



IN THE
STARS

EVENTS

SEPT. 9-10
Crosby Library
Book Sale

Friends of the Crosby Library will hold their 2022 Fall Back to School Book Sale on: Friday, Sept. 9th - 1pm - 6pm. Saturday, Sept 10th - 10am - 5pm.
*****Special*****
Buy 2 Books, get 1 Free!!
Paperback or Hardback books.
Children's books not included.

Books at bargain prices and many in new condition.
Movies and more at great prices!

All proceeds from the Book Sale benefit the Crosby Library.
For more information, call the Library at 281-328-3535 or 832-927-7790.

SEPT. 10, SAT.
Rotary Washer
Tournament

Highlands Rotary Club holds their 15th Annual Washer Board charity tournament on Saturday, Sept. 10 starting at 12:30pm at Charlie's Ice House, 906 N. Main Street, Highlands. The public is welcome, for fun and prizes.

2 person teams must register by 12:30pm, and the cost to play is \$50 per team. Awards include trophies and cash prizes, and bragging rights.

The Tournament is a benefit for Rotary International and Polio Plus, a world-wide initiative to eliminate Polio.

Rotary is also looking for sponsors, both individuals or companies. Call Rotary president Andy Scott for more information, at 713-201-8620.

SEPT. 13, TUE.
Highlands Little
League meeting

Highlands Little League Election of 2022-2023 Board of Directors will be held on Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00pm at the Baytown Boat Club, 1600 Clear Lake Road, Highlands TX 77562.

The board election meeting is open to the public and anyone who lives within the HLL boundaries and wants to help make a difference in the lives of our youth can be elected to serve.

See Notice on Page 5 for proposed HLL Constitution changes that will be voted on at the meeting.

Battleship Texas safely sails to Galveston drydock

\$35 million restoration will take over a year

HOUSTON (Aug. 31, 2022) – The Battleship Texas Foundation announced that the iconic Battleship Texas completed a milestone journey on Wednesday, August 31 from the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site to Galveston. The Battleship Texas, commissioned in 1914, is the only surviving dreadnought to have served in both World War I and World II.

The historic ship will now undergo an extensive, \$35 million repair at Gulf Copper & Manufacturing Corporation's shipyard to fix the hull. The Battleship Texas Foundation selected Gulf Copper's shipyard in October 2021 as the repair location since they recently acquired a floating drydock that is capable of lifting the Battleship Texas



TWO ICONS: Under tow, the iconic Battleship Texas passes under the iconic Harman Bridge on the way to a Galveston drydock for restoration work. More photos p.8

as out of the water. In addition, the location of the yard in Galveston significantly reduced the risks associated with towing the Battleship Texas due to sheltered waters and a short travel distance.

"It's an important piece of history. We feel like we're working for the people of the state of Texas so that they can be proud of their ship," said Tony Gregory, president and CEO of the Battleship Texas Foundation. "We are proud to have played a part in maintaining the integrity of the ship so future generations can continue to learn about her service and history."

The ship closed to the public in August 2019 to

Continued. See Battleship sails, Page 8

Crosby Cougars win OT thriller 27-21

CROSBY – In their second game of the season, the Crosby Cougars delivered an exciting game for their fans, with an OT win of 27-21 against the Fort Bend Marshall Buffaloes from Missouri City.

The Cougars were determined to win after a demoralizing loss last week to CE King of 63-7.

The win was even more remarkable since the Cougars were playing with eight of their varsity team members not participating, according to head coach Jerry Prieto.

The game was tied at the end with a score of 21-21 af-



Cougar running back #14 Levi Fontenot carries the winning TD in overtime.

ter Crosby scored on a touchdown pass from QB #10 Cyrin Myles to #13 Kade Eudy.

Then in the overtime period, running back #14 Levi Fontenot broke through the line and went untouched for the winning touchdown. The six points made the final 27-21. Fontenot's game stats were 20 carried for a total of 93 yards. His longest carry was 39 yards.

QB Myles was 7 for 13 passing with a total of 79 yards and 3 TDs (one rushing).

The next game is Friday night at home against R. L. Lee Ganders.

County announces new crime reduction initiative

\$150 million for "Safe Harris" and VIPER

HARRIS COUNTY – County leaders on Wednesday touted an overall decrease in violent crime across the region and announced the Safe Harris initiative — a four year \$150 million public safety investment focused on further reducing crime in Harris County.

According to Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the county saw a 7% decrease in violent crime since June 2021, with a 4% decrease in homicides. Additionally, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez added that since December 13, his department seized 279 guns, cleared 1,303 warrants, and filed over



Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez (middle) speaks to reporters about the county's Safe Harris initiative on August 17, 2022. At left is County Judge Lina Hidalgo, at rear Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia, and at right Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety Perry Turner.

1,000 charges — a majority of those being felony charges, Gonzalez said.

"We're moving in the right direction," Gonzalez said. "We're taking crime seriously here in Harris County, and we're going to continue to work collaboratively and learn from what's working and what's not working."

The additional money will bolster the county's ongoing public safety investments and help fund the Violent Persons Task Force, or Viper, which will launch next month in Harris County with the aim to "take the most dangerous individuals off

Continued. See SAFE HARRIS, Page 2

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ROTARY NEWS

Jeanne Shipp wins new vehicle in North Shore Rotary Fish Fry Raffle



Jeanne Shipp picks up her new Truck at Community Toyota in Baytown. North Shore Rotarians Steven and Stacey Palko of Palko & Associates sold her the winning ticket. Also present were Roger Elswick of Community Toyota, NS Rotary president Shawn Silman, and NS Rotarian Bill Palko.

North Shore Rotary hosts Multi-Club meeting with District Governor



ABOVE: Rotaiaans from Rotary Clubs in Highlands, North Shore, Baytown, Galena Park/Jacinto City, Humble, and Lake Houston met last Thursday, August 25 in the Monument Room at San Jacinto College North for a social luncheon and a talk by Rotary District 5890 Governor Mindi Snyder.

RIGHT: NS President Ken Wimbley presents flowers to the guest speaker, DG Mindi Snyder.



County announces new crime initiative SAFE HARRIS,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the street,” according to Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia.

“These efforts are part of the effort to address the common threat, which is in the rise of violence,” Garcia said. “This is why more common sense gun laws and measures are needed.”

The county also created the Safe Harris website, which compiles already existing dashboards — including data on Harris County Jail’s population and the county’s criminal court backlog — into one centralized location, along with information about the county’s public safety spending.

“SafeHarris.com is for you, our community, and is designed to give you a full view of the money and programs being de-

veloped and implemented,” said Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety Perrye Turner.

During the briefing, the focus shifted to the county’s short fiscal year \$1.3 billion budget, which focused heavily on public safety.

The Harris County Sheriff’s Office saw a \$123.6 million increase in total funding from from 2019 to 2021, which funded additional overtime and increased salaries for county law enforcement, according to the Safe Harris website.

Judge Hidalgo added that the budget for the Harris County DA’s Office has increased by \$12.7 million from 2019 to 2021 and adamantly dismissed accusations of defunding law enforce-

ment — claims that Hidalgo said were purposefully perpetuated by political opponents during an election year.

“We have increased the funding for every single law enforcement agency, so it is a lie,” she said. “You are hurting our law enforcement and you are hurting our democracy when you’re willing to spread lies.”

Harris County Commissioners Court previously allocated millions to several programs aimed at reducing crime and increasing community safety, including a controversial “ShotSpotter” gunshot detection pilot program in Aldine and two public safety programs meant to decrease reliance on police intervention.

Crosby Cougars win OT Thriller 27-21,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



On a pass from QB #10 Cyrin Myles, the Cougar’s Kade Eudy pulls it in for a TD that ties the game at 21-21, which is how the regulation period ended, and forced an overtime.

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CHAMBER NEWS

Highlands/Lynchburg Chamber Luncheon Thursday, September 8

Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce
FEATURED SPEAKER:
Randy Casey, State Farm Insurance Agent
September 8, 2022

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RSVP HERE
Join us Thursday, September 8th, for a special lunch at the Highlands Community center on HighlandsWoods Drive. Randy Casey will give updates on the current projects for the chamber in the community and discuss insurance policies and issues. Enjoy Chef John’s Shepherd’s pie and get prepared for the



Annual Jamboree this October! Please RSVP for seating to HighlandsChamber@verizon.net. Please call 713-851-5746 for more information.

COMING!!
October 1, 2022
Highlands Annual Jamboree Parade and Fair

Crosby/Huffman Chamber Luncheon Thursday, September 15 at Crosby Brethren

September Monthly Luncheon at Crosby Brethren Church, THURSDAY! September 15th! PLEASE RSVP!

Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce
September Monthly Luncheon at Crosby Brethren

“Let’s Talk Turkey”

Join us for our September Monthly Member Luncheon! The luncheon will take place on Thursday, September 15th at Crosby Brethren Church, located at 5202 First St in Crosby. Lunch will begin at 11:30am and the price of the luncheon is \$20.00.

Speaker
Chef Pat Mayberry
Southern Elegance Catering!

He is going to “Talk Turkey” and give us carving and cooking techniques along with recipes for sides and much more... Our luncheon will be catered by In Joy Personal Chef Services!!

Please RSVP by September 13th. You can call 281-328-6984, email chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org to register also.

Crosby-Huffman Chamber Of Commerce

PUBLIC NOTICE

Highlands Little League
Will be holding elections for their
2022-2023 Board of Directors
at 7:00pm on Tuesday, September 13, 2022
at the Baytown Boat Club
1600 Clear Lake Rd, Highlands, TX 77562

The board election meeting is open to the public and anyone who lives within the HLL boundaries and wants to help make a difference in the lives of our youth can be elected to serve.

The following proposed HLL Constitution changes will also be voted on at this meeting:

Article V – General Membership Meetings: Section 5
Annual Meeting: Subsection 7:q – Changing name of ‘Auxiliary Coordinator’ to ‘Event Coordinator’ (Replacing in this section)

Article VI – Board of Directors: Section 3
Election Qualifications/Criteria: Changing name of ‘Auxiliary Coordinator’ to ‘Event Coordinator’ (Replacing in this section)

Article VI – Board of Directors: Section 7
Roles & Responsibilities: Changing name of ‘Auxiliary Coordinator’ to ‘Event Coordinator’ (Replacing in this section)

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and Hollaway Park in
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For more information on the full range of services offered at Houston Methodist Baytown and to schedule an appointment, visit houstonmethodist.org/baytown or call 281-420-8600.

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OPINION

By BILL KING



Examining Harris County Funding for Law Enforcement

For the most part, I find the “defunding the police” debate little more than partisan rhetoric which serves more to obfuscate than elucidate any meaningful discussion about the appropriate level of law enforcement funding. This is especially true in the current back and forth between Democrats and Republicans on Harris County’s funding of law enforcement.

Unfortunately, an attempt to describe how the current County administration has funded law enforcement involves unpacking the County’s Byzantine accounting practices. It is even more complicated by the fact that the County recently changed its fiscal year, which resulted in a “short year” accounting period of seven months this year.

But after studying the numbers in some detail, here are my three takeaways:

- The County does not spend anywhere close to two-thirds of its budget on law enforcement as Judge Hidalgo has claimed.
- Prior to 2021, Commissioners Courts, under both Republican and Democratic control, increased the County’s law enforcement budget by about 5% each year. Since inflation for most of the time was running at about 2%, those increases represented real increases in capacity. However, in 2021, the Commissioners Court only increased the law enforcement by about 2% when inflation was running at 7%, thereby, cutting the budgets by 5% in real economic terms. This also coincided with a dramatic increase in crime.
- This year, in the face of intense public pressure over an exploding crime wave, Commissioners Court granted some one-time funding increases to law enforcement. These fell during the short-year budget. If those one-time funding grants are annualized, they would represent about a 10-11% increase. However, the proposed budget for next year rolls back about half of those increases. Therefore, funding available to law enforcement next year will be less than what they have this year.

The “Two-Thirds” Claim

The claim that Harris County spends two-thirds of its budget on law enforcement is based on excluding the County’s spending on flood control, the toll road system and public health. The expenditures for those areas are technically separate entities but ones which are governed by the Commissioners Court and their budgets are consolidated with other County spending for accounting purposes. It also includes a host of expenditures that most people would not consider a law enforcement function.

According to the County’s most recent audit, about 34% of the County expenditures were for the “Administration of Justice,” of which law enforcement would be a subset. Therefore, the County’s spending on law enforcement is clearly less than one-third, not two-thirds, of its total spending.

Law Enforcement Expenditures Since 2019

District Attorney

The first two years the Democrats controlled the Commissioners Court, they increased the District Attorney’s budget a little over 6% each year. However, in the third year, a year in which crime had begun to explode and the backlog of cases at the courthouse was growing exponentially, they only increased her budget by 1%.

In the face of intense public pressure, the Court added about \$10 million in funding to the District Attorney’s budget this year (FY2022 short year), which on an annualized basis would represent a 13% increase.² However, the proposed budget for the coming year rolls back almost half of that increase.

Since the Democrats have taken control of the Commissioners Court, they have increased the District Attorney’s budget by 26%. During the same time, they have increased the budget for the Public Defender’s office by 217%

Constables

Total funding for the Constables has followed a very similar pattern to that of the District Attorney. Funding was increased modestly the first two years then cut back significantly in the third. They too received a one-time increase in 2022 that is mostly rolled back in the proposed budget.

Sheriff

The Sheriff’s Department has also followed the same general patten but has fared somewhat better on its funding due to the County being forced to deal with the ongoing disaster at the County jail, which is included in the Sheriff’s budget.

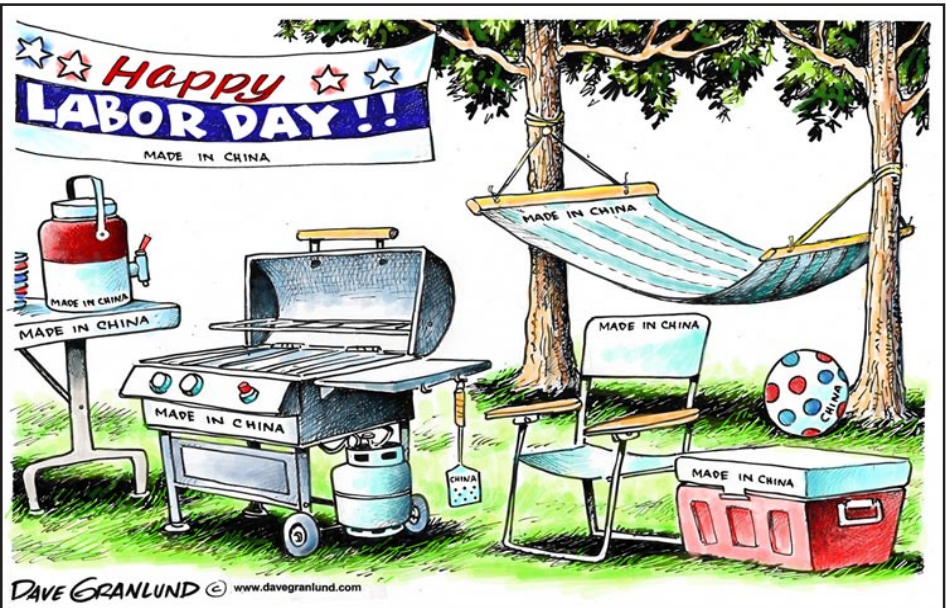
I think it would be hard to describe the Commissioners Court funding of law enforcement over the last four years as anything other than anemic, especially considering the significant surge in crime we have seen in our area. During that crime wave, the County was awash with about \$1.4 billion in federal COVID funding. Many other local governments used significant portions of those funds to shore up law enforcement to deal with the crime wave that we have seen across nearly the entire country. Harris County did not.

With a proposed budget that quickly retreats from the one-off funding increases this year, the current majority on Commissioners’ Court has clearly signaled their intention to continue funding law enforcement at minimal levels if re-elected. I think that is why you see virtually every law enforcement group lining up in opposition to the Democratic candidates in the upcoming election.

But while Harris County residents may be increasingly alarmed about crime, many also have grave reservations about a Republican Party whose views are becoming increasing out of step with theirs.

As a result, the upcoming election, in my view, will turn on whether voters’ concerns about national partisan issues, like 2020 election denial and abortion, outweigh their concern the troubling policies of Commissioners’ Court over the last four years on local issues like public safety funding. Of course, County government has little to do with those national issues but everything to do with public safety.

Note 1 - For the purposes of this discussion, I am only going to look at the funding levels for the Sheriff, the Constables, and the District Attorney. While there are certainly other expenditures that relate to the criminal justice system, it is the budget of these departments that



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Flooding in Dallas prompts Disaster Declaration

Heavy rains through Texas last week caused flooding, particularly in the Dallas area, prompting Gov. Greg Abbott to issue a disaster declaration for 23 affected counties. Texans who were affected by the rain, which dumped more than 10 inches in Dallas, are encouraged to file insurance claims with their providers and to complete the voluntary Self Reporting Damage Survey issued by the Texas Department of Emergency Management by visiting damage.tdem.texas.gov. The survey helps the state identify damage across Texas to gain an understanding of what areas were affected during the recent severe weather.

Counties included in the disaster declaration are Camp, Culberson, Dallas, Duval, Ellis, El Paso, Henderson, Hopkins, Hudspeth, Kaufman, Kerr, Live Oak, Marion, Montague, Navarro, Pecos, Rains, Smith, Tarrant, Upshur, Van Zandt, Webb and Wood. Additional counties could be added as damage is assessed.

BURN BANS LIFTED; FIRE DANGER DROPS

The heavy rains across a chunk of the state have reduced the wildfire risk, with the Texas A&M Forest Service for the first time in months not responding to any active wildfires. The number of counties with burn bans has dropped to 166. At its high point, 224 counties in the state were under burn bans.



The number of counties under extreme or exceptional drought has dropped as well. The percentage of Texas in the “exceptional drought” category dropped by more than half to 12.4%, according to kut.org.

BATTLESHIP TEXAS HEADED TO GALVESTON FOR REPAIRS

The Battleship Texas will leave its home at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site on Aug. 31 and make its way to the Galveston Shipyard for repairs, weather and tides permitting. A livestream video of the departure will be available to the public on the Battleship Texas Foundation’s YouTube channel and Facebook group page.

The former U.S. Navy battleship was launched on May 19, 1912, and saw action in World War I. It also escorted war convoys across the Atlantic during World War II, fought at Normandy on D-Day, and provided naval gunfire support in the Pacific dur-

ing the Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The ship was decommissioned in 1948.

While in dry dock, the ship’s hull will be repaired or replaced from four feet above the waterline down to the bottom, thanks to \$35 million in funding provided by the 2019 Texas Legislature. The grand reopening of Battleship Texas is expected to be sometime in 2024.

COASTAL POLICYHOLDERS PROTECTED BY EMERGENCY RULE

An emergency rule issued by the Texas Department of Insurance will protect Weston Property & Casualty Insurance Company policyholders who live along the Texas coast. Weston, a Florida insurance company licensed in Texas, is in liquidation and has been ordered to end its operations by Sept. 7, possibly leaving Texas policyholders in danger of not being covered against wind and hail damage.

More than 23,000 Weston policyholders live in possibly affected areas, according to TDI. They will be eligible to be insured through the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association for free for three months, after which a payment plan can be set up. Homeowners are encouraged to work with their insurance agent to find coverage.

CONDITIONS HEATING UP FOR DOVE SEASON

An especially scorching summer might make it trickier for dove hunters with the season opening just around the corner.

“Hunters will likely see larger concentrations of birds at watering holes and food sources than they have in the past due to limited resources,” said Owen Fitzsimmons with Texas Parks & Wildlife. “Agriculture production has been hit hard by drought so birds may be more reliant on native foods this September. Look for stands of common sunflower, croton and other native annual forbs and grasses.”

In general, dove season begins on Sept. 1, depending on the geographic zone. Go to the TPW website at tpwd.texas.gov for specific dates.

PUC CREATES OFFICE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Public Utility Commission has created an Office of Public Engagement to “provide a single point of contact for consumers, stakeholders, legislators, and other affected parties to make their voices heard at the PUC.”

“We’re very excited to build a team dedicated to bringing together all the parties and all the resources necessary to resolve what are often complex issues in a way that emphasizes collaboration among everyone involved and ultimately benefits customers and rate payers,” Peter Lake, PUC chairman, said.

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THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

“Not Much of a Joke”

It wasn’t much of a joke, as far as jokes go.

I saw the man wearing two hats, one on top of the other. The second hat may have been for his wife. It was decorated with intricate drawings. He was walking with her, a third hat tied to the handle of a stroller, and the family was making its way through the artisan market, where hats and ceramics and glass and handwoven, hand-carved, handmade items of all types are sold.

The man had his hands full, guiding the stroller loaded with purchases and keeping an eye on his wife, who was darting in and out of the artists’ stalls and, as I passed him, noting his two hats, I gave him a serious look and said, “I believe you need another hat.”

The man touched his hand to his hat, remembered he was wearing two and burst into laughter.

It was a real laugh, a belly laugh. He suddenly realized he looked silly, and he thought it was funny that I was bringing this to his attention in such a serious voice. And I was ridiculously pleased because I’d made the joke in Spanish.

Language is so tricky.

For decades, I’ve been able to ask where the bathroom is located and how much something costs. I’ve steadily picked up vocabulary because so many cognates are shared between Spanish and English. But then I’ve gotten stuck. I have to plan sentences before I say them. I have to ask people to speak more slowly or to repeat themselves three times. I do better with cab drivers and hotel employees because they have made it their life’s work to understand the fractured sentences of tourists and can make a reasonable guess as to what I’ve said.

But I’ve never been able to make a spontaneous joke.

I reached the conclusion about 10 years ago that I was never going to be fluent, so there wasn’t much point in trying. I’d become a writer, and I realized in a new way how inadequate my Spanish was, how far I was from being able to say anything important or meaningful. And so I quit.

But coming back to San Miguel de Allende has changed my mind. Because at its core, language is not about putting together beautiful sentences or showing off my vocabulary and grammatical skills.

Language is about connecting with people.

I will never understand Spanish as clearly as I would like. I won’t get the subtle inferences, the implied meanings. I’ll always be a little naive and clueless and have to have things spelled out for me. But, as I think about this, I realize I’m a little like this all the time—in any language.

What matters is that last night, I overheard two elderly Mexican tourists who could not find their way back to their hotel. The hotel was only a block and a half away. It was not an emergency. But I understood their confusion and said, “I know where that is. I am going there.”

They looked a little skeptical. This blond woman did not look like a local. But they slowly followed me (one had a cane) and, when we finally made it to their hotel, I was absurdly pleased.

My progress in Spanish is slow. I lose hope on a regular basis.

But yesterday, I helped two old women find their way. And the day before that, I made a joke. It wasn’t much of a joke, but somebody laughed—and at least for today—that is all the motivation I need.

Till next time,

Carrie

Photos from the column and a link to YouTube videos can be found at CarrieClasson.com.

HIGHLANDS CROSBY

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NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

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most directly affect the ability to actually take criminals off the street.

Note 2 – The District Attorney’s Office maintains that they have not actually received all of the promised funds. Because the County’s monthly financial statements are so far out of date (latest available at this time is April), I cannot verify whether they have or not.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.

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by WESTON COTTEN
Attorney for the Estate

by WESTON COTTEN
Attorney for the Estate

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Battleship Texas sails to Galveston,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Early Wednesday morning the Battleship Texas passes the Lynchburg Ferry south landing, and Seguin Park.



Battleship Texas is pulled by a tug boat in the ship channel, and guided by several others on its way to Galveston.

prepare for the restoration and required a dedicated project group consisting of the Battleship Texas Foundation, the operator of the ship, Valkor Energy Services, the project management and engineering firm for the ship repair, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the administrator of the ship. Resolve Marine Group was contracted in 2020 and coordinated with the Battleship Texas Foundation and Valkor Energy Services to reduce the amount of water leaking into the ship to help ensure a safe journey.

After an extensive campaign to save it from destruction, The Battleship Texas was decommissioned and commemorated as a museum at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site on April 21st, 1948 – 112 years to the day that the Texas Republic won its independence. The restoration project is expected to be completed between June and September 2023, after which the Battleship Texas will seek a new place to reside and reopen to the public.

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ABOUT THE BATTLESHIP TEXAS FOUNDATION
Formed in 1998, the Battleship Texas Foundation exists today as an advocate for Battleship Texas, and to help develop the historic ship into a premier hands-on museum and visitor attraction. The Battleship Texas Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; as of August 1st, 2020, Battleship Texas Foundation has taken the lead in the operations of Battleship Texas, with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department retaining an advisory and oversight role.

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