



North Shore Mustangs game winning 27 yd field goal by kicker Daniel Cruz. Ball holder Javoris Taylor & Torrance Bradford long snapper.

See Story below & on page 2.

# NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

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VOLUME 14, NO. 1 (#597) THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026 www.northchannelstar.com

## MUSTANGS WIN SIXTH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

North Shore defeats Duncanville 10-7; Mustangs Legacy of Championship Wins Lives on



North Shore Mustangs 2025 State Champions Team & Coach Willie Gaston with trophy (photo center). Photo by Linda Jamail  
By Allan Jamail

Arlington, TX. Saturday, December 20, 2025 ~ The North Shore Mustangs (Eastside Boys) dynasty lives on with a win 10-7 in the 6A -Div. 1 championship game to reclaim and bring home the title against the Duncanville Panthers. The two semifinalists met for the sixth time in eight years in front of an attendance of 39,436 at the home field of the Dallas Cowboys (AT&T Stadium).

Often overlooked for the Mustangs success is the camera shy GPISD Athletic Director Ms. Vivian Dancy. She puts together everything all sports coaches need in order to compete for championships. She's been athletic director for 3 football championship titles, 3 as assistant athletic director, director for a basketball championship and 2 assistant athletic director track championships.

The victory for GPISD's Mustangs over the Panthers gives



Mustangs DL # 99 Za Qwaun Nunn hurries Panther QB #14 Jcoryan Rives to cause wild pass. Nunn did this throughout the game.(Photo by Allan Jamail)

them their sixth state title, from 2003, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2025; leading the contests between the two rivals 4-2.

The state championship win is the first for Coach Willie Gaston, a North Shore graduate and former Mustangs quarterback. He took over as head coach in 2023 after the legendary Coach



# 99 Za Qwaun Nunn (The Terminator) & #94 Jayden Curry defense linemen (DL) tackle Panther running back #22 Joe McKinney II for loss of yards.(Photo by Allan Jamail)

Jon Kay left to join the coaching staff at Rice. That year Gaston's team lost to Duncanville 49-33 giving the Panthers back-to-back titles and their 3<sup>rd</sup> championship in school history.

The NShore Mustangs playing in their "battle red uniforms" after traveling 4 hours and 266 miles took down the state ranked number one



Mustangs #5 Jaylen Bocard catches games 1<sup>st</sup> TD on a QB Kaleb Maryland 44 yd TD pass. [see arrow] Photo by Allan Jamail

Duncanville Panthers (per Max-Prep) in the title game. The Panthers were playing only 25 minutes (16 miles) from their

Continued. See A CHAMPIONSHIP FORGED THROUGH DEFENSE, Page 2

## C.E. King Panthers Lose First Championship Game 55-27



Panther defensive line gang tackles DeSoto running back.(Photo by Allan Jamail)

By Allan Jamail

Arlington, TX. Saturday, December 20, 2025 ~ Sheldon ISD C. E. King Panther's first-year as Head Coach Cory Laxen and his team has a lot to be proud of by playing in the school's first history making championship game.

They may not have won the game but they won the hearts of many because of their remarkable successful season. The championship experienced DeSoto Eagles ended the Panthers 6 game winning streak 55 -27. The two semifinalists met for the first time in

front of an attendance of 39,436 at the home field of the Dallas Cowboys (AT&T Stadium).

Laxen has made a complete makeover of King's football program. He brings 15 years of coaching experience; this is his third year with the Panthers program. Prior to coming to King he spent 10 years at Galena Park ISD's North Shore High School where he was a part of four state championships 2015, 2018, 2019 & 2021 as the Offensive Line Coach and Strength and Conditioning Coordinator.

Continued. See PANTHERS EARN RESPECT, Page 5



#30 C E King Panther Darnell Bradley catches a TD pass in the end zone from QB Timothy Potts.(Photo by Allan Jamail)

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# MUSTANGS NS 6 SIXTH STATE CHAMPIONS

Continued from Page 1: A Championship Forged Through Defense and Determination



North Shore wide receiver Mustangs Jaylen Bocard makes 4 pass catches for 80 yards and this TD catch to earn Most Valuable Offense Player trophy. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



North Shore's State Championship Team Captains L-R: #7-Kaleb Maryland, #24-Dezmon Christian, #17-Tommie Anderson, #76-Jaylen Fields. (Photo by Linda Jamail)



#97 Xavier Waters & #99 Za Owaun Nunn Mustangs DL put QB Panther on the turf for loss of yds. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



North Shore Mustangs Tony Guillory with 8 tackles earns Most Valuable Defense Player trophy. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



Willie Gaston, Mustang's Head Coach answers reporters' questions in post-game interview room. Gaston recorded his first championship victory. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



#90 Lynell Hunter & # 99 Za Owaun Nunn Mustangs DL takes down QB for loss of yds. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



2025 North Shore's Ball Boys. They're essential for keeping the game going on time. L-R: Lorenzo Atkins, Kason "KJ" Walker, Esteban Razo, Cohen Moore, Owen Johnson. (Photo Linda Jamail)



Photo and game statistics were provided by Allan and Linda Jamail, longtime Photojournalists & statisticians for the North Channel Star.

home field in front of their massive fan base. But even with the fan advantage the local's couldn't pull off the win.

The three hour defensive slugfest was won not just by the players on the field but by the two teams coaching decisions. In what was early predicted to be a low scoring game because both the Mustangs and the Panthers defensive units have held their season's opponents to a few points per game.

After 16 games the Stangs opponents average only 16 points against their defense. The Panthers defense after 13 games held opponents to a mere 10 points.

With neither team on the scoreboard at halftime (0-0) most everyone could see the game would end up very close.

In a scoreless game with 4:18 on the clock in the third quarter senior Mustangs QB Kaleb Maryland under a tremendous Panther rush hurried a 44-yard touchdown (TD) pass to the open Jaylen Bocard (see photo) giving his team and the games first points. NS 7 - D'ville 0.

"That TD pass to Bocard, it was thrilling," Maryland said. "I didn't even see him score until I got up because I got hit on that play. But when I

got up and saw him in the end zone celebrating, I was just excited. ... Winning the state championship after all the stuff we've had to overcome, it's amazing, it feels really good."

Maryland a Clear Springs transfer after his freshman year patiently waited as a backup behind star QB Kaleb Bailey to start his 1<sup>st</sup> year in 2025. A dual-threat QB known for arm talent and athleticism also runs track and has committed to Utah State for 2026.

In the fourth quarter with 9:56 left in the game facing a fourth & 8 yds for a first down Coach Gaston sent Mustangs kicker senior Daniel Cruz in who iced the game with a 27-yard field goal. Cruz's leg accounted for 40% of the winning score. Ball holder Ja'Voris Taylor, long ball snapper Torrance Bradford. NS 10 - D'ville 0.

In the fourth quarter with 5:36 on the clock Panther QB Trenton Yancey passed to Zach Turner for a 32-yard TD to cut the deficit to three. NS 10 - D'ville 7.

With 2:57 remaining in the game the Mustangs had to punt turning the ball back over to the Panthers.

GAME ENDING PLAY: The Panthers drove the ball to the Mustangs 25 yard line with 42 seconds left on the clock and facing 4<sup>th</sup> & 3 yds for a first down. The Mustangs defense dug in.

Coach Samples decided not to try a 3 point field goal to tie the game but in-

stead ran a short pass play to the right.

Panthers senior QB Jcoryon Rivers pursued by an aggressive Mustangs defensive scrambled to his right and threw a hurried stray pass barely out of the reach of senior Leon Wood's outstretched hands.

Nshore defense delivered a fourth-down stop and the state championship; their celebration began as did the Mustang Nation fans in the stands.

The ball was turned over to NShore with 38 seconds left in the game. Stangs QB Kaleb Maryland took the snap, kneeling down to run out the clock and give his team another state championship.

COACH DECISIONS: Coach Gaston defense had caged the Panthers offense. Gaston wisely in the fourth quarter on fourth down opted for a 3 point field goal extending their lead to 10 to 0. His decision would later seal the fate of the Panthers.

Panthers Head Coach Reginald Samples faced with a similar situation in the fourth quarter after closing the Mustangs lead to 3 points (10 - 7) gambled on 4<sup>th</sup> down trying for a first down that failed.

POST GAME COACHES INTERVIEW:

NS Coach Willie Gaston: "I'm so excited," Gaston said. "When it comes down to it, this is hard to do. When you watch these kids and the adversity they went through this year and watching them band to-

gether and start playing their best football right there in the playoffs, it's a total team effort. These guys just banded together as a true brotherhood."

"Just one word: Coach (Garrett) Cross," Gaston said. "These defensive guys can tell you how well-prepared they are week in and week out because he's so detailed and organized. He puts these kids in good positions to make plays. It's just unbelievable. I'm just proud of our whole defensive staff. Our kids are coached well. Coach Cross is an amazing defensive coordinator, he's one of the top defensive coordinators in the state, and he loves coaching defense."

"This is what people expect," Gaston said when asked his feelings about the victory. "I'm excited for them, and I don't take it for granted. I know this is not easy to do. I'm excited to get here, but I'm not satisfied. I want to keep working, keep developing kids and making sure we have an opportunity to be in this situation year in and year out."

D'ville Coach Reginald Samples: In his postgame interview Samples never addressed his questionable decision to not attempt a game tying field goal with seconds on the clock.

Instead he said he and his coaches scouted the Mustangs very well to prepare the Panthers for the game and he felt his team did not play the game the way they'd been coached and prepared to play. And the end of the day he said Nshore played harder than his players and he thought the Mustangs outplayed them in every aspect of the game.

When asked if he was going to retire as the rumors suggest he stated at the moment his concern was dealing with the emotions of his players from losing the game and he wasn't looking to his future at this time.

North Shore Jaylen Bocard was named the game's Offensive Most Valuable Player with four catches for 79 yards. The 44 yd pass catch from Maryland was his 14th of the season. Maryland finished with 154 passing yards.

North Shore Tony Guillory was named the game's Defensive Most Valuable Player after recording 10 tackles and an interception that stopped the Panthers' first drive of the game.

Rushing yds; Nshore leading rusher, Hezekiah Johnson for 97 yds, avg. 5.5 yd per carry.

Former North Shore

Coach Jon Kay's legacy lives on in Coaches Willie Gaston and C E King Panther's first-year Head Coach Cory Laxen. Both spent years under the leadership of Kay where they were a part of his taking the Mustangs to four state championships 2015, 2018, 2019 & 2021. Head Coach Laxen took his team to their first state championship Saturday. (see related article in the NC Star)

STATS: 1<sup>st</sup> downs NS=13, D =18; rushing yds. NS =121, D =103; passing yds. NS =154, D=194; time of possession NS=24:54, D=23:06; punt yds NS= 7-242, D=6-187; defense tackles NS=64, D=63. rushing 1<sup>st</sup> downs N=6, D=6; passing 1<sup>st</sup> downs NS=7, D=10, penalties NS= 8-68yds, D=3-15yds; penalty 1<sup>st</sup> downs received N=0, D=2. Linda Jamail, Mustangs 80 players 28 seniors will be leaving; 27 juniors, 18 sophomores and 7 freshmen's will be returning.

## CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



### Boldly Into 2026

We blinked. Suddenly, it is a new year. What did we learn last year? I asked friends and colleagues to make a list of what they accomplished last year. Many started saving money for vacations, school expenses, automobile expenses, and some saved for retirement. Others shared that they started a healthier lifestyle, including weight loss, walking, practicing mindfulness and setting boundaries. Several friends even returned to school. Many colleagues worked on professional development goals. Several took on leadership roles within the nonprofit groups they have been volunteering with.

Next, I asked what goals have they set for 2026. One couple is preparing for a train trip across Switzerland. One friend hopes to purchase a new vehicle. Others are more determined than ever to get healthy. I personally lost over one hundred pounds and have had to clean out my closet. Going from size twenty-four to size twelve has been an eye-opening experience. For decades, I have hidden in dark colored lose fitting clothes and now, I find myself trying colors and styles that I have not thought about in years. My children have also commented that they have never seen me this thin.

For this year, what dreams do you want to accomplish? Or just get started on? I have been asking around for a while about why residents cannot find free Spanish classes. For decades, several organizations have offered English for speakers of other languages for free. The reality is for me to be a better neighbor; I need to not force new neighbors to do everything MY way as soon as they move here. If it would help them to hear some of their own language as they adjust to English, I would be happy to learn Spanish as we develop new relationships. For years, we have had community members preparing meals which they delivered to homeless members of our community. In doing so, they were demonstrating God's love to these neighbors. Recently, a young man challenged me to spend time on Sunday afternoons not just feeding the neighbors, but sitting down, listening to them, and helping share information on resources with them. This past Sunday, in doing so, I not only heard about things that they need but also about the circumstances which led to where they are today. I also found that instead of asking them if they had any prayer requests, I listened to them and found that they realized that we cared and then they asked for prayer.

This is something I have been praying about. Not pushing my desires on people but meeting them where they are and learning how to assist them. There are many hurting people in our community and there is a need for a variety of support groups as well as opportunities to just realize someone cares. In the weeks ahead, I hope to spotlight some of the non-profit organizations, small businesses as well as churches in our area. I will continue to share information about the people who have impacted our area as well as upcoming events. Thank you in advance for sharing ideas with me at [charlotte.jackson@yahoo.com](mailto:charlotte.jackson@yahoo.com)

### EAST HOUSTON DEMOCRATS

Kick off 2026 with Harris County Judge Candidate, Leticia Plummer on January 15 as she joins East Houston Democrats for the Monthly Membership Meeting at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Pine Trails Community Improvement Association, located at 6003 Wood Bend, Houston 77049.

With 2026 being an important year elections, now is a great time to get involved and become active with the Club. You are invited to join us to meet your local Precinct Chairs, join the organization and prepare for the March Primary Elections as well as to learn more about the upcoming Harris County Democratic Party Convention scheduled for March 20-21, 2026. For more information, please contact [EHDemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:EHDemocrats@gmail.com)

## Community Prayer Gathering

By Charlotte Jackson,

Community members are invited to come together in prayer an ongoing effort to unite local residents in support of the community.

Residents are encouraged to attend and invite family and friends. Those interested in hosting a future First Friday Prayer Gathering or suggesting a location are asked to contact me **Charlotte Jackson** at **832-896-1633** or **Pastor Bob Jones**.

Community outreach opportunities are scheduled throughout January as follow:

**Sundays afternoons** from 1 - 3 p.m., join Pastor Will Lagard in the Parking Lot of Panda Express/IHOP at I-10 and Uvalde Road as he shares the Gospel with members of our homeless community and provides a meal as often as funding allows. (Maybe you can't make it out but can prepare a meal or donate to help with expenses? His number is 713-459-5454)

**Friday, January 16** from 7:30-9 p.m., First

Lady Anita Dixon invites all women to attend **A Night of Release** at Next Generation Church, located at 13718 Force Street, Houston 77015.

**Saturday, January 17** Join Pastor Robert Burkhalter and Channelview First Assembly of God for their monthly Third Saturday Community Meal, from 11 - 1 p.m.

**Saturday, January 24** North Shore Men's Revival being hosted at Fellowship of The Nations, 13305 Woodforest Blvd., featuring Award Winning former North Shore Basketball Coach Randy Weisinger, Pastor Johnny Brady, Pastor Robert Dixon, Pastor Locke Brady. The event being at 6 p.m. and is open to all area men.

**Friday, January 30**, you are invited to join the Channelview Ministry Team at 9 a.m. in the Channelview ISD Administration Board Room, located at 828 Sheldon Road,

Thank you in advance for all you do to show the love of Christ to our hurting world.

## ASK DIAMOND JIM



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

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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. **Diamond Jim's Pineforest Jewelry Experience** has been a proud member of the Independent Jewelers Organization and the Retail Jewelers Organization for many years. See more at: [www.pineforestjewelry.com](http://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](mailto:jmills@pineforestjewelry.com).

## W.D.Ley Family YMCA Host Rennob Production Toy Distribution

By Charlotte Jackson,

On Saturday, December 20 holiday spirit was on full display as families from across the community gathered for the Rennob Productions Toy Drive Giveaway, hosted in partnership with the Wendel D. Ley Family YMCA. The event drew a large and enthusiastic crowd, filling the space with laughter, gratitude and the unmistakable excitement of the season. Volunteers, donors and community members came together with a shared mission: to ensure every child from infants to teenagers experienced the joy of receiving a gift this Christmas. One hundred and three children left Wendel D. Ley with a toy of their choice. Organizers described the turnout as "overwhelming in the best way," noting that the smiles on children's faces were the highlight of the day. "The community didn't just show up, they showed out," organizers said, praising the YMCA's staff, families, and supporters for their generosity and energy. Tables overflowed with toys, and volunteers worked tirelessly to distribute gifts, greet families, and keep the festive atmosphere alive.

For many parents, the event provided not only holiday support but also a reminder of the strength



(First picture is of Brittany Haskins, Executive Director of the WD Ley Family YMCA, Teylor Bonner, owner of Rennob Productions, Crystal Perkins-Bonner, Board Chair of WD Ley Family YMCA Board Chair, Kristina Zatopek, Board Vice Chair of the W.D. Ley Family YMCA.



and unity within the neighborhood. For the children, it was pure magic.

As the event came to a close, Rennob Productions extended warm holiday wishes to all who participated. "From our family to yours, Merry Christmas," the organization shared. "May your season be filled with joy, kindness, and community."

This was the first giveaway for Rennob Productions and owner Teylor Bonner, it will continue to grow each year and reflect the deep commitment of local organizations and business to uplift families and spread hope during the holiday season.



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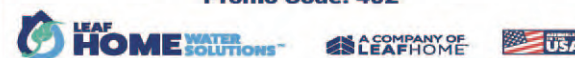


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OPINION PAGE

OPINION

By BILL KING

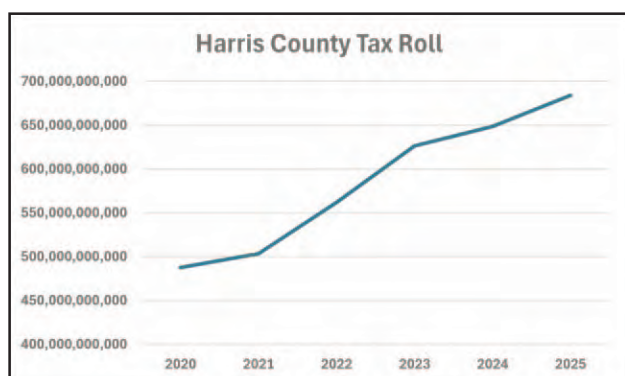


Harris County Tax Roll Up by 6% ... for Now

The Harris Central Appraisal District (HCAD) has finished adjudicating all but a handful of property accounts. As of today, the countywide taxable value of all properties stands at about \$684 billion.

The final tax roll will not be determined for years because after HCAD completes its administrative adjudication of any protests, the taxpayer can either file suit in District Court or, in some cases, file an arbitration with the State Comptroller's Office.

The growth in the tax roll has definitely slowed from the supercharged increases during the pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, the roll jumped by double digits. The last two years, however, it has returned to mid-single-digit growth.



However, the taxable value is just the first factor in the multiplication that determines your final bill. The other factor is, of course, the tax rate set by the governing body of the taxing entities.

In 2025, just under 20% of taxing entities in Harris County increased their tax rates, while 40% reduced theirs. The remaining entities did not change their rates.

Each one of these taxing entities has its own unique circumstances. For example, Galena Park ISD raised its tax rate by a hefty 6.6%. However, its taxable roll as of HCAD's latest numbers is down by nearly 3%.

Further complicating the calculation this year is that homeowners will benefit from the increased homestead exemption on their property taxes. When you factor all of these together, my guess is that most homeowners will see flat-to slightly lower taxes this year.

But I would love to hear about your experience, so drop me a note about your tax bill this year. email:

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, 5832 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Crockett, Talarico to Face off in Democratic Primary

U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Dallas, entered the U.S. Senate race on the final day to file, pitting her against state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock.

Crockett, in her second House term, has made a name by attacking both President Donald Trump and other GOP opponents, such as U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Talarico has also gained a large social media audience with a message far less confrontational in nature. He is a Presbyterian seminary student whose Christian faith is a running theme.

"I am called to love all of my neighbors like I love myself, because despite our differences, we all want the same things: a safe neighborhood, a good job, a quality, well-funded public school, and the ability to see a doctor when you need one," he said at his announcement.

The Republican primary also promises to be a spirited race, with incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn facing two challengers: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt, R-Houston.

TAX CUTS MAJOR PART OF ABBOTT'S RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Gov. Greg Abbott is seeking an unprecedented fourth term and is making property tax cuts the centerpiece of his campaign. He faces 10 largely unknown candidates in the GOP primary and is widely expected to win the nomination.

Abbott wants to make it harder for Texas cities and counties to raise property taxes and has also called for the elimination of school property taxes for homeowners and a slowdown in the rise of property values, according to The Texas Tribune.

Both cities and counties rely heavily on property taxes to pay for services such as public safety, parks, libraries, and road maintenance. Lawmakers in



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

2019 passed tighter limits on how much they can increase property taxes without voter approval.

"Local property taxes are the foundation of essential community services — they keep police and firefighters on duty, streets maintained, and trash collected," said Monty Wynn, who heads the Texas Municipal League.

In recent years, the Legislature has cut school property taxes by billions of dollars, primarily by raising the homestead exemption. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has proposed increasing that exemption by another \$40,000 and allowing homeowners at age 55 to take an additional \$60,000 off their home's taxable value.

TEXAS LEADS NATION IN 12-MONTH JOB GAINS

The state's job market continues to outpace the rest of the nation, according to labor market data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Workforce Commission. The state now has the largest labor force in its history at 15.879 million, gaining 168,000 jobs from September 2024 to September 2025.

"Texas' job market and labor force continue to grow because we have a dynamic workforce system that fosters opportunity for businesses and workers alike," said TWC Chairman Joe Esparza. "TWC will continue to provide the resources and support needed to keep this momentum and ensure that Texas remains a national leader in economic opportunity."

The state's unemployment rate stood at 4.4% in September,

nearly identical to the national rate.

STATE PLAN TO BATTLE SCREW-WORMS FACES PUSHBACK

As the New World Screw-worm makes its way to the Texas-Mexico border, potentially endangering livestock and wildlife, the Texas Animal Health Commission's proposed plan to combat it is facing pushback from agriculture groups, The Tribune reported.

A panel of lawmakers heard from state and federal officials as well as industry groups last week.

"The plan needs significant revision," said Tim Niedecken, executive director of the Livestock Marketing Association of Texas. He said the draft plan would require animals being moved out of an infested zone to have an ear tag, a vet inspection and receive treatment. That does not "meet the realities of this industry today," he told lawmakers.

Dr. Lewis "Bud" Dinges, Texas Animal Health Commission's executive director, said it will likely publish its response plan in about two months. He said the goal is to align with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure their actions do not harm trade.

The USDA is building a sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in South Texas and is also assisting with similar efforts in Panama. The screw-worm was detected about 70 miles from the Texas border in September. It infests cattle by laying eggs in open wounds and can be fatal if untreated.

NOVEMBER WAS WARMER AND DRIER THAN NORMAL

A trend that began in August continued through November, with warmer and drier weather throughout much of the state, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, a hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. By the end of November, 54% of the state was in drought — up 20 percentage points in about a month.

Wentzel said by the end of next February, drought conditions are expected to improve in the eastern half of the state but get worse in the western half.

South Texas and the Big Bend region of West Texas are experiencing the most severe levels of drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

MORE THAN 4 MILLION REAL CHRISTMAS TREES SOLD IN TEXAS ANNUALLY

Real Christmas trees are an important contributor to the Texas economy, according to Texas A&M Forest Service, with more than 4 million sold each year. That generated a total economic contribution of \$812.7 million and produced more than 6,000 jobs last year.

"Real Christmas trees hold cultural, environmental and economic significance, but the scope of this study was focused specifically on the economic contribution of the real Christmas tree industry," said Xufang Zhang, Ph.D., Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Resource Analyst.

Tree production acreage has increased from 945 acres in 2017 to 3,565 acres in 2022. The average Christmas tree takes about seven years to reach maturity.

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

More of The Same



Yesterday I saw a friend, Bridget, whom I had not seen for a full year. "How have you been?" she asked.

"I have learned a lot about myself this year," I told her. But at the time it was hard to say just what I'd learned.

It's the time of year when we think of what we've learned in the year behind us and make resolutions for the new year. I try not to make New Year's resolutions. All the studies show that motivation wanes by February—if we're lucky. Changing my life by flipping a switch on December 31st is not a feasible plan.

But not this year. This year, I'm making a New Year's resolution.

And the only reason I don't think I'm being foolish about the whole thing is that this year, I'm not making a resolution because I feel I've failed at something or need some kind of serious improvement. I'm making a resolution to do more of the same—a lot more.

Because sometimes, as I sift through my life for the things I wish I did better, I miss what really matters. I forget how good my life is—how strong my relationships are, how fortunate I am to have the friends and family I have, how lucky I am to have a mind that still works and a body that does what I need it to do.

This year, for whatever reason, I spent a lot more time doing things I truly enjoy, and I spent a lot less time beating myself up for not doing things I thought I should do.

I decided not to worry too much about what I ate and, instead, ate a lot of things I really love, and—to my surprise—I stayed exactly at the weight my body likes to be. I knew that writing brings me joy, and worrying about what will happen after I've written causes a lot of stress. So I let go. I worried less. And I discovered that worrying less left a lot more time for writing.

I spent more time with friends. I reached out more often. I said "yes" to invitations. I listened to my husband Peter's advice and, if I felt like sleeping in, I did. I talked to more dogs. I ate more cake. I listened to more music.

This year, I just got a little better at living in my own skin, at trusting myself, at letting myself enjoy what I was doing and spend more time doing it.

Since retiring, Bridget has taken up diving. She discovered she has a talent for taking beautiful photos of tiny fish that are seldom seen and almost never photographed. She loves it. She does it whenever she can. She hopes that she might be able to do it for another 20 years. And that is her resolution: to stay healthy enough to keep doing this new thing she loves for as long as she can.

That is my New Year's resolution—and my New Year's revelation as well.

Maybe I work hard enough right now. Maybe I'm healthy enough, fit enough, smart enough today. Maybe the self-improvement projects can be put on indefinite hold to make more time to do all the things I love.

And Bridget and I agreed: We needed to see each other before another year had passed.

Till next time, Carrie

Top Ten Most Popular Christmas Movies of All Time. 1. The Santa Clause 2 (2002), 2. The Nutcracker and the Four Realms (2018), 3. The Santa Clause (1994), 4. The Holiday (2006), 5. Elf (2003), 6. The Polar Express (2004), 7. A Christmas Carol (2009), 8. How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000), 9. Home Alone (1990), 10. The Grinch (2018). Source: ScreenCrush

Star Courier advertisement with contact information for Barbers Hill, Dayton, and North Channel. Includes staff list: Gilbert Hoffman (Editor & Publisher), Mei-Ing Liu (Associate Publisher), David Taylor (Managing Editor), Julieta Paita (Assignment Editor), Kristan Hoffman (Website Editor), Gerardo Hernandez (Production Manager).

Advertisement for Christmas trees with contact information for Grafikpress. Includes address: 5832 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Phone: 713-266-3444. Email: grafikstar@aol.com.

## Continued from Page 1: Panthers Earn Respect on Texas Football's Biggest Stage

Coach Laxen was named 2025 Coach of the Year by Touchdown Club of Houston and his 13-3 team was known for its incredible speed and high-scoring games... after missing the playoffs last year, C.E. King now has become one of Texas's most electrifying teams.

DeSoto has four state championship appearances, 2016, 2022, 2023 & 2025, because of this playoff experience DeSoto was predicted the favorite. Also because of the large amount of championship playoff hype first year players are exposed to could be a deciding factor. Coach Laxen knew this and tried to prepare the team for it and in his post game interview spoke about it. (see Laxen's interview comment below)

**COACH LAXEN POST GAME INTERVIEW:** "We didn't play up to our potential," Laxen said of the loss to DeSoto. "We played a good football team. We started slow, and we started to come back. It's just little detailed things that we preached all week — making tackles, finishing runs, ball security — little things like that. I'm proud of these kids, though. I'm proud of these kids for getting us to this point. We were 5-5 last year, and we turned that into a state championship berth. So, we'll be back. We played 12 sophomores tonight because these seniors right here laid the foundation. We'll be back."

Laxen stated, "our schedule had us playing in a playoff type game every week, last



#1 Dillon Mitchell, Panthers Special Team runs kickoff back 79 yds. for a TD. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Final
King	0	21	0	6	27
DeSoto	27	21	7	0	55

year we missed the playoffs by one point. Every week we prepared as if it's a playoff game, which was to help prepare us when we get into the playoff run."

When asked if this loss will leave a chip on your shoulder Laxen said, "yes this will leave us with a chip on our shoulder, call it what you may but it will be motivation going forward." This lop-sided loss can have positive effects going forward for the young team.

"We have good coaches and we prepared well, the coaches gave it their all and worked hard, could we have done better, well I have to look back at that," Laxen concluded.

**PANTHERS WINNING PLAYOFF RESULTS:** Clear Falls, 56-7 / Shadow Creek 51-6 / Katy Jordan 52-0 / Summer Creek 24-21 / Austin Vandergrift 58-41. Linda Jamail, statistician.



C E King Cheerleaders at championship game. Cheer Coach Jackson (left) names of cheerleaders not submitted by deadline. (Photo by Linda Jamail)



C E King Championship Team Captains: L-R: #62-Xavier Goode, #7-Kai'Dryn Edmond, #97-Dominick Toulon, #3-Dionne Sims. (Photo by Linda Jamail)



#97 Panthers Dominick Toulon makes solo tackle on Eagles #5 Sarod Baker. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



C E King championship game ball boys # 37 Malik Davis, #53 Jeremiah Robertson, #80 Nehemiah Simmons. (Photo by Linda Jamail)

## OBITUARY

# Dr. Gerald Cobb Leaves a Legacy of Leadership in Education and Banking



Dr. Gerald Dallas Cobb passed away peacefully on Dec. 17, 2025 after leaving a legacy in education and banking.



Gerald Cobb, first one on the left, second row, played for the Baylor University Bears and his team made it to the Final Four on one trip, and to the college Final on another. Cobb credited the experience as one of the most memorable of his life.

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

In the tapestry of the North Channel area's history, few figures loom as large as Dr. Gerald Dallas Cobb who recently passed away on December 17, 2025. From humble beginnings in New Diana, Texas, Cobb's journey is a testament to perseverance, vision, and service.

"One of the highlights of my life was my graduation from Baylor University," Cobb reflected in a 2010 interview with The Sentinel, recalling how a young country boy found a path to success through education.

After earning his degree, Cobb began his career as a high school athlete and educator, applying for a teaching job in Mineral Wells. There,

he found mentorship in W.C. Cunningham, who "would be like a father to him and guide him through most of his professional life." Cobb credited Cunningham for helping him secure pivotal roles, including his first job and later a position in Galena Park ISD.

"I have applied for only two jobs in my professional life," Cobb said. "The others some might say were handed to me, but I earned them in every way."

His career in education flourished, spanning Mineral Wells, Beaumont High, and Galena Park ISD, where he rose from basketball coach to business manager, assistant superintendent, and ultimately superintendent. "I owe a great deal to W.C.," Cobb emphasized. "He helped me get each of those jobs in

GPISD."

Even after reaching the pinnacle of educational leadership, Cobb sought new challenges. Facing the lack of Social Security in public schools, he began teaching at the University of Houston to qualify for benefits. But another mentor, Clyde Speed, offered a solution: "He told me, 'You don't have to do that, I'll put you on here at the bank for \$1,000 per month and you'll qualify for Social Security.'"

Cobb joined Woodforest National Bank in 1984, initially handling public relations.

"I really felt like I earned it," he said. His tenure saw him amass 132 quarters for Social Security, and after Speed's passing, Cobb became chairman of the board

and later CEO. He praised his successor, Robert Marling: "Robert's the kind of guy who not only knows what to do but has the courage to do it."

Under Cobb's stewardship, Woodforest National Bank grew to over 700 branches nationwide, many in Walmarts.

"Eighty-eight percent of our revenue comes out of operations. We're not dependent on loans," Cobb explained. "We didn't buy any of that exotic paper... I wouldn't buy it unless it was guaranteed by the U.S. government and I could look in the Wall Street Journal and see it every day," he smiled.

Bank examiners dubbed their holdings "a Dr. Cobb portfolio," recognizing his conservative approach. Dur-

ing that time, Woodforest National Bank stood as the No. 1 earning bank in America based on equity, a tribute Cobb attributes to the founders from the North Shore community of Woodforest.

Cobb's impact extended beyond banking and education. He was honored with the Kermit Reneau Lifetime Achievement Award by the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce.

"I am truly humbled by it," Cobb said. "I have nothing but admiration for him and his loyalty to this community."

Reflecting on his life, Cobb credited his success to faith, family, and service.

"Basketball was my ticket to Baylor," he said, noting the influence of coaches and his

wife, Bobbi. "I could think of a lot of words that went with education: budgets, buildings and books, but I wanted it to be kind of a joke with her," he shared, referencing his time under Lorena B. Stretch at Baylor.

For over 40 years, Cobb taught the Adult Men's Bible Class at First Baptist Church in Galena Park, remaining a pillar of the community.

"It helps keep you on target in life," he said. "It's been a great life."

As he approached his 81st birthday, Cobb reflected, "My mark was to try and make 80. When you make that then you want to make another year." The superintendent/banker made it to 96 and left a legacy woven into the fabric of the North Channel area of leadership, integrity, and enduring service.

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The District's administrative office is located at 2727 Allen Parkway, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77019.

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# Harris County 2025 Year in Review

## Celebrating Harris County's Top Accomplishments

Happy holidays, Harris County! As we look back on the last year, we want to celebrate the progress we've made and recognize the work we still have left to do. Keep reading to see some of Harris County's top accomplishments this year that Judge Hidalgo is most proud of.

### Bringing International Investment to Harris County



Judge Hidalgo and the Japan/Taiwan trade mission delegation meet with Foxconn, which recently announced a \$225M investment in AI manufacturing in the Harris County region.

Judge Hidalgo led Harris County's first-ever trade missions this year alongside the Greater Houston Partnership.

As a direct result of Harris County's trade mission to Paris, more than 50 companies will travel to Houston/Harris County in the next year to explore partnership and collaboration opportunities.

### Extending Critical Tax Cuts for Early Childhood Education Providers

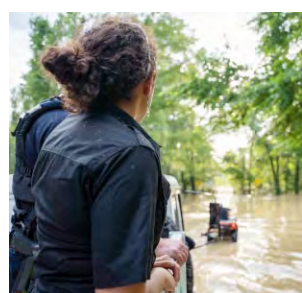


Judge Hidalgo visits one of Harris County's early childhood summer programs.

Commissioners Court voted unanimously to reauthorize 100% property tax exemption for qualifying childcare centers under Proposition 2.

program, which enforces quality standards, and at least 20% of their students must receive subsidized services. The property tax exemptions are expected to save the average eligible Harris County childcare provider thousands per year.

### Making Harris County More Resilient



Judge Hidalgo surveys flooding along the San Jacinto River.

Since Judge Hidalgo helped advocate for voters to approve Prop A last year, Harris County has taken huge steps to make Harris County more resilient and better maintain its flood control infrastructure.

it up to standards. So far, FCD has used Prop A funding to:

Triple the number of flood control infrastructure repair projects compared to 2024  
Restore 100+ miles of channels. Harris County's entire flood control system includes 2,500 miles of channels.

Remove 117% more sediment and debris from channels, which lowers the risk of flooding by helping water move more freely.

Cut resident maintenance request response times in half

### #4: Setting Up More Foster Youth For Success



From left to right: Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Amos Johnson (HAY Center Young Adult) Judge Hidalgo, Zacharie Birdwell (HAY Center Young Adult), and Angelica Sosa (HAY Center Young Adult) cut the ribbon on the new HAY Center Campus.

Every year, approximately 200 foster youth in the Harris County region - which includes Harris County as well as 12 other counties - are at risk of becoming homeless on their 18th birthday. Judge Hidalgo celebrated the opening of the new \$41M Houston Alumni & Youth (HAY) Center Campus in August.

### Started Preparing Harris County for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™



CAPs Judge Hidalgo joins local officials including Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis and Houston Mayor John Whitmire at a press conference highlighting preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™.

As Harris County prepares to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ next summer, Judge Hidalgo is working with local officials

to ensure that fans can enjoy the games safely. The FIFA World Cup 26™ matches will be the biggest sporting events that Harris County has ever hosted. According to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority, the games are expected to generate approximately \$1.5 billion in revenue for the Harris County economy.

## ENTERTAINMENT

December 1, 2025 Posting Date

### King Crossword

### Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

### TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

### The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

### Weekly SUDOKU

Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9 and instructions: 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.

### HOCUS-FOCUS



BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Difficulty this week: Moderate, Challenging, HOO BOY!

Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Hammer is longer. 2. Treehouse is not as wide. 3. First plank is different. 4. House is wider. 5. Cap is different. 6. Hand is moved. 7. Tree trunk is different. 8. House is wider. 9. Hand is moved. 10. The pigment chlorophyll.

- ACROSS 1 Roughly 5 Texter's "Wow!" 8 Nero's 1300 12 Stead 13 Museum-funding org. 14 Vicinity 15 In - (miffed) 16 Deception 18 Fawcett of '70s TV 20 Goodies 21 Skater's leap 23 "Delicious!" 24 Tobago's island neighbor 28 Salon request 31 A billion years 32 Whiskey drinks 34 Fish eggs 35 Privation 37 Three-paneled artwork 39 "Friendly skies" co. 41 Chevy sub-compact 42 Pulpit delivery 45 Painter Hopper 49 Homages 51 Always 52 Forearm bone 53 Depot (Abbr.) 54 Sultry Horne

King Crossword grid with numbers 1-57 indicating starting positions for words.

- DOWN 1 "Frozen" snowman 2 TV host Kelly 4 Defeated in a footrace 5 Promptly 6 Mal de - 7 Pace 8 Cosmetics 9 Butter producer 10 Birth doc. 11 Low isles 17 Sob 19 Pivot line 22 "Kinsey" actress Linney 24 - Aviv 25 Aussie hopper 26 Making certain 27 Tries to convey 29 Sinbad's bird 30 "Whatever" 33 Raced 36 Brazilian dances 38 Hair dryers 40 Baseball's Gehrig 42 Ticket half 43 - Stanley Gardner 44 Fed. accident investigator 46 Opposite of "sans" 47 Gambling mecca 48 "Phooey!" 50 Summer in Paris

### Trivia test

- 1. TELEVISION: Which TV sitcom features a French bulldog named Stella? 2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Algeria? 3. MUSIC: Which famous song starts with the line, "I read the news today, oh boy ..."? 4. MOVIES: Who wrote "Hedwig's Theme," the main music in the Harry Potter movies? 5. FOOD & DRINK: What is the origin of popcorn? 6. HISTORY: Where was Napoleon Bonaparte exiled to after his defeat in 1815? 7. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "The Sound and the Fury"? 8. ANATOMY: What are the smallest blood vessels called? 9. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: In what year did the international version of TikTok launch? 10. SCIENCE: What substance makes plants green?

Weekly SUDOKU grid and King Crossword grid with solution time: 22 mins.

Solution time: 22 mins. King Crossword



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