



Thresa Wester, left, loads up toys on Judy van Tries as the volunteers at Churches United In Caring prepare for their annual Christmas Holiday Sale on Saturday.

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

Star Courier

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

EVENTS

Cookies & Photos with Santa in Highlands Dec. 5

The traditional Arrival of Santa in Highlands will be indoors at the Highlands Community Center Tuesday Dec. 5 from 5pm to 8pm.

Cookies, Hot Chocolate, Pizza, and Pictures of your child with Santa.

Hosted by Precinct 3, Peet & Georgiana Bighorse, Highlands Chamber, Highlands Horizons, Rotary Club of Highlands, and Seniors Helping Seniors High-Town.

Christmas Trees!

The Community Center invites you to share your tree, and decorate a tree the week after Thanksgiving, from 8am to 7pm daily.

Crosby 25th Annual Christmas Festival Dec. 9

Crosby/Huffman Chamber presents its 25th Annual Christmas Festival, Saturday Dec. 9 from 1pm to 5pm at Crosby Church, 5727 Hwy 90, Crosby.

Event includes Christmas Market, Entertainment, Holly the Elf, Pictures with Santa and Goody Bags 2pm-4pm, Petting Zoo 2pm-5pm, Hayride, Balloon Artist, and MORE.

Lighted Parade at 6pm!

Crosby 25th Annual Christmas Parade Sat. Dec. 9 at 6pm

Crosby/Huffman Chamber presents its 25th Annual Christmas PARADE with Santa & Mrs. Claus. Starts at 6pm at Crosby Middle School, travels down FM2100 and returns to School.

Mixed results from voters on bond measures

Bonds pass in Huffman ISD and Crosby MUD; Fail in Crosby ISD and Goose Creek

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

With millions of dollars on the table to address growth in the area, voters narrowly passed the Huffman ISD and Crosby MUD bonds, but snubbed the Crosby ISD and Goose Creek CISD bond measures in elections last Tuesday.

The top two reasons for voting against the bonds mentioned on social media were trust and the economy.

Area leaders offered statements following the vote:

CROSBY ISD BOND—FAILED

Crosby ISD was seeking an additional \$85 million from taxpayers to pool with the money left over from the 2017 bond to build new facilities to address growth. Voters resoundingly defeated the request,



Signs across the precinct in front of Crosby Library led voters to one of the most prominent poll locations in the area.

1,072 (35.02%) voting for and 1,989 (64.98%) against the proposition. The bond only passed in Pct. 0251 and failed in all other precincts. Included in the bond wish list was a new middle school with only Phase 1 to be constructed, a new elementary school, and district-wide maintenance and renovations.

Superintendent Paula Patterson was unavailable for an interview but sent a statement.

“Thank you to everyone who voted in the 2023 bond

election. Voting is one of the most cherished rights we have. Although the Crosby ISD bond did not pass, we are moving forward. We will work to find room for the additional students who are coming. We will continue the work of earning trust and showing that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars. This bond was almost exclusively focused on additional classrooms needed for current and future students. You’ll hear more from us soon regarding plans for the future. For now, the work continues as we provide exceptional instruction for our students.”

Money from the 2017 bond is currently being used to build a new addition to the high school to help relieve overcrowding. The addition is expected to hold an additional 600 students.

CROSBY MUD BOND—PASSED

The Crosby Municipal Utility District is celebrating the passage of their \$20 million bond proposal. The narrow win came with a nine-vote margin, 103—94

Continued. See BOND ISSUES, Page 2

Crosby’s Hendrix Memorial Library; Veterans honored

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

The blessing of the Thanksgiving season is upon us, and my heart is full of seeing so many wonderful happenings in Crosby ISD. Let’s jump right in.

We were so proud to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Don Hendrix this month. Dr. Hendrix served as Superintendent of Schools in Crosby ISD for more than 21 years, from 1986-2007. Dr. Hendrix was superintendent when I was a student in Crosby ISD, and he was also became one of my college instructors. He lived and breathed Crosby ISD. On November 10, our communities came together to officially name the li-



Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

brary at Crosby High School as “The Dr. Don Hendrix Memorial Library.” Dr. Hendrix once told his friend of 65 years that the greatest honor for an educator would be having a library named after him or her. Dr. Hendrix now has that. At the cere-



Ribbon cutting and dedication of the Dr. Don Hendrix Memorial Library at Crosby High School.

mony, Dr. Hendrix’s oldest son, Dean, his widow, Maryland, and former Crosby ISD Superintendent, Mr. Mike Joseph, shared stories about his

love of learning. Dr. Hendrix was raised by a single mother, and he spent every day as a child in a library. His curiosity and love of discovery were lifelong

passions until his passing in 2021. Future generations of Crosby High

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 7

Gun Buyback Event this Saturday Nov. 18

HARRIS COUNTY – The Harris County Sheriff’s Office is partnering with the Office of Commissioner Lesley Briones, Precinct 4, to organize a gun buyback event. This event encourages residents to voluntarily turn in their firearms for gift cards just ahead of the holidays.

We hope to see everyone at the gun buyback event on Saturday, November 18, from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Westchase Park and Ride, 11050 Harwin Dr, Houston, TX, 77072.

This event is a proactive community safety initiative and can



have positive outcomes in preventing accidents and promoting responsible gun ownership. There is \$170,000 in gift cards to hand out to the community and those cards are ready for immediate use.

All weapons collected during this buy back event will be destroyed and will not be resold or

kept by the Sheriff’s Office.

For those planning to turn in firearms next week, do not sell your firearms to solicitors who may be outside the event. You never know if that firearm ends up in the wrong hands. Let our professionally trained staff safely dispose of the firearms.

CUIC continues mission after 40 years of service to Crosby

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

CROSBY – Cory Nelson and his brother Shawn grew up as CUIC kids. The two boys, along with their mom, would visit Churches United In Caring in Crosby to shop for shoes and clothes at the thrift store.

“I never really thought anything of it at the time until I got older and realized why we were going there,” Cory said. Times were tough and the family looked for deals to help survive.

Now the two Crosby brothers, graduates of Crosby High School, have carved out their own success in the oilfield business and are giving back to the charity that helped clothe



Cory Nelson, left, and his brother Shawn in the middle present a check for \$6,000 to CUIC Treasurer Judy van Tries, left, and CUIC President Skip Greenwade. The donation will go a long way in funding Christmas assistance.

them in their early life.

On Friday, the two brothers presented a check for \$6,000 to CUIC leadership at their board meeting to help further the mission of helping others in need.

It comes on the heels of

the 40th anniversary of CUIC.

“This gift from two clients we helped back in the 1990s personifies the mission of CUIC,” said CUIC

Continued. See CUIC 40th Anniversary, Page 2

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*APY=Annual Percentage Yield. Rates are available for new money and money currently on deposit with CRCU. Minimum \$100 deposit is required. Penalty for early withdrawal. Fees may reduce earnings. APYs, terms, and conditions are accurate as of 09/13/23 and are subject to change without notice. After the promotional period ends, the 9-month CD will renew at 12 months. Promotion does not apply to IRA and HSA CDs. Certificates of Deposit are non-transferable and non-negotiable. Offer subject to change or cancellation at any time. Please contact a representative for more details. CRCU membership required.

Mixed results from voters on bond measures

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

voting for. Two similar votes over the last few years failed both times by the same amount of a couple dozen. "I'm excited it passed," said Steven Schreiber, president of Crosby MUD. "Even if we sold them right away, it would take eight to nine months before we would see any kind of construction," he said.

Schreiber also said they would only sell the bonds as they needed them, limiting any kind of impact to taxpayers.

The big money, he said, would be spent on the infrastructure. Approximately \$1.5 million on the wastewater treatment plant, \$6.77 million on water supply, \$2.24 million on wastewater collection system, \$5.799 million on water distribution system, \$1.57 million on lift station improvements, and the remainder on other improvements throughout the system.

"We're trying to stay up with the growth, but it's not easy," he said. Schreiber said they could see a mountain of growth coming and adding more taps would be on the agenda for the foreseeable future.

Schreiber also believes voters understood there was no increase to their rates with this bond, but if it had failed, it was inevitable that water rates would have increased to meet the burden of maintenance and expansion.

"We all live in this community. We didn't want to have to raise rates, but that was inevitable if the bond didn't pass," he said.

The monthly increase could have been as much as \$50 and would have been burdensome to fami-

lies in a tight economy.

"We are so tightly regulated we don't have a lot of wiggle room with agencies like TCEQ and the Water Board," he said.

Crosby MUD has been fortunate enough to secure grants to take care of other projects with matching funds and grants in the millions.

"It was a grant that allowed us to get the new building erected. The grants are great, and we've been lucky to get one five out of the last six years," he said, "but you can't always bank on that."

The board met on Tuesday to canvass the votes and begin making plans.

GOOSE CREEK CISD BOND—FAILED

Goose Creek CISD sought \$386,310,000 in their three propositions. Proposition A had the largest ticket item with \$285 million to replace the main building at Sterling High School with structural foundation, and replace Winnie Brown Gym, natatorium, and vocational building. An additional \$24 million would have been used for safety and security upgrades, another \$15 million for facility upgrades throughout the district including new roofs, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Another \$6.2 million would have been spent on replacing 35 buses, athletic updates throughout the district, and \$510,000 on the demolition of old San Jacinto Elementary School. Proposition B would have addressed ADA standards at Stallworth, structural repairs at the stadium, replace the press box, and updates on the concourse, concession stands, fine arts locker rooms, and restrooms.



Huffman ISD administration building was among the polling locations at last week's election.

Proposition C addressed a network hardware refresh and technology throughout the district.

Proposition A failed with 2,560 (43.85%) for and 3,278 (56.15%) against. Proposition B failed with a wider margin of 1,986 (34.23%) against and 3,816 (65.77%) against. Voters turned down Proposition C with 2,117 (36.68%) voting for and 3,655 (63.32%) against.

"We fully accept that despite the gallant effort to inform our citizens about our district needs, that economic times, political climate, and personal hardship some of our community may be facing, have likely impacted this result. The needs have not gone away and still exist. District administrators will begin to identify alternative ways to consider how to address our most critical needs. We too are hopeful that our national, regional, and local economic circumstances improve in the near future," said Superintendent Dr. Randal O'Brien.

The superintendent wasn't disheartened but was back on the road visiting campuses and was at the meeting of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.

"Our school board and administration listened to the voice of the community, and they said no. Not this time," he said resolutely.

The needs are still there, and O'Brien said they would come back to it.

"When you separate the projects out, you get a better feel. A was focused on academics, B on athletics, and Prop C on technology. Academics had the closest margin. Our community feels for the need, it's just things are tight right now," he said.

With compression from the state legislature, the district's tax rate will drop 20 cents this year. Even with the passage of the bond, it would have only taken 8 cents of that drop leaving taxpayers with a reduction of 12 cents.

Despite 62 public forums, 31 of those at a campus specifically for those teachers, the election did attract a higher vote than in previous years, which was a good thing according to O'Brien.

Goose Creek CISD currently fits about in the middle in comparison with tax rates to other school districts.

"We aspire to be the lowest and get the greatest value for that, but the flip side of the coin is you have

to invest in your future," he said. "If we wait too long, we'll have portable buildings around every single campus," he said.

Just to house the students at Sterling High School would require between 80 and 100 portable buildings at just over \$100,000 each not including installation, plumbing, electrical, internet, sidewalks that are ADA compliant and numerous other required amenities. To replace the 35 school buses will cost more than \$100,000 per bus. The bond would have eased that amount from coming out of the general fund.

O'Brien said they would go back and figure out how to meet some of the immediate needs and continue educating students.

HUFFMAN ISD BOND—PASSED

Superintendent Dr. Benny Soileau thanked the community for passing the \$92 million Proposition A on the ballot last Tuesday. The proposal addresses aging buildings, the building of a new career Center, new police and academic training building, safety and security throughout the district, additional technology, and new school buses.

Soileau said that even with the passage of the bond, the district would still need to tighten the financial belt because of inflation and the loss of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) in January 2024.

"During COVID, we had extra needs and the government provided us the money through ESSER funds to hire the people we needed," Soileau said. "Now, those funds go away, and we're left with

a tough of decision of what to do with those hires. The needs are still there," he said.

Soileau was disappointed with state leaders, some who called for a no vote to all school bonds.

"I think it's time for the leadership to step up and tell us if they have a better option on how to finance these buildings and put kids where they need to have a place where they can be educated," Soileau said.

He was also put out by the requirement from legislators to place the statement on the ballot that the bond was a tax increase.

"Now, we're making statements at the ballot box that it's a tax increase even if the district has a zero-cent tax impact, if it's not going to raise their taxes a single penny," the frustrated superintendent said.

"We had many hurdles that we had to overcome. We have had multiple special sessions where school funding and vouchers had been talked about. People are more divided than they've been in quite some time. Certainly, Austin is more divided than it's been in quite some time. And we even had to overcome obstacles like our own state representatives making statements that voters should not pass school bonds," he said.

Soileau said they will sit down and put together timelines for the projects.

"We'll ask our oversight committee to help make a plan moving forward," he said.

John Reynolds, a long-time resident, and retired ag teacher has agreed to chair that committee.

CUIC 40th Anniversary,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

President Skip Greenwade.

The funds come from a golf tournament the boys started and have grown over the last several years.

Cory is president of Big State Oilfield and works side by side with his brother Shawn who serves as vice president of the company.

"We grew up in Crosby and really didn't realize how tough times were for our parents," he said. "We always had food on the table and my wife Kristin, her family also shopped there and received assistance."

Cory and Kristin graduated in 1998 and Shawn in 2004. College wasn't in their future.

"I barely made it through school, so I was destined to be a vocational guy. My brother did fine in school, but the money wasn't there for college," he said humbly.

They went to work for an oilfield company and Cory became the operations manager.

"After 13 years, the owner was ready to retire and so my brother and I started our own business," he said. The boys have increased the company to 35 employees and are still expanding.

Their success led them to participate in a fundraiser golf tournament for the Shriner's Hospital in Galveston, but they felt like they should be helping their own community.

They organized it and for four years, they have hosted the golf tournament. Even giving to CUIC has continued to humble Cory. "I felt bad about giving a \$3,000 donation those early years," he said, thinking about the six figure donations being made to the burn unit at Shriners.

"When we walked into their meeting back then to



Volunteer Norman Cobb spends his days working on electrical devices that are donated to CUIC making sure they work properly and doing light repairs.

make the donation, they were so excited to receive that amount," he said. "Some of the ladies had tears in their eyes. That was such a humbling experience."

Now, the brothers continue to build the tournament so that their donation back to CUIC increases.

The mission of CUIC began in 1982 when the country was amid an economic recession.

"Many of these people had moved to Houston from northern states, and they did not have enough money to return home," said Jody Fuchs in his narrative describing the early beginnings of the organization.

"They also lacked any family in the area to assist them in their time of need. Crosby had a small roadside park perched on the western banks of the San Jacinto River along old Highway 90. It was intended as a free overnight camping stop for travelers. However, it quickly grew into a long-term 'Tent City' that made worldwide news," Fuchs writes.

Local churches did their best to assist the wayfarers, but soon realized they were being taken advantage of.

"They would go from church to church requesting assistance," Greenwade said, "and we thought we could eliminate that by working together."

In late 1982, seven churches banded together to enter discussions for organizing a community food pantry. Those churches included Community Baptist Church of Crosby, Crosby Assembly of God, Crosby Brethren Church, Crosby United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church of Crosby, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and the Second Baptist Church of Highlands.

CUIC opened its doors to the public in December of 1983 and remains a vital part of the community. From a small rent house to a racquetball and fitness center, the charity now sits on a one-acre lot on Church Street next to the Crosby Fair and Rodeo parking lot and continues to meet the needs of Crosby families.

The organization is entirely staffed by volunteers except for one cashier who manages the front of the thrift store.

This weekend, the Crosby community has an opportunity to support the charity and wish them a



Volunteer Dee Ann Rook oversees the toy donations cleaning them and making sure they are in working order.

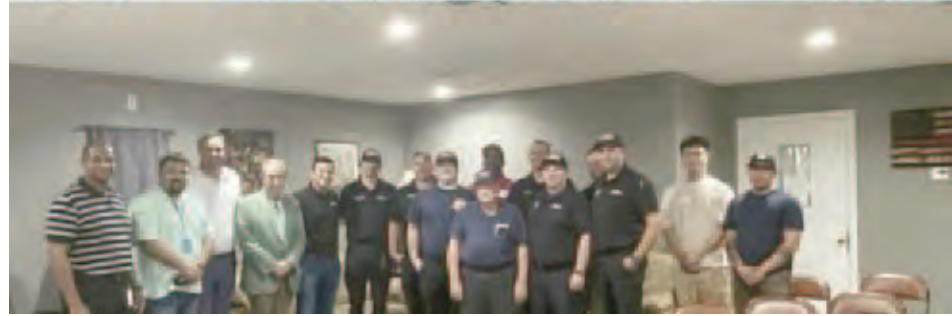
happy 40th at their 7th Annual Holiday Market. Note that the event is not held at the CUIC building but at Crosby United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 1334 Runneburg Road in Crosby from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Get there early!" said Judy van Tries, the treasurer for the charity.

"There are lots of good deals including \$3 wreaths and other nice items at incredible prices," she said.

To learn more about CUIC, visit them on Facebook at [HYPERLINK "https://www.facebook.com/churchesunitedincaring/"](https://www.facebook.com/churchesunitedincaring/) <https://www.facebook.com/churchesunitedincaring/>.

Highlands FD visits ZXP



Highlands Fire Department wants to send a huge "Thank You" to ZXP Technologies and Dick Hite with Support our Red and Blue foundation. They have been an exceptional community partner and have come together to donate a set of 4 Seek FirePro X Thermal Infrared Cameras (TICs) to Highlands Fire Department. These thermal infrared cameras will be used during firefighting operations and assist in zero visibility conditions. It will help us conduct better and faster search and rescue, locating hard to find fires and hot spots, improves situational awareness along with the safety of our firefighters. We appreciate their generosity and support!

Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Texas Senator Mayes Middleton Statement on Legislation



Fellow Texan, Last night, I joined my colleagues in the Senate to once again pass school choice, teacher pay raises, more funding to build the wall along the border, and the strongest border security bill in Texas history. As a state, we must defend ourselves from the invasion occurring at the southern border. If the federal government refuses to do their job, then Texas will secure our border. I will continue to fight for as long as it takes to see universal school choice become law, where every parent is empowered to be the primary decision maker in their child's education.

Our rights as parents come from God, not government. Every parent has the God-given right to choose the best educational opportunity for their child.

Today, Governor Abbott signed my bill to ban all COVID vaccine mandates into law. No one should ever be forced to choose between their job and taking the COVID vaccine, including nursing students and interns. Senate Bill 7 is the strongest ban on COVID vaccine mandates in the country. There are NO carve-outs or exceptions to the ban.

God Bless Texas,
Mayes Middleton

Christmas on The Hill Parade

Holiday traditions run deep in the south, and the Christmas on the Hill Parade is one of our most cherished Mont Belvieu traditions. This special event gives the community the opportunity to support our locals and 100% of the parade entry fees brought in from this parade are given directly to the West Chambers County Food Pantry right here in Mont Belvieu. This the season, so let's give back in one of the most meaningful ways we know how.

Parade info

The Christmas on the Hill parade will be at 6:00 p.m. on December 3, 2023.

2023 Entry Fees

Entry fees are \$50 per entry and an additional \$50 per vehicle included in your parade set up. (Truck + float is 1 entry - limit one float per entry)

2023 Parade Theme

The public has spoken - the 2023 parade theme will be Gingerbread Village. This is optional for your entry.

Attention Spectators!

Pick your favorite viewing spot on the Barbers Hill ISD side of Eagle Drive. The parade is best viewed from that side of the road and that's where all of the candy & hand-outs are given. Please stay off medians and remain behind the barricades for your safety.

Momentum Builds to Finalize Permanent Home for Battleship Texas in Galveston

Galveston, TX - [November 9, 2023] - The Battleship Texas Foundation is thrilled to express its deepest gratitude to the City of Galveston and the Port of Galveston Board of Trustees for their recent consideration and acceptance of the terms of negotiations and future lease agreements. This renewed vote of confidence will further progress the mission to restore and revitalize the Battleship Texas, solidifying its place as an integral part of the Galveston community.

"We at the Foundation see a bright future for the Battleship Texas," said Tony Gregory, President and CEO. "We look forward to stewarding the legacies of the brave men who served our great nation aboard and expanding our educational programming so that the Battleship Texas can be cherished for decades to come."

The Battleship Texas Foundation is excited to be working on an agreement with Landry's, aimed at enriching the Battleship Texas experience for Galveston and patrons from around the world by bringing the Landry's



world-class operational expertise and integrating the Battleship Texas with the Pier 21 development. As negotiations are in progress, the focus remains steadfast on enhancing maintenance, preservation, educational programs, and preserving the Foundation's operational oversight and strategic vision for the future.

"We look forward to bringing the Battleship to her new home at Pier 21 and reopening as a world-class educational museum honoring our veterans and the storied history of the Battleship Texas," added

Matthew Pham, Vice President of Development.

Due to generous support from the State of Texas, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Valkor, Gulf Copper, Dini Spheris and donors, the campaign to save the Battleship Texas has reached 80% completion. The focus now shifts to the second phase of the campaign, titled "Bring Her Home!" This \$15 million phase will transform the USS Texas into a state-of-the-art visitor experience. The plans include the restoration of 60 unique spaces featuring interactive and technology-driven exhibits, aug-

mented reality, holograms, guided tours, and integrations with cell phones. Additionally, the Texas will be climate-controlled for year-round access and will offer expanded visitor amenities.

These enhancements will also pave the way for the expansion of the Foundation's cornerstone educational program: the Overnight Education Program, where children can experience a piece of what sailors during WWII would have endured. Before restoration, Battleship Texas Foundation hosted 4,000 children per year as a part

of this program, and the updates to the Visitor Experience will allow this to grow exponentially. Furthermore, the Foundation will invest approximately \$8.5 million to build new home port infrastructure to safely moor the Battleship at Pier 21 and ensure she stands as a testament to the past, present, and future of our great nation.

Visit BattleshipTexas.org to donate or join the Flagship Circle with an annual pledge of \$2,500 or more. This exclusive membership includes the unique opportunity to have your name written on the hull of the Battleship before she goes back into the water, among other exclusive access opportunities to Battleship events. Additional merchandise such as genuine 1912 paperweights and plaques crafted from the ship's original steel are also available for purchase along with opportunities for named recognition on board, tied to specific spaces, from the Gangway to the Engine Rooms. For more information, contact Matthew Pham at matt@battleshipTexas.org.

Thankfulness: (noun) the feeling of being happy or grateful because of something

Sometimes it seems we live in a world that has forgotten thankfulness. For instance, in the US we get to live freer lives than most. According to the 2021 Human Freedom Index, which represents 165 countries and territories and nearly 99% of the world's population, the US scored 8.73 (The highest score being 9.01) in human freedom, 9.09 in personal freedom (highest - 9.56), and 8.24 in economic freedom (highest - 9.02).

That is impressive, yet there are many in this nation who, rather than looking at what they have and being grateful, look instead at what they don't

THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



The Power of Thankfulness

have and demand more of what they want regardless of what it might cost and who would be called on to pay the price.

Honestly, this is human nature. We instinctively want what we don't have. The serpent made certain promises about the forbidden fruit, and both Adam and Eve fell for his lies sure that the fruit would give them "more." It did, of course, but not the "more" they wanted. Had they re-focused, taken even a little

time to look around at the paradise they were living in and been truly grateful for that gift, the one tree would not have had anywhere near as much appeal. Throughout history the same story has been told over and over again.

Psalm 100:4 urges us to "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." Thanksgiving isn't just a family-oriented holiday

filled with food and football; at least it shouldn't be. True thanksgiving is powerful and should be a constant for us all year. It helps us reorient, like a compass turning to true north. It puts our focus back where it belongs, on our Creator to whom we owe all thanks and praise.

Too, as we shift our focus onto Him and all He has done for us, we lose sight of those things that tempt us to dissatisfaction and discontent, the

storms around us that would inspire fear, and the weaknesses that make us feel unworthy. There are also medical benefits. Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., is a University of California professor of psychology and the author of *The Little Book of Gratitude*. He says gratitude (aka thankfulness) is good medicine. "Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person's life. It can lower blood pressure and improve immune function."

Bottom Line? Thankfulness: We need to practice it, and not only on the third Thursday in November!

www.myhillsidefamily.com
@myhillsidefamily

Texas Senator Mayes Middleton Celebrates New Baytown Location with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

BAYTOWN - Texas State Senator Mayes Middleton recently opened an office in Baytown and celebrated with a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Chamber Board members, Ambassadors, staff and constituents were in attendance to show their support.

Prior to serving in the Texas Senate, Mayes served two terms in the Texas House Representatives, representing Chambers and Galveston Counties. During his last term in the Texas House, Mayes served as Chairman of the Texas House Freedom Caucus.



Pictured left to right: Bonnie Garcia, Steve DonCarlos, Gilbert Santana, Jackland McDowell, Ryan Caruso, Senator Mayes Middleton, Blythe Adam, Dan Linebaugh, John McKee, Jeff Walters, Karla Opryshek, Jessica Sims, Stephanie Turner

Now in the Texas Senate, Mayes represents Senate District 11, encompassing portions of Brazoria, Galveston and Harris Counties. Throughout his time in both the House and Senate, Mayes has consistently ranked among the top most conservative members of the Legislature. Senator Middleton currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and as a member on the Senate Committees on Administration, Business & Commerce, Education, Jurisprudence, and State Affairs.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION

By BILL KING



Democrats Should Propose Alternative Offsets

Last week, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$14.3 billion aid package to Israel, paired with a corresponding cut in the increased funding for the IRS included in the Inflation Control Act passed last year.

The bill, which will be dead on arrival at the U.S. Senate, was mostly partisan theatrics, with Republicans attempting to placate their base that is pro-Israel but hates more funding for the IRS.

So, I am completely okay with members of Congress insisting that any new spending be offset by cutting spending somewhere else. However, I do not agree with the Republicans' proposal to reduce IRS enforcement which almost certainly make the deficit worse.

Many economists estimate that as much as 10% of our economy is conducted underground and is never taxed. Much of this is in the illicit drug and human trafficking trades. But there is also a large independent contractor community that largely does not pay the same income and payroll taxes that you and I do.

But beyond those completely avoiding taxation in the shadows, there is plenty of other fudging that goes on in the preparation of tax returns. For many years, I practiced commercial litigation. In a number of cases, I had the opportunity to review tax returns of prominent and successful individuals as part of the discovery process.

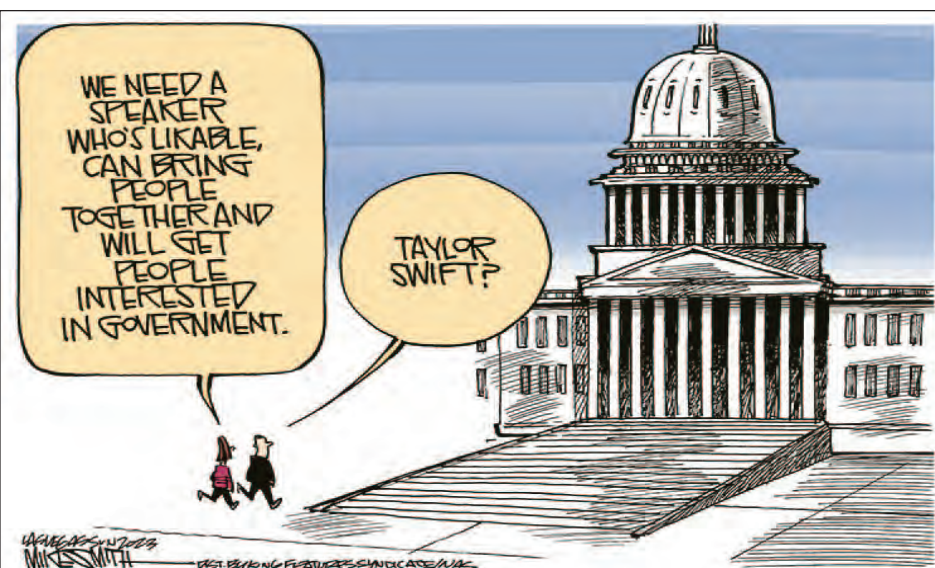
Those in the underground economy and those fudging their tax returns do so, and almost always get away with it, because the IRS is overwhelmed and only audits a tiny fraction, about .04% of returns filed. I am perfectly fine with Congress setting limits on the kinds of returns that can be audited - say only those over \$500,000 and those failing to report their income altogether.

And it's not like there aren't plenty of other places to cut or loopholes to plug - loopholes which ultimately have the same effect as spending. For example, the carried interest loophole, which allows private equity investors to treat an interest they receive for putting to together a deal as a capital gain instead of regular income, costs the federal government as much as \$18 billion annually - enough to fund the aid to Israel by itself.

Of course, the cost of the aid to Israel, even if you throw in the aid to Ukraine and some money for the southern border (all of which enjoy widespread, bi-partisan support), are a rounding error on our national debt and deficits going forward. The Congressional Budget Office's current baseline projections are that the federal government will run up another \$15 trillion in debt this decade, mostly driven by the rising costs of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Until we start talking about the fact that Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are not sustainable in their current forms, any discussion about the national debt and deficits is mostly partisan noise. But you must start somewhere. So, let's hear it, Democrats. What is your alternative proposed offset to provide this aid to Israel and Ukraine and to strengthen our southern border?

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.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Legislature Gets to Work in Fourth Special Session

The Texas Legislature, conceived as a part-time body to meet every other year for 140 days, is now in its record fifth session (counting the regular session). When the impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is included, legislators have been in Austin pretty much the entire year, as the Texas Tribune noted.

The Senate quickly passed measures last week allocating \$1.54 billion for segments of a border wall, a school finance bill that increases per-student funding, teacher retention bonuses for teachers and vouchers to parents who elect to send their children to private schools, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Once again, the onus is on the House, which has been reluctant to pass a school choice bill. The measure, being strongly pushed by Gov. Greg Abbott, is largely opposed by Democratic members and rural Republican legislators. On Friday, the latest plan was approved by the House Select Committee.

VOTER TURNOUT IN AMENDMENT ELECTION WAS 14.4%

Voter turnout in the Nov. 7 election reached 14.4% of registered voters. The good news is that is the highest turnout for a constitutional amendment election since 2005, according to the Texas Secretary of State's office. The bad news: well, it was just 14.4% of the electorate.

Voters approved all but one of the 14 propositions on the ballot, the lone loser being a bid to raise the mandatory retirement age for judges from 75 years to 79. Measures providing property tax relief and a boost in teacher retirement pay passed overwhelmingly.

Also receiving approval was Proposition 5, which establishes a \$3.9 billion permanent endowment for research in eligible universities. Those include Texas State University, the University of North Texas, Texas Tech University and the University of Houston.

"We feel like we won the Su-



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

TEA RELEASES FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATINGS

The Texas Education Agency has released its 2022-2023 financial accountability ratings for Texas public schools, with 88% receiving a "Superior Achievement" rating. The rating system, established in 2001, "encourages school systems to improve financial resources to provide the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes."

Only eight public schools and three charter schools received substandard achievement ratings. The eight public school districts receiving an "F" were Holiday, Ben Bolt-Palito Blanco, Keene, Priddy, Denver City, Tioga, Matagorda and Sunray ISDs. The three charter schools receiving an "F" were Education Center International Academy in Sunnyvale; St. Anthony School in Carrollton; and Texas Preparatory School.

TEXAS MEDICAID RECIPIENTS WERE VICTIMS OF DATA BREACH

A data breach of a data file transfer company has exposed Texas Medicaid recipients, whose names and Social Security numbers were obtained in the hack. The breach occurred in late May when hackers obtained files being transferred using the MOVEit platform, The Dallas Morning News reported. A total of 67 million people in multiple countries had their personal information illegally obtained, including the Texas Medicaid recipients.

Anyone concerned about being affected by the hack can call UMass Chan, which was providing services directly to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, to find out. That number is 855-457-6006.

MILLIONS OFFERED FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FORESTS

Texas A&M Forest Service is offering \$16.65 million in grant funding to boost urban and community forest initiatives in communities throughout the state.

"The initiatives supported by this grant funding will prioritize communities and neighborhoods in areas of greatest need based on environmental and social data," said Gretchen Riley of the forest service. "By focusing on these areas, we can ensure that the benefits of urban forestry are distributed where they can make the most impact."

The funding comes from the federal Inflation Reduction Act. It is intended to help the state "expand its urban forest canopy, improve air and water quality, reduce energy consumption and enhance the health and well-being of residents," according to the news release.

Grant applications will be accepted from Dec. 11 through Feb. 16, 2024. More information can be found at this link: <https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/CFG/>

OCTOBER RAIN REDUCES DROUGHT CONDITIONS

About half the state received above-normal precipitation in October, which reduced drought conditions to 65%, down 16 percentage points, according to Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. Central Texas and much of Deep East Texas have the most severe drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

"El Niño conditions, warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the eastern Equatorial Pacific, are in place and expected to persist into next year. El Niño typically brings Texas wetter and cooler-than-normal conditions during fall and winter. Those conditions are at least partially responsible for the improvements we saw in October," Wentzel wrote.

TEXAS ROAD FATALITY STREAK SURPASSES 23 YEARS

On an average day for more than two decades, a dozen people have been killed on Texas roadways. That streak nearly ended in February on a day when Texas experienced just one traffic fatality, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. The streak of daily deaths on Texas highways has continued since Nov. 7, 2000, despite the state investing \$17 billion in safety improvements through its 10-year plan.

"Each life lost means a family, neighborhood and community are impacted for a lifetime, and we take safety very seriously as we work to end this horrible streak," said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. "But it's going to take all of us working together to get this done."

Among those safety changes are wider pavement striping, rumble strips on centerlines to alert drivers when they cross over, and roundabout intersections. Drivers can make a difference as well by not operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and fastening their seatbelts. TxDOT reports 48% of deaths on Texas roads come from people not buckling up.

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Dietary Choices

I just spent a wonderful long weekend with my sister and her son, Beau, "up north" at my parents' cabin.

Stubby the red squirrel is doing well. Since the tragic loss of the end of his tail (and his subsequent unofficial adoption by my mother), he has flourished. The end of his tail, while still cut off at a sharp angle, has sprouted an impressive line of dark fur, and he looks dapper, sitting on the railing, shaking his tail and showing off his new plumage.

Mom still dutifully feeds him every day, usually bird food, although he recently had some leftover pasta shells, which he seemed to enjoy very much. Even without my mother's offerings, he is kept busy this time of year with pine cones and acorns and the many other good things there are to be found in the forest.

My mother is an intrepid gardener, braving the cold temperatures, lack of sun and marauding forest wildlife to keep the flowers in her many flowerpots growing and beautiful for much of the year. It is a neverending job, as the deer and, more recently, the wild turkeys love the tasty treats she has cultivated and placed around the house like a free salad bar. A pack of turkeys decimated her begonias earlier in the fall. She sent me a photo of her begonias, pre- and post-turkey invasion, and it was not a pretty sight.

My sister brought the family dog, Mabel, who gets along well with my parents' cat, Katie, and Mabel kept the turkeys and deer at bay. But that didn't mean we were free of animal drama.

My nephew and my dad went down to haul in the dock before the lake froze. My sister and mother and I followed them down to the water's edge, where we discovered the site of a recent raccoon feast.

"They must have been eating crayfish," my father guessed when he saw the enormous pile of fragrant poop at the end of the dock.

"Oh, no!" I yelled, because—at that moment—Mabel discovered the pile of poop and was eating it as quickly as she could.

Mabel was immediately banished to the house (with very stinky breath) while the dock was hauled in and, sometime in there, a door was left open just long enough for Katie the cat to escape, kill a songbird and bite off its head.

"Katie!" my mother scolded. "That was very, very bad!"

Katie looked mighty pleased with herself, and Mabel looked a little relieved because—although she hadn't gotten to eat as much raccoon poop as she thought she was entitled to—at least she was no longer the pet in the most trouble.

That night, we went out to dinner. My sister and nephew and father all had big burgers with bacon and ham and cheese or some combination of all three. I don't eat meat, and I haven't for most of my life, but I don't care what anyone else eats.

Beau, looking at his gigantic burger, told me, "I think we killed enough animals to make up for any that you saved!"

I tried to tell him that I don't make dietary choices for anyone but myself. But then I realized this was not quite true.

Because I did not agree with the dietary choices of Katie, eating songbirds' heads, or Mabel, eating raccoon poop off the dock, or even those turkeys, eating my mother's begonias.

I make a lot of judgments, all the time. And some of them I'm sticking with. Till next time, Carrie

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Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT by FELICIANO JAIMES dba THE HANGOUT BAR LLC, to be located at 13213 CROSBY LYNCHBURG, CROSBY, HARRIS, Texas. Officers of said corporation THE HANGOUT BAR are FELICIANO JAIMES, PRESIDENT.

44-2t

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38-8T

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed proposals for the Wastewater Treatment Plant No. 1 Improvements project, hence referred to as, WWTP No. 1 Improvements located in Harris County, Texas will be received at Cobb, Fendley and Associates, Inc., 13430 Northwest Fwy, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77040 until 2:00 PM on December 6, 2023, and then publicly opened and read. A NON-MANDATORY pre-bid conference will be held at Cobb, Fendley and Associates, Inc., 13430 Northwest Fwy, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77040 at 2:00 PM on November 29, 2023. Local time. Each bid must be accompanied by certified check or bid bond, duly executed, in the amount of five (5%) percent of the bid. Complete bidding documents are available at www.civcastusa.com.

44-2t

LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Malt Beverage Permit (BG) by Ivy's Place LLC, to be located at 6630 FM 2100 STE C, Crosby, Harris County, Texas. Officers of said corporation are Mark Robinson, CEO.

44-2t

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Crosby's Hendrix Memorial Library; Veterans honored

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

School students will now walk through the entrance bearing his name, each time they arrive to check out a book, listen to an author, or spend quiet time reading. Thank you, Dr. Hendrix, for your legacy of exceptional instruction at Crosby ISD.

This month, our students - from the smallest Cougars in Pre-K and Kindergarten to our graduating seniors - put on a patriotic program in honor of Veterans Day and Crosby / Barrett Station veterans and their families. We celebrated veterans, from those who just left active duty all the way up to the 86-year-old great-grandfather of one of our students. Harris County is home to the largest population of veterans in Texas, and the Crosby ISD celebration at Cougar Stadium is one of the largest ceremonies by a school district in our region. We thank them for their service and sacrifice.

Crosby High School's Culinary Arts teacher, Chef Vasso Espinosa, was the featured speaker at the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon. She hosted a "Turkey Talk." Chef Espinosa shared some secrets from the kitchen of our student-run restaurant, the Cougar Bistro. Her secret to mouth-watering turkey is lots of herbs and butter tucked directly under the skin of the centerpiece bird. During the time in the oven, the turkey meat incorporates the wonderful flavor from the seasonings of rosemary, thyme, and sage. Yum! Our culinary arts students are also celebrating a generous donation of \$2000 from Skero's Furniture that is helping purchase an industrial steamer for the CHS kitchen.



Dr. Don Hendrix's eldest son, Dean Hendrix, speaks during ceremony to name the Crosby High School library after his father, the longest-serving Superintendent in Crosby ISD history.

We also want to thank Trusted Insurance Group for choosing the Cougar Bistro to host their Thanksgiving company lunch, catered by our students. There's nothing better than COMMUNITY cooking.

This month, staff members on each campus spent their Staff Development Friday learning, eating, laughing, and learning some more. At Drew Elementary School, teachers closely examined data points regarding student

performance. Their analysis included identifying areas of improvement and then tailoring their teaching strategies to suit student needs. At Crosby Middle School and Newport Elementary School, the campus-wide training focused on the benefits of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, including new strategies for rewarding positive behaviors more effectively. At Crosby High School, teachers trained on STAAR test ad-



Newport Elementary School students perform at Crosby ISD's Veterans Day Commemoration and Celebration at Cougar Stadium. Crosby / Barrett Station veterans are recognized for their service during Crosby ISD's Veterans Day Commemoration and Celebration at Cougar Stadium.



Crosby High School Culinary Arts instructor, Chef Vasso Espinosa, teaches "Turkey Talk" for the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce.



Drew Elementary School teachers use data analysis to tailor teaching strategies to suit student needs.

ministration, special programs, 504 accommodations, and Apple Pencil with our Technology Services trainers. Our campus administrators had a development session by Region IV focused on how to build efficacy on their campuses, or zero in on what's needed to help students reach their potential. Staff Development Fridays also include optional wellness sessions. We love seeing our staff have a chance to participate in a rotating wellness class each month.

One housekeeping note. We are currently seeking input on a survey for the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar. We are asking one question: do you prefer a four-day instructional week or a five-day instructional week? We have a link to the survey embedded in the District's weekly "Cougar News Now" newsletter. The newsletter can be found in an email from the District and posted on our social media platforms. I hope the start of the

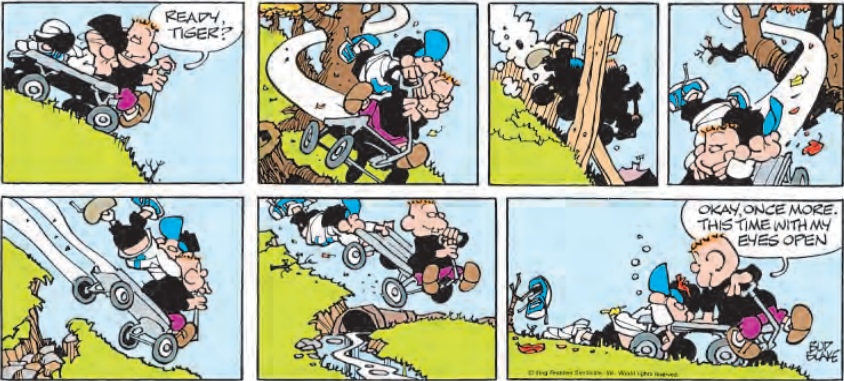
holiday season is a joyful time for our students, staff, families, and communities. Thanksgiving reminds me that we all need moments to ponder our gratitude and acknowledge all those who are blessings in our lives. From the Crosby ISD family to your family, Happy Thanksgiving. We are Moving Forward! Go Coogs!

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



TIGER



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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 BOLTIKOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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November 13, 2023 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Mausoleum
5 "Born Free" lioness
9 Branch
12 Ornamental jug
13 Jupiter counterpart
14 Sheepish remark
15 Famed diarist
17 Squeak stopper
18 Historic times
19 Grown-up
21 Town square
24 Tizzy
25 Occupy the throne
26 Imaginary
30 Right angle
31 Count with an orchestra
32 Simile center
33 Bloated, in a way
35 Computer brand
36 Literary Jane
37 Puccini work
38 Curry spice
40 Roundish do
42 Palindromic constellation
43 Yearly charge
48 Up to
49 Oboe insert
50 Cupid's realm
51 Compass dir.

DOWN

1 Earl Grey, e.g.
2 Haves
3 Gents
4 Light wind
5 Poet Pound
6 Meadows
7 Day light
8 With suspicion, as a look
9 Complete reversal
10 Banister

11 Beer ingredient
16 Monk's title
20 Cato's 502
21 Get ready, briefly
22 Humdinger
23 Like the Supremes and the Pointer Sisters
24 Use scissors
26 Lose color
27 Tempe sch.
28 Addict
29 Zhivago's love
31 Novelist Malamud
34 Memo letters
35 Lunar program
37 Mouths (Lat.)
38 Felines
39 "The Haj" author
40 From the start
41 Elmer of cartoons
44 "The Matrix" role
45 Dandy guy
46 Actress Mendes
47 Moray, for one

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- LITERATURE: What is Dorothy's last name in "The Wizard of Oz"?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which U.S. states share a border with Mexico?
- MOVIES: What are Indiana Jones and his father searching for in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"?
- TELEVISION: Which TV dramedy is set on Wisteria Lane?
- LANGUAGE: What is a common Latin phrase meaning "something for something"?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the fastest fish?
- INVENTIONS: Where was the first compass invented?
- SCIENCE: How long does it take for the sun's light to reach Earth?
- U.S. STATES: Which state is the smallest in land size?
- MEDICAL: What is a common name for aphthous stomatitis?

Solution time: 23 mins

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FOOTBALL SCORES & SCHEDULES

LAST WEEK'S SCORES

6A D1 PLAYOFFS
Galena Park North Shore 42, Deer Park 14
The Woodlands 35, Spring 0
Spring Westfield 35, Conroe 20

6A D2 PLAYOFFS
Willis 62, Aldine Nimitz 34
Conroe Oakridge 29, Spring DeKaney 28
Sheldon C.E. King 70, Channelview 21

5A D1 PLAYOFFS
Barbers Hill 43, McKinney North 21

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

6A D1 PLAYOFFS
Galena Park North Shore (11-0) vs. Clear Springs (7-4), 7 p.m., Friday at Galena Park ISD Stadium in Houston, Texas
Spring Westfield (9-2) vs. Klein Cain (8-3) 7 p.m., Friday at Tomball ISD Stadium in Tomball, Texas

6A D2 PLAYOFFS
Sheldon C. E. King (8-3) vs. Clear Falls (7-4) 7 p.m., Friday at Challenger-Columbia Stadium in Webster, Texas

5A D1 PLAYOFFS
Barbers Hill (9-2) vs. Richland (11-0) 7 p.m., Friday at Memorial Stadium in Hutto, Texas

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