

HIGHLANDS CROSBY Star Courier

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

These stories in the PRESS:

- Standoff ends in a house fire
• Letter to the Editor: Robert E. Lee HS change of name
• Letter to the Editor: Hair Appeal - De'Andre Case

.....And more, Page 3

COVID-19 RESOURCES

City of Houston Pre-Screening 832-393-4220
Harris County Ask a Nurse 713-634-1110
Harris County Pre-Screening 832-927-7575 or readyharris.org
Harris County Mobile Tests 713-439-6000
MD Medical 1-888-776-5252
Methodist Hospital Download mymethodist app.

COVID-19 Cases as of July 28, 2020

HOUSTON AREA 19 COUNTIES

104,645 POSITIVE
1,129 DEATHS
41,346 RECOVERED

TEXAS

406,559 POSITIVE
5,882 DEATHS
229,107 RECOVERED

UNITED STATES

4,341,201 POSITIVE
149,052 DEATHS
1,325,804 RECOVERED

WORLDWIDE

16,605,067 POSITIVE
657,643 DEATHS
9,667,033 RECOVERED

BIRTHDAYS

- Jul 30-Janis Parker
Jul 31-Cliff McKee
Richard Turvil
Aug 1-Kenneth Boudreaux
Calvin Finnell
Mildred Miller
Randall "Oscar" Stone
Barbara Statts
Mona Bowman
Aug 2-Joe Luis Rodriguez
Katerina Horn
Aug 3-Mrs.W.E.Gentry
Nita Sloan
Aug 4-Stacey Glover
Brittany Hahn
Aug 5-James Bobalik

ANNIVERSARIES

- Jul 30-Johnnie & Barbara Stotts
Aug 1-Doug & Cathy Wagner
Christina & Troy Woodall
Aug 2-Rusty & June Ressler
Aug 5-PeeWee & Patti Farmer

EPA Releases Preliminary Design for Remediation

WASTE PITS REMOVAL WILL HAVE MAJOR IMPACT ON AREA

Plan will cause Seven years of noise, dust, truck traffic

HIGHLANDS - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has just released many volumes of reports from the GHD Consulting Engineering firm, detailing their ideas for how to remove the toxic wastes from the North and South Impoundments along the San Jacinto River, known as the Superfund Site.

The report is extremely long and detailed, consisting of 10 volumes of information for the Northern Impound Site, and Two volumes for the Southern Impound Site. In total, there are many thousands of pages with data, drawings, boring logs, and most important a Work

Plan on how to remove the waste material, and how it will impact the environment around the communities of Highlands and Channelview.

The engineers have proposed excavation within "cells" on the Northern site, encompassed by sheet piling, and on the Southern site removal without the piling enclosures. The full extent of the work includes driving piles to form five cofferdams, dewatering the soil, excavating the material, and hauling it away to licensed landfills approximately 100 miles away. They envision one year of preparation, five years of excavation, and one year of clean-up and resto-



Removal method of dry waste inside cofferdam

ration, for a total of seven years of work.

The report emphasizes that it is preliminary in nature, and must be evaluated and refined. It is written by the GHD Environmental Engineering firm, located in

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, but reflects input from the EPA, the TCEQ, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The report says that it will also need the concurrence and coordination with the Port of Houston Authority, Harris

County Flood Control District, the TXDOT Texas Department of Transportation, and the Coastal Water Au-

See WASTE PITS, Page 6

Backlog of criminal cases imperils justice

By Lewis Spearman

HARRIS COUNTY - Local government is trying to catch up an extreme backlog of cases threatening destruction of the criminal justice system.

While a backlog of felony and misdemeanor cases is nothing new in the county, several factors have made the situation critical. Nearly 81,000 cases are now pending, a doubling of last year.

The criminal courthouse was water damaged by Hurricane Harvey, the COVID-19 pandemic rendered housing inmates, selecting juries, and the halt of trials problematic. Add to that since the 2018 election more than 140 lawyers no

longer work for the prosecutor's office.

District Attorney Kim Ogg discharged some of the lawyers after taking office, others quit citing low pay and the progressive agenda she has initiated. More than a million and a half dollars in compensation and vacation time went with them.

All jury trials and jury selection were stopped by the Supreme Court of Texas due to precautions over COVID-19, that order was extended until September 1. Special permission from regional judges and the state Office of Court Administration can provide the rare exceptions.

A Harris County Commissioners Court meeting invited the Justice Man-

agement Institute, (JMI) a nonprofit organization to address the county's problems over the last five years. Commissioners heard from Thomas Eberly, "inability to handle the volume of felony cases," causes delays and long pretrial incarceration.

JMI projections indicate inmate populations could reach 10,000 by Labor Day for a jail with normal capacity of 10,500. Almost 90% of those incarcerated are being held in pre-trial activities. So, persons not convicted of a crime face pretrial delays in a setting of social distancing that could impact them much like solitary confinement.

See Court Cases, Page 8

HOUSTON & HARRIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPTS.

Health order requires no in-person instruction until at least Sept. 8

Harris County, Texas - July 24, 2020, Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Executive Director of Harris County Public Health (HCPH) and Local Health Authority for Harris County, and David Persse, MD, FACEP, FAEMS, Local Health Authority for the Houston Health Department, signed a joint public health order requiring all public and non-religious private schools in Harris County to remain closed to in-person instruction until at least September 8. The start of on-campus instruction and activity may be delayed further based on ongoing monitoring and assessment of public health mitigation conditions.

The order follows the release of a provision from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) permitting schools to delay in-person instruction and a letter sent to local school districts from Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Dr. Shah on July 20 strongly urging schools to delay in-person instruction given the ongoing public health crisis. Over the past several weeks, Harris County authorities have consulted with local school officials, parents, teachers, and other public health and safety experts on reopening plans and the most responsible path forward regarding school operations.

"In order for students to be able to learn and grow, they must also be healthy and safe," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. "Right now, we continue to see a severe and uncontrolled spread of this virus

and it would be self-defeating to reopen schools as usual for in-person instruction. We are all desperate to move on from this crisis and get life back to normal. September 8 is still likely too soon, but the truth is, the fastest way we can all work together to bring this virus under control, the sooner we will be in a position to reopen again for the long term."

"We cannot talk about sending our children, teachers, and staff back to school when the virus is spreading uncontrollably in our community," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said. "We are at a critical moment in the fight against COVID-19, and we must take a step back and work to lower the positivity rate and hospitalizations. It is important to keep encouraging people to social distance, wear face coverings, and get tested. In a few weeks, we can look again at the data, see where things are, and gradually move forward again."

"Opening schools safely is a public health priority," said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, local health authority for HCPH. Harris County schools must reopen in a manner that prioritizes the health and safety of children, staff, families and the community. Considering how widespread this virus is in the community, we feel it is not safe at this time."

"We're in a critical time in our mission of working together as a community to get COVID-19 under control"

See in-person instruction delayed, Page 2

Governor Abbott waives grade promotion requirements for 2020-2021 STAAR testing

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott announced that the grade promotion requirement related to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test for students in grades 5 and 8 has been waived for the upcoming school year. Typically, school systems must take into account a student's score on the STAAR test to determine whether the student can be promot-

ed to the next grade level. The traditional A-F rating system will remain in place, albeit with certain adjustments due to COVID-19.

Typically, students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 are required to re-take a STAAR test late in the school year, and sometimes again in the summer, if they do not meet grade level when taken

during the spring. With this waiver, there will only be one administration of the STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading assessments for the 2020-21 school year. The test will be administered in May to coincide with the administration of other STAAR grades 3-8 assess-

See STAAR Test, Page 5

TURNER CHEVROLET advertisement with logo and contact info: 281-328-4377

AUTO & HOME INSURANCE advertisement for Jeremy Rosenkranz, State Farm Agent: 281-426-3512

WESTON G. COTTEN Attorney at Law advertisement: 281-421-4050

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Help schools open in September – Take precautions and get tested for COVID-19

July 27-August 1. Mobile Test Sites will be in new locations

Houston – The increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations is so concerning Harris County and the City of Houston are ordering all public and non-religious private schools to be closed until at least Tuesday, September 8th. If the rapid spread of this dangerous virus continues, schools may be ordered to stay closed even longer. To prevent that, each of us must take the simple steps to protect ourselves from contracting the disease: stay home as much as possible, when in public wear a mask and stay 6 feet from others, wash your hands often and get tested.

Testing is important because up to 40% of people with COVID-19 have no symptoms, but are still contagious. Knowing if you have the virus benefits you and your family. If you do, your provider or health department will help you understand any symptoms that may develop, advise

you if you need medical treatment and tell you how to protect your family. Testing is free at Harris County Public Health's 7 drive-through sites. Mobile sites move weekly and there are two stationary sites: CyFair at the Ken Pridgeon Stadium, 11355 Falcon Rd, Houston, TX 77065 and Pasadena, on the San Jacinto College Central Campus, 8060 Spencer Hwy, Pasadena, TX 77505. Stationary sites are open 6 days, Monday-Saturday and mobile sites are open 5 days, Monday-Saturday and closed one weekday. Due to extreme heat or storms, test sites may need to close temporarily.

Sign up online at www.hcphtx.org and take the self-assessment or call 832-927-7575. Results are available in 5-7 business days. You must take the self-assessment to get an authorization code for a testing site.

Mobile locations for the week of July 27 – August 1, Monday-Saturday are:

- Garcia Middle School
2369 W Mt Houston Rd,
Houston, TX 77038
Closed Tuesday, July 28
- Pasadena High School
206 Shaver St, Pasadena, TX 77506
Closed Wednesday, July 29
- Bear Creek Park
3505 War Memorial Dr, Houston, TX 77084
- Closed Thursday, July 30
- Legacy School of Sports
Science Creek Dr, Spring, TX 77373
- Closed Friday, July 31
- Greater Pure Light Church
12330 Vickery St, Houston, TX 77039
- Open Mon-Wed, July 27-29

Sometimes testing appointments fill up quickly sometimes. Some are free, but others are not, so call first. You can also be tested by your provider or clinic.

Visit www.hcphtx.org for COVID-19 updates and resources.

Texas Sales Tax Holiday is Aug. 7-9

(AUSTIN) — With the Texas economy slowly awakening from effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Comptroller Glenn Hegar reminds shoppers they can save money on clothes and school supplies during the state's sales tax holiday on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 7-9.

The law exempts sales tax on qualified items — such as clothing, footwear, school supplies and backpacks — priced below \$100, saving shoppers about \$8 on every \$100 they spend. The date of the sales tax holiday and list of tax-exempt items are set by the Texas Legislature.

“Even though significant uncertainty remains for our public and private schools as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sales tax holiday is a perfect opportunity to save money on school supplies and other tax-free items at

a time when many Texans are carefully monitoring their family finances,” Hegar said. “Online shopping is covered, so I encourage all Texans to shop online or practice social distancing when making in-store purchases. We want folks to stay safe while saving money.”

Apparel and school supplies that may be purchased tax-free are listed on the Comptroller's website at TexasTaxHoliday.org.

To promote social distancing, the Comptroller's office wants all taxpayers to know that during the annual sales tax holiday, qualifying items can be purchased online or by telephone, mail, custom order or any other means (including in-store purchases) tax free, when either:

- the item is both delivered to, and paid for by, the

customer during the exemption period; or

- the customer orders and pays for the item, and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends.

Texas' sales tax holiday weekend has been an annual event since 1999, allowing Texans to save millions of dollars in state and local sales taxes each year. Uncertainty surrounding consumer activity in the retail sector coupled with a lack of clarity regarding the timing and nature of schools reopening prevents the agency from producing an estimate for dollars saved by taxpayers during this year's holiday. Last year's holiday generated an estimated \$102.2 million in savings for Texas taxpayers.

In-person instruction delayed until Sept. 8,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

trol,” said Dr. David Persse, local health authority for the Houston Health Department. “Sending students, teachers and staff into classrooms while this virus is still spreading uncontrollably is not only unsafe for the people in the schools, it's dangerous for their families, friends and the entire community.”

In addition to the suspension of in person instruction, the order includes the following:

- Virtual instruction is allowed consistent with in-

dividual district or school academic plans. Instructors may use classrooms for video streaming if they are alone in the classroom and building occupancy does not exceed 10%.

- All school sponsored events and activities, including but not limited to clubs, sports, extra-curricular activities, fairs, exhibitions, academic and/or athletic competitions, must not take place in-person, on or off campus, until school systems resume on-campus instruction.

- By no later than Friday, August 21, 2020, each School System shall develop and submit a written plan with safety and health protocols for resuming in-person instruction and extracurricular activities to the Local Health Authority with jurisdiction over the school. School systems must make the plan available to parents and the general public.

Additional information regarding the joint order will be available on ReadyHarris.org.

An Important update on Medicare Find out how it can affect you.

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- Learn about **Medicare benefits** many retirees may not be aware of

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“Notice of Public Meeting to Discuss Budget”

San Jacinto College District will hold a public budget hearing meeting by videoconference on Monday, August 3, 2020, at 7 p.m. in the Board Room, Suite A1.104, of the Thomas S. Sewell District Administration Building, located at 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, Texas.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the College District's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Members of the public may access the live-stream of this meeting as follows: www.sanjac.edu/board-meeting-videos

Public participation in the discussion is invited. Members of the public who desire to address the Board must comply with the following registration procedures:

A link to a public comments form is available at: www.sanjac.edu/request-speak-to-board. The form must be completed prior to 6:50 p.m. on August 3, 2020, but members of the public are encouraged to complete the form an hour prior to the start of the meeting to allow time to receive call-in information and sufficient time to join the meeting.

A regular meeting by videoconference of the Board of Trustees will be held immediately after at which time adoption of the 2020-2021 budget will be considered.

The proposed budget will be available for inspection beginning on July 31, 2020, in the office of the Vice Chancellor, Fiscal Affairs, Room A1.202, 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, Texas.

Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ROUND-UP

An Opinion letter to Barbers Hill ISD Board of Trustees

July 24, 2020

Re: The Case of Mr. Kaden Bradford and De'Andre Arnold.

Dear: George Barrera, Fred Skinner, Cynthia Erwin, Becky Tice, Benny May, Eric Davis, Clint Pipes.

I am a Marine Corps Vietnam V.F.W., a retired California State Peace Officer, and an American Indian with long hair. I served as a State Peace Officer with long hair because the State of California recognized my Constitutional religious and cultural rights as an American Indian. I also want to point out that the American Indian religion was the only religion "outlawed" in the United States, just Google the 1883 Religious Criminal Code. This code led to the Massacre at Wounded Knee because they were conducting an illegal ceremony, the Ghost Dance.

The two young men in question are the type of young people this school should be supporting and recognizing their Constitutional rights for cultural expression. Your decision to not change the grooming standard, or accommodate these exceptional young men is a blatant statement that "only White culture is accepted at this school." That the only way for a student of color to get any respect at your school is, they must shed any cultural/spiritual expressions that are not "White," or that are not accepted in the White community. Your decision is an echo of the 1883 Religious Criminal Code, because the "sub-text" of your decision, without explicitly saying it, all students of Color must act, look, and behave "White."

Looking at the racial composition of the Board of Trustees it no wonder that, the Trustees believe only "White" culture is accepted at the school. Like the "Jim Crow Laws" the decision by the Board of Trustees places Black cultural expression in the "Back Seat of the Bus." These young men, like Rosa Parks, do not feel they should be shoved to the "Back of the School's Cultural Bus." Has the Board of Trustees asked the other students at the school what they think and feel about the subject (or, don't they care)? And, is the Board of Trustees decision on the school's grooming standard only re-enforces and teaches the school's White students "cultural intolerance for things that are not White?"

It is totally dishonest of the Board of Trustees to say it is only about keeping the grooming standard consistent, this is an obvious and blatant false façade. Is this the United States that I fought for when I served in the Marine Corps? Is this the United States that I put my body on-the-line for, that promised freedom of thought, cultural and religious expression?

As a citizen of the United States, that fought for this country and had a career in law enforcement I am totally ashamed of the Barber Hill Independent School District Board of Trustees. For the Barber Hill Independent School District has reintroduced a new form of modern day "Jim Crow Laws."

Jose Rivera
U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam V.F.W. and Retired State Peace Officer

SWAT standoff ends in suicide blaze

CROSBY - A man that law enforcement had sought mental health help for was determined to be dead by suicide and the home reduced to ashes by flames.

At about 6:30 Friday, July 24, the Harris County Sheriff's Office received a call from family members that a sibling was threatening them with a firearm near the 6800 block of FM 1942, near Bob & Jeans Bar.

Deputies say the man's sister made the emergency 911 after the two of them got into an altercation, then the suspect pulled out a firearm.

When deputies arrived gunshots rang out and a call was made for SWAT units to assist.

The sister and her father were able to escape from inside the home.

SWAT units' negotiator tried communicating with the man but did not receive a response. After obtaining a warrant,



Firemen watch as house is consumed by fire, possibly set by suspect being sought by police.



Only a shell of the house remains the next morning. Authorities were searching for the body of the suspect in the ashes.

SWAT units attempted to move closer to the suspect.

Suddenly, they noticed a fire within the upper portion of the home.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez indicated a suspect had barricaded inside the home and intentionally set the home on ablaze during a standoff.

As negotiators tried to contact the suspect and get inside the home more gunshots rang out. Flames began to engulf the entire residence.

Deputies indicated they had encountered him earlier in July concerning terroristic threats and had taken him to a mental health unit and had taken firearms as a precaution.

Now arson investigators are looking into the source of the blaze and the Harris County Medical Examiner's Office is working to identify the body left inside the home.

OPINION, LETTER TO EDITOR:

Change Robert E. Lee High School's name, because the Baytown area deserves better

By Randy G. Dunn
July 25, 2020

I strongly support changing the name of Baytown Robert E. Lee High, the school I graduated from. The name needs to be changed because Confederate values and the values of R.E. Lee are not the values of our students and our community as they exist today. Renaming the school is clearly what is best for Baytown and Baytown's children and school graduates.

The current name of the school honors a man who was a notorious anti-American traitor who fought against the United States of America (and



Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown, Texas

lost), failed to honor his oath to defend the U.S. Constitution, led many battles that killed tens of thousands of Americans (including huge numbers of American troops), owned

many slaves, thought that black people were inferior to whites, and fought for the independence of a

See High School name, Page 6

Dayton Chamber of Commerce welcomes new members



The Dayton Chamber of Commerce celebrated the opening of the second section of Encino Estates with First America Homes. Visit their beautiful model home located at 1112 CR 660 in Dayton to see what they have to offer.

Lung Cancer Screening can save lives

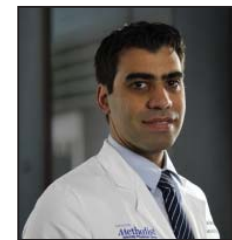
BAYTOWN — (July 23, 2020) —The Lung Cancer Screening Program at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital helps high risk patients receive a diagnosis and treatment plan at an early stage of the disease.

The program provides fast, accurate and efficient diagnosis and management of suspicious lung nodules through expert analysis by a radiologist, interventional pulmonologist or thoracic surgeon.

Suspicious lung nodules—small masses of tissue in the lung—are quite common and detected through chest imaging, such as X-ray and CT scans. Nodules can be cancerous, though most are benign. Noncancerous nodules usually require no treatment, with your doctor possibly recommending periodic imaging tests to monitor their growth or changes. Patients diagnosed with malignant nodules may begin a treatment plan developed through collaboration between oncologists, pulmonologists and thoracic surgeons.

Dr. Houssam Oueini, pulmonologist at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital, says patients should not delay lung cancer screening due to concerns over COVID-19 safety.

"Because smoking rates have fallen in recent decades, many people assume that lung cancer is no longer a major health concern," Oueini said. "But lung cancer remains the deadliest of all cancers. More Americans die each year from lung cancer than from colon, breast and



Houssam Oueini, MD

prostate cancer combined, even though most lung cancers are easily preventable."

One of the most persistent misconceptions about lung cancer, especially among long-term smokers, is that it is "too late" to stop. But Oueini says that quitting smoking at any time not only can reduce the risk of cancer, but also provides other health benefits, including improved circulation and heart and lung function.

"A smoker can cut his or her risk of lung cancer by as much as 50 percent by quitting," Oueini said. "It's never too late to gain some benefit and, of course, the earlier you quit, the better."

Another common myth is that only smokers get lung cancer. While smoking is by far the number one cause, approximately 20 percent of lung cancers occur in patients who have never smoked. Some of those cases are the result of genetic mutations; others are caused by environmental factors, such as exposure to asbestos or radon gas.

Regardless of the underlying cause, early detection is critical to

See Lung Cancer, Page 8

★ OPINION PAGE ★

NEWSPAPERS
By Texas Press Association

A metro newspaper refugee found success at a weekly

By Jim Iovino
West Virginia University

M.E. Sprengelmeyer called himself a “hired gun” at big-city newspapers for more than 20 years, including the now-defunct Rocky Mountain News, where he was the Washington correspondent.

But he didn’t like the direction newspapers of that size were going. Staffs were getting squeezed, and he said he wasn’t sold on working for a publicly traded company that was making moves based on profits.

So he left.

M.E. Sprengelmeyer talked on the phone as he supervised work on his weekly. (Photo by Rick Scibelli Jr., The New York Times)

He took his severance and some savings and started a search that would help him control his own journalistic destiny. He ended up in Santa Rosa, New Mexico, in 2009, where he purchased a weekly newspaper called the Guadalupe County Communicator.

“It was awesome,” Sprengelmeyer said. “I say this to anyone who asks me. I covered wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was on the presidential campaign trail for a year. Coverage of sex trafficking in the Philippines. But the stuff I did in the middle of nowhere in New Mexico was the most important work I had ever done. It was the most satisfying. It was also the most frightening.”

Sprengelmeyer gained national recognition for his career path, including being featured in the New York Times. He also turned his weekly paper into a journalistic powerhouse in New Mexico, winning numerous awards and shining light on local issues like never before.

Oh, it was also profitable. While stories of major metro newspapers are filled with financial doom and gloom, that’s not so for many weekly newspapers across the country – his included.

That’s not to say hard work wasn’t involved. There were many things Sprengelmeyer had to learn in real time, including how to get over the fear of being the person in charge of not just a newsroom, but also payroll and taxes.

“In 21 years of being in corporate papers, I had never been an editor,” he said. “I hadn’t supervised anyone. ... The other stuff (payroll, ad sales, circulation, etc.) seems like a drag. The truth of the matter is that kind of takes care of itself. Just do it. You learn it on the job.”

Due to family health issues, Sprengelmeyer eventually sold the paper and moved to North Carolina after running the Communicator for more than eight years. He hopes more journalists follow his path to ownership. It may not be something many realize they can do – or even want to do, for that matter. But he said there is great satisfaction personally and an even greater impact on a community.

You will never have more fun and never do more important journalism,” he said, “than when you’re in a small town running the show.”

Jim Iovino is director of NewStart, a program at West Virginia University’s College of Media to develop the next generation of community newspaper owners.

This article is one of a series distributed by the Texas Press Association for its members. If you wish more information, call 713-266-3444 or email grafikstar@aol.com



Kristan Hoffman Butler, author of “Little Love Stories” with Reed Butler and Iris Butler.

LITTLE LOVE STORY
By Kristan Hoffman

One Thing I Didn’t Expect About Motherhood

How much I would think about bodies. My body. My children’s bodies. The way they grow, stretch, scar and heal. Their softness and their strength. Through pregnancy, birth and recovery, I’ve become more forgiving toward my body, though it hasn’t always felt like mine. Its changes aren’t easy to accept, nor are the demands to share it so frequently. I marvel at my children, so awkward and elegant. Why are we drawn to embrace so often? Why does touch offer such comfort? I am not religious, but since becoming a mother, I have learned to worship. Our bodies are holy. — Kristan Hoffman

This short story was originally published in the New York Times on July 6, 2020 in a regular column entitled Little Love Stories.

Reprinted here by permission of the New York Times.

Kristan Hoffman is the daughter of this newspaper’s publishers, an author, and a columnist for this newspaper.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Chris Cobler

Let’s search together for capital ideas

Let’s search together for capital ideas

Ed Sterling wrote this column for almost three decades, so let’s open by celebrating his contributions to the Texas Press Association and its members. Ed was the calm, steady voice keeping us informed and interested.

I am honored to have been asked by Mike Hodges, TPA executive director, and Donnis Baggett, executive vice president, to continue the important work of keeping Texans up to date on what’s happening in Austin. The world has changed dramatically since Ed started writing in the early 1990s, but the need for being informed remains greater than ever.

The “Capital Highlights” column appears in more than 100 newspapers across Texas, reaching all the way from the Rockport Pilot to the Moore County News-Press and from the Bowie News to the Seminole Sentinel. From his many years of traveling around Texas and talking to editors and publishers, Ed carried in his head the knowledge of each paper and its readers.

Please help me help sniff out the most useful news to you. Via email at ccobler@texaspress.com, tell me about the state agencies and topics you want monitored most closely. Are you concerned most about the large players like the Texas Education Agency, or do you want me to report the latest buzz from more obscure agencies like the Texas Apiary Inspection Service?

Despite my penchant for dad jokes, I pledge to keep playing this column straight, as Ed did so well. We need more nonpartisan news, which is why you read and support your local newspaper.

The pandemic remained the theme of the news in July, much of it centering on the economy and education. The week opened with Comptroller Glenn Hegar’s forecast that Texas faces a \$ 4.6 billion budget deficit and closed with the first



hurricane of the season, Hanna, making landfall Saturday night near Port Mansfield.

ELECTRIC NEWS FOR THE ECONOMY

A jolt of good news came late in the week when Tesla announced it would build an electric-vehicle manufacturing plant in Travis County, bringing at least 5,000 jobs and \$ 1 billion in capital investments.

Austin, offering about \$ 60 million in local tax breaks, beat out Tulsa and other American cities vying for the prize. The factory will produce Tesla’s Cybertruck, Semi and Models 3 and Y and be built on 2,000 acres near the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport

“We’re going to make it a factory that is going to be stunning,” Tesla top executive Elon Musk said. “It’s right on the Colorado River. So we’re actually going to have to have a boardwalk over you, hiking, biking trail. It’s going to basically be an ecological paradise.”

GETTING RID OF GOBBLEDYGOOK

Jargon isn’t just hard on readers. It also can be bad for business, Texas’ insurance commissioner wrote in a column last week.

Kent Sullivan said he has been promoting plain language since becoming insurance commissioner three years ago. One example of policy legalese he noted: “You may qualify for a contingent non-forfeiture benefit.”

Instead of this gobbledygook, Sullivan wrote, “Why not just say you can

receive benefits even if you stop paying for this policy?”

The coronavirus outbreak has spotlighted potential confusion and costly legal fallout caused by bewildering insurance policy language, Sullivan said. “We need a coordinated effort to strengthen and enforce plain language requirements in state laws,” he added.

ADA TURNS 30

July 26 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The US Census Bureau estimates that one in four Americans, or 61 million adults, have a disability.

The Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities will have its quarterly business meeting from 8 am-5 pm July 30 and 8 am-noon July 31. Because of the pandemic, the meeting will be via Zoom.

One agenda item: How educators wearing face masks affects students who are deaf or who have hearing loss. The full agenda and Zoom meeting information may be found at bit.ly/disabilities0730

LOOKING AHEAD TO TAX SAVINGS

Texas’ annual sales tax holiday is Aug. 7-9. The holiday exempts sales tax on qualified items - such

as clothing, footwear, school supplies and backpacks - priced below \$ 100, saving shoppers about \$ 8 on every \$ 100 they spend. Qualifying items are listed at TexasTaxHoliday.org.

“Even though significant uncertainty remains for our public and private schools as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sales tax holiday is a perfect opportunity to save money on school supplies and other tax-free items at a time when many Texans are carefully monitoring their family finances,” Comptroller Hegar said. “Online shopping is covered, so I encourage all Texans to shop online or practice social distancing when making in-store purchases. We want folks to stay safe while saving money.”

Chris Cobler is a board member and past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. He welcomes email at ccobler@texaspress.com.

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★ LIFESTYLE PAGE ★

OBITUARIES

Nelda Ann Tosh

Nelda Ann Tosh, 77, passed away peacefully at home on July 23, 2020 in Crosby, Texas. Nelda was born on December 20, 1942 in Bremond, Texas to parents Newel and Berta (Hailey) Hamilton. She was a loving sister, mother, grandmother and friend. Nelda was a member of Dell Dale Baptist Church where she treasured the fellowship of her church family as well. She enjoyed sewing and making handmade quilts that she loved sharing with her family. Nelda will be dearly missed and will remain in the hearts of those who knew her.



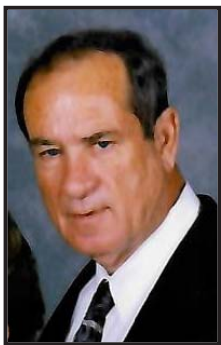
She is preceded in death by her parents; husband, Thurman Leo Tosh, Sr.; son, Thurman Leo Tosh, Jr.; as well as numerous siblings. Nelda is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Deana and John F. Peek, Jr.;

grandchildren, Tiffany Goines and husband Fredrick, John Forrest Peek, III; great-grandchildren, Ransom Goines, Faith-Marie Goines; her only living sister, Dorothy Risenhoover; as well as numerous nieces and nephews who loved her dearly. Due to the current pandemic, services to honor Nelda's life will be postponed until a later date.

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Jimmy Cain

Jimmy Cain, 85, of Highlands, Texas went to be with the Lord on July 19, 2020. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Mary Cain and daughter, Karen Schoppa. Jimmy is survived by daughter Christina Anderson and husband Glenn of Crosby, TX. Grandchildren Shanna Wiggins and husband Michael of Crosby, TX. Jerome Anderson and wife Julie of Highlands, TX. Amanda Duda and husband Zack of Crosby, TX. Brent Shoppa of Pasadena, TX. James Shoppa and wife Misty of Webster, TX. Great grandchildren Jared Wiggins, Maddie Wiggins, Colton



Anderson, Braydon Anderson, Elijah Duda, Gabriel Duda, Cullen Schoppa, Luke Schoppa, Travis Schoppa, Ethan and a granddaughter-in-law from a previous marriage, Tricia Meador. He

also leaves behind a life-long friend, James Norwood.

Friends are invited to visit with the family from 9:00am to 11:00am on Thursday, July 30, 2020 at Sterling White Funeral Home. Funeral services will follow at 11:00am. Interment will follow in Sterling White Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Sterling White Funeral Home, 11011 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd., Highlands, Texas 77562.

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Governor Abbott, TMD Announce Texas National Guard Partnership With Active Duty, Reservists In Support Of COVID-19 Response

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Military Department (TMD) today announced Joint Task Force Texas, a newly formed partnership between the Texas National Guard and Active Duty and Reservists to strengthen COVID-19 response efforts in Texas. More than 1,200 service members have come together from the Texas National Guard and the active and reserve components of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force to support hospitals in Houston, San Antonio, Del Rio, and the Rio Grande Valley.

"This formal partnership will help ensure a more effective collaboration among state and federal re-

sources, and allows us to better meet the needs of Texans across the state," said Governor Abbott. "I thank our federal partners at the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force for continuing to provide crucial support to the Lone Star State. The State of Texas remains committed to working alongside our federal partners to keep Texans safe and combat the spread of COVID-19 in our communities."

"We are proud to work with our brothers and sisters in arms from the active duty and reserve forces to help our fellow Texans in need," said Texas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris. "The units of the Texas Military Department are not authorized with enough medical profes-

sionals to meet the current demand. Therefore, the Governor requested medical assistance through FEMA. That request is being met from the Department of Defense with active duty and U.S. Army medical professionals. By partnering with the active duty and reserve components, we will be able to provide this much needed support and relief to the Texas civilian healthcare workers who have been working tirelessly to care for the people of our great state."

Texas Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Thomas Suelzer, appointed as the dual-status commander, serves as the commander of both Texas National Guard and federal service members.

STAAR Test,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ments. "As always, our goal is to provide a high quality education for every Texas student," said Governor Abbott. "This will be a uniquely challenging school year, therefore, this year is about providing students every opportunity to overcome the disruptions caused by COVID-19. By waiving these promotion requirements, we are providing greater flexibility for students and teachers, while at the same time ensuring that Texas students continue to receive a great education — which we will continue to measure with high quality assessments."

"Parents deserve to know how well their children have learned grade level knowledge and skills in reading and math, especially in a time when education has been

substantially disrupted," said Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath. "And educators use this valuable information to make adjustments to support students the following year. But there is no benefit to our children by requiring them to repeat a year based on a single test score given the disruptions of COVID, so we are waiving the grade promotion requirements from STAAR this year for our students."

"Parents rightfully expect our schools to continue to meet a high bar and it is critically important that teachers and parents know how each child is progressing and whether or not they need additional help. A-F ratings will provide us with important information about school performance and, while we won't use the STAAR test

to determine promotions, it will continue to provide us with assessment data that we need. We face some unprecedented challenges in the upcoming year, but we must continue to keep our schools accountable and on track," said Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick.

"With this waiver, we are ensuring that the success of Texas students remains the focus of this school year. These unprecedented times have brought much upheaval to these students' lives and this is one thing we can do at the State level to help ease them back into their educational routines while still ensuring the institutions of education remain accountable," stated Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, Dan Huberty.

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey—

1. Is the book of Titus in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Joshua 10, the sun stood still while Joshua's army destroyed

3. In Genesis 9, who saw a rainbow in the sky? Adam, Moses, Noah, Abraham
4. From 1 Samuel 2, how many children did Hannah have? 5, 10, 15, 20
5. In which city did King Ahasuerus live? Corinth, Gath, Berea, Shushan
6. Who was David's oldest brother? Jonah, Eliab, Joel, Agrippa

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Amorites; 3) Noah; 4) 5; 5) Shushan; 6) Eliab

The Journey of a thousand miles begins with one step
-LaoTzu

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What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later
ROMANS 8:18

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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.
-- 1 JOHN 4:18

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.
--2 Timothy 1:7

★ ASK THE EXPERT ★

Waste Pits removal will have major impact,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

thority. The latter two have work projects in the area that might conflict with the Waste Pits remedial activity, they said.

The conclusions delineated in the report indicate the toxic material is deeper and wider than originally thought, and quantities will be larger and time to remove the material extended over the original schedule. In addition, these factors are expected to increase the costs an unknown amount.

It is expected that the EPA will have to negotiate with the PRP (Potential Responsible Parties) to come to an agreement on the cost of the work which they will be responsible for.

In the narrative accompanying the reports and the

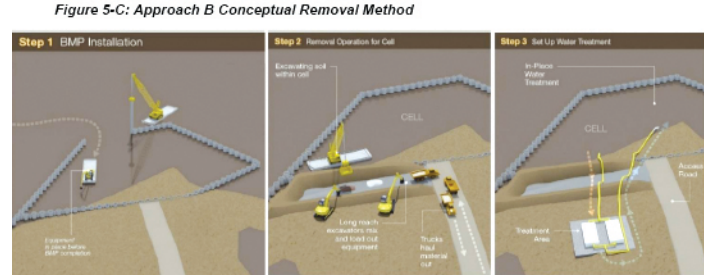
Work Plan, the consulting engineers say that the size, location, and required techniques for removal may be beyond reasonable construction parameters, and may in fact not be feasible. They indicate further study is needed in this regard.

Some details from the report emphasize the scope and difficulty of the project. Due to poor soil conditions, the engineers say the steel sheet piling must be 109 feet long in some situations, and have a cross section of a 41" I-beam, or a 5'-6" tubular cross section, and weight hundreds of pounds per foot of length. These structural members are not normally available, and may have to be fabricated overseas. It is obvious that their transpor-

tation will be very difficult, too.

The Northern site is about 14 acres, with more than half of it normally under water. The report says that another site of about 10 acres must be located as a staging area, and a gravel road built to access the waste pits site. This gravel road would be in TxDOT right-of-way of I-10, and there is a strong possibility that a new bridge for I-10 will be under construction at the same time, creating possible conflicts for work crews.

The waste material soil must be dewatered prior to excavation the report says, and this will require building a temporary water treat-



Removal of waste in water areas; then treatment of water and return

ment plant. Its plan is very large, about 75' x 150' and consists of either 24 or 16 stages of treatment, depending upon the scheme selected. The Work Plan calls for all materials to be removed that test above 30 ng/kg in toxicity, and this means some of the excavation will be 25 feet or more deep.

Environmental groups including THEA's Jackie Young Medcalf, have questioned whether the 30 ng/kg criteria is safe enough. She also thinks the plan to use some of the rock material that forms the present "cap" is not a good idea since it may be contaminated. She is also worried about worker safety, and neighborhood safety as the excavation work and transportation present opportunities for escape of toxins.

Jackie Young Medcalf also takes issue with the GHS/EPA determination that the waste material can be classified as "non-hazardous industrial waste" allowing it to be handled and removed at lower limits of safety. The material was tested for "ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, and toxicity" to arrive at this conclusion, GHD said.

The report points out some of these problems, saying that driving the sheet piling would be very noisy, cause vibrations, and last for five years. Impact hammers might have to strike the piles 1500 to 2500 times each, the report said. It is expected that the noise would bother nearby residences, and distract drivers on I-10 who were not expecting it. Work would be confined to the November to April calendar months, to avoid floods or hurricanes that might affect the site and release toxic material. In addition, excavation would probably release dust, that must be contained by

the contractor with some method.

The material to be removed from the Northern site is now calculated to be 212,000 cubic yards, not 162,000 as originally figured in the ROD, or Record Of Decision of 2017. This would require 15,000 truck loads of material to be hauled away from the site. This means these trucks would enter I-10 at the Monmouth ramp, if TxDOT would allow this. The Southern site would have an additional 26,000 cy of material transported, with 30,000 cy stored on-site for reuse. The Southern Impound site is approximately 20 acres.

The majority of the work would be scheduled from November to April, to avoid the high water periods in the San Jacinto River, and to also avoid the hurricane season. High Water could greatly affect the safety of the site and the exposed material. However, the report notes that the Coastal Water Authority is constructing 10 new gates in the dam at Lake Houston, and this would allow greater discharge rates, and could affect the height of the river in a rainy season. The sheet piling is designed to extend 9 feet above average water level, but the report says it is not known if future water events might exceed this height.

In a word of caution that might be understated, the report concludes for the Northern Impoundment, the following uncertainties: "Uncertainties... could render the remedial alternative outlined in the ROD technically impractical and not implementable." These include the following factors:

- Uncertain Depth
- Pile types... are not conventional
- Possible slope failure... releasing toxic material into the river

— Logistics of (pile) transportation

— Inability to remove the piles after completion, leaving an obstruction in the river

— Overtopping (flooding) possible in a storm

— Coastal Water Authority (CWA) water releases at the dam

— Water treat ability, so that it may be returned to the river. At present the treatment is only theoretical

— Trucks entering I-10. May need a TxDOT permit and traffic control if allowed

— Release of greenhouse gases due to heavy truck volume.

In the report, the SSA or Sand Separation Area was found to have toxicity below the allowable levels, and the report recommended that no treatment other than MNR (Monitored natural remediation) be needed for this area.

In the Southern Impoundment, some demolition of existing structure and concrete slabs are required to allow excavation, and sheet piling 55' long and 180' long is planned for the western edge of the impoundment site to hold back river water. Criteria for this site is 240 ng/kg, and much of the material is below that criteria, the GHD report said. The plan is to excavate and dewater the areas that tested above that figure, and then backfill and restore the site.

Due to the Pandemic from COVID-19 virus, the EPA has not been able to present this information in a public forum as originally planned. You can read the reports yourself, at <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/collection/06/SC32193>. The consultant, GHD Environmental Engineers, is continuing to work on the Remedial Design and the next report will be the 90% RD.

High School Name,

CONTINUED FROM THE PRESS

rogue nation founded to preserve the institution of slavery for economic gain.

The school never should have been given that disgraceful name. It was originally built and named in 1928 (during the Jim Crow Era) as a segregated school for white children only. The school continued to exist as a "whites only" school for almost four decades, until Baytown

schools were finally racially integrated in 1967.

There has been an ongoing movement across this country in recent years to rename schools, streets, and other landmarks that were named to honor despicable Confederate men. The Baytown area cannot afford the bad reputation that would result from being the last such school to change its name.

Randy Dunn
Baytown Robert E. Lee High School graduate, Class of 1976 (always a Gander.)

Retired public school teacher, independent educational consultant and school improvement advocate

Unity Alumni Association for School Improvement, Baytown Robert E. Lee High School



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Harris County Emergency Service District is soliciting resumes/applications to fill a vacant-unexpired position on the Board of Commissioners. Applications/resumes will be accepted until 5 p.m. August 15, 2020 at P.O. Box 96, Highlands, TX 77562, 1500 E. Wallisville Road, Highlands, TX 77562 or at either fire station in Highlands at 2301 E Wallisville Road, or at 123 San Jacinto, Highlands. Applications are not required, but can be picked up at 123 San Jacinto, or at 1500 E. Wallisville Road. A simple resume will be sufficient.

LEGAL NOTICE

A person is disqualified from serving as an emergency services commissioner if that person:

(1) is related within the third degree of affinity(blood) or consanguinity(marriage) to:

(A) a person providing professional services to the district;

(B) a commissioner of the same district;

or

(C) a person who is an employee or volunteer of an emergency services organization providing emergency services to the district;

(2) is an employee of a commissioner of the same district, attorney, or other person providing professional services to the district;

(3) is serving as an attorney, consultant, or architect or in some other professional capacity for the district or an emergency services organization providing emergency services to the district; or

(4) fails to maintain the qualifications required by law to serve as a commissioner.

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THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF JACINTO CITY WILL MEET IN SPECIAL SESSION ON THURSDAY AUGUST 13, 2020 AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 10301 MARKET STREET FOR THE PURPOSE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ANTICIPATED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020/2021. THIS BUDGET WILL RAISE MORE PROPERTY TAXES THAN LAST YEAR'S BUDGET BY \$237,072 OR 6 PERCENT. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED.

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Harris County ESD No. 50 is selling a 2006 Ferrara Intruder II Pumper from the Channelview Fire Department's fleet through sealed bid process with a minimum starting bid of \$50,000. ESD 50 will be accepting sealed bid from August 3rd until 3pm CST on August 17th. The bids will be opened at a public meeting on August 17, 2020 at 6pm at the Channelview Fire Department located at 1210 Dell Dale, Channelview, TX 77530. The bidding process is being hosted by Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus. Further details are available at <https://www.firetruckmall.com/AvailableTruck/13663/2006-Ferrara-Intruder-II-Pumper> or by calling 256-776-7786. Bids may be hand delivered or mailed to:

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ATTN: Truck Bid
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Channelview, TX 77530

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Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

HEY DAD, MOM SAYS THE OLDER I GET THE MORE I ACT LIKE YOU IN MANY WAYS.

SHE SAYS I HAVE YOUR LAUGH, AND ESPECIALLY YOUR EYES.

NOT TO MENTION MY RUGGED GOOD LOOKS AND CHARM?

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR WAS ANOTHER.

R.F.D. by Mike Marland

BUCKSTER DOESN'T MIND YOU DOIN' ALL THAT TO HIM, JUNE?

NAW! HE LOVES PLAYIN' UNICORN!

ACTUALLY, I DON'T! SO WHILE SHE'S PRETENDIN' I'M A UNICORN, I'M PRETENDIN' I'M A BUDWEISER CLYDESDALE.

The Spats by Jeff Pickering

I WOKE UP BRIGHT EYED AND BUSHY TAILED!!

BUSHY TAILED??

MAYBE YOU SHOULD SEE A VETERINARIAN?

Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Bushes are missing 2. Apron is different 3. Earring is missing 4. Window is smaller 5. Man's nose is different 6. Bracelets are larger

Posting Date July 27, 2020

King Crossword

ACROSS

- Oil cartel
- Largest continent
- Crime scene evidence
- Lounge around
- Charged bits
- A billion years
- Perry Mason's client
- Entertainment
- Smell bad
- Geneva's river
- Skiers' 7-Down
- String instrument
- Do as you're told
- Old cars for new ones
- "Help!"
- Repeat verbatim
- Arctic bird
- Confiscations
- Sans siblings
- Diner staffer
- Name
- BLT meat
- Swimming venue
- Alias abbr.
- Secret or Sure
- Crib
- Elderly
- Press
- Pismire
- May honorees
- Kindly bloke
- Antiquated
- "The Raven" writer
- Sprite
- Group of priests
- Helper
- Drench
- Hostel
- On both
- sides of
- 9 Leaves-dropper?
- Proper subject, maybe
- 11 Heche or Hathaway
- 16 Born
- 20 Weeding implement
- 21 Privation
- 22 Reed instrument
- 23 Drying agent
- 24 Cisterns
- 26 Ankara resident
- 27 Fish eggs
- 28 — and void
- 29 Terrier variety
- 31 Former
- 34 Menagerie
- 35 Drilling apparatus
- 37 Also
- 38 Ali —
- 39 Related
- 40 Verse
- 41 Probability
- 44 Id counterpart
- 45 Exist
- 46 Negative prefix
- 47 Explosive stick

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Trivia test by Efi Rodriguez

- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the birthstone traditionally associated with the month of July?
- MOVIES: What was the name of the artificial intelligence system in "The Terminator" movie series?
- CHEMISTRY: Which element has the chemical symbol Pt?
- HISTORY: Which two boxers were matched in 1974's "The Rumble in the Jungle" contest in Zaire?
- ANATOMY: What is the common name for the hallux?
- AD SLOGANS: Which product is featured in the advertising slogan "Obey your thirst"?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which four U.S. states start with the letter "I"?
- TELEVISION: What city was the setting for the 1990s sitcom "Home Improvement"?
- MUSIC: Which female singer had a No. 1 hit in the 1970s with the song "You're No Good"?
- MEASUREMENTS: How many tablespoons are in 1/4 cup?

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

Answers

1. Ruby; 2. Skynet; 3. Platinum; 4. Muhammad Ali (winner) and George Foreman; 5. Big toe; 6. Sprite; 7. Idaho, Illinois, Indiana and Iowa; 8. Detroit; 9. Linda Ronstadt; 10. Four

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★ COMMUNITY NEWS ★

Congressman John Lewis, Civil Rights Icon, dies at 80

By Allan Jamail

It was January 24, 2018 at the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Houston's Fifth Ward, as a photojournalist for the North Channel Star I got to meet Congressman John Lewis of Georgia. I was there covering the Criminal Justice Forum (CJF) spearheaded by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

The North Channel Star put on its front page my article and photos of Lewis and the CJF. You can still read the article by going to: www.northchannelstar.com, search for "crime forum".

Hundreds gathered at the church to hear Lewis' speech, here's part of it, "You must find a way to get in the way. You must find a way to get in trouble, good trouble, and necessary trouble." "I've been arrested about 50 times for getting into good trouble." "Use what you have to help make our country and make our world a better place, where no one will be left out or left behind... It is your time."

After the event I made it a point to meet Lewis, I wanted to have a few words with him. As we shook hands and exchanged a few words, I told him he delivered a good speech. And I told him how I respected and admired him for his achievements and his relentless effort to make improvements in civil rights, voting rights and criminal justice reforms. I told him how I hoped my article would help his efforts, he thanked me. Before parting I then told him I'd be praying for him and he thanked me again.

Congressman Lewis served Georgia's 5th congressional district from 1987 until his death Friday, July 17th at age 80. Known as a civil rights icon he was one of the giants in the historic struggle for equal rights in America.

His death came seven months after his public announcement in late December 2019 after a routine examination he had been diagnosed with advanced stage 4 pancreatic cancer. He said then, "I have never faced a fight quite like the one I have now."

Lewis, who was born on Feb. 21, 1940 to sharecroppers in Troy, Alabama, attended segregated public schools and gives credit to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s radio broadcasts which inspired his work as an activist.

At 18, he wrote a letter to King, who responded by purchasing a round-trip bus ticket to Montgomery



Photo by Allan Jamail
January 2018 - the late Congressman John Lewis gave a rousing speech while in Houston attending a Criminal Justice forum aimed at improving the nation's Criminal Justice System. Lewis emphasized the need to never use acts of violence to accomplish one's goal. John Lewis said, "The best non-violent action we can take to correct the unfair Criminal Justice System is to VOTE! Vote like you've never voted before. Get everyone to VOTE!"

for Lewis so they could meet. "Dr. King, I am John Robert Lewis," he recalled saying to King. "And that was the beginning." Lewis wasted no time organizing, quickly finding himself on the front lines of the civil rights movement.

As a student at Fisk University, he led numerous demonstrations in Nashville against racial segregation, including sit-ins at segregated lunch counters as part of the Nashville Sit-ins.

Starting in 1961, he took part in a series of demonstrations that became known as the Freedom Rides, in which he and other activists -- Black and white -- rode together in buses through the South to challenge the region's lack of enforcing a Supreme Court ruling that deemed segregated public bus rides unconstitutional.

Upon stopping, the activists on these rides often were arrested or beaten, Lewis included. In his second-to-last tweet before his death, Lewis tweeted, "it was 59 years ago today I was released from Parchman Farm Penitentiary after being arrested in Jackson, MS for using a so-called "white" restroom during the Freedom Rides of 1961."

And on March 7, 1965 in what would become known as "Bloody Sunday," Lewis, was in the process of leading hundreds of demonstrators in a march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery when they walked across The Edmund Pettus Bridge, which crosses the Alabama River in Selma.

They were greeted by a "sea of blue" of Alabama state troopers who beat and tear-gassed the demonstrators. One of those

troopers fractured Lewis's skull, scarring his head for the rest of his life. The troopers acts of violence helped make that demonstration a pivotal one in the fight for African-American suffrage.

Often called "One of the most courageous persons the Civil Rights Movement ever produced," Lewis dedicated his life to protecting human rights, securing civil liberties, and building what he calls "The Beloved Community" in America. His dedication to the highest ethical standards and moral principles has won him the admiration of many of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the United States Congress.

This past Sunday, July 26th a horse drawn carriage carried Lewis' casket, draped with the United States flag across the same Edmund Pettus Bridge for the last time.

Sunday Lewis body lied in state in the Alabama state capitol, Monday his body arrived in the nation's Capitol Rotunda to lie in state. Thursday it will make its final stop at a private funeral service in Atlanta, Georgia.

President Barack Obama in 2011 awarded Lewis the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his lifetime of advocacy and activism.

During that February ceremony, Obama said of Lewis: "And generations from now, when parents teach their children what is meant by courage, the story of John Lewis will come to mind -- an American who knew that change could not wait for some other person or some other time; whose life is a lesson in the fierce urgency of now."

Backlog of Court Cases,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

So, the Justice Management Institute recommended dropping charges for arrestees accused of nonviolent felonies.

Sheriff Gonzalez had asked for a "compassionate release" plan for non-violent offenders, and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo moved quickly to put it into action.

An administrative judge over ruled the plan before it could be implemented. Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order that halted release of certain inmates and Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo and the union expressed that the plan was a risk to the general community.

Harris County Sheriff's Ed Gonzalez created a so-called "Zoom Team" to help keep cases moving through the courts.

The extreme disposition of cases has had the

county take special measures to begin assembly and selection of juries. Through December 16 the NRG Arena was leased to be a temporary criminal courthouse jury assembly area.

The folks that could become jurors will be required to have their temperature checked and wear masks. Six foot intervals will be required. Then they will submit to unreasonable search and seizure by a metal detector. Doors will regulate the flow of foot traffic. Then they will be verbally screened for illness. The main arena will host the assembly and people will sit three seats apart.

Does anyone doubt that defense lawyers are not going to like the new settings? Given they could look at obtaining dismissals for their clients since the constitution requires a fair and

speedy trial might mean automatic dismissals in many cases.

District Attorney Kim Ogg expressed that the community should be concerned that a functioning criminal justice system has not been in place since Hurricane Harvey. Which sounds much like the "Act of God" defense of attorneys for Arkema Chemical.

The Arkema criminal trial is being held now on the second floor of the arena. Criminal charges were brought against decision makers for Arkema related to post Hurricane Harvey explosions that injured first responders. Arkema's attorneys are arguing that the nearly 50 inches of rain that fell causing the flooding that shorted refrigeration was an "Act of God" meaning out of their hands.

Lung Cancer,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 - THE PRESS

survival rates. Lung cancer patients can now benefit from a range of new, targeted therapies, such as low-dose radiation CT scanning for high-risk patients.

"In the past, most patients didn't realize they had lung cancer until it was in an advanced stage," said Oueini. "Screening with CT gives us the opportunity to detect lung cancer long before it becomes symptomatic or spreads outside the lungs. And early detection is one of the keys to successful treatment."

People 55 to 77 years of age who currently smoke or have quit smoking in the past 15 years, have a tobacco smoking history of at least 30 "pack years" (an average of one pack a day for 30 years, two packs a day for

15 years, etc.), and receive a written order from a physician are eligible for low-dose CT lung screening.

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital is open and caring for all of our community and has implemented the following enhanced safety measures in all of its doctors' offices and clinics in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health and well-being of our patients:

- Screening all patients when scheduling appointments for symptoms and exposure risk
- All patients and hospital staff are required to wear masks
- Minimizing the number of patients we are seeing per day in our clinics by expanding virtual services and staggering in-person appointments

Using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-recommended testing for our employees

Screening all patients upon arrival with temperature checks and an exposure questionnaire

Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) while providing patient care

Reorganizing waiting rooms and check-in lines to ensure social distancing

Implementing additional sanitation processes to disinfect all equipment and surfaces

For more information on the Lung Cancer Screening Program at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital, visit houstonmethodist.org/baytown or call 281-428-4510.

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