

HIGHLANDS CROSBY
Star ★ Courier

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VOL. 67, NO. 44 - 50¢ © Copyright 2020 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020 P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Tax losses revise funding for roadway progress

Taxing revenue in Texas decreased substantially in 2020, thanks to the pandemic. The source of funding roads for both TxDOT and H-GAC is taxes.

Years of finances and budgeting for future years are going to be impacted and how much improvement can be made on local roadways or how much infrastructure can be improved is a stake.

The State Highway Fund is looking at probably losing near 20% of state and federal income next year, a nearly \$3.5 billion

reduction.

Regarding local road construction such as FM 2100 from north into Crosby and other on-going projects including the FM 1960 expansion and Grand Parkway connections, "At this time, all active projects are moving forward with no impacts. We'll know more about impacts to future projects early next year when the Comptroller issues his next budget estimate for the state, and will adjust accordingly as we do each year to develop our 10-year

Unified Transportation Program. This 10-year project planning document allows us to adjust with respect to any revenue increases or decreases," said Danny Perez, Public Information Officer for Texas Dept. of Transportation (TxDOT)- Houston District.

TxDOT and H-GAC are investigating needs along the region's most traveled roads to establish a triage to see where spending is

See *Roadway Progress*, page 6

Heavy voter turnout splits between parties in polls

Without a clue concerning the Presidential candidacy except a substantial lead by the incumbent in key toss up states and a lead by the challenger in projected electoral votes local elections are monotonously slow on Tuesday night.

Locally, Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Eagleton has maintained a comfortable 60% to 39% lead over Andre Hines all night.

With less than half of the votes to count in Harris County John Cornyn seems off to a fourth term in the US Senate by over



8% over Democrat M.J. Hagar.

Keeping the House seat for the local District 36, Republican Incumbent Brian Babin was about 62% in Harris County over Dem. Rashad Lewis. That Turns to 80% to 19% in Chambers County in favor of Babin. New face in the Republican

Party in the House, Dan Crenshaw a War on Terror veteran won by over 10% over Sima Ladjevardian, who immigrated from Iran. Also in the US House Race, District 29 was won by Dem. Sylvia Garcia about 71% to 27% for Rep. Jaimy Blanco.

Incumbent Democrat Kim Ogg has a nine percent lead over Mary Nan Huffman for District Attorney.

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez leads Republican Joe Dan-

See *VOTING*, page 6

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Harris County makes \$1,200 in COVID-19 relief money available

HARRIS COUNTY — Harris County has issued a new \$40 million COVID-19 relief fund to help residents in need during the pandemic that will be administered by Houston Catholic Charities.

It's set to open on Monday, Nov. 2, and will accept applications through Friday, Nov. 6.

The program will provide one-time payments of \$1,200 to up to 33,333 families struggling with financial hardships related to COVID-19.

The payments will be distributed in two rounds. The first round is already underway and is assisting families who applied, but did not receive help from the county's coronavirus relief program launched earlier

this summer.

The second "public" round begins on Monday when anyone can apply.

The money can be used for any type of emergency expense, such as housing, food, utilities, healthcare, childcare and transportation.

Families can apply on their own without cooperation from a landlord or anyone else.

"Thousands of families across Harris County have struggled to overcome the financial damage from COVID-19," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. "While this relief will not reach everyone who needs it, we must do everything in our power to help those who are vulnerable pull through."

The fund is entirely need-based, and the money will be distributed equally across the county's four precincts.

Harris County residents living inside the city of Houston will not be excluded.

Applicants may apply online at CatholicCharitiesHelp.org starting Nov. 2.

Since the application process requires applicants to upload documents, all applications must be submitted online. For those who want help or who have questions may call the hotline at 832-990-1318 Monday through Saturday between 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Crosby Superintendent unveils district's finances

CROSBY — The status of Crosby ISD in recovery from the state of financial exigency was recently revealed by Superintendent Dr. Scott Davis.

"The With the adoption of the fiscal year 2020 audit, Crosby ISD now sits at the TEA minimum recommendation for fund balance totals. TEA recommends an unassigned fund balance of 15% of the current year's expenditure budget. Crosby's unassigned fund balance is now sitting at 19.78% of our 2020-2021 expenditure budget. TEA also recommends a total fund balance of 25% of the current year's expenditure budget. Crosby's total fund balance now sits at 26.42% of the 2020-2021 expenditure budget. The conservative budget approach and goal of living within our means has, in concert with assistance from HB3 funding, come together with the collective will of the school board and staff to get us to this positive and healthy financial position."

Some questioned how the school's audit might come out this year, Davis addressed this also.

"The 2020 audit had no findings, errors, or concern with the financial position of Crosby ISD. This now finds Crosby ISD with two years of positive and improving audits. Recent conversations with bond rating agencies and bond disclosure groups also find that the finance world agrees with the positive financial improvement and position with changes from negative outlooks to positive outlooks as Crosby ISD seeks to refund bonds in an effort to save over \$15 million in interest over the life of the bonds."



CROSBY ISD SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT DAVIS

This school year has been especially challenging for most school district to maintain enrollment and keep up with changing pandemic requirements.

"Despite the challenges of education in a COVID environment, Crosby ISD has only seen a decrease of 1.6% in enrollment from this time last school year. We still have 6331 students attending Crosby ISD. The majority of that decrease can be found in parents of Pre-K and Kindergarten students whose parents have chosen to keep their students at home for one more year while we all learn to live with COVID in our society. We have also seen our numbers of face-to-face students grow from 39% to 58% from the first nine weeks to the second nine weeks. Our health, safety, and cleaning efforts have helped Crosby ISD keep our active COVID cases low after an initial rise when we all came back to face-to-face. Honestly, that was to be expected as everyone had largely been apart since Spring Break last school year. Now, we are working to maintain academic rigor and contact with our students in both

instructional settings. Our parents and staff have worked together well to navigate these uncharted territories with remote instruction. Our first nine-week failure rates for students did increase from the same grading periods in 2019-2020, but our teachers are tirelessly working to reach out to students in remote settings to help them succeed. As an educator for 28 years, it will always be better for the majority of students to attend school face-to-face with teachers whenever that is possible and practical. I respect parents' decisions to keep kids home during this pandemic, but whenever possible, it is more productive for the majority of students to come to campuses."

Davis had a word for his fellow workers in the school district.

"I am most proud of our teachers and other support staff. Truly, these last months have been something out of our wildest imaginations! While we used to only speak of grit, determination, and perseverance, our amazing district employees now display those traits on a daily basis. We are humbled to work for those heroes and support them as they continue to make positive differences in the lives of our wonderful students. This is why Crosby ISD exists. We absolutely had to address the financial problems, but now that those difficulties have been addressed and we are moving positively forward. We can re-engage the lion+fs share of the focus to moving Crosby ISD into the future with confidence and great possibility."

CONGRATULATIONS
To Alexia Perez of Crosby, who won Free Tickets to the Texas Renaissance Festival. You can win too. Just send us a photo reading this newspaper. See information on Page 7, and enter the Drawing.



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CROSBY'S HOME TOWN HOME CARE

Houston Health Department COVID-10 Test Sites Nov. 2 thru 7

Houston Health Department, partners announce free COVID-19 testing schedule for week of November 2

HOUSTON - The Houston Health Department and its agency partners are announcing the schedule for sites offering free COVID-19 tests the week of November 2, 2020. The week will offer 13 free testing sites across Houston, including three mega sites.

Houston Health Department, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Texas, will offer testing (self nasal swab) at its Southwest Multi-Service Center, 6400 High Star Drive. The site has a 1,250 daily test capacity and will open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Appointments are available at hoineedacovid19test.com. On-site registration is also available.

The department also offers free drive-thru testing (self nasal swab) at the Aramco Services Company, 9009 W. Loop South. The mega testing site will open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. It remains open until reaching daily capacity of 1,000 tests.

People wanting to get tested at the Aramco site can call the department's COVID-19 Call Center at 832-393-4220 between 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. to receive an access code.

The department will offer drive thru or walk up testing (self nasal swab) at Park Place Regional Library, 8145 Park Place Blvd., November 3-7 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or until reaching capacity of 250 tests per day. The site does not require an appointment.

Walk up testing (self nasal swab) is available without an appointment at Clark Com-

munity Center, 9718 Clark Rd., November 4-6 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. or until reaching capacity of 250 tests per day.

The department will provide (self nasal swab) testing at the METRO Addicks Park & Ride, 14230 Katy Freeway, and the Multicultural Center, 951 Tristar Drive, city of Webster. Appointments are available by calling the department's call center at 832-393-4220.

Texas Division of Emergency Management Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and the Houston Astros offer free COVID-19 tests (self oral swab) daily at Minute Maid Park (Lot C), 2208 Preston. The testing site's capacity is 1,200 tests per day.

The site features evening hours twice a week, eight drive-thru testing lanes and four walk-up testing lanes. It opens 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday through Wednesday and from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday. Spanish-speaking staff is available on-site.

Visit texas.curativeinc.com to set an appointment or obtain more information. On-site registration is also available.

TDEM and the department will also operate drive-thru testing sites (self oral swab) Monday through Saturday at:

HCC - Northeast Campus, 555 Community College Drive, and HCC - South Campus, 1990 Airport Blvd. Appointments are required, available at texas.curativeinc.com.

TDEM and the department offer weekday testing (nasal swab by healthcare professional) at LeRoy Crump Stadium, 12321 Alief Clodine Rd. Appointments are required, available by visiting covidtest.tdem.texas.gov.

United Memorial Medical

Center United Memorial Medical Center (UMMC) will offer weekday testing (nasal swab by healthcare professional) at drive-thru test sites at:

Plaza Americas Mall, 7500 Bellaire Blvd., Houston Community College - Southeast, 6815 Rustic, and UMMC Tidwell, 510 W. Tidwell Rd. The sites don't require appointments and offer testing from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. or until reaching daily capacity of 300 tests.

People needing information about UMMC test sites can call 1-866-333-COVID or visit ummcscreening.com.

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) the health department is providing test kits, lab access and equipment to local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) so they can expand their COVID-19 testing capacity. The centers and phone numbers people can call to set up testing appointments are:

HOPE Clinic, 713-773-0803 Spring Branch Community Health Center, 713-462-6565 El Centro de Corazon, 713-660-1880 Avenue 360 Health and Wellness, 713-426-0027 Lone Star Circle of Care at the University of Houston, 346-348-1200, and Scarsdale Family Health Center, 281-824-1480. FQHC patients pay what they can afford, based on income and family size, and are not denied services due to inability to pay or lack of insurance.

The department and its agency partners may shift locations and schedules of test sites to better meet community needs. Houstonians can visit HoustonEmergency.org/covid19 for current Houston testing sites and information about stopping the spread of the virus.

Information obtained through testing, treatment or services will not be used against immigrants in their public care evaluation.



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Jones Public Library Photo Contest

Calling all local photographers, the Jones Public Library needs YOU!

The library is updating the artwork in our Texas Room, and we need your help!

The library will be hosting a photography contest throughout the months of November and December to choose the 7 new images to be displayed in the Texas Room.

Those wishing to enter should submit a black and white photograph to the library between November 1st - November 15th via email to: jonespubliclibrary@claytontx.org

See Dayton photos, p.6

Large election turnout votes Republican

CHAMBERS COUNTY – Voters turned out in large numbers early and on election day, and as predicted the vote tally was strongly in favor of Republican candidates.

A total of 21,641 people went to the polls, with 18,182 voting early and 2,573 voting on Election Day November 3. This amounted to 70% of the registered voters. The large turnout indicated the

intense interest in the national race for president, between Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

In Chambers County, almost all winning Republican candidates got about 80% of the vote, compared with their Democratic opponent.

Incumbent candidate Donald Trump got 17,343 votes, or 80%, versus Joe Biden's 3,997 or 20% of the Chambers County vote.

In other positions, John Cornyn topped M.J. Hegar by the same percentage for the U.S. Senate, and for U.S. Representative District 36 Brian Babin won over Rashad Lewis. These totals are for the county only, and final results for the whole state, and nation, are still being tallied at press time.

Also in Chambers County, for Railroad Commissioner Jim Wright

defeated Chrysta Casteneda, incumbent Nathan Hecht was reelected Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court.

State Senator Brandon Creighton defeated Jay Stittelburg, and Mayes Middleton won over Jeff Antonelli.

Running unopposed were District Attorney Cheryl Swope Lieck, County Attorney Scott Peal, Sheriff Brian Hawthorne,

and Tax Assessor-Collector Denise Hutter.

For County Commissioner, Pct. 1 Jimmy Gore was elected, and Pct. 3 Tommy Hammond. Constables running unopposed and elected were Pct. 1 Dennis Dugat, Pct. 2 John Mulryan, Pct. 3 Donnie Standley, Pct. 4 Ben Bean Jr., Pct. 5 Bradley Moon, and Pct. 6 Kirk Ritch.

Beach City: Hogs Gone Wild!

By Jackie Lasater

As many of you know, we are experiencing a dramatic surge in a feral hog invasion in Beach City and the surrounding area. These animals are causing millions of dollars of damage each year all over Texas so it's not just a local problem.

I have spoken to Sheriff Hawthorn about this and to get clarification on questions that I have been getting from citizens.

One common question is, "is it legal to shoot these hogs on your own property. Technically, the answer is yes because Texas does

not require a hunting license for feral hogs and Beach City does not have an ordinance against discharging a firearm on your property.

If you live in a subdivision, there is more than likely a restriction on firearm discharge by the HOA. I strongly urge you NOT to attempt to shoot the hogs. There are significant risks of unintended consequences, that can result in criminal charges including possible felony charges, if persons or property are on the receiving end of a misguided or ricocheted bullet.

The County is address-

ing this issue with numerous traps and soon will be installing multi-hog traps on TGS property.

If you are experiencing hogs on your property, contact Gilbert Phillips at 409-267-2500 and hopefully he can get a trap in your area. If you put up traps yourself (this is a good idea) and have trapped a hog you can call the Sheriff's office and they will come out and relocate the animal for you. Please understand that these hogs reproduce at a very high rate and this problem will take some time to get under control.

Mayor thanks the BCVFD fire dept.

From Mayor Lasater:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the members of the Beach City Volunteer Fire Department for their dedication and service to our community.

Sometimes we forget that they are unpaid volunteers that are on call 24/7 to serve our community and willing to risk their own safety and well being for the benefit of others. Not to mention that a fire can occur at any moment or day of the week. Middle

of the night and holidays are not uncommon.

As you know, 2020 has been a very tumultuous year with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Fire Department has not been exempt. The Barrow Ranch Poker Run/Car Show/Auction has become the BCVFD's largest fund raiser collecting approximately \$25,000 last year. This years event had to be canceled due to COVID-19, thus negatively impacting

See BCVFD, page 6

Barbers Hill Independent School District Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances Governmental Funds For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

Data Control Codes	1999		999	
	General Fund	Debt Service Fund	General Fund	Debt Service Fund
REVENUES				
5700 Local and intermediate revenues	\$ 84,140,132	\$ 31,528,799		
5800 State program revenues	13,229,937	102,239		
5900 Federal program revenues	642,543	-		
5000 Total revenues	98,012,612	31,631,038		
EXPENDITURES				
0000 Current:				
0011 Instruction	41,853,464	-		
0012 Instructional resources and media services	601,524	-		
0013 Curriculum and instructional staff development	1,536,255	-		
0021 Instructional leadership	549,074	-		
0023 School leadership	3,742,419	-		
0031 Guidance, counseling, and evaluation services	2,535,390	-		
0032 Social work services	275,649	-		
0033 Health services	902,881	-		
0034 Student transportation	2,236,000	-		
0035 Food services	348	-		
0036 Extracurricular activities	2,314,749	-		
0041 General administration	3,029,955	-		
0051 Plant maintenance and operations	7,599,983	-		
0052 Security and monitoring services	704,274	-		
0053 Data processing services	1,277,055	-		
0041 Community services	14,844,000	-		
0071 Principal on long-term debt	-	18,425,000		
0072 Interest on long-term debt	-	10,468,716		
0073 Insurance costs and fees	-	825,146		
0081 Facilities acquisition and construction	10	-		
0091 Intergovernmental:				
0091 Contracted instructional services between schools	7,184,317	-		
0098 Payments of Ad Valorem Tax Credits	3,939,300	-		
0099 Other intergovernmental charges	648,617	-		
6000 Total expenditures	95,810,382	29,408,862		
1100 Excess (deficiency) of revenues over funded expenditures	2,202,230	2,021,956		
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)				
7901 Issuance of refunding bonds	-	40,395,000		
7911 Capital-related debt issued (regular bonds)	-	-		
7915 Transfers in	-	-		
7916 Premium or (discount) on issuance of bonds	-	4,473,601		
8911 Transfers out	(75,530)	-		
8940 Payment to refunding bond escrow agent	-	(64,352,074)		
7080 Total other financing sources (uses)	(75,530)	516,525		
1200 Net change in fund balances	2,126,700	2,538,481		
0100 Fund balances - beginning	47,021,643	12,254,991		
3000 FUND BALANCES - ENDING	\$ 49,148,343	\$ 14,812,972		

The Notes to the Financial Statements are an integral part of this statement.

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Exhibit C-2

699	Total	98
Capital Projects Fund	Nonmajor Funds	Governmental Funds
\$ 799,403	\$ 2,146,783	\$ 118,615,317
18,314	1,372,099	14,723,441
-	2,099,417	2,761,880
817,919	5,619,299	136,110,718
1,675,020	2,632,379	46,180,863
48,953	-	650,477
-	58,260	1,588,485
-	-	547,074
17,435	-	3,760,054
4,203	-	2,541,593
-	-	276,649
19,055	-	922,036
414,589	-	2,650,409
-	3,149,324	3,149,472
186,155	3,343	2,306,267
4,647	-	3,034,652
534,751	-	8,134,734
121,349	92,749	918,372
125,317	-	1,402,342
-	-	14,844,000
-	-	18,425,000
-	-	10,468,716
180,647	-	705,813
19,758,902	-	19,758,912
-	-	7,184,317
-	-	3,939,300
-	-	648,617
23,093,343	5,956,055	154,468,462
(22,273,424)	(836,756)	(18,357,944)
-	-	40,395,000
11,970,000	-	11,970,000
75,000	530	75,530
2,210,647	-	4,684,248
-	-	(75,530)
-	-	(64,352,074)
14,255,647	530	14,697,172
(8,019,777)	(836,226)	(3,640,772)
35,427,235	711,433	95,484,902
\$ 27,407,458	\$ 375,407	\$ 91,824,130

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Sleep Disorders May Lead to Serious Conditions

BAYTOWN — (October 30, 2020) — Getting a restful night's sleep is an accomplishment worth celebrating for many people suffering with a sleep disorder. In addition to being a drain on quality of life, these disorders may also pose serious health threats.

Blood pressure usually falls during sleep, but interrupted sleep can lead to high blood pressure, according to the National Sleep Foundation. "Sleep disorders are linked to a greater risk of heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeat and heart failure," said Dr. Skantha Manjunath, a board-certified pulmonologist and sleep disorders specialist at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital.

Insufficient sleep also impairs the body's ability to use insulin, which can lead to diabetes. In addition, it can affect the amount of a hormone linked to obesity that's secreted, increasing the chance for weight gain. Daytime drowsiness increases the risk for accidents at work and on the road.

Common Sleep Disorders

Sleep apnea. People with sleep apnea experience pauses in breathing while asleep that last from several seconds to more than a minute. These may occur five to 30 or more times an hour, and are often associated with loud snoring. Apnea sufferers sometimes gasp, snort or make a choking sound when breathing resumes. The breathing disruptions interfere with the deepest and most restorative levels of sleep.

Restless legs syndrome (RLS). If you



DR. SKANTHA MANJUNATH

have this disorder, you may not notice it, but your bed partner does. RLS causes unpleasant crawling, pricking, burning or tingling sensations in the legs and feet when at rest and an almost irresistible urge to move them for relief. RLS can make it difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Narcolepsy. A person with narcolepsy is likely to become drowsy or to fall asleep at inappropriate times and places. These "sleep attacks" can last from several seconds to more than 30 minutes and may occur even if the person has had a normal amount of nighttime sleep.

Insomnia. Almost everyone has occasional insomnia, which is marked by difficulty falling or staying asleep or waking up too early. Stress, jet lag, temperature extremes, noise and medication side effects are common problems. If insomnia is chronic (occurring most nights and lasting a month or longer), one of the sleep disorders listed above or some other underlying condition may be the cause.

Schedule a Sleep Study

The Houston Methodist Sleep Center at Baytown is located in a new facility at 4201 Garth Rd. (Independent Plaza 1), suite 112. The

state-of-the-art larger space is staffed by experienced, registered polysomnography technologists and features a quiet, four-bed facility for conducting sleep studies. Each room is designed much like a comfortable bedroom, featuring soft, ambient lighting, a television, sound insulation and queen-sized beds.

The rooms feature carbon dioxide level monitoring, negative air pressure systems—which trap potentially contaminated droplets in a specially designed air filtration system to prevent spread—and private bathrooms. Wi-Fi and snacks are also provided.

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital is taking every necessary precaution during the coronavirus pandemic to keep you and our staff members safe. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are:

- Screening all patients, ensuring only those without COVID-19 symptoms are seen in the office

- Wearing masks and 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

If you or a loved one suspects the presence of a sleep disorder, make an appointment with a sleep specialist at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital by visiting houstonmethodist.org/baytown or calling 281-428-4510.

★ OPINION PAGE ★

COUNTY CONNECTION
Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo



Applause for our Voters and Poll Workers

Harris County, you never fail to impress. Across the country, people are buzzing about the incredible numbers of voters we have had during our early vote period. By the time early voting shut down last Friday after 18 days, 1,435,221 (or 57.85% of registered voters) had cast their ballots. That is well beyond the total number of voters for each of the entire 2016 and 2018 elections! You have come through this election season by volunteering to help folks register, working the polls, and generally offering one another the support and encouragement we all need to believe that we can make a difference. We are a strong, resilient, and driven community and we are determined to have our voices heard, both within Texas and across the country. I have never been more proud of our residents and our tireless poll workers who are making this incredible movement of civic participation happen.

And while you all are showing up for this election like never before, Harris County government has been working harder than ever before to make your voting experience what you need it to be. We are bending over backwards to make sure that our polls are safe for you to visit — by offering masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, and finger coverings, and ensuring social distancing. We tripled the number of early vote locations and worked with partners to open large accessible venues such as the Toyota Center, NRG, and BBVA Stadium. For the first time, we offered drive-thru voting and had a day in which polls were open 24 hours. We are doing everything we can to make the voting process what it should be — safe, secure, and accessible so that every eligible resident can confidently exercise their right to vote, and in the middle of a global pandemic, no less.

Tomorrow, November 3rd, is election day, your final day to vote. So many of you have already cast your ballots in this election, but for those who haven't, please don't miss this chance to make history. If you requested a mail-in ballot, please drop it off at the county's mail ballot drop-off location at NRG Park. If you're voting in person, I promise it will be as painless as possible. I know you won't let your county or your country down.

It's never been easier or more important. Make a plan, make it happen, change our future — Vote!

Abrazos,
Lina Hidalgo



Texas Renaissance Festival
Saturdays, Sundays, and Thanksgiving Friday
October 3rd through November 29th
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WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THOSE VOTER POLLS?

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"I love the polls — I only vote for who is ahead!"
"If th' polls ain't reliable — why bother with 'em?"
"If they poll me, I'll tell 'em what the polls say I think!"
(VIA CELL) "Polls? WHAT polls?"

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Chris Cobler



It's not just Election Day any longer

For most Texans, Election Day is a misnomer.

More Texans voted early this year than cast their ballots during all of the 2016 general election. Many more voted early than went to the polls on Election Day.

A record 9.7 million people, or 57% of registered voters, completed their civic duty during the extended early voting period of Oct. 13-30, or by mail, according to the Texas Secretary of State.

Voters don't register by party in Texas, so political pundits could only speculate about whether the record early turnout favored either Democrats or Republicans. Either way, the intense voter interest is unquestioned. When final election results are in, the state's percentage of registered voters who cast ballots was expected to surpass 60% for the first time since the early 1990s.

20 YEARS OF DEATHS DAILY ON TEXAS ROADS

Texas is approaching a deadly milestone that the Texas Department of Transportation is working to prevent.

The last deathless day on Texas roads was Nov. 7, 2000. Through its campaign #EndTheStreak, Tx-DOT is trying to stop 20 consecutive years of daily deaths on Texas roads. During that time, more than 70,000 people have died.

An average of 10 people die every day in crashes in the state.

"This is so horrific. Come on Texas! We can do better!" said Dr. Beverly Thompson Kuhn of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

A&M STUDY ANALYZES MEDICAID EXPANSION

The state of Texas could deal with part of its looming budget shortfall by expanding Medicaid coverage, according to Republican Rep. Lyle Larson

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION



of San Antonio.

Larson's position, endorsed by the Texas Medical Association, came in response to a new Texas A&M study that Medicaid expansion would bring the state about \$5.4 billion from the federal government. Texas is one of 12 states that have chosen to not participate in Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

Most state Republicans strongly oppose the Affordable Care Act, which is going before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"As we address the budget shortfall in the next session, we should seriously consider accessing federal Medicaid funding," Larson tweeted. "This recently released study shows Texas is losing out on \$5.4 billion while 38 other states are taking the federal dollars."

NEW LAW PROTECTS BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS

Women are allowed to pump breast milk anywhere in public, the Texas Comptroller's Office reminded the public in its latest issue of "Tax Policy News."

A bill passed in the last legislative session aims to make it clear for businesses and employers that breast pumping in public is allowed just as breastfeeding already was under Tex-

as law.

Texas Health and Human Services offers support for breastfeeding mothers. The Texas Lactation Support Hotline number is 855-550-6667.

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE; LICENSE PLATE IS \$30

You can soon buy a Texas license plate that floats like a butterfly, or at least appears to do so.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recently announced the winner of its newest conservation license plate design. The public selected its favorite monarch butterfly design through an online survey.

Proceeds from the sale of the plates go to help conserve monarch butterflies and other at-risk, non-game species native to Texas. To be notified when the plates go on sale in March, sign up at <http://bit.ly/TP-WDEmailNotification>.

All conservation specialty plates cost \$30 a year, with \$22 going to the parks and wildlife agency.

CHANGES PROPOSED TO SEXUAL ASSAULT LAWS

Look for laws regarding sexual assault to change in the upcoming legislative session.

The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force has issued its first report to the Texas Legislature. The group began meeting earlier this year after being created by the passage of House Bill 1590 during the 2019 session.

The report includes 11 policy recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. A few of those:

- Remove law enforcement's ability to decline forensic medical examinations for sexual assaults reported within 120 hours and clarify language pertaining to law enforcement's ability to decline forensic medical examinations outside of 120 hours.
- Require law enforcement to complete the Office of the Attorney General's Law Enforcement Request for Sexual Assault Exam form for every sexual assault that is reported to them.
- Require that a forensic medical exam be offered to all children who report a sexual assault, including cases reported more than 120 hours post-assault.
- Remove the word "alleged" when referencing a sexual assault or other sex offense.

One-third of adult Texans, or 6.3 million people, have experienced sexual assault at some point in their lives, according to a 2015 study by the University of Texas at Austin's Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

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

THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

"Early Snow"

This has been a year that defies explanations.

I spoke with my parents a week or so ago. We have used Zoom and other types of video to communicate but, more often than not, I just call up my dad, he puts me on speaker, and we chat as we always have.

My parents were about to go skiing. They live in the north, but they don't live on the North Pole. It was much too early to cross-country ski, but they'd had an early snow and my mom decided they should give it a try.

"You know what is going to happen," I told them.

"Uh-huh," my dad said.

"First the snow is going to stick to the bottom of your skis, then the leaves are going to stick," I told them. "You are going to be stuck in place!" I felt like the voice of doom, truth-telling to my very experienced 80-some-year-old parents.

"Yeah," my mother admitted, "I'm sure you're right!" I could tell this would not deter her for a minute.

My husband, Peter, and I were preparing for a visit from my former brother-in-law, Jason. This is the first visitor we've had in eight months and his visit precipitated a lot of house-cleaning. There are places we just don't get around to cleaning until we are confronted with the prospect of company.

"The baseboards in the bathroom were filthy!" Peter informed me.

"Your desk is covered in dust!" I told him.

We cleaned places we hadn't looked at closely in three-quarters of a year so that we could entertain Jason, who spent almost the entire time on our patio, which Peter swept for the occasion. Peter made his famous enchiladas, and I made my Aunt Betty's apple squares, and it was a lovely evening. Peter built a fire and we sat around and talked until much later than I usually stay up.

Jason's father, my former father-in-law, is 94 and failing and Jason is driving all the way from California to Wisconsin to see him—even though he knows he'll have to visit his father through a window, even though he'll have to drive through a lot of illness and some early winter storms to get there.

"I didn't think I was going!" Jason told me, just before he left. He sounded a little surprised.

But he ended up renting a car and is driving to see his dad, who now weighs only 100 pounds, who may or may not recognize him when he gets there, and who is no longer able to converse.

"I wasn't going to go," Jason repeated. "But now I'm going."

For quite a while, I've been trying to let go of expectations. People say that holding too tightly to our expectations only leads to unhappiness, but I've always had a hard time letting them go. I like the idea that I have some idea of where my life is headed and what is going to happen next.

A few hours after I spoke with my parents, I saw a photo posted on Facebook of my mom on her skis in the woods. Their house was nowhere in sight so they must have made it some distance. I'm sure it wasn't great skiing—but that wasn't really the point, was it?

If this year has taught me anything, it's that maybe I need to let go of some of my expectations of how things work. This isn't the year for them.

I looked again at the photo of my mom. She's skiing in the early snow and smiling.

Till next time,
Carrie
Carrie Classon's memoir is called, "Blue Yarn." Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

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OBITUARIES

Walter Donald "Donnie" Ballew

Walter Donald "Donnie" Ballew, 87, passed away October 31, 2020 at his home in Channelview, Texas. Donnie was born at home, the third of what would eventually be seven children, in 1933, the depth of the Great Depression. He grew up working on a farm and joined the Navy in 1950 during the Korean war and achieved the rank of 2nd Class Petty Officer. He met his future wife, Sharon White, at a drugstore soda fountain in 1954. They married in 1956, were later blessed with three sons whom they enjoyed raising in their community.

Donnie and Sharon were always together, and he stayed with her, never leaving her side for the rest of his life. He loved God, and was a faithful member of Dell Dale Avenue Baptist Church. Donnie was, in every sense of every word, a husband, father, grandfather, brother and servant of God.

He worked for Armco Steel for 28 years until retiring in 1983. Donnie and Sharon began Ballew Air and Heat in 1968 and they continue to serve the community faithfully. His son Bob and grandson Brian are carrying on the business- serving the community. Don was known as a mentor for many AC/Heat technicians and gave them a



start by providing internships. He allowed his grandsons to work during the summers and these are times they will cherish forever.

He was also a mentor to many of the men of The Table Ministry and especially to his son's friends who looked to him as a father figure. He was an avid gardener, an award-winning beekeeper, and enjoyed his family time. Donnie was known to many as "Poppa" and will be missed by all who knew him.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Ervin Charles Ballew and Amelia Word; brothers, Charles Thomas "Buddy" Ballew, Robert Rodney Ballew and Larry Word. He is lovingly survived by his wife of 64 years, Sharon Ballew; sons, Bill, Bob and Ben (the three B's) and their wives Michelle, Janice, and Kelly; brothers, Gene Ballew and wife Lorita, E.C. Ballew; sister, Charlotte Harling;

grandchildren, Chad and wife Amanda, Brian and Catherine, Tyler and wife Samantha, Zachary and wife Shelly, Lauren and fiancé Yoann, Leslie and husband Zach, William and wife Meredith, Matthew, Mary Catherine and Nicholas; great-grandchildren, Bailee, Travis, Morgan and soon to be born, Paige; as well as numerous nephews, nieces, extended family members and friends.

Friends are welcome to join the family for visitation from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Wednesday, November 4th. Funeral services officiated by Pastor Danny Kilcoyne will be held at 10:00 AM Thursday, November 5, 2020 in the chapel of Carter-Conley Funeral Home. Graveside services with military honors provided by the US Navy will follow at 11:30 AM at San Jacinto Memorial Park where he will be laid to rest under the direction of Carter-Conley Funeral Home.



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Georgia Kovalcik Snider

Georgia Kovalcik Snider, 89, of Crosby, Texas went to be with the Lord on October 20, 2020. Georgia was born on February 3, 1931 in Eastgate, Texas to Emil and Mary (Dlouhy) Kovalcik.

She is preceded in death by her parents; her husband Leonard Snider (married 52 years); her son, Jerry Allen Miller; her brother, Albert (Big Al) and wife Alice Jean Kovalcik, and their sons, Willie Earl, Albert Lee, and Billy Ray Kovalcik. her sister Mary Michalsky and husband Frank, and their daughter, Beverly Yelverton and her husband Clyde, and their son Frankie Michalsky; her sister Willie Mae Kovalcik McMahon, her granddaughter Tyler McMahon and her grandson Michael Turner; her sister Tonie McMahon and husband Scotty and their son Scotty Jr.; her bro-

ther-in-law Albert Smith and his grandson Logan and son-in-law Hank.

Georgia is survived by her grandson Jerry Wayne Miller and girlfriend Miranda Kimbrough of Palestine, Texas; her grandson Lance Miller and wife Katerina of Elkhart, Texas; her sister Rosie Smith of Melborne, Arkansas; daughter-in-law Ann Miller (mother of Jerry Wayne Miller); daughter-in-law Jamie (mother of Lance Miller); step-daughter Raynell Bobo and husband Doyce; her special caregivers Cathy & Craig Stasney and Randy & Debbie Foster. She is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

Pallbearers are: Jerry Wayne Miller, David McMahon, Donald McMahon, Brandon Davis, Derek Guinn, Craig Stasney Jr., Chris Stasney, and Shane

Davis. Honorary pallbearers are Kevin Michalsky, Emil McMahon Sr., Emil McMahon Jr., Richard Mayo, Tim Smith, Randy Foster, Craig Stasney Sr., and Jimmie Michalsky.

Friends are invited to visit with the family from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on Monday, October 26, 2020 at Sterling White Funeral Home. The service will immediately follow at 2:00 PM with Larry Koslovsky officiating. Interment will follow at Sterling White Cemetery. Due to COVID-19, the family will not be holding a bereavement meal.

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Clemson visits ND in meeting of the top five teams; Texans return from Bye week with trip to Jacksonville

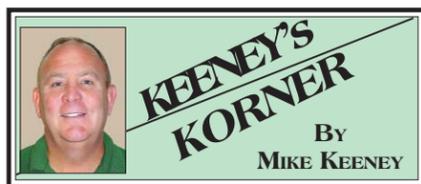
It's been a tough season thus far for Texas' two professional football teams.

The Texans lost six of their first seven games and return from their bye week with a trip to Jacksonville to take on the only team they have beaten so far this season. Up 1-45, the Dallas Cowboys entered the 2020 season with Super Bowl aspirations, but have looked anything but a SB contender. After losing quarterback Dak Prescott to a horrible ankle injury, head coach Mike McCarthy turned to former Cincinnati starting QB Andy Dalton to lead the offense. Dalton was knocked silly on a cheap shot by Washington linebacker Jon Bostic two weeks ago (Bostic was rightfully ejected from the game) and might be able to return this week for a home date against Pittsburgh. Dallas has been decimated by injuries, especially on offense where they've lost both starting tackles and Prescott. On defense, Dallas is horrendous. I mean, when you give up 25 points to Washington you know you have issues.

Many are already calling for McCarthy to be one and done and for owner Jerry Jones to clean house. We shall see.

Things could get ugly at AT&T Stadium on Sunday when the Steelers, who look like the best team in the league at the moment, come calling with their high-powered offense and stifling defense.

In college action, all eyes will be on South Bend, IN on Saturday when No. 1-ranked Clemson visits No. 4-ranked Notre Dame. This will be both teams first real test as both have had a relatively easy go of it thus far in the 2020 season. Clemson QB Tyler Lawrence, a Heisman Trophy candidate, will



face a ND defense that has allowed 9.8 points per game in its first five games. But that unit will get its first real test against Lawrence and his host of playmakers.

In Big 12 action, Oklahoma State travels to Manhattan to face Kansas State with first place in the league at stake. Both entered their games last week undefeated in the conference. OSU hosted Texas last week and KSU took on West Virginia.

In high school action, four of Aldine ISD's five varsity teams will have their bye weeks. The only District 14-6A game will feature Westfield visiting Nimitz in Thorne Stadium.

Before we check out this weekend's games, let's review last week's record. A 6-4 week brought the season record to 47-27 (64%).

Now, onto this week's game.

NCAA

Houston at Cincinnati: Dale Holgerson's Cougars hit the road to take on a very good Cincinnati team in an important American Athletic game. Two weeks ago, the Cougs picked up a nice road win at Navy as quarterback Clayton Tune (319 yards, 2 TDs) led the way to a 37-21 victory. Tune has a talented receiver to throw to in Marquez Stevenson (5 receptions, 118 yards, 1 TD). Stevenson is also a dangerous return man. The Bearcats are a solid bunch on both sides of the ball. Cincinnati

is led by quarterback Desmond Ridder (597 yards, 6 TDs) and running back Gerid Doaks (145 yards, 4 TDs). I think UH hangs around in this one, but look for the Cincinnati defense to be the difference maker in this one. My pick, Cincinnati 31, Houston 26

Clemson at Notre Dame: The Game of the Week in college football pits Lawrence's (848 yards, 7 TDs) Tigers against Ian Book's (719 yards, 4 TDs) Fighting Irish in a nationally televised game on NBC. Lawrence is not a one-man team. He has plenty of talent around him like running back Travis Etienne (243 yards, 2 TDs) and wide receiver Amari Rodgers (12 receptions, 206 yards, 3 TDs). ND has been winning with a strong ground game and a stifling defense, as evidenced by the 9.8 points per game they've allowed in their first five games. The ND defense will get its first real test of the season. I think Lawrence and Co. will be too much for ND on Saturday, but I expect these two will meet in the ACC title game in December. My pick, Clemson 26, Notre Dame 24

Texas A&M at South Carolina: Jimbo Fisher's Aggies can't afford to look past the Gamecocks when they hit the road on Saturday. Sure, SC lost three of its first five games, but they did defeat Auburn at home three weeks ago and quarterback Collin Hill (502 yards, 3 TDs) is a playmak-

er. Aggie QB Kellen Mond (507 yards, 4 TDs) must protect the football and make plays with his arm and legs. He can count on running back Isaiah Spiller (142 yards) to lead the way on the ground. Look for the A&M defense to put heat on Hill and force a key turnover or two. This appears to be Fisher's best team in his first three years in College Station and another road win appears to be in the offing. My pick, Texas A&M 27, South Carolina 17

NFL

Green Bay at San Francisco: A good one for Thursday Night Football pits Aaron Rodgers and the explosive Green Bay offense against a San Francisco team that is beginning to play well on defense and doing just enough on offense to get back in the NFC West race and playoff hunt. Two weeks ago, Rodgers (1,497 yard, 17 TDs) threw four touchdown passes to lead the Packers to a 35-20 win over the Texans. The 49ers also cruised to a win at New England as quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo and the defense routed New England, 33-6. GB wide receiver Davante Adams (30 receptions, 388 yards, 5 TDs) had a big day with 13 catches for 196 yards. Rodgers should have his No. 1 running back return for this one as Aaron Jones (374 yards, 4 TDs) after missing the Houston game with a mild calf strain. Rodgers will need him as he takes on a 49ers defense that has been hit hard by injuries, but thanks to a wealth of depth, the defense has barely missed a beat. The Packers aren't a great defensive team, but they should make some plays against Garoppolo. My pick, Green Bay 26,

San Francisco 20

Houston at Jacksonville: The Texans return from their bye week with a trip to Jacksonville to face the only team they have beaten this season. Quarterback Deshaun Watson (1,401 yards, 8 TDs) should have a big day against the Jags. He threw for 300 yards or more in three straight games heading into the bye and appears to be getting more comfortable with wide receivers Brandin Cooks, Will Fuller and Randall Cobb. The Jags have also struggled this year, but did put up 29 points two weeks ago in a loss at Los Angeles. Look for Watson to have a big day against a suspect Jacksonville secondary as the Texans pick up win No. 2 on the season. My pick, Houston 33, Jacksonville 26

Baltimore at Indianapolis: Lamar Jackson (769 passing yards, 7 TDs/235 rushing yards, 1 TD) visit the Colts on Sunday in what should be an interesting game. The Colts have been doing just enough to remain in the AFC South race as quarterback Phillip Rivers (984 yards, 4 TDs) and rookie running back Jonathan Taylor (250 yards, 2 TDs) are leading the way on offense. Both of them will need to step things up on Sunday when they face the ball hawking Ravens defense. The Baltimore defense is adept at forcing turnovers and Rivers has had trouble in that department thus far this season. Look for the Ravens defense to force a turnover or three to lead Baltimore to a solid road win. My pick, Baltimore 26, Indianapolis 23

Pittsburgh at Dallas: This one could get ugly early. Dallas is struggling on both sides of the ball and who knows if Dalton will be cleared from concussion pro-

col for this game. He probably hopes he doesn't have to face the blitz-happy Steelers who have one of the top defenses in the league. The Dallas offensive line is struggling, especially at tackle, so look for T.J. Watt and his mates to have a huge day and should come up with a handful, if not more, sacks. Offensively, look for Ben Roethlisberger (1,446 yards, 13 TDs) to be the next QB to carve up the porous Dallas defense. If Dallas suffers another humiliating defeat, I wonder if owner Jerry Jones would pull the plug on Mike McCarthy. My pick, Pittsburgh 36, Dallas 20

New Orleans at Tampa Bay: A good one for Sunday Night Football pits Drew Brees (1,618 yards, 11 TDs) against Tom Brady (1,910 yards, 18 TDs). Brees and running back Alvin Kamara (364 rushing yards, 4 TDs/46 receptions, 460 yards, 3 TDs) will face a very good TB defense that has greatly improved since the first time these two teams met in Week 1 (a 34-23 Saints win). Sine that game, the Tampa Bay defense has been a wrecking crew and on offense tight end Rob Gronkowski (22 receptions, 280 yards, 2 TDs) and Brady are connecting in the passing game just as they did when they were teammates in New England for so many seasons. As if the Bucs didn't have enough weapons with Gronk, running back Ronald Jones (506 yards, 4 TDs), wide receivers Chris Godwin and Mike Evans, they went out and added former Steeler wide out Antonio Brown to the offense. Look for Brady and his teammates to extract revenge for that opening season loss at the Bucs continue their roll. My pick, Tampa Bay 33, New Orleans 24

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If you know a child who may be challenged with a disability, please contact the Crosby ISD Special Education office at 281 328-9200, Extension 1108. If the child is already a student in Crosby ISD, please contact the counselor at the child's school. The counselor will be happy to assist you.

The special education personnel will coordinate efforts to evaluate the student and, if eligible, ensure that the student is provided with supports and services needed to benefit from instruction.

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