



Newly elected Mayor Oscar Mireles's first days in office have been busy assessing the state of the city from top to bottom. See Story Below & on page 5

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Mireles' First Days as Galena Park Mayor are Busy

By David Taylor
NCS Managing Editor

GALENA PARK — Newly installed Mayor Oscar Mireles says his first days in office have revealed a city government in urgent need of review, but he says his administration will focus on stabilizing operations, improving public safety and opening City Hall to more public input.

Mireles defeated long-time Mayor Esmeralda Moya in the May 2 election and took office after a tense transition that drew regional media attention and questions about records, staffing and the condition of city operations. Recent local reporting described a disputed and highly public changeover at City Hall following Mireles' win.

The swearing-in ceremony nearly did not happen after mayor Moya was



Oscar Mireles is sworn in as Mayor on the steps of Galena Park City Hall.

unexpectedly unable to attend.

According to those involved, "at around 5:35... [they were told] the mayor called... she had a family emergency and she's not going to be able to make it," leaving organizers scrambling with less than half an hour to figure out a solution.

Faced with the possibil-

ity of canceling in front of a large crowd and media presence, organizers weighed their options.

"I said, you know what? We have 25 minutes. Let's see what happens," Mireles recalled.

Without the mayor present, the ceremony required at least two commissioners to proceed. At first, it appeared that quo-

rum would not be reached. Organizers worked the phones in a last-minute effort to secure attendance. As time ran out—"it was 5:59"—they were on the verge of calling it off. "I was about to walk out the door to tell people that it wasn't going to happen," Mireles said.

At the last moment, word came that help was on the way. "Hold on, hold on. He's (the last commissioner) coming. Give it 10 minutes," he was told.

With that, organizers delayed the start and informed the crowd the mayor would not attend but asked for more time.

The plan ultimately held. By 6:15 p.m., enough commissioners had arrived, and they narrowly avoided a failed ceremony.

Among the first policy issues on his desk is the city's discounted water billing for senior residents.

Mireles said the city will revisit the program rather than automatically continue a flat \$34 rate, arguing that Houston's wholesale rate changes could make the current discount unsustainable. Complicating the issue, the city of Houston raised water rates this month they charge to the city of Galena Park.

"We're going to have to revisit that," he said. "We're going to have to look at it and really crunch the numbers." He added that while seniors "do deserve a discount," he does not yet believe it can remain "that deep of a discount."

"I think most people realize it was probably a ploy for re-election. That was another reason that I asked people to wait on paying it because we were learning how many people got the discount and how many people didn't," Mire-

les said alleging her supporters were the ones receiving the discount and not all seniors.

Mireles said his administration intends to pursue both a financial audit and a forensic review of city systems to determine the city's fiscal position and whether any records or equipment are missing. He said the city cannot afford to delay a clearer accounting of its books, especially if it hopes to regain access to grant funding and make informed decisions about staffing and services.

"I don't know all of what's missing, but you know, we'll figure it out," he said.

Some of the pettiness included missing keys, no passwords for key city systems and the outdoor sign.

Continued. See MIRELES SEEKS TRANSPARENCY, Page 5

Channelview ISD's History Making Mariachi Bands

By Allan Jamail

Channelview, TX. ~ On May 14, 2026 the History making Channelview ISD two Mariachi bands loaded-up in school buses heading to the famous Annual Pasadena Strawberry Festival to perform in the city's parade.

I had the pleasure of listening to the students perform at the recent grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of owners Ramiro & Marvella Granados LaTaza Corazón coffee shop (Channelview's first). Although these band members were students their music was as good as or better than the professional mariachi bands I've heard.

Mariachi Halcón de Oro and Mariachi Halcón Azul



Channelview ISD Mariachi Halcón de Oro and Mariachi Halcón Azul:

Mariachi Halcon de Oro: Director Ramon Garcia, Jose Bonilla, Juan Cabrera, Sophia Espinoza, Yuvia Flores, Davian Garcia, Joel Gonzalez, Abraham Iracheta, Francisco Morales, Emmelie Pereyra, Christopher Rodriguez, Luis Torres, Luke Valdez & Samantha Xiloj.

Mariachi Halcon Azul: Director Ramon Garcia, Jose Alanis, Diego Alvarado, Aylani Balleza, Jayd Garcia, Princess Garcia, Osvaldo Gonzalez, Angela Guajardo, Natalie Guifarro, Emilio Ibarra, Josiah Jackson, Isaac Mena, Allan Perez, Jose Ramirez, Jaasiel Suarez, Valentina Valdez & Alexander Zamora. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

are the official mariachi ensembles of Channelview High School in Channelview. Rooted in both cultural tradition and educational excellence, the program was established

to give students the opportunity to explore and perform the rich musical heritage of mariachi while strengthening their overall musicianship and performance skills.

Founded under the direction of Ramon Garcia, an alumnus of Texas A&M University-Kingsville and Associate Director of Bands at Channelview High School, Mariachi

Halcón de Oro became the school's first-ever mariachi ensemble and a meaningful expansion of the school's fine arts offerings, a history making event. Mr. Garcia helped build

the program from the ground up as a space where students can celebrate

Continued. See CVISD HS MARIACHI BAND, Page 2

Asian History Month Honoree

Celebrating Samsung's Lee kun-hee

By Allan Jamail

May 19, 2026 ~ Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2026 is observed from May 1 to May 31, celebrating their history, culture, and contributions.

May was chosen to commemorate two key milestones: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, which relied heavily on Chinese laborers. The observance began as a week in 1979, expanded to a month in 1990, and was permanently designated by Congress in 1992.

This week's Asian Honoree is Lee Kun-hee was a South Korean businessman who served as the chairman of Samsung from 1987 to 2008 and from 2010 to his death in 2020.

Lee Kun-hee was born



Lee Kun-hee, (January 9, 1942 – October 25, 2020)

on 9 January 1942 in Daegu, during the Japanese occupation of Korea. His father, Lee Byung-chul, founded the Samsung Group, initially as an exporter of fruit and dried fish. Lee Kun-hee studied economics at Waseda University in Tokyo, and was later educated at the George Washington University in the United States.

He is also credited with the transformation of Samsung to one of the world's largest business entities that engages in

semiconductors, smartphones, electronics, shipbuilding, construction, and other businesses.

Since Lee became the chairman of Samsung, the company became the world's largest manufacturer of smartphones, memory chips, and appliances. He was the third son of Samsung founder Lee Byung-chul. With an estimated net worth of US\$21 billion at the time of his death, he was the richest person in South Korea, a position that he had held since 2007.

He was convicted twice, once in 1996 and subsequently in 2008, for corruption and tax evasion charges, but was pardoned on both instances. In 2014, Lee was named the world's 35th most powerful person and the most powerful Korean by Forbes's list of the world's most powerful people along with his son, Lee Jae-yong.

Galena Park ISD Honors Student Success & Community Partnerships at GPCC PTA Luncheon



Galena Park ISD proudly welcomed parents, campus leaders, and community members to the GPCC PTA Luncheon, an endofyear celebration recognizing collaboration, service, and student success across the district.

The annual event highlighted the strong partnerships that continue to support students and families throughout their educational journey.

A highlight of the luncheon was the recognition of students who received

PTA scholarships, made possible through the generous support of GPCC PTA community and business partners. In addition, several scholarships were

Continued. See PTA PRIDE, Page 2

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Channelview HS Top 10 Class of 2026

Valedictorian



Gerardo Cavazos

Salutatorian



Lisa Le

Ranked Third



Jorge Gonzales

Ranked Fourth



Constantino Nunez

Ranked Fifth



Hannia Escalante

Ranked Sixth



Alexa Arana

Ranked Seventh



Arianna Hernandez

Ranked Eighth



Aubrianna del Bosque

Ranked Ninth



Joaquin Mondez

Ranked Tenth



Jasmine Sanchez

PTA pride: Supporting Student success,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



awarded through the GPISD Education Foundation, including the Desmond “Kat” Tyler Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Angi Williams Legacy of Excel-

lence Scholarship, Daniel Bazan Jr. Memorial Scholarship, and the United Community Credit Union Scholarship. These awards honor students for their academic achievement,

perseverance, and commitment to continuing their education beyond high school.

The luncheon also provided an opportunity to reflect on the

accomplishments of the school year and reaffirm a shared commitment to supporting students, staff, and families across Galena Park ISD. Through collaboration and open dialogue,

GPCC PTA and the GPISD Education Foundation remain valued partners in strengthening connections between schools and the community.

As the year comes to a close, Galena Park ISD celebrates its students and thanks all who help make GPISD a great place to be.

CVISD HS mariachi bands head to strawberry festival, building on a historic run,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

brate cultural identity, develop leadership and musicianship, and share music with their community.

Mariachi Halcón de Oro serves as the varsity ensemble, representing Channelview High School through performances at school concerts, district events such as Fine Arts Day, community celebrations, festivals, and competitions. In 2025, the program expanded with the creation of Mariachi Halcón Azul, the school's non-varsity ensemble, allowing even more students the opportunity to participate in mariachi performance and education.

Students in both ensem-

bles refine their instrumental and vocal abilities through traditional mariachi instrumentation including violins, flutes, saxophones, trumpets, guitarrón, vihuela, and guitar, while also learning the cultural expression and storytelling that define mariachi music. The ensembles remain active within the community and on social media, particularly through the program's Instagram page; @cv.mariachi, where performances, rehearsals, and community outreach are shared.

Since its inception, the mariachi program has quickly become an important part of Channelview

High School's performing arts tradition. Mariachi Halcón de Oro attended the UIL Mariachi Festival for the very first time and received a division one from all three judges, superior rating. At the 2026 UIL Solo and Ensemble event, Mariachi Halcón Azul earned Division 1 “Superior” ratings as large ensembles, reflecting the dedication, passion, and musical excellence of the students and directors. Today, the ensembles continue to serve as a source of pride for Channelview High School while preserving and promoting the vibrant tradition of mariachi music throughout the community.

GPISD Celebrates a Rising Star in Education

Galena Park ISD is proud to recognize Heather Rodriguez, AP Physics Teacher and UIL Calculator Mentor at North Shore Senior High School, for being named a 2026 HEB Excellence in Education Award Rising Star.

This prestigious honor celebrates outstanding public school educators who demonstrate passion and commitment to the teaching profession, innovation and creativity in the classroom, and a dedication to continuous professional growth. Ms. Rodriguez exemplifies these qualities through her engaging instruction and student-centered approach to learning.

Beyond the classroom, Ms. Rodriguez mentors



Heather Rodriguez, AP Physics Teacher and UIL Calculator Mentor at North Shore Senior High School

students through UIL, helping them sharpen problem-solving skills and gain confidence in advanced mathematics and science. Her work inspires students to think critically and reach their full potential.

Being named an HEB Rising Star highlights Ms. Rodriguez's positive impact on her students and school community. Congratulations to Ms. Rodriguez on this well-deserved recognition—GPISD is proud to celebrate her success!

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



What is Next?

It is the time of year when parents are ready to pull their calendars out, if not their hair. What seems like every few minutes they are hearing phrases such as “I am bored” or “what’s to eat?” or even worse “I am bored!” So, what is a parent, grandparent or caregiver supposed to do? Boredom sets in much quicker today than ever before. We have become a society that thinks we need to be busy or always fulfilled. Very few people have learned to be content. The messages we see on television, social media and hear on the radio are always about being on the go, being active, spending money and it is often said that we are raising an anxious generation.

While it is good to be involved, sometimes we need to slow down and rest. As I write those words, I feel as if I am talking to the person in the mirror, yet I am a product of the times. I have learned my shortfalls, and I have learned what helps my mental state of mind. After years of being a single mother, I am accustomed to staying busy. As I talk with Seniors each week, I hear the same thing. If someone worked a full-time job, kept their children involved in school, extracurricular activities and took care of the responsibilities around the house, what do they do now that they have time on their hands?

Fortunately, many years ago the late Commissioner Jim Fonteno listened to friends, neighbors and constituents and started working to develop activities for citizens in our area to stay active, stay involved and enjoy fellowship that keeps their minds sharp and their wit as sharp as ever. Through the decades the Harris County Commissioners have continued the activities and in addition, other groups offer a variety of activities.

Several local churches offer Bible Study during the day as well as plan events and day trips for their congregants as well as friends. There are activities planned for those who live in Senior apartment complexes as well as those with active Homeowner Associations and several groups of retirees are active in our area for former educators and employees of Southwestern Bell and AT&T. Many of the Seniors I talk with enjoy line-dancing, golf, Bingo and organized trips to the casino. Quite a few retirees volunteer with the YMCA, East Harris County Empowerment Council and at various food distribution sites in the area.

In addition to these groups, there is a newly formed group of area residents that are known as “The Rusty Buckets Senior Group” and they have started with a bang. They have scheduled an outing each month to gather for a meal and have multiple field trips planned throughout the remainder of the year including trips to Trader’s Village, The Lazy Dog and more. It is no surprise that many of the group have raised their children in our area and they held one of their first organizational meetings at Gatti’s Pizza. If you would like information on how to join the fun, please contact therustybuckets72@yahoo.com

Save the Dates

C.H.I.C. Monthly Meeting

When: Thursday, May 28, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Channelview Fire Station No. 3, 1210 Dell Dale, Channelview, TX 77530

Details: Monthly meeting of C.H.I.C. Open to the community.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “What sets natural diamonds apart from lab-grown diamonds?”



Let’s first begin by asking, “What is a lab-grown diamond?”

A laboratory grown diamond, also known as a synthetic diamond, lab created diamond, or man-made diamond, is a man-made gemstone that mimics the physical properties and optical properties of a natural diamond. Unlike natural diamonds, lab grown diamonds can be produced in unlimited quantities. Lab grown diamonds are created using advanced technologies such as High-Pressure High Temperature (HPHT) or Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD), which simulate the conditions under which natural diamonds form deep within the Earth’s mantle.

Where do natural diamonds come from?

Natural diamonds form over billions of years from deep within the heated core of the earth. Natural diamonds are rare and limited in supply, with only a certain finite supply of these diamonds available. Mined diamonds are ancient (typically 1 to 3 billion years old). This distinction makes natural diamonds some of the oldest substances in earth and arguably the hardest natural substance at 10.0 on the Mohs hardness scale.

Do lab grown diamonds hold value?

Lab grown diamond prices have dropped significantly, from 80% of the cost of natural diamonds in 2016 to less than 20% by 2024. This dramatic price reduction is largely due to the ability to produce lab grown diamonds in unlimited quantities using methods like Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD) and High-Pressure High Temperature (HPHT). Unlike natural diamonds, which are rare, lab grown diamonds are priced based on production costs and retail markup. As production techniques improve and scale, their value is expected to continue declining until they reach a stable price point.

What is the actual value of natural diamonds?

Like other natural materials, how much natural diamonds cost is based on how rare they are to find in nature. The rarer the natural diamond, the more valuable it will be. A diamond’s Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carat weight form the basis for a specific diamond’s rarity. A 1.25 carat E/VS2 diamond is considerably more rare and valuable than a 1.25 carat H/SI2 diamond. Over the last 35 years, natural diamond prices have been shown to appreciate in value by approximately 3% annually. In its 2019 Global Diamond Industry Report, Bain & Co. found that the natural diamond market has grown 300% over the past 50 years.

So, which shall it be?

Will you be considering lab-grown diamonds more due to their lower upfront cost? Or will you be looking harder at natural mined diamonds due to their uniqueness and value retention? Either one would be a good choice. A diamond that you can enjoy for many years to come.

Stop by Diamond Jim’s Pineforest Jewelry Experience and receive your “WOW” experience. We have an amazing collection of lab-grown diamonds and an equally impressive collection of natural mined diamonds. We hope to see you very soon!

Con-grad-ulations are in order!



Diamond Jim's Pineforest Jewelry Experience

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Thank you for reading the “Ask Diamond Jim” column and for supporting the North Channel Star Newspaper!

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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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Good Stuff!

Community donates 1 000 Stuffed Animals To First Responders as Comfort companions

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HIGHLANDS — In the spirit of spring and community kindness, the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands gave local first responders something special to keep on hand for children facing frightening emergencies: stuffed animals meant to comfort them in moments of trauma.

The center’s inaugural “Stuffed With Care” drive collected more than 1,000 stuffed animals, which were distributed to the Harris County Sheriff’s Office District 3, Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Eagleton’s office, and the Highlands Fire Department, including ambulances serving the area.

San Jacinto Community Center Director Tonya Kostka said the idea grew from seeing similar efforts elsewhere, but she wanted to make the impact broader.

“I thought, well, I’ll go a step further and I will support all our first responders, not just our deputies that work the

area,” Kostka said. “So, we reached out and we supported the fire department as well.”

Kostka said the campaign was designed with one simple goal in mind — helping children find a sense of comfort when everything around them feels overwhelming.

“Whenever they’re on a scene where there’s a child that might need a little comfort, hopefully it helps. That was our plan,” she said.

The drive began in mid-February, continued through March, and wrapped up in April. Donors were asked to provide new stuffed animals, with community members, seniors, and local businesses stepping up in a major way. Kostka described the response as overwhelming and heartfelt.

“It was a labor of love,” she said. “It was definitely coming from all angles.”

Among the supporters were Crosby Sheffield Liquidation, the Rotary Club of Highlands, Randy Casey State Farm, and seniors who attend the cen-



Firefighters Chief Mike Carsner, Theresa Young, Captain Ryan Lopez, and Captain Chris Contreras from Highlands Fire Department were happy to receive several tote bags full of stuffed animals to give to children on their scenes who may be in trauma when they arrive.



Harris County Pct. 3 constables Katie Evans and Sgt. Jeff Gonzales join Tonya Kostka, director at the SJCC, to receive their allotment of stuffed animals. The furry toys will be put in patrol cars and given to children who are in distress on the scenes that they service.

assurance at scenes where children may be scared and confused.

“When kids are in trauma, they look for what they consider a soothing trigger and that could be holding a stuffed animal and stroking the soft fur or just something that they can hold themselves tight while things are chaotic around them,” Waybright said. “We really appreciate this. It will really be impactful.”

Kostka said each law enforcement group received four large bags of stuffed animals, while the fire department received even more to stock two stations and their emergency vehicles.

She also said the success of the first drive means it won’t be the last. “This will be an annual thing moving forward,” Kostka said. “So we’ll keep doing it each year.”

As spring blooms across Highlands, the “Stuffed With Care” drive has already planted seeds of compassion that will continue growing — one child, one emergency, and one stuffed animal at a time.


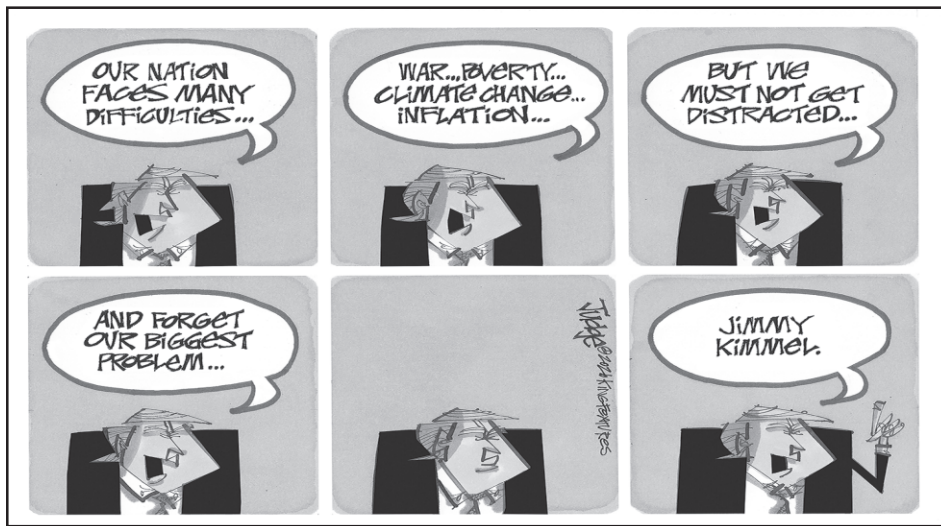
ter regularly and brought stuffed animals day after day.

For first responders, the donation is more than just a kind gesture — it’s a practical tool for helping children cope during chaotic and traumatic situations.

Lt. Aaron Waybright of the Harris County Sheriff’s Office District 3 said stuffed animals can offer immediate emotional re-

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**

THE POSTSCRIPT
By **Carrie Classon**

New FEMA Flood Maps for Harris County

Update!
New FEMA Flood Maps for Harris County

This week, FEMA issued updated flood maps for Harris County. This is the first update to the maps since 2007. The maps are currently proposed and subject to public comment. However, it is widely expected that they will soon be adopted largely in the proposed form.

These revisions are hugely consequential for Harris County. Their adoption will mean that thousands of acres of land will now be subject to more restrictive flood regulations. Thousands more will be subject to regulation for the first time.

The proposed FEMA maps can be found [here](#) (Click on Draft Database for Community Review and then zoom in to Harris County). The Houston Chronicle has also published an excellent map showing the changes in the flood map from the 2007 maps. Unfortunately, it is currently behind their paywall, so only subscribers can view it. However, the Harris County Flood Control District has also just put up a new map that shows the changes in very high resolution and is the most user-friendly of the three. On the HCTRA map, changes can be compared by clicking the "Manage Change Comparison" button in the upper-left corner of the map, then using the sliding bar to view the changes.

The maps designate areas within the 100- and 500-year floodplains — that is, those properties that have a 1% and a 0.2% of flooding in any given year. When you are looking at the FEMA maps, the 100-year floodplain is designated as "AE."

The changes primarily reflect updated rainfall projections for southeast Texas adopted by NOAA in 2018 — widely known as "Atlas 14." These models predict about a 25%-30% increase in rainfall in our region.

The new maps also reflect changes to the physical watershed, such as additional runoff from paved areas and improvements such as detention facilities. One silver lining of the new maps is that some areas have been removed from the floodplains due to the massive drainage projects completed in those watersheds. These included significant areas near Braes, Sims, Hunting, and White Oak. A particularly dramatic example of this is along Hunting Bayou near the NE corner of Loop 610, where hundreds of homes and businesses have been removed from the floodplain altogether. This includes virtually all of the Settegast neighborhood.

There are two immediate consequences of these changes. First, in nearly all cases, flood insurance will be required to obtain a mortgage on any property that has been moved into a 100-year flood plain. Second, any property moved into a 500-year floodplain will be subject to the regulations adopted by Harris County and the City of Houston after Hurricane Harvey. Generally speaking, these regulations require that any structure in a 500-year floodplain be raised to two feet above what is referred to as the "base flood elevation." The base flood elevation must be calculated for each property.

While the new flood maps will mean that fewer homes and businesses will flood in future storms, they will also make it dramatically more expensive and difficult to build in Harris County. They will likely make it impractical to build in much of the County. That will, of course, encourage more development outside the County. In a perverse irony, much of the development will be shifted to Montgomery County, where the FEMA maps have not been updated. But of course, drainage from developments in Montgomery County mostly flows downstream into Harris County — once again making the case for a regional flood control authority.

The maps will also cause additional brand damage to the Houston region. They will once again remind individuals and companies considering relocating here of our region's vulnerability to flooding.

The new maps also underscore the importance of the Harris County Flood Control Authority's timely completion of the 2018 bond program. The completion of those projects could serve as the basis for removing large tracts from the floodplains. The reductions in the floodplain along several of our watersheds show these projects can make a difference.

Building a giant metropolis on a flat coastal plain, subject to frequent hurricanes, reminds me of Robert Burns' line in "To a Mouse," "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley (often go astray)."

Yet perhaps we need to think about our excess rainfall differently and not purely as a liability. In a nation increasingly concerned about freshwater scarcity, Houston's hydrologic surplus could be a long-term strategic asset. Each inch of rain across Harris County represents roughly 29 billion gallons of freshwater. The challenge is not how to make it disappear faster, but how to capture, store, and recharge more of it. With smarter regional detention, aquifer recharge of water strategies, and reservoir management, Houston could convert its principal liability into a strategic asset, indeed, perhaps an entirely new industry.

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. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By **Gary Borders**



Top Lawmakers Back Lifting Camp Safety Law

Top Texas legislators are pushing to waive a new state law that requires camps to install broadband fiber optics in order to legally operate this summer, The Dallas Morning News reported. Scores of camps are struggling to meet the deadline. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dustin Burrows released a statement last week saying they support lifting the law.

Nearly 20 camps have sued to block the law requiring them to install a fiber-optic network, arguing that it does not make their properties safer and would cost millions of dollars. So far only nine Texas summer camps are licensed to open, with fewer than two weeks before the season begins. Nearly 300 are still working to obtain licenses. The Department of State Health Services said last week that camps will be allowed to operate under existing licenses while their applications are reviewed.

The laws were passed in the aftermath of last year's July 4 flooding, which killed more than two dozen campers at Camp Mystic along the Guadalupe River. In addition to fiber optic networks, camps must install emergency warning and public address systems and provide safety training for campers.

PATRICK BACKS MIDDLETON IN ATTORNEY GENERAL RUNOFF

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick is backing state Sen. Mayes Middleton, R-Galveston, in the GOP runoff for Texas attorney general on May 26. Early voting runs from May 18 to May 22. In the runoff, Middleton faces U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, R-Austin.

"Mayes Middleton has established a record as one of the most conservative senators in Texas history," Patrick said on social media.

The News quoted Patrick as saying Middleton will make the post "the strongest and



most impactful AG office in the nation."

Democrats Joe Jaworski, a former Galveston mayor, and state Sen. Nathan Johnson, D-Dallas, are in a runoff for their party's attorney general nomination. Incumbent Ken Paxton opted not to run and is locked in a primary runoff with incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn.

Cornyn, Paxton in tight runoff race

Paxton is locked in a tight race against incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn for the GOP nomination, the Texas Standard reported. The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston recently conducted a poll that showed Paxton leading Cornyn, 48% to 45% with 7% still undecided.

The poll of those indicating they were likely to vote in the GOP runoff had a 2.83% margin of error.

In the first quarter of this year, Cornyn raised nearly \$9 million, including \$3.4 million after the March primary. Paxton raised \$2.2 million. Democratic nominee state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock, raised a record \$27 million in the first quarter, the largest-ever sum for a Senate candidate in the first quarter of an election year in any state.

TEXAS HAS BIGGEST TEACHER WORKFORCE, BUT THEY GET PAID LESS

Texas has the country's largest teacher workforce but lags behind the national average in teacher

pay and per-student spending, according to a report in the Austin American-Statesman.

A National Education Association report said teacher pay in Texas is about \$10,700 below the U.S. average. Texas public school teachers earned an average of \$63,749 in 2024-2025, which put it 33rd among states and Washington, D.C. The national average was \$74,495.

Texas had nearly 370,000 public school teachers in 2024-2025, the highest number in the country.

SMOKABLE HEMP AGAIN PULLED FROM TEXAS SHELVES

Smokable hemp products such as flower buds and rolled joints must again be pulled from store shelves as the state appeals the latest court ruling, according to The Texas Tribune. The ban was set to take effect on March 31, but lawyers for the hemp industry filed suit challenging the plan. A Travis County district judge temporarily halted imposition of the ban, but with the 15th Texas Court of Appeals agreeing to hear the state's appeal of the lower court ruling, the ban is now back in effect.

"We are confident that the 15th Court of Appeals will reinstate our temporary injunction so that our vets, elderly, and adult consumers have reasonable access to these products," said David Sergi, an attorney for the hemp industry.

Hemp retailers have said their businesses have lost over half their revenue since imposition of the new rules, which also include much steeper licensing fees.

TEXAS MOST AT-RISK STATE FOR HAIL DAMAGE

Everything is bigger in Texas, including the hail, according to Cotality's 2026 Severe Convective Storm Risk Report, published in the Statesman. The state ranks as the most at-risk for hail damage, with 8 million homes exposed and a combined reconstruction value exceeding \$3.1 trillion.

Four Texas cities rank among the top 10 for homes at greater risk of hail damage. Dallas ranks second nationally, behind Chicago, followed by Houston in third, Austin in ninth, and San Antonio in tenth.

"Although most hailstones are typically pea- or dime-size, hail can grow to as large as golf balls and baseballs. In extreme cases, hail can reach the size of a softball, grapefruit or even a pineapple," Statesman meteorologist Mary Wasson wrote.

A pineapple?

Sharon's Book Club



I was never a part of any team.

I was terrible at sports. I was so bad at tennis in high school that my gym teacher sent me to the school nurse to have my vision checked. I didn't bother to tell her I was wearing contact lenses.

In elementary school, I was never asked to jump rope. Jumping rope was popular when I was in elementary school, and I was not. I watched the girls jump and knew two things: I would never be asked, and I would be terrible at jumping rope if I were asked.

Instead, I read. Books were my escape and my friends. But I never thought of writing a novel until I was almost 60.

"Would you like to come to my book club?" a woman I had never met, named Sharon, asked me in January.

"Loon Point" had not yet been released. I was a bundle of nerves. And here was this stranger who read an article about me in her local paper, asking if I would come and talk about my book.

"Of course!" I said.

The weeks passed. I hoped "Loon Point" wouldn't disappoint my publisher. I hoped people wouldn't write terrible things about it in their reviews. I knew that getting a first book into the world is hard. But a lot of people read "Loon Point." I gave my husband, Peter, the job of looking at the sales numbers that my publisher seemed determined to provide (even if it might have been better for my mental health not to have quite so much information). Peter told me that my little book was doing surprisingly well.

So the night of Sharon's book club came, and she contacted me to make sure I had not forgotten. I had not. I would not have missed Sharon's book club for the world.

When I drove up to Sharon's house in suburbia, I saw there were a lot of cars already parked outside, and a few more people walking down the street, headed to her house carrying book bags, and I realized all these folks had come to Sharon's house to hear about my book.

Sharon had made name tags because, as it turned out, this was not really an established book club after all. Sharon had just moved into her new house a year ago. She had invited friends from her old home and neighbors from her new home, and Denise, a friend she'd had since third grade. Many of these women were just meeting for the first time. Sharon just wanted everyone to have a chance to meet this local author she had hunted up and ask questions.

And everyone had questions about the book. They asked about how I wrote it, and they told me about the people in their lives who reminded them of the character Wendell. We talked about the first books we remembered reading as kids and what we were reading now. Everyone seemed to enjoy "Loon Point," whether they had read it on a Kindle or on paper or listened to the audiobook. I don't know when I have had so much fun.

Two hours flew by and, as I left, Sharon gave me a card and some beautiful pink flowers. I didn't read the card until I got home.

"We look forward to following your career!" the card said. It was signed, "Your Home Team."

I'd never had a team before. I put the flowers on my desk and thought how grateful I was to have been invited to Sharon's book club.

Till next time,
Carrie

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Mireles seeks transparency, financial review after taking office,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

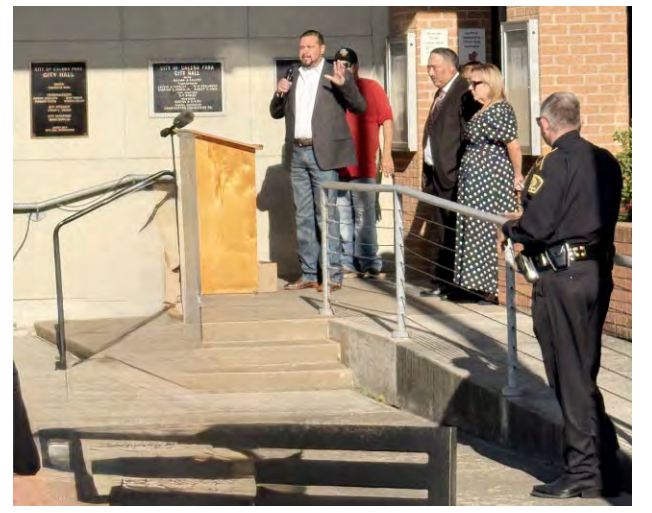
On Thursday morning, Mireles met with department heads and received some revealing information on the state of their work.

Another issue facing Mireles is the discovery of how many employees have quit in the past and what positions are open for filling and if he has the finances to replace them. The former city attorney is one of those who quit their position with the city. Mireles is already in the process of hiring a new city attorney and the first thing Thursday morning, the IT firm was already at city hall assisting with new passwords and documenting any potential nefarious activity.

Public safety is also central to his early agenda. Mireles said he wants to reevaluate spending in the police department, particularly at the leadership level, and shift attention toward patrol presence and prevention. He criticized



In the foreground of the third photo, a large, temporary A-frame sign stands on the lawn outside Galena Park City Hall. The sign features the city's seal and reads in bold, block letters: "Congrats Mayor Oscar Mireles" representing A New Chapter for Galena Park.



Mayor Oscar Mireles talk to a crowd city hall full of supporters and family members as well as local officials At the oath ceremony. The moment marked the official start of his term as the city's newest mayor.

cized the city's reliance on rented camera trailers near a park that has seen repeated violence, saying the city needs a broader strategy than simply monitoring the same trouble spots.

For Mireles, that broader strategy starts with youth programs and public gathering spaces.

"We need to open up the community centers," he said. "We need to make sure that we give them an opportunity to do something." He argued that keeping community centers active could help reduce problems at the park by giving young people a place to go after school and before parents get home.

Mireles also said he wants a more visible and accessible city government. He said he plans to encourage wider community discussion outside formal meetings and wants city business broadcast live on social media so residents who cannot attend in person can still follow decisions.

"I want to make sure that everything is live broadcasted on social media," he said, adding that residents should have more chances to share concerns and ideas about issues ranging from street lighting to pedestrian safety.

Even as questions linger from the transition, Mire-

les said he does not want to remain focused on the past.

"Everybody's just ready for change and we want to move forward," he said. "I'm not going to dwell on the past. I'll give it a little bit of attention, but we need to focus on the future."



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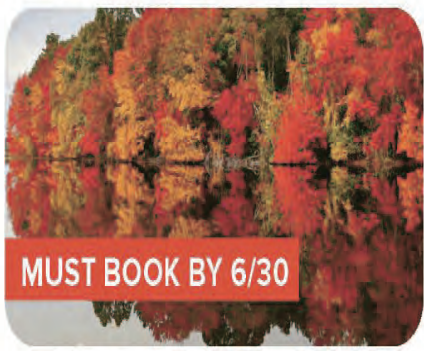
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Texas Leads in Immigration Detention as Crossings plummet

By Gary Borders,

Texas continues to lead the country in the number of people held in detention centers, even as unauthorized border crossings plunge, the Houston Chronicle reported.

As of early April, the daily average in Texas was nearly 18,000 people. That's more than twice the average number of immigrants held in Louisiana, the second highest, with about 8,100 per day.

Texas' high numbers are partly due to the state's numerous deten-



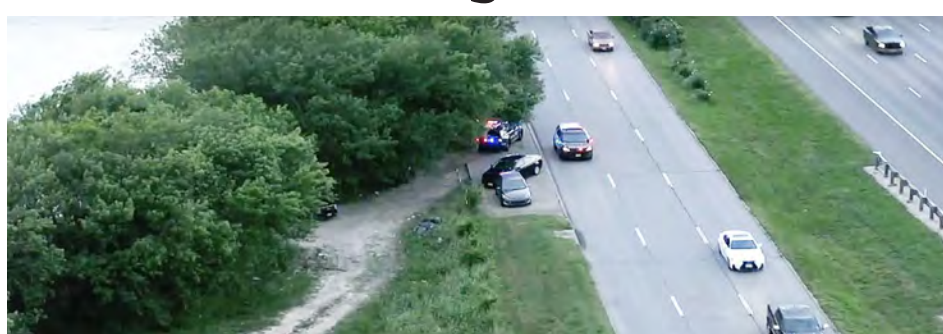
tion centers and a ruling from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals that upheld the practice of hold-

ing immigrants until their removal proceedings conclude.

"The 5th Circuit is not immigrant-friendly, and it's easier to remove people who are detained in the Texas facilities," said Zenobia Lai, executive director of the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative.

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security said decisions on where detainees are held are made on a "case-by-case basis in accordance with U.S. law."

Fisherman Discovers Body in Greens Bayou Near I-10, Homicide Investigation Launched



EAST HOUSTON – A fisherman's discovery of a body in a Houston-area bayou has prompted a homicide investigation by the Houston Police Department. The grim find occurred on Saturday evening along Greens Bayou, near I-10 and Uvalde Road.

At approximately 6:34 p.m., officers were called to the scene after the fisherman, who was enjoying a day of fishing, spotted the body and immediately dialed 911, according to Lt. Michael Pulido of the Houston Police Department.

The body, identified as that of an adult male, was located at the water's edge.

However, due to the extended time the body had spent submerged, authorities have been unable to determine the victim's age, race, or any distinguishing features. "We don't know the age or race or anything and that's all the information we have right now," Pulido stated.

The investigation saw the involvement of Houston Police homicide detectives, the department's dive team, and the Harris County medical examiner, who worked together to recover the body from the water on Friday night.

While the investigation is still in its early stages, Pulido indicated that there is currently no suspicion of

foul play. "At this time, we don't believe that's the case," he said, addressing concerns about the possibility of the body being dumped. "We think this is just a random occurrence." He also reassured the public that there is no known threat.

This discovery adds to a troubling trend, as it is the latest in a series of bodies found in Houston-area waterways in recent months. Since 2017, over 200 bodies have been recovered from the city's bayous.

Authorities are urging anyone with information to contact the Houston Police Department Homicide Division or Crime Stoppers to assist in the investigation.

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Please be advised that Galena Park ISD will hold a Zoom meeting for administrators of all Private Nonprofit Schools with students residing in the Galena Park ISD attendance area. Information on the 2026-2027 program planning, availability, and eligibility criteria of Federal funds and services (Title I, II, III, IV, and Special Education programs) will be held on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 1:00 pm. For additional information about this meeting, please contact Amy Cole at 832-386-1028 or acole@galenaparkisd.com.

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Bob Odenkirk star in "Normal."

"Normal"

"Project Hail Mary" (PG-13) — This sci-fi film starring Ryan Gosling ("The Actor") became the second highest-grossing film of the year...

"Ladies First" (R) — Inspired by the French film "I Am Not an Easy Man," this comedy film premiering May 22 flips the patriarchy on its head...

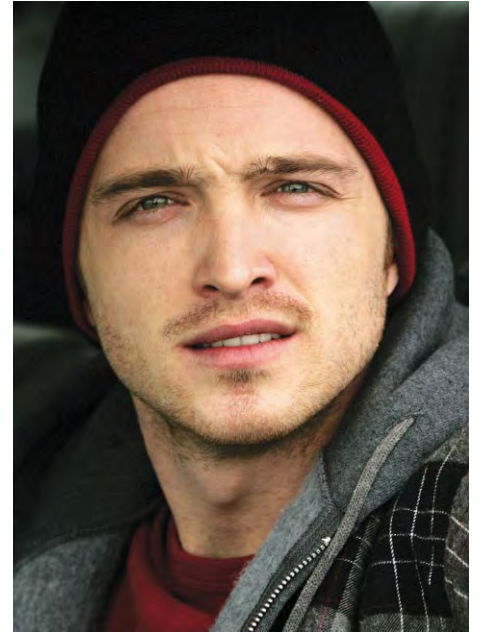
action/comedy film is led by Bob Odenkirk ("Better Call Saul"), who co-wrote the story alongside screenwriter Derek Kolstad.

"In the City" (TV-MA) — The spin-off of the Bravo reality series "Summer House" hits streaming this week with its pilot episode premiering on May 20!



Q: Is there any chance that there'll ever be a continuation of the show "Breaking Bad" with the character Jesse Pinkman? — M.G.

A: Never say never, but the answer for now is "no." Despite Aaron Paul's fondness for the character of Jesse and his respect for "Breaking Bad" and "Better Call Saul" creator Vince Gilligan...



Aaron Paul as Jesse Pinkman in "Breaking Bad"

Q: Wasn't there a TV show from years ago where the lead guy from "Sons of Anarchy" played a college student? I never did watch it but would like to find it on streaming. — T.J.

A: Before Charlie Hunnam bulked up to play a motorcycle gang member in the FX series "Sons of Anarchy," as well as a serial killer in Netflix's "Monster," he played a college freshman in a TV series that was created by Judd Apatow.

Apatow is credited with introducing audiences to future stars like Hunnam, Seth Rogen ("The Studio"), Jason Segel ("Shrinking"), and Linda Cardellini ("DTF St. Louis")...

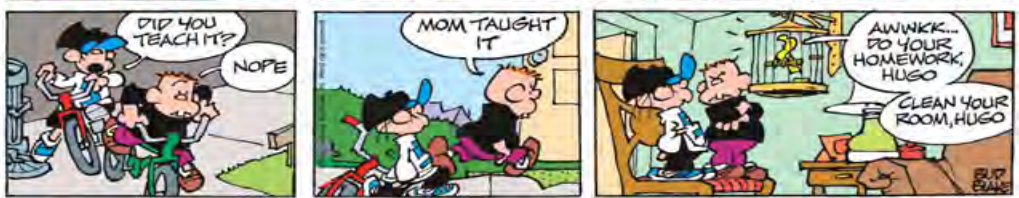
You can stream "Undeclared" on Netflix. Be sure to keep an eye out for appearances by Apatow's buddies Adam Sandler, Will Ferrell and Amy Poehler.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com. (c) 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

ENTERTAINMENT

May 18, 2026 Posting Date

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions

HOCUS-FOCUS comic strip by Henry Boltinoff

ACROSS

- 1 Detox center
6 Gives up
12 Swiss metropolis
13 Unexpected
14 Ingratiate
15 Stahl of "60 Minutes"
16 Disposition
17 "La — Bonita"
19 Casual shirt
20 Third son
22 Capote nickname
24 Canine greeting
27 Furnace fuel
29 Branches
32 President of South Africa, 1994-1999
35 Pronto
36 Monumental
37 Half dozen
38 Fannie —
40 Former Laker Lamar
42 Sashimi fish
44 Neatnik's nightmare
46 Jazzy James
50 Legislative group
52 Camelot king
54 Aerie newborn
55 Organize an art show

King Crossword

King Crossword grid with numbers 1-57

- 9 Birds of prey
10 Duel tool
11 Ocular woe
12 Tiara jewel
18 Rug cleaner
21 — friendly
23 "Awesome, dude!"
24 Navarro of "The View"
25 Scale members
26 Pink wading bird
28 Relaxed
30 Roman 1051
31 Coltrane's instrument
33 Aromatherapy spot
34 Sgt., e.g.
39 Lauder of cosmetics
41 Paris subway
42 Cruising
43 Lettuce unit
45 Reply to "Shall we?"
47 Spring meltdown
48 Mild rebukes
49 "How — you?"
51 Cleric's tunic
53 Scamper

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- 1. FOOD & DRINK: When fish eggs are served as food, what are they called?
2. LITERATURE: Which Dr. Seuss book about trying new foods has a character called Sam-I-Am?
3. GEOGRAPHY: What is the most populated country in Africa?
4. U.S. STATES: Which state's nickname is The Pine Tree State?
5. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of animal produces mohair?
6. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many times does a standard dinner fork have?
7. FOOD & DRINK: In what year was Kool-Aid introduced?
8. TELEVISION: Which animated TV show features a baby named Stewie?
9. MOVIES: What is the name of the character played by John Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever"?
10. SCIENCE: What is a googol?

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1. Roc; 2. "Green Eggs and Ham"; 3. Nigella; 4. Maine; 5. Angora goats; 6. Hour; 7. 1927; 8. "Family Guy"; 9. Tony Manero; 10. The digit "1," followed by 100 zeros

Solution time: 21 mins. Answers King Crossword

Highlands Rotary Supports Perfect Attendance at Highlands Elementary



HIGHLANDS TX - In a generous gesture to promote education, punctuality, and healthy living, the Highlands Rotary Club has donated 10 bicycles and helmets for students at Highlands Elementary School. These prizes will be awarded to one boy and

one girl from each grade, from 1st to 5th, who have maintained perfect attendance throughout the school year. The much-anticipated drawing for these prizes will take place next week during the school's award ceremonies. Students who

have achieved perfect attendance are encouraged to attend and participate in the excitement. The Highlands Rotary Club extends its best wishes to all eligible students and hopes this initiative will inspire continued dedication to their studies.

Former Rivals Rally Behind Briscoe Cain in CD-9 Runoff

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

With just over two weeks remaining before the Republican runoff for Texas Congressional District 9, State Rep. Briscoe Cain is highlighting a wave of support from former opponents in the primary, arguing the endorsements show growing unity behind his campaign over rival Alex Mealer.

On Tuesday, May 12, Dan Mims of Channelview, who finished fourth in the March Primary polling, threw his support to Cain.

"I believe Briscoe will work hard for the citizens of our district and will give the Republican Party the best chance to beat the Democrats and win this seat in November," he said.

Mims said following the election, he took some time off to reflect. Both camps contacted him seeking his support, but he said he took his time to consider which of the two candidates would meet the needs of those who live in the district.

"Over the past few months, Mary (his wife) and I have gotten to know Briscoe and his family. Like me, Briscoe is from here and lives here. I believe he is a man of honor and integrity who will put the hard-working voters of this district ahead of the special interests trying to buy this seat. We deserve a representative who will go to Washington, D.C., to serve while remaining true to his Texas roots and loyal to the citizens of CD-9," Mims said firmly.

Mims said he didn't want someone who would go to work in Washington for the party or for the president, but rather with anyone willing to sit down



Endorsements from former Republican primary opponents add momentum to Cain's campaign ahead of the May 26 runoff.

and talk through issues.

"We also need a representative whose home will continue to be in CD-9 — not someone who will just stop by occasionally," he said pointedly toward Mealer who is reportedly already scouting out a place to live in Washington.

"Your support of my campaign is greatly appreciated, and this request is made with the utmost respect for you and your desire for true representative governance," he told his supporters in a letter on Tuesday.

"I humbly ask that you join me in voting for Briscoe Cain in the upcoming runoff election for Texas Congressional District 9," he closed in his letter.

The news of the endorsement brought joy and appreciation from the Cain camp.

"Having Dan's endorse-

ment really means a lot. He's a community leader that I've known and watched and see the fruit of his leadership here, not just at San Jac(into College), but kind of really across the district," Cain responded.

"When he called to make the endorsement, I couldn't have been more excited. I had one of the biggest smiles I've had in a very long time," he said.

The endorsement comes on the heels of the other candidates in the race tossing their support to Cain as well.

Steve Stockman, Stovall, Sarmiento, and Blanco have also endorsed.

Cain has five times requested a debate with Mealer and she has canceled all five times.

Early voting for the Republican Runoff begins on May 18th - 22nd and the election day is Tuesday, May 26th.

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