



Superintendent Patterson welcomes "Superintendent for the Day," Mr. Taren Thompson, a fifth grader from Barrett Elementary School.

HIGHLANDS

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE:

Crosby ISD scores high Financial Rating; New addition to High School planned

By Paula Patterson
Crosby ISD Superintendent

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

We are on the cusp of a new year! 2024 presents a new chance for new opportunities and new connections.

I have some important financial news to write about, and an item that the Board of Trustees and my administration are so proud to share. Crosby ISD achieved its highest School FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) rating in more than five years, scoring a 96 or Superior Achievement for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The state's accountability rating system ensures Texas public schools are held accountable for the quality of

their financial management. It is important to note that School FIRST ratings are given for the prior fiscal year, meaning 2021-2022 ratings are issued during the 2023 - 2024 school year. Crosby ISD Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Yvonne Johnson, shared the 2023 report during a public hearing at the Board of Trustees meeting last month. CFO Johnson shared the ratings and historical data for the past 5 fiscal years. Board members pointed to the growth, in particular from the financial hardship year of 2017-2018 and the 6-point increase from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022. Until now, the School FIRST reports were based on the work of prior administrations. The 2021-2022 school year was our first year, so I want to say kudos to CFO Johnson and



Rendering of future additional academic wing at Crosby High School by architectural firm, Stantec.

her team. Our first year here and the team was able to increase our rating by 6 points. This is great news for taxpayers.

The new year will include further progress on the expansion of Crosby

High School. I wanted to share an update presented to the Board of Trustees on December 18th from our project manager. We made tweaks to the original plans drawn up after voters approved the 2017

bond. My desire was to get rid of any flex space that wasn't being used directly for instruction and make room for additional classrooms. The plans from 2017 included: 30 classrooms, 6 labs, and room for

816 students. The space-saving measures we've implemented boosted the number of classrooms from 30 to 34, making room for 912 students. We are actively selecting materials that are significantly less expensive in today's dollars than materials used in 2013-2016. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress at CHS.

Now, allow me to brag on our students. What a joy it was to spend a day with our Superintendent for the Day, Mr. Taren Thompson, from Barrett Elementary School. Taren was the winner of the auction from the Crosby Education Foundation gala in August. He had a chance to spend the day with me performing superintendent duties, including

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT MESSAGE, P. 2

New CEO named at Baytown Hospital

Baytown — Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital announced the appointment of Adrienne Joseph, PhD, as its new CEO, effective January 1. Joseph has more than 30 years of extensive healthcare experience, having worked in academic and community settings. Most recently, Joseph has served as chief operating officer at Houston Methodist Baytown since 2020.

She has played a crucial role in driving positive change and growth within the institution. Her leader-

ship has contributed to several recent improvements at Houston Methodist Baytown including the completion of the five-story Unity Tower expansion project and the impressive rise in patient safety rankings by Vizient, a health care quality organization.

"Adrienne has excelled in multiple roles within Houston Methodist," said Dr. Marc Boom, president and CEO of Houston Methodist. "Her breadth of experience will be a definite benefit for Houston Methodist Bay-

town and I'm excited to see how the hospital will continue to flourish under her leadership."

Joseph holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Louisiana State University, a Master of Business Administration from Tulane University and a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy from Southern University. Committed to community service, Joseph is an active board member of the United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County.

About Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital has provided Baytown and east Harris, Liberty and Chambers counties with excellent medical care since its opening in 1948. The hospital continues to grow to meet the health care needs of its growing community through an ongoing construction and renovation program that has seen the opening of a new five-story patient tower, emergency

center, outpatient center and medical-surgical units. As a health care leader, the hospital is proud to have a fully integrated residency program focused on educating and inspiring future practitioners. Today, Houston Methodist Baytown provides the most advanced and innovative procedures while never wavering from its focus on compassionate care and providing a safe, patient-centered healing environment. Houstonmethodist.org/baytown.



ADRIENNE JOSEPH
New CEO at HMB

Rotarians preparing for 49th annual Chili Feast on Feb. 3

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The Highlands Rotary Club members are finalizing plans for their upcoming 49th Annual Chili Feast fundraiser set for Feb. 3, 2024.

The Chili Feast chairman this year is Gay Lynn Milliorn, president-elect of the Highlands Rotary Club.

The club members looked immediately to their largest fundraiser of the year, the Annual Chili Feast, Raffle, and Auction.

"This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and it's pretty significant," Gay Lynn said. "This money goes to projects we undertake in the community throughout the year and it

also funds scholarships we give away to graduating seniors."

Last year, the club gave away 21 scholarships of varying amounts, totaling about \$37,500.

The fundraiser is hosted at St Jude's Catholic Church on 808 South Main in Highlands from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. While the date is about a month away, deadlines for sponsorships are quickly coming. The final date for sponsorships has been extended to Jan. 9, 2024. For businesses or individuals looking for a year-end tax donation, they must be in before Dec. 31, 2023.

"We have to set an early deadline in order to get the sponsors names on the banners, posters, and all



Last Year Kris Dahlquist won the Top Prize in the Chili Feast Raffle, a 2023 Chevrolet Trailblazer. Pictured with Rotarians Andy Scott and Denise Smith.



Highlands Rotary Chili Cooking team prepares the special Chester's Famous Recipe onsite for the enjoyment of attendees at the Chili Feast. The delicious chili is a secret recipe originated by Rotarian Chester Stasney.

other marketing materials for the event," she said.

Sponsorships range from the top level at Diamond for \$5,000, Platinum for \$2,500, Gold for \$1,000, Silver \$500, and Bronze for \$250. Raffle tickets include two chili dinner tickets and a chance in the drawing to win a 2024 Chevrolet Trax or Trailblazer from Turner Chevrolet or any one of 15 other prizes. The winner is responsible for the payment of all local, state, and federal taxes.

Outside of the top prize vehicle, other prizes include four \$200 gift cards, 32-inch smart television, a 55-inch smart television, air fryer, portable ice maker, shotgun, 28-inch Black Stone Cooker, outdoor propane fire pit, rifle, and more.

Milliorn also pointed to the live auction and silent auction as other exciting items to bid on during the day.

Each meal ticket includes chili, corn chips, rice, diced onion, cheese, and beans (if you dare). Drinks like tea, water, or soda and desserts are sold by the Highlands Horizons Club as part of their fundraiser.

Raffle tickets purchased before January 9 will be entered into the Early Bird drawing with the winner receiving a \$300 gift card. Tickets can be purchased from any Highlands Club Rotarian for \$100.

For more information, please call Milliorn at 832-262-6828.

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Crosby Superintendent's Message,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

meeting with principals, walking campuses for security checks, and signing important proclamations. He even frosted cookies with Culinary Arts students and handled a snake and lizard in Dr. Melissa Gable's science class. I so enjoy these close interactions with students.

This is the season when so many student groups and extracurricular organizations give back to the Crosby and Barrett Sta-

tion Communities. Student-athletes in baseball, softball, football, and basketball have been adopting families by the dozens. The looks on the faces of the children are truly extraordinary. Our Crosby kids are the best kids in Texas! I couldn't be prouder when students help students.

I hope our families have enjoyed the holiday performances at each of our campuses last month. From the kindergartners singing

their hearts out to the senior band and choir students, we should all be proud of the talent that comes from the classrooms of our schools. The best gifts of the holiday season are watching students share their gifts with all of us.

Happy New Year! We'll see our students back in class on January 8!

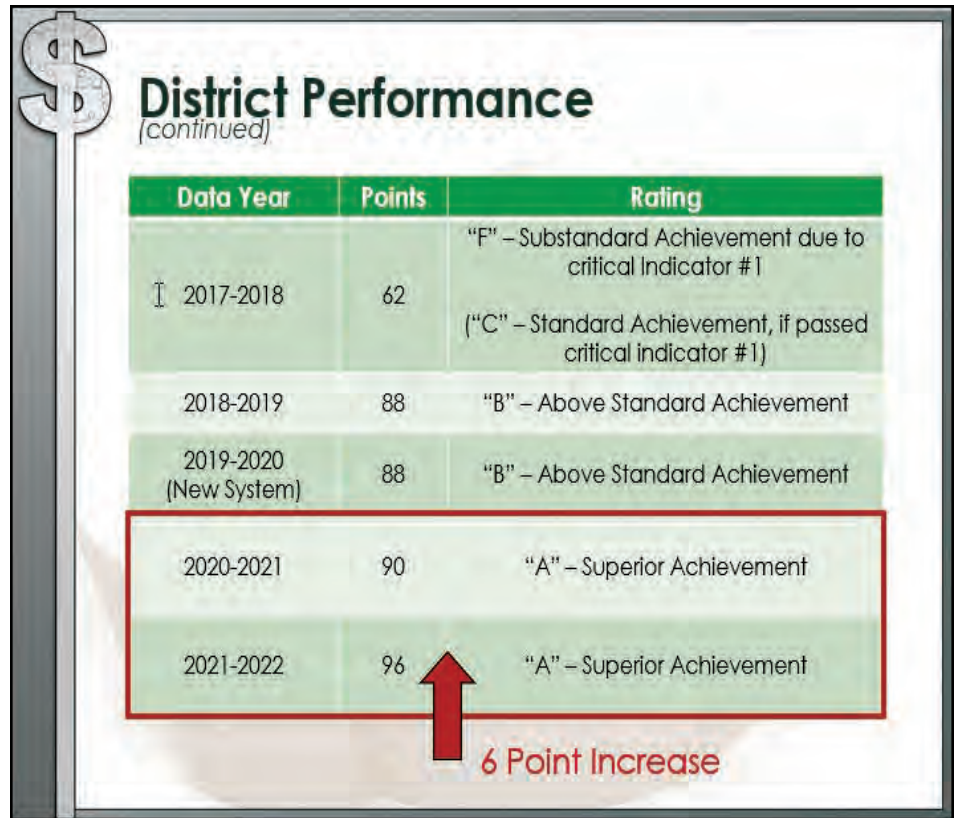
We are Moving Forward! Go Coogs!




Crosby High School baseball players wrap gifts for children in need.



"Superintendent for the Day" delivers popcorn to the Finance Department at Crosby ISD Operations Center.




Graphic showing the past five Crosby ISD fiscal years as graded by the School FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas). Crosby ISD has received two consecutive "A" Superior Achievement ratings, including a 6-point increase from the 2020-2021 to the 2021-2022 fiscal year.



PET MATTERS

In Memory of Susan Hoffman



Dog Bites: Enjoy the Outdoors with your Furry Friends Safely!

Enjoy the Outdoors with your Furry Friends Safely! Remember Harris County's Leash Laws and Dog Bite Prevention Tips

HOUSTON – As community members and pet owners around Harris County enjoy the fall weather and time outdoors this holiday season, Harris County Public Health's (HCPH) Veterinary Public Health Division (VPH) reminds residents of important bite prevention methods and local leash laws in Harris County.

The American Veterinary Association estimates that each year nearly 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs, and more than 800,000 require medical treatment for a dog bite incident. Dogs can bite people for various reasons, but bite incidents occur most often when the dog feels stressed, hungry, threatened, sick, or sore.

Pet owners are always responsible for their pet's behavior. All pet owners **must keep dogs and cats restrained (leashed)** in unincorporated parts of Harris County. Restraint is defined as the control of a dog or cat under the following circumstances:

- When it is under control through a line or leash not more than 6 feet long or held by a human.
- When it is secured in your vehicle.
- When it is in the confines of your private dwelling that is not accessible to members of the public.

What Can Dog Owners Do?

There are several things you can do to keep your dog healthy and safe:

- Socialize your pet to feel comfortable around people and other animals.
- Make sure you train your dog

properly and have proper behavior education.

- Walk and exercise your dog regularly to keep it healthy, both physically and mentally.
- Ensure the dog is leashed (no longer than 6 feet) and can be secured in your vehicle when traveling to public places.
- Keep your dog up to date with vaccinations.
- Have your pet spayed or neutered.
- If you have a fenced yard, ensure the gates are secure.

How Can You Protect Your Family?

Generally, dog bites are a preventable public health issue. Here are some safety tips to reduce the chances of being bitten:

- Teach children - and adults - to be careful around pets. Do not approach strange dogs or try to pet dogs through fences.
- NEVER run away from a dog that appears to be aggressive. Remain calm and avoid eye contact.
- Always ask permission from the dog's owner before petting the dog.
- NEVER leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.
- Always be alert for possible dangerous situations.
- Do not bother a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Report stray animals to your local animal control agency. Harris County residents can call Harris County Pets at (281) 999-3191 for assistance.

For more information on preventing dog bites, contact Harris County Pets at (281) 999-3191 or visit our website at hcptx.org/vph or www.countypets.com.



Crosby High School football players deliver gifts for children in need.



You can help prevent

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MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Baytown Woman Imprisoned After Embezzling Millions from Her Employer

HOUSTON – A 55-year-old Baytown woman has been ordered to prison for wire fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

Judy M. Green pleaded guilty April 27, admitting to embezzling over \$3 million from her employer for approximately 10 years.

U.S. District Judge Alfred Bennett has now ordered Green to serve 24 months in federal prison to be immediately followed by three years of supervised release. Judge Bennett also ordered Green to pay \$3.4 million in restitution, with \$10,000 due immediately. At the hearing, the court heard additional evidence that because of the her theft, the victim company had to lay off employees and could not give bonuses to the remaining employees. In handing down the sentence, the court noted the length and depth of Green's betrayal of people who trusted her.

Green worked as an account manager for a Houston-based building and maintenance supply company. As part of the scheme, she submitted fraudulent invoices to induce payment from the company and pocketed the funds for personal expenses. Ultimately, authorities uncovered the scheme when one of the business owners noticed a large payment to an unknown credit card company in the summer of 2022. An audit revealed the fraud had been ongoing since 2012.

Green was permitted to remain on bond and voluntarily surrender to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

The FBI conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Carter prosecuted the case.

DOJ Targets Colony Ridge in Lawsuit Over Predatory Practices

The U.S. Department of Justice is taking legal action against Houston-area developer Colony Ridge, accusing it of employing a sales scheme that preyed on Latino buyers through fraudulent lending practices.

The lawsuit, filed in the Southern District of Texas, contends that Colony Ridge engaged in misleading tactics, targeted vulnerable Latino consumers with predatory loans, exploited language barriers and made false statements about essential infrastructure.

Federal violations: The DOJ lawsuit alleges that Colony Ridge's practices violate four federal laws, including the Equal Credit Oppor-



tunity Act and the Fair Housing Act. The government seeks to halt the alleged predatory lending practices, provide relief for affected individuals and impose

civil penalties on the developers. Colony Ridge's CEO, John Harris, called the allegations "baseless" and "inflammatory."

Landing investigates:

The lawsuit echoes many of the findings in a recent Houston Landing investigation that examined the business practices of the sprawling subdivision in Liber-

ty County. The case marks the DOJ's first attempt at "reverse redlining" through its Combatting Redlining Initiative.

'Bait-and-switch': The lawsuit outlines a bait-and-switch land sale scheme, asserting that Colony Ridge specifically targeted potential Latino buyers through Spanish-language advertising, promising minimal down payments and above-average interest rates. This alleged scheme resulted in an "extraordinary" foreclosure rate, with at least 30 percent of seller-financed lots foreclosed within three years — 15 times the national average.

Linebaugh, Dority and Allen LLC Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Commemorating Name Change

The Baytown Chamber of Commerce Board, Ambassadors and staff celebrated the new name and new faces of Linebaugh, Dority and Allen, LLC, with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on December 4th. With 50 years of combined experience and over \$125 million dollars recovered, these personal injury attorney's are relentless in pursuit of justice!

The attorney's at LDA actively engage in community initiatives aimed at raising awareness about truck crash prevention and promoting road safety. LDA is an active supporter of the Truck Safety Coalition, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving truck safety regulation and making our highways safer for the motoring public.

To schedule a free consultation, call 281-422-0606 or visit www.time4justice.com.



Timothy Allen, Michael Dority and Dan Linebaugh joined by office staff, Baytown Chamber of Commerce Board members, Ambassadors and staff.

Extended Stay America Celebrates Renovation with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony During Grand Re-Opening

Extended Stay America Suites (ESA) Baytown was eager to show off their beautiful property renovation. They celebrated the Grand Re-Opening with a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. The event was well attended by Baytown Mayor Brandon Capetillo, Wil Carter, representing Congressman Brian Babin's office, Wayside Investment Group, Extended Stay America corporate executives, Chamber Ambassadors and staff among others. Mayor Capetillo thanked ESA for bringing their business off Baytown, while Wil Carter presented a proclamation from Congressman Babin's office. Extended Stay America President and CEO, Greg Juceam spoke



Greg Juceam, President & CEO, ESA; Samir Patel, Chairman Wayside Investment Group; Miraj Patel, President Wayside Investment Group; Saaj Patel, Vice President Operations, Wayside Investment Group; Ash Patel, Vice President Construction; Wayside Investment Group; Ashleigh Evans, General Manager, ESA; Extended Stay America employees; Baytown Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors and staff

on the timeline of getting to this point and expressed his excitement of bringing ESA's premier guest experience, superi-

or service and high-quality hotels to the area. President of Wayside Investment Group, Miraj Patel thanked everyone

for their support and encouraged guests to help themselves to lunch. Guests were given a tour of the

newly renovated hotel and treated to delicious made-to-order Mexican street taco's complete with all the fixings! Extended Stay America-Baytown is located at 7212 Eastpoint Blvd. and can be reached at 281-839-1400.

Extended Stay America is the leading mid-priced extended stay hotel brand in the U.S. with more than 650 hotels. It's extended stay brand family includes Extended Stay America Suites and Extended Stay America Premier Suites. All locations are ready to welcome guests with genuine care and value. For more information on Extended Stay America, visit www.esa.com.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION

By BILL KING



It's Just a Number

Yesterday morning at 11:05, I completed my 72nd trip around the sun. A friend called to wish me a happy birthday and reminded me, "It is just a number, Bill."

Yeah, it is a number alright. Like the number of pills I have to remember to take every day. Like the number of aches and pains in my knees. Like the number of doctor appointments I have these days. Like the number of times I have to get up in the middle of the night to attend to nature or walk off a cramp. Like the number of funerals of friends and family I have attended recently.

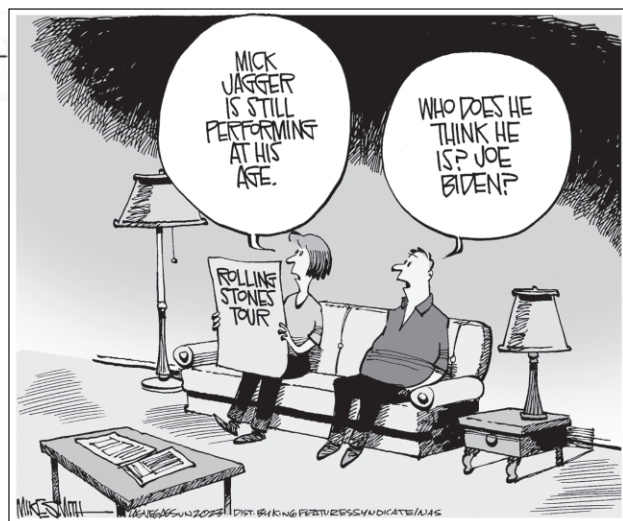
But there are other numbers too.

Like the amazing seven children and six grandchildren Cheryl and I share. Like the hundreds of friends that we've shared so many fun times with and who have been there to support us in so many different ways. Like the thousands of great people I've met across this great city over my two mayoral campaigns.

Like the thousands of breathtaking sunrises and sunsets I have witnessed. Like the thousands of miles of open seas I have sailed. Like the hundreds of places across the planet I have visited. Like the scores of fishing trips with friends. And so much more.

But the number most on my mind at this particular moment is the number of you who have given me the privilege of regularly corresponding with you about the various topics that pique my interest. I truly appreciate that opportunity and the feedback I receive from so many of you.

It appears that we will have plenty to discuss in 2024, so I am looking forward to continuing our dialogue for another year.

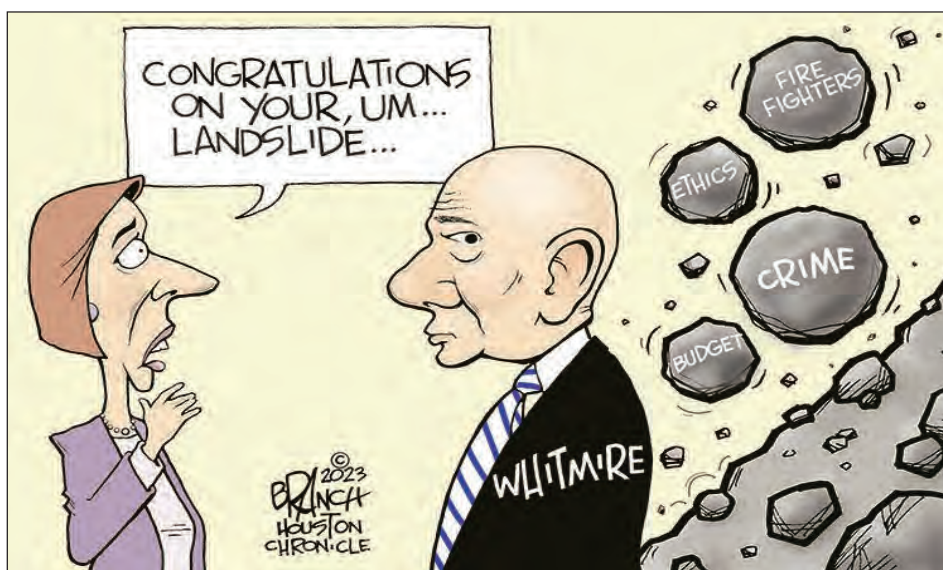


Treasure Christmas

Mabel Adams was sitting in the day room at the Rest of Your Life retirement home when the children came in. She smiled and so did all the others in the room except for two who didn't know what was going on.

The old-timers in the home knew the kids were coming and had put up Christmas decorations around in the day room and on the doors of their own small apartments and on themselves. Mabel had been reminded several times by the staff that morning that the kids were coming over, this being necessary as Mabel's memory isn't what it used to be. And she put a sprig of imitation holly in her hair and tied a red ribbon on the other side.

The little girl smiled and walked over to Mabel. "Are you a grandma?" she asked. "Why, yes dear, I am." "I brought you a present, Grandma," she said, handing a box to Mabel. Mabel opened it and was delighted at the sandalwood-scented hankies inside. "Why thank you so much, Honey!" she said. "And what is your name?" "I'm Candice. I'm four." "Well, Candice, merry Christmas to you. Have you been here before?" "Well ... no, I guess. Mom said this is where the grandmas are and we can have fun bringing presents to the grandmas." "I see," Mabel said. "Well, Candice, come over here, dear and let me give you a hug. There!" Sometimes, it isn't the cost of the hankies, or the fun wrapping them up. Sometimes it's just a child's smile and a small taste of love that makes us treasure Christmas.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Legal Groups Sue to Stop New Immigration Law

The ink was barely dry on a law signed by Gov. Greg Abbott that makes unauthorized entry into the United States a state crime before a lawsuit was filed by civil rights groups and El Paso County challenging its constitutionality. The Austin American-Statesman reported the suit was filed in an Austin federal court by the ACLU and two immigrant advocacy groups on behalf of the county.

The complaint says Texas Senate Bill 4, passed in the recently concluded fourth special session, is "patently illegal" and that it violates "the federal government's exclusive immigration powers and the sensitive foreign policy implications of these powers." The law is set to go into effect on March 5.

SB4 allows any Texas law enforcement officer to arrest people who are believed to have entered the country illegally. Once in custody, they could either agree to leave the U.S. or face prosecution on misdemeanor charges of illegal entry. "These laws will help stop the tidal wave of illegal entry into Texas, add additional funding to build more border wall, and crack down on human smuggling," Abbott said after signing the bill.

BORDER PATROL BANNED FROM CUTTING TEXAS RAZOR WIRE

An appeals court has ordered the Border Patrol to stop cutting razor wire installed by Texas officials, The Dallas Morning News reported. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling that gave federal authorities the legal right to remove the fencing, which federal officials said had been done to prevent injuries to migrants. The state contended, however, that federal agents were removing the concertina wire simply to let migrants enter Texas without notification.

Col. Steve McCraw, Texas Department of Public Safety director, said the state agrees that the wire



should be cut in cases of emergency. "We're doing it to go rescue somebody," he said. "We're not doing it to allow a large number of migrants to enter between the ports of entry. We want them to go to the ports of entry."

TEXAS HAS LOWEST GAS PRICES IN COUNTRY

Gasoline prices in the state are at their lowest level in nearly three years, according to AAA. The current average is \$2.57 a gallon — the lowest average gas price in the nation, according to a Texas Standard report. Matt Smith, an energy analyst for Kpler (stet), warned Texans that higher prices are likely during the holiday period.

AAA is projecting 104 million travelers are driving at least 50 miles to their holiday destinations, while air traffic is expected to be the busiest ever, with 7.5 million air travelers this holiday season.

Smith said a number of factors, including unrest in Yemen and the Middle East, could cause oil prices to rise, leading to higher gas prices in the future.

"We've seen a lot of bearishness that has pushed these prices to multi-month lows here; we may be at the point now where we're seeing a bit of a turnaround going forward here," Smith said.

ERCOT CHIEF: GRID IS READY FOR WINTER

The chief of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas told his board last week that added power generation will

be sufficient this winter, despite population growth and lower output from wind power turbines because of less wind velocity.

"We are as ready as we have ever been to deal with the challenges of the winter season," ERCOT chief Pablo Vegas told the board.

The Statesman reported Vegas' statement of confidence in the grid comes just three weeks after ERCOT warned much of the state could face rolling blackouts starting next month, most likely in the early morning hours before solar generating facilities can be utilized.

"In the wintertime, the peak of the system tends to happen in the early morning hours as people are starting to wake up at 7 a.m., 8 a.m.," Vegas said. "It's still cold from an overnight winter cold. And we don't yet have the resources like solar resources on the system at that point in time."

Vegas said 800 new projects have been added to the grid in the past year. ERCOT's chief meteorologist is predicting a milder than usual winter for much of the state.

AMOUNT OF STATE IN DROUGHT DECLINES

Drought conditions across Texas are declining, with 43% of the state in some stage of drought at the end of November — down 22 percentage points from the end of October and 42 percentage points from early September.

"Despite the improvements on the landscape, our statewide surface water supply reservoirs haven't seen a lot of recovery yet," Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board, wrote in his monthly report. "That's not unexpected. Compared to the landscape, our water supply systems take longer to respond to drought."

The surface water systems most adversely affected are clustered in Central and South Texas, which are still experiencing drought conditions. Also still in severe-to-extreme drought are far West Texas counties and a scattering of counties in Deep East Texas.

STATE LEADS NATION IN POPULATION INCREASES IN LAST YEAR

Texas' population grew more than any other state in the country, up nearly half a million people, according to the recent census estimate. The Texas Tribune reported the population growth is centered in the state's cities. Nearly 70% of the state's residents live in the four largest metro areas — Houston, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

While the state had the largest total increase in population, two other states had higher growth rates than the 1.6% recorded here — South Carolina and Florida. The South accounted for 87% of the country's population growth in the latest census estimate.

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Wild Children: A Lesson

The children were in the pew in front of me.

We had not arrived early enough at my sister's church for the Christmas Eve service to secure a seat in the back, so we were in the fourth row. The first row is never used by anyone; the second row is only for people who arrive impossibly late. The third row is, for all intents and purposes, the front row, and that's where these two wild-looking children were.

The children were provisioned with colored pencils and drawing paper but, other than that, looked rather neglected. Neither one had seen a comb in a long time. Both were dressed in a combination of outdoor wear and pajamas. Neither was actually sitting on the pew. The girl was sitting on the floor, using the bench as a drawing table. The boy was sprawled out across the bench, arms and legs akimbo. I felt myself making judgments. I get that way sometimes.

"Seriously," I thought, "is getting out of their pajamas too much to ask?"

The children paid no attention to the service. When the congregation rose to sing, the children remained where they were. When the other kids went up for the children's sermon, the boy disappeared outside, and the girl remained where she was.

"Where has he gone?" I wondered. These children seemed feral to me. "Probably raised by wolves," I said to amuse myself. "He's gone out to hunt squirrels," I conjectured. "Likely he is eating one now." The boy returned and lay back down on the pew. "Why are they even here?" I wondered.

I looked at the skirt I had put on for the occasion, the good coat I had brought for wearing to church, the time and effort the other parishioners had taken before leaving their homes. These children (and whoever had transported them to church) had clearly missed the memo.

I was surprised when, as the service was about to end, a man joined the children. The boy suddenly snapped out of his lethargy and went to the man, who wrapped him in a hug. The boy and the man remained that way for a long time, oblivious to the service, enfolded in a hug.

"Did you see the organist's kids in the front row?" my sister asked her husband after we got home.

"Yeah," he said. I was about to make some snappy remark about their lack of grooming when my sister continued.

"Her husband left them just a couple of weeks ago. He won't even answer his phone when the kids call. Her son is autistic, and she is just beside herself."

"The husband was there," my brother-in-law told my sister. "He came into church at the very end."

"Really?" my sister said and shook her head.

I realized what a colossal ass I was.

There are so many troubles I have never known. There is a world of pain I have never experienced. While I was dwelling on a couple of hastily dressed kids with messy hair quietly doodling in the front pew, there were wells of pain and loss and confusion right in front of me that I could not imagine.

I do not like that prissy woman in the nice skirt who sits in judgment of those poor kids. I do not like her, and I don't want to be her. While I was focused on grooming and decorum, a tired, lost man took his child in his arms and—right in front of me—a Christmas miracle occurred, a miracle I was too blind to see.

Till next time, Carrie

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information and subscription rates.



Dan Levy makes his directorial debut in "Good Grief."

"Good Grief"

By Demi Taveras
"GOOD GRIEF" (R) — Dan Levy ("Schitt's Creek") makes his directorial debut in this comedy-drama film out Jan. 5.

"PRISCILLA" (R) — Since it is so often the case with Hollywood to tout out similar movies back-to-back while interest is still up, we all knew that a foil to Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis," which tells the story of musical legend Elvis Presley, was surely on its way.

In Case You Missed It "OFFICIAL COMPETITION" (R) — Multimillionaire businessman Humberto Suarez reaches his 80th birthday and feels that he doesn't have anything long-lasting to show for it.

"THE MORNING SHOW" (TV-MA) — This critically acclaimed show starring Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon is an addicting binge-watch.

HOLLYWOOD by Tony Rizzo

Stars We Lost in 2023

HOLLYWOOD — George Clooney has given his stamp of approval for "Barbie" stars Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling to play his parents in the upcoming prequel of "Ocean's Eleven."

In 2023, we lost many of my favorite stars who I did shootings with or knew. In 1985, while shooting Brian Bloom (Dusty in "As the World Turns") in Gramercy Park, New York, Italian superstar Gina Lollobrigida had a meltdown over him and said in her sexy Italian accent, "I love watching you on your telenovela."



STELLA STEVENS - One of many Stars we lost in 2023.

I remember in 1982 when "Laverne & Shirley's" Cindy Williams and Penny Marshall crashed a party for David Hasselhoff and hysterically pretended to be huge gushing fans of his.

I pinched myself following Tina Turner around the post-premiere party for "Tommy" (1975), as she interacted with The Who and Elton John.

In 1967, at the closing night of Marlene Dietrich's Broadway show, I mingled with her conductor Burt Bacharach and his wife, "Police Woman" star Angie Dickinson, just before Dietrich was hoisted atop her limo with them inside.

In 1985, I ran into Stella Stevens in Hawaii. She starred with Elvis Presley in "Girls! Girls! Girls!" (1962) and

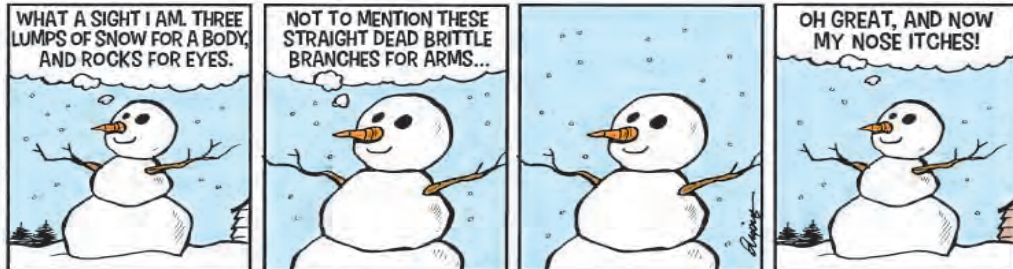
with Jerry Lewis in "The Nutty Professor" (1963). She wanted to learn how to surf, so I asked my friend Sam J. Jones (star of "Flash Gordon" in 1980) to teach her.

I was devastated when Raquel Welch died on Feb. 15, 2023, at 82. She was the epitome of glamour. She once told me at a party, "I want to thank you for all the encouraging things you've written about me in your columns."

I got to know Matthew Perry when he was filming "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip." Every time I covered a shooting of his, he was friendly and nice, and liked it when I called him (what else?) "friend!"

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Includes a 9x9 grid and difficulty level: Moderate, Challenging, HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff. Find at least six differences in details between panels.

January 1, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

King Crossword puzzle grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues. Includes clues like 'Melville captain', 'Male swans', 'Luau dish', etc.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez. Includes 10 trivia questions such as 'When is Three King's Day celebrated typically?' and 'What is the name of the heroine in "The Scarlet Letter"?'

Trivia Test Answers: 1. Jan. 6, the 12th day of Christmas; 2. Coca-Cola; 3. An archipelago; 4. Paris, France; 5. A simulated court to give law students a chance to practice; 6. Hester Prynne; 7. Almond; 8. 11 pipers piping; 9. Almost 71%; 10. Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Slow police chase on I-10 ends, driver arrested

CHANNELVIEW, Texas — Police last Wednesday, Dec. 27 ripped apart the cab of a tractor trailer and pulled the truck's driver out after pursuing him in a slow highway chase that shut down the road for hours.

Texas police ripped apart the cab of a tractor trailer and pulled the truck's driver out after pursuing him in a slow highway chase that shut down the road for hours. Sheriff's deputies and other law enforcement officials used a new battering ram type device to puncture



ties and other law enforcement officials used a new battering ram type device to puncture

the truck's cab, in an attempt to reach the driver. The highway chase ended with police rip-

ping apart truck's cab and pulling the driver out.

The dramatic con-

frontation on a stretch of I-10 highway east of Houston came hours after sheriff's deputies be-

gan trying to pull over the truck, which could be seen on television news footage crawling along the interstate. The driver's arrest left questions about what prompted his behavior and the heavy police response.

Deputies finally brought the 18-wheeler to a stop on the shoulder of Interstate 10 in Channelview, using spike strips to puncture its tires.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that Original Letters Testamentary for Docket No. 520950; Estate of GLENN EDWARD ROLLINS Deceased; In Probate Court No. 4 of Harris County, Texas, were issued on DECEMBER 21, 2023 to:

FELICIA MARIE STEWART

The residence address of the administrator is in Harris County, Texas. The mailing address is:

c/o Weston Cotten
 1500 E. Wallisville Road
 Highlands, TX 77562

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
 Dated this DECEMBER 27, 2023

Weston Cotten
 by WESTON COTTEN
 Attorney for the Estate

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Notice is hereby given that the street address of the administrative office of Harris County Emergency Services District No. 5 is 5915 FM 2100, Crosby, Texas 77532.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Harris County Emergency Services District No. 12 ("District")

The District's administrative office is located at 911 Hollywood Street, Houston, Texas 77015.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Harris County Emergency Services District No. 50 ("District")

The District's administrative office is located at 1210 Dell Dale, Channelview, Texas 77530.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Notice is hereby given that the street address of the administrative office of Harris County Emergency Services District No. 60 is Sheldon Community Fire and Rescue Station No. 1 located at 7601 Uvalde Rd., Houston, Texas 77049.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Notice is hereby given that the street address of the administrative office of Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 is Crosby Fire Station No. 2, 123 S. Diamondhead Blvd., Crosby, Texas 77532.

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BE PART OF POLYCYTHEMIA VERA (PV) RESEARCH

You may be able to help researchers learn more about an investigational study drug for people with PV. Find out if you qualify for the global VERIFY Phase 3 clinical research study.

Polycythemia vera (PV) is a rare blood disorder that causes the body to make too many red blood cells. The high red blood cell count can make the blood thicker, which can lead to strokes, heart attacks, organ, and tissue damage. The established goal of therapy is to maintain red blood cell levels, as measured by hematocrit, below 45%.

Protagonist Therapeutics, Inc. is developing rusfertide, an investigational drug designed to control the amount of iron available to make red blood cells. Rusfertide therapy is being studied in the VERIFY Phase 3 clinical trial to evaluate its safety and ability to control the production of red blood cells in the blood, potentially reducing the need for phlebotomy treatment and improving patients' quality of life.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN THE STUDY?

- At least 18 years old (or meets country-specific age of consent).
- Diagnosed with polycythemia vera.
- Frequent blood draws to control hematocrit levels (e.g., at least 5 in the past year).
- Other requirements will apply.

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- Access to the study investigational drug.
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- Education about PV.
- The opportunity to help advance PV research.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- US-Toll Free: 1-888-899-1543
- ptgxcntrials@ptgx-inc.com
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**More details about the study will be provided by the study team.*





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