch to examine and wear. I think we can all agree that it's the errors, mistakes, and hiccups that sometimes happen during manufacturing processes that make collecting these rare items so exciting. From rare coins to rare watches, collectors understand that rarity breeds value.

Credit to Bobswatches.com for much of the content in 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 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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Remediation completed on WP South Site,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

resulted in a potential release of contaminated water. The early communication and responsiveness to community concerns helped build trust in the integrity of the project and allowed the work to stay on track.

Water treatment worked. The company responsible for the toxic material in the Southern Pit originally objected to the plan to treat contaminated water on site. However, the EPA says it successfully treated 1.4 million gallons at the site, significantly reducing the amount of material that needed to be trucked away.

The work didn't stop for hurricane season. The responsible company also didn't want work to continue year round. They

wanted to halt during hurricane season and start up again in the fall. That would have prolonged the cleanup, potentially exposing the site to two hurricane seasons instead of one. However, the EPA required work to continue with contingency plans in place to protect the work-site if a hurricane blew through Houston. Fortunately, we didn't see a hurricane, but the planning helped prepare for storms that did hit during the year.

The Bottom Line
The Southern Pit remediation shows what can be done if the EPA moves forward with cleanup plans. Now, let's get to work cleaning up the Northern Pit!

Sent from my iPhone

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OPINION PAGE

TRIBUTES To Sheila Jackson Lee



State Representative Armando Walle:

I'm heartbroken at the passing of my former boss & mentor @JacksonLeeTX18. In 2001, I was young & didn't know much about politics as her staff. SJL quickly taught me about being relentless for your constituents. She was driven & immensely loyal. She always had my back and I was always grateful. Rest in power SJL.

Harris County Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia:

Words cannot fully express the impact of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. The word 'tireless' gets thrown around in politics, but there's no one I've ever met with that kind of work ethic who could compare Congresswoman Jackson Lee. Her work didn't only benefit the Houstonians she represented for decades; it helped make our nation better for all Americans. Saying she will be missed is an understatement. My condolences to her family and to all who loved her. Thank you, Congresswoman, for your dedication to our city, county, state and country.

Former Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner:

I am deeply saddened by the death of my dear friend and colleague, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. From City Hall to the Halls of Congress, Sheila Jackson Lee has served her constituents well. She has written and passed key legislation and has stood on the floor of the United States House of Representatives speaking passionately for the interests of her district and the country she loved. She has worked with and advised Presidents of our great country, met with global leaders, and has been embraced by world renowned artists. But her work on the ground, in some of the poorest and under-resourced communities; the channeling of billions of federal dollars back to her district; her presence at someone's bedside, giving words of comfort to families who lost loved ones; her appearances at places of worship and events showcasing the global diversity of our City; and her uncanny ability to be everywhere, working every day for those who needed a champion, made her truly exceptional.

When she was elected to the United States House of Representatives she stood in the shadow of Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland and Craig Washington. Without question, she rose to the occasion and served with great distinction. Even if you disagreed with her politics, you had to respect her work ethic. We can honestly say Sheila Jackson Lee left it all on the field. Rest in peace my sister. Thank you for all you gave us. And, thank you to her family for sharing her with us. We will not forget her sacrifice or yours. Sheila - to God be the glory for the good you have done. It was truly a job well done!

Americanisms
Sheila Jackson Lee
'Her strength and stamina were truly never-ending and her determination to rally a chorus to the fuse of justice was unwavering.'
---Tribute from Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

New Citizens

I'd never been to a U.S. citizenship ceremony before. I'd never even thought about it much. I knew the process took a long time but, beyond that, I knew nothing about it, until I was invited to one.

My dear friend, Betty, was coming in from out of town to attend the citizenship ceremony of her son-in-law, Raul. Raul is a quiet and soft-spoken man who works in corporate catering. He has been waiting to become an American citizen for many years and finally, last Thursday, he became one.

I wasn't expecting much, but I was looking forward to seeing Betty. She had recently turned 80, and I hadn't seen her in ages. It took a long time to get all the families of all the soon-to-be new citizens seated, so we had a lot of time to catch up. Then the ceremony started.

The 136 new citizens sat in the rows up front, and their friends and family sat in rows of seats behind them. The huge former railroad station was nearly filled before the ceremony started.

A judge stood behind the podium and, after a few administrative details were dealt with, introduced the 76 countries where the citizens came from and encouraged them to wave their American flags when she read their country.

'You don't have to if you don't want to,' she added. 'This is America, after all.'

It was an amazing spectacle as, one by one, the new citizens waved their flags as their countries were named, and the families sitting behind them cheered. Some countries were a lot noisier than you might expect. I think the New Zealanders were some of the loudest, and there were not that many of them.

People laughed and applauded and waved flags, and we all sang the national anthem together. Then the judge made a few comments. She started by quoting Ronald Reagan.

'We lead the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people—our strength—from every country and every corner of the world. And by doing so, we continuously renew and enrich our nation.'

The judge congratulated them on completing the long and arduous process that had brought them to this day, and talked about their responsibilities and rights as new citizens. She told them she knew most of them had to get back to work and get on with their lives, but she encouraged them to take time, at some point in the day, to celebrate.

'You will have a birthday every year and celebrate the holidays every season. But you will only have one day in your life when you become an American citizen.'

Then they played 'America the Beautiful,' and there were quite a few people crying, including Betty.

I'm not sure what I expected. But if you ever want to have a renewed appreciation for the U.S., I recommend you go to watch 136 immigrants getting their citizenship.

The sun was shining outside as all the families and friends gathered with the new citizens, still holding their flags. And I realized I had no idea what it was like for my family when they were new citizens. I didn't know if there was a ceremony or if they were given a small flag. I didn't know if they took a test, as these folks had, or sang the national anthem. I knew nothing about it. And I was sorry about that.

'What a wonderful ceremony!' I said to Betty.

'I didn't know it would be so nice,' Betty agreed.

Then we all went out to lunch, and we celebrated.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

Abbott Demands Probe into Houston Power Outages

More than 2 million Texans lost power when Hurricane Beryl hit the Texas coast, and Gov. Greg Abbott wants to know why. The Austin American-Statesman reported Abbott has ordered the Public Utility Commission to conduct an immediate study into why the Houston area has again been hit by widespread power outages.

'I want to find out, was there a structural flaw with regard to the electrical delivery system?' Abbott said. 'Was that the cause of it? If so, what needs to be done to shore up, or was this a personnel issue of not having enough power personnel in all the right locations to get power back up?'

CenterPoint Energy is the primary electricity transmission company serving the Houston area. Its CEO, Jason Ryan, appeared before the PUC last week and was questioned about the outages.

'To our customers that not only have power out but have significant property damage from the trees we talked about coming up from the roots, our hearts go out to you and our hearts go out to our community,' Ryan said.

As of Sunday morning, CenterPoint's website indicated 461,247 customers were still without power, nearly a week after Beryl made landfall.

To date, 67 counties have been approved for federal disaster assistance, while other counties may be included as damage assessments are concluded. Those counties in the initial list are: Anderson, Angelina, Aransas, Austin, Bowie, Brazoria, Brazos, Burleson, Calhoun, Cameron, Camp, Cass, Chambers, Cherokee, Colorado, Dewitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Freestone, Galveston, Goliad, Gregg, Grimes, Hardin, Harris, Harrison, Hidalgo, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Kenedy, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Matagorda, Milam, Montgomery, Morris, Nacogdoches, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Panola, Polk, Refugio, Robertson, Rusk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler, Upshur, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Washington, Webb, Wharton, and Willacy.

FOREST SERVICE ASSESSES TREE DAMAGE AFTER BERYL



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

More than 400,000 acres of rural forestland was potentially affected by Hurricane Beryl, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service, which has closed W.G. Jones State Forest in Conroe until a damage assessment can be undertaken. In addition, hurricane force winds potentially affected as much as half of Houston's urbanized area tree coverage, the service reported.

'We used a combination of on-the-ground observation, remote sensing and Forest Inventory and Analysis data to conduct a tree damage assessment for rural forests in East Texas and the Houston metro area,' said Aaron Stottlemeyer, Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Analytics Department Head.

Workers and others are urged to use extreme caution when clearing tree debris.

OLD PIPES LEAD TO BILLIONS IN LOST GALLONS OF WATER

The state's most populous cities lost approximately 88 billion gallons of water last year because of aging pipes and extreme heat, The Texas Tribune reported. Unsurprisingly, the city that lost the most water, according to self-reported audits, was Houston, the state's largest, at 31.8 billion gallons. Coming in second was San Antonio, which reported losing 19.5 billion gallons.

The main factors for the losses are leaks and water main breaks, problems more often associated with smaller towns with fewer resources to maintain infrastructure, The Tribune reported.

'What we have right now is not sustainable [or] tenable,' said Jennifer Walker, National Wildlife Federation's Texas Coast and Water Program director.

An Austin-based think tank, Texas 2036, predicts the state will need to spend more than \$150 billion over the next half-century on water infrastructure.

'REAL ID' WILL BE REQUIRED BY NEXT MAY

Is your state-issued identification card, such as a driver's license, a Real ID? Texans have until May 2025 to find out and comply with a federal law passed in 2005 in response to 9/11, the Statesman reported. The state in response began issuing Real ID compliant cards in 2016. These cards have a gold circle with an inset star located in the upper right-hand corner.

Right now, a Real ID card is not required to fly domestically, but that will change on May 7, 2025. After that, a Real ID or a passport will be required to board domestic flights. Anyone renewing their driver's license now will receive an idea that is Real ID-compliant.

Passports are still required to travel beyond U.S. borders.

SALTWATER FISH RELEASE NEARS 1 BILLION

Hurricane Beryl slowed the official release of the 1 billionth saltwater fish into Texas bays, but it should happen soon, according to the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. The Texas Parks and Wildlife program has been releasing fish into Texas bays for the past four decades in order to replenish native fish populations.

The fingerlings are raised in local and state hatcheries. The billionth fish is slated to be a red drum fingerling — a highly popular game fish in Texas.

PAXTON: HOUSE COMMITTEE PREPARING TO IMPEACH HIM AGAIN

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said last week that a House investigating panel once again is attempting to impeach him, though its chairman said the panel is meeting for an unrelated matter.

The committee passed articles of impeachment in May 2023 that were passed overwhelmingly by the House. The Senate then voted by a large margin to acquit Paxton.

'Their bitter obsession with taking me down knows no bounds, and they will stop at nothing to remove me from office,' Paxton wrote last week.

Committee chair Rep. Andrew Murr, R-Junction, said Paxton was mistaken.

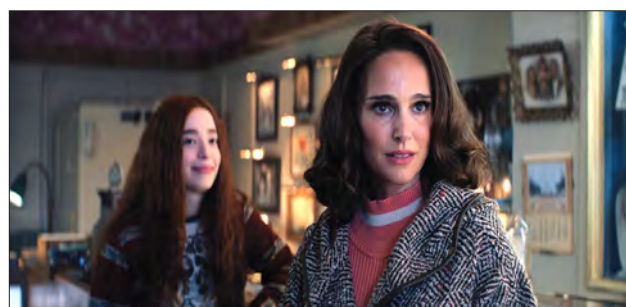
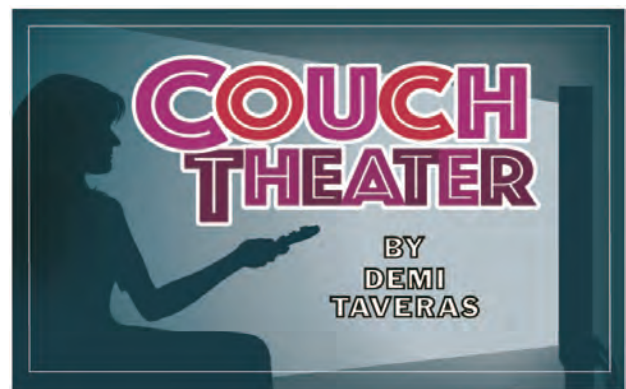
WHATABURGER APP SERVES AS OUTAGE TRACKER

While CenterPoint Energy's outage tracker was down, some Houston residents figured out that an app used by Whataburger, the iconic Texas burger chain, could be used to figure out what areas had power and what didn't.

The Houston Chronicle reported the app allowed folks to look at the Houston area and determine what areas had power. If the Whataburger 'W' normally orange logo was gray on the app's map, that area likely had no power.

After a social media user posted the discovery on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday night after the storm, more than a million people had viewed the post. It is unknown how many used the information to head out for a burger or a taquito.

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Mikey Madison, left, and Natalie Portman star in "Lady in the Lake."

named Tessie Fine and a bartender named Cleo Sherwood (Moses Ingram). As she gets closer to unraveling their mysteries, especially Cleo's, Maddie faces immense pressure from all ends to tell Cleo's story in a manner that recognizes Cleo's efforts in Baltimore's Black progressive agenda. Look out for more episodes of this limited series every Friday. (Apple TV+)

"Reunion" (R) — The cast is quite an interesting bunch in this comedy-mystery film out now! Starring Lil Rel Howery ("Get Out"), Billy Magnussen ("Game Night"), Jillian Bell ("The Night Before"), Nina Dobrev ("The Out-Laws"), and Chace Crawford ("Gossip Girl"), this film follows a handful of alumni from Ridgeview High School during their 20-year reunion. Hosted by Matthew (Crawford), a popular student turned wealthy hedge fund manager, the reunion kicks off and leaves a good few too drunk to leave the party. They elect to stay at Matthew's house but are horrified to find Matthew's dead body in the morning. Realizing the killer has to be one of them, the group turns into amateur detectives to figure out who became a cold-blooded murderer in the still of the night. However, once they find out that they all have motives due to their terrible high school experiences with Matthew, it makes finding the killer more difficult than they thought. (Amazon Prime Video)

HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

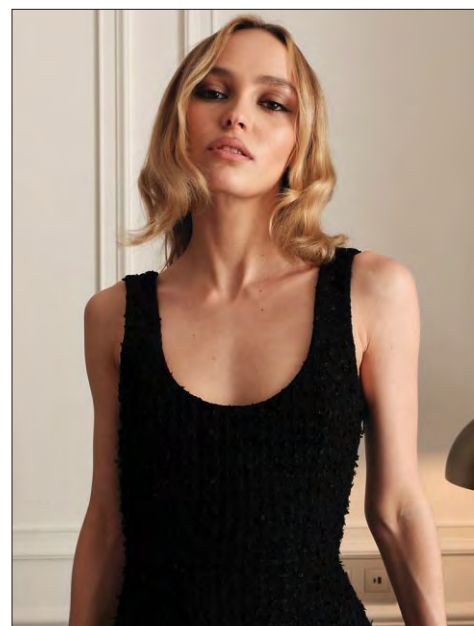
HOLLYWOOD — Eddie Murphy must be preparing an Olympic-style comeback. He started shooting "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F" in August 2022 and wrapped in December 2022. In June 2024, he began voicing Donkey in the fifth "Shrek" film, along with Mike Myers, Cameron Diaz and Antonio Banderas, who are all reprising their roles in the franchise.

In April, Murphy shot "The Pickup" with Pete Davidson, Keke Palmer, Andrew Dice Clay and Eva Longoria for Amazon MGM Studios, and he's currently working on an album, titled "9." Where does he find the time to deal with his 10 children, spanning from ages 6 to 34?

As promised back in April, Oscar winner Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan have started shooting "Freaky Friday 2," with Chad Michael Murray and Mark Harmon reprising their roles from their earlier film. In 1971, long before "NCIS," I met Mark when he had one line in Chad Everett's TV series "Medical Center." Talk on set was that his father was the all-American, Heisman-Trophy-winning football player Tom Harmon, and because he was great-looking, he couldn't miss. They were right!

What does it say about today's movies that the top-five-grossing films so far this year have been the animated feature "Inside Out 2" (\$1.2 billion); the sci-fi film "Dune: Part Two" (\$711.8 million); "Godzilla x King" (\$569.7 million); "Kung Fu Panda 4" (\$545.5 million); and "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" (\$394.7 million)? It says that it's tough to be an actor or be able to see movies of beauty, romance and substance!

This may be why Scarlett Johansson was Black Widow in "Iron Man 2" (2010), "The Avengers" franchise, "Captain Marvel," and her own film "Black Widow." She's been in other films such as "The Horse Whisperer" (1998), "My Brother the Pig" (1999),



Actress Lily-Rose Depp (Upcoming in "Nosferatu")

"Ghost World" (2001), "Eight Legged Freaks" (2002) and "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie" (2004). But now Johansson really wants to join the "Jurassic Park" franchise in the worst way.

"I'm such an enormous fan of the franchise," she admitted. "It's one of the first films I remember seeing in a movie theater. It was life-changing. It was mind-blowing. ... I've been trying to get into this franchise in any possible way for over 10 years. ... I'll do anything for it." Her prayers have been answered, and she'll headline the upcoming seventh film with Jonathan Bailey and Mahershala Ali, due on July 2025.

Filmmaker Robert Eggers ("The Lighthouse") has already picked our Christmas present! He's giving us "Nosferatu," a gothic tale of obsession between Lily-Rose Depp and a vampire (Bill Skarsgard) who is infatuated with her, causing untold horror in its wake. Sounds like a merry time for all of us! How did the Hallmark Channel miss this one?

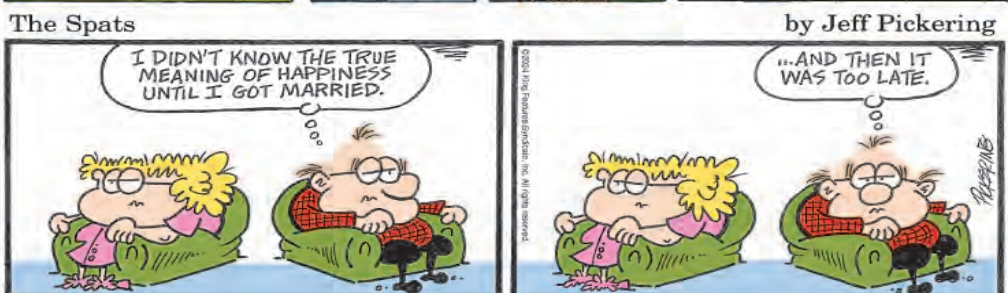
"The Bikeriders"

"The Bikeriders" (R) — After this film was delayed by the writers' and actors' strikers, then some wishy-washiness with its original distributor, it finally released this past June and is now available to rent on streaming platforms. Jodie Comer stars as ("Killing Eve") Kathy Bauer, a regular woman in 1960s Chicago who happens upon the Vandals Motorcycle Club at a bar. Kathy becomes immediately entranced with one of the club members, Benny (Austin Butler), and marries him a whopping five weeks later. Through Benny, Kathy gets to know the club and its members intimately, learning what it takes to become a Vandal and the rewards and consequences that come with it. In a sort of documentary style,

viewers get to watch in flashback form as Kathy recounts tales about its members one by one to photographer Danny Lyon (Mike Faist). This film is full of comedy, romance, action, pure grit, and top-notch performances. What more could you ask for? (VUDU)

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

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

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Table leg is moved. 2. Pillow is larger. 3. Telephone pole is moved. 4. Bush is taller. 5. Fence boards are wider. 6. Man's legs are longer.

July 22, 2024 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Pequod captain
- 5 "Big Blue"
- 8 Driver with a handle
- 12 Sci-fi prefix
- 13 Rep.'s rival
- 14 Sea predator
- 15 Be overly sweet
- 16 The Stars and Stripes
- 18 A cause of pay inequity
- 20 Political meeting
- 21 — butter
- 23 SUV maker
- 24 Veterans
- 28 Snack
- 31 Museum-funding org.
- 32 TV, radio, etc.
- 34 Fib
- 35 Lummoxes
- 37 Celtic language
- 39 Bear hair
- 41 Architect
- 42 "Alfie" singer
- 45 Painter
- 49 It may be hard to break
- 51 Sushi fish
- 52 India's continent
- 53 High card
- 54 "Zounds!"
- 55 Corn seasoning
- 56 Shriill bark
- 57 Swift jets
- 7 Roman 2600
- 8 Newspaper piece
- 9 Veggie with florets
- 10 Beige
- 11 Sunbeams
- 17 Joke
- 19 Counterfeit
- 22 Confuse
- 24 Plastic — Band
- 25 Grazing land
- 26 Yellow flower
- 27 Avoid
- 29 Bro's sib
- 30 Sly chuckle
- 33 Suffix for billion
- 36 Baby's beachwear
- 38 Courses
- 40 Genetic letters
- 41 Sunbeams
- 42 "— I say!"
- 43 "Casablanca" role
- 44 Online auction site
- 46 Carpets
- 47 Body sci.
- 48 Tiny amounts
- 50 Here, to Henri

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Answers

King Crossword

Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: What is the longest-running talk show on television?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: In terms of letter count, what is the longest month of the year?
- MOVIES: Which famous action movie is set on Amity Island?
- SCIENCE: What is heliocentrism?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of horses are featured in Budweiser beer ads?
- U.S. STATES: Which state's nickname is "The Land of 10,000 Lakes"?
- FOOD & DRINK: How many goodies are in a baker's dozen?
- INVENTIONS: Who invented the battery?
- LANGUAGE: What does an ampersand symbol signify?
- GEOGRAPHY: In which desert is Las Vegas, Nevada, located?

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Trivia Test Answers

- "The Tonight Show" debuted in 1954; 2. September; 3. "Jaws"; 4. It is the idea that the Earth and other planets orbit the Sun; 5. Clydesdale; 6. Minnesota; 7. 13; 8. Alessandro Volta; 9. The conjunction "and"; 10. Mojave Desert.

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SHELDON ISD NEWS

Sheldon ISD's Jumana Mills Receives Administrator Award

Mrs. Jumana Mills, principal of Sheldon's KASE Academy, has been named the Texas Association for Alternative Education (TAAE) Administrator of the Year as well as the organization's vice president. Mills helps underline the mission of the TAAE board in her role at Sheldon ISD by advocating for students and helping them graduate while attending non-mainstream education facilities. Her heart is focused on supporting the students of King Academic School of Excellence (KASE). Most recently, she was named the district's Secondary Principal of the Year.



Sheldon ISD Prepares for First Day of school

Sheldon ISD teams work hard to prepare for the first day of school throughout the summer. The first day of school is Monday, August 12. The 2024-25 school calendar is located at www.sheldonisd.com/calendar.

Sheldon ISD Communication Department Wins 5 National Awards



Sheldon ISD's Communications Department wins five national awards. Sheldon ISD has received five national communications awards from thousands of entries across the nation. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA's) Publications and Digital Media Excellence Awards recognize outstanding education publications and marketing/informational materials (print and electronic), video/TV/radio programs, social media and websites. Sheldon's communication team received the following awards:
 Award of Merit - Get into the Classroom Video Series
 Honorable Mention - Attendance Awareness Month Video Series
 Honorable Mention - Annual Report
 Honorable Mention - Photography
 Honorable Mention - Ready for the Spotlight Photography
 The team will receive recognition at the national conference in July for their work.

KHS Criminal Justice Students Receive Unique Experience



This summer, King High School criminal justice students attended the 7th Annual DEA Teen Leadership Academy to gain hands-on learning experiences for the first time. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Houston Field Division hosted the group of teens from around the Houston area for two days. The students were selected to join this program and gain firsthand knowledge concerning the many harms of drugs and drug addiction. The academy provided the students with rare behind-the-scenes access to professional equipment, facilities, and legal processes as they learned what it takes to be a part of the DEA team.

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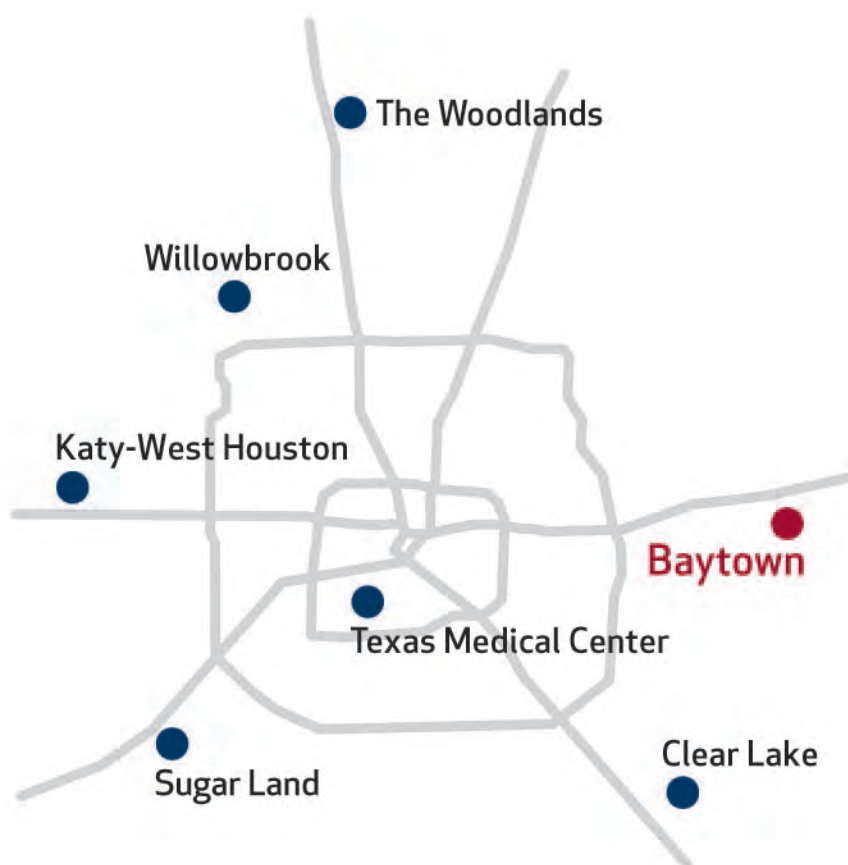
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