



BRRRR.
Terri Stanton built this snowman in North Shore and he's holding one of her own handmade coffee cups. Stanton sells all kinds of pottery. See Front Page story.

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CHANNEL CURRENTS

Rotary Chili Feast set for Saturday Feb. 1

Highlands Rotary Club will hold their 50th Annual Chili Feast, Raffle & Auction on Saturday, Feb. 1 from 11am to 3pm, at St. Jude's Catholic Church Social Hall, 808 S. Main St. Highlands.

Tickets to win a new 2025 Chevy SUV, and two chili dinners are on sale for \$100 from all Rotary members and many local stores.

Call 713-906-2337 for more information, tickets, and sponsors.

Jacinto City Blood Drive Tuesday Feb. 4

Jacinto City Library Blood Drive Hosted by Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center Date: Tuesday, February 4th Time: 1-5:30 PM Location: 921 Akron St. Houston, TX 77029 Contact Nyla Vela librarian, @ 832-927-5520

North Channel Chamber 48th Annual Gala

North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce presents its 48th Annual Gala on Friday, January 31, 2025 6:30pm Reception, 7:00pm Dinner. Attire: Cocktail Masquerade. Awards and Installation Gala Banquet, at the Hyatt Regency Baytown Houston Hotel. Tickets \$100. RSVP 713-450-3600 or yesenia@ncchamber.com.

Historic Snowfall blankets Houston

City and Schools closed for 2 days; Temperatures fall below 20 degrees; Snow up to 5 inches

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

From the ship channel area of Galena Park to the rails of Jacinto City, across the North Shore community east to Channelview and north into Sheldon, the North Channel area was completely blanketed by a historic snow for two days. Winter Storm Enzo packed a wallop, the result of a rare combination of weather factors causing the first blizzard in southeast Texas in more than a century.

The Houston area is not accustomed to a winter wonderland and the 4 - 6 inches of snow and at times it showed.

The rare snow days paralyzed the entire Gulf Coast with school closures,



Galena Park, Main st. at rail tracks closed due to icy conditions.

most staying home from work, or ordered to remain at work during the perilous traveling conditions that lasted from late Monday to early Thursday morning.

"Enzo was the rare com-

ination of a primarily strong polar vortex that came off Siberia, pushing frigid Arctic air all the way across the states to the Gulf Coast," The Weather Channel reported.

The unusual cold front



Galena Park residents building a snowman at the GP Park.

then collided with a low-pressure system near the Gulf Coast that brought the precipitation onshore turning it into a wintry mix of sleet and snow.

"The mix didn't only affect the Texas coastline but

also across New Orleans all the way to parts of Florida dumping record snowfall across the south.

The frosty conditions

Continued. See HISTORIC SNOWFALL, Page 2

Sheldon FFA raises \$75,000 in Livestock Auction

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

He never has a day off. While Kodey Davis's friends from school were at home cozying up next to the warm fireplace, he was trudging through the snow to get to the barn to take care of his animals. That's commitment and it's the sort of character that his teacher Stephanie Jones says will jumpstart a successful career for her students.

The junior, who has only been a member of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) for two years, scored the Grand Champion Steer at the recent Sheldon ISD FFA Livestock Show.

"When I won, I was like, aww man," the junior said.



Kodey Davis won Grand Champion steer and is shown with his sponsor, JD Livestock. He hopes to use his project money to go to college and stay in the ag business if he doesn't get a D1 scholarship in athletics.

"I learned from the best," he smiled.

He's the first to acknowledge that he received a lot of help from his mom, dad, and many others.

"They helped me a lot with my project," he said about Brandy, his heifer. That kind of success doesn't come easy.

"I wake up in the morning and get ready to go to school. My breeder feeds for me in the morning," he said.

"I go to school, take care of my classes, go to athletics, get a little workout in, then I head to the barn," he said.

The athlete takes Bran-

Continued. See SHELDON FFA LIVESTOCK AUCTION, Page 2

Lake Houston Brewery to Open New Location in Huffman



The Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce celebrated the ribbon cutting with the Lake Houston Brewery in Huffman on Thursday. The members also had lunch at the restaurant and tasted the many delicacies.

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Mother Nature tried. A pandemic tried. The economy tried. All failed and now against incredible odds, the Lake Houston Brewery not only survived as a new business but will soon expand and open their own brewery location for distribution. It was a dream they weren't sure would come true.

A piece of blue tape in the heart of the restaurant marks the water line

where the business was flooded by Hurricane Harvey, the first of many calamities for the building.

The business was first formed in 1978 and then bought in 2019 by Sean Matthews and his brother-in-law, and their first task was to do a little expansion.

"We expanded the number of boat slips out there," he said, "to about 15 or 16 now and we also added the boardwalk that wraps around the concrete with handrailings."

They also added a stage

which has become a great attraction for artists to entertain the guests on weekends.

Neither had any prior restaurant business experience, Matthews himself only working as a server back in his college days, but the two have managed to keep it open and build on their success.

Business was rolling for the two partners until March 17, 2020.

Continued. See HUFFMAN NEW BREWERY, Page 6

Houston observes Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

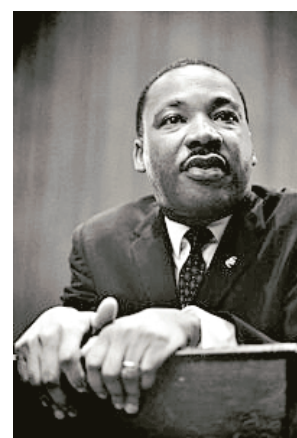
By Allan Jamail

January 20, 2025, Martin Luther King Jr. Day referred to as MLK Day is a federal holiday observed and celebrated on the third Monday of January each year. King born in 1929 was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the 1960's Civil Rights Movement. His movement protested racial discrimination in federal and state law and civil society; it led to several groundbreaking legislative reforms in the United States.

In Houston and across the nation there were parades and events celebrating MLK Day. This is the 39th year the holiday has been recognized, it was observed for the first time on January 20, 1986. This day was established to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King, and to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities.

This year on MLK Day the Department of Defense (DOD) joined the nation in celebrating MLK Day. This year it fell on January 20, 2025, coincidentally on inauguration day of President Donald Trump.

Also this past Saturday, (December 20th) Bernice A. King MLK's daughter



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at a 1965 press conference presenting his nonviolent Civil Rights Movement.

told an audience at her dad's church in Atlanta, the Ebenezer Baptist Church to stay alert for attempts to rollback civil rights gains.

The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination April 4, 1968. I clearly remember that 1968 day; it was a sad day for me and so many others. In the 1960's there was a wave of assassinations on our nation's leaders. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 and his brother Robert (Bobby) Kennedy was assassinated June, 5, 1968.

After several failed attempts in congress President Ronald Reagan

signed the holiday into law in 1983. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. Official observance in each state's law as well as federal law occurred in 2000.

Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964; he was the youngest person to ever receive this high honor. He followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and father by entering the ministry to become a Baptist minister. At the age of 39, he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee as he stood on the balcony of a hotel. Dr. King traveled to Memphis, Tennessee to lead a march in support of striking sanitation workers.

Ms. Nya Vela the librarian at the Jacinto City Branch library stated she has kids and teen books about MLK on display right now as well as some adult titles on the civil rights movement. She encouraged readers to visit her library and other libraries to learn more about MLK. Jacinto city's library is at 921 Akron; phone 832-927-5520; email:jc@hcpl.net.

Winter storm Enzo dumps record snow on North Channel area,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



began late Monday afternoon and one by one, Galena Park, Channelview, and Sheldon ISDs began canceling classes for at least Tuesday, which brought the brunt of the storm, through Wednesday when frigid temps froze the ice and snow creating 'black ice' and treacherous driving conditions. By Thursday morning, most of the area began to see the snow melt away as temperatures climbed back above 32-degrees and sunlight broke through to begin the melting process.

The storm brought some anxiety for Houston and Texas residents who saw their power go out for several days when Winter Storm Uri impacted the coast with four to five days of winter ice and snow.

According to CenterPoint Energy, 99 percent of their customers maintained power completely throughout the snow storm. At least 11 have been confirmed dead from the Gulf Coast of Texas to Florida from the record-breaking snow and ice storm.

Widespread road closures, flight cancellations,



and power outages occurred due to the heavy snow and icy conditions. Galveston and the coastal areas experienced additional issues due to storm surge combined with snowfall.

Kids and families home from the two days off spent time making snow angels and snowmen, a first for many of them.

Life returned to normal for most across the state and North Channel area with a return to school on Thursday and Friday. Remnants of melting snow and ice lingered throughout most of Thursday, but began to dissipate and gone by Friday.

Sheldon FFA Livestock Auction,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dy out of the barn to work with her.

"I tie her head up briefly to help her get used to holding it up in the ring," he said about competition prep.

"If the stall is really bad, I clean it out, put in new sand and bathe her," he described the grooming.

"I'll blow dry her out and then work showmanship for about 15-20 minutes," he said.

She's a little free spirited and he recently found out that she's also very pregnant.

"I walk her about every other day. I don't want to put a lot of stress on her and move her around too much," he said. "When I can, I let her go out into the field to play."

Davis is rapidly developing into a skilled professional in the field of animal husbandry. He left for Fort Worth on Friday and competed on Saturday at the livestock show where he placed third in his category. He is already a multiple grand champion winner with his animals.

"I could have got second if her belly just looks like she ate a little bit more, but that first place entry was really good," he acknowledged.

It costs a considerable amount to feed a heifer, but his parents help on the bill.

"They haven't made me go out and get a job yet, so they've been paying for it, and I truly appreciated it," he said.

His teacher, Jones, was in Fort Worth with him and his parents coaching and working with students from Sheldon.

"All of the students that I have with me today are

all scramble kids," she said. "They scrambled at Fort Worth, or Houston, or Austin or somewhere, and won a scramble certificate and they purchased these cattle for it. Now they're getting to show the heifers," she said.

Large projects like heifers students began raising back last May or June while smaller ones get started in September or October, Jones said.

Then the projects go to auction.

"Our show is terminal, which means they (the projects) can't be returned to the student. They're going to go into the food chain, one way, shape or form. Whoever purchases them, you know, takes them. And then we also have heifers. So heifers are one of those types of animals where you there's no ending. The end is in having a calf and you selling the cow and the calf, or selling the calf off and raising that, the calf to pay tuition, or whatever. That's kind of how that works," she explained.

Some students do more than one animal, even multiples of the same breed.

"Obviously, I'm biased about our kids being special. Whether it's Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, freeze or not, they're up there twice a day at the barn feeding, watering, caring for those animals," she said. "They just have a different type of work ethic than most kiddos, in my opinion."

A lot of the students are there at the barn every morning around 5:15 and have to be in class by 7.

The kids aren't the only

ones who have to be committed.

"Sometimes they have parents that go and help them before school which is great!"

The teachers aren't far away getting to show the students as groups and individuals depending on the breed and student.

"Say a student needs a little extra help on showmanship or needs a little extra help on grooming. Then we schedule different appointments with those students to make sure they all kind of catch up and get on the same page with everyone else," she explained.

The program has five teachers and 474 students this year.

With that many students, they still share them with other programs such as band, athletics, cheerleading, drill team, and more.

"We want them to do as much as they can to be successful," she said.

The steer Kodey raised and won grand champion with was donated to the chapter. Through an interview process, Kodey was selected to raise the calf free of charge. He only paid for the feed.

"He chose Kodey to represent him and raise the calf and that student is an alumni of our chapter. That's so cool to me."

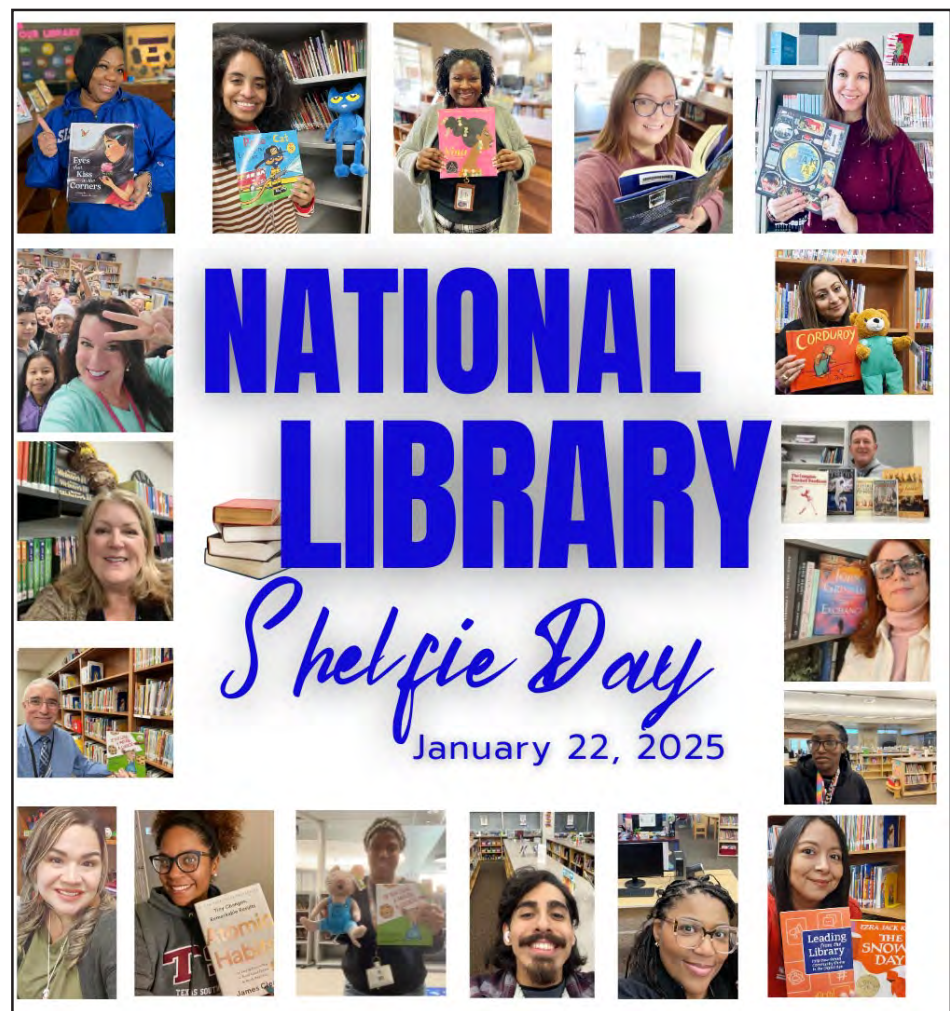
Jones said it was the kind of legacy they're trying to leave with students.

In the meantime, Kodey wants to use his money for college.

"I don't know exactly what I want to do, but I know I want to stay on the agriculture side, or maybe I could possibly get a D1 offer," he hoped.

SHELDON ISD NEWS

National Library Shelfie Day Makes a Mark in Sheldon ISD



NATIONAL LIBRARY Shelfie Day
January 22, 2025

Every year, Library Shelfie Day is celebrated on the fourth Wednesday in January. This year it is celebrated on January 22. It is a day for book lovers to share their favorite books and library shelves with the world in a fun way.

On this day, readers are encouraged to take a selfie with their most beloved library shelf showcasing the books that stand out for them. In Sheldon ISD, we love to read and our campus libraries are a great place to do just that. Our staff celebrated by posting shelfies on their social media.

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CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Finding Strength

When life happens and you feel like the wind has been knocked out of you or when someone you love calls and they are devastated, where do you turn? In many of our lives, have experienced loss of a loved one, of a job or of the sense of peace we took for granted. How did you react? Did you curl up and just want to sleep? Did you react with anger and want revenge? Who did you call?

Times are certainly changing and depending on what we face, we may not feel that we can move forward. In the past few days, I have heard many people express concern about changes that are happening in our country. Young people have reached out to me asking where they can find assistance for their parents and even for themselves. I spoke to a single mother of three who is concerned about the loss of government benefits. I spoke to a single dad who must decide to take care of his disabled young adult daughter or place her in a group home so he can return to the workforce and be able to continue making his house payment. There was a Senior parent of a mentally ill adult son who was recently released from prison, and she fears he will return to her home causing havoc; yet she does not want him to return to prison or become homeless.

I remember a few years back when the stocks crashed and a well-respected community member was shown on television, upset after losing millions of dollars due to poor investment decisions. Some of those in the community asked about when they saw him on the news, why they never showed his hands. People who knew him well joked that knowing him, he may have had a gun in one hand and a bottle of alcohol in the other. Reflecting on those moments, I know firsthand that he was upset. He had lost more money than most of us will ever earn. He was dealing with an older relative facing death as well as many friends who he felt he had let down. In a few weeks, as the shock wore off, he was back to being involved in the community, spending time with the loved one who eventually passed away and returned to his own roots of trusting God for whatever the future would hold.

In my own times of confusion and hurt, I have learned that if we remove the middle letter of the word pride and the middle letter of the word sin, and instead of focusing on myself, but focusing on God, everything works out. Who would have ever thought that I could have recovered from some of the most painful experiences that I have, yet today I can share those memories with people facing them today. We all have traveled various journeys to get to where we are today. We all needed people to be kind to us along the way. Now, we need to show kindness as we provide strength to those who are in our lives that need strength to face today. Let there be hope and let it begin with me.

Blind Date With a Book Proves a Hit at King HS



Blind Date With a Book is a unique passive programming display that invites students to "take a chance" on a book knowing only the genre and first line. King High School students embraced this program wholeheartedly with bountiful creativity, choosing all of the books and wrapping them with eye-catching decor.

Channelview ISD School Board Appreciation Month



We are incredibly grateful for the unwavering commitment and leadership of our Channelview ISD Board of Trustees. Your dedication to our students, staff, and community ensures that we continue to inspire excellence and achieve success together. From making critical decisions to supporting innovative programs, you are the foundation of our district's growth and success.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "Does Pineforest Jewelry replace watch batteries?"

Yes! We have a 'Full-Service Repair Shop'
People come into our store every week asking, "Do you replace watch batteries?", or "Do y'all remove links from watch bands?", and even "Do you repair jewelry?". Some of these people live right here in our community and yet they spend gas, effort, and time driving around looking for a "one-stop" jewelry repair shop.



Well, look no more! As our existing customers already know, Pineforest Jewelry is THE PLACE to go for all of your jewelry repair needs. From replacing batteries in watches, vehicle entry fobs, and garage door openers, to precision laser welding of broken chains, to resizing rings, to replacing missing stones in your jewelry... we do it all! Our website, www.PineforestJewelry.com, lists all of our services and the amazing repair work we do for our customers. Go to the tab entitled "Services" and "Jewelry Repair".

If you are looking to purchase that amazing gift for yourself or someone else, or you need to sell some old jewelry, coins, or diamonds to pay the bills, look no further than [Pineforest Jewelry](http://PineforestJewelry.com). Contact us or simply stop by our store and discover how we can be of service to you.

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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CHS ISD Celebrates DECA Students Advancing to State



Congratulations to Our CHS DECA Winners!

Last week, our CHS DECA students competed in the District competition in Fort Bend, and we're thrilled to announce that the following students are advancing to State in March in Dallas, Texas!

Automotive Service Marketing Series

Joaquin Mondez
Jeremy Hernandez
Project Management
Samiya Webber
Professional Selling
Event
Kyle Martin
Travel and Tourism
Team Decision Making
Joyce Hernandez
Lyrra Moreau
Way to go, Falcons!
Best of luck at State!

OPINION PAGE



Know Your Immigration Rights and Stay Prepared

As you have probably heard through news reports, the new Trump administration plans to make changes to our immigration laws that will impact all of us. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure everyone is informed of their rights and responsibilities.

What are your rights?

IN YOUR HOME: ICE agents cannot search your person, belongings, car, or home without your permission or a valid search warrant signed by a judge with your correct name and address on it.

AT WORK: ICE can only enter a workplace with the employer's consent or a judicial warrant. If they enter your work place, do not panic or try to run away.

IN PUBLIC: You are not required to answer questions about your immigration status, where you were born, or how you entered the country. You may refuse a search.

AT DOCTOR'S OFFICES: You are not required to disclose your immigration status to receive medical care, even if your healthcare provider asks you for this information.

AT SCHOOL: Students have the right to attend school without providing documentation of their immigration status. Schools should not ask about immigration status, and they cannot deny enrollment based on immigration status.

AT PLACES OF WORSHIP: Currently, ICE is directed to avoid enforcement actions in certain "protected areas" like schools, places of worship, and hospitals.

If you are detained by ICE, ask to speak with an attorney immediately. If you do not have a lawyer, ask an immigration officer for a list of pro bono lawyers.

To help protect yourself and your loved ones, here's a "Know Your Rights" card that outlines your legal protections and present it to ICE agents if needed.

Develop a family safety plan by identifying trusted contacts that can keep important immigration paperwork safe and memorizing important phone numbers you can contact in case you are detained.

During these uncertain times, we must stand together as neighbors and ensure everyone knows their rights.

If you have any questions or need assistance with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or have an issue with ICE, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office at 832-325-3150.

Sincerely, Sylvia R. Garcia Member of Congress

EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



Hegar Releases Biennial Revenue Forecast

The Texas Legislature begins its work creating a state budget for the next two years with slightly less revenue available than it had during the previous biennium.

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar projects lawmakers will have \$194.6 billion available during the 2026-27 budget cycle, down 1.1%.

He noted the state is in good financial shape and predicts revenue collections will continue to rise in the upcoming biennium.

"Thoughtful consideration of spending decisions, as always, will be crucial to ensure new and existing investments can be funded in the future — and that these investments focus on improving the lives of Texans," Hegar said.

Sales tax collections continue to make up the state's largest source of general fund revenue at 61%, followed distantly by oil and gas tax collections.

WATER BOARD DEEMS MARVIN NICHOLS RESERVOIR 'FEASIBLE'

The Texas Water Development Board recently reported to Gov. Greg Abbott that a controversial reservoir project in Northeast Texas could be finished and operating within the next 25 years.

The Marvin Nichols Reservoir has been on the drawing board for decades to be built in the Sulphur River Basin, which includes parts of Franklin, Red River and Titus counties.

Landowners in the affected areas have long opposed the reservoir's construction since they would lose valuable farm and timber land. The reservoir has pitted two regional water groups against each other.

The News reported that the official recommendation of a reservoir project in no way guarantees its construction. The permitting process at the



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

state and federal levels likely will take decades. Cost to build the 66,000-acre lake is now estimated at more than \$7 billion.

ABBOTT FLOATS NOTION OF BUYING WATER FROM HOUSTON FOR WEST TEXAS

Abbott and Houston Mayor John Whitmire reportedly have been in initial talks to sell the city's "excess" water to West Texas, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Whitmire, a longtime state senator before being elected mayor, told the Chronicle that he was open to the idea if it means the city can get much-needed infrastructure funding, calling it potentially a "win-win."

Cities and businesses operating in the Permian Basin are calling for more access to water as their aquifers run low after decades of unrestricted drilling. However, a recent State Water Plan predicts the 15-county region that includes Houston could itself run short of water for municipal needs by 2030.

Whitmire said the city could build new reservoirs to hold water sold to the state in exchange for funding to fix its crumbling infrastructure.

The city needs about \$15 billion just to fix its water pipes and build a new water purification plant. Houston has lost 36 billion gallons of water in the past two years — enough to supply the entire city of Fort Worth, with 900,000 people, with water for a year.

INVESTOR TIED TO PAXTON IMPEACHMENT PLEADS GUILTY

Austin real estate investor Nate Paul pleaded guilty last week to a single federal count of making false statements to a financial institution, the Austin American-Statesman reported. All other charges were dropped.

Paul faces up to six months in prison under the plea deal.

Paul, a major contributor to Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's campaigns, was the focus of a federal investigation. Allegations that Paxton improperly used his office to help Paul thwart the probes led to the attorney general's impeachment in the House in 2023 on 20 counts of improperly accepting gifts and favors from the developer. Paxton was acquitted in the Texas Senate.

Investigators said Paul underreported his total debt and overreported his cash on hand in order to obtain loans to buy commercial properties.

FATAL OCCUPATIONAL INJURY REPORT RELEASED

A total of 564 workers died on the job in 2023, according to the Texas Department of Insurance's annual report, down slightly from the previous year. Most of the fatalities occurred in the private sector — 93%.

The trade, transportation, and utilities industry, both private and public sector, reported the most fatalities at 183. During the same period 126 construction workers died on the job.

The number of worker fatalities has not changed markedly in the past five years, according to TDI.

TEXAS FIREFIGHTERS DEPLOYED TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Texas Division of Emergency Management and Texas A&M

Forest Service have deployed firefighters, emergency management and medical personnel, fire engines, and equipment to assist with wildfire response efforts in California.

More than 135 firefighters and other emergency personnel, as well as more than 45 fire engines, ambulances, command vehicles, and equipment, have been sent to California.

"I thank all the brave firefighters and first responders who are answering the call to help Californians in need as these fires continue to burn," Abbott said.

AIR IN 12 COUNTIES EXCEEDED FEDERAL SOOT STANDARDS

A dozen Texas counties have recently exceeded federal air quality standards for particulate matter, also called soot, The Texas Tribune reported.

However, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is recommending that eight of those counties be excluded from stricter federal pollution rules because of either faulty air monitoring data or "exceptional events," such as wildfires and dust storms.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency last year cut the permitted level of particulate matter from 12 to 9 micrograms per cubic meter annually. It is considered the deadliest form of air pollution.

TCEQ has proposed that four counties — Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Bowie — be declared out of attainment. The other eight counties that exceed the new limit would be allowed to avoid the tougher standards. Those are Travis, Montgomery, Kleberg, Harrison, Ellis, Webb, Hidalgo and Cameron counties.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Clean Ankles



I don't normally tackle controversial issues, but today I'm going out on a limb.

Baths are better than showers.

I don't care what my husband, Peter, or my mother and father have to say on the subject. I don't care about those people who take samples of bathwater and look at them under microscopes and tell you that you are bathing in miniscule amounts of dirt and micro-organisms.

I looked at my ankles.

When Peter and I stay in Mexico, I do not have a bathtub. I will admit, when the sun is shining and we are eating outside in February surrounded by the friendly staff at our hotel, I am not exactly hankering to get back to the gloom of the Midwest.

I love a hot bath. And baths are better. I have proof. The proof is on my ankles.

When I get home after a long stay in Mexico, I sit in the bathtub and give myself a good scrub, and the things that need scrubbing the most are my ankles. It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that they are filthy. And this is no surprise.

Anyone who has tried to properly scrub their ankles while standing in a shower should save their skills and become a yoga instructor. Or a stork. It is not physically possible. There are creative ways to get one's feet clean, but the ankles suffer in a shower. And before anyone tells me it doesn't matter because ankles are covered by socks, I'd like to point out that this could apply to a lot of other body parts.

Baths are also much more relaxing. I don't have to be worried about how much water is running down the drain while I wash. I can be concerned about the environment and the cleanliness of my ankles and my need to relax all at the same time. I can simply lie still in hot water and enjoy the sensation of nothing to do (other than wash my ankles, of course) and breathe in steamy air.

I realize I will not win this debate. There are houses that don't even have bathtubs these days. I hear people say they are dangerous and take up space and no one has the time.

My feeling is that, if I run out of time for a hot bath, I need to reorder my schedule. I will always have time for a hot bath. I will have time on good days and bad. I will have time when I'm actually dirty and on days when I just need to feel warm and relaxed.

And I have remarkably clean ankles. Till next time, Carrie

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information for the Barbers Hill, Dayton, and North Channel editions, and details about the publisher and subscription rates.

New Texas Laws that Took Effect on Jan. 1

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

With the Texas state legislature days away from gaveling in the 89th regular legislative session, the biggest fight on the floor the first day will be over the election of a new speaker. In the last biennium, the legislature drafted legislation that was signed by the governor and went into effect on Jan. 1, 2025. Only about four laws might directly affect local voters. Here they are:

Senate Bill 2

Property tax relief

Most of the law is already in effect with the exception of Sections 3.05, 3.08, and 3.15(b) which took effect on Jan. 1, 2025. Sections 4.02, 4.05, 4.08, 4.10, and 4.12 which take effect on Jan. 1, 2027.

This year, the Education Code will be amended to ensure school districts receive additional state funding to offset property tax revenue lost due to reduced tax increase limits for elderly or disabled homeowners.

In addition, the Education Code will now require the Texas Education Agency to post each school district's maximum compressed rate for the current and preceding tax year bringing light to taxation of taxpayers.

Section 3.15(b) repeals tax discounts that have already expired.

House Bill No. 4

Texas data privacy and security

Most of the law took effect on July 1, 2024, introducing new consumer data privacy regulations, by enhancing protections for Texans' personal information. The key provision of the bill took effect Jan. 1 which was the Business and Commerce Code.

What does it do? It gives consumers more power over their personal data with unified opt-out mech-



anisms for their personal online data processing.

Consumers will be able to use their browser settings, device preferences, or extensions to automatically opt of targeted advertising, data sales and profiling without the need to interact individually with each business.

Consumers can confirm whether a business is processing their personal data and will be able to access their personal data, correct inaccuracies, delete personal data provided by or obtained about the consumer, and opt out of the processing of personal data for purposes of targeted advertising, the sale of personal data, or profiling.

Businesses will be required to respond to a consumer's request within 45 days after receipt and without delay. They can request and extension as long as they inform the consumer and provides a reason for the extension. If the business wishes to decline the consumer's request, they must provide justification and instructions on how to appeal the decision.

House Bill No. 3297

Eliminating state vehicle inspections

The law was passed in the 2023 legislature and took effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

The new legislation eliminates annual inspections for non-commercial drivers to get their vehicle registration with a few exceptions that include Har-

ris County.

Drivers will have to pay a nominal \$7.50 fee for the inspection program replacement when they get their registration.

The exceptions are for counties that will require non-commercial vehicles in Harris, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, and Montgomery counties will include a vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program. The law also affects drivers in Dallas-Fort Worth in Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker Rockwall, and Tarrant counties. It also includes Travis, Williamson, El Paso, and Bexar (2026) counties.

House Bill No. 4504

Streamlining criminal procedure

This bill is an ongoing effort to simplify legal rules in the state of Texas. There are small, technical updates to the Code of Criminal Procedure without changing the meaning of the laws.

These updates directly involve the duties of police officers, how they interact with the public, where cases can be tried, moving cases to a different location, rules for certain local courts, and clearing criminal records.

There are considerably more laws that don't directly affect taxpayers locally including the creation of several new judicial districts across the state.

Alleged Intruder Shot Once at Crosby American Legion Hall

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

An intruder who entered the David H. McNerney American Legion Post 658, at 14890 FM 2100 in Crosby was shot after he allegedly threatened an employee with a stick similar to a cane or Shillelagh. Deputies received the 9-1-1 phone call around 4 p.m. Friday afternoon reporting the wounded man was in a pavilion next door to the Legion Post.

"The call dropped around 4 p.m. today telling us that an employee of the Legion Hall was in his office when a man entered uninvited," said Sgt. Adriel Hinojosa of the Harris County Sheriff's Office.

The employee said the door was already unlocked while the employee was working on books.

"The man came in and got into a little verbal confrontation with the employee at the Legion Hall.

During that conversation, the male was armed with a stick. At that point, the employee felt kind of threatened by the male individual with the stick and discharged his firearm one time striking the male in the chest. The male was able to walk out of here and walk to a neighboring business," where 911 was called.

Hinojosa said that's where they found the man, in the front of a small pavilion next door to the Legion Hall.

"He was transported by EMS in stable condition to a local hospital," he said.

Hinojosa said he didn't believe the victim was trying to rob the employee nor was the disturbance physical until the victim allegedly threatened the employee with the Shillelagh-like stick.

Hinojosa confirmed only one shot was fired with a small caliber pistol.

A man matching the

same description also entered a local restaurant making demands, shouting and talking out of his mind, threatening and scaring employees. He only left after he was given a sandwich.

The same man also walked into the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce and frightened employees one of which made a report with the Sheriff's Office after he left.

He is also the same person who has been hanging out at a local church and seen walking along FM 2100 making gestures toward vehicles on Friday.

The employee wouldn't make a statement more than he tried to get the intruder to leave when he felt threatened.

After the investigation was finished, the employee was freed to go home and the case will be referred to a grand jury for any possible charges.

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Lake Houston Brewery overcomes adversity to expand and brew local success,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“That’s when COVID hit and we were shut down for a couple of months,” he said. They were able to manage some takeout orders, but they also took advantage of the down time.

“We spent that time expanding the outside area in front of the stage adding additional tables for outdoor seating,” he said.

It turned out to be great timing because they needed additional space when restaurants were allowed to reopen with spaced seating.

They’ve endured more hurricanes that left them mostly with wind damage and some flooding, but nothing could prepare them for the possibility of a tornado.

During the recent tornado breakout in the Houston/Gulf Coast area, one tornado formed in the Atascocita area and then made its way onto the lake, very visible to Matthews and others who were concerned for the business. Fortunately, it made an easterly turn and plowed its way into Liberty County.

A few years outside of the pandemic and constantly fighting rising prices with a sour economy and supply chain issues, the business is primed to expand again.

“About a mile-and-a-half down the road is our off-site location for our brewery. We don’t carry anyone else’s beer since we brew our own,” he said. They also serve mixed drinks, but their biggest business comes from their craft beer.

Up until now, their beer wasn’t available anywhere else but the restaurant. Now they hope to distribute the specialized craft beer to local HEB stores and other vendors across the area.

With a new brewery that they hope will be another revenue stream for profit, they discovered another feature that may help them back at the restaurant.



Co-owner Sean Matthews serves up some salad to guests from the Crosby-Huffman Chamber Of Commerce at their monthly luncheon.



Chefs are known for their catfish delicacies prepared fresh daily at the restaurant.

“When we looked at the numbers, our ticketed concert events were very profitable attracting large crowds,” he said. “We’ll look at expanding that this year as well,” Matthews said.

They also partner with Roger Randall of Texas Adaptive Aquatics and serve as the launching area for several of the parades on the lake.

During the spring and summer months particularly, the boater traffic that comes to the restaurant is very busy.

“Technically, we are the only restaurant literally on the water,” he said, “which is a great selling point for

us. Other restaurants are set back off the water.

“We always have boaters tell us that they can’t reach the other restaurants, but at our place, they can pull up to one of the boat slips, park, and walk down the boardwalk into the restaurant.”

Last Thursday, a lot of chamber members got their first chance to check out the facility when the chamber hosted their monthly luncheon at the restaurant and also welcomed them into the chamber with a ribbon cutting.

“We hope to be active and available to the chamber for whatever they need,” Matthews said.

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HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — All eyes are on the Blake Lively/Justin Baldoni lawsuits! Lively accused Baldoni of sexual harassment on the set of "It Ends with Us," then accused him of mounting a smear campaign to tarnish her reputation. He filed a \$250 million suit against the New York Times for running Lively's complaint against him. He also accuses her of a smear campaign. The "he said, she said" campaign drove the \$25 million film to a \$351 million gross in the box office.

Lively and husband Ryan Reynolds skipped the Golden Globes because they were unhappy that neither of them were nominated. She has since moved on to the sequel to her 2018 black-comedy/crime film "A Simple Favor," which is being directed by Paul Feig for Amazon MGM Studios. It co-stars Anna Kendrick, Henry Golding, Andrew Rannells and Allison Janney.

Meanwhile, Reynolds recently wrapped the live-action animated comedy "Animal Friends" in April 2024, as well as the action-adventure film "Mayday" with Kenneth Branagh and Maria Bakalova, which wrapped in May 2024. How will this in-fighting affect their future images?

People are still talking about Demi Moore's wonderful speech at the Golden Globes after she won for "The Substance." I met Demi in 1982 when she was Jackie Templeton on "General Hospital" before she starred in "Blame It on Rio" (1984), "St. Elmo's Fire" (1985), "About Last Night" (1986), and her superstar-maker "Ghost" (1990).

During her speech for "The Substance" (which cost \$17.5 million and grossed \$76.5 million), she said "I've been doing this a long time — over 45 years. This is the first time I've ever won anything as an actor." Next, she'll star in the sci-fi comedy "I Love Boosters" with "Password" host Keke Palmer and Will Poulter.

Sebastian Stan was another Globe winner for "A Different Man" (which he also produced), but the film only grossed \$1.3



Justin Baldoni and Blake Lively in "It Ends with Us"

million. He fared better with "The Apprentice" (yes, as TV host Donald Trump), which cost \$16 million and grossed \$17.3 million because distributors were afraid to incur Trump's wrath! In fact, 83% of the 238 critic reviews on Rotten Tomatoes were favorable.

His next film should fare even better. It's the Marvel superhero film "Thunderbolts*" with Florence Pugh, Wyatt Russell (Kurt Russell's son), David Harbour, and Julia Louis-Dreyfus. It's due on May 2.

Imagine when I met George Clooney on the set of "The Facts of Life" in 1985 and talked him into an at-home photo shoot for TV Radio Mirror Magazine (because he was handsome, a nice guy, and had "TV star" written all over him). I never envisioned that he'd become the superstar icon he is today. His next film is the Netflix coming-of-age comedy "Jay Kelly" with Adam Sandler, Laura Dern, Billy Crudup, Riley Keough, Jim Broadbent, Isla Fisher and Greta Gerwig.

Who better to help "Jay Kelly" come of age than Clooney, who had four young girls teach him "The Facts of Life"?

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Q: Is Mark Wahlberg really bald in his new movie "Flight Risk," or is he wearing a bald cap?

He looks like George Costanza from "Seinfeld." — N.W.

A: That's no bald cap or special effects. Mark Wahlberg really did shave off the top of his hair for his latest movie role as a pilot who transports a prisoner (Topher Grace) cross-country to testify against a mafia group. It was Wahlberg's idea to fully commit to the role with daily shavings and leaving "the horseshoe around the sides."

Wahlberg told People magazine that the best part about his temporary look was seeing his wife's face the first time he took off his hat. The movie, which was directed by Mel Gibson and also stars Michelle Dockery ("Downton Abbey"), was originally set for release in 2024 but got moved back to Jan. 25.



Mark Wahlberg star in Mel Gibson's "Flight Risk" (1973)

Q: I saw an ad for a new show that looks really good. It's about prisoners breaking free, but I can't recall the name of it. When does it come out? — B.F.

A: You're thinking of the upcoming NBC drama "The Hunting Party," which premiered on Jan. 19. The premise follows a group of prisoners who escape after their underground top-secret prison (known as The Pit) blows up. The hunters in this case are a small team of investigators assembled to "capture the most dangerous killers our country has ever seen."

The search team includes a former FBI profiler played by Melissa Roxburgh ("Manifest"), a prison guard played by Josh McKenzie ("La Brea"), and a CIA agent played by Patrick Sabongui ("The Flash"). Among the deadly escapees are a serial killer played by Tobias Jelinek ("Stranger Things"), who Roxburgh's character initially helped put away for his crimes.

JJ Bailey, one of the show's creators, explains that there's enough plot besides escaped prisoners to engage viewers for several seasons. He claims that by the end of the season, it "turns out there's much more going on."

He further explains, "We talk a lot about what was going on at the Pit as being sort of ... this octopus with many tentacles. In the end of season 1, we sort of chop one off only to realize there's more, and there definitely is someone behind the explosion at the Pit with an ulterior motive that we'll uncover hopefully seasons ... down the road."

Q: Will there be some kind of benefit concert to help the victims of the California Wildfires? — K.K.

A: Yes, there is a concert in the works that is expected to air live on Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. PT (3 p.m. ET) from two different venues: the Kia Forum and the Intuit Dome. Details can be found at FireAidLA.org, but artists who are scheduled to perform include Olivia Rodrigo, Billie Eilish, No Doubt, P!nk, Sting, Stevie Nicks, Rod Stewart, Joni Mitchell, Lady Gaga, Jelly Roll, Earth, Wind & Fire, plus many more!

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWs, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Reference: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Can is moved. 3. Sash is different. 4. Hair is different. 5. Frame is different. 6. Shirt has a pocket.

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January 27, 2025 Posting Date
King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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ACROSS

- Dime portrait
- "Phooey!"
- Chow
- Singer Reed
- Aachen article
- Russo of "The Intern"
- Top floor cooler
- Roman poet
- Farm fraction
- Corrodes
- Monk's home
- Raw minerals
- Paint layer
- Sillet with low sides
- Gearwheel tooth
- Prefix with "logical"
- Bathroom, to a Londoner
- Refuse holder
- Lacking slack
- New Mexico resort
- Desert flora
- Passé
- Achy
- Breakfast chain
- Village People classic
- Air-show stunt
- Sneeze syllable
- Latin 101 word
- Singer Lovett
- Tools with teeth
- Label
- One
- Hotel furniture
- "Cold As Ever" rapper
- Seized vehicle
- Bank statement no.
- Rude dude
- Killer whales
- Check
- Designer Chanel
- Table protector
- Hamilton bill
- Complain
- Guns the engine
- Terse denial
- Roe provider
- Treeless tract
- Poi base
- Some Pacific salmon
- Pickling herb
- "Hi, sailor!"
- Implement
- Garbage barge
- Roast VIPs
- "Caught ya!"
- "I — Rock"
- Eggy quaff

DOWN

- Ga. neighbor
- Speck
- Yellow turnip
- Belittle
- Teeming
- Political strategist Navarro
- Hamilton bill
- Complain
- Guns the engine

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What year was the first Barbie doll released?
- MOVIES: What is the name of the island in the "Jurassic Park" film?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What are baby rabbits called?
- U.S. STATES: Which state is the home of Mount Rushmore?
- INVENTIONS: When were emojis invented?
- TELEVISION: In the TV series "The Walking Dead," what was the character Rick Grimes' profession previously?
- CHEMISTRY: Which element is also known as quicksilver?
- SCIENCE: What is the name for the pivot on which a lever turns?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which country is home to the ancient city of Petra?
- MUSIC: Which of Taylor Swift's songs was first to appear on the Billboard Hot 100?

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King Crossword

Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

Trivia Test Answers: 1. 1959; 2. Isla Nublar; 3. Kites; 4. South Dakota; 5. 1999; 6. Sheriff's deputy; 7. Mercury; 8. Fulcrum; 9. Jordan; 10. "Tim McGraw"



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