

Students From Crosby High Rehearse the play "Olivia" ahead of the One Act Play Contest this Month. See STORY on Page 6.



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THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

EVENTS

Crosby Library Annual Meeting April 10; Meet New Librarian

The Friends of the Crosby Library will be holding their Annual meeting on April 10th, at 6pm in the library. Our speaker will be Crosby's new librarian, Laura Hancock.

Laura Hancock grew up in Deer Park, Texas, and has been pursuing Library shelves since she was a toddler —she started her career in libraries almost a decade ago at the LaPorte Branch library in youth services before moving to the Manvel Library in Brazoria County and the City of Dickinson Library in Senior Librarian roles, before returning to HCPL. She's been a part of all facets of libraries, from story times and sewing clubs to collection development and cataloging.

Her favorite library activities include running book clubs (for all ages), providing readers advisory (also for all ages), and collection development. When not at work, she can be found reading, embroidering, Lego-building, or watching baseball. She is very excited to be back at HCPL and looks forward to working with Crosby's staff and community.

Please come and join us. Refreshments will be served.

Crosby Chamber holds Business EXPO

Activities crank up in the spring

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Following their successful awards banquet in February at Stoneridge in Newport, the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce hasn't slowed down. This month they hosted their annual Expo with hosts Crawfish Shack on FM 2100. While the weather was wicked and wild with wind and rain, it didn't dampen the spirits of the members.

"It was a good opportunity to announce new Chamber members and despite the weather, we still had a good turnout,"



Chef Vasso Espinosa, Culinary Arts Instructor at Crosby High School, cuts a cake made especially for the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce with their new sugar burner thanks to a financial gift from the bicentennial committee.

said Tom Richard, president and CEO of the chamber.

The Expo is an opportunity for chamber members to promote their business

among chamber members and the public.

Richard said it was also a good segue to launch into the coming golf tournament, but Richard had an-



Chamber President and CEO Tom Richard began the Expo by recognizing new members to the chamber. He's assisted by Traci Galyean from Courtyard at Marriott Generation Park.

other exciting announcement.

"We have a lot of things kind of bubbling beneath the surface that's getting ready to come up and one

of those is our announcement of a new website," he said.

Continued. See CHAMBER EXPO, Page 5

Crosby ISD Celebrates 'Portrait of a Graduate';

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

March flew by! As we launch into the month of April, Crosby ISD will spend the final two months of the school year celebrating the district's "Portrait of a Graduate." Our Portrait represents five key characteristics we hope to instill in each student throughout the student's 12 years in Crosby ISD. Aside from academic excellence, we aim for our students to be: Effective Communicators, Kind, Emotionally Intelligent, Goal-Oriented, and Service-Minded. This strategic plan will come to life in April and May, as our teachers deliver mini lessons on each character



Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

trait. We hope by the end of each week, our students will know each trait by heart and what it means to live out that purpose. Morning announcements will include encouragement and inspirational quotes about what it means to be kind or emotionally intelligent or service-minded, etc. You can read more about



Fifteen Crosby High School students were all certified as EKG technicians this month. They completed all the requirements and passed the national certification exam.

our plan here: www.crosbyisd.org/por-trait. The "Portrait of a Graduate" was built with the input of parents, students, teachers, adminis-

trators, business leaders, and the Board of Trustees. We all look forward to expanding and enhancing it as we move forward.

Next, I wanted to share

some important dates with families and community members. STAAR testing will be conducted on ele

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 6

State sues Huffman ISD for Electioneering

Paxton alleges Superintendent and Board tried to influence election illegally

By David Taylor
Managing editor

Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed a lawsuit against Huffman ISD for alleged electioneering accusing Superintendent Dr. Benny Soileau of using state resources to influence political races. The board was also included in the suit.

Paxton alleges during a school meeting at Hargrave High School, Soileau instructed faculty to vote for 16 specific politicians who supported certain policies, namely against vouchers. The suit also alleges when school staff



Benny Soileau, Huffman Superintendent

asked for a list of those endorsed politicians they had been told to vote for, Soileau said a Huffman ISD administrator would dis-

tribute it.

The district disputes many of the charges alleged in the suit.

"Huffman ISD has been notified of a lawsuit filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on March 4, 2024, alleging that Superintendent Soileau engaged in improper electioneering during a February 2024 staff meeting," a statement from the district read.

According to the district, the alleged comments related to the March 5, 2024, Primary Election.

"The district disagrees

Continued. See PAXTON SUES HUFFMAN ISD, Page 5

Crosby FD Stair Climb



Firefighters were cheered on and supported by the Chick-Fil-A cow on the track as they walked in remembrance of the 911 firefighters who lost their lives.

David Taylor
Managing Editor

For the second year in a row, the Crosby Volunteer Fire Depart-

ment has hosted their own 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb remembering the 343 firefighters in the Fire Department of New York who were tragically lost in one of the World

Trade Center disasters. Whether it was the North or South Towers that were attacked by terrorists on

Continued. See CROSBY FD, Page 7

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GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT | DR. RANDAL O'BRIEN

Dear Goose Creek CISD Family



I would like to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thank you to each and every member of our staff, our board of trustees, and wonderful community as we are confronted with the task of balancing our budget. Due to the exhaustion of ESSER funds and the Formula Transition Grant, unfunded/underfunded mandates, rising inflation, and minimal support from the Texas Legislature, the district is challenged with tough decisions to adopt a balanced budget while maintaining the high-quality education and competitive teacher pay we have established

as a district standard. I know that together, as one voice for our community, we are committed to going the extra mile to ensure our students continue to thrive.

The Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees called a special meeting on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, to discuss and dig deep into the budget plan for 2024-2025. The meeting was held in an informational workshop format. The board did not vote on any of these recommendations, and GCCISD will continue to work through the April 1 meeting to refine the plan before the final recommendation.

Brigitte Clark, Chief Financial Officer, and Dr. Matt Bolinger, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presented the current status of the district and a proposed budget reduction plan for the 2024-2025 school year. The proposal includes an additional \$6.5 million for a general pay increase for staff, equating to a combined \$28 million overall reduction needed. The GC-CISD staff proposed 3 tiers. No dismissals would be required across any of the tiers, and staff reductions would be achieved through the attrition model and closing out unfilled vacancies.

Tier 1 was the bulk of the presentation and amounts to over \$13 million in savings. This tier includes moving high school schedules from 8 to 7 periods as well as removing the current double block schedule from the junior high schools. Changes would include phasing out the dual two-way language bilingual program and consolidating the New Arrival Center program to identified campuses. Tier 1 would also reduce 25 district/campus curriculum & instruction positions and the consolidation of prekindergarten offerings by removing the STEAM prekindergarten program. GCCISD would also close or repurpose 16 professional positions, 28 auxiliary positions, and 20 transportation positions. Communities in Schools, principal residency grant, consultants, conferences, and white fleet vehicle replacement would also be reduced.

Tier 2 is a more aggressive approach for a savings of over \$2 million. This tier includes merging campus library and technology positions and the consolidation of campuses based on declining enrollment. However, the board removed Tier 2 from consideration for the 2024-2025 budget adoption cycle. Tier 3 is a one-time diversion of funds from Chapter 313 and Foreign Trade Zone to the general fund. These are one-time funds that would not carry forward beyond this budget cycle.

The district will incorporate changes to the plan requested by the board, including removing walk zones from Tier 1 and postponing all tier 2 items from consideration for the 2024-2025 budget adoption. The board agreed to review the proposed plan and consider the budget reduction plan as an action for the April 1st regular board meeting.

In closing, I want to reiterate our commitment to prioritizing what is truly best for our students. Every decision we make, every policy we implement, and every action we take must be rooted in the well-being, growth, and success of the children and families we serve. Let us always remember that our ultimate goal is to provide them with the opportunities, support, and environment they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We are a district that values our staff and the passion they have for growing giants. Together, our district and elected board will strive for excellence in education and continue to create a brighter future for all students.

Dr. Randal O'Brien
Superintendent of Schools

GCM Achieves National Recognition as AVID Demonstration School



Goose Creek Memorial High School has officially achieved a significant milestone in its journey towards academic distinction and student success by being designated as a National AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Demonstration School. Only two other high schools in the greater Houston area and twenty-one others in Texas have achieved this designation. This honor highlights the school's commitment to implementing best practices in education and implementing an environment of equity, access, and college readiness for all students. GCM first became a National Demonstration School in January of 2020 and since, has undergone a strenuous revalidation process.

Brianna Nole, senior and AVID President shared, "GCM has given me so many opportunities and the AVID class is my family. I am doing big things, I am going to graduate high school with an associate's degree and am attending Prairie View A&M, and I have big goals for my future. I owe that to AVID."

Fabian Cienfuegos, AVID senior, was asked to describe AVID in one word: "Empowering. We did not come in to this school perfect. Individual determination is what AVID stands for and AVID gives us the tools we need. Our district motto is Here, We Grow Gi-

ants. AVID is how we do that at GCM."

AVID focuses on providing academic, social, and emotional support to students, particularly those historically underrepresented in higher education. Becoming a National AVID Demonstration School signifies that GCM has met rigorous standards set forth by the AVID organization, demonstrating exemplary implementation of AVID methodologies and practices school wide.

Nancy Jacobs, GCM AVID coordinator, was in tears watching AVID student ambassadors, Baylee Tompkins, Codee Rice, and Mauricio Salgado give a tour of the school, "Watching my kids so confidently articulate their learning and show pride for our school just makes me emotional. Building these leaders is what it is all about."

This achievement is a result of the dedicated efforts of the GCM community, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents.

Kendall David, Executive Director of Community Engagement and AVID District Director, spoke about how the district is relentless in effective implementation of AVID, "AVID is anchored in the district's strategic plan, instructional framework, and professional development plan. It is a non-negotiable in GC-CISD. We've built a community of strong AVID

coordinators who serve as instructional leaders in our district."

As a National AVID Demonstration School, GCM will serve as a model of superiority and innovation in education, sharing its best practices and insights with educators across the nation. By showcasing effective strategies for promoting student success and closing achievement gaps, the school will play a crucial role in advancing educational equity and distinction on a broader scale.

Kathy Holland, principal at GCM stated, "everything we do revolves around instruction, AVID is our tool to implement high quality, rigorous learning for ALL students. Our teachers are incredible and have a true passion for our kids and their success in high school and beyond and we are thrilled to share this with the world."

The designation as a National AVID Demonstration School not only recognizes past achievements but also sets the stage for continued growth and improvement. GCM will continue to build upon its success, refining its practices, and implementing new initiatives to further support the academic and personal growth of its students. As a model of excellence in education, GCM will continue to inspire and empower students to reach their fullest potential and achieve their dreams.

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Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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

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THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

MB Patriots Day 2024 Celebrates Community Spirit and Honors Local Heroes



Mont Belvieu, TX - Patriots Day Celebration, an annual event dedicated to honoring and celebrating our local veterans, returns to Mont Belvieu on April 1st. Organized by the Chambers County Veterans Association (CCVA), this community-driven initiative promises a day filled with gratitude, camaraderie, and meaningful tributes.

Patriots Day Celebration is more than just an event; it's a testament to the unwavering spirit of our community and a heartfelt expression of appreciation for those who have served our nation. With a range of activities and attractions for all ages, the event aims to unite residents in honoring our local heroes.

Highlights of Patriots Day Celebration 2024 include:

Touch-a-Truck Exhibit: Get up close and personal with military vehicles of all sizes, as well as local emergency response vehicles.

Family-Friendly Activities: From games to face painting, there's something for everyone in the family to enjoy.

Veteran Services: Connect with organizations offering support services, resources, and assistance to veterans and their families.

Food and Refreshments: Indulge in a variety of delicious offerings from local food vendors and food trucks.

Honoring Our Heroes: Participate in special ceremonies and tributes dedicated to honoring the sacrifices and achievements of our local veterans.

"We are thrilled to welcome the community to Patriots Day Celebration 2024," said Douglas Egbert, President of the CCVA. "This event is a testament to the strength of our community and a heartfelt tribute to our local heroes. We invite everyone to join us in celebrating the spirit of patriotism and gratitude."

Patriots Day Celebration will take place on April 1, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Mont Belvieu City Park at 10900 Eagle Drive. Admission is free, and all are welcome to attend.

For more information, including volunteer opportunities, visit www.ccva.org or contact April Robbins at events@ccva.org.

GOOSE CREEK MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Harmony Diggins Wins Top Honor in City-wide #Houston19 Black History Month Essay Contest

(Houston, TX)— Harmony Diggins, a 10th-grade student at Goose Creek Memorial High School, has claimed the top honor, scholarship prize, in the 2024 Black History Month essay contest organized by the esteemed Harris County #Houston19 Judges. Harmony's essay revolved around her steadfast commitment to realizing the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King.

At her high school Harmony is involved in several activities including Student Council, she is a Global Business Academy Ambassador and a visual Rhapsody member, which is an American Sign language choir.

The 2024 essay competition, established by the #Houston19 Judges specifically for Houston-area students, aims to cultivate



effective communication skills. Understanding the value of concise writing, the judges launched the contest to align with the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and Black History Month. Their overarching goal is to inspire and support the development of

essential skills in future leaders, fostering a positive impact on society at large.

The Houston19 made history in 2018, when 19 black women ran for judge in Harris County and were elected. (*2 already on the bench and 17 were elected on November 6, 2018.) So-

cial media dubbed them #Houston19. A photo taken during the historic election went viral. The #Houston19 judges are as follows: **Judge Shannon Baldwin, Judge Lucia Bates, Judge Sharon M. Burney, Judge Ronnisha Bowman, Judge Dedra Davis, Judge**



Linda M. Dunson, Judge Toria J. Finch, Judge Lori Chambers - Gray, Judge Angelia Graves-Harrington, Judge Ramona Franklin, Judge Erica Hughes, Judge Cassandra Y. Holleman, Judge Maria T. Jackson, Judge Tonya Jones, Judge Michelle Moore, Judge Sandra Peake, Judge Latosha Payne, Judge Germaine Tanner, and Judge LaShawn Williams.

Pilot Club of Baytown Planning Hawaiian-themed fundraiser

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The Pilot Club of Baytown will celebrate their 75th year of friendship and service to the community with a Hawaiian-themed fundraiser on April 30, 2024, at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The annual Yellow Rose Gala will go Hawaiian, and the ladies are planning a special event.

"Save the date" announcements are being spread around the community by all Pilot members, with formal invitations being mailed soon.

Much fun is expected with awesome Friendships, Live and Silent Auctions, and three hours of photo booth fun. A gift card valued at \$500 or more and



PilotClub—Pilots plan the "2024 Yellow Rose Gala Goes Hawaiian" fundraiser to be held on April 30, 2024, at Hilton Garden Inn. Pictured are from left are Helen Gerlich, Delores Ellis, Terry Presley, Valerie Burton, Carolyn Parrish, Judy Wheat, Glenda Mosley, Susan Pitts, and Cindy Nettles.

a "Boozy Wagon," valued at \$1,000, will be drawn. All proceeds from Pilot fundraisers go into the projects budget to be distributed back to the community.

Sponsorships, business card advertisements, dinner tickets at \$75, gift cards and Boozy wagon tickets at \$10 are available from any Pilot Club member or call Judy at 281-413-6488 or Susan at 281-657-5883. Auction item donations are welcome. Terry Presley is coordinating the auction and can be reached at 713-805-2843.

The club applauds past supporters for their commitment and encourages others to join the fun event.

To follow through with

the Hawaiian theme, sponsorships are named after traditional flowers of the island.

Pilot Clubs around the world "DO MORE, CARE MORE, BE MORE" for those in need. Pilots focus on developing youth, supporting education, and brain health and safety. Many projects benefit Alzheimer's, dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. Using puppets, Pilots teach brain protection to children and elderly through Pilot Brainminders® Education.

For questions and information about the upcoming Yellow Rose Gala, joining Pilot as a volunteer, visit <http://www.pilotclubofbaytown.org>, call any Pilot member or 281-413-6488.

Maplewood Industrial – Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

BAYTOWN - Maplewood Industrial, located at 7505 Gateway Blvd., off the I-10 feeder road between N. Main Street and Sjolander, celebrated their Grand Opening with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Maplewood Industrial provides a wide range of materials management solutions. With 200,000 square feet and an additional 100,000 square feet under construction, this humidity controlled warehouse space offers overhead cranes, engineered hanging racks, pallet racks and 24 hour secure access control. Detailed Inventory Management available through convenient Client Portal, including tracking and tagging for quick access. Kitting Services are available to save valuable time and personnel resources that are job specific with MIS reading BOMs and ISO drawings to kit per customer's specifications. Maintenance Solu-



Staci Wise, Karla Opryshek, Erica Rodriguez, Eunice Morgan, Bradford Downs, Joe Toma, John McKee, Dean Strickland, VP Maplewood Industrial, Blythe Adam, Greg Thompson, President Ratcliffe Development, Gilbert Lacy, Ken Miller, President Maplewood Industrial, Jessica Davis, Tammy Moyers, Jackland McDowell, Annmarie Diego, Richard Bello, Operations Manager Maplewood Industrial, Carmen Parris, Mike Nebgen

tions that help you maintain your equipment functionality and longevity. Upon request, their well-trained, experienced staff

can provide services beyond storage, including: routine maintenance, technical assessments, repairs, recordkeeping and mainte-

nance reports.

Maplewood Industrial has over 16 years of experience with two locations: Baytown, TX and Sulphur,

LA, both strategically located on I-10. For more information, visit their website at www.maplewoodindustrial.com

OPINION PAGE

OPINION Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

Response to SB 4 Anti-Immigration Law

Harris County, TX, March 20, 2024, Judge Lina Hidalgo issued the following statement today about SB 4: "I'm an immigrant myself and I lead a massive county where almost 25 percent of the population are immigrants. Under SB 4, it's conceivable that an anti-immigrant officer could arrest someone for little more than them "looking like an immigrant." That possibility alone makes our community nervous, and with good reason. I'll be the first to say that our immigration system and border security have major challenges. There is an opportunity to fix these with the bipartisan bill President Biden, Leader McConnell and senior Republican leaders moved forward until Trump demanded that Republicans continue politicizing immigration rather than solving it. Fundamentally SB 4, which purports to give states the authority to - like sovereign nations - make their own immigration laws, shows disheartening disrespect for the United States constitution and for the rule of law," said Judge Lina Hidalgo. ###

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo is Harris County's chief executive and Director of the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Judge Hidalgo, alongside four county precinct commissioners, oversees a budget of approximately \$5 billion that funds services and institutions for the third-largest county in the nation, home to nearly 5 million people. For more information about Harris County and the Office of the County Judge, please visit: cjo.harriscountytexas.gov.

LETTERS To The Editor

Candidate Lewis defends her record

My name is Umeka UA Lewis. I am a constitutional/civil rights attorney one of the few who practices in the area full time and recognized by the courts for doing so. The snippet about me and my candidacy may be attributed to insufficient research or perhaps your personal knowledge of my arrest in 2015 that led to your recognition of my name on the ballot; regardless, there is significantly more to my advocacy and background as a Black Female Constitutional Civil Rights Attorney, than an arrest nearly a decade ago. https://www.starcouriernews.com/2024/03/primary-election-ogg-out-teare-lee-cantu-in

I am disappointed that of all the work I have done to fight for the constitutional and many rights of others, my legacy in 2024, according to you, boils down to a 2015 wrongful arrest. I have had a fantastic rapport with many journalists due to my high-profile cases. You can find me on the news more than your average attorney due to the nature of my cases.

--My first media case involved a child who was released to a convicted kidnapper by Delta Airline after her father allowed her to fly under the unaccompanied minor program. --In 2015, Jesse Jacobs, a 32-year-old gay white male, was allowed to die in the Galveston Jail after he was deprived of his physician-prescribed medications. I secured the highest civil rights settlement at that time on behalf of his family due to his preventable death. --In 2016, I was one of six other volunteer lawyers who spent 100s of hours fighting the Harris County Attorney's office over their unconstitutional injunction that labeled 92 Black men as gang members without due process and attempted to bar their very presence in the neighborhoods they lived in Third Ward/Sunnyside area, most without their knowledge. --I represented Pride Houston in their efforts to regain control from a rouge past-president. --I represented The Houston (Black) Lawyer's Association in litigation to stop an organization from attempted to use the name Houston Black Lawyer's Association to dilute and confuse the names of the organizations. --I have been invited to argue before the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals 9 times, fighting for the constitutional rights of others when it is not usual to be invited at all. John Allen v Justin Hayes resulted in a significant change in the law that now requires officers who shot individuals and caused an injury to provide medical care as opposed to handcuffing and waiting for EMS. --I have been recognized by the State Bar of Texas and granted the Steve Condos Award for the most continuing education hours. I was also recognized by the Houston Volunteer Lawyers for my pro bono work in fighting the evictions of dozens of tenants. Houston Trial Lawyers as Director of the Year in 2019.

Well, if I may, allow me to introduce myself to you and your readers properly. U.A. "Umeka" Lewis Civil Rights/ Injury Attorney

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

Texas Counties Among Nation's Fastest Growing

Recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that six of the 10 fastest-growing counties in the United States from 2022 to 2023 were in Texas. According to the Texas Tribune, Kaufman County, just east of Dallas, led the list with a 7.6% increase in new residents that brought its population to more than 185,000. Census data shows that Rockwall and Liberty counties closed out the top three, with growth rates of 6.5% and 5.7%, respectively.

Also in the top 10 with the largest residential growth rates are Chambers, Comal and Ellis counties. All 10 of the fastest-growing counties are in the South, Census officials said, and are due to people relocating from other parts of the country.

"Domestic migration patterns are changing, and the impact on counties is especially evident," said Lauren Bowers, chief of the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Branch.

Texas also holds eight of the 10 counties that added the most residents from 2022 to 2023, with Harris, Collin and Montgomery counties leading nationwide. Harris County added 53,788 residents, more than any other county in the U.S.

MAJOR WILDFIRES NEARLY CONTAINED

The largest wildfire in Texas history is 89% contained as of Sunday, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service, after burning more than a million acres. The Smokehouse Creek fire in Hutchinson County is one of two active wildfires in the state. The only other wildfire not contained is the Windy Deuce Fire in Moore County, 94% contained and consuming 144,045 acres.

There are currently 70 counties with burn bans in place.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved Gov. Greg Abbott's disaster declaration request for the following Panhandle counties: Armstrong, Carson, Donley, Gray, Hansford, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman and Wheel-



er. "These disaster declarations will help Texans in communities affected by the Smokehouse Creek and Windy Deuce wildfires receive critical financial assistance they need as they continue to recover and rebuild," Abbott said.

Low-interest loans are available to homeowners, renters, and businesses affected by the wildfires. Applications can be downloaded at sba.gov/disaster.

TEXAS CHALLENGES FEDERAL METHANE RULE

The state is challenging a tougher methane emissions rule recently put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency through a lawsuit filed by the Texas attorney general's office last week. The regulations force oil and gas companies to reduce emissions in the next two years.

Texas oil and gas operators emit more methane than any other state, according to the EPA. A report in the Houston Chronicle said the program would reduce negative climate impacts and improve health, saving up to \$7.6 billion annually through 2038.

The Texas Railroad Commission claims the rule is detrimental to the oil and gas industry, and maintains the industry has made great strides to reduce emissions.

"Texas is taking action against the federal government's egregious overreach," said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick. "The latest attack on oil and gas is nothing more than an attempt to shut down the industry that creates hundreds of thousands of jobs, funds one-third of our state's

economy, and produces clean and reliable energy for the world."

COURT: MINORS NEED PARENTAL CONSENT FOR CONTRACEPTIVES

A federal appellate court upheld a state law requiring parental consent for minor seeking access to birth control, the Austin American-Statesman reported. The ruling partially upholds a late 2022 ruling that blocked federally funded clinics from providing contraceptives to teens without proof of parental consent.

Teens have the right to access confidential contraception services at Title X clinics under a program established in 1970. A lawsuit filed in 2022 challenged the Title X regulation, arguing it violates state law and infringes on parental rights.

"Minors have been unable to access confidential contraceptive care in our network of Title X clinics for more than a year," Stephanie LeBleu, a project director at Every Body, a nonprofit that administers federal funds to more than 150 Title X clinics across the state, said in a news release.

PAXTON, CORNYN STILL EXCHANGING BARBS

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is possibly considering a run against incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn following a streak of successes in ousting Republican House incumbents in the March primary, The Dallas Morning News reported. Paxton has repeatedly attacked Cornyn, up for reelection in 2026, as being too moderate.

"Super Tuesday showed there is a large base of Paxton-friendly voters who not only admire him but want his kind of unapologetic aggressive conservatism in the United States Senate, said conservative radio talk show host Mark Davis.

The two have clashed several times on social media. When Cornyn announced he would run to replace Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, as the Republican leader in the Senate, Paxton posted on X, formerly Twitter, "Republicans deserve better in their next leader and Texans deserve another conservative senator."

Cornyn replied, "Hard to run from prison, Ken." Paxton faces a trial this spring for securities fraud and is under federal investigation for his ties to a since-indicted real estate investor.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION LONE STAR

Operation Lone Star, the state's border initiative, recently marked its third anniversary. According to Abbott's office, the multi-agency effort has led to apprehension of more than a half-million people believed to be here illegally. More than 36,100 felony charges have been filed and more than 100,000 migrants have been transported to other cities, the governor's office said.

In addition, more than 469 million doses of fentanyl have been seized during that three-year period.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Useful



I had a discouraging day yesterday.

I don't expect anyone to keep track—heck, I can't keep track half the time. But I got another rejection of my book from another editor with another publishing house.

I've read the stories of how long it has taken well-known authors to sell their first novel. A publisher has to put a lot of money into a new book, and the odds are slim that a writer's first book will ever earn that money back. Publishers know this and so they are understandably cautious.

You would think I would be used to rejection by now. Before I was even able to have my book read by publishers, I had to find an agent, and they are swamped with letters from writers who want the same thing I do—to see their book out in the world.

Now that I have my wonderful agent, Annie, she is putting a lot of time into editing and working to sell my book, and she makes no money at all until the book sells. It is a long process. Everything takes months and months, and in the meantime, I keep writing, because that is the only part of the process I have any control over at all.

So, when I got an "update" from Annie yesterday, I knew from the subject line of the email it would not be good news. The note read:

"Hi Annie, Thank you for the opportunity to read Carrie's work. She is a talented writer, and I love the premise for this, but I didn't connect with the characters quite as strongly as I'd hoped. It is with regret that I am a pass, but I hope you land the perfect home for this (or perhaps already have!)." I added this rejection to a file I keep with the previous rejection letters. Sometimes I read the comments later and, generally, I don't get too discouraged. But yesterday I did.

I was grumpy, and I felt more than a little sorry for myself. So I took a day off. Instead of writing, I went for a long walk.

And, as I was walking, I suddenly thought of my best friend who died seven years ago. She was only 50 years old when she died, and I never met a person who was more alive. I thought of how she would chew me out for wasting even part of one day feeling sorry for myself.

"Take a teaspoon of cement, Princess, and harden up!" she would have said.

She was very good about saying things like that, whenever I complained that what I was doing was too difficult. I missed her no-nonsense advice, her never-ending encouragement.

"I sure could use you now," I thought.

And at that moment, I realized I had lost sight of a really important thing. Of course, I write because it makes me happy. But the reason writing makes me happy is because I think the stuff I write might be useful.

Maybe my writing will make somebody smile. Maybe someone will feel less alone. Maybe it will be used to line the bottom of a birdcage. But whatever happens, I'm hoping it will be useful in some small way.

It's not really about me. Or, as my beloved friend would say when I got too full of myself, "Buy some lumber, build a bridge, and get over yourself!"

She was good at that, as I mentioned. She was good at reminding me of what matters and, seven years later, she is still so very useful.

Till next time, Carrie

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

Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce Thrives with Annual Expo and Announces Exciting Developments,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The website, he promised, would be user member friendly and a major platform for the chamber and their members.

"It will be a member-centered website that will have sections where members will be able to post their own events and job openings," he said.

The 32nd Annual Tees-N-Tails Crosby-Huffman Chamber Golf Tournament will be hosted on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at the Stonebridge at Newport Golf Club in Crosby. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., with breakfast at 9 a.m. and shotgun start at 10 a.m.

"We're getting a lot of traction for the tournament and our sponsorships are selling out fast," Richard said.

Early Bird registration by April 5 is \$100 per player and from April 6-17 is \$125. The registration includes green fees, range balls, cart, breakfast, lunch, drinks, giveaways, godie bags, and awards for winning teams.

To register, visit HYPERLINK "https://www.crosbyhuffmancc.org" https://www.crosbyhuffmancc.org, or email HYPERLINK "mailto:crystal@trustedinsgroup.com" crystal@trustedinsgroup.com, or by calling 281-328-6984.



Alliance Properties owner Velma Ellison (second from right) is joined by Toni Handley, Yesenia Cavazos, and Krissi Taylor spinning the wheel for free gifts.



Eunice Morgan and Julie Gilbert from Community Resource Credit Union enjoyed the day with friends and freebies.



Crystal Egorushkin, center, is the owner of Trusted Insurance Group. She is joined by Chelsey Carlson, left, and Katie Blancset.



Traci Galyean of Courtyard by Marriott at Generation Park was on hand to offer deals and help with the chamber event.



RIGHT: Kay Sosa of Visiting Angels in Baytown is joined at her table by Hope Hartman, left, and Jennifer Wolf.

Huffman Lawsuit,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with multiple aspects of the lawsuit and has authorized its attorneys to explore its legal options, and to communicate with the Attorney General's office on its behalf. Due to the pending nature of the litigation, the district has no further comment at this time," the statement said.

Huffman ISD was among seven districts Paxton targeted with electioneering lawsuits prior to the Primary. Other districts involved include Castleberry, Frisco, Denton, Aleo, and Denison ISDs.

In a statement from Paxton's office, "such actions directly violated the Texas Election Code's prohibition against the use of 'state or local funds or other resources of the district to electioneer for or against any candidate, measure, or political party.'

According to the Attorney General, Soileau was meeting with Hargrave High School administration, faculty, and staff in the cafeteria when he referenced 21 legislators following a question by a staff member in the audience. The original intent and focus of the meeting were transparency, informing them of the current financial situation and how they had arrived at that place. The question was asked referencing school vouchers and Soileau discussed the legislators who had supported public school finance during the past special session.

They were originally called the Raney 21 because, according to the AG, the representative that carried the bill that

stripped the vouchers out of that portion of HB3 in the House was named Raney.

The suit alleges Soileau said "We killed the vouchers, but we also had to sacrifice the money that was in that bill that was coming to public education."

Those same 21 were facing election in the March primaries, Soileau said, they had a challenger put up against them.

"Five of those 21 are retiring, they're not coming back. They're not even running," he said.

"And we know that if we don't show up and support those 21...Let me back up a little bit. Five of those 21 are retiring...They're not even running. So now we're down to 16. And they're calling them Sweet 16. And if we don't support those 16 representatives in the upcoming election, we roll into the next session almost assured that we're going to face a universal voucher bill that will change the face of public education for years to come."

Soileau continued the discussion where the money would come from for vouchers.

"It comes from the same pot of money that we get ours from," he told the staff. He then encouraged the importance of showing up for polls and supporting "those 16 individuals that have supported us."

Then he encouraged the staff to show up at the polls and "show them that we're worth paying attention to." It's important to note that none of the staff lived in

the areas where any of the 16 were being challenged and couldn't vote for them even if they wanted to.

Staff member Grace Ann asked, "How do we get the list of those 16 legislators?"

"We'll get those for you, Mandy [believed to be a reference to Amanda Fortenberry the Huffman ISD Director of Communications] can you help us with that? Get those 16 individuals, the Sweet 16, those names out to our staff."

The AG also said in the suit that the communication also appeared in written form on the internet through X.com (formerly Twitter).

The Star-Courier has requested copies of any receipts, papers, documents, or emails from the Attorney General's office that would have been produced by Soileau or his staff but has not received any communication at the time of this story.

The Attorney General doesn't even have the power to prosecute criminal charges against the district or anyone else for that matter according to Texas v. Stephens, No. PD-1033-20 (Tex. Crim. App. Dec. 15, 2021). The court noted in Texas v. Stephens that the Texas constitution granted prosecutorial authority to county and district attorneys.

Paxton did use his office to file a Temporary Restraining Order.

Negotiations continue with the AG's office and attorneys from the district and there's more to follow.



The RE/MAX group was represented by agents Daniel Balderrama, Leticia Balderrama, Kathi Goedrich, and Kathryn Singleton.



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Crosby ISD Getting Ready for STAAR Testing, Solar Eclipse Approach and 'Portrait of a Graduate' Celebration,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mentary campuses on: April 16, April 24, and April 30; at Crosby Middle School on: April 16, April 17, April 23, April 24, April 30, and May 1; and Crosby High School on: April 9, April 18, and April 25. Visitors are not allowed on campuses on those days, as we want our students focused on doing their very best and limiting distractions. We want to remind families that students do their best when they get plenty of sleep and eat a healthy breakfast. Students should also come to class with their iPads fully charged, since state testing is conducted 100% online. Thank you to our Technology Services team for all their assistance keeping us plugged in during testing time.

Here's a big date for all of us! Monday, April 8 will be the Total Solar Eclipse over Texas. Crosby / Barrett Station will spend about 4 minutes in 94% darkness, as the moon blocks the Sun from our view here on Earth. Crosby ISD is celebrating this big day with eclipse viewing parties on each of our campuses. We're also giving every student a free pair of safety viewers, so they can enjoy the experience safely. This will be a remarkable time for our children and us grown-ups as well. This is truly a once in a lifetime experience. Let me explain. Solar eclipses are not all that rare, with a few each year. Total solar eclipses, in particular, happen about once every 18

months or so somewhere on the planet. However, the next time Texas will be in the path of complete darkness will be April 14, 2200. 176 years away now! I can't wait to celebrate this real-life science lesson safely alongside our students. Let's all hope for clear skies!

Another big milestone is on the horizon. We are two months away from graduation season! The Crosby High School Class of 2024 Commencement Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 31 at 7:30pm at Cougar Stadium. We can't wait to celebrate more than 400 graduating seniors as they walk across the stage and become instant alumni. Last year, more than half of our graduates earned an associate's degree or industry certification before they graduated from high school. I share that factoid with community members every chance I get!

There is so much happening in Crosby ISD before the summer! Let's share some high-fives and shout-outs! Our CTE program is flourishing at Crosby High School. In the past few weeks, students have visited CenterPoint Energy's Gas Operations Training Center. The seniors explored what a career could look like in the natural gas field. Fifteen CHS seniors are moving forward with their interest in Health Sciences. Kaylie Hill, Janivette Torres, Carlee Griffith, Miranda Valdes, Jennifer Estrada, Gabby Hernandez, Litzy

Barbosa, Gisel Malpica, Dalanie Hosford, Aidan Guiting, Robert Eggert III, Laney Strang, Bell Land, Julieth Fragozo, and Angelica Medina were all certified this month as EKG Technicians. They completed all the requirements and passed the national certification exam. Crosby ISD has been designated a "Heart Safe District" by Project A.D.A.M., and we are so proud our students are experts at performing tests that can alert patients to a cardiovascular issue.

We are proud of our Theater Coogs, too! They performed the play "Olivia" in the District 17-5A One-Act Play Contest this month. "Olivia" is a special production, because it was co-written by teachers, Mr. Raymond Blanchard and Mr. Chris McAnally. The students performed their hearts out.

On the athletics side, Crosby High School baseball head coach, Ross McMurry, celebrated his 100th career win. We are so happy he celebrated that coaching milestone with us! Congrats to the Crosby High School Bass Club for finishing in second place at the Lake Somerville tournament. It's also soccer playoff season, and we hope to see everyone cheering our Cougars on the pitch! The CHS Boys' Varsity Team ended its regular season with Senior Night and a big 5-0 win against Port Arthur Memorial. Woo hoo! We are Moving Forward! Go Coogs!



The Crosby High School baseball team celebrated Head Coach Ross McMurry's 100th career win.



Crosby High School AP Chemistry students demonstrate proper use of eclipse safety viewers. Crosby ISD campuses will celebrate the Total Solar Eclipse over Texas on April 8. Each student is receiving a free pair of safety viewers.



Crosby High School students visit CenterPoint Energy's Gas Operations Training Center. These seniors explored what a career could look like in the natural gas field.

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Crosby Fire Department Stair Climb Benefit,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sept. 11, 2001, the 343 firefighters every year are remembered in a Memorial Stair Climb and this year Crosby was joined by several area departments.

The memorial was held last Saturday at Cougar Stadium in Crosby and began with a remembrance ceremony and the playing of the national anthem by the Crosby Middle School band under the direction of Brandy Killough.

"We were asked by one of the firemen to come and play the national anthem for them," Killough said. One of her band students' father is a firefighter for Crosby.

"It's our first time and we hope it kind of becomes a tradition," she said.

A student from the Crosby High School ROTC presented the colors and led the firefighters around the track to the starting point of the climb on the home side of the stadium.

The tradition was started by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation that supports fire service survivors. The funds raised at the memorial climb provide assistance to the surviving families and co-workers of the 343 firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Warren Thompson, Station Captain for Crosby VFD at Station 82 in Newport, along with Russell White, Assistant Fire Chief, led the event.

"Last year turned out better than we expected but we wanted it to be even bigger," White said. "As we're doing this interview, we have doubled the number of participants to over 100."

Before the event began, they had already met last year's numbers and were ahead of their goal for this year.

"There's no obligation to wear their firefighter gear, but most of our guys are fully packed out," the assistant chief said. That equates to more than 60 pounds of gear and for some, even air tanks.

Some wore civvies clothing and led the public participants who wanted to walk instead on the track.

To fully dress out a volunteer, White said, costs \$11,000-plus, not including the radio that costs be-



Megan and Paul Urdialez, a husband and wife team in the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department, lead other volunteers and firefighters at the Crosby 9/11 Memorial Climb last Saturday.



Joshua Stillwell, a member of the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department for one year, was one of the early finishers on Saturday. He also participated in the early practice climb on Thursday.



Firefighter Emily Armstrong walked in memory of her uncle, 19-year-old Bob Boyles, Jr., who was killed in the line of duty, Crosby VFD's only LODD. Boyles died in a wreck on his way to a fire.



Jacque Darbonne came out in respect for his brothers and sisters in Crosby VFD who perished in 911. He was at the medical tent getting his blood pressure checked.

tween \$6,000 and \$7,000 each, a result of interoperability after 9/11.

There's no final total available at the time of this story, but White was certain they had shattered last year's goal of \$10,000. Close to a dozen other departments participated including the Harris County Pct. 2 Constable's Office, State Troopers, Crosby EMS, North Channel EMS, and several fire departments including Anahuac, Holiday Lakes, Deer Park, and Bacliff.

"To simulate the climb of the towers, the climbers have to do four evolutions up and down in the stands. The walkers walk 16 laps around the track," Thompson said.

"During Pearl Harbor, some of you folks weren't even born. You may not completely understand, and we hope you never have to," the announcer said. 9/11 was the most recent generation's taste of terrorism.

"What we do today is not remarkable, but it is important... And I know that every one of you here knowing what you know, if the call goes out, will respond without hesitation," the announcer prayed.

At the end of the climb or walk, each participant goes to the south end zone where they salute, and the fire bell rang. They also wear

one or more of the badges of one of the 343 firefighters and carry them with them during the climb as a remembrance.

For Emily Armstrong, it's personal.

Her uncle, 19-year-old Bob Boyles, Jr., was killed in the line of duty, Crosby VFD's only LODD.

Boyles was killed in a wreck on his way to a fire.

"He swerved to miss the car, knowing that if he had hit them, they would have died," his niece recalled. Instead, he died in the wreck.

For Paul and Megan Urdialez, it also had a special meaning for

the husband and wife.

"I have been in the ladies auxiliary and then after my kids got older, I joined too," she said. "I wanted other ladies to know that they could do this too. I wanted to give back a be a part of something bigger than myself," his wife said.

Paul, who is a safety lieutenant, this was to support the department and the firemen of 9/11.

He was in sixth grade; she was in fifth grade when 9/11 occurred.

"I could see some of the teachers across the hall quickly turning off the televisions. They asked us to be really quiet because something important was happening

and eventually we would see it," he said.

Some teachers wept as the news grew worse.

"This really was our Pearl Harbor," Paul said.

Before walkers or climbers could leave, they had to be cleared by the medical tent.

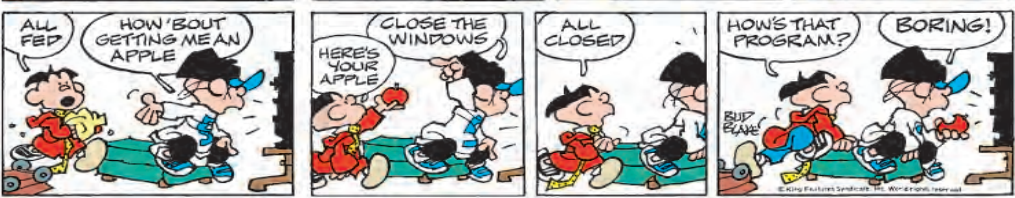
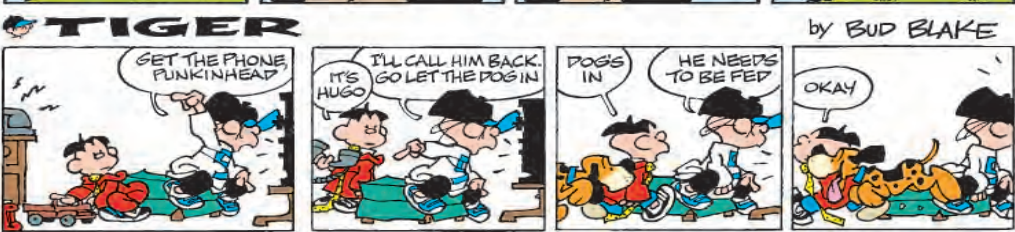
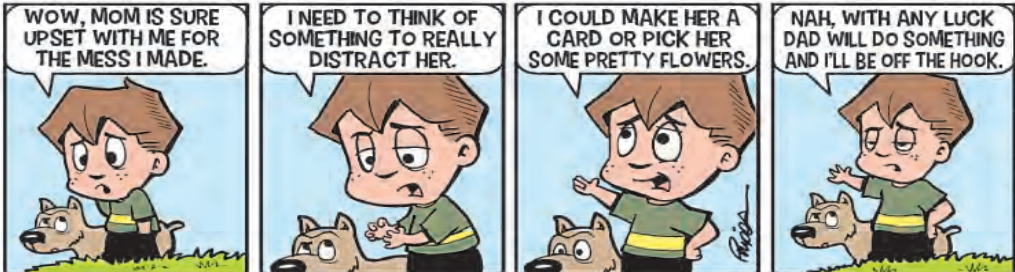
Jacque Darbonne came out in respect for his brothers and sisters in Crosby VFD who perished in 911. He was at the medical tent getting his blood pressure checked.

"We saw it on television at my workplace and then a year later, I joined the Crosby VFD. It's been fun ever since," he said.

ENTERTAINMENT

March 25, 2024 Posting Date

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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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!

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is moved. 2. Neck opening of undershirt is lower. 3. Pocket is different. 4. Cabinet door is wider. 5. Bottle on counter is moved. 6. Which is added.

- ### ACROSS
- 1 Weighing device
 - 6 Sitar tunes
 - 11 Fearful
 - 12 Using the Internet
 - 14 Eagles' homes
 - 15 Julianne and Demi
 - 16 Away from SSW
 - 17 Auto style
 - 19 Wager
 - 20 Food regimen
 - 22 Cariou of Broadway
 - 23 Visibility hindrance
 - 24 Cancel
 - 26 Journeys
 - 28 Head of st.
 - 30 Animal doc
 - 31 "Lolita" author
 - 35 Summary
 - 39 Plow pullers
 - 40 Felon's flight
 - 42 Sitarist Shankar
 - 43 Soccer's Hamm
 - 44 Prom duds
 - 46 Heavy weight
 - 47 E-business
 - 49 Boring type
 - 51 New citizen, perhaps
- ### DOWN
- 1 Picturesque
 - 2 Life's work
 - 3 Onassis nickname
 - 4 Cask sediment
 - 5 '50s Ford
 - 6 Peter the Great, e.g.
 - 7 Shortly
 - 8 Day- paint
 - 9 Car safety feature
 - 10 Allergy season sound
 - 11 Hourglass fillers
 - 13 "Melrose Place" actor
 - 18 "Lion" star
 - 21 Yank at
 - 23 Misanthrope
 - 25 - choy
 - 27 " - outta here!"
 - 29 Library array
 - 31 - plume
 - 32 Wise sayings
 - 33 "Scram!"
 - 34 Preventive shot, in slang
 - 36 40 winks
 - 37 Sidesteps
 - 38 Lipstick shades
 - 41 Repairs
 - 44 Rent
 - 45 Foolproof
 - 48 Hollywood trickery (Abbr.)
 - 50 Ruby or Sandra

King Crossword

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY:** Where are the Seychelles islands located?
- TELEVISION:** In which sitcom is the catchphrase "Hello, Newman" used often?
- FOOD & DRINK:** What is a cornichon?
- HISTORY:** According to a WWII government slogan, what should citizens do after they "Keep calm ..."?
- MOVIES:** What is the name of John Wayne's character in "True Grit"?
- LANGUAGE:** The Latin word "genu" refers to which part of the human body?
- U.S. STATES:** How many states begin with the letter "R"?
- LANGUAGE:** The first vaccine was created to protect against which disease?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** What is the name of Helen Keller's teacher, who taught the blind and deaf girl how to communicate?
- ANATOMY:** What is the smallest organ in the human body?

Weekly SUDOKU

Solution time: 21 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

King Crossword

Solution time: 21 mins.

Answers

1. Indian Ocean; 2. "Seinfeld"; 3. A small pickle; 4. "... and carry on"; 5. Rooster Cogburn; 6. The knee; 7. One; Rhode Island; 8. Smallpox; 9. Anne Sullivan; 10. Pineal gland.

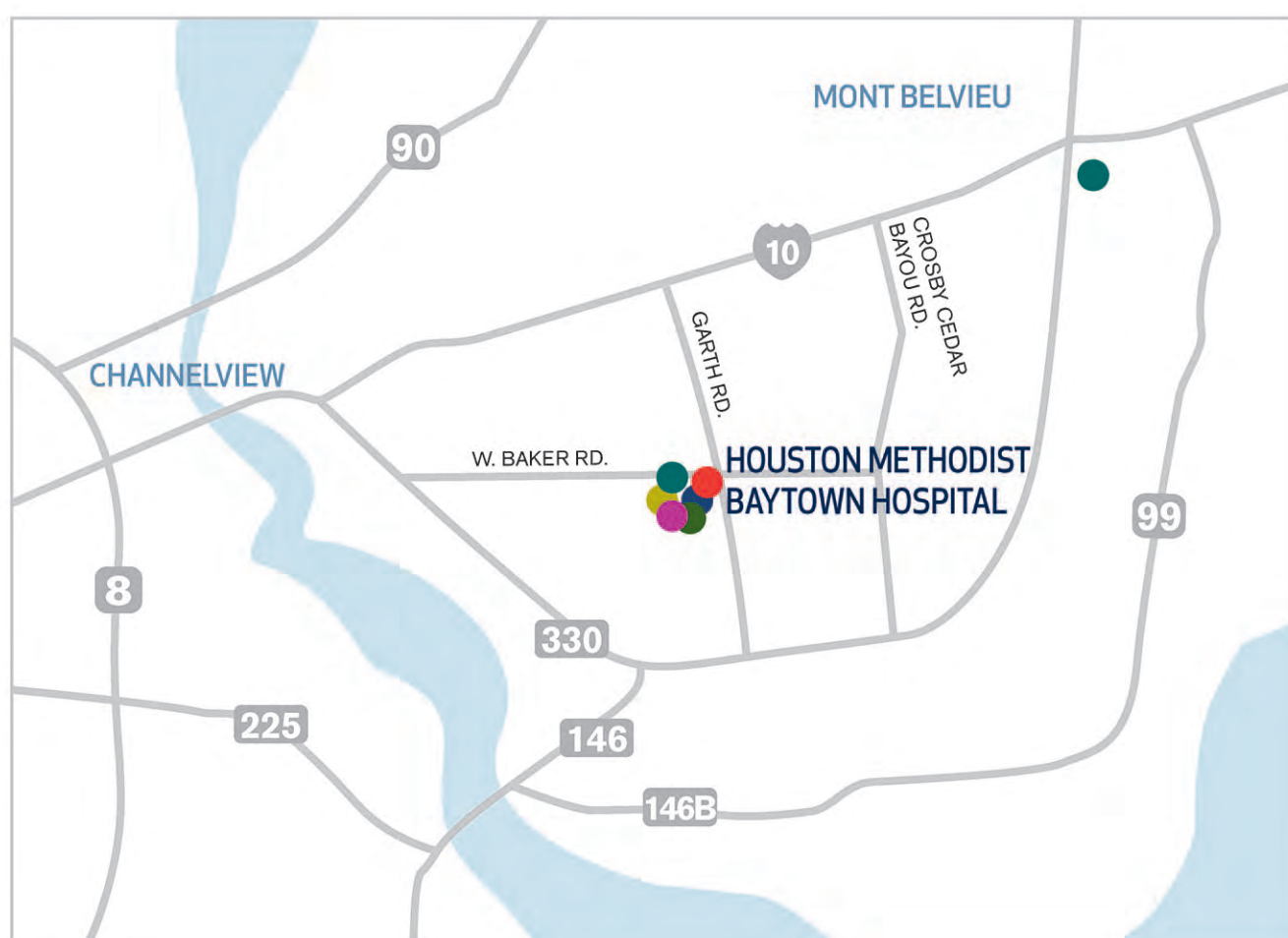


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