

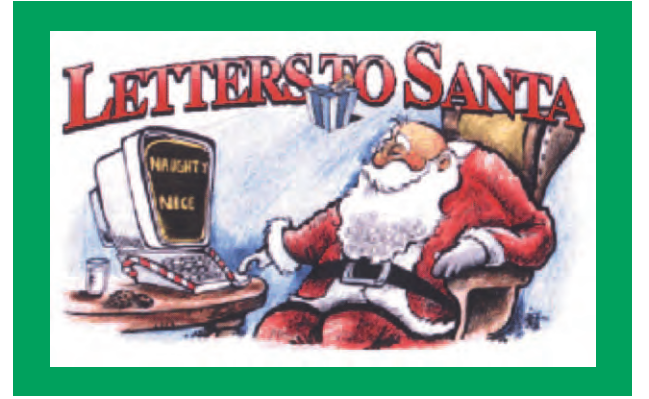


HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

Star Courier

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

Holiday Events

Thursday, DEC. 12 CHS Band Concert

The Crosby High School Band Winter Concert will be held Thursday, Dec. 12 at the Crosby High School Performing Arts Center, 333 Red Summit Dr., in Crosby. The concert is free, donations accepted.

Saturday, DEC. 14 Crosby Chamber Christmas Festival

The Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce welcomes the public to their 26th Annual Christmas Festival from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Crosby Church, 5725 US-90, in Crosby. The festival is an opportune time for businesses to give back to the community, showcase their wares, and connect with local residents. Enjoy the indoor/outdoor market, with free activities for the family. Free hotdogs, popcorn and cotton candy will be given out. Pictures with Santa and goody bags, balloon artist, petting zoo and so much more. To register for a booth, go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/BJH22MH. For more info, email tiffany@crosbychurch.com or deena@crosbyhuffmancc.org.

Saturday, DEC. 14 Crosby Christmas Parade

After shopping at the chamber of commerce's festival, drive on over to FM 2100 and watch the annual Christmas Parade with the theme of Favorite Christmas Movie. Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. The parade begins at Crosby Middle School and proceed up FM 2100. Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Sponsorships are available. To enter the parade, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y2XFK6M>. For more info, email tiffany@crosbychurch.com or deena@crosbyhuffmancc.org.

Sunday, DEC. 15 Christmas Recital

Enjoy the talented students from the Studio of C. David Taylor for their annual Christmas recital at Church of the Resurrection, 5202 First Street, in Crosby. The recital begins at 2:30 p.m. and the public is invited to a reception for the students in the Parish Hall immediately following the recital.

Santa, Cookies, and Cocoa in Highlands

Hundreds line up for cookies with Santa

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The colder weather provided the perfect weather for Santa Claus and his reindeer to make an appearance at the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands. The big, red jolly guy was there to hear the children's wishes with tikes who came dressed to the nines for photos. Also present was The Cow from Chick-Fil-A filling in for Santa's elves who were back at the North Pole putting their final touches on millions of toys.

"This was our third year here," said organizer Tonya Kostka who manages the community center. "Before we were in here, we were outside at the railroad tracks for the Christmas tree lighting."

It was run previously by the chamber until the leader suffered medical issues and couldn't return.

The event has been going on in Highlands for decades and the Highlands Rotary has always provided the hot chocolate, and the Horizons have provided the cookies and candy canes. The seniors groups take care of Santa and hand out goody bags for the kids on their way out.

Kostka was pleased with the turnout, which reached over 400 during the two-hour event.

She pointed out several advantages to hosting the event inside at the community center now.



Mr. Cow from Chick-Fil-A and Tonya Kostka join Santa Claus for their annual Christmas photo. Mr. Cow and Kostka assist Santa in landing the sleigh carefully on the roof with his reindeer and also assist Mr. Claus inside.



Hot Chocolate and Cookies were served to the children and families that attended the event. Santa's helpers were the Highlands Rotary Club, seen above, and the Highlands Horizons Club. Rotarians included Robert Woodall, Andy and Tricia Scott, Ann Woodall, GayLynn Millorn, Weston Cotten, Cora Lynn Miller, Denise Smith, Karrie Torina, and Connie Russell.

"We're not outside in the cold or wet weather, safety is always an issue, and it's dark out there," she said.

With the event inside, children and parents can come have photos taken with Santa that are printed out on the spot and given to them then.

"The photographer, Peet and Georgina Bighorse has graciously donated his time and materials," she said.

Many of the families come dressed together in the same pajamas or clothes for a family photo.

The Horizons is a decades old organization in Highlands, who came before the Pilot Club, and they partner with public, independent and charter schools to create out-of-school academic enrichment and social learning programs for students from pre-kindergarten through high school. "We used to raise money for scholarships for our students at Goose Creek Memorial with the Miss Highlands pageant until COVID and that really shut us down," said Carol Forrest.

Forrest has lived in Highlands since 1995 and is a past president of the women's organization.

Now the organization hosts purse bingo events and raises more money than they ever have.

"We used to give 12 \$500 scholarships to students. This year, we were able to give out 10 \$1,000 scholarships to students," she said.

To join the group, join their Highlands Horizons page on Facebook and send a message to a member that the interest is there to participate.

Despite the long line that at times reached outside the center, it went by fairly quickly.

"I don't see this celebration ever going away," she said, "as long as we have volunteers to help. It takes a village and Commissioner Ramsey to put this on."

MORE Christmas Photos on Page 6.

Crosby HS Band Performs Inside Capitol Rotunda

AUSTIN – The Crosby High School Band performed inside the Capitol Rotunda in Austin, celebrating the sounds of the holiday season. The Big Red Machine played "Frosty the Snowman," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Jingle Bells," and many other holiday classics during their one-hour concert inside the State Capitol.

Visitors stopped inside the historic dome to listen to the Crosby High School student-musicians perform Christmas tunes. The band ended with a flourish and had a chance to show Austin what Crosby is all about. Students played the Crosby Cougar Fight Song to share their hometown pride in the state capitol.

The visit to the State Capitol building is the icing on the cake for the Crosby High School Band. Students have had a won-



Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

derful fall. In October, they won 4th place at the UIL State Military Marching Band Contest in Waco. After their performance, students had a chance to take photos on the floor of the state house.

Crosby ISD would like to extend a big thank you to State Representative Briscoe Cain who hosted the Crosby High School Band. Superintendent Patterson and Board of Trustees President, Mrs. Kea Lynn Lewis, had the

opportunity to enjoy the performance in person as well.


Superintendent Patterson said, "This is who we are, and this is what we do. Crosby ISD is proud to travel across the state of Texas to show our school spirit. The Crosby High School Band is the best of the best, and today total strangers know it. I am so proud of these students who give their all and genuinely have fun showing off their school pride."

The Crosby High School Band is under the direction of Crosby ISD Director of Bands, Mr. Kevin Knight, and assistant director, Mr. Zachary Sanchez.

Continued. See CROSBY BAND, Page 6



Aerial view of the Crosby High School Band performing inside the Capitol Rotunda in Austin on Thursday, December 5.

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 Letters to Santa 

 Letters to Santa 

Dear Santa,
I am 7 years old. I live in Baytown. I have really been good this year. I would really like it if you could bring me a PS6 and electric scooter.
Love,
Cedric Trench
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 7 years old. I live in Highlands and Baytown. I have really been good this year. I hope you will bring me a electric scooter.
Love,
Liam Hoel
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I want a switch, i want a ipad, ps5 and popchrol cards.
Evie Roberts, 6 yrs old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
For christmas I would like a Buggati and a tesla for my mom and a Rolls Rocce and a McClaren and the eart and a ps5 20 schools an a masion thanks.
Arturo, 7 yrs old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 7 years old. I live in Highlands, Texas. I have really been good this year. I helping my mommy I would really like if you could bring me a hoverboard and electric scooter.
Love,
Zy Angel Williams
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 8 years old. I live in Baytown Houston, Texas. I have really been good this year. I would really like it if you could bring me a Ronaldo shirt and a puppy. Merry Christmas Santa and I hope I see you next year.
Love,
Lilyana Gonzalez
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 7 years old. I live in Baytown, Texas. I have really been good this year. I would like it if you would bring me a barbie.
Love,
Valerie Salinas
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am 7 years old. I live in Baytown. I have been really good this year. I would like it if you could bring me a PS5 and games. Can I have a spider game?
Love,
Tristan Alkhayat
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I want a hello kitty toy I want sun makeup, I want a Ipad, I want a Basit22, I want a meo, I want a fan.
Kayla Silva, 6 yrs old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I hope you're ok how are your reindeer? I wish for a Basketball. I would really like to get a santa book. I'am been nice to my classmates.
Harry Allen, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I hope you stay safe on Christmas. You should get me a gift because I haven't gotten a Conduct mark, I would want a beaded dragon and a Ja Marant jersey. Tell Rudolph I said Hi.
Ezra Jaramillo, 8 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am 7 years old. I live in Baytown. I have been really good this year. I would like it if you could bring me a PS5 and games. Can I have a spider game?
Love,
Tristan Alkhayat
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
Can you please get me a iphone please, also I like my family an a VR head set and for my brother a my famdi an iphone and a good life thank you.
Amielean, 7 yrs old.
Highlands Elementary



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Joe Stephens and family

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Cougar Christmas
CROSBY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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VOL. 29, NO. 47

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Festive Spirit Shines at 2024 Christmas on the Hill Parade

Christmas Events in December

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 14, 2024
Bring the family out and capture a special moment with Santa at our selfie station while we cater a tasty breakfast including a biscuit bar full of goodies. After breakfast, keep the kids engaged with a decorate-it-yourself ornament for your tree.

TICKETS

Purchase your breakfast tickets below! Choose from 3 allotments: • 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. • 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. • 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Tickets will go on sale Fall 2024.

Buy your tickets in advance because this will sell out! Each person in attendance will need a ticket.

Santa in the City Night

December 16, and 17, 2024 Santa Claus will be riding in style onboard one of the Mont Belvieu Fire Department engines through a neighborhood near you! so he knows exactly where all of his stops will be on Christmas night. be sure to get out and give the big man a wave and a shout as he rides by!

Pictures with Santa

Friday, December 13, 2024 | 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Santa's last stop is at Eagle Pointe for a photo op where kids can pick up some cookies & milk after their photo with Santa!

This is a free event and no membership necessary. Cookies & milk while supplies last. No tickets or pre-registration needed.

Women's Golf Clinic

Saturday, December 14, 2024 | 9:30 a.m. - 11 am \$35 per person. Shop by the Eagle Pointe pro shop or Call to sign up! (281)385-6666.

This clinic is for all players at any skill level!

MONT BELVIEU - The 2024 Christmas on the Hill Parade brought holiday magic to life as the community gathered for a night filled with cheer, creativity, and festive lights. Floats dazzled with imaginative designs, including whimsical "Minion" and "Whoville" themes, showcasing the talent and effort of local participants. Santa Claus made a grand entrance atop a Mont Belvieu fire truck, spreading holiday joy to residents of all ages. The parade showed the strong spirit of the community, with families and friends braving the cool evening to celebrate together.

A heartfelt thank-you was extended to all participants, volunteers, and residents who contributed to the event's success. The parade winners, will be announced during the City Council meeting on Monday, December 9, and shared on the city's Facebook page. This annual tradition event exemplifies the unity and festive spirit of the community, setting the perfect tone for the holiday season.

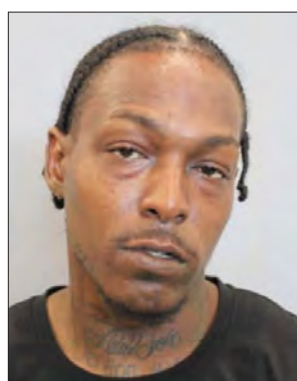


Murder Suspect Arrested after SWAT Standoff at I-10 Motel

HOUSTON, Texas - Authorities have identified the murder suspect taken into custody after a SWAT scene ended outside a Baytown hotel Thursday afternoon.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said the suspect, Adrian G. Reeves, 35, has been charged in connection with the shooting death of 30-year-old Tomas Newman on Nov. 26.

Police responded to the home invasion and shooting at The Selena Apartments on Uvalde Road at about 3 a.m. and found a



Suspect, Adrian G. Reeves, 35

man dead on Nov. 26.



Officials said that Newman went to check on a neighbor's house in the 200 block of Uvalde Road when Reeves allegedly shot him.

Near where police found the victim, the people who

reported the shooting said a suspect forced his way into their residence before gunfire was exchanged between them.

No one was hurt in that shooting, though investigators said they were

working to determine the motive for the home invasion and how the man killed outside the apartment may have been related.

On Thursday, the Harris County Sheriff's Office said the standoff with the barricaded suspect was happening at 1931 East Freeway, near Thompson.

Authorities have not released additional details about the SWAT scene but urged people to avoid the area.

Houston Shuts Down Water Pumps as Precaution After Train Derailment in Highlands

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas - In a recent turn of events, a train derailment in East Harris County has prompted the City of Houston to shut down its water pumps as a cautionary measure. According to ABC13, the shutdown ensued after the collision of two trains resulted in several cars derailing, and two of these cars plunging into a canal that serves as a conduit between the Trinity River and the San Jacinto River, despite this

incident, city officials assure that the water supply remains uncontaminated for now.

The accident took place near Battlebell Road and Thompson Road, with one train rear-ending another causing the derailment although no injuries have been reported. Hazmat teams were dispatched to the scene to handle the aftermath, teams that are working alongside the Union Pacific and Baytown Fire Department con-



firmed that "there were no leaks in the containers," hence no risk posed to nearby residents, as stated by the KHOU.

The impact of the collision extended to the nearby infrastructure when one of the train cars struck a building, an incident uncovered by ABC13 the following morning. While it's fortunate that there were no injuries, the proximity of the accident to water

sources led to precautionary measures, and the city's swift response in suspending water pump operations exemplifies a cautious approach in the face of potential environmental hazards.

Road closures are currently in place as cleanup operations continue; Sheriff Gonzalez has provided an estimate for these efforts to conclude around 3 p.m. or 4 p.m the crisply

executed strategies by first responders and clean-up crews should hasten the return to normalcy, and while the containment of potential threats like spilled propane and plastic pellets reflects an effective emergency response, the disruptions to the flow of daily life are palpable, with the recommendation for drivers being to head west on Battlebell Road to reach FM 2100.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

TO DISCUSS BARBERS HILL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STATE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATING

Barbers Hill ISD will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m., Monday, December 16, 2024
In the J. Justin Jenson Conference Room, 9600 Eagle Drive, Mont Belvieu, TX.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Barbers Hill ISD's rating on the State's financial accountability system.

OPINION PAGE

Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

By FRANCIS P. CHURCH, First published in The New York Sun in 1897

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

Dear Editor—

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" was an immediate sensation, and went on to become one of the most famous editorials ever written. It first appeared in the The New York Sun in 1897, almost a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age 21. The following year she received her Master's from Columbia, and in 1912 she began teaching in the New York City school system, later becoming a principal. After 47 years, she retired as an educator. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter, and to each reply she attached an attractive printed copy of the Church editorial. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died on May 13, 1971, at the age of 81, in a nursing home in Valatie, N.Y.



THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

One More Sun



It is an unusual living situation, in many ways.

My husband, Peter, and I spend almost half the year down in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. We had a terrible experience in another town (an absentee American owner with a filthy rental) and we came running back to San Miguel, desperate to find a place to stay—any place that was clean and halfway affordable. And that is how Jorge found us.

"I have an apartment on Loreto that is available for the month," he wrote, in response to my frantic post on the San Miguel Facebook page.

"That will be expensive," I warned Peter.

Jorge told us the price. It was not expensive.

"That will be a dump!" I warned Peter.

It was not. It is a small apartment in a small hotel called "House of the Suns," and has (according to Jorge) nearly 3,000 suns painted on various surfaces and hung from all the walls. Most of these were painted by Fabrizio, the artist Jorge keeps on more-or-less permanent retainer.

Our apartment is not fancy, and it is not large, but we are happy. All our friends either own their own homes here or rent something much larger and fancier. I sometimes admire their space (and their bathtubs!) but I cannot imagine leaving Jorge.

Every time we are down here, I buy another painting at an art gallery and hang it on the wall. Peter buys another cooking gadget. We buy more pillows, and the cupboards fill with our brightly colored dishes from the market and... we leave all of it, right where it is. Our apartment is rented out to other people while we are away, but Jorge does not mind.

Even so, I was reluctant to broach the subject of the table.

There is nothing wrong with our kitchen table. It's heavy and round and built for the outdoors, so it did not start its life expecting to be a kitchen table. That is not a serious problem. But it occupies a large percentage of our small kitchen and has awkward legs. And so (because I have a far-too-busy brain), I had been agitating about this table.

"I think we need a new table," I told Peter.

"You better ask Jorge."

Peter's No. 1 concern is keeping Jorge happy, and I share this concern. But I also wanted a new table. So I waited for the appropriate time, and I sprung.

"I have a very serious question for you," I told Jorge—letting him know this might not be as serious as my words implied.

Jorge smiled. "Yes?" Jorge is always patient with my Spanish.

"I saw a table. It is square and painted, and I think it would be nice in the apartment. I wonder if I could buy it." I did not think Jorge would need much convincing, but I wanted to seal the deal. "And perhaps I could pay Fabrizio to paint a sun on the table."

Jorge smiled. Adding one more sun to our kitchen table certainly could not hurt.

"No problem," Jorge said.

"For sure?" I asked.

"For sure," he said. So I went out the next day, and I bought the used blue and green painted table, and I carried it home. And the very next day, Fabrizio painted a magnificent sun on the top.

I don't know if this is how hotels are supposed to operate—letting us put our art on the walls and swap out the furniture—but it seems to work for all concerned.

And now, I am looking at the chairs...

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



Deportation Vow Alarms Construction Industry

The state's construction industry is voicing concern that President-elect Trump's vow to deport millions of undocumented immigrants would cause major labor shortfalls, according to the Texas Standard. "It would devastate our industry, we wouldn't finish our highways, we wouldn't finish our schools," said Stan Marek, CEO of Marek, a Houston-based commercial and residential construction giant. "Housing would disappear. I think they'd lose half their labor."

Many of the state's cities are on lists of the country's fastest growing communities, and companies rely on undocumented labor. A 2022 report by the American Immigration Council and Texans for Economic Growth indicated more than a half million immigrants were working in the construction industry and nearly 60% of that workforce was undocumented.

Economist Ray Perryman notes that the Texas workforce isn't large enough to keep pace with growth.

"There are more undocumented people working in Texas right now than there are unemployed people in Texas," Perryman said.

PROPOSED TARIFFS RAISE CONCERNS ALONG BORDER REGION

Trump's intention to levy a 25% tariff on goods imported from Mexico and Canada is raising concerns, particularly along the southern border.

"The biggest impacts are going to be felt by manufacturing companies, transportation companies and warehousing companies," said Tom Fullerton, an economics professor at the University of Texas at El Paso. "We could end up with a repeat of the 1930s with the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act," which created a trade war and contributed to the Great Depression.

Most goods traded across the three countries are considered intermediary goods, The Texas Tribune reported. An example is an American carmaker importing Chinese electrical parts, sending the vehicle to Mexico for a circuit board, then the vehicle being sent back across the border for finishing in an assembly line in Texas. Fullerton said an individual product could pass between the



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

U.S. and Mexico four to eight times.

Some Texas elected officials have expressed support for Trump's tariffs, however. Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said tariffs can be an effective negotiating tool to encourage Mexico to shut down the border and said any potential economic impacts would be short-lived.

"We are trying to shut down the flood of illegal immigration," Miller said. "That factor alone offsets any temporary price increase."

PATRICK CALLS FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH FUNDING

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick wants lawmakers in the upcoming session next month to approve a dementia research fund modeled after the state's \$6 billion Cancer Prevention and Research Institute, called CPRIT, The Tribune reported.

Since it began in 2007, CPRIT has become the country's second-largest funder of cancer research, only exceeded by the federal government. If funded by the Legislature, the dementia counterpart could have a global impact on research into Alzheimer's and dementia.

"Like CPRIT, this investment will draw leading researchers and companies to Texas and require them to be based in Texas, leading to their further investment in our state," Patrick said last week.

The Texas Department of State Health Services reports that 459,000 Texans have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, the most common form of dementia. That is about 12% of the state's over-65 population.

CRYPTO MINING FACILITIES MUST REGISTER WITH PUC

Cryptocurrency mining facilities connected to the state's primary electric grid must register with the Public Utility Commission under a rule passed late last month. The rule was mandated by a bill passed in 2023 requiring crypto mining facilities using more than 75 megawatts of power to do so.

Crypto mining consumes huge amounts of power. According to the Texas Blockchain Council, there are at least 27 mining operations in Texas and more are planned. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas predicts the growth in crypto mining facilities and data centers could nearly double electric use within six years.

"To ensure the ERCOT grid is reliable and meets the electricity needs of all Texans, the PUCT and ERCOT need to know the location and power needs of virtual currency miners," PUCT Chairman Thomas Gleason said.

Virtual currency mining facilities are "flexible loads," meaning they can quickly adjust their power consumption in response to certain factors, like changes in the wholesale price of electricity. Facilities that fail to register could be fined \$25,000 a day.

FEDS CAN'T DESTROY RAZOR WIRE, APPEALS COURT RULES

A federal appeals court has stopped the federal government from destroying razor-wire fencing installed by Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border near Eagle Pass, the San Antonio Express-News reported. The state placed more than 29 miles of wire in the Eagle Pass area in the past year or so. The Border Patrol has cut some of the wire in a long-running dispute between the federal government and the state over who controls the border.

Last week, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a 2-1 opinion reversing a lower's court's ruling that the federal government could destroy the wire.

"It was shocking to me that the federal government would go out of their way to cut razor wire to allow illegals to cross when we're just trying to protect our own land," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said.

TXDOT PROJECTS SAVE COMMUTERS \$915 MILLION

A historic number of projects underway by the Texas Department of Transportation are easing commute times, according to a new report from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

Despite the number of miles traveled on state roads increasing by 7% in the past five years, traffic delays are down 7% in that same time period, according to TTI. The study also found commuters are saving an estimated \$915 million in time and fuel costs.

"As our population and economy continue to grow, there's a considerable need for more projects, and this report helps guide our work to areas that need it most," TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams said.

Advertisement for HOFFMAN-LIU DESIGN ASSOCIATES featuring a snowman illustration and contact information for Gilbert Hoffman, Architect.

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FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 15:

Texans host Tua and Dolphins: Bills, Lions do battle in Motor City

College football's regular season, along with the conference title games, have come and gone and now we wait on the College Football Committee (CFP) to announce the 12 teams who will make up this year's new playoff format.

When the 12 team field is announced, the top four seeds will receive byes, while the other eight teams will play first-round games Dec. 20 and 21. The higher seeded teams will host a game on their respective campuses, while the top four teams will get a much-needed week off.

It has been a wild and woolly year. I think it's safe to say that no matter what transpired in the SEC title game on Dec. 7, the University of Texas should be in the field. They've won 11 games, earned a spot in the SEC title game in their first year in the conference and have perhaps the best defense in college football.

While we wait for the CFP field to be announced, there is one game to discuss this weekend as Army and Navy will meet for the 125th time (Navy leads the all time series, 62-55-7) on Saturday at Northwest Stadium in Washington, D.C. Both teams have had solid seasons. Army finished first in the American Athletic Conference and carried a 10-1 record into the AAC title game against Tulane a week ago. Navy with an 8-3 record. Both teams will be bowling this year.

While a lot of attention will be on that game and the CFP committee's announcement, the NFL will take center stage this weekend. So, what else is new?

The Texans return to action after a much-needed bye week and will host Tua Tagovailoa and the Miami Dolphins on Sunday at NRG Stadium. Two weeks ago, the Texans got back on the winning track with a 23-20 road win at Jacksonville. Running back Joe Mixon got going once again with 101 yards rushing and a touchdown and QB C.J. Stroud turned in a turnover-free performance. This will be a tough game for the Texans because the Dolphins are a desperate team hanging to their playoff lives.

Week 15 begins with Thursday Night Football with the Rams visiting the beat-up and battered 49ers. SF running back Christian McCaffrey sustained another injury two weeks ago against the Bills and could be finished for the season. The Rams are in the NFC West race and will need to win one on the road to remain in the race.

Other key games this weekend have the Cowboys and their faint playoff hopes traveling to Carolina to take on a feisty Panthers team. Carolina has played hard the last few weeks and took Tampa Bay to overtime two weeks ago before falling, 26-23. This is a game Dallas cannot afford to take for granted, especially considering they probably have to win out to even have a chance of the playoffs.

The Chiefs have a tough road test at Cleveland. The Browns have had a disappointing season, but three weeks ago upset the Steelers at home and would like nothing more than to upset the defending Super Bowl champs on Sunday.

The Game of the Week will occur in Detroit, when the Lions host the Buffalo Bills in what could be a Super Bowl preview.

There's also the battle for the Keystone State when the Steelers visit the red-hot Eagles in Philadelphia. Both teams should be playoff bound. This should be a fun game to watch as the stout Steeler defense will try and slow down the high-octane Philly offense.

Tampa Bay heads to LA to take on the Chargers, while the Packers will head to the Pacific Northwest to take on Seattle on Sunday Night Football.

The NFL will give us two Monday Night Football games, with the Bears and their new head coach Thomas Brown. Brown replaces the fired Matt Eberflus, who was fired after the Bears fell to 4-8 after their Thanksgiving loss at Detroit. The nightcap will feature Atlanta at Las Vegas.

Before we take a look at this weekend's games, let's review last week's record. An 8-4 week brought the season record to 101-43 (70 percent).

Now, onto this weekend's games.

NCAA

Army vs. Navy - I don't



know about you, but I love this game and watch it every year. This is more than a football game, it's a meeting of two of the most respected military academies in the country and features young men who won't be playing in the NFL, but who will be defending our great country once they graduate from their respective schools. And this year, both teams have had solid seasons, especially Army, which entered the AAC title game with 10 wins against one loss, while Navy will enter with an 8-3 record. If you like teams that run the football, then you will love this game. These two teams have combined for 72 rushing touchdowns (Army has 39 and Navy has 33). Both teams have dual-threat QBs as Army is led by Bryson Daily (860 passing yards, 8 TDs/1,348 rushing yards, 25 TDs) and Navy is led by Blake Horvath (1,154 passing yards, 11 TDs/895 rushing yards, 13 TDs). Daily will get help in the running game from running back Kanye Udoh (906 yards, 9 TDs). This should be a high-scoring and entertaining game. Look for Daily to make one or two more plays than Horvath does as the Black Knights pull it out. My pick, Army 34, Navy 31

NFL

Los Angeles Rams at San Francisco - Week 16 kicks off with an NFC West battle on Thursday Night Football as the Rams visit the beat up 49ers. San Francisco has been decimated by injuries and has lost star running back Christian McCaffrey for the rest of the season with a knee injury. His backup, Jordan Mason (789 yards, 3 TDs) is also injured, so that means QB Brock Purdy (2,707 yards, 13 TDs) will need to make plays in the passing game to wide receiver Juan Jennings (50 receptions, 654 yards, 4 TDs) and tight end George Kittle (61 receptions, 649 yards, 8 TDs). The Rams are squarely in the division race and will look to QB Matthew Stafford (2,983 yards, 17 TDs), running back Kyren Williams (926 Yards, 10 TDs) and wideouts Cooper Kupp (58 receptions, 565 Yards, 5 TDs) and Puka Nacua (42 receptions, 546 yards, 2 TDs) to attack a suspect SF defense. The Rams have too much firepower and will pick up a big road win on Thursday night. My pick, Los Angeles Rams 326 San Francisco 23

Dallas at Carolina - Can the Cowboys make a late-season run after a disastrous start to the season? Maybe, but they will need to win on the road on Sunday against a young and hungry Carolina team that has not given up on the season, even though they've won only three games heading into their Dec. 8 game at Philadelphia. Dallas picked up its second straight win on Thanksgiving Day over the Giants as backup QB Cooper Rush (1,008 yards, 5 TDs) passed for 195 yards and a score and running back Rico Dowdle (600 yards, 2 TDs) rushed for 112 yards and a score. Dallas will need star wide receiver CeeDee Lamb (79 receptions, 880 yards, 4 TDs) for this game. Lamb sat out most of the New York game with a shoulder injury. The Dallas defense will need to contain Panthers QB Bryce Young (1,381 yards, 6 TDs) and running back Chubba Hubbard (919 yards, 7 TDs) if they hope to pull out the win. It says here the Dallas "D" will do just that come Sunday. My pick, Dallas 24, Carolina 17

Kansas City at Cleveland - The Chiefs may not be blowing people out, but they do find ways to keep on winning. On Sunday they will face a tough test at what should be a chilly afternoon in Cleveland. KC QB Patrick Mahomes (2,979 yards, 19 TDs) will be up to the task. He will get help from running back Kareem Hunt (592 yards, 5 TDs), tight end Travis Kelce (75 receptions, 637 yards, 2 TDs) and rookie wideout Xavier Worthy (33 receptions, 407 yards, 5 TDs). The Browns have had a tough year, but have not given up on the season. They lost a tough one at Denver two weeks ago, falling 41-32. Reserve QB Jameis Winston (1,763 yards, 11 TDs) and wide receiver Jerry Jeudy (54 receptions, 880 yards,

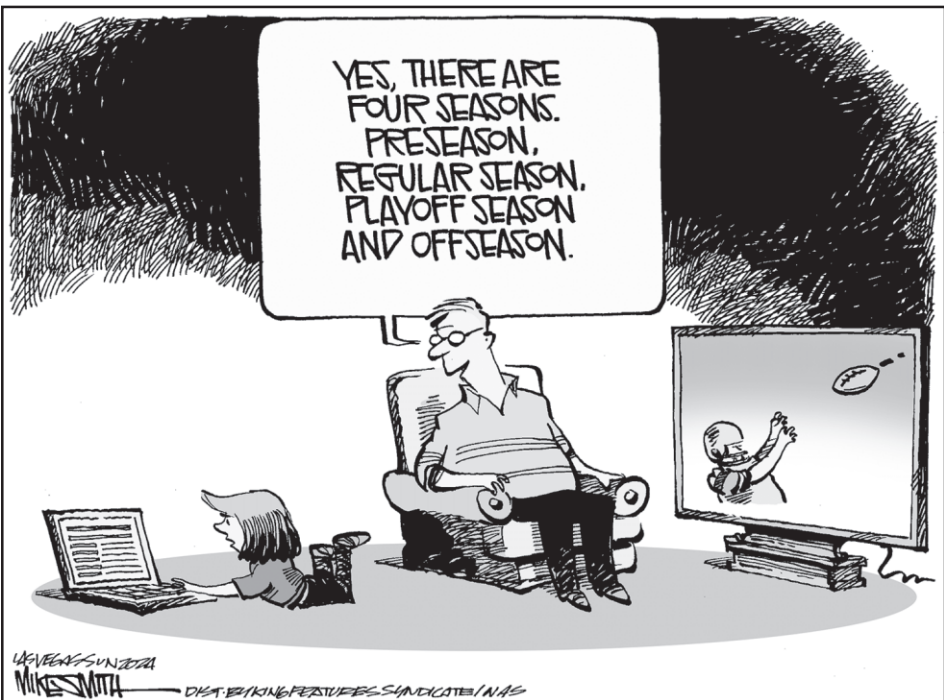
3 TDs) have formed a formidable duo, but look for the Chiefs defense to harass Winston and force a turnover or two as the Chiefs win a tough road contest. My pick, Kansas City 23, Cleveland 16

Miami at Houston - The Dolphins visit the Texans on Sunday and the Texans will take on the explosive Miami offense without starting linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair, who the league suspended three games for his hit on Jacksonville QB Trevor Lawrence. Houston head coach DeMeco Ryans will need to come up with a solid game plan to slow down Miami QB Tua Tagovailoa (2,125 yards, 17 TDs), running back De'Von Achane (576 yards, 9 total TDs) and speedy wideout Tyreek Hill (55 receptions, 654 yards, 4 TDs). The Texans could use another big day from running back Joe Mixon (887 yards, 12 total TDs). If Mixon has success running the ball, Houston can control the clock and keep Tua off the field. That will also open up the passing game for Texans QB C.J. Stroud (3,117 yards, 15 TDs) and big-play wide receivers Nico Collins (49 receptions, 532 yards, 4 TDs) and Tank Dell (43 receptions, 543 yards, 2 TDs). With Kansas City and Baltimore next up on the Texans schedule, it would behoove the locals to win this one at home on Sunday. My pick, Houston 31, Miami 27

Buffalo at Detroit - This should be a really good game as one of the best teams in the AFC visits the top team in the NFC. Detroit improved to 11-1 with their Thanksgiving Day win over Chicago, while Buffalo improved to 10-2 with their win over SF two weeks ago. The Lions are beat up on defense, which should have Buffalo QB Josh Allen (2,691 passing yards, 20 TDs/334 rushing yards, 6 TDs) smiling. The Lions defense will also have to contend with running back James Cook (703 yards, 11 TDs) and wideout Khalil Shakir (60 receptions, 629 yards, 2 TDs). The Buffalo defense will also have its hands full taking on Lions QB Jared Goff (2,982 yards, 22 TDs), running backs Jahmyr Gibbs (973 yards, 11 total TDs), David Montgomery (720 yards, 11 total TDs) and wideouts Amon-Ra St. Brown (76 receptions, 820 yards, 9 TDs) and Jameson Williams (34 receptions, 630 yards, 4 TDs). The Lions are tough to beat at home, which the Bills will discover come Sunday. My pick, Detroit 33, Buffalo 30

Pittsburgh at Philadelphia - The Steelers and Eagles battle for the pride of the Keystone State on Sunday in what could turn into an offensive shootout. Two weeks ago, Steeler QB Russell Wilson (1,626 yards, 10 TDs) passed for a season high 414 yards and three TDs to lead his team to a 44-38 win at Cincinnati. He has been receiving a lot of help from running back Najee Harris (824 yards, 4 TDs) and wideout George Pickens (55 receptions, 850 yards, 3 TDs). The Steeler defense is one of the best in the league, but they will take on a loaded Eagle offense led by QB Jalen Hurts (2,454 passing yards, 14 TDs/485 rushing yards, 12 TDs), sensational running back Saquon Barkley (1,499 yards, 13 total TDs) and wideouts A.J. Brown (44 receptions, 793 yards, 4 TDs) and DeVonta Smith (41 receptions, 516 yards, 4 TDs). This should be one of those back-and-forth games, but playing at home will be a huge benefit for the Eagles. My pick, Philadelphia 31, Pittsburgh 28

Tampa Bay at Los Angeles Chargers - An important game for both team's playoff hopes. Two weeks ago, the Bucs survived a scare at Carolina and pulled out a 26-23 win. QB Baker Mayfield (3,034 yards, 25 TDs) is having another big season and he's getting help from rookie running back Bucky Irving (732 yards, 6 TDs) and dependable wide receiver Mike Evans (39 receptions, 521 yards, 5 TDs). Irving sustained a hit injury in the Panthers win and his availability could be up in the air for this game. The Chargers improved to 8-4 after their road win at Atlanta. LA is a hard-nosed team, just like their first-year head coach Jim Harbaugh. They aren't flashy, but they get the job



done behind a solid QB in Justin Herbert (2,551 yards, 13 TDs) and rookie wideout Ladd McConkey (55 receptions, 815 yards, 4 TDs). Starting running back J.K. Dobbins is out with a knee injury, which means Gus Edwards (235 yards, 1 TD) will need to step up and lead the running game. Look for the Chargers to win another close one as the defense will be the difference maker come Sunday. My pick, Los Angeles Chargers 20, Tampa Bay 16

Green Bay at Seattle - The Packers head to the Pacific Northwest to take on the Seahawks on Sunday Night Football. Both teams are squarely in the NFC playoff race, with the Packers probably looking at a Wild Card spot,

while Seattle is looking to win the NFC West. GB QB Jordan Love (2,518 yards, 20 TDs) needs a big night, and will count on running back Josh Jacobs (987 yards, 9 total TDs) and wideout Jayden Reed (44 receptions, 693 yards, 6 TDs) to help him navigate the Seattle defense. The Seahawks will need a big night from QB Geno Smith (3,241 yards, 13 TDs), running back Kenneth Walker III (547 yards, 8 TDs) and wide receivers Jaxon Smith-Njigba (70 receptions, 829 yards, 4 TDs) and DK Metcalf (50 receptions, 763 yards, 3 TDs). The Packers have the better defense, and that unit will be the difference maker in this one. My pick, Green Bay 26, Seattle 22

Chicago at Minnesota - The

Bears visit the Vikings with a new head coach, but it probably won't matter much at this point in another disappointing season for the Windy City team. The Vikings know they can't afford to look past anyone team at this point in the season. They are smack dab in the middle of the NFC playoff hunt, so look for QB Sam Darnold (2,952 yards, 23 TDs), running back Aaron Jones (820 yards, 5 TDs) and wide receivers Justin Jefferson (68 receptions, 1,038 yards, 5 TDs) and Jordan Addison (36 receptions, 575 yards, 4 TDs) to come out in attack mode. The Vikings defense will also bring it's "A" game on Monday Night Football, which could make for a long night for rookie Bears QB Caleb Williams (2,612 yards, 14 TDs). My pick, Minnesota 30, Chicago 14

OBITUARY

KENNETH ALAN WARDLAW

Kenneth Alan Wardlaw passed away from a tragic death on November 20, 2024.

Survived by his Wife Falein Wardlaw, Mom Deborah Morris, Dad Frank Alan Wardlaw, sisters Stacey, Che-



rie and Chrissy and other extended family and friends.

Service will be held on Sunday, December 22nd from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. at Crosby Church, 5725 U.S. 90, Crosby, Texas 77532.



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Crosby High School Band Brings Holiday Cheer to Texas State Capitol,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Crosby ISD Director of Bands, Mr. Kevin Knight, conducts the Crosby High School Band performing inside the Capitol Rotunda in Austin on Thursday, December 5.



State Representative Briscoe Cain, Crosby ISD Board of Trustees President Kea Lynn Lewis, and Crosby ISD Superintendent Paula Patterson on the floor of the state house. Representative Cain hosted the Crosby High School Band performing holiday classics at the State Capitol. Superintendent Patterson and President Lewis were able to attend the performance in person as well.



Photo of the Crosby High School Band on the floor of the State House after they performed inside the Capitol Rotunda in Austin on Thursday, December 5.

Santa, Cookies, and Cocoa in Highlands



Martha Sutton stands by one of the beautiful Christmas trees in the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands during the Cookies with Santa event last Tuesday. Seniors organizations at the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands helped decorate many of the trees inside.



Horizons members Carol Forrest and Pam White hand out cookies to the children after they get their photo with Santa.



Santa's elves Denise Smith, Jennifer King, Connie Russell, and Karrie Torina with the Highlands Rotary Club were busy serving up hot chocolate to the visitors to see Santa.



Dear Santa
I hope the reindeer are all doing well. I think I should get a gift because I helped my mom put stuff up. I would really like to get a dirt bike.
Darrell, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I hope the reindeer are all doing well. I have been a really good kid when someone is sad I will help them. I would really like a axolotl stuffie and a Piano if it fits in your sleigh. Are the Elves hard working?
Hendrix, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am really looking forward to Christmas this year. I talked to someone about their feelings. I really like to get headphones if you have room in your sleigh. When is your birthday?
Stefanía Cuevas, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
Give us joy. I helped my mom cleaning my room. Can I have a puppy? I would help you to carry it and bring it inside home.
Alex Mena, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I'm really looking forward to Christmas I help my brother and my mom. I would like to get a Computer if you have room in your sleigh. Tell your elves that my brother wants a drone.
Joshua Mendoza, 7 years old.
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am 7 years old. I live in Highlands. This year, I have been really bored. I would like you to bring me a camera and Iphone.. I really want these things.
Annaleah Pacheco
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am 8 years old. I live in Highlands, Texas. I have really been good this year. I did all my homework. I would really like it if you could bring me a pink ipad and apple pen.
Love,
Mia Cuellar
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am 7 years old. I live in Battle Bell, Texas. I have been good this year. I would really like it if you could bring me an Iphone 15 and a scooter.
Love,
Ariyah Hamilton
Highlands Elementary

BID NOTICE

BID NOTICE

BID NOTICE

Barbers Hill ISD is requesting bids for Erate eligible Category One and Category Two goods/services. Additional information is available at www.crwconsulting.com/ifcb. Bids will be opened 01/23/2024 at 2:00 p.m. at the Barbers Hill ISD Technology Integration Center.

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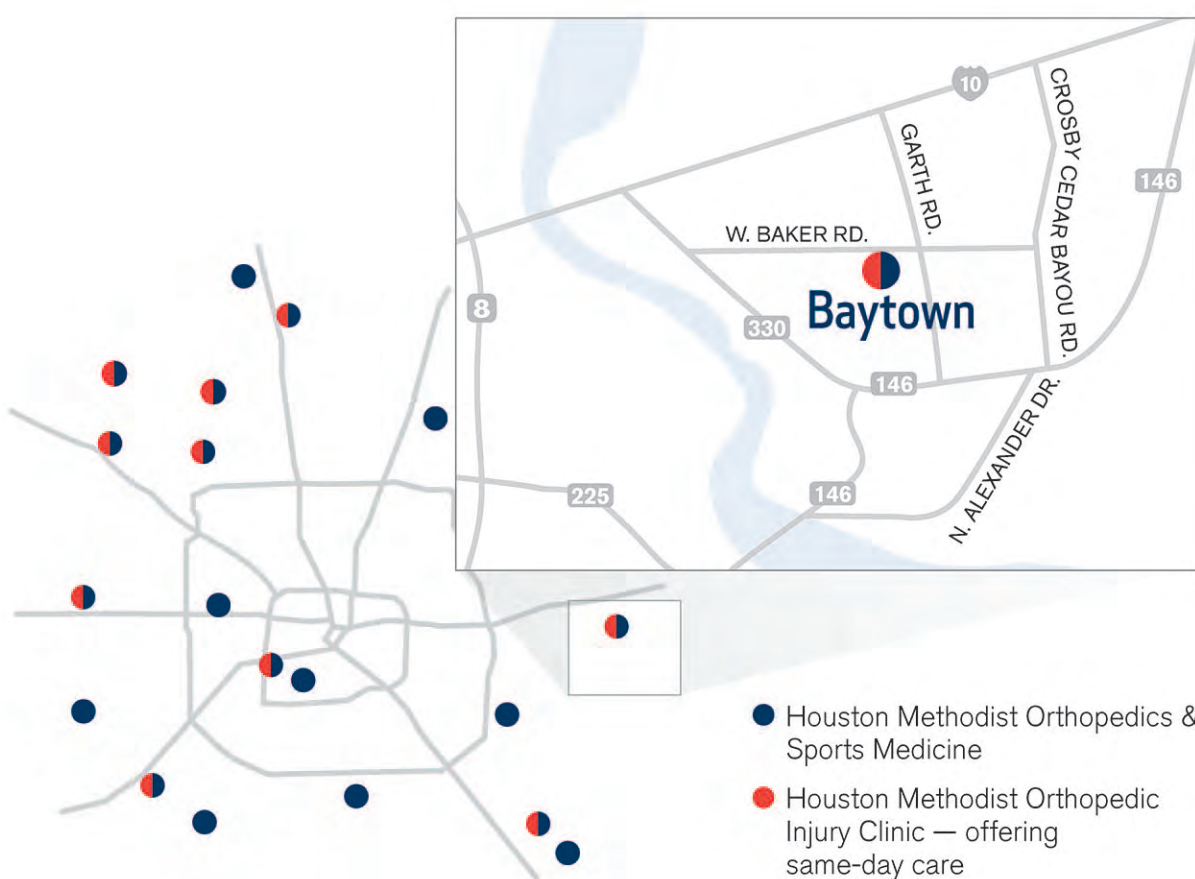
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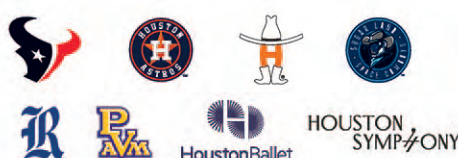
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Letters to Santa

Dear Santa
I love Christmas I
am really excited!
I've been nice this
year. I helped my
friends when they
fall and I helped my
friends when they
fall and I helped my
mom when she is sick.
I hope to get a
Kuromi Plush and a
bed set for
Christmas, can you
tell everybody at the
toy shop that I said
Hi?
Briele Banda, 7 years
old.
Highlands
Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 7 years old. I live
in Highlands. I have
been really helpful this
year. I would like a
Nintendo and Xbox if
you could bring me one.
Love
Atticus Ochoa
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I am eight years old. I
live in Baytown, Texas.
I have been pretty
good this year. Will you
please bring me a dirt
bike and PS5?
Love,
Cash Sanders
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa,
I am 8 years old. I live
in Highlands, Texas on
South Main Street. I
have really been good
this year. I am hoping
you will bring me a
\$500 roblox gift card
and an apple pen.
Love,
Grace Peacock
Highlands Elementary

Dear Santa
I want to say hi. I
would like to have a
cat I really take care
of him. Tell your
sleigh I said hi.
Serena Q, 7 years
old.
Highlands
Elementary



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