

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

EVENTS

THU. FEB. 17 Highlands Chamber Awards Banquet

Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber Directors Installation and Community Awards Banquet
February 17, 2022
Monument Inn

Dinner and Awards
Join us for dinner and awards. We will recognize outstanding community service and install the new directors to the board.

Monument Inn Restaurant
6:30 pm cocktails and silent auction
7:00 pm dinner and program

THU. FEB. 24 C/H Chamber Nite at the Races

Annual Awards Banquet
"A Nite at the Races"
February 24, 2022
5:00pm-9:30pm
The Hundred Oaks Event Center
1110 Indian Shores Rd
Crosby, Texas 77532
We will be installing our Board of Directors and awarding our:
EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR
NON-PROFIT OF THE YEAR
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
Entertainment will be "Nite at the Races"
Live Horse Racing! Okay-Just Kind of...We will have recorded professionally called horse races, programs, betting windows, and funny money available for purchase for your wagering fun! Also a Derby Hat Contest so wear your most fabulous creative hat you can find!
Please call Chamber at 281-328-6984 or email us at chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org for more information!

BIRTHDAYS

Feb 11—Carol Kelley
Mary Mills
Michael Parson
Lanette Salters
Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale
Feb 12—Shelby Hodges
Lori Osterman
Jed Riser
Alania Kay Jones
Ida Turley
Joseph Bowen
Feb 13—Lisa Brown
Hannah Riser
Tami Roe
Christopher Salters
Feb 14—Susy Cavazos
Feb 15—Micheal Hance
Lisa Henning
Debbie Herman
Terry Smith
Feb 16—Sandra Gross
Feb 17- Donnie Cravatt

ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 11—Keith & Becky Adams
Howard & Patricia Brockinton
Feb 12- Donnie & Elonda Cravatt
Feb 14—Larry & Jeannie Kelly

DEATHS

Leo W. Johnson, 83,
Highlands/Trinity

Jeremy Rosenkranz wins Rotary raffle

HIGHLANDS – The Rotary Club held their 47th annual Chili Feast, Raffle and Auction last Saturday, and in spite of cold weather and the pandemic, a large crowd turned out at St. Jude's social hall, and made the event a success.

Chili Feast chairman Andy Scott said proceeds were comparable to previous years, and thanked all the sponsors and the public for their support.

The top prize in the raffle drawing, a 2022 SUV from Turner Chevrolet, was won by Highlands

Continued. See Chili Feast, Page 7



Rotary Club president Jerry Fallin and Raffle winner Jeremy Rosenkranz with the 2022 Chevrolet Trailblazer that was the top prize in the Chili Feast raffle. MORE PHOTOS PAGE 7.

| TICKET DRAWING ORDER | PRIZE DESCRIPTION | WINNING TICKET NUMBER | NAME ON TICKET |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Early Bird | \$300 Gift Card | 396 | Berry Smith |
| 1 st | \$200 Gift Card | 694 | Jack Wilson |
| 50 th | 32" Smart TV | 589 | Luther Smith |
| 100 th | Portable Ice Maker | 220 | Denise Okegon |
| 150 th | \$200 Gift Card | 448 | Ricky Martin |
| 200 th | Air Comp/Battery Charger | 001 | Andy & Tricia Scott |
| 250 th | Beats headphones | 431 | Tonia Kostka |
| 300 th | \$200 Gift Card | 427 | Paula Winklers |
| 350 th | Air Fryer | 581 | Derek Lineberry |
| 400 th | 65qt Arctic Cooler | 35 | Lanette Armstrong |
| 450 th | Shotgun | 356 | Tonya Kostka |
| 500 th | \$200 Gift Card | 550 | David Kostka |
| 550 th | 28" Blackstone Cooker | 60 | Jim Jones |
| 600 th | Propane Fire Pit | 230 | Marjorie Husley |
| 650 th | 6.5 Rifle | 616 | Tom Machala |
| 699 th | 55" Smart TV | 293 | Jim Strickland |
| 700 th | 2022 Chevy Trailblazer or 2022 Chevy Equinox | 700 | Jeremy Rosenkranz |

Highlands Rotary thanks everyone who helped make this 2022 Chili Feast a Success.

Crosby supports "Bras for the Cause" 2022

Raises \$180,000 for cancer patients

The Crosby Community came out loud and strong on Saturday, January 29th at the Crosby American Legion Hall to support Bras for the Cause. After skipping last year, due to COVID, Bras for the Cause celebrated their tenth anniversary in grand style.

The black and gold decorations and balloons gave the hall a celebratory feel.... and celebrate we did!

Continued. See Bras for the Cause, Page 2



Models in the Group Photo are: Justin Whittridge, Tony Guthmiller, Clay Stephens, Shaun Manuel, Jason McWhorter, Troy Reuter, Jeremiah Price, Aubrey Larkin, Adam Notgrass, Andrew Tarpinian, Matthew Whitworth, Jason Lewis, Quentin Klaus, Jason Cornelison, Jacob Massengale, Jacob Schexnayder, Teague Schexnayder. MORE PHOTOS PAGE 2



Surprising Bengals take on Rams on LA's home turf in Super Bowl LVI

By Mike Keeney
Sports Writer

If someone had told you the Cincinnati Bengals would be playing in Super Bowl 56, you might have questioned or wondered what substance they were on.

Well, the unimaginable has happened and the Bengals indeed are one game away from hoisting the Lombardi Trophy and taking it back to the Queen City.

Talk about a real-life Cinderella story!
No one in his or her

right mind could have predicted that the Bengals, better known for decades as the Bungals for their poor play, would be facing the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl 56 on Sunday in SoFi Stadium in LA.

Cinci was 4-11-1 in 2020 and their best player, second-year quarterback Joe Burrow, was coming off a serious knee injury.

The Rams, on the other hand, have been one of the better teams in the NFC since head coach Sean McVay arrived in

2017. The Rams won the NFC in 2018 and lost to New England in SB 53, 13-3. After the 2020 season, when the Rams were eliminated by Green Bay in the division round of the NFC playoffs, McVay knew a change had to be made at quarterback and that's when he and the front office traded for former Detroit Lions QB Matthew Stafford.

Stafford became the final piece in the puzzle that lifted the Rams as a

Continued. See Super Bowl LVI, Page 7

Houston offers \$50 to \$1000 incentives to get vaccinated

HOUSTON – The Houston Health Department is launching a new program to encourage more Houstonians to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The 6-week initiative will award 12 people \$1,000 gift cards and provide \$50 gift cards to hundreds of additional people.

People who get their first dose or booster shot at eligible health department vaccination sites between January 29 and March 10, 2022, will be entered into drawings for \$1,000 gift cards. Two \$1,000 winners will be selected on Fridays starting February 4 for a total of 12 winners over six weeks.

Fixed vaccination sites eligible for the \$1,000 incentive program are:

- Acres Home Multi-Service Center, 6719 W.

Montgomery Rd.

- Hiram Clarke Multi-Service Center, 3810 W. Fuqua St.

- La Nueva Casa de Amigos Health Center, 1809 North Main St.

- Magnolia Multi-Service Center, 7037 Capitol

- Northside Health Center, 8504 Schuller Rd.

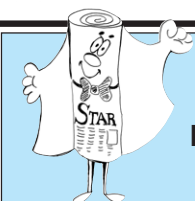
- Sharpstown Health Services, 6201 Bonhomme Rd.

- Southwest Multi-Service Center, 6400 High Star Dr.

- Sunnyside Health Center, 4605 Wilmington St.

Fixed vaccination sites close at 11:30 a.m. on the second Wednesday of every

Continued. See COVID shots, Page 2



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WESTON G. COTTEN

Attorney at Law

O. 281/421-4050

F. 281/533-6032

weston@westoncotten.com

STAR-COURIER PHONES: 713-266-3444 • E-MAIL: GRAFIKSTAR@AOL.COM • FAX: 713-977-1188



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Crosby supports “Bras for the Cause” 2022

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With 17 celebrity models, ranging from Beth Dutton (Aubrey Larkin), Tiger King (Shaun Manuel), Wonder Woman (Matthew Whitworth), and a “Sexy Nurse” (Jacob Massengale), the crowd enjoyed a “star studded” fashion show. Teague (Birthday Cake) and Jacob (Alligator) Schexnayder, once again rounded out the live auction with a whopping \$30,000 total donation for their dancing abilities and bras!

The silent auction provided goods and services donated by so many businesses and individuals from the local community. It was a record breaking night for proceeds from the silent auction.

MC duties were handled expertly by Jay Beasley and David Rodgers. Elbert de la Cruz did an outstanding job with music to accompany the models and their themes.

Kellie Price, of Joseph’s Warriors, spoke eloquently of how losing her son Joseph to cancer, has prompted her and husband Jeremiah, to start a foundation in their son’s memory which supports families of children undergoing cancer treatment in the Gulf Coast Area. The BFC Committee presented “Joseph’s Warriors” with a donation as well as donations to Candlelighters and Houston Methodist Breast Care Fund.

Bras for the Cause sup-

ports Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Family Alliance which provides emotional, educational, and practical support to families of children with cancer. BFC also supports the Pink Heals Patient Assistance Fund at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital, which provides financial help to qualifying patients undergoing treatment at their facility by paying third party vendors for items such as mortgage, utilities, prescriptions, and transportation expenses. The Breast Care Fund, started with the support of the Bras for the Cause Committee, provides financial support for breast MRIs, mammograms and biopsies as needed for qualifying patients.

Personal patient stories were highlighted throughout the hall and displayed on tables with details of how these organizations help children and adults dealing with cancer.

Once again, with the overwhelming support of our local Crosby Community, Bras For the Cause reports a preliminary total of \$180,000 being raised to support cancer patients in our area for their tenth anniversary celebration.

Models in the Group Photo are:

Justin Whittridge
Tony Guthmiller
Clay Stephens
Shaun Manuel
Jason McWhorter
Troy Reuter
Jeremiah Price
Aubrey Larkin
Adam Notgrass
Andrew Tarpinian
Matthew Whitworth
Jason Lewis
Quentin Klaus
Jason Cornelison
Jacob Massengale
Jacob Schexnayder
Teague Schexnayder

Vaccination Shots,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

month.

Many of the department’s pop-up vaccination sites are also eligible for the \$1,000 incentive program. Weekly schedules listing eligible pop-up vaccination sites are available at houstonhealth.org or by calling 832-393-4220.

Once a person is entered into the pool for the \$1,000 drawings, their name will remain in unless it’s selected. People may only enter the pool once.

In addition to being entered into the \$1,000 drawings, people who get their first dose or booster shot at select pop-up sites will receive a \$50 gift card until a total of 760 cards are distributed.

Sites and schedules eligible for the \$50 incentive are:

- Lyons Elementary, 800 Roxella St, 77076

January 29, 2022
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

- Benavidez Elementary, 6262 Gulfton St, 77081

February 5, 2022
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

- Brookline Elementary, 6301 S Loop E Fwy, 77087

February 12, 2022
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

The program is a partnership with Houston in Action and Human Age Digital, which received \$50,000 in grant funds to support efforts to increase vaccination rates in Houston.

Participants must sign a declaration affirming eligibility for the program, and verification will occur using the Texas immunization database.

People ages 5 and up are eligible for the Pfizer vaccine, while people ages 18 and up are eligible for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. In addition, booster shots are available to people ages 12 and up.

Getting vaccinated or tested for COVID-19 at health department-affiliated sites is free and does not require proof of residency, citizenship, or insurance.



Holy Moses, what an Angel!



Clay Stephens demonstrates a “Jiggle”



Hundreds of supporters turned out at the American Legion Hall, including David Mendez and Scott Stephens.

We are accepting new deposits!
All eligible residents and employees have received the COVID-19 vaccine. Health screenings are performed for guests.

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Barbers Hill Dayton Press

Serving Mont Belvieu, Dayton, Baytown and surrounding communities since 1995

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Beach City News from Mayor Ryan Dagley

To All:

First, I want to say that I am proud to announce that the City of Beach City recently was awarded the largest grant in the history of Beach City. I announced the grant at last week's city council meeting, and we also introduced the grant administrator who will be working with the city to find projects to complete that fit the criteria set out in the grant. We have worked on this grant for months, and I am very proud for our city.

Second, some of you are probably wondering about the status of the waterline to the Beach City Fire Department. This was approved by commissioner's court and TGS several months back and TGS had 6 months post the finishing of the Fisher Road expansion to start the water line. The last couple of months the City of Baytown has slowed down the process due to the review of the route and project details. This week I received word that the City of Baytown has now signed off on the project details and the waterline will go out for bid and construction will begin very soon (watch for materials being stage soon).

Lastly, I am also pleased to announce that the long-sought Greenbelt along the FM 2354 corridor is now taking shape. This was on last week's commissioner's court for approval however this item got tabled due to some minor language needing revisions. Expect the Greenbelt agenda item for the next commissioner's court in February. A greenbelt to protect the residents from industry encroachment has long been sought and promised. After months and months of negotiations with the County, TGS, and the City of Beach City it looks like the greenbelt will become a reality this month!

COVID-19 Shots available in Chambers County

Chambers County Public Health will be offering several COVID-19 vaccine clinics in the coming weeks at no cost to the public. Please visit bit.ly/chamberscovaccines to register for an appointment. Appointments are required.

First, second, third and booster doses of vaccine will be available at each clinic.

For reference, please see the below distinction between booster and third doses:

- Third doses are available in the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine only for persons who are immunocompromised

- Booster doses are available only in the Pfizer vaccine and are recommended for:

- o People aged 65 years and older
- o Residents aged 18 years and older in long-term care settings
- o People aged 50 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions
- Booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine are also available for:
- o People aged 18 to 49 years with underlying medical conditions
- o People aged 18 to 64 years with an increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission

If you have questions regarding vaccines or your eligibility, please call Chambers County Public Health at 409-267-2931 or email vaccines@chamberstx.gov.

LEE COLLEGE WEBSITE WINS AWARD

Lee College boasts award-winning video, website

Lee College Marketing and Public Affairs garnered national attention recently when it was awarded the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) Gold Medallion for video production and Bronze Medallion for website at the District 4 Conference in Hot Springs, Ark., Oct. 21-23.

"Our website is critical to the mission of our institution and the success of our students," said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College president. "For many students, the website serves as their first impression of Lee College. Even before they step foot on our campus or complete an enrollment application, it gives them a powerful visual representation of what we have to offer. Congratulations to our Marketing and Public Affairs team on a job well done!"

The new Lee College website was completed and rolled out to the public in August 2020, shortly after the pandemic hit. Roger



Demary, web services manager for Lee College, worked to lead the effort remotely. The goal of the upgrade was to implement a design that would allow the college's website to grow and change incrementally, rather than being locked into a redesign mentality.

"We wanted a product that was flexible enough to adapt to changing wants and needs without requiring a complete overhaul every time we considered a significant adjustment," Demary said. According to Demary, moving

to a top-tier product was a big change, but it offered much better tools, including the capability of adding a lot more personalization to the site.

"For example, if you let us know you're a prospective student when you visit the website, on subsequent visits you may see information geared specifically toward that group," he said. "If you say you're a parent or an international student, same thing. This will open several marketing options we haven't had."

The Lee College video was awarded the Gold Medallion by NCMPR for its exceptional storytelling, diversity and creativity.

Chris Coats, assistant director of Marketing and Public Affairs at Lee College, originally created the video for use during new student orientation sessions. The goal of the video was to give a broad view of Lee College and its diverse populations, while highlighting fields of study that exist within those student populations.

"It's a quick way to show people that there are other people like themselves, and they are succeeding in college. Maybe you can do it too," said Coats. "Of all the things I do, I like making videos the most. I enjoy visually conveying the story of Lee College."

"It's rewarding to speak with students who have been positively impacted by the school. It has changed their life – either in determining their career trajectory, or enabling them to be a better

provider for their family," he said.

NCMPR District 4 covers Texas, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. The Lee College website and video have both been entered in the NCMPR national contest, which will take place later this year.

Lee College offers more than 100 associate degree and certificate programs, as well as non-credit workforce and community education courses, that prepare its diverse student body for advanced higher education; successful entry into the workforce; and a variety of in-demand careers. With the main campus and McNair Center located in Baytown, Texas, and a satellite education center in nearby South Liberty County, the college serves a geographic area of more than 220,000 residents that includes 14 independent school districts. To learn more, visit www.lee.edu.

CC Appoints Barbers Hill Native Aaron Thomas as Auditor

Aaron Thomas was sworn in as Chambers County Auditor on Tuesday, January 11.

Aaron is a Chambers County native and BHISD graduate. He attended Stephen F. Austin University before coming home to work part time for then-Auditor Jerry Sparks and then full time for his predecessor, Tony Sims. After several years in the Auditor's Office, Aaron transitioned to County Judge Jimmy Sylvia's Office where he has served as Budget Officer and Interim HR Director.



More Parking, other work set for MB City Park

The City of Mont Belvieu announces that City Council has approved the construction of nearly 50 more parking spaces at City Park. This should make attending games and events easier for you. The new spaces should be ready this Spring.



The City of Mont Belvieu says as phase 2 develops and changes are made in the existing section (phase 1) a new set of restrooms and a covered rental facility will be added to the playground area.

Houston Methodist Hospital Baytown

Living with High Blood Pressure

BAYTOWN – Living with high blood pressure (HBP) heightens the risk of being impacted by a variety of potentially serious conditions, including stroke and heart disease.

Blood pressure is a measurement of the force of your blood pushing against your vessel walls. HBP, or hypertension, is diagnosed when that pressure is consistently too high.

"High blood pressure is sometimes called a silent killer because it doesn't cause symptoms and won't be caught without regular blood pressure readings," said **Dr. Irfan Dadabhoy**, a primary care physician at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital. "Having HBP makes you four times more likely to die from a stroke and three times more likely to die from heart disease. The only way to know whether you have HPB is to have it checked. Most likely, your blood pressure

is measured and recorded every time you go to your health care provider's office."

Blood Pressure Categories

Your systolic pressure, or the top number of your reading, is the pressure in the arteries as the heart beats. Your diastolic pressure, or the bottom number, is a measurement of the pressure in the arteries as the heart muscle rests. "Typically, the top number receives more attention, but elevated diastolic pressure alone also increases cardiovascular disease risk," Dadabhoy said.

Managing High Blood Pressure

The best strategy for preventing HBP from leading to serious conditions begins by working with your health care provider sooner to find ways to successfully manage the condition through lifestyle changes.

"There's no cure for high blood pressure, but



DR. IRFAN DADABHOY

you can successfully manage it with medication and living a healthy lifestyle," Dadabhoy said.

The following changes can help you keep a lid on HBP.

- Monitoring your blood pressure regularly
- Taking your medications as prescribed
- Eating a well-balanced, low-salt diet (**DASH** diet)
- Exercising regularly
- Maintaining a healthy weight that you and your doctor have agreed on
- Quitting smoking
- Increasing potassium

intake, if recommended by your doctor

- Managing stress
- Limiting alcohol

Know Your Numbers

Being aware of your blood pressure status by checking it regularly is key to preventing it from spiraling out of control. Here is a breakdown of blood pressure readings:

Normal Range: Less than 120 systolic (upper number) and less than 80 diastolic (lower number)

Elevated: 120-129 over 80

High Blood Pressure Stage 1: 130-139 over 80-89

High Blood Pressure Stage 2: 140 or higher over 90 or higher

Hypertensive Crisis: Higher than 180 over 120

Dadabhoy provides a full range of family medicine services, including routine checkups and immunizations, diagnosis and management of acute and chronic illnesses, and advanced treatment of


complex conditions, such as diabetes and asthma. To schedule an appointment, call 832.556.6670, or visit houstonmethodist.org/baytown.

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital is taking every necessary precaution during the coronavirus pandemic to keep you and our staff members safe, including, 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, and implementing additional sanitation processes to disinfect all equipment and surfaces.

Houston Methodist Bayt is designated as a COVID-19 vaccine hub. to register for your vaccine visit houstonmethodist.org/vaccine.

COUNTY CONNECTION

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo



Dealing with COVID-19 in a New Year

A new year is a time for new beginnings, and I know we are all ready to start fresh. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 epidemic has not slowed down over the holidays. With the emergence of the Omicron strain fueling the fire, a new wave of infections are once again raising our numbers. Hospitalizations are slowly rising and approaching problematic levels, infections are spreading rapidly across our County, and this week our numbers have pushed our threat level back to red. The possible exposures from travel, holiday celebrations, and gatherings on top of the return of children to school this week could trigger a very difficult month ahead in terms of hospitalizations and the strain on our medical system. It is clear that we will be living with this virus indefinitely.

But here in Harris County we are not giving in – we have more tools available and more knowledge on this virus than at any previous point during this pandemic. And we know that vaccinations are the best protection for you and your family against this virus. If there has ever been a wake up call to get vaccinated and get your booster, that time is now. You can find all the information you need on how and where to get vaccinated and your booster at readyharris.org.

Another powerful tool we have to combat this latest wave is testing. Our public health sites continue to have plenty of PCR test capacity across the county and I want to encourage anyone who needs to get tested to visit one of these sites. Rapid tests that are available over the counter for home use are also helpful, particularly when it comes to giving parents and schools peace of mind on whether or not students and staff are clear to be teaching and learning. Last week, Commissioners Court approved additional funding for 55,000 test kits which we will be distributing to schools and health clinics that serve the low income communities that need them most.

Also this week, a state court ruled that our local health officials do have the authority to put reasonable measures such as mask requirements in place to protect our community from COVID-19, something we have been fighting for the entirety of the pandemic. While this ruling will likely be appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, wearing a mask right now is simply the right thing to do. Schools and businesses are in the right to enforce mask requirements and policies. So please, put the masks back on when you are in public, regardless of your vaccination status.

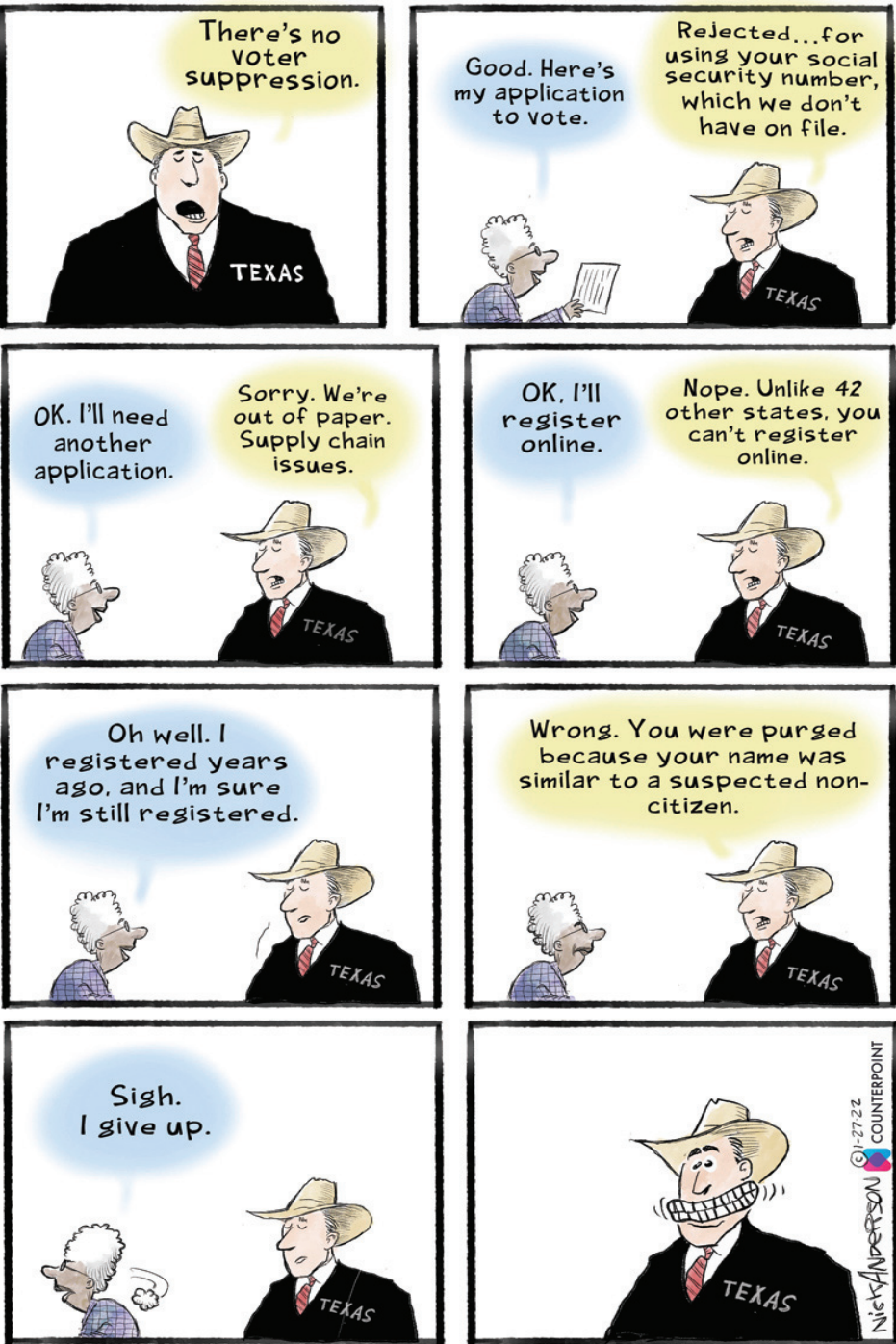
In this new year, our fight is still not over. But we have more reasons than ever to be hopeful that the end of COVID-19 as a major threat to our community is near. Here's wishing everyone a safe and healthy 2022.

George Floyd Sculpture Donated to Tom Bass Park

George Floyd's tragic death sparked a worldwide movement against police violence in communities of color. In Harris County, we know that the Houston native is not only a symbol, he was a son, father, neighbor, and friend.


Last month, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Commissioners Court accepted a donation from the Kay Davis In the Community (KDITC) Foundation of a life-size, bronze sculpture of George Floyd to be placed at Tom Bass Regional Park. The sculpture is being designed and created by Texas-based Sculptress Adrienne Rison-Isom and is entitled "A Conversation with George."

We look forward to visiting the statue in his remembrance.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Two Proposed Amendments on the May primary ballot

TWO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS ON MAY BALLOT

Voters who go to the polls for municipal and school board elections on May 7 will also be asked to decide on two proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution.

Deputy Secretary of State Joe Esparza drew the ballot order last week for the two proposed amendments, both dealing with property taxes. The first proposition on May's ballot would authorize the Legislature to cut the property tax limit for the homesteads of elderly or disabled residents "to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year."

According to Ballotpedia.org, the measure would result in a reduction in revenue of \$467.5 million in the first two years it is implemented. The measure passed unanimously in both chambers during the second special session.

The second proposed amendment would increase the homestead exemption for school district property taxes from \$25,000 to \$40,000. That measure, approved by the Legislature in October in another special session, also passed unanimously.

State Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, the author of the amendment, said, "People see the need for property tax relief, and Texans are continuing to cry out for that continuously. This is a great way to bring that home to all of the taxpayers of Texas."

STATE SIGNS DEAL WITH TOKYO

The state hopes to see expanded growth from Tokyo-based small and medium-sized businesses after signing a cooperative agreement with the Tokyo metropolitan government. The governor's office of Economic Development and Tourism organized 18 local economic development partners across the state to provide resources to Tokyo businesses interested in expanding in Texas.



opment and Tourism organized 18 local economic development partners across the state to provide resources to Tokyo businesses interested in expanding in Texas.

"Tokyo and Texas may be half a world apart, but we are closing that gap by facilitating more investment and economic development between our two regions," Gov. Greg Abbott said. "I look forward to our continued work together as we create a more robust partnership and a more prosperous economic future."

The Texas community partners include cities and economic development corporations from throughout the state. More than 400 Japanese companies have operations in Texas. Japan was the state's sixth-largest export destination in 2020, with more than \$9.8 billion in exported goods, including organic chemicals, industrial machinery, aircraft and spacecraft, fuel and oil.

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR URI REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOLS

The deadline for public school districts and charter schools to seek reimbursement from the state for damages caused last year by Winter Storm Uri has been extended to Feb. 24, the Texas Education Agency announced. Any district located in an area declared a disaster after last February's storm can apply for assistance for

costs not covered by insurance or federal disaster relief.

Schools can receive reimbursement for uninsured damages to facilities, vehicles and computers.

TEA has posted two webinars explaining the program on YouTube, which can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y76tev3j>

COVID-19 CASES DOWN; ICU BEDS NEARLY FULL

While the number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas during the past week dropped to 295,501 — a decrease of more than 130,000 — the state's intensive care unit beds are approaching capacity once again. The Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University also reported 1,212 deaths, up nearly 25% from the previous week.

The drop in new cases has health officials hopeful the omicron variant has peaked. Hospitalizations in Texas of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 dropped slightly to 12,760, with only 317 available ICU beds in the entire state, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

"The vast majority of the people who are critically ill are either unvaccinated or have significant comorbidities," Dr. James McCarthy, chief physician executive at Memorial Hermann, told the Houston Chronicle. "We are not seeing middle-aged, healthy, vaccinated individuals in the ICU like we did in the previous wave."

A total of 16.896 million Texans are fully vaccinated, according to DSHS, which is 58% of the state's population. An additional 5.85 million Texans have received a booster dose.

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Out of the Jungle

In my dream, the jungle was thick and dark.

There was a river running through it and I was on a small raft, careening down it. The current was flowing fast in the center and I wanted to steer closer to the banks, but the jungle was filled with monsters—prehistoric creatures that roared when they saw my little raft tumbling in the water. I never saw them clearly, but could sense their large presence. They reared their giant heads as I went by. The branches of the trees thrashed as they moved just out of sight.

Then, up ahead, I saw huge stones in the center of the river. I feared I would smash my makeshift raft to bits. I steered closer to the bank until my raft was very close to the river's edge.

Suddenly, a huge arm reached out of the jungle. It was gray and covered in scales with long claws and I was easily within reach.

I woke with a start. Peter was sleeping. I grabbed him.

"What's the matter?" he asked groggily.

I tried to explain about the monsters that were like dinosaurs and the river that was flowing too fast for me to navigate the rickety raft and the rocks ahead.

"Wasn't I there?" he asked. "No!"

He wasn't there. But as he fell back to sleep, I knew he thought he should have been. If he had been there, we would have evaded those monsters. Next time, he would make a point of being on the raft.

Being married comes with a lot of responsibilities they don't tell you about.

We are now in Mexico and, after weeks of feeling good, Peter's back went out again last night. He felt worse than he'd ever felt before. I didn't know what we should do. Stay where we were? Continue to our destination? Return home?

"I can't think clearly enough to decide. Let's do what you think is best," Peter said.

"Let's go!" I said. We packed up in minutes, caught a shuttle, and headed to our final stop, an hour and a half away.

I explained to our driver, Ricardo, in my childlike Spanish that my husband had "terrible pain of the spine" and he looked on sympathetically.

We had almost made it to our destination when Ricardo asked if we would like to stop at a pharmacy. The only thing that had helped Peter before was a short course of steroids. I figured it couldn't hurt to ask. So I launched into my small-child Spanish again, asking the pharmacist if it was "possible to buy prednisone."

"What strength?" she wanted to know. "And how much?" This was beyond my abilities to communicate, so she just brought out the boxes and laid them on the counter.

By nightfall Peter was feeling a bit better, and today he is up and cooking beans. He will see another doctor when we get home, because he cannot live like this—always in fear of monsters jumping out of the jungle. But I am so glad he is better today.

"I am not very good at taking care of you," I said, because I'm not.

I have no experience caring for people who are ill or in pain. I don't know what to say or do. I feel helpless and useless and frustrated—none of which makes me much of a Florence Nightingale.

But I was able to speak enough Spanish to get some help. I got our raft a little closer to the center of the river and now we are picking up speed.

Till next time,
Carrie

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

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OBITUARIES

LEO W. JOHNSON

Leo W. Johnson, age 83 of Weldon, passed away Monday, January 31, 2022 at Trinity Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in Trinity. Leo was born in Highlands, July 25, 1938, to parents Simon Johnson and Annie Wingate Johnson. He retired from Houston Natural Gas and Texas Department of Corrections. Leo was a member of the Sampson Masonic Lodge #231 AF&AM in Highlands and was a gunsmith, loving to refurbish old guns. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and his favorite past time, going to visit. Leo never met a stranger and always



had a kind word for anyone who crossed his path. Leo is survived by a daughter, Penny McMillian and husband, Sonny of Weldon; grandchildren, Vicki Bunnell and husband, Bryan of Weldon, James McMillian and wife, Veronica of Weldon; great-grand-

children, Peyton, Andy, Madison, Macy, Molly; numerous other loving relatives and friends. Leo was preceded in death by his wife, Sue Johnson; son, Donald Johnson; parents, Simon and Annie Johnson. Memorial services for Leo W. Johnson will be held 2:00 p.m. Saturday, February 12, 2022 at Weldon Baptist Church, Rev. Witt Meyer, officiating. Online condolences may be left at www.callawayallee.com.

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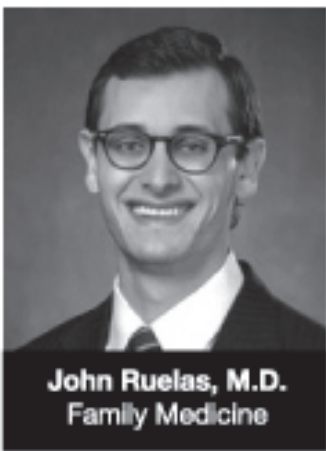
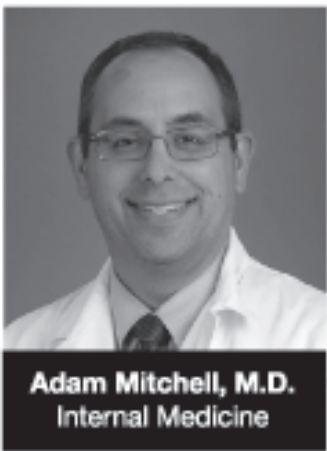
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Highlands crowds enjoy Rotary Chili Feast

ACONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



A Giant Teddy Bear was a Valentine favorite at the Live Auction.



Rotarians Larry White and Diana Weaver kept track of the tickets, as Miss Highlands Haley Maxey pulled.



Students from Chinquapin, Goose Creek Memorial, and Pilot Club's Anchors helped with the Chili serving line.



Rotarians Jeremy Rosenkranz, Robert Woodall, and Johnny Gaeke kept the Famous Chili coming.



Rotary club president Jerry Fallin announces a ticket winner, as Auctioneer Rick Loggins stands by.



Connie Russell donated several beautiful Patriotic Quilts she made, to the Live Auction.



This young man had the time of his life, riding the miniature 4 wheeler up and down the aisles.

businessman Jeremy Rosenkranz.

All 700 raffle tickets were sold, thanks to a last minute purchase by a consortium of Bryan Teel, Don Hill, and David Kostka. The club thanked them for their extra effort and support.

Preliminary figures indicate the event raised about \$93,000, and after expenses including the cost of the top prize, the club expects to be able to use the remaining monies for scholarships and community projects. Last year the club awarded \$32,000 in scholarships to 18 graduating seniors.

Funds raised at the Chili Feast are used to support the club's projects, including Scholarships, Partners in Education, Stratford Library, GCM and Chinquapin Interact clubs, Dictionaries for 3rd graders, School supply drive, Christmas baskets for the needy, Veteran's programs, Highlands Jamboree, Highlands Little League, International Youth Exchange, Ambassadorial Scholars, worldwide polio eradication, and other local charities and projects.

Sponsors for the event included: Diamond, Jerry & Julie Fallin; Platinum,

Hill Materials; Gold, Community Toyota/Honda/Kia, ReMax Eastside, Vision Max Baytown, Allegiance Bank Memorial Spring Branch, Chuck & Carol Radney; Silver, Edward Jones, Scott Stephens & Associates, Capital Bank, BDI Resources, Central Auto Inspections, Charlie's Ice House, Environmental Health Specialties; Bronze, Rich & Nancy Slaugh.

Club president Jerry Fallin thanked all the Rotarians, wives and volunteers for their assistance in achieving a successful event.

Live Auction items were varied, with some unusual items such as this Luckenbach sign.

Surprising Bengals take on Rams on LA's home turf in Super Bowl LVI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

serious Super Bowl contender. The Rams have been loaded on offense but lacked a quarterback who could throw the long ball and Stafford can do just that.

In his first year with the Rams, Stafford threw for 4,886 yards and 41 touchdowns. In the playoffs, he's passed for 945 yards and six TDs in three games (the first three playoff games Stafford has ever won as a starting QB. He was 0-3 as a Lion). It has helped to have this year's best wide receiver in Cooper Kupp, who has had an amazing year with 145 receptions for 1,947 yards and 16 touchdowns. Kupp has continued his amazing season in the playoffs with 25 receptions for 357 yards and four TDs.

The Rams front office shored up the passing game when it signed former Browns wide receiver Odell Beckham prior to Week 10 after Beckham wore out his welcome in Cleveland and was released by the Browns. Beckham has found new life in LA, catching 27 passes for 305 yards and five TDs. In the playoffs, Beckham has 19 receptions for 236 yards and a score.

While Stafford has had a solid 12-year career, Burrow entered the 2021 season with a lot of question marks. Would his knee hold up, would his offensive line give him the protection he needed to make plays down field and would 2021 first-round pick (fifth overall) Ja'Marr Chase prove to the doubters that he can play at the pro level. The answers to those questions are, yes, somewhat



and yes.

Burrow came back from the injury with 4,611 passing yards and 34 touchdowns and in his first three playoff games, he's thrown for another 842 yards and 4 TDs. Chase had a remarkable rookie season, hauling in 81 catches for 1,455 yards and 13 TDs. Chase has been solid in the playoffs with 20 receptions for 279 yards and one score, but don't be surprised if he has a big night on the game's biggest stage on Sunday.

Burrow has also benefited from a solid run game led by Joe Mixon, who had a breakout season with 1,205 yards and 16 total touchdowns. Mixon could be a key player in the Super Bowl on both the ground and in the passing game.

Chase isn't a one-man receiving corps. Fellow wide out Tee Higgins (74 receptions, 1,091 yards, 6 TDs) had a big day in the Cinci's 27-24 upset of Kansas City in the AFC title game with six catches for 103 yards. Look for Higgins to have another big game against a solid Rams secondary.

The Bengals also have a big advantage in the kicking game thanks to

rookie kicker Evan McPherson. The rookie out of Florida has made 12 field goals in post-season play, which is an NFL playoff record. He's hit three field goals from more than 50 yards, and kicked the Bengals into the Super Bowl with a last-second game-winning field goal to upset the top seeded Tennessee Titans in the division round and his 31-yarder in overtime sent the Bengals to the Super Bowl, where they will face a Rams team that badly wants to win its second Lombardi.

The Rams will be playing in their fourth Super Bowl, while the Bengals will be playing in their third. Cinci hasn't been to the Big Game since it lost 20-16 in the waning seconds in the 1989 game when Joe Montana connected with wide receiver John Taylor to deny the Bengals a chance at the franchises biggest ever victory.

While the Rams appear to be the better team on paper, that won't phase the Bengals. They overcame a 10-point deficit in the second half at Tennessee to upset the Titans, and were down 18 points (21-3) at Kansas City before rallying for

the OT win. Cinci closed the gap to 21-10 late in the second quarter and the Chiefs could have made it 24-10 at the half, but QB Patrick Mahomes foolishly tried for one more TD with five seconds left and no timeouts. His pass to Tyreek Hill was stopped short of the goal line and the Bengals snatched momentum heading into the second half.

When they came out for the second half, the Burrow led them to 21 straight points and a 24-21 lead before KC tied it at the end of regulation.

In OT, the Bengals picked off Mahomes and Burrow and Mixon drove them into position for McPherson to kick the game winner.

The Rams also had to rally in the second half to earn a trip to the Big Game. LA trailed San Francisco 17-7 in the fourth quarter, but Stafford, Kupp and Beckham rallied the Rams to a 13-point fourth quarter and a trip to the Super Bowl.

While the Rams will be the second straight team to host the SB in their home stadium (Tampa Bay hosted at their place last year), ironically they

will be the visiting team and the Bengals will be the home team.

I'm sure the Rams and their fans could care less about that. They are just happy to be playing for a shot at their second Lombardi Trophy.

Should the Rams win, McVay would become the youngest head coach to ever win a Super Bowl (Pittsburgh's Mike Tomlin currently holds that distinction).

This game will also match two former overall No. 1 picks, as Stafford was taken No. 1 out of Georgia in 2009, while Burrow was take first overall out of LSU in 2020.

Should Burrow and the Bengals win, Burrow would become the first-ever quarterback to win the Heisman Trophy, a national championship in college and a Super Bowl and he would have completed the trifecta in just two years. Pretty amazing.

This should be a competitive game, but the key could be how well the Cinci offensive line holds up against a Rams front seven that features two very good pass rushers in defensive tackle Aaron Donald (a three-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year) and edge rusher Von Miller, who was acquired from the Broncos by the Rams at the trade deadline. In the Bengals win at Tennessee, Burrow was sacked nine times, but the OL held up better against the Chiefs, allowing just one sack. The Bengals coaching staff will have an extra week to come up with a scheme to show down the Rams pass rush because if they

don't Burrow could be in for a long and bruising day.

While the Rams have been more of a passing team than a running team, look for second-year running back Cam Akers to play a big role in this game. Akers suffered an Achilles injury in July, but amazingly worked his way back to play in the final game of the season and the first three playoff games. Akers can be a difference maker with his speed, but has turnover issues. He fumbled twice in the Rams win over Tampa Bay, but McVay hasn't given up on the talented second-year man out of Florida State.

If this game is close late, and the Bengals have the ball, McPherson could certainly win it for the Bengals. The big stage does not seem to faze the confident kicker.

Nor is the stage to big for Burrow. They don't call him Cool Joe for nothing. I don't see this as too big of a stage for him and he just might come out slinging it all over the field to keep the Rams defense on its heels.

While I love the Bengals story, I think Stafford will be the difference maker in this game. He's waited 13 years for this day and at the end of it, he will be called a Super Bowl winning quarterback.

Look for Stafford and Kupp to have a big day against a Cinci secondary that can be thrown on as the Rams celebrate by lifting the Lombardi Trophy on their home field.

My pick, Los Angeles Rams 33, Cincinnati Bengals 30



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