

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star ★ Courier

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THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

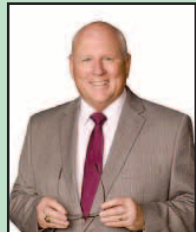
## IN THE STARS

### EVENTS

#### THU. MAY 19 Crosby Chamber luncheon with Comm. Ramsey

On Thursday, May 19 the Crosby/Huffman Chamber will host Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey for lunch at Crosby Church, 5725 Hwy 90. Luncheon starts at 11:30am. RSVP to 281-328-6984 or [chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org](mailto:chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org).

#### WED. JUN. 1 Meet Commissioner Tom Ramsey at Highlands Chamber lunch



With county Precinct re-alignment, Highlands now has two Commissioners. Meet Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey for lunch, at the Highlands Community Center. 11:30am-1:00pm, Wednesday June 1. Fundraiser for the Chamber, \$30 a person, reservations 713-851-5746 or [highlandschamber@verizon.net](mailto:highlandschamber@verizon.net).

#### FRI-SAT. JUN 3/4 Crosby Library Book Sale

Friends of the Crosby Edith Fae Cook Cole Branch Library Book Sale will take place on Friday, June 3, 2022 from 1-6pm and on Saturday June 4, 2022 from 10am-5pm. Children's books, mysteries, romance, cook and craft books are just a sample of book choices. There's so much more and discounts too! Proceeds benefit the library and support summer reading programs. Questions call 832-927-7790"

#### THU. JUNE 23 Spearman Memorial Issue

On the 1 year Anniversary of the loss of our colleague Lewis Spearman, we will publish tributes in his memory. You are invited to submit your thoughts and remembrances for inclusion in this special Memorium. Email [grafikstar@aol.com](mailto:grafikstar@aol.com).

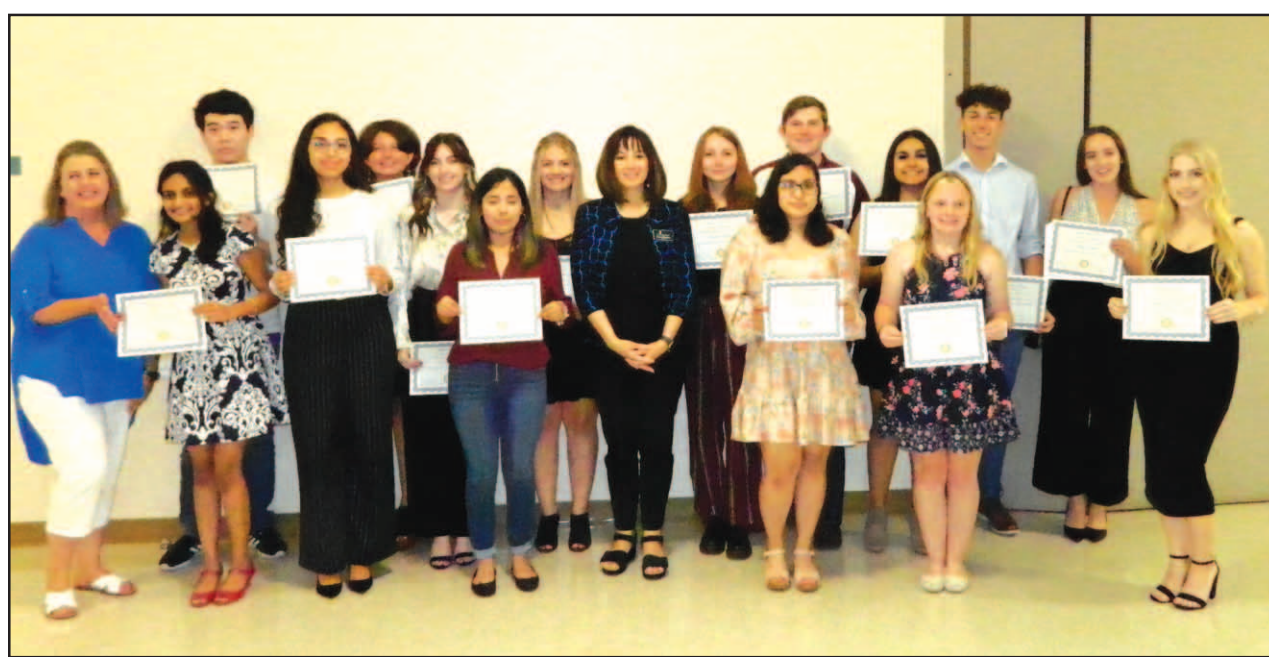
## Rotary awards \$32,000 in Scholarships 18 students from area schools

HIGHLANDS – The Rotary Club held their annual Scholarship Banquet last Monday night, May 9th, and awarded 18 scholarships totalling \$32,000.

The venue of the Highlands Community Center was festive and full with scholarship recipients, family and friends, and Rotarians and their families.

The featured keynote speaker was Lee College president Dr. Lynda Villanueva, who spoke about how she developed a passion for learning, with the help of mentors and teachers that believed in her ability to "be more than I could be." She counseled the scholarship recipients to find a mentor that believes in them and challenges them to succeed. And then give back in turn, leading others.

The scholarships are a result of the funds raised primarily at the club's Annual Chili Feast in February. At this event, a new vehicle is raffled off to a \$100 ticket holder, along



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AT LAST WEEK'S AWARDS BANQUET. AT CENTER IS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER, DR. LYNDA VALLENUEVA, PRESIDENT OF LEE COLLEGE, AND AT LEFT IS GAYLYNN MILLIORN, CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE AND EMCEE FOR THE EVENING.

with 13 other prizes, and the net proceeds are used for the scholarships and other community projects.

Over the years, these projects have included supporting such groups as the Bay Area Homeless, Bay-

town Youth Fair, Bras for the Cause, Cody Stephens Foundation, Crosby Fair & Rodeo, Highlands Food Pantry, Harris County Stratford Library, Harris County Seniors program, Highlands Horizons Miss

Highlands Pageant, Highlands Little League, Highlands Volunteer Fire Department, Hurricane Relief, Methodist Church, Northshore Rotary, Partners in Education, Share Your Christmas, Stratford

Library Summer Reading Program, Community Tree Lighting ceremony, Wreaths Across America,

*Continued. See Rotary Scholarships, Page 7*

## Run-off Election May 24, Early voting this week

Texas voters get another opportunity to cast ballots starting May 16 in primary runoff elections slated for both Republican and Democratic candidates. The election is May 24, with early voting running until May 20. Statewide runoff races are slated for attorney general and land commissioner in both parties, lieutenant governor and comptroller in the Democratic race, and railroad commissioner on the Republican side of the ticket.

More information can be found about particular races at [harrisvotes.com](http://harrisvotes.com). Voters who cast ballots in one party's primary cannot vote in the other party's runoff election. However, voters who did not cast ballots in the primary can vote in either party's runoff.

Early voting hours are Mon-Fri, 7am to 7pm, and the same on Tuesday, May 24 Election Day. Voting locations in this area include:

- Crosby Community Center
- JD Walker Community Center
- St. John's Methodist Church, Baytown

*Continued. See Run-off Election, Page 7*

## HARRIS COUNTY

# New VIPER program to reduce crime

### VIPER VIOLENT FELONY WARRANT TASK FORCE

Harris County, TX — TUESDAY, May 10, Harris County Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia was joined by County Judge Lina Hidalgo, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, and Pct. 6 Constable Silvia R. Trevino announced VIPER - a new violent crime



Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, along with the County Commissioners and Judge Hidalgo, announce the new VIPER program.

warrants task force approved by Commissioners Court. The warrant roundup initiative aims to reduce the number of violent offenders on the loose in Harris County. After being considered by Commissioners Court, VIPER passed unanimously with a 4-0 vote.

There are more than 50,000 people in Harris County who are wanted by police, including more than 700 people who are wanted for murder. The Harris County Commissioners Court passed the creation of a new task force that will be aimed at tracking down and arresting the most violent offend-

ers.

The Harris County Violence Persons Task Force, or VIPER, consists of deputies from both the sheriff's and constables' offices. VIPER will add much-needed staff, whose purpose will be to track down and arrest the most violent offenders in Harris County. The task

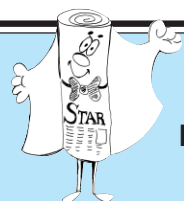
*Continued. See VIPER crime reduction, page 2*



## Highlands Water Tower gets a fresh new look

The Highlands water district has just completed a renovation and repainting of their water tank on Julie Lane, and added a sign for the Highlands Jr. School teams.

Water Company director Mark Taylor said the repairs took six months, and cost about \$800,000 but will last at least 20 years due to new types of paint. Goose Creek CISD donated the signage to complete the new look, and raise the pride of the community. The 750,000 gallon tank was built in 1983, and repainted several times since.



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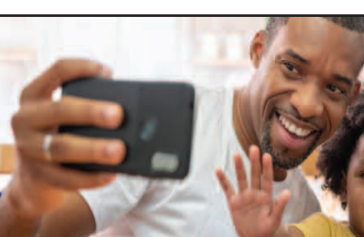
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# GOOSE CREEK NEWS

## Green Makes an Impact in its First Year

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey

Edward Franklin “E.F.” Green Junior School opened its doors on August 18, 2022. The campus, named after the first Black deputy superintendent in Goose Creek CISD, is led by principal Earnest Brooks. In its first year, the campus has created several programs and groups designed to elevate its students; both personally and academically.

One of those groups is the Grace. Excellence. Maturity and Style group; better known as the GEMS. “The all-girls group was created because the campus saw the opportunity for its female students to better themselves and others around them,” said Yolanda ShawGranger, seventh grade ELA teacher, and GEMS sponsor. The mission, according to Brooks, is “To build self-esteem, pride, and social awareness through education, exposure and motivation.”

The group held several events during the spring term, including an induction ceremony, sweetheart dance, as well as met with several guest speakers. The GEMS also visited UTSA, participated in community service, and served as a pep-squad in the stands for athletic games.



GEMS members read the group’s pledge during their induction ceremony.



GEMS members pose with Coach Eva Bradford of Highlands Junior School and former Lee High School coach and UT Women’s Athletics Hall of Honor recipient, Retha Swindell. The trailblazers spoke to the group about making good choices and blazing their own paths.



GEMS 2021-2022 group photo with sponsors

## CoSN’s Trusted Learning Environment Seal Awarded to Goose Creek CISD for its Commitment to Protecting Student Data Privacy

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) awarded the Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) Seal to Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District (GCCISD) on May 12<sup>th</sup>, making it the fifth school system in Texas to receive the TLE Seal. The TLE Seal is a prestigious national distinction that school districts earn for demonstrating a commitment to protecting student data through modern, rigorous policies and practices.

Gary Lackey, Cybersecurity Specialist at GCCISD, said, “Goose Creek CISD is extremely excited to achieve the distinctive TLE Seal for our focus on student data privacy and security. Data privacy is a critical priority for GCCISD – so much so, it is part of the district’s Strategic Plan. The use of technology is continually increasing and we want our students and families to know that GCCISD is taking proactive measures to help secure and protect their student data.

The TLE framework gave GCCISD the guidance it needed to redefine and strengthen its data privacy practices, professional development, and curriculum. We are very thankful to CoSN for

developing the TLE Seal Program and all the program resources. We are also appreciative of Texas Education Technology Leaders (TETL) for developing additional resources and facilitating TLE cohort study groups. GCCISD was able to work with other districts to discuss the topics and share best practices in an effort to strengthen each other’s data privacy programs. We are truly grateful for everyone’s help and guidance.”

*Goose Creek CISD Superintendent Randal O’Brien further emphasized,* “School districts across the nation work hard to ensure the safety and security of students and staff each day. As superintendent of Goose Creek CISD, I believe it is imperative to implement measures that promote best practices for technology integration and management in our schools. Indeed, technology has provided resources and tools to help improve student achievement. I am proud of Matt Flood, our Chief Technology Officer, and his team of professionals as they continue to strive for excellence by strengthening our district culture as it relates to cybersecurity and data management responsibilities.”

## Rotary Club of Baytown Awards scholarships to GCCISD Students

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey

Rotary Club of Baytown awarded six scholarships to four Impact Early College High School students.

Kayla Cabellero earned the First Generation scholarship. She has been a member of Interact Club for three years and has 298 hours of community service. She earned her associate’s degree from Lee College and will attend the University of Houston in the fall.

Greg Ordonez and Pablo Barron earned the Bob Kalbitz scholarship. Ordonez has been in Interact for four years and has 183 hours of community service. He earned his associate’s degree from Lee College and will attend Texas State University in the fall. Barron has been in Interact for four years and has 148 community service hours and earned his associate’s degree from Lee College.

Genesis Lopez-Castro earned the Charles White scholarship. She has been in Interact for four years and has 205 community service hours. She earned her associate’s from Lee College and will attend Texas A&M University in the fall.

Madisyn Allen from Goose Creek Memorial High School and Lindsey Fox from Baytown Lee High School also received scholarships.



Dr. Demetrius McCall, GCCISD Deputy Superintendent for Administrative Services; Adrienne Schoppe, Impact teacher, and Interact sponsor for Impact; Laura Reyes, IMPACT ECHS principal; Anna Espinoza, Coordinator for Counseling and College & Career Readiness; and Dr. Shannon Ramirez, CTE Specialist for Business/Arts & AV Tech pose with the 2022 Baytown Rotary scholarship winners.

## Baytown Sterling’s Cameron Chin Caps High School Career with Gold

Feature by Vype Magazine

Cameron Chin poured everything he had into one last race. It would be the last time he represented Baytown Sterling. It was the final chapter of his high school career, and all his hard work came down to 200 meters. Chin kicked into another gear, chasing down Brenham’s Eric Hemphill - the favorite coming into the 2022 UIL State Track & Field Meet - and started gaining ground. He passed him with 100 meters to go and didn’t let up.

“It was just hold on for dear life because I know he’s coming,” Chin said with a smile.

Chin eventually pulled away from Hemphill and the rest of the field to cross the finish line at 47.05, capturing the Class 5A 400-meter State Championship in thrilling fashion.

“Honestly, I never thought I’d be able to make it here,” Chin said. “I just trucked along and kept pushing. I just always remembered it just takes one step. “I always told myself whether I came first or last that this was going to be everything for me.”

The future Lamar University Cardinal had never been to the UIL State Track & Field Meet. Walking into Mike A. Myers Stadium in front of packed stands can be “pretty nerve-racking” but Chin wasn’t fazed.

“I have a really good mental state to always look forward and keep pushing,” Chin said. That mentality led Chin to become the first runner from Baytown Sterling to win an individual medal at the UIL State Track & Field Meet since 2007. “It was to show everybody what Baytown Sterling is about,” Chin said. “Show everybody that anything is possible from anywhere.” The support system around Chin is a rock solid one.

The Baytown Sterling senior gets the support he needs from his mom, Baytown Sterling head track man Coach McDowell, his teammate Chandler Beck and God. As he crossed the line on Friday night with the stadium roaring, Chin thought about his late grandmother Nelda Ruth Barnaba - she was the final support piece in this win. “I thought my grandmother was really holding me up from heaven because lord knows I needed it,” Chin said. “That final 100 meters was everything I had.”

As Chin walks off into the sunset of his high school career and prepares for his collegiate career, the first thing he is ready to do is get home to enjoy some of his mom’s gumbo.



STATE TRACK: Baytown Sterling’s Cameron Chin caps high school career with gold (Copyright (c) 2022 VYPE - All rights reserved)

The TLE Seal serves as a critical privacy framework for school systems of all sizes across the country working to protect their students’ information. Earning the TLE Seal requires that school systems take measurable steps to ensure strong data privacy practices in the following areas: “Congratulations to Goose Creek CISD for their leadership in prioritizing protection of student privacy and building trust with parents and other community members. We are excited about the continued growth of the TLE Seal Program across the country, and applaud the work of the Texas Education Technology Leaders in collaborating with CoSN and their membership to support Texas districts working to achieve the distinction,” said Keith Krueger, CEO of CoSN.

Goose Creek CISD joins a select group of school districts in small, large, urban and rural communities that have earned the Seal. As a recipient, Goose Creek CISD has committed to ongoing improvement of their student data privacy practices. To maintain their status as a TLE Seal recipient, Goose Creek CISD will be required to demonstrate that improvement through a re-application process every two years.



# Barbers Hill Dayton Press

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

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THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

## ON THE HILL

### FOOD PANTRY OPEN

West Chambers  
County  
Food Pantry  
OPEN  
Wednesdays  
9am - 11am  
a ministry of First  
United  
Methodist  
Church at 10629  
Eagle Drive

### Jones Library Summer Reading Program Art Contest

SUBMISSIONS  
ACCEPTED  
JUNE 1 - JULY  
Patrons age 13 and up  
are invited to participate  
in this year's Summer  
Reading Program Art  
Contest. The art must fit  
the theme: "Oceans of  
Possibilities. Any and all  
art mediums may be  
entered.  
Pieces may be  
submitted in person at  
the Jones Public Library.  
For more information  
about the contest,  
please call 936-258-7060  
or email us at  
jonespubliclibrary@daytontx.org.

### Mitchell Fellows to Graduate from Utah State University

BAYTOWN —  
Mitchell Fellows (from  
77520) is a candidate  
to graduate from Utah  
State University with a  
Master of Arts in  
History. Fellows is  
eligible to earn a  
degree from Utah  
State University and is  
among the 6,588  
students eligible to  
receive degrees and  
certificates from  
USU's statewide  
campuses or USU  
Online. The 2022  
graduating class  
includes graduates  
from summer and fall  
2021 and spring 2022  
semesters.  
USU Statewide  
campuses have held  
graduation  
ceremonies through  
the past several  
weeks. The USU main  
campus ceremonies  
will be held May 5 in  
Logan.  
USU's graduation  
ceremonies will be  
livestreamed via  
aggiecast.usu.edu. For  
more information on  
USU's  
commencement  
ceremonies, visit  
www.usu.edu/  
commencement.

## Grand Parkway final link opens May 19

Connects US 59 in New Caney to I-10 in Baytown

Construction of the Grand Parkway/SH 99 – a major traffic artery for the Greater Houston Area – will wrap up next week with the opening of the final segments of the project, which will connect US 59 in New Caney to I-10 in Baytown. The official date to open is Thursday, May 19.

Motorists traveling on the Grand Parkway can enjoy a two-day grace period before tolls begin at midnight on Saturday, May 21.

In Liberty County, the Grand Parkway can be accessed along US 90 and FM 1960 west of Dayton, and in the Colony Ridge communities south of Plum Grove.

The segments from New Caney, through Dayton, and to Baytown represent 52.8 miles of the 184-mile



Grand Parkway loop that traverses seven counties in the Greater Houston Area. The Grand Parkway is the third circumferential highway around the Houston metro area – the others being the 610 Loop and Beltway 8.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, the Grand Parkway is the longest highway loop in the entire United

States. The first section – Segment D in Fort Bend County – opened in 1994.

While the tollway is expected to spur residential and commercial growth along its path, its purpose is to provide yet another means of traveling around Houston metro area. The Texas Department of Transportation spent \$855 million on the Grand Parkway construction.

TxDOT also has other important traffic mobility projects for Liberty County wrapping up in May. Traffic signals have been installed on FM 2025 at the overpass of US 59 in Cleveland. These will be functional and operational by the end of the month.

Motorists on FM 787 will be relieved to know that TxDOT plans to have both lanes of travel open

on the Trinity River Bridge near Romayor at the end of the month.

“The bridge structure work is complete and crews are currently working on pavement to the east of the bridge,” said Sarah Dupre, a TxDOT spokesperson.

FM 787 at the river bridge has been down to one lane since May 2019 due to major erosion on the eastern approach of the bridge. The erosion was caused by major hurricanes and floods, and due to the Trinity River slowly changing its course.

The Trinity River bridge on FM 787 was built in 1976 and lengthened in 2003. Some repairs were made in 2018, but subsequent storm events pushed the river to flood stage, resulting in even more damage.

## Houston Methodist Hospital Baytown

## Could it Be GALLSTONES?

Gallstones — crystalline structures that vary in size from a grain of sand to a golf ball — generally cause no symptoms. But, if you've experienced nausea, vomiting and pain on the right side of your abdomen, it could be a gallbladder attack. Your gallbladder is a small pear-shaped organ located under the liver. It stores bile, a substance made by the liver that helps the body digest fat.

WHAT CAUSES GALLSTONES? “Gallstones may form if digestive fluids, or bile, contain too much cholesterol or too much bilirubin and harden, or when the gallbladder doesn't empty bile properly or often

enough,” explained Dr. Yassir Ashraf, a gastroenterologist-hepatology specialist with Houston Methodist Gastroenterology Associates at Baytown. In many cases, gallstones can remain in the gallbladder undetected. You might learn you have gallstones during an unrelated imaging test. If your gallstones aren't causing any symptoms, your doctor may recommend leaving them alone.

WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT Problems occur when a stone travels from the gallbladder to a nearby bile duct. A stone that blocks the duct can trigger an attack. “A gallbladder attack most likely occurs in the evening after eating a



DR. YASSIR ASHRAF

heavy meal and can continue several hours,” Ashraf added. It's important to contact your health care provider once you start having symptoms to avoid complications. You may be referred to a gastroenterologist or surgeon to treat your condition.

**Surgery** to remove the gallbladder, called cholecystectomy, is one of the most common procedures to treat gallstones. Fortunately, people can live normally without their gallbladder.

Surgeons perform two types of cholecystectomy: **Laparoscopic cholecystectomy** is a minimally invasive procedure that requires only one or several small incisions in the abdomen to remove

the gallbladder. Surgeons may perform robotic-assisted surgery using the da Vinci® Surgical System. “These instruments give the surgeon greater control and precision. They also offer an enhanced 3D view inside the body,” Ashraf noted. “A patient can often go home the same day.”

**Open cholecystectomy** is performed using one large incision. Your surgeon will use this approach if your gallbladder is extremely irritated, infected or damaged from previous operations. You may need to stay in the hospital for several days or up to a week.

**Nonsurgical treatments** are only used in situations when surgery is not an option. These include:

Oral medications to dissolve certain types of gallstones.

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) uses X-rays and a thin, tube-like device, called an endoscope, to locate and remove a stone that's stuck in a bile

duct.

Lithotripsy, which uses shock waves to break up stones.

**PREVENT GALLSTONES** Making the following lifestyle changes can help you avoid gallstones:

Eat a healthy diet consisting of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and healthy fats, such as olive oil.

Pass up refined grains, such as white bread, foods that are high in sugar and unhealthy fats, such as cholesterol and transfat, which are often found in prepared foods.

Lose weight slowly if you are overweight or obese. Aim for 1 or 2 pounds a week. Losing weight too quickly can lead to gallstones.

Get regular physical activity. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, like brisk walking or bike riding, on most days of the week.

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### HELP WANTED

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# STARLITE

By Gil Hoffman, Publisher

## Pages from an editor's notebook

With the COVID-19 Pandemic under control due to vaccinations and social distancing, many activities that were curtailed or cancelled last year have now returned to in-person events.

A few of these activities that kept our staff busy this past week are reviewed here. We welcome your event information too, please let us know what you are doing.

**Aldine Education Foundation Scholarships**

The AEF board and administration of AISD were happy to be able to come together last week and award scholarships to 200 graduating students, whose pictures are on page 1. Here is a look at the AEF folks:



**Highlands Rotary awards 18 scholarships**

Over in Highlands, the Rotary Club held their annual Scholarship Awards. They gave 18 students a total of \$32,000. The keynote speaker was Lee College president Dr. Lynda Villanueva, seen center in the photo:



**North Shore Rotary Fish Fry a huge success**

In North Shore, the annual Rotary Catfish Fry and Crawfish Boil, with its auctions and car raffle, had a great turnout for this benefit:



**Meet and Greet a run-off candidate Mealer**

Alexandra Mealer, one of two run-off Republican candidates for Harris County judge, was at Teapot Depot in Highlands Saturday:

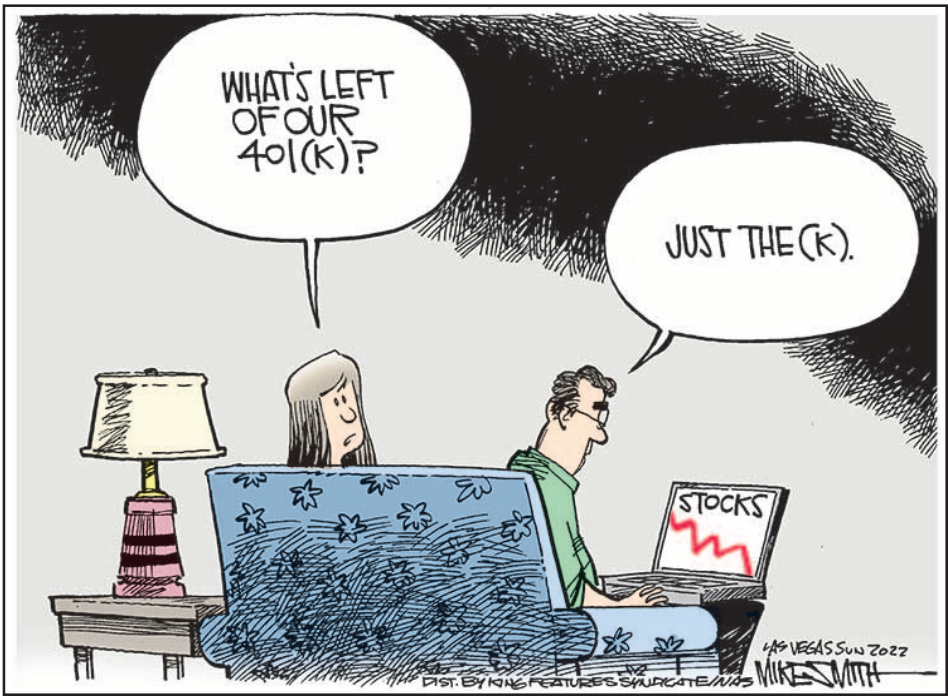



**Country Music at the Buckshot Jamboree**

To close out a busy week, a little Country Music was just the ticket. Buckshot Jamboree, with Buck and Shirley Sloan, plays every Saturday night at 7414 Hartman, just off old Beaumont Highway in Channelview. Below, Shirley accompanies Buck in a number with Danielle Kudelka as the vocalist:



That pretty much rounded out a busy week and weekend, but with an election coming up, and graduation for all nine school districts that we cover, it promises not to slow down until summer. I guess I'll need a few more pages in my notebook.





# STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



## Voters Back Property Tax Amendments

Texas voters overwhelmingly approved two proposed amendments on Saturday that will provide property tax relief to homeowners. According to the Austin American-Statesman, nearly 85% of voters supported Proposition 2, which raises the homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$40,000—starting this year. That will save the average homeowner about \$175 in school property taxes.

Another proposition that easily passed corrects an oversight to a 2019 bill passed by the Legislature, which didn't apply to homeowners who are disabled or 65 and older, because their school taxes were already frozen. The state will reimburse school districts for tax funding lost by both propositions, with the Legislative Budget Board anticipating the amount at more than a half-billion dollars, according to the Statesman. Meanwhile, Texas voters get another opportunity to cast ballots starting May 16 in primary runoff elections slated for both Republican and Democratic candidates. The election is May 24, with early voting running until May 20. Statewide runoff races are slated for attorney general and land commissioner in both parties, lieutenant governor and comptroller in the Democratic race, and railroad commissioner on the Republican side of the ticket.

More information can be found about particular races at [votetexas.gov](http://votetexas.gov). Voters who cast ballots in one party's primary cannot vote in the other party's runoff election. However, voters who did not cast ballots in the primary can vote in either party's runoff.

**FIRST STATE CASE OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WILD BIRD CONFIRMED**

A great horned owl at a



rehabilitation facility in Wichita County was confirmed to have the virus by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories, which notified the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The potentially fatal HAI is highly contagious and transmits easily among wild and domestic bird species. It has been found in 38 states, and its symptoms include diarrhea, incoordination, lethargy, coughing and sneezing.

TPWD recommends enhanced biosecurity measures at labs that deal with wild or domestic birds, including quarantining birds showing symptoms of HPAI. While the risk of transmission to humans from birds is low, TPWD recommends taking basic precautions if contact with birds cannot be avoided, such as wearing gloves and face masks.

**SBA LOANS AVAILABLE FOR EASTLAND COMPLEX FIRE VICTIMS**

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved the state's request for a disaster declaration in communities affected by the recent Eastland Complex Fire, which means low-interest loans are available for qualified homeowners, renters, and businesses in affected communities. Counties included are

Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Erath, Palo Pinto, Shackelford, and Stephens.

"Thank you to the U.S. Small Business Administration for providing this much-needed financial assistance to communities affected by the Eastland Complex Fire," Gov. Greg Abbott said.

Applicants can apply online or receive additional disaster assistance information at [disasterloanassistance.sba.gov](http://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov).

The potential for more wildfires continues, especially in the Texas Panhandle and the Trans Pecos, including areas near Canadian, Amarillo, Childress, Lubbock, Abilene, Big Spring, Midland and Alpine, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. In the first week of May, the service responded to 26 requests for assistance on wildfires that burned more than 18,000 acres across the state. Burn bans are in effect in 132 Texas counties.

**LOOK TWICE FOR MOTORCYCLES**

A motorcycle safety and public awareness campaign is underway, spearheaded by the Texas Department of Public Transportation. It urges motorists to look twice for motorcycles, especially at intersections—the most common collision site. Last year, 519 riders were killed and 2,318 were seriously injured in crashes in Texas. More than half of the fatalities result from collisions with other vehicles. "Drivers simply don't see the motorcycle or misjudge its distance and speed."

The small size of motorcycles can make them appear farther away when they're actually closer. The combination of congested roadways, distracted driving and the difficulty of seeing motorcycles in traffic has led to many preventable fatalities each year," a T+DOT news release said.

**COVID-19 CASES TICK UP SLIGHTLY IN STATE**

The number of COVID-19 cases in Texas rose slightly in the past week to 21,105, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at John Hopkins University, with 68 new deaths reported. The number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations in the state was essentially unchanged, with 783 reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The number of Texans who are fully vaccinated now stands at 17.615 million, or 60.4 percent of the state's population, while 6.783 million have received a booster shot, according to DSHS.



# THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

## Friends like Angel

This time of year still hits me hard.

It is the anniversary of the death of my best girlfriend, Angel, who died too young and left an Angel-shaped hole in my life.

"Can it be six years?" I ask my husband, Peter, in disbelief. Angel died at 50 years old, six years ago.

In the years since she died, I have tried to fill the spot she occupied without success. I expect new friends to be like Angel, and this is, of course, unfair. I expect they will be willing to listen to whatever mad idea has entered my head at any hour of the day. I expect them to type as fast as they speak and keep up three conversations at once—usually with people on different sides of the globe.

While I considered Angel my best girlfriend, I had no illusions that she felt the same about me. Angel was rich in friends. There was no limit to her ability to support and encourage and cajole and occasionally berate her legions of friends into being more hopeful and less gloomy and better able to face the very particular challenges of their lives. Angel floated into and over so many lives. I was just lucky to be one of them.

Of course, she was no angel.

I remember her boyfriend, Alain, discovering she had thawed out all the baguettes he had been saving in the freezer. He was enraged and at a loss for words.

"She is not perfect!" he finally exploded.

This was not news to anyone who knew her. We did not seek her out because she was perfect. We sought her out because she was so unbelievably real.

There was no experience she would dismiss out of hand, no passion she did not think was worth exploring, no body of knowledge she felt was beyond her depth. Art and cooking and politics and string theory and Disney movies and bad '80s rock 'n' roll and fashion and trashy novels and whatever else the person she happened to be talking to was interested in—this is what Angel was interested in. She tried everything. She was the first to admit she was wrong—and she frequently was. But it never discouraged her from experiencing another thing, learning a bit more.

Today, I felt a little wicked.

I spoke the truth to a friend. I told him he had hurt me and that I didn't want to put up with his nonsense anymore. It's the sort of thing I don't often do. Usually, I tell myself how lucky I am and how much easier things are for me than for some people and how I should just forget about the slight. This time I did not. I felt a little guilty, I confess.

And I heard Angel laughing.

Angel would chide me for being so anxious, so careful, so worried about things—things that were never worth worrying about in the long run. She was all about speaking her truth. She was all about getting her needs met without shame or embarrassment. She has been dead for six years, and she is still teaching me. She was bigger and freer and more lively than any person I've known, which is why it is so hard to accept that she is no longer alive.

I don't need another friend like Angel, because there are no other friends like Angel. Besides, the goal was never to replicate her. The goal was to try—in my cautious, nervous, high-strung way—to become a bit more like her.

Till next time, Carrie

For photos from the column and other info visit: [CarrieClasson.com](http://CarrieClasson.com).

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Viper Crime Reduction program,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

force will be made up of two teams, each team will consist of 4 deputy constables and 4 deputy sheriffs.

“VIPER will help ensure public safety that must be addressed,” Commissioner Adrian Garcia said. “Putting a stop to the culture of not feeling there are any consequences for criminal activity.”

“This historic investment in VIPER not only aims to address the warrant backlog of violent cases, for Harris County, it is a first-of-its-kind partnership between all local county law enforcement – the sheriff and constables. Our message to people who are accused of violent crime and have warrants issued for their arrest: you have a pair of handcuffs on, and you don’t even know it because VIPER is upon you.”

-Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia

“The simple truth is that justice delayed is justice denied. Denied for those who need to present themselves to authorities and denied for crime victims awaiting justice. When dangerous criminals aren’t apprehended quickly, it creates a sense that the government does not do its part in addressing serious crimes, making victims feel ignored and perpetrators empowered. That’s why this specific initiative is so important.”

-Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

“50,000 active warrants in our community – 4,800 of those are for aggravated felonies. Almost 1,000 are for bond revocations. We need to make sure we are working together because every community and every precinct in Harris County has violent offenders that have absconded. We want them to know we are going to be out there looking for them.”

-Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez

Russia may want to trade Griner for criminal in U.S. custody

WASHINGTON, DC – American officials learned last week that Brittney Griner, a professional women’s basketball star player, will be detained for another month in Russian custody, and that her pre-trial hearing had been delayed until then.

Griner is well known in Houston and Aldine, where she was a star center for the girl’s basketball team at Nimitz High School. She currently plays for the Phoenix, and was in Russia for the off-season playing pro ball there.

Griner was detained at a Russian airport in February, and charged with having illegal drugs in her luggage. Since then, U.S. officials have been working to get her release, with little progress.

For the first time since Brittney Griner’s arrest almost three months ago, Russia appears to have publicly signaled its asking price for her safe return, if multiple reports by Russian state media are to be believed.

Russia is looking to exchange the WNBA star in a prisoner swap for notorious convicted arms trafficker Viktor Bout, several state-owned Russian news outlets reported last Friday, citing unnamed government sources.

Bout, whose exploits earned him the nickname the “Merchant of Death,” flooded fierce conflicts in Africa and the Middle East with weapons, U.S. authorities say. He was arrested during a sting operation in Thailand in 2008, extradited to the U.S. and sentenced to 25 years for conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens, delivery of anti-aircraft missiles and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

After Bout’s arrest, the U.S. alleged that his Russian allies tried to block his extradition from Thailand to America by bribing key witnesses to give false testimony. Since his 2012 conviction, Bout has been at the top of Russia’s prisoner exchange wish list and has been linked repeatedly in the Russian state media with potential swaps involving jailed Americans that haven’t come to fruition.

WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner leaves a courtroom after a hearing, in Khimki just outside Moscow, Russia, Friday, May 13, 2022. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was detained at the Moscow airport in February after vape cartridges containing oil derived from cannabis were allegedly found in her luggage, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner leaves a courtroom after a hearing, in Khimki just outside Moscow on Friday. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was detained at the Moscow airport in February after vape cartridges containing oil derived from cannabis were allegedly found in her luggage, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

U.S. ambassador to Russia John Sullivan visited Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on Wednesday, but the State Department did not disclose what they discussed. A spokesperson for the State Department declined comment to Yahoo

Sports on Friday when asked if negotiations for Griner’s release were underway and if Russia was seeking a trade for Bout.

“Due to operational and privacy concerns, we are unable to discuss specific details,” the spokesperson said.

While one Russian state media report quoted an unnamed source who described a potential Griner-for-Bout exchange as “likely,” experts in Russian diplomacy viewed that skeptically. William Pomeranz, a professor of Russian law and the acting director of the Kennan Institute, told Yahoo Sports that he interprets the reports as a signal that “Russia really wants to make that trade” but cautioned that they give no indication of the U.S.’s willingness.

“This is Russia saying, ‘Wouldn’t this be a great idea?’” Pomeranz said. “This isn’t the U.S. saying they’re interested. We’ve had other opportunities to get rid of Viktor Bout in the past and we haven’t done it.”

Griner has been behind bars since Feb. 17 when she flew into a Moscow airport and Russian customs officials allegedly found vape cartridges containing hashish oil in her luggage. She is under investigation for the large-scale transportation of drugs and faces up to 10 years in a Russian prison if convicted.

Griner appeared at a hearing in a courtroom outside Moscow on Friday and had her pre-trial detention extended by a month. Photos taken at the hearing show Griner leaving the courtroom handcuffed, the hood of an orange sweatshirt pulled

over her head and her signature dreadlocks peeking out.

Last month, the U.S. and Russia completed a prisoner swap despite deteriorating relations between the two nations. Trevor Reed, the former Marine who the U.S. says was wrongfully detained in Russia for almost three years, came home in exchange for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot convicted of drug trafficking.

The release of Reed leaves at least two Americans in Russia who the U.S. classifies as wrongfully detained: Griner and Paul Whelan, another former Marine sentenced to 16 years on spying charges. Their cases are now in the hands of the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, which focuses on negotiating the release of American hostages and others deemed to be wrongfully detained in foreign countries.

A 1-for-1 exchange for Griner could be especially unpalatable for the U.S. if Russia insists on Bout in return. Bout is a far more notorious figure than Yaroshenko, having inspired Nicolas Cage’s character in the 2005 movie “Lord of War.” Bout’s arms trafficking history also makes the allegations against Griner appear minimal by comparison.

Former top Pentagon official Evelyn Farkas hopes the Biden administration explores all options to get Griner and Whelan home, but she points out there is a downside to prisoner exchanges.

“This is the kind of situation that we want to avoid,” said Farkas, the executive director of the McCain Institute, “because the Russians will continue to seize Americans as trade bait if we agree to such swaps.”



Brittney Griner is seen on Russian TV leaving a hearing room last week, where she learned that her detention and pre-trial hearing will be extended another month. Griner, in handcuffs, did not speak to the media. She was accompanied by her Russian lawyer, but no U.S. officials have been allowed to see her except once for a welfare check.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Attention Non-Profit Private Schools, Home Schoolers  
Non-profit private schools and homeschoolers who legally qualify as non-profit (currently hold a 501-C3 certificate) are invited to meet with a representative from Channelview Independent School District to learn more about federally funded services available for eligible residents of Channelview ISD. Please contact the district, Dr. Patricia Glaeser (patricia.glaeser@cvisd.org), Director of Federal Programs, no later than Friday, May 27, 2022.  
  
Atención Escuelas Privadas y Educados En Casa  
Escuelas privadas sin fines lucrativos y estudiantes educados en casa, que legalmente califican como una entidad no lucrativa y que tengan un certificado 501-C3, son invitados a una junta con representante de Channelview para aprender más sobre servicios financiados por el gobierno federal que están disponibles para los residentes elegibles en dichos distritos. Por Favor de contactarse con Dr. Patricia Glaeser la coordinadora del Programa Federal de Distrito de Channelview (patricia.glaeser@cvisd.org), a no más tardar el día Viernes, 27 de Mayo del 2022.  
19-2T

LEGAL NOTICE

Attention Private Non-Profit Schools, Home Schoolers, Parents, and Community Members in the Sheldon Independent School District  
  
Private, non-profit schools, who legally qualify as a non-profit (currently hold a 501-C3 certificate), home schoolers, parents, and community members are invited to participate in a meeting with representatives from the Sheldon Independent School District to learn more about federally funded programs and services available for the 2022-2023 school year. The meeting will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2022, from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. If you are interested in participating or have questions, please contact Sheldon ISD at (281) 727-2096.  
  
Atención a las escuelas privadas sin fines de lucro, los educadores en el hogar, los padres y los miembros de la comunidad en el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Sheldon  
  
Los escuelas privadas, sin fines de lucro, que califican legalmente como una organización sin fines de lucro (actualmente tienen un certificado 501-C3), educadores en el hogar, padres y miembros de la comunidad están invitados a participar en una reunión con representantes del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Sheldon para obtener más información sobre los programas y servicios financiados por el gobierno federal disponibles para el año escolar 2022-2023. La reunión se llevará a cabo el jueves 2 de junio de 2022, de 9:00 a 10:00 a.m. Si está interesado en participar o tiene preguntas, comuníquese con Sheldon ISD al (281) 727-2096.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice for Private Nonprofit Schools with students who reside in the Galena Park ISD attendance area.  
Please be advised that Galena Park ISD will hold a Zoom meeting for administrators of all Private Nonprofit Schools that have students who reside in the Galena Park ISD attendance area. Information on program planning, availability, and eligibility criteria of Federal funds and services (Title I, II, III, IV and Special Education programs) will be held on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 9:00 am & 1:00 pm. For additional information about this meeting, please contact Amy Cole at 832-386-1028 or acole@galenaparkisd.com.  
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Rotary awards \$32,000 in Scholarships

18 students from area schools

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Thanksgiving Turkeys for needy families, and Precinct2gether, as well as many other projects.

The club estimates that since it started awarding scholarships, it has given out over \$500,000 in scholarships to college bound students. Awards are from \$1500 to \$2500 per school year.

The Scholarship committee that reviewed the 36 applications consisted of 7 Rotarians, with Dr. Larry White as chair. At the banquet, scholarships were presented by Gaylynn Milliorn and Diana Weaver.

Scholarship Awards this year went to the following:

**From Goose Creek Memorial High School:**

- Madisyn Allen
- Delilah Cancino
- Daniel Li
- Mindy Perez
- Jackie Ponder



Keynote Speaker Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College President



Presenters at the head table, Deleen and Weston Cotten, Dr. Villanueva, Rotary President Jerry Fallin, and Gaylynn Milliorn.

-- Anushka Ranjan  
**From Impact Early College High School:**

- Yaretny Trejo

**From Crosby High School (In Memory of Tony Irwin):**

- Nayla Hernandez
- Lillian Leman

**College Students:**

- Isaiah Cavazos, TAMU
- Samantha Hillier, TAMU
- Tanishqa Kharat, UT
- Joshua Protain, TAMU

Named scholarships are in honor of Highlands Ro-

tarians who contributed to the club and the community, and that have passed away. They are presented by a person who was best friends or family to the Rotarian that is being honored.

This year, the following special named Scholarships were:

**Beverly Culbreath Scholarship,** presented by Johnny Gaeke to Scoutt White of Dayton High School;

**W.L. Herndon DDS Scholarship,** presented to Morgan Forsyth of Sam Houston State University;

**Jay E. Bird Scholarship,** presented by Weston Cotten to Ysabella Argueta of Chinquapin Prep School;

**Chester Stasney Scholarship,** presented by his best friend Johnny Gaeke and his widow Marie Stasney, to Jennifer Staley of Goose Creek Memorial High School; Ches-

ter passed away two years ago, but he was known for his famous Chili recipe that is served annually at the club's Chili Feast. This honor has passed to the presenter, Johnny Gaeke.

**Pat McPhee Scholarship,** presented by his widow Barbara McPhee to Nathan Cavazos of Crosby High School.

The Rotary Club of Highlands, and president Jerry Fallin, say Congratulations to all!

Run-off Election

May 24,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On the Democratic ballot, races of interest include:

Lieutenant Governor, Michelle Beckley vs Mike Collier; Attorney General, Joe Jaworski vs Rochelle Mercedes Garza; Commissioner of the General Land Office, Sandragrace Martinez vs Jay Kleberg; Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Place 2, Steve Duble vs Sonia Lopez.

On the Republican bal-

lot, races of interest include:

Attorney General, Ken Paxton vs George P. Bush; Commissioner of the General Land Office, Tim Westley vs Dawn Buckingham; Railroad Commissioner, Wayne Christian vs Sarah Stogner; Harris County Judge, Alexandra del Moral Mealer vs Vidal Martinez; County Commissioner Pct. 2, Jack Morman vs Jerry Mouton.

Judge Candidate visits Highlands

HIGHLANDS – Alexandra Mealer, candidate in the run-off for Harris County Judge on the Republican ticket, appeared at a "Meet and Greet" reception last Saturday at the Teapot Depot, sponsored by Friends of Alex from the East Side.

Mealer spoke of her background and qualifications. She is a combat veteran, and experienced in corporate finance. Her main issues are more conservative fiscal policy, more law enforcement and criminal justice, and honest and ethical government.

A crowd of about 50 persons, mostly partisan, gave her a warm welcome and asked questions.





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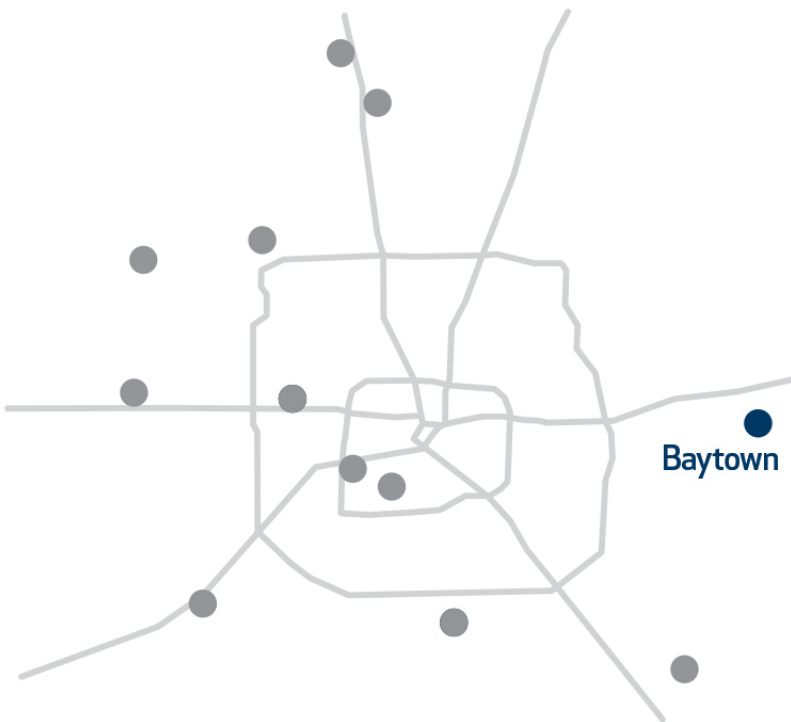
without joint pain



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