

HIGHLANDS

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'HIGHLANDS-LYNCHBURG CHAMBER NEW PRESIDENT'
Bella Dion of Sterling-White Funeral Home and Cemetery is sworn in as the New President. (David Taylor photo).
See Story Below and on page 6

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber Swears in New Board, Gives Awards

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

After coming close to shuttering their doors following the Covid pandemic, the resilient Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce fought back with leadership and solid board to rebuild the organization and welcome more than 100 to their awards banquet last Thursday night.

Stage Right, enter Jim Wadzinski as the president and the board and the gang to rebuild the flailing group was formed.

"We had significant tax debt, just enough money to get by for a bit, and we were in need of help," Wadzinski told the chamber membership and friends.

"I stated at that time that our goals were simple - retire all of our debt, increase our membership to 50 members, and finish the year with \$10,000 of available funds."

He reported that with



Board members for the 2025 Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce raise their hand as they are sworn in to office by the Honorable Judge Lucia Bates.

the help of the board and community, they now have over 50 members, the tax debt has been entirely retired, and as of the last board meeting, a total of \$16,000 in available funds.

"That number will increase significantly after tonight," he said.

Wadzinski finished his final address to the chamber inviting them to invest

in the community, whether through funds, volunteerism, or personal time, but do it now.

Following his speech, Judge Lucia Bates of Baytown swore in the new board members and incoming president Bella Dion of Sterling-White Funeral Home and Cemetery.

"Looking ahead to 2025, our organization has an im-

portant mission: to be the voice of the Highlands community during this period of rapid growth. While our area thrives and expands, it's essential that we preserve the strong sense of community that makes Highlands such a unique and special place to live and do business," she said.

Dion said the board's goal was to identify new op-

portunities to give back, help those in need, and ensure that, as the area grows, they are strengthening the community.

"We also remain committed to promoting and supporting our local economy, ensuring that all businesses—small or large—continue to have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed," she

told the banquet crowd.

Special speaker for the event was Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey. Ramsey has been the commissioner for the area since his election in 2020. Ramsey was recently named the American Society of Civil Engineers 2024 Public Official of the Year. He was also named the Engineer of the Year by Houston area engineering societies and received the Distinguished Graduate Award from the Zachry Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Texas A&M in 2023.

"I like to come to Chamber of Commerce meetings where you've met all your goals, you've set a record. I have seven grandchildren. My job is not to sit there and say, 'Well, I remember back in the good old days, it was all great back then.' I just don't know how y'all gonna make it," he said.

Continued. See HIGHLANDS CHAMBER BANQUET, Page 6

IN THE STARS

Crosby-Huffman Chamber Awards Banquet Feb. 27

Crosby-Huffman Chamber will hold their Awards Banquet on Thursday, February 27 at 6:30pm at Stonebridge at Newport, 16401 Country Club Drive, Crosby.

Tickets, Sponsorships and information, contact www.crosbyhuffmancc.org, or 281-328-6984. Deanna@crosbyhuffmancc.org.

THEA Superfund Update, petitions EPA over Timelines and Design

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The Texas Health and Environment Alliance (THEA), led by founder Jackie Medcalf, met Tuesday night to update its members with the changes that have occurred since the election of President Donald J. Trump.

"When we get a new president, we get new leadership within the Environmental Protection Agency and the new leader of the EPA is Lee Zeldin," Medcalf announced.

She also introduced Scott Mason IV as the new administrator for Region 6. Mason is headquartered in Dallas and his jurisdiction covers Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribal



THEA founder Jackie Medcalf speaks to the constituents at the most recent meeting as they discussed the recent report from the EPA, and new leadership at the EPA in the Trump administration.

Nations. "These two are our decision makers when we think about who has the

power to do what we need in this cleanup," she said.

Medcalf said the record of decision outlining the

cleanup in the north waste pits in total was made by the administrator under the first Trump presidency. The southern site was cleaned up down to 10 feet during the Biden administration, but no big decisions were made on the northern pit in the last four years.

"I encourage you to send them a letter asking them to finish what they started," she told folks attending the meeting.

Several years ago the responsible parties for the Superfund site mess produced a report that was supposed to be the near final plan on how they were going to execute the cleanup as ordered, but it had big issues.

The EPA sent the companies a Notice of Take-

over, she said, basically telling them that the plan was seriously deficient and if they didn't remedy the things outlined, they had the legal authority to take over the site.

They submitted what was called a 100 percent design, but the EPA told them they missed the mark. They gave them more time and another chance. "On that last 100 percent design plan, we submitted the most extensive comments that we have ever submitted on any plan to date," she said, "and we've been involved in this site for over 10 years."

She received a copy of the latest plan in January

Continued. See THEA HIGHLIGHTS LEADERSHIP CHANGES, Page 2

STATE OF THE STATE: Abbott calls for Texas to be "Guardians of Freedom"

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

From the headquarters of the Arnold Oil Company in Austin, Texas governor Gregg Abbott issued his annual State of the State address looking back to accomplishments and successes in 2024 and outlining the plan for the future of the state.

The 85-year-old business supplies auto products, lubricants, power equipment, and much more.

"The Texas economy is thriving because of Arnold Oil and thousands of businesses like it," Abbott said.

"Texas is the most powerful economy in America. Ranked as the best state



Texas Governor Greg Abbott

for doing business for 20 years, Texas is No. 1 for the most new jobs, No. 1 for economic development, and No. 1 as the best state to start a new business. We rank No. 1 for technology and innovation and No. 1 for semiconductors that power the things you use every day," he told the crowd assembled for the speech.

Last year, the governor created a Space Commission to boost space exploration in Texas, from NASA, to SpaceX, to Blue Origin, and beyond. They also added new business courts to swiftly deal with complex business litigation.

"Business is booming so much that we now have our own stock exchange, the Texas Stock Exchange. It will make Texas the financial capital of America," he added.

To ensure prosperity reaches every Texas family and business, he created the Small Business

Continued. See STATE OF THE STATE, Page 5

Snowstorm Didn't Stop Huffman FFA Livestock Show; raises \$415,678



Eighth-grader Jacey Walker with her Grand Champion Market Steer Franklin and her supporters Sherry and Robert Wolf of Dee Foundries. Walker's win brought her \$24,000 at the show.

By David Taylor
Management Editor

The Huffman FFA show avoided disaster thanks to swift planning and community support. "At first, we didn't

think that it would be enough to cancel school. We were just trying to figure out how to keep all of these animals warm and taken care of while they were up here," said Ag teacher Katie Coker.

"We changed the schedule, I think, four times before we finally settled on the final plan, just because the weather

Continued. See HUFFMAN FFA SHOW, Page 5

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THEA highlights EPA leadership changes, Calls for Action on delayed waste pits cleanup,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and Medcalf and her team have reviewed much of the material, taking time to compare it to the comments they previously submitted.

"Sadly, as I went through the spreadsheets of our comments and our questions and the column that said was this addressed, over 95 percent was no. Our overall conclusion is that it is still deficient," she explained.

One of the sticking points was the timeline. An original agreement was two-and-a-half years. Now that has stretched to seven years which THEA finds unacceptable.

"The EPA entertained that for a while," she said, "but recently, they've been aligning with us and pushing back and saying, you

know, seven is a bit unreasonable guys."

For the first time in years, the responsible party said they were willing to work year-round if the EPA makes them, Medcalf told the group.

The double cofferdam wall is another sore spot. The plans are to backfill the middle of the double cofferdam, and another structure added that will provide an extra layer of protection should a barge head towards the pit again.

"Something that they have brought up in this design is that over time, the sheet piling will corrode and there will be loss of the sheet piling, and they are planning to go down about 70 feet into the riverbed. They are con-

cerned that they won't be able to pull all the sheet pile up," she explained.

If they can't pull it out, they want to cut it off and then push it below ground surface.

"Many of us have watched the river change a lot over time, but also the pipelines part of the concern and the argument around not putting the sheet piling deeper to make it higher above the river water was because they couldn't go deeper because of the pipelines. But now, if they say they can't pull it up and out, they want to push it deeper," she said. Leaving the cofferdam was not something the Port of Houston Authority wanted and neither did THEA.

That was discussed and

added to a petition that will be sent to the EPA administrator.

The TxDOT right of way was another troublesome point.

"They will be replacing the bridge at the same time that this construction is going on. There has been discussion about widening that right-of-way, and they have altered the design for that containment area based on this," she said.

Unfortunately, however, no final agreement has been reached. Medcalf said they still want to see a Plan B.

There was much more discussed, too detailed for this report, and the meeting ended with numerous members signing a petition to be sent to the EPA with their concerns.

HIGHLANDS ROTARY CLUB NEWS



Highlands Rotary Club sponsored 5 students from Chinquapin Interact to attend RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award).

Also attending were 2 students who attended as coaches in training. Super proud of Chinquapin Interact Club.

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SCHOOL PAGE

Goose Creek CISD Partners with United Way on MLK Day to Beautify Banuelos Elementary

On January 15, 2024, Goose Creek CISD joined forces with United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County (GBACC) and dedicated volunteers to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy through service. With a focus on beautification and student empowerment, the day's projects brought meaningful improvements to campuses while inspiring students to dream boldly.

Volunteers from multiple GCCISD schools, along with CP Chemical's BELIEVE group, came together at Banuelos Elementary to enhance the campus environment. Throughout the morning, more than 40 volunteers planted 50 trees, creating a more welcoming and vibrant outdoor space for students and families. These efforts not only improved the school's aesthetics but also fostered community pride and left a lasting impact for future



generations.

In addition to beautification efforts, students across GCCISD campuses participated in the MLK Dream Wall Project, a collaboration between United Way GBACC and Communities in Schools (CIS) of Baytown. This initiative

encouraged students to reflect on their dreams and share them publicly, reinforcing the values of hope, perseverance, and self-reflection. The project created a meaningful opportunity for students to engage with Dr. King's message and envision a

brighter future for themselves and their communities.

These projects were made possible through the combined efforts of United Way GBACC, CIS Baytown, and GCCISD, with key leadership from Diana Molina (United Way), Brit-



tany Rodriguez (United Way), Lori Rumfield (GCCISD), and Mel'Danci Robinson (Communities in Schools). Additionally, Trees for Houston, Deep Roots Nursery Baytown, The Houston Tool Bank, and The Baytown Home Depot provided essential resources to support the tree-planting initiative.

While MLK Day of Service is a special opportunity to give back, the mission of strengthening the community continues year-round. GCCISD remains committed to fostering

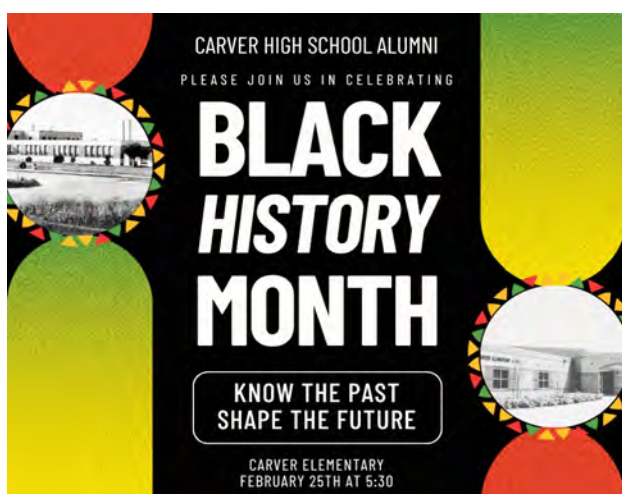
partnerships and volunteer opportunities that make a lasting difference. Those looking to get involved can explore opportunities through Volunteer Connect and contribute to projects that positively impact students and families throughout Greater Baytown and Chambers County.

Goose Creek CISD is proud to support initiatives that enhance school environments, empower students, and build a stronger community.

Carver Elementary Honors Carver High Alumni at Black History Month Program

Carver Elementary is calling all Carver High School alumni to join them for a special recognition at their Black History Month Program on February 25 at 5:30 PM. This event honors the legacy of Carver High School and celebrates the impact of its alumni.

We encourage former



students to attend and be part of this meaningful celebration. Please help us spread the word and invite fellow alumni to join in this special occasion.

For more information, contact Carver Elementary at 281-420-4600.

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Barbers Hill Press

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

ONEOK, MPLX partner to build LPG export terminal in Texas

ONEOK, Inc. and MPLX LP have entered into definitive agreements to form joint ventures to construct a new large-scale 400,000-barrel per day (bpd) liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) export terminal in Texas City, Texas, and a new 24-inch pipeline from ONEOK's Mont Belvieu, Texas, storage facility to the new terminal.

Texas City Logistics LLC (TCX), the export terminal joint venture, is owned 50% by ONEOK and 50% by MPLX, with MPLX constructing and operating the facility, and is expected to be completed in early 2028. ONEOK's and MPLX's share of the total investment in the export terminal is expected to be approximately \$700 million each for a total of \$1.4 billion. The export terminal will leverage Marathon's existing location and infrastructure providing construction timing and cost benefits.

The 400,000-bpd loading throughput is expected to be primarily low ethane propane (LEP) and normal butane (NC4), with ONEOK and MPLX each contractually reserving 200,000-bpd for their respective customers.

MBTC Pipeline LLC, the pipeline joint venture, is owned 80% by ONEOK and 20% by MPLX, with ONEOK constructing and operating the pipeline. ONEOK's and MPLX's share of the total investment in the pipeline are expected to be approximately \$280 million and \$70 million, respectively, for a total of \$350 million.

ONEOK's share of capital investment for these projects is expected to be approximately \$1.0 billion.

"We are excited to collaborate with MPLX on these strategically located projects which expand and extend our NGL value chain providing additional optionality and value to our customers," said Pierce H. Norton II, ONEOK president and chief executive officer. "Given our high expectations for future growth and demand for more energy infrastructure, including export capacity, these projects with MPLX complement our disciplined capital allocation strategy."

Visit our New Website for Chambers County News:
www.BHDPRESS.com

United Way Marks 2-1-1 Day: Connecting Communities to Essential Resources

Baytown, TX (February 10, 2025) — February 11 is 2-1-1 Day, a time to recognize the vital role that 2-1-1 Texas plays in connecting individuals and families to essential services. In 2024 alone, the helpline assisted over 1.8 million Texans, addressing critical needs such as utility assistance, rent and mortgage support, housing services, public benefits, and food programs.

Here in Baytown and Chambers County, the 2-1-1 Texas Helpline has been a lifeline for residents facing challenges.

"Resources like 2-1-1 Texas multiply the efforts



of United Way and other community programs by providing direct connections to assistance in times of need," said Kaci Pena, Community Engagement Director at United Way of Greater Baytown Area and Chambers County. "2-1-1 extends the reach of community partners and empowers anyone to be a

resource for those around them. It's an essential part of our work to ensure that everyone in our community has the opportunity to thrive."

The 2-1-1 Helpline operates 24/7, 365 days a year, with trained specialists providing confidential assistance in over 108 languages across the country.

This February, United Way GBACC is increasing awareness of 2-1-1 Texas by distributing nearly 2,000 resource cards to community organizations, first responders, and front-line workers—ensuring more people know where to turn for help.

You are not alone. Help is just a call away.

*Dial 2-1-1 anytime for free, confidential assistance.

*Visit 211texas.org for more information.

Together, we can build a stronger, more connected community—one call at a time.

About United Way of

Greater Baytown area & Chambers County.

For more than 75 years, United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County has served the community,

which covers Baytown, Highlands, and Chambers County. From strengthening local resilience to advancing health,

youth opportunity, and financial security, we're working towards a future where every person in every community

can reach their full potential. For more information, visit <https://www.unitedwaygbacc.org/> or call 281.424.5922.

Goose Creek CISD Principals of the Year

Goose Creek CISD proudly recognizes Erica Smith, Principal of Carver Elementary, as the Elementary Principal of the Year for the 2024-2025 school year and Judy Mackyeon, Principal of Baytown Junior School, as the Secondary Principal of the Year for the 2024-2025 school year.

A Louisiana native, Principal Smith's journey in education began as an Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) teacher at Robert E. Lee High School. Since then, she has served in various roles across Goose Creek CISD, including elementary and junior high teacher, Student Support Administrator, and Assistant Principal. Her experience and commitment to education have made a lasting impact on the entire Carver community.

As a principal, Mrs. Smith has worked tirelessly to create an environment where both students and staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. She embodies the district's mission to nurture the whole child, addressing academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being through Family Engagement events and programs like PBIS and CATCH. Her innovative initiatives, open-door pol-



Judy Mackyeon 2024-2025 Elementary District Principal of the Year



Erica Smith 2024-2025 Secondary District Principal of the Year

icy, and genuine passion for education have fostered a culture of unity and purpose, earning her admiration and respect from students, staff, and peers alike.

Also from Louisiana, Principal Mackyeon relocated to Baytown and has worked in Goose Creek for over 20 years. She has enjoyed a career as a middle school and high school math teacher, middle school instructional coach, Student Support Administrator, and Assistant Principal. Her commitment to support the growth at her campuses is spectacular.

A servant leader at heart, Mrs. Mackyeon inspires her staff by modeling grace, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence. She leads by example, never asking her team to do what she wouldn't do herself, and has cultivated a culture of trust, collaboration, and innovation. Her courageous conversations and results-oriented mindset drive her to "move the needle," ensuring that every decision contributes to the success of her students and staff. Mrs. Mackyeon's influence extends beyond academics, implementing social-emotional learning programs, fostering extracurriculars, and highlighting student achievements through social media.

Jersey Mike's Subs to Open in Mont Belvieu

MONT BELVIEU, Texas, Feb. 13, 2025 – **Jersey Mike's Subs**, known for its fresh sliced/fresh grilled subs, will open at **9737 Eagle Drive** in Mont Belvieu on February 19.

Franchise owners Bebe and Willie Mora will hold a grand opening and fundraiser from Wednesday, February 19 to Sunday, February 23 to support Barbers Hill Education Foundation. Customers who receive a special fundraising coupon distributed through a grassroots effort prior to the opening can make a minimum \$2 contribution to Barbers Hill

Education Foundation in exchange for a regular sub. **Customers must have a coupon to be eligible.**

Guests can place orders in-store or for pickup through the website or through the Jersey Mike's app. Additionally, delivery is available in most areas through the Jersey Mike's app or through third-party delivery partners. Curbside pickup is available for orders placed in Jersey Mike's app.

Jersey Mike's premium meats and cheeses are sliced on the spot and piled high on in-store baked bread. Jersey Mike's fans crave their subs made



Mike's Way® with the freshest vegetables – onions, lettuce and tomatoes – topped off with an exquisite zing of "the juice," red wine vinegar and an olive oil blend. Authentic cheesesteaks are grilled fresh.

Jersey Mike's is looking for individuals interested in career opportunities with extraordinary growth

potential to join their team. Candidates who are passionate about customer service and connecting with their local community are invited to apply at <https://harri.com/JM15243>

The restaurant's hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. You can contact this location directly at 832-781-1956.

Jersey Mike's believes that making a sub sandwich and making a difference can be one and the same. Since 2010, Jersey Mike's locations throughout the country have raised more than \$135 million for local charities. In 2024, the company's 14th

Annual Jersey Mike's Month of Giving in March raised \$25 million for more than 200 local charities.

Jersey Mike's Subs, with more than 4,000 locations open and in development, serves authentic fresh sliced/fresh grilled subs on in-store freshly baked bread — the same recipe it started with in 1956. Passion for giving in Jersey Mike's local communities is reflected in its mission statement "Giving...making a difference in someone's life." For more information, please visit jerseymikes.com or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jerseymikes), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/jerseymikes), [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/jerseymikes) and [X](https://www.x.com/jerseymikes).

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**



Birthright Citizenship

Since the adoption of the 14th Amendment in 1868, the United States has recognized birthright citizenship; that is, if a person is born on U.S. soil, that person is a U.S. citizen regardless of the citizenship of their parents. In one of his first official actions, President Trump issued an executive order that instructed U.S. officials to no longer recognize birthright citizenship. The essence of the order is that children of parents who are in the U.S. illegally will not be recognized as citizens. His order was met with immediate outcry from immigration advocates and was immediately challenged in numerous lawsuits, one of which has already resulted in a temporary stay of the order. A bill has also been introduced in Congress with similar effect.

While many have predicted the courts will summarily strike down the order, the issue is quite complicated and nuanced, and the outcome may not be as clear as many predict. It seems likely the issue will ultimately land in the Supreme Court, which was probably Trump's intention in issuing the order.

Soil or Blood

Countries throughout the world recognize two fundamental doctrines of citizenship: jus soli (Right of Soil) and jus sanguinis (Right of Blood). Right of Soil recognizes citizenship based solely on where the person was born. Its origins are the feudal concept that loyalty to the lord and, ultimately, the sovereign being bound up with the land. Right of Blood recognizes citizenship based on the nationality of the child's parents and traces its origins to Roman law. From my review, it does not appear that any country strictly uses jus soli or jus sanguinis. Rather, all countries incorporate some elements of each.

However, on a continuum of the two doctrines, the U.S. would be far toward the jus soli end compared to most of the world. This is fairly typical of countries that outlawed slavery in the 19th century, especially those in the Western Hemisphere. At that time, those countries were faced with dealing with the citizenship status of a large number of former slaves. Many of those countries, like the U.S., adopted constitutional amendments that broadly gave citizenship to former slaves born in their countries. In the U.S., the 14th Amendment was enacted to overrule the U.S. Supreme Court case of Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857), which held that African Americans, free or enslaved, could not be U.S. citizens.

There are two questions we must face in addressing this issue. The first is a legal one. Can a President or Congress overturn a doctrine recognized in the U.S. for over a century by executive order or legislation? The second issue is whether an extreme reliance on the jus soli doctrine is the best policy for the country.

Legal Arguments on Birthright Citizenship

The legal question turns to the interpretation of Section 1 of the 14th Amendment. It provides:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside." (Emphasis added.)

The crux of this issue is the interpretation of the clause "subject to the jurisdiction thereof." Clearly, the phrase is intended to limit the grant of citizenship based on the birthplace in some way. However, the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" is hardly precise. During the debates surrounding the adoption of the 14th Amendment, the framers of the amendment appear to have been referring to Indian tribes because of their semi-autonomous status and children born to foreign diplomats or foreign military during their residency in the U.S.

I was unable to find any discussion at the time of the issue of children of parents in the U.S. without legal authority. However, the U.S. needed labor at that time for its rapidly expanding economy and frontier. It was relatively easy to come to the U.S. and apply for citizenship. In fact, legislation like the Homestead Act (1862) actively encouraged immigration. So, the issue of citizenship for emigrants who had come to the U.S. in violation of its laws was likely not on the minds of any of those drafting the amendment.

The issue of whether a child born in the U.S. of parents who were not U.S. citizens was first considered by the U.S. Supreme Court in United States v. Wong Kim Ark in 1898.1 Ark was the child of two Chinese immigrants who had settled in San Francisco but never became U.S. citizens. After residing in San Francisco for over twenty years, his parents returned to China in 1890. The parties stipulated that Ark's parents were Chinese citizens at all times.

In 1895, Ark traveled to China. When he returned, he was detained by customs officials seeking to enforce provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed during a period of rampant anti-Chinese sentiment in the U.S. and, particularly, in California. It expressly forbade any Chinese immigrant who left the country from returning. However, U.S. citizens were excluded. Therefore, whether the Act applied to Ark and whether he could return to the U.S. after he visited China turned on whether he was a U.S. citizen.

In a 6-2 decision, the Supreme Court ruled in Ark's favor, broadly declaring that the jus soli doctrine was required by the 14th Amendment and narrowly interpreting the "subject to the jurisdiction" qualifier. In reaching the decision, the majority relied heavily on English common law, which was rooted in the feudal system.

However, in a dissent, Justices Fuller and Harlan argued that the English common law did not bind the U.S. They contended that the standard was obsolete, especially in America, which was the antithesis of feudal society. According to Fuller and Harlan, "(n)ationality is essentially a political idea and belongs to the sphere of public law." Their dissent implies that Congress is Constitutionally allowed to define the limits of what it means to be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

Whether the Ark case can be read as an absolute prohibition on Congress more broadly defining what the "subject to the jurisdiction" phrase includes or, more narrowly, only holds that Congress went too far in the Chinese Exclusion Act seems to be an open question. This is an excellent discussion of the issue by two highly respected legal scholars.

It is somewhat ironic that today's progressives are flocking to the majority view in Ark. Justice Harlan is known as a liberal dissenter of the Supreme Court of that era when the Court primarily supported the status quo. When reading the two opinions, I thought the dissent reflected more contemporary views and values than the majority opinion.

I do think it is important to note that the Supreme Court would not have to overtly overrule Ark to uphold Congress' authority to redefine the limits of birthright citizenship. Ark is clearly distinguishable on numerous facts, most notably that Ark's parents were legally in the U.S. at the time of his birth.

But even if recognizing that Congress has the authority to define the "subject to the jurisdiction" clause required overruling Ark, the current Court has shown little reluctance to overturn long-standing precedents. The bottom line is I think the legal outcome of whether Congress could change the standard could go either way.

Of course, even if Congress has the right to limit birthright citizenship, there is still the question of whether a president can do so by executive order. In the case where Congress has failed to act, does the President have the right or authority to give direction to his administration in the absence of any direction from Congress? That seems to be much more of a stretch to me. Still, I have been amazed by the courts' deference to regulatory authority in the last few decades, so I would not rule out the possibility that the courts might ultimately uphold his order.

Policy Considerations

Setting aside the legal issue, is birthright citizenship a good policy for the U.S.? I think the proponents for it have a harder time here.

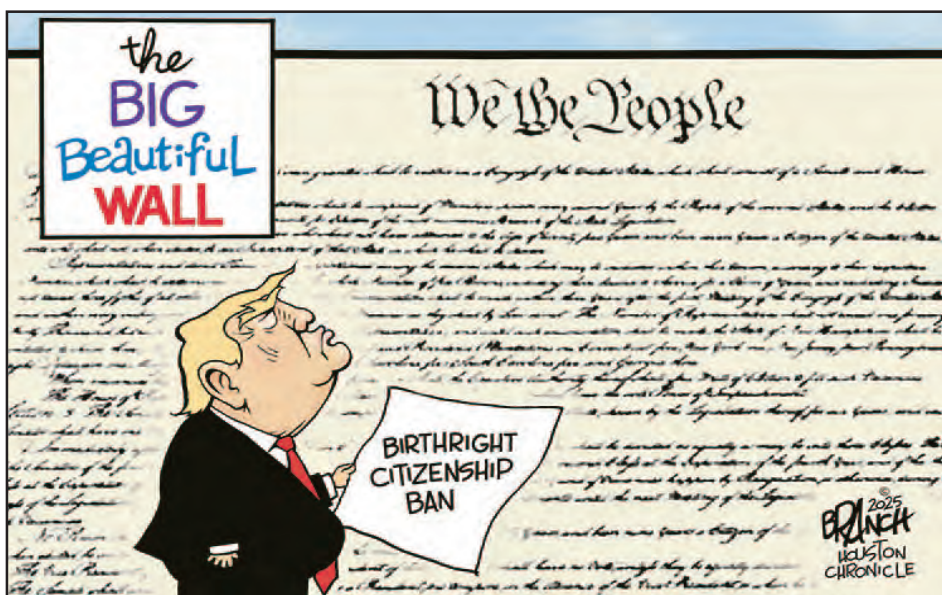
First, such a policy encourages prospective mothers to come to the U.S. illegally to obtain citizenship for their children. While most of us can sympathize with a mother aspiring to give the great gift of American citizenship to her child, nonetheless, that does not seem like a rational way to dole out citizenship. Certainly, it is easy to imagine a rational immigration legal structure that would encourage the type of immigration the U.S. needs while also screening those that would cause harm or become a burden to our country. It is easy to imagine such a functioning immigration system because such systems exist in much of the rest of the world.

One of the serious difficulties in changing our policy would be the transition and the administrative and litigation nightmare that would ensue. For example, there are literally millions of people in the U.S. who believe they are citizens by virtue of being born here, and the government has treated them as such for decades in many cases. Suddenly, stripping those individuals of their citizenship would likely run afoul of the Constitution's prohibition of ex post facto laws, in addition to being profoundly unfair. Trump's executive order avoids this problem by restricting it only to children born 30 days after its issuance.

Both Trump's executive order and the pending legislation provide that if one of the parents is a citizen, the child will be as well. How exactly would it be determined if the father was a U.S. citizen? Who would have the burden of proof? Will we run DNA tests on every child born to determine their heritage? Can you imagine the number of lawsuits that would be filed over that? At a minimum, a massive new federal bureaucracy would be required to determine citizenship claims.

Adopting a rational immigration system that included better criteria for granting citizenship would greatly benefit our country. Many of the issues surrounding birthright citizenship are the legacy of the inability of Congress to enact such a system. I wish I believed Trump's executive order might spur a thoughtful debate and legislative action in that direction. But sadly, our representatives from both sides of the aisle seem more interested in demagoguing immigration than working together to enact a rational system.

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**



Voucher Bill Passes Senate, Arrives in House

A bill to implement school vouchers in Texas sailed through the Senate largely on party lines last week and now awaits consideration in the House, the Austin American-Statesman reported. House Speaker Dustin Burrows, R-Lubbock, said he believes there are enough votes in that chamber to pass the legislation, which was defeated a half-dozen times in 2023 by a coalition of Democratic and rural Republican members. "As Speaker, I'm committed to ensuring the agenda of the Texas House remains truly member-driven this session," Burrows said in a statement. "I support empowering parents to decide the best educational option for their children." The bill's supporters, which include Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and other top elected officials, say it would give students access to more school choices. Opponents fear the \$1 billion program will siphon funding and students away from public schools already facing budget deficits. The political director of the Texas Freedom Network said legislators should focus on funding public schools instead. "Voucher schemes steal vital funds from kids in our neighborhood schools, all so megadonors and the politicians in their pockets can subsidize private and religious schools for the wealthy at our expense," Rocio Fierro-Pérez said.

ABBOTT OUTLINES HIS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Abbott outlined his legislative priorities in a speech last Sunday. Besides school vouchers, he wants state lawmakers to cut property taxes by \$10 billion, launch a massive water project to ensure adequate supplies, and restrict bail for a number of crimes, the Houston Chronicle reported. Other priorities include pay raises for teachers and investment in nuclear energy as a way to "fortify" the state's electric grid. Abbott is backing a plan by state Sen. Charles Perry, R-Amarillo, which would invest in several large projects to increase the state's water supply. Among the projects are desalination plants and a network of pipelines to



distribute water. "We will make the largest investment in water in the history of Texas," Abbott said. "We will tap into new water supplies and repair pipes to save billions of gallons of water each year." The Democratic response to Abbott's State of the State address blasted the governor for being too friendly with President Trump and billionaire Elon Musk, who is leading an effort to eliminate federal government waste and inefficiency. "The fact is people are struggling after 30 years of Republican rule," Gilberto Hinojosa, the former Democratic Party chair, said in the response.

DAIRY, POULTRY PRODUCERS GRAPPLE WITH BIRD FLU

By now, most everyone has noticed the steep rise in the price of eggs, which is being blamed on the spread of avian flu, first detected in a flock of pheasants in Erath County nearly three years ago. The Texas Standard Reported. "It's a supply-and-demand issue," said J.C. Essler, executive vice president of the Texas Poultry Federation. "When we're putting multiple flocks down, and our layer operations can be up to a million birds, you're taking a substantial supply out of the market." Thus far in Texas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have confirmed 14 cases of bird flu at poultry farms, only one of which was at a large-scale farm with 2 million chickens. There have been 27 confirmed cases at Texas dairy farms. The potential economic impact could be huge if bird flu continues to spread in the state. The poultry industry contributes more than \$5 bil-

lion to the state economy annually, while dairy operations add \$53.8 billion. One longtime researcher of bird flu at Texas A&M University said he didn't expect the virus to spread from human to human; 67 cases of it being transmitted to humans from poultry or cattle have been recorded, including one in Texas. One death has been reported. "If we ever start seeing human-to-human transmission, that tells us the virus is adapting to humans," said Gerald Parker, associate dean for Global One Health at A&M. "That would not be a good sign."

STATE STRUGGLING TO FIX LEAKY ABANDONED OIL WELLS

Abandoned oil wells turned into water sources are threatening aquifers that supply water to cities, farms and ranches, the Statesman reported, particularly in rural West Texas where oil exploration began nearly a century ago. The leaky wells are called P-13 wells after a Texas Railroad Commission form that allowed them to be repurposed to provide water. The state has recorded 1,915 P-13 wells, though many more likely exist undetected and undocumented. They have the potential to become environmental disasters. One example is the 60-acre Lake Boehmer in Pecos County, formed by a leaky well. It emits high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, a potentially fatal gas. The state committed \$10 million to plugging the leaky wells in 2023, but two years later none of that money has been distributed. Even that amount, whenever it is actually spent, is likely inadequate to solve the problem, since plugging a single well can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. "We do not know how much it will cost to plug each well, so we cannot determine how many wells could be plugged under this program," said Ricky Richter, a spokesperson for TCEQ. Federal funds that are being used to plug orphan gas and oil wells can't be used for P-13 wells, since they are no longer considered oil wells.

ABBOTT BACKS LEGALIZING SPORTS GAMBLING IN TEXAS

Abbott recently said on the Texas Take Podcast that he has no objection to Texas joining 39 other states that have legalized sports betting, the San Antonio Express News reported. "I don't have a problem with online sports betting," Abbott said in the interview. "The reality is that I'd be shocked if there were not some Texans that do it already." A coalition of major sports franchises including the Dallas Cowboys, San Antonio Spurs and Houston Astros have teamed up with several sports gaming companies to push for legalized sports gambling. They have hired more than a dozen lobbyists and have tapped former Gov. Rick Perry and Houston Rockets owner Tilman Fertitta to help make their pitch to legislators to pass such a measure. The issue ultimately would require voters to approve a constitutional amendment.

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Abbott: State of the State,

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Freedom Council to require all state agencies to slash rules, fees, and regulations to expedite business.

“We know that many Texans face an affordability crisis. Last session, we slashed your property taxes. But for many Texans, those cuts were wiped out by local taxing authorities that hiked your property taxes even more. That must end this session,” he said, pledging \$10 billion in new property tax relief.

“That will only work if local authorities cannot use loopholes to jack up your property taxes like Harris County did. They increased property taxes more than 10 percent last year,” he said.

Abbott promised to make property tax relief an emergency item and water.

“We will also make the largest investment in water in the history of Texas. We will tap into new water supplies and repair pipes to save billions of gallons of water each year,” he promised.

He also plans to add more power to the electric power grid adding at least 10,000 megawatts of power, enough to power an additional two million homes. Texas currently ranks No. 1 for electric power generation, more than California and New York combined.

“Texas is No. 1 in so

many ways, like jobs, Tier One research universities, cattle and cotton, oil and gas, and we’re home to the largest medical center in the world. The list goes on. It is now time that we set our sights on another No. 1. Texas should be No. 1 in educating our children,” he said.

Abbott listed three pillars to that success: empowered parents, exemplary teachers (with a pay raise), and exceptional academics.

In other related targets for education, he promised to ban DEI in grades K-12, no boys in girls’ sports, and expand career education.

He promised to fully fund public schools and raise teacher pay, while also giving parents choice with vouchers.

He pledged to rid state agencies of DEI and make communities safer by eliminating parole for criminals convicted of child trafficking, capital murder, and other heinous violent crimes.

“Illegal immigrants who are arrested should be considered a flight risk, denied bil, and turned over to ICE,” he said.

With that, he pledged bail reform, property rights to remove and prosecute squatters, and more funding firefighters to protect homes.

“As the world becomes more complicated and dan-

gerous, we must protect our state from hackers and hostile foreign actors. Just in the last two weeks, we have seen one of our cities, a hospital, and a major business all hit by serious cyberattacks,” he said. He announced a partnership with UT at San Antonio in the creation of the Texas Cyber Command.

“We also must protect Texas from infiltration by foreign adversaries...prohibiting non-citizens from serving in state and local government and prohibiting hostile foreign nations and their agents from buying Texas land,” he pledged.

He also promised to protect election integrity and empower the Attorney General to prosecute election violations.

Operation Lone Star at the border will continue as well as the border wall, buoys in the Rio Grand River, and the deployment of the Texas National Guard and DPS in the ground, water, and air.

Last year, Abbott declared an invasion at the border and designated the Mexican drug cartels foreign terrorist organizations along with the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua.

“Ultimately, our task this session is to be guardians of freedom. Freedom will persist for as long as we protect it,” he said.

HIGHLANDS ROTARY CLUB NEWS



Highlands Rotarians serve Seniors at their “Senior Prom”



The Rotary Club of Highlands had a great time on Tuesday serving the seniors at the San Jacinto Community Center. Today’s theme was Senior Prom! The decorations and dressy attire were absolutely fabulous. It was an honor to be a part of such a great event! Special thanks to Connie Russell and Karrie Spyr Torina for the wonderful food that was enjoyed by all!

ROTARIANS PICTURED:
Front Row: Andy Scott, Weston Cotten, Wayne Prescott
Back Row: Karrie Torina, Connie Russell, Cora Miller, GayLynn Milliorn, Tricia Scott, Martha Sutton, Denise Smith.



FFA: \$24K Grand Champion Steer Win embodies Huffman’s community grit amid winter challenges,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was so unpredictable. But these kids were great. They were troopers,” she said.

Coker said it was definitely a community effort to make the show happen, especially right after the snow and their efforts paid off.

As of Monday morning, preliminary counts showed they raised approximately \$415,678.

It wasn’t a record, but it definitely surpassed their hopes and expectations.

“With the economy and the snow, we just weren’t sure how things would turn out,” she sounded relieved.

There’s an African proverb that says it takes a village to raise a child. That holds true for Jacey Walker of Huffman and her family.

Surrounded by a supportive community, Jacey has thrived in an environment that emphasizes both academic and practical skills. Her involvement in raising animals, particularly steers, has not only taught her responsibility and hard work but has also deepened her connection to her family’s agricultural roots.

Sherry and Robert Wolf of Dee Foundries became a part of Jacey’s village when they won the bid for the purchase of her heifer at the Huffman Hargrave FFA 53rd Livestock Show and Auction on Saturday, Jan. 25.

Eighth grader Jacey won the Grand Champion Market Steer title and a \$24,000 prize, beating older competitors. It was no big thing for the unassuming teen.

“My dad and uncle have always raised cattle, so I was kind of just raised into it,” she said.

“We started showing back when I was in third grade.”

Walker says they are her biggest supporters.

“We raise cows on 80 acres in Lovelady,” she said confidently. Locally, they have a barn in Dayton where they take care of the show animals, but it’s still a long trek.

“I’m lucky my uncle feeds in the morning so I don’t have to get up that early, and then we go right after school to the barn. Depending on what we have to do we can leave around seven at night or later,” she explained.

With such a long day, it might seem easy to skip the homework, but she’s not that kind of student.

“It makes it a little hard, but when you enjoy what you do, it’s nothing,” she said shrugging it off.

Her chores include a routine of cleaning the pins, fill up with water, rinsing off the animals to cool them off, brushing out their coat, putting them under a fan to cool them off, and then putting lotion and other products on them to keep their skin shiny.

“Sometimes at night we let them out so they can run, stretch, and play around,” she said.

She never has a day off—not even on Christmas Day.

“Right after I opened my Christmas presents, I was in the barn,” she said. Last week she was also in a predicament, digging her way through the snow to get to her animals to take care of them.

The work ethic, she hopes, will bring her successfully to her goal.

“When I grow up, I want to be an ag teacher and raise my own cattle

for my kids so they can continue to show and do good,” said the 13-year-old.

While the district is in a 4A conference, they have a little more than 370 students involved in their program.

“I think we had about 400 projects in Saturday’s show,” she said.

The program continues to grow, and Huffman ISD board members and the community approved a bond that will reward the growth.

“We have a new CTE building in the works and part of that will include a barn extension for our livestock show animals. That means no more pop-up tent,” she said.

Coker attributes the growth to help from the community and several different paths for students to take in the Ag program.

“We are also fortunate enough that our Huffman Young Farmers Chapter and their Booster Club, essentially pay the FFA dues for all Huffman ISD students who take an ag class grades six through 12, so that opens up the livestock show to any student who wants to show,” she said.

They also have a junior FFA program, something that is unique to them.

The students also hit the road and show in the majors from goats, sheep, broilers, heifers, and steers in Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston and that includes Jacey.

“I’ll be in Fort Worth to show there soon,” she said. The 8th grader said she’ll use the money to earn a scholarship to her dream school, Texas A&M.



ATTN: Precinct 3 Residents!

SENIOR OLYMPICS

MARCH 17 - MARCH 21

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<p>DAY 3 - CROSBY COMMUNITY CENTER 409 HARE RD. CROSBY, TX 77532 832-927-7730</p>	

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Swearing-in ceremony, community awards, and pledges to foster growth mark Chamber's resurgence after tax debt, membership struggles,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Instead, the commissioner had a better idea.

"I think y'all need to inspire them. I think you need to encourage them, give them a sense of what we just began. It's gonna get better. It's gonna be better than you can imagine. So as a chamber, as a county, as a community leader, I would ask, I would encourage you, to take a moment and go inspire a few folks," he asked.

The chamber then handed out several community awards to special people:

Ruben Lopez, Jr. was named the 2024 Firefighter of the Year.

Jose Gomez was named the 2024 Constable Deputy of the Year.

Keith Shelton was named the 2024 Sheriff's Deputy of the Year.

Sterling-White Funeral Home and Cemetery was named Business of the Year.

Mike Joseph was named the 2024 Terry Davis Award winner.

"This gala represents not



Bella Dion (third from left), new president of the Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce joins her new board for a photo.

just an evening of celebration, but a testament to the strength and vitality of our

community," Dion said in closing. "It's a reminder of the incredible work being

done every day by businesses, entrepreneurs, and leaders who drive our local

economy forward. The partnerships, collaborations, and innovations we've seen

here tonight are proof that together, we are building a thriving, resilient future."



Keith Shelton was named the 2024 Sheriff's Deputy of the Year.



Ruben Lopez, Jr. was named the 2024 Firefighter of the Year.



Jose Gomez was named the 2024 Constable Deputy of the Year.



Sterling-White Funeral Home and Cemetery was named the Business of the Year.



Harris County Sheriff's Deputy Brenda Mahan was unable to receive her award as Sheriff's Deputy of the Year 2024 because of injuries she sustained during an arrest, was present for the award last Thursday night.



Mike Joseph was named the 2024 Terry Davis Award winner.

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

HUFFMAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT is soliciting competitive sealed bids to purchase ±131.73 acres off Holcomb Road in Huffman, Harris County, Texas (Parcel ID 0401830000172 and Parcel ID 0401830000009). Property information, the Invitation for Bid (IFB) Package, or answers to questions regarding the submission of sealed bids can be obtained by contacting Matthew Davis, Cushman & Wakefield, U.S., Inc. by email at Matthew.Davis@cushwake.com. **The deadline for submission of hardcopy sealed bids is 2:00 PM, on Monday, March 24, 2025.** All bids are to be submitted in the form required in the bid packet. Bids must be timely submitted by U.S. Mail, courier/express service, or hand delivery to Huffman Independent School District, Attn: Adam Skinner, 24302 FM 2100, Huffman, Texas 77336. No electronic submissions will be accepted. The Seller reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informality in bids received. The public opening and announcement of the names of Bidders only will be held immediately following the deadline for submissions.

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Robert De Niro, left, and Angela Bassett star in "Zero Day."

"Zero Day"

"Mufasa: The Lion King" (PG) — This musical drama tells the story of an orphaned lion who would later become a king through the eyes of Academy-Award-winning director Barry Jenkins ("Moonlight"). Taking place after the events of "The Lion King" (2019), the film picks up after Simba, Mufasa's son, becomes King of the Pride Lands and now has a young daughter, Kiara, with his wife, Nala. While Simba's trusted friends Timon and Pumbaa watch over Kiara, the shaman Rafiki pays them a visit and decides to tell Kiara the story of her grandfather, letting viewers get whisked away to the time when Mufasa first stepped foot onto the Pride Lands. New additions to the cast include Blue Ivy Carter in her feature film debut, Mads Mikkelsen, and Thandiwe Newton.

Available to rent on Feb. 18. (Amazon Prime Video)

"One of Them Days" (R) — This comedy led by Keke Palmer and SZA can be compared to the 1995 film "Friday," starring Ice Cube and Chris Tucker. The two female leads respectively play waitress Dreux (Palmer) and aspiring artist Alyssa (SZA), who face eviction after their rent fails to get paid on time. Dreux and Alyssa deduce that Alyssa's boyfriend, Keshawn, took the rent money for his own gain, so the two women are forced into a series of shenanigans to obtain \$1,500 before the day is over. Lil Rel Howery, Katt Williams, and Maude Apatow co-star in this ridiculously entertaining film that is out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"The White Lotus: Season 3" (TV-MA) — Mike White's smash-hit series "The White Lotus" recently premiered its third season, with the first episode out now to stream! This season is in Thailand and follows a new set of self-absorbed characters who are doomed to experience some kind of ego death while they're on vacation. Jason Isaacs (of "Harry Potter" fame), Leslie Bibb ("Palm Royale"), and Walton Goggins ("Fallout") are some of the new additions to the cast, while Natasha Rothwell reprises her role as Belinda, a spa manager from the first season that took place in Hawaii. Viewers will be glued to their screens for this show until the season's finale on April 6, and a fourth season has already been greenlit by HBO. (Max)

"Zero Day" (TV-MA) — It is hard to believe that the prolific Robert De Niro hadn't yet taken on a main role in a television series, but this role as ex-president George Mullen in Netflix's new-political-thriller miniseries is his first! In a reality that looks scarily akin to ours, George is tasked by President Evelyn Mitchell (Angela Bassett) with heading a commission for cybercriminals after a global cyberattack leaves the world in devastation. But as George begins his investigation, he's thrust into a deeply hidden conspiracy that will test his patriotic morals. Lizzy Caplan ("Fatal Attraction"), Jesse Plemons ("Civil War") and Connie Britton ("Winner") were perfectly picked to co-star and dial in the drama. All six episodes are out now for your viewing pleasure! (Netflix) (c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.



Q: Is it true that "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" is coming back?

Will it be a TV series or a movie? — G.A. A: Sarah Michelle Gellar, who rose to stardom after playing the titular role in the WB series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" from 1997-2003, has confirmed that a reboot series is in its early stages of development. The actress shunned the idea of such a project for years, especially after the show's creator Joss Whedon was canceled by Hollywood for numerous allegations of misconduct. However, Gellar changed her mind recently when one of the original show's executive producers, Gail Berman, introduced her to Oscar-winning director Chloe Zhao ("Nomadland"). Both women convinced Gellar that their vision was one that would honor Buffy and her legacy.



Sarah Michelle Gellar as Buffy in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

According to the Los Angeles Times, the new series, which is being developed for Hulu, will center on a new, younger slayer, much like Buffy was as a teen. Gellar will also star, but it's not known yet which beloved characters from fictional Sunnydale, California, will also return. ***

Q: Why is there not going to be a new season of "The Bachelorette" this year? Has it been canceled?

— M.E. A: No, "The Bachelorette" hasn't been canceled, but it has been put on hiatus. It normally airs a new installment in the summer following "The Bachelor," which recently premiered on ABC for its 29th season. However, no reason has been given for why its female counterpart is being put on the shelf indefinitely. The ratings for Jenn Tran's season last year were no worse than Charity Lawson's the year before, but Tran did have a heartbreaking ending. She proposed to her chosen suitor Devin Strader, only to have him break up with her (via phone no less) before the "After the Final Rose" live reunion. Fortunately, Tran ended up meeting her current beau, Sasha Farber, when she was paired up with him on "Dancing with the Stars." According to Entertainment Weekly, this isn't the first time the show has taken a long break. The magazine stated: "After

three consecutive January premieres, 'The Bachelorette' took two years off in 2006 and 2007 before returning with season four in 2008, which, in turn, resulted in the show moving to a summer launch date." As for who will eventually follow in Tran's footsteps, we'll just have to wait and see! ***

Q: Who is the new female judge on "The Voice"?

I know she's a singer, but I've never heard of her before. — S.K. A: While she looks much younger, 31-year-old Kelsea Ballerini is a new coach on the latest season of the singing competitive reality show "The Voice." Growing up in Knoxville, Tennessee, Ballerini became the first solo female country music artist to earn a No. 1 hit with her debut single ("Love Me Like You Mean It") since Carrie Underwood accomplished the same. In the next decade, Ballerini would go on to be nominated for five Grammy Awards. Underwood, who is now 41 years old, has taken home eight Grammys since winning "American Idol" in 2005. Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions. Difficulty: Moderate. HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS puzzle with two panels and instructions to find at least six differences in details.

February 17, 2025 Posting Date King Crossword puzzle grid and word list.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez with 10 questions and answers. Solution time: 23 mins.



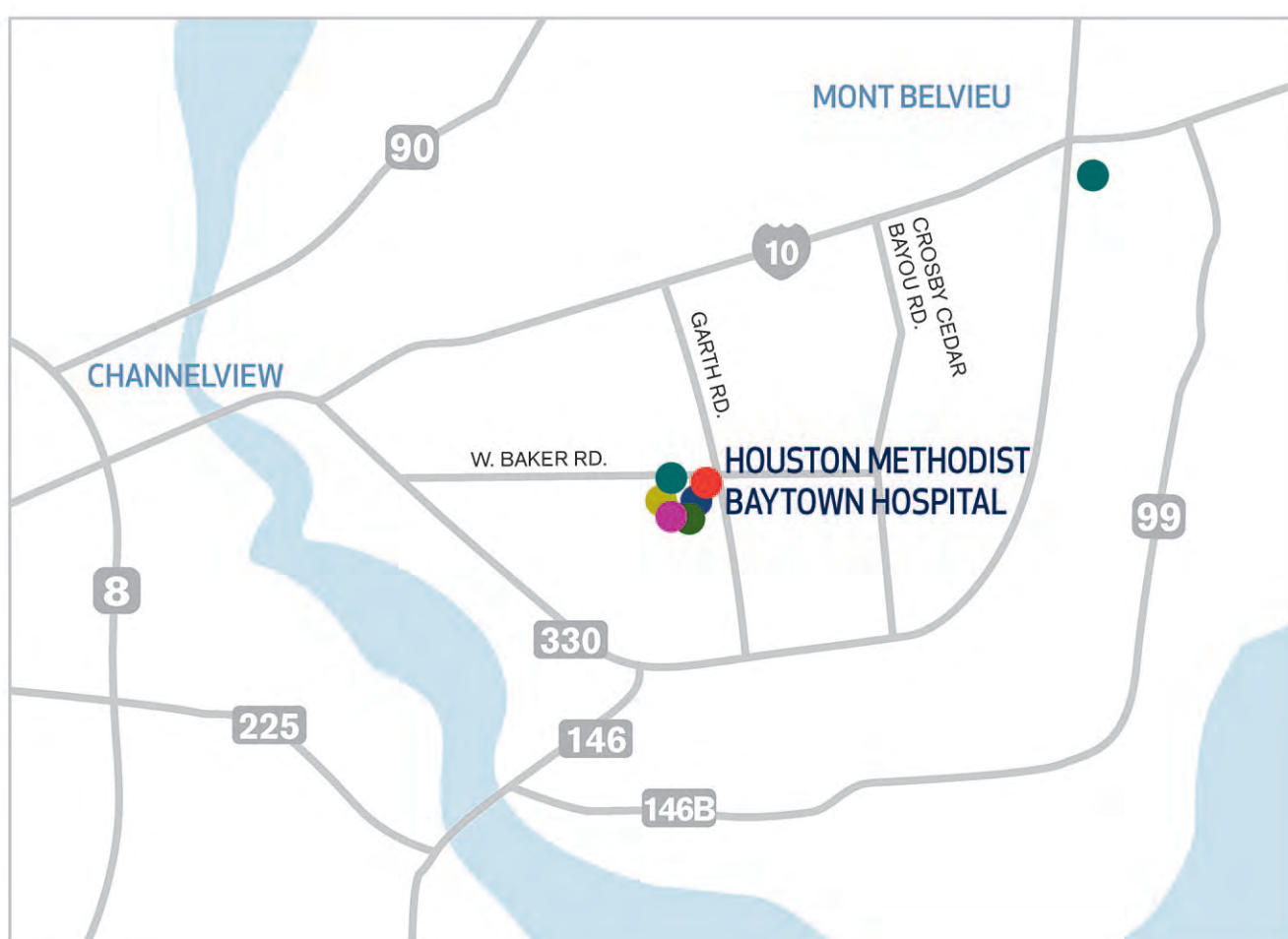
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