



Bella Abzug, nicknamed "Battling Bella", (July 24, 1920 - March 31, 1998) was an American lawyer, politician, social activist, and a leader in the women's movement - Story in PAGE 8

NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

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VOLUME 14, NO. 33 (#629) THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2026 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

Community Events

Thursday, August 27
9 a.m. Coffee with a Cop, Hampton Inn, 14120 Karissa Court

10 a.m. Donations accepted for St Andrew Catholic Church 52nd Annual Fall Bazaar, Call 713-303-0229

6:45 p.m. Dinner and Bible Study, East Houston Revival Center, 16221 Bear Bayou Drive

7 p.m. Season Opening Game for Galena Park High School Football (home)

Friday, August 28
9 a.m. Channelview Ministry Team Meeting, Joyce Hendrix Administration Building

7 p.m. Season Opening Game for Channelview High School Football (home)

7 p.m. Season Opening Game for CE King High School Football (home)

7 p.m. Season Opening Game for North Shore Senior High School Football (home)

7 p.m. Healing Huddles, Open to adults ages 25-50, 4014 Market Street, Houston

Saturday, August 29
8 a.m. EASTBOUND RUN CLUB, Gene Green Park, call 713-614-8064 for details

Sunday, August 30
12:00 p.m. Fifth Sunday Potluck & Praise. Singing will start around 1 p.m. There will be an open mic time., 16221 Bear Bayou Dr.

Monday, August 31
5 p.m. Deadline to purchase tickets for State of the Youth Address & Annual Scholarship Fundraiser, call 832-896-1633 for details

Tuesday, September 1
5:30 p.m., VFW Monthly Meeting, 16417 Market St., Phone: 832-458-4114

Wednesday, September 2

11:30 a.m. Senior Bible Study, Next Generation Church

12 p.m. Mid-Day Mid-Week Bible Study, Fellowship of Purpose

5:30 p.m. Free Community Dinner, Fellowship of the Nations, 13305 Woodforest Blvd.

Galena Park Library's Meet & Greet Mayor Oscar Mireles

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park, TX. ~ August 5, 2026 at Harris County's Branch Library in Galena Park Branch Manager Sisi Medina and staff provided residents with the opportunity to meet the new mayor Oscar Mireles in an informal setting and to have a guided tour of the library.

Ms. Medina opened the meeting and introduced Mayor Oscar Mireles and said, "We were honored to welcome the Mayor and City officials to our library for a special visit celebrating the new administration. It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with the Mayor, share the many programs, services, and resources we provide, and highlight the positive impact the library has on residents of all ages"

"We were especially encouraged by the Mayor's enthusiasm and his expressed interest in working with us to



Oscar Mireles, Galena Park's new mayor explains to citizens some of the tough issues he says he inherited upon his election in May of this year. He complimented the library for its contributions to the community. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

better serve the community. His support and willingness to collaborate reaffirm the value of the library as a community partner, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead. We look forward to building a strong partnership with the



Galena Park's Branch Manager Sisi Medina provided Mayor Mireles and guest an extensive PowerPoint presentation of the library services. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

Mayor and the City as we continue to inspire learning, connect people, and enrich lives, Medina concluded.

Mayor Oscar Mireles said, "It is very exciting to learn about all of the services that the library provides to our resi-

dents, and inspirational to see how dedicated the staff are to making knowledge accessible to everyone. We look forward to collaborating with them as an administration, to give everyone in Galena Park resources to help them thrive."

Medina presented a thorough PowerPoint presentation of what the library has to offer residents in the area. She also introduced the staff with each one of their field of expertise and responsibilities.

These member of Commissioner Adrian Garcia's office were present, Alexandra Cuellar, Public Affairs Executive Specialist, Mercedes Sanchez, Executive Director of Community & Government Affairs and Myriam Saldivar, Community Relations Liaison. They introduced themselves to the attendees before and after the meeting while enjoying the snacks and refreshments the library provided.

Besides the mayor's presence other Galena Park city officials present to greet the community's guests were;

Continued. See MIRELES MEETS RESIDENTS AT GP LIBRARY, Page 2

Cloverleaf Neighbors Take Ownership of Cleanup Effort Through Adopt-A-Mile to Transform Community Image

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

CLOVERLEAF — For years, parts of Cloverleaf carried a reputation many residents and business owners wanted to leave behind: a community too often associated with illegal dumping, littered roadsides and a run-down appearance.

Now, a growing group of local businesses, churches and families is working to change that image — one mile at a time.

Through Harris County Precinct 2's Adopt-A-Mile program, 10 streets in the Cloverleaf area have been adopted by neighborhood stakeholders who have committed to keeping them clean of trash and debris. The effort marks the first large-scale collaborative Adopt-A-Mile initiative in Cloverleaf, with



Alejandro Bedolla, owner of Brother-In-Law's BBQ on Freeport Street, his family, and employees have adopted Freeport Street as their Adopt-A-Mile commitment to the community.

nearly 100 volunteers participating across the community.

Unlike traditional Adopt-A-Mile efforts, which are often led by large companies maintaining a stretch of roadway, this project is being carried out by people with direct ties to the streets they are cleaning. Small businesses, churches and even families have signed on to maintain the blocks where they live, work, worship and serve.

The participating adopters include Next Generation Church, TVC Houston Church, Brother-In-Law's BBQ, the Hernandez family, The Healing Vein, Harris County Water District No. 36, El Mante Tire Shop, Cloverleaf Community Outreach, GLT Church and Martinez Auto Complete.

For Alejandro Bedolla, owner of Brother-In-Law's BBQ on Freeport Street, the decision to participate was simple.

"Our business is here on Freeport Street, so of course I want to be part of it," Bedolla said. "I would like to be part of the community, help clean up our community."

Bedolla said he first learned about the Adopt-A-Mile program through local business connections, including Hampton Inn manager Crystal Jackson, who introduced him to Luz Lopez with the county program. After hearing how it worked, Bedolla said he and his family signed up to adopt Freeport Street.

"We were like the first ones to sign up for the Adopt-A-Mile here in the

Continued. See VOLUNTEERS SWEEP STREETS, Page 3

San Jac Receives funding to Launch its CUNY ASAP-modeled program

PASADENA, Texas — San Jacinto College is launching a program, thanks to a \$15.3 million grant from Arnold Ventures, in support of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) model, a project aimed at improving community college completion rates.

By combining high-touch advising, structured pathways, and a comprehensive financial and academic support system, the project aims to raise the current three-year graduation rates from 39.8% to 50%, and create a sustainable, equity-focused framework aligned with Texas's Building a Talent Strong Texas initiative.

"This generous grant will allow us to support students — from enrollment to completion — by removing barriers and strengthening support systems already in place," said San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer. "We



Program will help to expand resources to improve completion rates

are committed to ensuring more students complete so they can transfer or enter high-demand careers that fuel our regional economy, and this investment by Arnold Ventures will provide a strong foundation for scaling important work already taking place."

Modeled on CUNY's rigorously evaluated ASAP, the program is expected to double graduation rates for participating students. Through its

postsecondary student success work launched in 2016, Arnold Ventures identified ASAP as a standout, scalable model — proven through AV-funded randomized controlled trials across multiple states — that delivers comprehensive, long-term supports to help two-year students overcome financial and academic barriers.

"CUNY ASAP continues to

Continued. See SAN JAC SECURES, Page 2

FOOTBALL SEASON PREVIEW: Texans look to reach NFL mountaintop: UT hopes this is their magical year

The 2026 football season is right around the corner with a handful of college games on the final weekend of August. Things kick into high gear over Labor Day weekend when there will be a full slate of college games, and the NFL will kickoff on Wednesday, Sept. 9 when a rematch of Super Bowl 60 when the defending champs the Seattle Seahawks host AFC champion New England on NBC.

Optimism is high locally for the Texans and UH Cougars, while in Austin, Texas Longhorn fans are eyeing a return trip to the College Football Championship playoffs. UT won 10 games a year ago, but was denied a third straight CFP berth. Fifth-year head coach Steve Sarkisian has perhaps his deepest and most talented roster during his time on the Forty Acres.

Texas and the rest of the college football world will battle for the 12 CFP berths



KEENEY'S KORNER BY MIKE KEENEY

that will be announced on Sunday, Dec. 6. This will mark the second straight year of a 12-team CFP field and some are pushing for a 16 or even 24 team field in the future. I'd say 16 would be the max the NCAA should go.

The college football world will be aiming to unseat Indiana as the top dog in the land. Curt Cignetti's Hoosiers finished 16-0 a year ago and look poised to make another CFP run. In two years in Bloomington, Cignetti has forged a 27-2 record. He took the worst program in college football and turned it into a national

title winner and appears IU will be for as long as Cignetti is running the program.

The top four seeds will earn first-round byes, while Seed 5-8 will host first round games at their home stadiums the weekend of Dec. 18-19. Second-round games will be held Dec. 30 and Jan. 1 at the VRBO Fiesta Bowl, the Cotton Bowl, the Peach Bowl and the Rose Bowl. Those games will be televised by TNT, TRU TV and ESPN. The first national semifinal

Continued. See KEENEY'S KORNER, Page 5

GP Mayor meets residents at Galena Park library,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Photo source; Harris County public library website.

Commissioners Martha Cantu-Perez & Juan Flores, Fire Chief Tom Ehlers, Police Chief Jason Adams and Alejandra Flores with the office of the mayor.

Mayor Mireles and guests took a tour of the library and were given a brief explanation of the different services the library provides.

My parents moved to Galena Park after my birth in Galveston in 1944 later I used the Galena Park Libraries at school and Harris County's, it gave me a genuine appreciation for their helping millions like me acquire a better education.

The Galena Park Library is located at 1500 Keene

Street; 77547 (Phone: 832-927-5470~ email gp@hcpl.net), the Jacinto City Library is at 921 Akron Street; 77029 (Phone: 832-927-5520~ email jc@hcpl.net) & the North Channel Library is located at 15741 Wallisville Road, 77049 (Phone: (832) 927-5550~Email: nc@hcpl.net.

San Jac secures \$15.3M grant to boost graduation rates with ASAP model,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

demonstrate the power of providing students with comprehensive support to increase graduation rates and change lives, which is why more than 65 colleges across nine states have replicated our model," said CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. "We are grateful to Arnold Ventures for continuing to invest in expanding the ASAP model, and we anticipate it will be transformative for students at San Jacinto College in Texas, just as it has been for more than 125,000 CUNY students and for students at colleges across the nation."

The ASAP program at San Jacinto College will be embedded within the College's Promise program, aiming to start with 900 Promise Scholars studying Natural Sciences or who are enrolled in one of the

College's four bachelor's degree programs.

This work directly aligns with the State of Texas's Building a Talent Strong Texas plan, and the state's House Bill 8 performance-based funding model. The ASAP model is an evidence-based approach designed to improve completion and outcomes tied to workforce alignment, helping to grow the economic impact across the region and state.

"We know that completion outcomes for many of our Natural Sciences students is low, which is one reason the discipline was selected for this program," added Hellyer. "By introducing this ASAP program and other supports that address both academic and non-academic barriers related

to completion, we believe we can lead a transformation in completion, not just with our student, but across the state as well."

"Arnold Ventures is proud to partner with San Jacinto College as it replicates the ASAP model, a proven, evidence-based approach to improving community college completion," said Kelli Rhee, President and CEO of Arnold Ventures. "By aligning the program's goals with Texas's Building a Talent Strong Texas initiative, San Jacinto College is helping more students complete credentials that strengthen economic mobility while supporting the state's workforce and longterm economic growth." San Jacinto College is scheduled to launch its CUNY ASAP-modeled program in Fall 2027.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.03 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2**.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.030000 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.029673 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.033080 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2026 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** from the same properties in both the 2025 tax year and the 2026 tax year.

The voter-approval tax rate is the highest tax rate that **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2026 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON September 8, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. at Station No. 1, 14418 Beaumont Highway, Houston, Texas 77049. **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** shall take action on the proposed tax rate on September 8, 2026, following the hearing to be held.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE TAX RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

Property tax amount = (tax rate) x (taxable value of your property)/100

The members of the governing body voted on the proposal to consider the tax increase as follows:

FOR the proposal: **Sonya Anderson, Johnnie McClelland, Buster Gates, Earl Skank and Charles Anthony**

AGAINST the proposal: **None**

PRESENT and not voting: **None**

ABSENT: **None**

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** this year.

	2025	2026	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.0300	\$0.0300	Increase of 0.0000 per \$100 or 0.00%
Average homestead taxable value	\$219,172	\$213,354	Decrease of -2.65%
Tax on average homestead	\$65.75	\$64.01	Decrease of -\$1.74 or -2.65%
Total tax levy on all properties	\$2,048,382	\$2,089,299	Increase of \$40,917 or 2.00%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the District Counsel for **Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2** at (713) 652-6500 or npierce@smithmur.com or visit <https://districtdirectory.org/harris-county/harris-county-emergency-services-district-no-2/>.

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CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Make it Count

Perhaps you remember your childhood days of learning to count or to be able to make change using coins. Maybe you remember flash cards where you would learn simple math or perhaps learn lists of spelling words each week. As you advanced in grade levels, you learned the names of all the states as well as their capitols, lists of presidents and so much more. As a child, I remember countless hours sitting at our dining room table learning many of these topics but learning so much more. The time I spent at the table with my father was priceless.

My mother has always been involved in community organizations, and I cannot begin to count the number of meetings I attended with her nor the number of miles that she has driven over the decades helping others. As a very young child, I remember her not only volunteering with events at school and church, but always giving someone a ride to work, a meeting or to an appointment.

I look around and I wonder about so many of the young people as to who, if anyone, is teaching them the values that I grew up thinking were normal. I certainly tried to emulate the same things with my three children, yet like many of my generation, more mothers were working outside of the home and too often children were being raised in single parent homes. I did my best to attend meetings, fundraisers and events for my children, yet I know I could not be as “present” for my children. Not to mention that where my two parents were raising two children, I alone was raising three children, while working full-time outside of the home. As time went by, I also took on various part-time positions to help supplement expenses. I always had a village to help with my children. In addition to family and neighbors, I had a huge network of support from my coworkers, church family and even childhood friends who I keep in touch with.

Yet as I look around, I have seen some changes that truly make me sad. We are aware of the rising crime in the area as well as the growing number of homeless individuals. A recent trip to a professional building in our area, I could not help but notice that the courtyard, sidewalks and parking lot were filled with trash. I offered to pick up the trash and was given a plastic trash bag as well as a pair of disposal gloves by the business owner. He let me know that unfortunately, he feared that some of the times might be contaminated with drug residue. What a sad state our world is in. Is there anyone out there teaching basic skills to the younger generation? Please do not blame it on the school system. I am tired of teachers being expected to give 135% when there are parents who do not give 60%. So many parents as well as other adults use such horrible language and the examples they set are shocking. We need to pray more than ever before. We must make our days count.

NC FOOTBALL SCORES/SCHEDULES

THIS WEEK

Aug. 27, Thursday
Galena Park vs. Porter, 7 p.m., Galena Park ISD Stadium

Aug. 28, Friday
3 C. E. King vs. Conroe, 7 p.m., Panther Stadium
Channelview vs. Spring, 7 p.m., Ray Maddy Memorial Stadium
2 North Shore vs. #14 Lancaster, 7 p.m., Galena Park ISD Stadium
#-state ranking

NEXT WEEK

Sept. 3, Thursday
Channelview at MacArthur, 7 p.m., Thorne Stadium
Galena Park vs. Kempner, 7 p.m., Galena Park ISD Stadium

Sept. 4, Friday
#3 C. E. King at Cypress Ranch, 7 p.m., Cy-Fair Stadium
#2 North Shore at #4 John Curtis, 7 p.m., Cajun Field, Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana



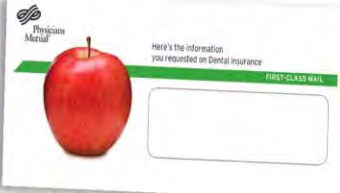
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ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “What is the birthstone for September?”

The world is your oyster

The September birthstone is sapphire – a gem that’s been cherished for thousands of years. Although the term sapphire usually refers to the blue variety of corundum (ruby is the red variety), this birthstone comes in a rainbow of other colors. Sapphires have been long associated with royalty and romance and are also said to symbolize fidelity and the soul. “Sapphire” comes from the Greek word sappheiros and blue sapphire is one of the most popular colored stones. Read on to learn more about the September birthstone, specifically its history and where it can be found.

In addition to being the September birthstone, sapphire is also the gem commemorating the 5th and 45th wedding anniversaries.



The famed Rockefeller Sapphire weighs 62.02 ct. Here it is flanked by two cut-cornered triangular cut diamonds, mounted in a platinum ring signed Tiffany & Co. Courtesy: Christie's Images Ltd., 2015

The September birthstone has traditionally symbolized sincerity, truth, faithfulness and nobility. For countless centuries, sapphire has adorned royalty and the robes of the clergy. The elite of ancient Greece and Rome believed that blue sapphires protected their owners from harm and envy. Clerics of the Middle Ages wore sapphires because they symbolized Heaven. Ancient Persians believed the earth actually rested on a giant sapphire, which made the sky blue.

The September birthstone was reputed to have healing powers as well. Medieval Europeans believed that sapphire cured plague boils and diseases of the eye. The sapphire birthstone was also thought to be an antidote to poison.

Famous sapphires include the Rockefeller Sapphire, a 62.02 carat (ct) rectangular step cut stone that was unearthed in Myanmar (Burma). Acquired in 1934 by financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874–1960) from an Indian maharaja, the gem was recut and remounted over the years. The sapphire was first set as a brooch and later as a ring featuring two cut-cornered triangular diamond side stones. Perhaps the best-known sapphire in recent years is the 12.0ct blue gem surrounded by diamonds in the sapphire engagement ring first worn by Princess Diana and then given by her son to Kate Middleton, now Duchess of Cambridge.

Where Is Sapphire Found?

Kashmir, Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Sri Lanka are three historically important sources for the September birthstone. Significant quantities of the September birthstone have also been found in Australia, Thailand, Cambodia, Madagascar and the United States (Montana), among other countries in Asia and Africa.

Sapphire Birthstone Care & Cleaning

The September birthstone is relatively hard, ranking 9 on the Mohs scale. It has excellent toughness and no cleavage, which is a tendency to break when struck. This makes it a great choice for rings and other mountings subject to daily wear. Note: Sapphires are often treated to improve their color or clarity. Heat treatment is common – and the results permanent – so it is well accepted in the trade. Less common treatments such as lattice diffusion, fracture filling and dyeing may require special care. In some cases, the color induced by lattice diffusion is so shallow it could be removed if the stone was chipped or had to be recut. Fracture-filled and dyed sapphires can be damaged by even mild acids like lemon juice. Before you buy a sapphire, always ask if it is treated and by what method. Warm, soapy water is always a safe choice for cleaning the September birthstone. Ultrasonic and steam cleaners are usually safe for untreated, heat-treated and lattice diffusion-treated stones. Fracture-filled or dyed material should only be cleaned with a damp cloth.

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

Diamond Jim is a master jeweler, diamond dealer and precious metals broker. Pineforest Jewelry has been a proud member of the Independent Jewelers Organization (IJO) and the Retail Jewelers Organization (RJO) for many years. See more at: www.pineforestjewelry.com.

If you have questions pertaining to jewelry, watches, diamonds, precious stones, precious metals, and other questions related to the jewelry industry, email jmills@pineforestjewelry.com.

Volunteers sweep streets, turn neighborhood pride into action,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cloverleaf area,” he said.

Under the program, adopters commit to a two-year agreement. Precinct 2 provides safety gear and cleanup supplies such as bags and vests, and Precinct 2 Public Works picks up collected trash at designated locations. Participants contribute their time and labor.

Bedolla said his group typically cleans once a month, walking the stretch from Interstate 10 to Holly Park.

“It is about three hours, because we clean the whole street,” he said. “But we like it. It clears your mind. It’s relaxing. You’re doing it with a good attitude.”

The cleanup work, he said, does not always wait for an official cleanup day. If he sees tires, large bags or other debris while driving, he often stops to pick it up.

“Even if it’s not the cleanup day, that’s how we’ve been keeping Freeport clean,” Bedolla said.

The Adopt-A-Mile push is part of a broader cleanup effort in Cloverleaf through Commissioner Adrian Garcia’s Keep2Clean initiative. That work has included heavy-trash drop-off events, volunteer cleanup days and efforts to reduce illegal dumping complaints in the area.

At a recent Keep2Clean trash drop-off event in Cloverleaf, more than 150 vehicles participated, with crews collecting more than 1,300 tires and about 370 cubic yards of trash. Bedolla said Brother-In-Law’s BBQ also hosted a heavy-trash pickup event that drew more than 100 cars.

“It was a big, massive event,” he said. “They had over a hundred cars waiting in line to drop off heavy trash.”

The turnout, he said, showed how much the community wanted a way to help improve its surroundings.

Cloverleaf’s reputation for looking worn down did not develop overnight, but participants say the visible cleanup work is helping shift the way people see the neighborhood — and the way residents see their own role in improving it.

“A lot of people now have Adopt-A-Miles here,” Bedolla said. “We have the mechanic shop, we have just families that don’t have a business — it’s just families that want to participate. So it’s good now.”

Bedolla said the pride that comes with the work is just as important as the cleaner sidewalks and roadsides.

“Like Adrian Garcia said, we all got to be proud of what we’re doing because not a lot of people want to deal with trash,” he said. “We want to just

keep our community clean and make it better.”

For Bedolla, the cleanup effort is part of a larger story of investment in Cloverleaf. He and his father, Aurelio, purchased Brother-In-Law’s BBQ in 2019 after years of working in the barbecue industry. Since then, they have been remodeling the restaurant and reinvesting in the property.

“The place was going down — the structure, the paint, the roof, the inside,” Bedolla said. “We’re still remodeling. We’re still putting a lot of money into this place, just trying to make it better inside and outside.”

He said the county’s improvements along Freeport Street, including paving and sidewalk work, have also helped the area look better and encouraged more pride from nearby businesses.

“Since they did the sidewalk, the sidewalk looks pretty nice as well,” he said.

The new signs marking adopted streets also serve as a public reminder that businesses and families are taking ownership of the area.

“They know we’re doing something for our community,” Bedolla said. “We gotta be proud of it.”

For residents interested in joining the Adopt-A-Mile program, Precinct 2 officials said they can call 3-1-1 and ask for Precinct 2’s Community Relations Department.

In Cloverleaf, organizers say the program is already showing that cleanup is not just a county effort. It is becoming a neighborhood effort — led by the people who have the most at stake in seeing the area improve.

“It’s been a blessing,” Bedolla said. “You get to know more people, a lot of people that care for their community.”



Adopt-A-Mile partners gathered at Brother-In-Law’s Barbecue on Freeport for a group photo with Pct. 2 Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia last Saturday before dispersing for photo ops at their individual signs throughout the Cloverleaf area.

Flashing lights stop traffic

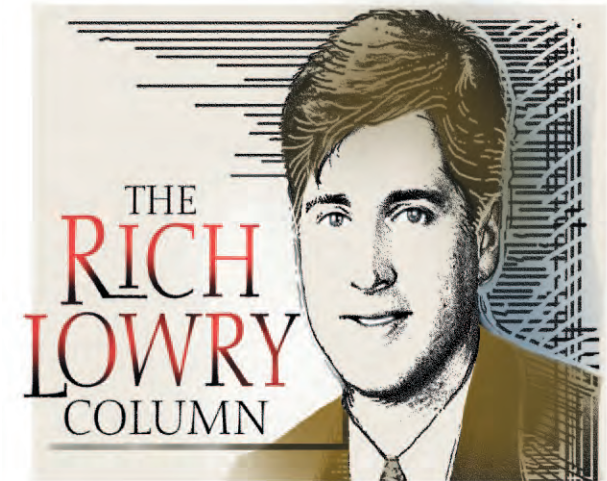




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Trump’s fondness for kim Jong Un sends the wrong signal

It’s hard to believe that Kim Jong Un is really this charming. President Trump touted his fond relationship with the North Korean dictator in a Truth Social post calling for scaling back a long-running annual military exercise with the South Koreans.

“Based on my very good relationship with Kim Jong Un,” Trump wrote, “I am not happy with the fact that the United States has, long ago, agreed to participate in Joint Military Exercises with South Korea.” According to Trump, the exercises “send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile, to a Country that, as long as Donald J. Trump has been President, has been unthreatening and respectful.” Then he added that South Korea had recently declined to take a role in the Iran war, clearly irking Trump, as he subsequently explained to reporters at the White House.

The joint exercises have been a key element of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance for decades. They are meant to ensure that the two countries are prepared in the event of a North Korean assault, and perhaps now have an added importance given the experience North Korea has gained in high-intensity modern warfare by bolstering Russian forces in Ukraine.

Much more important than the practical effect of Trump’s fusillade, though, is the signal it sends, yet again, that he is easily disenchanted with long-time allies whose friendship should be considered a strategic boon to the United States.

Whether musing about making Canada the 51st state, briefly campaigning to take control of Greenland, imposing tariffs on friend and foe alike or hammering NATO, Trump has been careless of the goodwill of our allies.

They need us more than we need them, which means they are willing to put up with a lot, but sowing dissension unnecessarily is a foolhardy game at a time of growing international threats.

South Korea has been a treaty ally since 1953, and is a wealthy, technologically advanced democracy that occupies strategically important ground in Northeast Asia. It is obviously both threatened by and a bulwark against potential North Korean adventurism.

Pete Hegseth visited South Korea last year and said, “Our alliance is stronger than ever before, 72 years strong.” He described the inspiring sight of U.S. and South Korean soldiers standing “shoulder to shoulder working together.” South Korea has been committed to increasing its defense spending to 3.5% of GDP. In light of this, Hegseth subsequently averred, “Model allies that step up, like Israel, South Korea, Poland ... will receive our special favor.”

Such assurances by administration officials are always subject to change, depending on Trump’s animosities at any given time. It’s certainly true that South Korea owes its existence to us. We fought to preserve its independence at a great cost in blood and treasure during the Korean War, and we have nearly 30,000 troops on the peninsula to deter North Korea from assaulting the South again. Seoul has lent support to recent U.S. military operations, typically in noncombat roles, but it’s understandable that it wouldn’t be enthused about taking part in an Iran war that hasn’t gone as planned and that has no clear endgame.

As for the North, it isn’t our friend. It is firmly within the China-Russia axis, and has been developing its nuclear and missile arsenal apace. There is no reason to believe that any blandishments from Trump will change its behavior, and Kim has been clear that the U.S. needs to abandon its “obsession” with denuclearization.

What we most need from South Korea is for it to be as strong as possible to deter North Korea, and we shouldn’t be lending any credence to its claim that U.S.-South Korean exercises are provocations, or sowing doubt about our commitment to allies.

Such diplomatic episodes, though, are an inherent part of Trump’s governance. To paraphrase the Roman writer Publilius Syrus: Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them, and Trump distresses them — unnecessarily.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

SpaceX, Tesla make grimes plant official

What CEO Elon Musk says will be the world’s largest computer chip manufacturing plant is planned for Grimes County, east of College Station, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

In a joint announcement last week, SpaceX and Tesla unveiled an initial \$16.8 billion investment in a plant called Terafab. It is expected to employ at least 3,000 people. Many of those jobs are expected to go to residents of Grimes and neighboring Brazos counties.

“We’re now embarking on the most epic chip-building effort,” Musk, CEO of both companies, said in a statement. “The Terafab is bringing cutting-edge manufacturing to America, creating thousands of high-paying jobs in the Lone Star State and enabling us to produce AI chips at scale for use on Earth and in space.”

Gov. Greg Abbott confirmed last week that the project is receiving a \$30 million Texas Enterprise Fund grant from the state. Grimes County has previously approved a property tax waiver in exchange for annual payments of \$20 million.

The plant would eventually span 100 million square feet.

STATE FAIR OF TEXAS’ GUN BAN UPHELD BY APPEALS COURT

A Texas appeals court upheld a handgun ban at the State Fair of Texas, rejecting the state’s claim that the city of Dallas unlawfully allowed a private operator to prohibit guns on city-owned property, according to The Dallas Morning News.

The 15th Court of Appeals affirmed a Dallas County judge’s dismissal of a case originally filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and three gun owners. It rejected the state’s argument that the restriction on cities banning guns doesn’t automatically apply to private tenants operating on public property. The ban will remain in place unless the Texas Supreme Court intervenes.

“The decision to prohibit firearms on the fairgrounds is the correct decision to protect the safety of our patrons,” Karissa Condoianis, a State Fair of Texas spokesperson, said. This will be the third year the ban will be in place.

TALARICO VOTED USING PARENTS’ ADDRESS, REPORT SAYS

Democratic Senate nominee James Talarico voted in five elections using his parents’ address after buying a nearby home for himself, according to The Texas



Tribune and ProPublica, a practice that may have violated state voting laws. The revelation comes weeks after Talarico accused Paxton, his GOP opponent, of voting from his estranged wife’s address despite not having lived there for two years.

Talarico has taken advantage of a state law that allows some public officials to redact personal information, such as home addresses. The news organizations pieced together the information from unredacted records provided by the Talarico campaign.

Texas law requires that residents register to vote where they live. The Talarico campaign declined to answer questions about his residency and voting history, saying “right-wing actors” have made threats about trying to locate the candidate and his family.

Talarico’s house is in the same county as his parents’ home. Both residences are located in the same state House district he represents, but in different jurisdictions for some local elections, according to The Tribune.

WILDFIRE DANGER INCREASING AS CONDITIONS TURN DRY

August is typically the peak month for wildfires in Texas. The Texas A&M Forest Service expects wildfire potential to increase due to dry vegetation, particularly in the Panhandle and North Texas.

The state is deploying numerous wildfire response resources as a result, including the state’s mutual aid system and assistance from a number of state agencies.

There were two active wildfires as of Sunday. The 200-acre Round Up fire west of Amarillo was zero-percent contained at that time.

The service recently acquired three multi-mission aircraft, adding to its first dedicated, state-managed wildfire aviation fleet. It previously had acquired two wildfire suppression helicopters.

“Every wildfire is different,

which is why a diverse aviation fleet is so important,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Fire Chief Jared Karns. “Having multiple aircraft types available, including multi-mission aircraft platforms that can serve a variety of roles, allows us to respond effectively to the unique demands of each incident.”

SALMONELLA CASES LINKED TO JALAPEÑOS

The popular jalapeño pepper has been linked to 345 cases of salmonella illness in 27 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The San Antonio Express-News reported three cases in Texas, stemming from peppers imported from Sinaloa, Mexico.

No deaths have been reported nationwide, but 36 people have been hospitalized, according to the CDC. Nearly all of the cases were reported by people after eating at a Mexican-style chain restaurant.

Two affected chains, Chipotle Mexican Grill and Qdoba, said they had taken steps to remove potentially contaminated peppers.

TALARICO UNVEILS HIS ‘AFFORDABILITY AGENDA’

Democratic Senate candidate James Talarico last week unveiled an “affordability agenda” that would help Texans buy homes, cancel medical debt, raise the minimum wage and expand the child tax credit, according to The News.

“The top 1% put the American Dream behind a paywall,” Talarico told about 1,300 people at an Arlington rally. “For too many of our neighbors, for too many Texans, the American Dream has become an American Nightmare.”

Talarico also touted the endorsements of former Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, a Republican, and Arlington Mayor Jim Ross, a self-described independent.

“He’s the most corrupt politician that Texas has ever seen,” Whitley said of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, the Republican nominee.

Paxton has faced numerous ethical and legal challenges during his time in office. He has denied wrongdoing and was acquitted by the Texas Senate in his impeachment trial.

At the Arlington rally, Talarico blamed both parties for economic policies that he said benefit the wealthy at the expense of working families.

“Republicans and some Democrats sold the false Gospel of trickle-down economics,” he said. “Trickle-down economics isn’t a theory. It’s a theft.”

DISTRACTED DRIVING PUTS SCHOOL CHILDREN AT RISK

As the school year begins, the Texas Department of Transportation is urging drivers to pay special attention in school zones. More than 3,200 traffic crashes in school zones involved school buses last year. Distracted driving and speeding were the most common contributing factors in these crashes.

“School zones can be chaotic places, with people in a rush and children not always watching for cars while they hop on and off buses or in and out of cars. Drivers can become impatient or distracted, which leads to mistakes,” TxDOT said in a news release.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Habit Forming



I am made entirely of habits. This is not an original observation. Annie Dillard wrote: “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” I either love that quote or hate it, depending on how I spent my day.

I am thinking about this because I was trying to break a habit of mine: sitting up late at my computer, mindlessly scrolling and snacking. I do this because I am tired — not hungry — and I feel too lazy to read a book or do anything useful, but it seems too early to go to bed. So instead, I end up full of peanuts and chocolate chips. I don’t sleep well, and I don’t fit into my jeans. I have concluded that this is not a good habit. So I resolved to break it.

It was very hard the first night. Once again, I was tired and convinced I was hungry. I was not, but weariness and hunger are close cousins, and I had grown accustomed to managing weariness with food. I resisted and had a hard time sleeping. I felt rather discouraged about the whole idea of breaking an old and cherished habit.

But I did it again the second night, and I was surprised that it was noticeably easier. The night after that, it took almost no effort at all. I don’t want to get ahead of myself, but I am now going on a week without my late-night snacks, and I am starting to feel that this is not such a great sacrifice after all. It’s starting to feel normal. It’s becoming a habit.

Over time, habits become a lot more than habits; that’s what I realized. Habits are who I am. I am in the habit of walking five miles a day — therefore, I am a walker. The neighbors say “hello” as I go by. The dogs know me. I have a habit of writing every day. Writing every day is no longer a habit — I am a writer.

The habits that define me are both good and bad. I consume too much social media, and it shapes how I view the world. I eat a lot of vegetables, and I become healthier. I started meditating, and now I feel unsettled if I don’t do it regularly. If I practiced my Spanish, I would become a Spanish speaker — but I don’t.

One after another, the habits are acquired — and very occasionally dropped — and they define and redefine who I am. Because my life is ruled by habits. Most of the time, this isn’t a bad thing. I make surprisingly few actual decisions in the course of the day. Very little energy, thought or willpower is put into most of what I do because I did it yesterday and the day before that. Only a change takes effort.

I now wonder if I don’t have a lot of habits that I engage in every day without noticing. I judge situations too quickly and get annoyed with people too easily simply because they are not doing something I expect them to do. I do this habitually — usually without thinking.

Before I can change anything, I first have to notice what I am doing. I have to stop long enough to recognize that, somewhere along the line, this habit has become me. These habitual attitudes are harder to see. But now that I’m looking for them, I’m not sure it’s harder to change these habits than any other habit.

It surely can’t be harder than resisting peanuts and chocolate chips before bedtime.

Till next time,
Carrie

Carrie is the author of “Loon Point.” “The Turnip House” will be released in January 2027.

Photos and other things can be found on Facebook at CarrieClassonAuthor.

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FOOTBALL SEASON PREVIEW:

Texans look to reach NFL mountaintop:

UT hopes this is their magical year

game will be held on Jan. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Capital One Bowl, with the second semifinal being held Jan. 15 at the All State Sugar Bowl. The CFP National Championship game be held on Monday, Jan. 25 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas.

Turning our attention to the NFL, it was a busy offseason as a record 10 new head coaches were hired to turn their team's fortunes around. The 10 new head men are: Joe Brady at Buffalo, Jeff Haflay at Miami, John Harbaugh with the New York Giants, Klint Kubiak, with Las Vegas, Jesse Minter, Baltimore, Mike McCarthy, Pittsburgh, Mike LaFleur, Arizona, Kevin Stefanski, Atlanta, Todd Monken, Cleveland and Robert Saleh, Tennessee.

Those 10 teams, along with the 22 other NFL teams all have their sights set on making it to Super Bowl 61, scheduled for Feb. 14 (yes, Valentine's Day) at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles. This will mark the latest date that a Super Bowl has ever been played.

So, without further ado, let's take a look at how the 2026 college and NFL season might shake out this season.

NCAA
NOTRE DAME - ND head coach Marcus Freeman has a loaded team heading into the 2026 season. After losing their first two games last year (to Miami and Texas A&M), the Irish ran off 10 straight wins, but were denied a CFP berth. This year, Freeman welcomes back his starting QB in C.J. Carr, four of five offensive linemen and nine starters on defense for the No. 5-ranked Fighting Irish. ND also has a favorable schedule. They play a very good BYU team in Provo on Oct. 17 and host Miami on Nov. 7.

BIG 12 - This should be a three-team race between No.



12 Texas Tech, No. 15 BYU and No. 23 Houston. Tech won the Big 12 regular season and Big 12 title game beating BYU twice and finished with a school record 12 wins. Head coach Joey McGuire welcomes back a strong nucleus on both sides of the ball, especially on defense. The key will be how QB Will Hammond responds after suffering a torn ACL last Oct. 25. Hammond is a dual-threat QB. The Red Raiders have two talented and productive running backs in J'Koby Williams and Camerron Dickey. Look for Tech to feature those two early as Hammond settles in at QB. BYU also finished 12-2 a year ago and have one of the top dual-threat QBs in Bear Bachmeier and a top back in LJ Martin. UH finished 10-3 a year ago with a bowl win over LSU in Willie Fritz's second season. The Coogs return Conner Wegman at QB and signed the nation's No. 1 recruit in Spring Legacy QB Keisean (6-5, 195 pounds). UH has a big early date against Tech on Sept. 17 in Lubbock.

BIG 10 - The Big 10 has won the last three national titles and will look to make it four in a row. This is a deep and talented league, but the top three teams, No. 1-ranked Ohio State, No. 2-ranked Oregon and No. 6-ranked Indiana are the class of this league. The Buckeyes should be explosive on offense behind veteran QB Julian Sayin, sophomore running back Bo Jackson (no, not THAT Bo Jackson) and star wide receiver Jeremiah Smith, who could be the No. 1 overall pick in the 2027 NFL draft. They

will reload, not rebuild, on defense after losing six starters to the NFL draft. Oregon finished 13-2 a year ago and returns star QB Dante Moore. He has a load of weapons around him and you can bet Dan Lanning's defense will be solid as well. Indiana returns four starters on both sides of the ball, but Cignetti is a master of the transfer portal. He brought in former TCU QB Josh Hoover (, 9,629 yards, 71 TDs in three years in Fort Worth) to replace Heisman Trophy winner and No. 1 draft pick Fernando Mendoza.

SEC - The SEC should be called Quarterback U because there are so many talented signal callers that call the league home this year. No., 4-ranked Texas (10-3 in '25) has Arch Manning, No. 3-ranked Georgia has Gunner Stockton, No. 7-ranked Ole Miss has Trinidad Chambless, No. 8-ranked Texas A&M has Marcel Reed and LSU and new head coach Lane Kiffin brought in Sam Levitt from Arizona State. This is not going to be your grandfather's SEC, where defense dominated and teams won brutal defensive battles back in the day. This year, the ball will be flying all over the field from Austin to Oxford. UT returns a strong nucleus led by Manning, a star wide receiver Cam Camerson who comes over from Auburn. Texas also has one of the top defensive ends in Collins Simmons (12 sacks), a sure first-round draft pick. Ole Miss also has a stud running back in Kewan Lacy (rushed for over 1,500



yards and scored 24 TDs last year). Georgia is a year older and wiser and you know Kirby Smart's team will play tough defense. Alabama is the big question mark here. Head coach Kalen DeBoer is entering his third year in Tuscaloosa and the natives are getting restless. 'Bama did earn a CFP berth last year, but were embarrassed in the Rose Bowl by Indiana. Crimson Tide fans expect more, especially after being spoiled by Nick Saban's six national titles during his 17-year run. Saban did win his first national title in his third year, and this just happens to be DeBoer's third year in Tuscaloosa. We shall see.

ACC - The ACC will be a two-team race between Miami, last year's national championship runnerup, and SMU. The Hurricanes are loaded on offense led by Duke transfer Darian Mensah at QB and returning running back Mark Fletcher and star wideout Malachi Tony. SMU will pin its hopes on starting QB Kevin Jennings.

NFL
AFC SOUTH - The Texans will go as far as QB C.J. Stroud takes them, along with an offensive line that has been the team's weakest spot the last few years. If Stroud takes his game to the next level, Houston could advance deep into the AFC playoffs. The running game should be improved with the acquisition of David Montgomery from Detroit. He should help near the goal line, where the team struggled to score last year. The offense suffered a huge blow in training camp when second-year wideout Jalen Higgins was lost for the season with a torn ACL. The defense is good enough to carry this team far, but Stroud must prove he can win in clutch time. Jacksonville should contend for the division as well behind QB Trevor Lawrence.

AFC NORTH - This will be an interesting division to watch. Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Cincinnati should contend for the division title. The Steelers have a new head coach in Mike McCarthy who is reunited with Aaron Rodgers. The two had a lot of success in Green Bay. Rodgers has another weapon on offense to go with DK Metcalf as former Colt wideout Michael Pittman Jr. was added to the mix. running back in Derrick Henry and an up-and-coming star in wide receiver Zay Flowers. The Bengals are hoping that QB Joe Burrow can stay healthy for the entire season because he is surrounded by a load of talent in running back Chase Brown and big-play wideouts Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins.

AFC EAST - This will be a two team race between the New England, the defending AFC champs, and Buffalo. NE gave QB Drake Maye a huge weapon in the offseason when they acquired big-play wide receiver A.J. Brown from the Eagles. Brown will open up the deep passing game for Maye and put him firmly in the MVP conversation. Buffalo has a pretty fair QB as well in former MVP Josh Allen a true dual-threat QB (14 rushing TDs in '25). The front office provided Allen with a new weapon as well trading for former Chicago wideout D.J. Moore. The Bills also have one of the top running backs in the league in James Cook and are moving into a new stadium. Nothing would be finer than

for the Bills to host the AFC title game in January in their new digs.

AFC WEST - This is the best division in the AFC as Denver, the Los Angeles Chargers and the Kansas City Chiefs should all contend for the division crown and playoff spots. Denver won the division a year ago and provided QB Bo Nix with a deep threat when it acquired speedy wideout Jaylen Waddle from Miami. He will pair with the steady Courtland Sutton to give Nixon plenty of options in the passing game. Look for a breakout year from second-year running back RJ Harvey. The Denver defense is a top five unit. The Chargers helped QB Justin Herbert when it hired former Dolphins head coach Mike McDaniels as the team's new offensive coordinator. McDaniels is an offensive genius and should help Herbert step up his game. Herbert has two solid targets in wideouts Ladd McConkey and Quentin Johnson. If second-year running back Omar Hampton has the breakout year many expect, this offense could be down right scary. The Chiefs had a bad year in 2025, falling to 6-11 and lost QB Patrick Mahomes late in the season to a knee injury. But Mahomes looks like he will start the season opener against Denver. He has a new toy to play with in former Seattle running game Kenneth Walker III, which should help KC's passing game. Look for wide receiver Rasheed Rice to have a big year and Mahomes still has dependable tight end Travis Kelce to throw to in the Red Zone.

NFC EAST - This will be a two-team race between Dallas and Philadelphia. I think the Giants are year away. I think Dallas wins the East because of its high-powered offense led by QB Dak Prescott, running back Javonte Williams and big-play wideouts CeeDee Lamb and George Pickens. Dallas was dreadful on defense a year ago, but the front office spent the offseason improving that side of the ball with trades, free agent signings and the drafting of Ohio State All-American safety Caleb Downs, who should solidify a shaky secondary. Philly QB Jalen Hurts lost his go-to guy when Brown was traded to the Patriots. How he responds will be interesting to see. The Eagles could use a bounce-back year from running back Saquon Barkley, which would take a lot of pressure off of Hurts.

NFC NORTH - This will be a fun division to watch as Chicago, Green Bay and Detroit are all talented enough to make deep playoff runs. The Bears won 12 games a year ago and won the division behind QB Caleb Williams. Williams has a lot of talent around him, but the defense will be the key to how far this team advances. The secondary is suspect. The Packers also made the playoffs a year ago behind QB Jordan Love, running back Josh Jacobs, tight end Tucker Kraft and wide receiver Christian Watkins. The defense is solid and will get a huge boost in October when star pass rusher Micah Parsons returns from an ACL injury. It appears Parsons is on track to return to face his old team, the Cowboys on Oct. 18 in GB. The Lions missed the playoffs a year ago but have too much offensive talent to be taken for granted, led by QB Jared Goff, star running back Jahmyr Gibbs and big-play

wideouts Amon-Ra St. Brown and Jameson Williams.

NFC WEST - This division is home the the SB champion Seahawks and a Rams team that took them down to the wire in the NFC title game a year ago. Seattle took a big hit in the offseason when Walker, their best running back, bolted for KC. His departure will put more pressure on QB Sam Darnold and star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba. The defense returns intact and Seattle has one of the best young head coaches in the NFL in Mike McDaniels. The Rams are hungry to host another Super Bowl and have enough talent on both sides of the ball to get the job done. MVP QB Matthew Stafford threw 46 TD passes a year ago and he has two stud receivers in Puka Nacua and Davante Adams. He also has a solid running back in Kyren

Williams. The front office vastly improved the defense trading for Defensive Player of the Year Myles Garrett (23 sacks) from Cleveland. The 49ers could be in the mix, as long as running back Christian McCaffrey stays healthy.

NFC SOUTH - This is the worst division in the entire league, so who knows who's going to win it. Tampa Bay seems to have the most solid team, but watch out for Atlanta with Stefanski running things now. The Falcons also have one of the top two backs in the league in Bijan Robinson, who can hurt teams as a rusher and pass catcher.

So, without further ado, here is one man's predictions on how he sees the college and NFL season playing out in 2026.

NCAA

BIG 12 - TEXAS TECH OVER HOUSTON
BIG 10 - OHIO STATE OVER INDIANA
SEC - TEXAS OVER GEORGIA
ACC - MIAMI OVER SMU

12 TEAM CFP FIELD:
TEXAS, GEORGIA, TEXAS A&M, ALABAMA, OHIO STATE, INDIANA, OREGON, USC, MIAMI, NOTRE DAME, BOISE STATE AND NORTH DAKOTA STATE

CFP TITLE GAME - TEXAS OVER OHIO STATE

NFL
AFC SOUTH - HOUSTON
AFC NORTH - BALTIMORE
AFC EAST - BUFFALO
AFC WEST - LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

AFC WILD CARDS - KANSAS CITY, DENVER, NEW ENGLAND

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP - BUFFALO OVER HOUSTON

NFC EAST - DALLAS
NFC NORTH - CHICAGO
NFC WEST - LOS ANGELES
NFC SOUTH - TAMPA BAY

NFC WILD CARDS - PHILADELPHIA, DETROIT AND SEATTLE

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP - LOS ANGELES OVER DALLAS

SUPER BOWL 61- LOS ANGELES RAMS OVER BUFFALO

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Aiysha Hart, left, and Anthony Mackie star in "Desert Warrior."

“Outer Banks: Season 5.”

“The Whisper Man” (R) — Based on the novel by Alex North, this crime thriller film, premiering Aug. 28, was produced by the Russo Brothers (“Avengers: Endgame”) and stars Robert De Niro (“The Alto Knights”), Michelle Monaghan (“The White Lotus”), and Adam Scott (“Severance”). Although it’s deemed a crime thriller, it’s got the tone of a full-on horror flick, and with the dark subject matter at hand, it’s sure to keep the hairs on your arms standing. Scott portrays Tom, a widowed father to an 8-year-old son, who decides to move his family to a quiet town named Featherbank to start anew. Featherbank, however, used to be tormented by a serial killer named the Whisper Man, and somehow, the killer has escaped. Tom’s son is subsequently taken, leaving him with no choice but to reach out to his estranged

father, a detective named Pete (De Niro), to help find the missing boy. (Netflix)

“The Last Sunrise” (R) — Maia Reficco from the rebooted “Pretty Little Liars” series leads this steamy romantic drama premiering Aug. 26! Based on the 2025 novel of the same name, “The Last Sunrise” follows Ry, a young American woman who accompanies her mother, Isolde (Eva Longoria), on a business trip to Majorca, Spain. With health issues weighing her down mentally, Ry isn’t expecting much out of this trip ... until she meets a local boy named Julian (Fernando Lindez). A passionate affair between the two is inevitable, but their romance gets threatened when Isolde reveals to Ry that she needs to buy out Julian’s family’s docks to bring her business deal to fruition. (Amazon Prime Video)

“Girls Like Girls” (R)

— Actress and singer Hayley Kiyoko got her start in the 2011 film “Lemonade Mouth,” a Disney Channel original film. Since then, she’s had a steady career in music, film and TV. In 2015, she released the song “Girls Like Girls” with a music video that’s somewhat of a sneak peek of the new “Girls Like Girls” film, which just released on Peacock. This coming-of-age drama film is directed by Kiyoko and stars Maya da Costa (“Descendants: Wicked Wonderland”) and Myra Molloy (“He’s All That”). Da Costa plays 17-year-old Coley, who begins a new chapter of her life in rural Oregon with her estranged father, Curtis (Zach Braff). Soon after she moves, Coley meets another girl named Sonya (Molloy), and they form a deep emotional connection that’s bound to leave one girl heartbroken. (Peacock)

“Desert Warrior” (R) — AGC Studios made an interesting choice in producing a \$150-million historical-action film led by Anthony Mackie (“Captain America: Brave New World”). While Mackie is incredibly talented, his latest “Captain America” installment didn’t fill theater seats like Chris Evans’ previous three films, and “Desert Warrior” didn’t even make \$1 million at the box office. Still, this film could be a great choice for those who enjoy period-piece action films. Mackie takes on the role of Hanzala, a legendary bandit in 7th-century Asia who agrees to assist an exiled princess in her revolution against a tyrannical empire. Not only must he unite tribes against Emperor Kisra (Ben Kingsley), but he must also face the emperor’s ruthless soldier Jalabzeen (Sharlto Copley) in direct combat. Premieres Aug. 28. (Hulu)

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Q:Is Johnny Depp making a comeback anytime soon? I haven’t seen him in anything since all the bad publicity he had with his ex-wife. — S.T.

A:It’s been four years since the defamation trial between Johnny Depp and Amber Heard, but his career has never regained the heights that it achieved in the early 2000s. He portrayed King Louis XV in the French historical film “Jeanne du Barry” back in 2023, and his future has been looking brighter since. He’s starring in the action thriller “Day Drinker” with Oscar winner Penelope Cruz (“Vicky Cristina Barcelona”), which is set for a March 2027 release. This November, however, he’ll play the title character in the holiday film “Ebenezer.”

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer did say at D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event that he’s in talks with Depp about reprising the role of Captain Jack Sparrow in “Pirates of the Caribbean 6.” A screenplay is in progress, but this sequel will center on a new female lead played by Margot Robbie and place Depp in more of a supporting role.

Q:Isn’t Marvel making a movie or TV series with Paul Bettany’s character called “VisionQuest”? Whatever happened with this? — C.E.

A:It’s understandable that one would think that Disney has abandoned the planned “WandaVision” spin-off “Vision-Quest” because it’s been years in the making. The original series with Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany ended in 2021, and we were treated to the first “WV” spin-off — “Agatha All Along” starring Kathryn Hahn — in 2024. Disney recently released the trailer for the upcoming series “VisionQuest” at the recent D23 Disney event.

In the preview, we see Bettany as “a humble guy working in a British pub,” according to TVLine, “[who] takes a trip inside his own mind and his own memories, admitting that ‘I was an Avenger, but I’m not a hero anymore.’” James Spader also stars as Ultron, who tries to convince Vision that his memories are indeed real and urges him, “Free us all and save your son.”

The new series is expected to premiere on Disney+ on Wednesday, Oct. 14. In addition to Bettany and Spader, the cast in-



Johnny Depp (Upcoming in “Day Drinker”)

cludes Faran Tahir (“Iron Man”), Emily Hampshire (“Schitt’s Creek”), Todd Stashwick (“12 Monkeys”), and T’Nia Miller (“The Haunting of Bly Manor”).

Q: Is Ryan Gosling starring in a new “Star Wars” movie? I thought they finished making them with this past trilogy. — A.B.

A:Yes, there’s another “Star Wars” movie in the works, but it’s an entirely original story that, according to director Shawn Levy, is neither a prequel nor a sequel. In “Star Wars: Starfighter,” Ryan Gosling (“Project Hail Mary”) plays a rogue pilot named Kade Auberon. Auberon, according to Entertainment Weekly, has a decommissioned G17 starfighter in his possession that he claims is “the fastest ever built.”

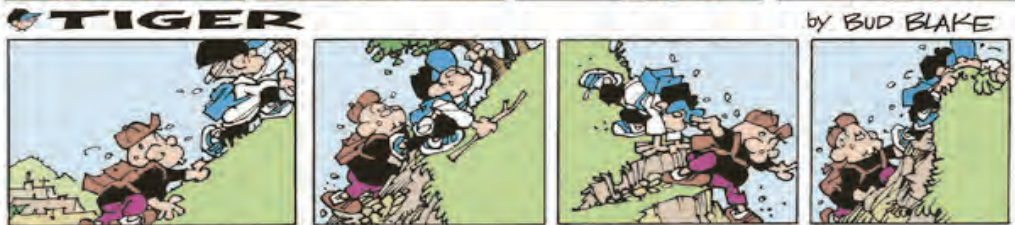
Levy, who directed “Deadpool & Wolverine,” is excited to team up with novelist and screenwriter Jonathan Tropper (“The Adam Project,” “Your Friends & Neighbors”) and Gosling, of course. Look for what’s sure to be another blockbuster hit for the “Star Wars” franchise in theaters on May 28, 2027.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Glass is larger; 2. Hand is longer; 3. Bowl is missing; 4. Mug is reversed; 5. Arm is longer; 6. Lipel is missing.

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August 24, 2026 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Doves' home

5 Coach

Parseghian

8 Beach crawler

12 Pizza cooker

13 Greyhound vehicle

14 — Martin (cognac)

15 Bread sellers

17 Sheltered

18 Hogwash

19 Thespians

21 Sheriff's star

24 Hold sway

25 Jealousy

26 Stalks for soups

30 Finale

31 Give it a go

32 Man-mouse link

33 Sets of prayer beads

35 Big gulp

36 Eyeglass frames

37 Lake flock

38 Hoi —

41 Enjoy Aspen

42 Mayberry young 'un

43 Officials with seals

48 Ivy in Philly

49 Literary collection

50 Corporate symbol

DOWN

1 Corn core

2 Eggs

3 Shatner's "— War"

4 Vigor

5 Slightly

6 Regret

7 Military attacks

8 Moon cavity

9 Move, in Realtor lingo

10 Pt. of U.S.A.

11 Tournament passes

16 Caviar base

20 "Pinocchio" fish

21 "Cheers" order

22 Part of A.D.

23 Film formats

24 Point —

Peninsula

26 Record holder?

27 "The Music Man" setting

28 Ireland

29 Droops

31 Small combo

34 Dahl of films

35 Marble cake patterns

37 Reggae relative

38 Vatican leader

39 Pundit's piece

40 TV journalist

41 Remain

44 Lennon's partner

45 Charged bit

46 Conceit

47 Plant seeds

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the only mammal that can't jump?

2. MOVIES: Which movie has the tagline, "They're young, they're in love, and they kill people"?

3. HISTORY: When is Labor Day celebrated every year in the United States?

4. LANGUAGE: What's the name of a punctuation mark that combines a question mark and an exclamation point?

5. GEOGRAPHY: Which country was called Kampuchea from 1975 to 1979?

6. ASTRONOMY: What are the names of the twin stars in the GEMINI constellation?

7. MYTHOLOGY: What is the only thing left in Pandora's box after it was opened?

8. FOOD & DRINK: Which country is associated with the fermented cabbage dish kimchi?

9. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who is the first president to die in office?

10. TELEVISION: What are the Halloween episodes of "The Simpsons" called?

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King Crossword

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

MONS

QOOL

SEIS

IKS

SNAMS

OWMS

VOH

SEIS

HOIOT

ALRE

BAKRE

AVEN

COLE

MONS

QOOL

SEIS

IKS

SNAMS

OWMS

VOH

SEIS

HOIOT

ALRE

BAKRE

AVEN

COLE

ESD 12 welcomes new ladder truck, pins four firefighters



By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas — Harris County ESD 12 marked a milestone July 25 with a traditional push-in ceremony for its new Ladder 24 and a badge-pinning ceremony recognizing four firefighters who completed probationary service or stepped into new roles.

The ceremony, held at 10 a.m., brought together ESD 12 commissioners, command staff, firefighters and family members as the department placed a 2026 Sutphen 75-foot aerial ladder truck into service. The apparatus will be assigned to Station 24 on Wallisville Road.

Assistant Chief James Novick said the truck represents both a major investment and a practical upgrade for the district.

“The manufacturer is Sutphen. They call it a 75-foot aerial, and it’s a mid-mount, meaning the ladder is in the middle of the truck instead of a rear mount,” Novick said.

Novick said the ladder truck cost about \$1.6 million and replaces an aging 20-year-old apparatus whose repair needs had begun to exceed its value. The department was able to sell the older truck and put the proceeds toward the new ladder truck.

“It was one of the demo trucks that they had made,” Novick said. “Our frontline ladder is going to go into reserve status, and that’s going to go up to the frontline status.”

The new ladder will initially be staffed with four personnel, with the department planning to increase staffing to five at the beginning of the year, Novick said. The 75-foot ladder was selected because it meets the needs of buildings across the district, he said.

The push-in ceremony follows a fire service tradition dating back to the days of horse-drawn wagons, when crews returning from a call unhitched the horses, cleaned and restocked the equipment, and pushed the apparatus back into the station by hand.

“Over time, it’s taken on the pride of teamwork and work ethic, and we continue that today,” Novick said.

The ceremony also included opening comments from Board President Williams Anders, an invocation from Board Vice President Bryan Clements and the presentation of colors and Pledge of Allegiance by the Harris County ESD 12 Fire Department Honor Guard.

Clements said the new truck reflects the board’s responsibility to equip firefighters while being accountable to taxpayers.

“Our job is to make sure that our firefighters have the best equipment to do their jobs,” Clements said. “That’s just part of that process — making sure that our fire trucks are up to date, because again, we’re serving the community and we have to be good stewards of their money.”

Clements said maintaining modern equipment also supports the department’s ISO Class 1 rating, the highest rating available.

“We’re an ISO 1 department, which means they’re the best of the best out there,” Clements said. “That rating also gets our citizens the lowest insurance rates they can on their homeowners, compared to other places where they don’t have that rating.”

Clements said the department’s rating reflects training, equipment, water availability and daily readiness.

“These guys are training every single day,” he said. “They’re answering calls every single day. They’re a working fire department.”

Four members were recognized during the pinning ceremony: Capt. David Araguz and firefighters Joseph Gonzales, Mikal Gill and Riley Dunn. Their badges were pinned by family members after they took the oath of office.

Novick said the additions bring the department to about 43 personnel serving a district that includes about 9 square miles of residential and commercial territory, with additional industrial areas along Industrial Road and Haden Road.

The ceremony marked ESD 12’s second push-in ceremony in recent years and underscored the department’s effort to honor fire service tradition while preparing for the needs of a growing community.

HCC Transportation COE wraps up summer with Automotive STEM Camp



Houston City College’s (HCC) Transportation Center of Excellence (COE), with support from a grant and presenting sponsor BP America, wrapped up the summer with its Automotive STEM Camp for middle and high school students.

Hosted at the Automotive Training Center on HCC’s North Forest Campus, the camp provided an engaging, hands-on learning experience designed to introduce students to automotive technology, engineering principles and future transportation careers.

Through interactive activities using remote-controlled vehicles, students disassembled, built, troubleshot and raced mini cars while exploring the fundamentals of engines, electrical systems, drivetrains and vehicle safety. Participants also gained exposure to emerging transportation technologies, including electric, hybrid and autonomous vehicles.

The camp combined



STEM learning with teamwork, problem-solving and friendly competition, creating a fun and educational experience.

HCC Transportation COE faculty, instructors and industry professionals guided students through real-world demonstrations and career exploration activities, offering valuable insight into the latest transportation technologies. These experiences helped inspire interest in careers as skilled technicians, engineers and transportation professionals.

Thanks to the support of BP America, the college

was able to provide students with learning kits, safety equipment, instructional materials and lunch throughout the program. The sponsorship helped create meaningful educational experiences that prepare young learners for future opportunities in the evolving automotive and energy industries.

The Automotive STEM Camp reflects HCC’s continued commitment to developing the next generation of innovators and workforce leaders through hands-on education and industry partnerships.

Celebrating Women’s Equality Day: Honoring Bella Abzug’s Legacy and the Fight for Full Equality

By Allan Jamail

August 26, 2026 ~ In 1973, Congresswoman Bella Savitzky Abzug, one of just 16 women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives at the time, championed legislation designating August 26 as Women’s Equality Day, commemorating the certification of the 19th Amendment and women’s constitutional right to vote.

Women’s Equality Day is celebrated in the United States on August 26 to commemorate the 1920 adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment (Amendment XIX) to the United States Constitution, which prohibits the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex. It was first celebrated in 1971, designated by Congress in 1973, and is proclaimed each year by the United States President.

Women’s Equality Day honors the generations of women who endured opposition, sacrifice, and hardship in the long fight for the vote. It ensures that their courage, persistence, and determination—and the history of the movement they built—are remembered and recognized.

It is also a reminder that the pursuit of equality did not end with the 19th Amendment. Women’s Equality Day calls us to reflect on the progress that has been made and the work that remains to achieve full equality, including the ongoing effort to secure recognition of the Equal Rights.

Bella Savitzky was born on July 24, 1920, in New York City. Both of her parents were Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants from Chernigov in the Russian Empire (later Ukraine). Her mother, Esther (née Tanklevsky or Tanklefsky), was a homemaker who immigrated from Kozlets in 1902. Her father, Emanuel Savitzky, was a



Congresswoman Bella Savitzky Abzug.

butcher who emigrated in 1906. He ran the Live and Let Live Meat Market on Ninth Avenue. Even in her youth, she was competitive and would beat other children in all sorts of competitions. She ran the cash register at her father’s deli as a young girl.

Her religious upbringing influenced her development into a feminist. According to Abzug, “It was during these visits to the synagogue that I think I had my first thoughts as a feminist rebel. I didn’t like the fact that women were consigned to the back rows of the balcony.” When her father died, Abzug, then 13, was told that her Orthodox synagogue did not permit women to say the (mourners’) Kaddish, since that rite was reserved for sons of the deceased. However, because her father had no sons, she went to the synagogue every morning for a year to recite the prayer, defying the tradition of her congregation’s practice of Orthodox Judaism.

Abzug graduated from Walton High School in the Bronx, where she was class president. Through high school she took violin lessons and went to Florence Marshall Hebrew High School after classes at Walton. She went on to major in political science at Hunter College of the City University of New York and simultaneously attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. At Hunter Col-

lege, she was student council president and active in the American Student Union. Abzug first met Mim Kelber, who would go on to co-found WEDO with her, at Walton High School and they went on to attend Hunter College with one another. She later earned a law degree from Columbia University in 1944.

In 1970, Abzug’s first campaign slogan was, “This woman’s place is in the House—the House of Representatives.” She was later appointed to co-chair the National Commission on the Observance of International Women’s Year created by President Gerald Ford’s executive order, presided over the 1977 National Women’s Conference, and led President Jimmy Carter’s National Advisory Commission for Women. Abzug was a founder of the Commission for Women’s Equality of the American Jewish Congress.

She was the sponsor for the Equality Credit Opportunity Act (ECO) that made it unlawful to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or age. She was a cosponsor of H.R.13157 that established the Clara Barton National Historic Site, the first National Parks Site dedicated to the achievements of a woman.

In 2017, Time magazine named Abzug one of its 50 Women Who Made American Political History.

After battling breast cancer for a number of years, she developed heart disease and died at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center on March 31, 1998, from complications following open heart surgery. She was 77. Abzug was interred at Mount Carmel Cemetery, Glendale, Queens County, New York. Bella was married to Martin Abzug who died in 1986, they had 2 daughters.

Abbott Recognizes Two Service Members With Texas Legislative Medal Of Honor

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today presented the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Army Sergeant Rickey Wittner and to the family of Navy SEAL Special Warfare Operator First Class Nathan Gage Ingram at the Texas Capitol. The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration conferred to a service member of the Texas military forces.

“Today, we honor two men who answered the call for our nation,” said Governor Abbott. “They continued a tradition of heroism that the United States of America was built on. We will never forget the sacrifices they made for our country and for their fellow service members.”

The Governor was also joined at the ceremony by Senator Brent Hagenbuch, Senator Tan Parker, Representative Ben Bumgarner, Representative Cole Hefner, Representative Joanne Shofner, and Texas Military Department Adjutant General Thomas Suelzer.

Army Sergeant Rickey Wittner was awarded the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor in recognition of his valorous actions on July 10, 1970. He demonstrated bravery in the face of grave danger, saving 12 lives.

Navy SEAL Special Warfare Operator First Class Nathan Gage Ingram was posthumously awarded the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor in recognition of his



extraordinary courage, heroic action, and selfless dedication to duty on January 11, 2024. Without hesitation or regard for his own safety, he voluntarily entered the water in an attempt to save the life of his teammate. Ingram gave his life to uphold the highest traditions of the United States Naval service.

U.S. Army Sergeant Rickey Wittner enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 1969 and underwent helicopter training at Fort Eustis, Virginia, before beginning his service in the Vietnam War with the U.S. Army 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company, 269th Aviation Battalion. In recognition of his actions on July 10, 1970, Specialist Wittner was awarded the Soldier’s Medal for heroism; he also received the Purple Heart and the Air Medal. Following the completion of his active-duty army service in 1975 at the rank of Specialist Fifth Class, he joined the U.S. Army Reserve, transferring to the Texas Army Na-

tional Guard headquarters company in Marshall as a member of the 5th Battalion, 112th Armor. In 1987, he was honorably discharged at the rank of sergeant.

Nathan Gage Ingram, Navy Seal Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class was a beloved husband, son, brother, and friend who was lost at sea while on a night mission off the coast of Somalia. Gage enlisted in the Navy on September 25, 2019, and graduated boot camp at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois on November 22, 2019. He graduated Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training Class 346 in December 2021 and reported to his first operational tour as SEAL Team THREE. Gage’s awards and decorations include the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and other personal and unit awards.