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Largest Gift, Page 3

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state election bills, Page 4

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VOL. 70, NO. 23 - \$1.00

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THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

ONE DEAD, THREE WOUNDED IN BARRETT SHOOTING

BARRETT STATION – One person is dead and multiple people were shot in the Crosby area Sunday afternoon. The Harris County Sheriff's Office responded to reports of a shooting at a strip center parking lot in the 12000 block of Crosby-Lynching around 3 p.m. Sunday, June 11.

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said four to five were involved in the shooting. Three persons were in a car, and joined by two others. An altercation and gunfire started inside the car, and continued outside. One person was fatally wounded, and three others were shot. Two were taken to a location on Barrett Road and two others transported themselves to a hospital.

Sheriff Gonzalez said "At around 3 p.m., a gray Dodge Charger pulled into an empty commercial center parking lot with three people inside. There were two young black men, sitting in the parking lot before approaching the car and getting in, officials said.

That is when investigators said they believed an altercation happened inside the vehicle, leading to an exchange of gunfire. Still, it is unclear who fired first, Sheriff Gonzalez said. "We want to know who pulled the trigger," he said.

CONTINUED. SEE BARRETT SHOOTING, PAGE 5

Crosby Rodeo wraps up successful event

Large crowds for performances; Peyton Turbitt shows GC Steer



Large Crowds attended all the Concert performances. This was the scene at Rock'n C Arena last Friday night for the concert by Creed Fisher. The crowd estimates each night were as high as 2300 excited fans.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS ON PAGE 2



Grand Champion Swine, exhibited by Emma Niemtsch; Reserve Champion Swine, exhibited by Presley Purvis; 3rd Place Swine, exhibited by Sadie Manuel



Grand Champion Steer, exhibited by Peyton Turbitt, purchased by Texas Turf Tenders; Reserve Champion Steer, exhibited by Abigail Brady; 3rd Place Steer, exhibited by Shelby Kouba.



Grand Champion Turkey, exhibited by Harper Loggins; Reserve Champion Turkey, exhibited by Preslee Harvey; 3rd Place Turkey, exhibited by London Harvey

Commissioner Garcia cites progress in reduction of Crime case backlogs

Felony and Misdemeanor backlogs reduced by more than 40%

Harris County, TX — Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia has championed the importance of reducing the backlog of cases in the criminal justice system, long before COVID-19. Often saying "justice delayed is justice unserved," Garcia has often taken the lead in directing Commissioners Court to invest nearly \$40 million in efforts to reduce the backlog.

Since January 2022, the investments have led to both the felony and misdemeanor backlogs being reduced by more than 40%.

At Tuesday's Commissioners Court, an additional \$25 million in ARPA funds were allocated to reduce the backlog, and Commissioners Court ap-

proved the measure unanimously. The new funds are broken down into the following programs:

- \$7.9 million – Case Preparation: Associate Judges and support staff
- \$4.8 million – Evidence Management: Technology and support staff
- \$8.3 million – Case Disposition: Emergency Response Dockets District Courts
- \$2.9 million – Case Disposition: Emergency Response Dockets County Courts
- \$1.2 million – Case Flow Management & Process Improvements

The funds will be dis-



tributed among the following departments: District and County Courts, the District Attorney, the District Clerk, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, Community Supervision (adult probation), the Public Defender, and Pre-Trial Services.

As an example of why these investments are critical, the \$4.8 million dedicated to evidence management includes \$1.8 million to the Institute of Forensic Sciences (IFS). IFS has suffered significant staffing and retention challenges, with over 20% of positions needing to be filled.

"I am proud of our progress so far, but I will

Continued. See Court Backlogs reduced, Page 2

County approves \$500 monthly anti-poverty payments

'Uplift Harris': to provide support for some low-income households

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas – A program designed to help struggling families in the Houston area passed in a vote of 4-1 in Harris County Commissioners Court last Tuesday.

Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis and County Judge Lina Hidalgo outlined details about the \$20.5 million Uplift Harris program, aimed at helping low-income residents with rent, food costs, and other issues.

The program is set to begin in September. The initiative is a guaranteed income program, and officials are hoping it will re-



Pct. 2 Commissioner Ellis announces details of the program, with Judge Lina Hidalgo and HC Public Health Director Barbie Robinson.

duce poverty. Uplift Harris would also help people with transportation, housing, utilities, and care.

Under the program, up to 1,500 families living below 200% of the federal poverty line – approximately \$40,000 for a fami-

ly of four – will receive \$500 per month to support their household needs. Uplift Harris will run for 18 months, beginning this fall. It will be administered

Continued. See Anti-Poverty Program, Page 5

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CrosbyRodeo wraps up successful event

Large crowds for performances; Peyton Turbitt shows GC Steer



Grand Champion Goat, exhibited by Jaiden Grimes



Grand Champion Horticulture, exhibited by Addison Maxey



Grand Champion Photography, Paisley Harlien; Reserve Champion Photography, Anna Ellisor



Lil Cowpoke Pageant



Grand Champion Broilers, exhibited by Kayson Marek; Reserve Champion Broilers, exhibited by Colt Glover



Grand Champion Lamb, exhibited by Jaiden Grimes; Reserve Champion Lamb, exhibited by Chloe Hood



Grand Champion Lamb, exhibited by Jaiden Grimes



Reserve Champion Steer, exhibited by Abigail Brady

GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS

Giant Things Going On in GCCISD

Exceeded Expectations

What a year it has been!

I can't believe the 2022-2023 school year has come and gone. There were so many highlights this school year. From academic to athletic, our students truly exceeded our expectations and excelled to the highest of heights. What better way to end the school year than with a grand celebration for our graduates. For five nights straight, we honored the tradition of hosting commencement in Stallworth Stadium; something that was last done during the 2011-2012 school year. Over 1,500 young people entered the Stallworth Stadium as students and exited as graduates and Giant alumni. Seeing the packed stands, filled with close family and friends, many of which graduated in Stallworth, made me beam with pride. Our community came together to support our students, and, in the end, that is what it is all about.

Though the school year has ended, that doesn't



Dr. Randal O'Brien Superintendent

mean learning has to! Our GCCISD Athletic department, City of Baytown, Wetlands Center and Lee College are offering a myriad of exciting, enjoyable, and engaging summer opportunities for students of all ages. From soccer camp to science camp and more; there is something for everyone! Please visit our GCCISD website for more information.

As I close, I want to give a special thanks to

our community stakeholders. We appreciate your continuous support year after year and we are so thankful that we have such dedicated individuals as a part of our Giant family.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer and we look forward to welcoming both new and returning students back to "The Goose" on August 14th.

Best Regards,
Dr. Randal O'Brien,
Ed. D. Superintendent of Schools

Goose Creek Memorial French Program Recognized as Exemplary Program with Honors



From left to right. Karina Jewell (Historian), Alexa Ramawad (Artistic Co-Director, Alanni Kramer (President), Cinthia Ruiz (Artistic Director), Manuela Langlois (Teacher/Sponsor), Nell Willems (Foreign Exchange student), Lizbeth Cardenas, Renata Bravo, Haydhar Abizar, Avery Greenaway, Ava Bessard, Elisabeth Flores, Camila Lara, Ruben Fernandez, Andrea Trejo.

The American Association of Teachers of French has conferred its award of Exemplary with Honors on Goose Creek Memorial High School in March of 2023. This prestigious award recognizes the outstanding quality of the French program. Goose Creek Memorial High School is one of ten in the nation to receive the award in 2023.

Thanks to its excellent program, Goose Creek Memorial High School has increased its enrollment in French

throughout the past three years. So that students may profit to the maximum, Goose Creek Memorial HS offers advanced courses, including AP. The program makes use of innovative and creative methods in teaching, gives standards-based assessments, and offers numerous cultural activities beyond the classroom. The school participates in the AATF National French Contest and inducts students into the National

French Honor Society, with many honorees annually. Manuela Langlois shows excellent preparation and enthusiastic dedication to her work. Administrators, parents, students, and graduates have all praised the program and its teacher in glowing terms. Graduates have continued to use French and the skills they acquired in college and in their careers, such as teaching, business, and government.

GCCISD CTE Academies Earn Coveted Model Academy Designation

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey, APR – Director of Communications

Two of the district's CTE academies recently earned the coveted Model Academy status designation by the National Career Academy Coalition. This is the highest designation awarded by NCAC, and each academy will hold it for four years. The academies learned of their status during special ceremonies on May 17th.

The Robert E. Lee High School STEM Academy and Ross S. Sterling High School Health Science Academy were part of the district's original three academies; presented by Dr. Randal O'Brien in 2014. Students were enrolled in the academies during the 2014-2015 school year. The Sterling Academy also earned a per-

fect score!

Both academies went through their first national review in 2019, where they received Model Academy status and were recognized at the National Career Academy Coalition Conference in Philadelphia in the fall of 2019. Model status is valid for four years and then must go through a new review process to maintain their status. Of course, there are no guarantees that an academy will maintain their status.

The review process began last October with initial meetings with NCAC, and training sessions attended by district staff. Academy artifacts and historical academy data had to be prepared along with NCAC surveys that were completed by academy administra-

tors, teachers, students, and advisory board members. All documentation had to be submitted in March prior to the onsite reviews on April 5th. The day of the review consisted of an academy presentation, followed by multiple rounds of interviews with the review team, and a campus tour. The review team interviewed academy teachers, academy students and advisory board members in separate 30-minute segments. Following the interviews was a final debrief with the academy administrators and CTE staff. Many hours were spent meeting among all participants in the review on a weekly/bi-weekly basis as well as a mock review day that was coordinated in-house to prepare for the actual review.



Members of the Lee STEM Academy staff pose proudly during their surprise presentation event.

Barbers Hill Press

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VOL. 28, NO. 23

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THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Teacher of the Year Barbers Hill South



Congratulations to Ms. Deoncia Mendes on earning TEACHER OF THE YEAR at Barbers Hill South. She is amazing and loves those kiddos. Barbers Hill is blessed to have you, says Husband David Mendez.

Creighton's Priority Workforce Training Bill Signed by Governor Abbott

Austin, Texas—Today, Governor Greg Abbott signed HB 8, the Community College Finance Bill into law. The bill, authored by Senator Creighton (R-Conroe) and Representative Gary VanDeaver (R-New Boston) modernizes funding for Texas community colleges and incentivizes degree programs for in-demand careers. "A highly educated and skilled workforce is critical for Texas to remain the most attractive state to do business, and community colleges are ground zero for students to access the necessary skills and training for in-demand careers," said Creighton. "This new funding framework will only encourage more successful programs for Texas to train the workforce of the future."

The Community College Finance Commission was created in SB 1230 in the 87th Legislature, and this bill activates the Commission's recommendations. Specifically, HB 8 provides funding based on student outcomes, increased financial aid and work-based opportunities, as well as greater investment in college capacity through grants and cross-campus partnerships.

"I want to thank the Commission members for the many months of time they committed. Specifically, Chairman Woody Hunt—a true public servant who gave his time and expertise, Representative Gary VanDeaver for his leadership in the Texas House, Higher Education Coordinating Board Chair Harrison Keller, and the community colleges across the state who continue to demonstrate vision and ingenuity to ensure student success."

Chambers County Participates in Statewide Hurricane Preparedness Training Activity

Chambers County participated in a full-scale exercise hosted by the Texas Department of Emergency Management in preparation for the upcoming hurricane season.

This exercise, dubbed Hurricane Indigo, allowed the County to confirm readiness and coordination between internal department and with external partners.

"Activities like this



exercise allow the County to prepare for disasters, practice response activities and identify and mitigate deficiencies," said Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia. "I can confidently say that, after this exercise, Chambers County stands ready to respond to possible events."

The 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins on June 1 and runs through November 30.

Lee College Receives Largest Estate Gift in School History

Donation of \$900,000 of ExxonMobil Stock Establishes Student Scholarships

BAYTOWN, TX, June 8, 2023 – Lee College in Baytown, TX has received a substantial gift from the estate of the late John P. and Charlotte Henderson. The Hendersons, who were longtime supporters of the college, bequeathed 10,000 shares of ExxonMobil stock which was sold for approximately \$900,000. Their gift is ---the largest estate donation in the institution's 89-year history.

The Lee College Scholarship Committee recently voted to use the money to establish the Henderson Family Trust, which will create over 20 scholarships annually. Recipients of the Henderson Family Trust will be known as The Henderson Scholars.

"Uncle John and Aunt Charlotte always valued Lee College and its impact on the Baytown community," said Jason Free, great nephew. "They made Lee College a priority in their charitable work and charitable giving during their

lives, and they were excited to help future students receive a much-needed education through their estate plan."

The Hendersons have been associated with Lee College since the late 1960s. John served as a regent on the Lee College Board and was a charter member and board member of the Friends of Lee College.

"The visionary gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henderson will support our students for generations to come. Their legacy and that of the Henderson Family Trust will live on through the success of the Henderson Scholars in perpetuity," said Patricia Ranzini, vice president of College Advancement and executive director of the Lee College Foundation.

John passed away at the age of 107 in October 2020. Charlotte was 106 years old when she died exactly one year later. They were married for 80 years, and



Charlotte and John P. Henderson at their home in the Longhorn Village Retirement Community, Austin, TX (c. 2019).

in 2019, the Guinness World Record recognized them for setting the then all-time world record for the oldest living couple of aggregate age.

"This exceptional donation will truly be transformational for our students and for the future of our college," said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College president. "We are extremely honored and

thankful that John and Charlotte cared so much for the betterment of Lee College and future generations of Lee College students."

For years, Lee College has benefited from the Henderson's generosity. In January 2021, shortly after John Henderson's death, an endowment scholarship was established in his name to sup-

port tuition and books for a deserving Lee College student who is planning to transfer to the University of Texas at Austin where Mr. Henderson was a letterman on the Longhorn football team.

Mr. Henderson began his career in 1939 at Humble Oil and Refining Company, which is now ExxonMobil. After 34 years and various assignments, he retired as department head of business services. Henderson was extremely active in the Baytown community – having spent decades as a board member with the Community Resource Credit Union, formerly known as Humble Employees Baytown Federal Credit Union. Mr. Henderson was also a member of the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, past president, life member and treasurer of the Kiwanis Club, and past board member of Baycoast Hospital.

THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



Time to Rest

Are you ready for summer, with all its activities, vacations, and extra adventures? Sometimes it seems that what is often said of vacations ("I need a vacation to recover from my vacation!") can apply to summer in general. We spend the cold, wet, winter months looking forward to sun-filled, warm days spent in leisure and then that time we've been anticipating, for parents at least, often ends up being less than leisurely.

As a pastor, I would encourage you to keep your eyes on Jesus even during these more fun-filled months, continuing to grow in your relationship with Him. I also strongly advise using every opportunity to guide your kids in their walks with the Lord. But there's something else all of us need that is important as well, something we can forget in the busyness of summer: Time to rest.

Jesus knew all about this need. We see it in Mark 6:31. "Then Jesus said, 'Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.' He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat."

I'm sure you've felt this way too at times, with so much going on in your life that you don't even have time to eat. It is easy to get so caught up in the needs of work, family, yard care, vacation planning, and more that we are left feeling like we can hardly breathe, that we

reach the end of the day at the end of our rope. This is not what God wants for us, even in this, to follow the example Jesus set.

Jesus used wisdom. Yes, He was available to those who needed Him and, according to John 21:25, "Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written." Even so, He often went aside by Himself to pray, and at least once He pulled His disciples away from the crowds specifically so

they could get some much-needed rest.

Science has shown us just how vital rest is to our well-being. It is while we are at rest that our bodies heal themselves, with even short breaks proving to benefit both our physical and mental health. Rest also helps combat stress, increases creativity, improves productivity, and helps with decision making. Obviously, it's something we really can't do without.

It's also something the warrior of God can't do without. A soldier who is battle worn and weary can only accomplish so


much without supernatural help. Yes, God stands ready to give us that help, but the wise warrior takes time to recover and to regain the energy he's lost. We do this on our knees, in prayer, in praise and worship, and in the silence of rest. Having replenished ourselves, we're then ready to get back out there and fight.

So I encourage you to take a hint from Jesus, to follow the lead of His disciples, and take time to step aside for a while. Maybe you can't take literal time off, but surely you can schedule some rest stops during the day, moments when you can back off and let your brain and body have a break. Find a quiet place. Hit the reset button. When you do, you'll be better prepared to get back out there and keep giving it your all.

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OPINION PAGE

OPINION
 Harris County Judge
 Lina Hidalgo



Judge objects to state bills targeting Harris County elections

"Harris County today finds itself grappling with the audacity of Republican state lawmakers, hell-bent on recklessly enhancing the election chances of one party by targeting the largest county in the state," said Judge Hidalgo. "This sets a dangerous precedent and subverts elections in one of the most diverse counties in the nation—another step toward disenfranchisement in the name of 'election reform.'"

Background information:

Harris County is home to nearly 5 million residents and the third largest in the nation. The signing into law of two Texas election subversion bills, SB 1933 and SB 1750, will strip away Harris County's nonpartisan Elections Administrator and empower a Republican state official (the Abbott-appointed Secretary of State who served for 30 years as a Republican state senator) to tightly control the elections in Texas' largest—and Democratic—county. There has been no substantiated finding of the exaggerated allegations that Republican lawmakers used as the reason behind the bills. 9 out of the 10 largest counties in Texas, and almost 50 percent of counties in the state have a nonpartisan Elections Administrator.

OPINION
 By Elsa Soto Leggett, PhD, LPC-S
 Texas Counseling Association

A simple way for Texas to increase mental health access

State legislators can take a simple but important step to improve access to mental health care by authorizing Texas to join the Interstate Counseling Compact — currently a group of 25 states who allow Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) the privilege to practice in-person and via telehealth across state lines.

Elected officials from both parties continue to call for greater access to mental health services. More than 180 of the 254 counties in Texas have been identified as mental health workforce shortage areas. By allowing Texans to work with Licensed Professional Counselors in other states, the Compact would vastly grow the number of counselors able to serve Texans — regardless of whether they live in our large cities or smaller rural communities that have long struggled with attracting mental health professionals. Joining the Compact may not eliminate that vexing challenge, but it will give rural Texans more counselors from whom to choose.

The impact could be profound for military families and others who have recently moved from another state and are looking to maintain their relationship with their professional counselor. Also, counselors who leave Texas could keep seeing clients from our state. This continuity of care would benefit the clients and the counselor. The Compact similarly helps families who have experienced a divorce that causes a spouse and children to relocate to another state, because the adults and children involved could continue to see their counselors after moving. Young adults moving off to attend college would also benefit.

How does the Compact work? Professional counselors licensed in their home state apply for a privilege to practice under the Compact. States participating in the Compact communicate and exchange information including verification of licensure and disciplinary sanctions. The State of Texas would retain the ability to regulate practice in our state.

In order to see Texas clients, participating professional counselors from other states must have a license from their home states, pass an FBI background check, comply with their home state's continuing education requirements and have no adverse action against their license for the past two years.

The Compact is a way to vastly improve access to mental health care without a broad expansion of government or a new type of entitlement. This is probably why conservative states such as Florida, Arkansas, West Virginia and Tennessee have joined the compact, along with more centrist states such as North Carolina, Virginia and New Hampshire.

The Texas Counseling Association has identified passage of the Compact as its highest priority because professional counselors understand how much this agreement could expand access to needed mental health services from quality providers. It would be wise for Texas to join this diverse, growing coalition of states who recognize the importance of mental health care and the challenges of finding the professionals needed to deliver that care.

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.



THE POSTSCRIPT
 By
 Carrie Classon

"Father's Day"

It's time to be thinking about Father's Day—even if all we do is think about it.

The woman who suggested Father's Day in 1909 was named Sonora Smart Dodd. She was raised, along with her five siblings, by her father after her mother died in childbirth.

The idea took a long time to catch on, and didn't become a national holiday until Richard Nixon was in the White House. If you're thinking it's too bad that Ms. Dodd wasn't around to see her dream fulfilled, you'd be wrong. She was just 90 years old. At age 92, she was honored for her idea.

I always have trouble finding a card that seems appropriate for Father's Day. My dad's eyesight isn't great, but even if the cards were easier to read, there wouldn't be much worth reading. Father's Day cards are all about fishing or drinking or playing golf, and my dad isn't big on any of those activities. But even if I found a card, the holiday is hard to celebrate.

This year, I'm seeing my dad right before Father's Day.

"We're going to miss Father's Day!" I told him.

"That's fine!" he said.

He didn't sound disappointed at all. Missing Father's Day meant we'd have less of a chance to wrestle the restaurant check away from him. He sounded like he hoped we might forget to get him a present as well. But that doesn't mean I won't be thinking about him because I always am—whether I know it or not.

My dad's advice, my dad's way of solving problems, of taking care of business is so ingrained in me that I'm not sure I know where he leaves off and I begin. It doesn't seem like my dad's way of looking at the world, it just seems like the way the world should be looked at— if I take the time to be thoughtful and don't rush out and do something stupid.

My dad would say that every plan needs "belt and suspenders." What will I do if something falls through? What's the next move?

The lesson in this way of thinking is that a person can do virtually anything they want to do as long as they take the time to think it through. My dad might argue mightily against something I wanted to do (and he has), but he'd never tell me not to do it. He'd just want to make sure I'd covered all the angles.

The result is that I've done things that, at first glance, might seem improbable or risky but, because I'd given them the "belt and suspenders" test before I started, were not nearly as precarious as they seemed. I can't imagine a more valuable lesson to have learned young. I can't imagine a better teacher than my dad.

My dad now lives in the house he planned for many years before his retirement and built almost entirely by himself with the help of his Uncle John. He always has a project in progress. He's going to turn 90 next year, and he would tell you he has slowed down, and perhaps he has, but if you just met him, you'd never guess.

I will be celebrating Father's Day this year— maybe early, maybe late, certainly over the telephone at the very least. I'll try to tell my dad how important he has always been to me—how every major decision of my life has been guided by him, how every decision I ever make will continue to be. And how much I love him.

Happy Father's Day. Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
 By Gary Borders



Central Figure in Paxton Case Charged

The Austin real estate developer who is at the heart of Attorney General Ken Paxton's impeachment was arraigned on eight federal charges Friday, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Nate Paul was arrested by the FBI on Thursday.

Paul, 36, has been accused of providing financial benefits to the attorney general, who in exchange intervened in several legal issues involving Paul. That connection led in part to the Texas House impeaching Paxton on May 27. He now awaits a trial sometime this summer in the Senate.

The federal charges allege Paul made false statements to financial institutions in Texas, Connecticut, New York and Ireland that underreported his total liabilities and overreported his cash, influencing lenders' decisions to loan him money to buy commercial properties.

Meanwhile, Tony Buzbee, the Houston attorney hired to represent Paxton, said his client was the victim of a "kangaroo court," according to the Texas Tribune. Buzbee, who is leading Paxton's legal team, predicted Paxton "will never be convicted by the Senate. Not on this evidence. Not with this record. The fact is these allegations are completely untrue."

Paxton has been temporarily removed from office, with former Texas secretary of state John Scott appointed as interim attorney general.

STATE FIGHTS TO SEIZE FORMER STATE PARK LAND

Commissioners with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department voted unanimously Saturday to pursue eminent domain claims to acquire property that once was Fairfield Lake State Park.

The move came amid increasing acrimony between state officials and Todd Interests, the new owners of the land in Freestone County. Todd Interests re-



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

cently purchased the land that had been leased to the state for the past half-century.

Shawn Todd, the company's founder and CEO, told The Dallas Morning News the state had engaged in "intimidation" in an attempt to block his family's company from acquiring the 5,000-acre tract from energy company Vistra. The state made a \$25 million offer to buy Todd Interests out of its contract in mid-May, according to The News.

Arch "Beaver" Aplin III, chair of the nine-member commission, said the legal maneuver is an effort to save and expand a "beloved state park."

At least three measures concerning condemning the park land in order to acquire it failed to pass in the last legislative session. The park averaged 80,000 visitors annually, according to TPWD.

NEW \$321.3 BILLION BUDGET SENT TO ABBOTT

Texas comptroller Glenn Hegar has certified that the recently passed \$321.3 billion, two-year state budget is balanced. The budget legislation is the only task required of lawmakers by the Texas Constitution, the Texas Tribune reported. That means Gov. Greg Abbott can now review the 1,115-page document and potentially veto certain items that do not meet his approval. The deadline to do so is June 18.

Abbott's line-item veto authority only applies to the state budget. The 2024-

2025 budget allocates tax money toward tax cuts, broadband internet expansion, border security and raises for state employees, to name a few items. It does not provide increased pay for teachers. Although \$4 billion has been set aside to increase teacher salaries and public-school funding, that will occur only if the Legislature acts separately to create a private school voucher program. Legislation for that failed in the regular legislative session but likely will be considered again in a special session later this year.

JACKSON NAMED INTERIM CHAIR OF PUC

Kathleen Jackson, recently confirmed to the Public Utility Commission by the Texas Senate, has been named interim chair by Abbott. That follows the resignation of chair Peter Lake, who will remain on the PUC until July 1. He joined the PUC in April 2021 in the wake of the major failure of the electric service after Winter Storm Uri the previous February.

"I'm honored and humbled by Governor Abbott's trust and confidence in me to lead the Public Utility Commission at this very important time for the agency and for Texas," Jackson said.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS EASE ACROSS STATE

Abundant rain in the Panhandle and much of Central Texas has eased drought conditions for much of those areas, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. The end of May saw the ninth consecutive weekly decrease in areas of the state affected by the drought. Less than 1 percent of the state is now listed as suffering from severe drought. That's the least since March 2022.

A total of 34% of the state is listed in any type of drought condition, compared to 78% a year ago. The arrival of an El Niño weather pattern should bring a cooler, wetter autumn and winter, forecasters say.

STATE AGAIN NO. 1 IN FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES

With a record 55 Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Texas, the state continues to lead the nation, Abbott announced.

"Texas is the headquarters of headquarters," Abbott said. "With our strong and growing workforce and welcoming business climate, Texas is where businesses find the freedom to flourish, and people find opportunities to prosper."

The greater Houston metropolitan area is second in the nation, home to 25 Fortune 500 headquarters. The Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metro area is third with 24.

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Entered as Periodicals Class at Highlands Post Office, Highlands, TX 77562. Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Published 50 weeks per year, on Thursdays, by Grafikpress Corp., 5906 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Opinions in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily this newspaper's. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to grafikstar@aol.com.

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OBITUARIES

SUSAN LYNN HOFFMAN

Susan Lynn Hoffman died on Tuesday, May 23rd in Phoenix, Arizona at the age of 64, from Cardiac Arrest suffered during a scheduled heart procedure.

Susan was a graduate of New Castle, Pennsylvania High School, class of 1976, and Arizona State University, class of 1980, with a bachelor's degree in Political Science. Susan's career was as a Legal Assistant, and for most of her life she was employed by Attorney Scott Palumbo of the law firm Palumbo Wolfe & Palumbo. She was a valuable member of the firm who will be greatly missed.

Susan's interests included extensive travel, and care for every conceivable stray animal she encountered. With her sister Trisha, Susan had travelled to Mexico, Australia, Canada, and Florida and Washington States. She cared for many stray animals, including cats,



dogs, and birds. She kept some, but found foster homes when possible. She supported animal shelters and encouraged others to do the same. She was also an avid sports fan, following NASCAR and the NFL. She had been to several Super Bowls, and a Rose Bowl game.

Susan was born on September 24, 1957 in New Castle, Pennsylvania to Gilbert E. B. Hoffman and Carol Louise Lutz Hoffman. Her mother Carol preceded her in death in 2017. Susan is survived by her husband Terry Blanchard, her sister Trisha (Patricia) Alison Hoffman, her nephew Derek Geffs, stepsons

Kevin and Billy Blanchard, and several step-grandchildren. She is also survived by her half-sister Kristan Liu Hoffman and family of Cincinnati, Ohio. She also leaves extended Cramer family in Florida.

Susan had planned to retire in a few short years, and had a second home in the woods of Show Low, Arizona where she was able to retreat and enjoy the quiet of the country. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. Funeral arrangements are private, and donations can be made in her name to animal rescue organizations.

Barrett Shooting: One dead, three wounded,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

From there, investigators said two people, a man in his late teens or early 20s and a 14-year-old, were dropped off at Barrett Station Evergreen Cemetery on 560 Barrett Road, about four blocks from the initial scene. According to investigators, first responders found the man dead from his injuries at the cemetery. The injured 14-year-old was taken to a hospital.

Two people who remained inside the vehicle drove themselves to the hospital and were also treated for gunshot wounds, investigators said.

One person, who was not injured, drove away from the scene in the Charger, which Gonzalez said investigators are still looking for.

Sheriff Gonzalez said a motive has not been determined for the shooting, but may involve a drug transaction. Authorities are looking for the grey Dodge Charger vehicle. Call Crime Stoppers 713-222-TIPS if you have any information.



Scene of shooting, parking lot at 12000 Crosby-Lynchburg Road in Barrett Station



Scene where deceased victim was found after the shooting, Evergreen Cemetery in Barrett Station.

Harris County starts anti-poverty program,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

by a third-party agency and subjected to rigorous evaluation.

Judge Hidalgo said "The program is designed so it goes to folks with a certain income level, so it's below the poverty line for those zip codes where there are economic challenges for a lot of people."

Uplift Harris was spearheaded by Commissioner Ellis' Office. The program, funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, is part of the county's broader strategy to reduce poverty and deliver economic prosperity for everyone in Harris County.

"Decades of neglect, ine-

equity, and discrimination have financially destabilized generations of Harris County families, perpetuated poverty, and created unfair barriers to prosperity," Commissioner Ellis said. "Unchecked and ongoing inequality has created an economic divide that families can't overcome on their own, and Harris County has an obligation to act."

Similar programs have been launched in 45 cities across the country, including Austin, which has seen positive results so far.

According to a study by the Urban Institute, before the program was brought

to Austin, 80% of families said they could not afford food. After six months of being in the program, the number dropped to 68%.

Also before the program, 77% of families in Austin said they couldn't afford to serve balanced meals to their children. After six months of being a part of the program, that number dropped to 62%.

About 55% of families in Austin said they were behind on their rent before starting the program, and after six months, that number dropped to 33%.

For more information, visit this website: <https://countiesforaguaranteedincome.org/>.

Harris County Pets over capacity! Waiving adoption fees

HOUSTON – Spring and summer bring many new things, including litters and unwanted puppies and kittens! Many of them are being brought to Harris County Pets (HCP) – already crowded with homeless dogs and cats, pushing the shelter past its capacity. HCP needs people to adopt or foster and rescue groups to help us in our effort to provide loving homes for adoptable pets.

HCP has almost 300 animals over its capacity (currently 758 animals). Up to 40% of animals that are brought to the shelter are surrendered by owners for various reasons. Although not all animals that arrive at the shelter are adoptable for various

reasons (e.g., elderly, feral, sick, aggressive or injured animals), many of them would make great pets for individuals and families.

Currently, all adoptable animals at the Harris County Pets Resource Center are free of charge to a loving home! All adopted animals from HCP are spayed or neutered, receive age-appropriate vaccinations (including rabies), are microchipped and receive a one-year Harris County pet license.

Pet ownership requires an investment of time and money, so when adopting a pet, please consider:

- Selecting a pet that is suited to your home and lifestyle. Do you have time to walk your dog? Would an older pet be more suit-

able than an active kitten or puppy?

- Avoiding impulsive decisions when selecting a family pet.

- Owning only the number of pets that you can provide for appropriately.
- Ensuring that the pet is properly vaccinated, identified and registration is up to date.

HCP, located at 612 Canino Road in Houston, has many animals ready for a loving home. Stop by and choose yours! If you cannot adopt a pet, consider volunteering at our shelter. Volunteers are needed to facilitate adoptions, socialize, and foster animals. For more information, email volunteer@countypets.com or call (281) 999-3191.

IN THE STARS

- BIRTHDAYS**
- Jun 15 – Tina Hill
 - Jun 16 – Steffany de la Cruz, Tim Grisham, Evelyn Del Angel
 - Jun 17 – Garret Oviedo, Brandi Rutledge
 - Jun 18 – Erica Castro, David Mata
 - Jun 19 – Lara Sue Hill
 - Jun 21 – Louise Cann, Eddie Marshall
 - Jun 22 – Dixie Roffe, Randall Sloan, Robert Guillory
 - Jun 23 – Gladys Cornelius, Ryan Dunlop, Janell Simmons
- ANNIVERSARIES**
- Jun 18 – Cliff & Janise McKee
 - Jun 19 – David & Susie Coffman
 - Jun 22 – Larkin & Margaret McKay, Gene & Elizabeth Bulanek
 - Jun 23 – Ben & Shannon Coward
 - Jun 25 – Daniel & Jane Pratkan, Daniel & Rene Anselmo

NOW OPEN New Laundromat opens in Highlands

Well known local businessman Bill Bagi has opened a new Laundromat in Highlands, known as 501 Laundromat.

Bagi said that the new store has the latest Wascomat professional washers and dryers, and because of their extra large size can clean 60 lbs of laundry in an hour.

The new store is now open, and operates 7 days a week, from 8am to 9pm.

More details and photos on page 2 of this paper, or stop by with some laundry. Located at 501 S. Main Street, Highlands.

It's a Dirty Business

Joe Flanagan of Lonestar Siteworks has available time for Dozer, Backhoe and Tractor work. Call or text him for a Free Quote on your next Dirt(y) project. 832-530-0054. He's well recommended, fast and inexpensive. Call now.

Court cases Backlog reduced,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

not be satisfied until we reduce the backlog to pre-Hurricane Harvey levels, eventually eliminating it. Historically, it takes around 200 days to bring a typical case to disposition," said Commissioner Adrian Garcia. "We can't keep delaying justice for victims who deserve a speedy resolution. It's also important that the accused get their day in court in a timely manner."

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Sarah Snook, Kieran Culkin and Jeremy Strong star in "Succession."

"Succession"

"Succession" (TV-MA) — What better way to end the killer lineup that HBO's Sunday night slot has had for the past year than with the finale of the show "Succession"?

After four seasons following the dynamic Roy siblings around their vulgar corporate wonderland, the coveted position as CEO of their father's company, Waystar RoyCo, will fall into just one person's hands. As longtime viewers of the show know, anything is possible when it comes to the Roys. The incredible leads — Jeremy Strong, Sarah Snook and Kieran Culkin — along with the rest of the talented cast are sure to bring the show to a bittersweet close. The full 10-episode final season is out now. (HBO Max)

"Menendez + Menu-do, Boys Betrayed" (NR) — A new development in the story of Lyle and Erik

Menendez, the brothers who were sentenced to life in prison for murdering their parents, has come to light and spawned a three-part docuseries. During their 1996 trial, the brothers alleged that their father, Jose, had sexually abused them for years, but these claims weren't considered by the prosecution to be their true motivation for the murders. Now, Roy Rosello, former member of Puerto Rican pop group Menudo (previous members also include Ricky Martin and Draco Rosa), comes forward in this docuseries about the sexual abuse he also suffered from Jose Menendez. For those who don't know the Menendez story or the horrific working conditions of being in Menudo — as well as other American boybands who followed Menudo's lead — I highly recommend this sobering docuseries out now. (Peacock)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Barbers Hill Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:30 pm, June 26, 2023 in J. Justin Jenson Conference Center, 9600 Eagle Drive, Mont Belvieu, TX. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$0.84760/\$100 (proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters	\$0.30690/\$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories.

Maintenance and operations	5.9 % increase
Debt Service	27.3 % increase
Total expenditures	11.8 % increase

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$17,837,667,308	\$19,474,121,387
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$ 765,792,514	\$ 367,794,910
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$ 9,184,355,473	\$ 9,617,128,370
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$ 733,423,884	\$ 361,374,050

*Appraised value is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(8), Tax Code.
** "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code.
*** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$430,090,000

*Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$0.86460	\$0.28990*	\$1.15450	18,385	593
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$0.85123	\$0.24720	\$1.09844	13,756	299
Proposed Rate	\$0.84760	\$0.30690	\$1.15450	14,877	441

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$291,551	\$349,663
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$185,390	\$199,325
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.15450	\$1.15450
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$2,140.33	\$2,301.21
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		+\$160.88

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is \$1.1545. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of \$1.1545.

Fund Balances

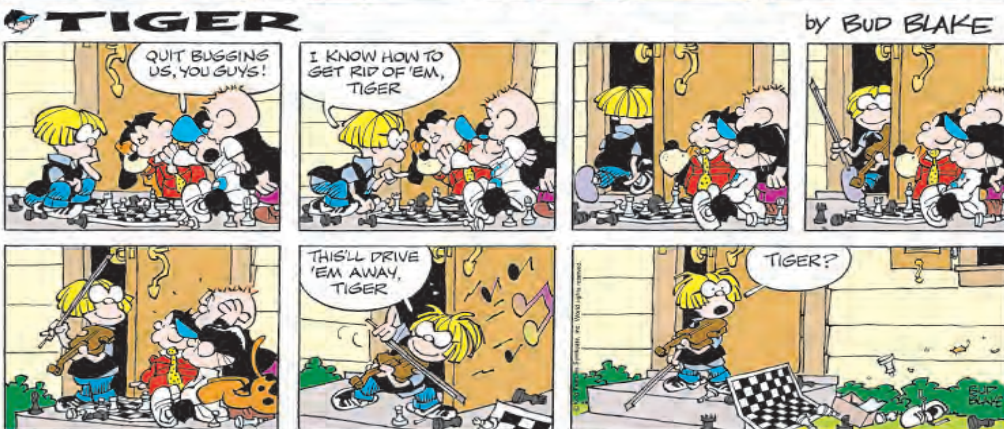
The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment.

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$42,990,000
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$20,573,000

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Cloud is smaller; 2. Zipper is missing; 3. Burper is missing; 4. Starburst wheel is different; 5. Post is missing; 6. Post is missing; 7. Burper is missing; 8. Post is missing; 9. Mexico; 10. Throat.

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June 12, 2023 Posting Date King Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
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46	47	48			49		50					
51				52	53					54	55	
56					57				58			
59					60						61	

ACROSS

- Potential syrup
- Ship's front
- Dutch cheese
- Family card game
- One with will power?
- Cover with blacktop
- Kind of stove
- Mid-month date
- Solo of "Star Wars"
- Pie chart divisions
- Exact
- Fan's cry
- "East of Eden" brother
- Blend
- Interior design
- Curved molding
- Signing need
- Chicago paper, briefly
- Irritable
- "Mayday!"
- Blackbird
- Summer mo.
- Orders of pancakes
- Snarls
- Annoy
- Pulitzer winner James
- Soup cooker
- Katy Perry hit song
- Hunt for
- Wildier's "Town"
- Leer at
- Nashville venue
- Dead heat
- Dine
- Year in
- Cancun
- Driving hazards
- Wunderkind
- Seminary
- subj.
- Monet's supply
- More ironic
- Disparaging term
- Pedestal part
- Highlander
- Senate staffer
- Chill in the air
- Ballot marks
- Eccentric
- Sty cry
- Baseball stats
- Curio cabinet
- Refusals
- Actor Brynner
- Viscid
- Bas-relief medium
- Noah's boat
- Poi base
- Awestruck
- Patricia of "Hud"
- Dance move
- "— the ram-parts ..."
- Gigi's "yes"
- Three, in Rome

DOWN

- Dine
- Year in
- Cancun
- Driving hazards
- Wunderkind
- Seminary
- Dine
- Year in
- Cancun
- Driving hazards
- Wunderkind
- Seminary

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: When did "Sesame Street" debut on PBS?
- MOVIES: What is the name of the moon where "Avatar" takes place?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which country is home to a tall rock structure called the Finger of God?
- HISTORY: What was Babe Ruth's real first name?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many of Snow White's seven dwarfs have names ending in "y"?
- MUSIC: Which country did the band AC/DC come from?
- LITERATURE: How many books are in the primary Harry Potter novel series?
- GOVERNMENT: How many national parks are in the United States?
- FOOD & DRINK: In which country was the Caesar salad invented?
- ANATOMY: Where is the uvula in the human body?

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

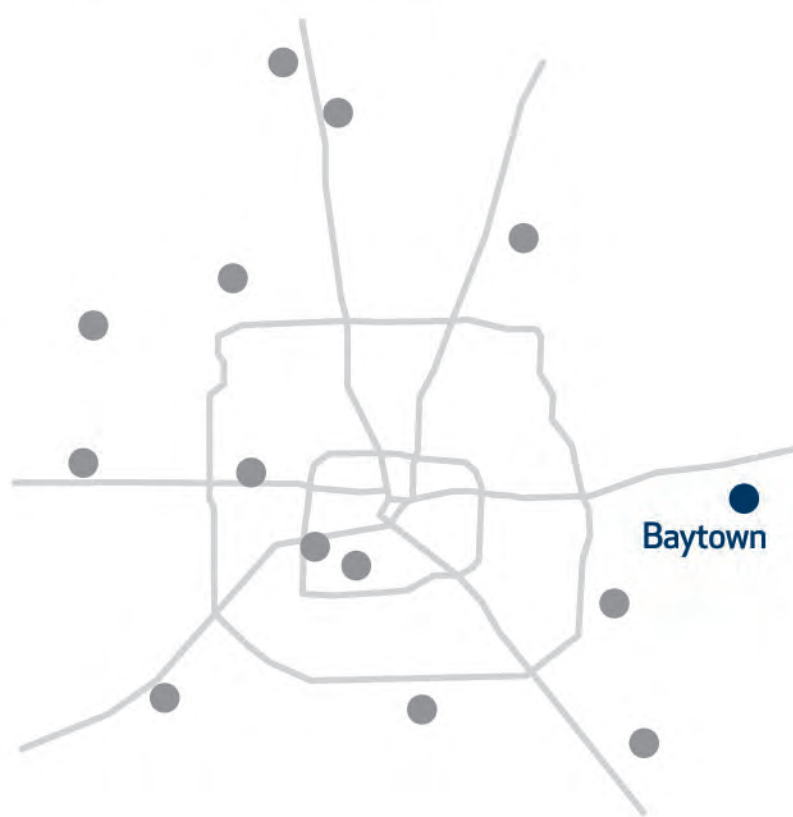
1. 1969; 2. Pandora; 3. Brazil; 4. George; 5. Five; Happy, Sleepy, Dopey, Sneezy and Grumpy. The other two are Doc and Bashful; 6. Australia; 7. Seven; 8. 63; 9. Mexico; 10. Throat.



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