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HIGHLANDS

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P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Crosby VFD hosting Third Annual 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb, Mar. 29

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

It's not a race; it's a solemn reminder. Saturday, Mar. 29 at 6 p.m., the firefighters and the community are asked to assemble and remember those firefighters and innocent victims who were lost on September 11, 2001, during the attack on the World Trade Centers in New York. The annual remembrance raises funds to donate to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation that supports the families of fallen heroes across the nation.

The Crosby Fire 'Under The Lights' 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and Walk is held at Cougar Stadium, 14703 FM 2100 with onsite registration beginning at 5 p.m., an opening ceremony, and the climb begins promptly at 6:10 p.m.

In just their first two



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

years, the Crosby fundraiser has exceeded expectations.

"We've had a goal of \$10,000 each year," said District Chief Warren Thompson, "and we have ex-

ceeded that with \$23,000 total. We're already on our way to meeting and exceeding that goal again this year," he said.

It gets exciting when the start begins. Last year,

there were firefighters from six different departments that joined the climb.

"We were the first department that was sanctioned in the state of Texas

to do a climb with the foundation," Thompson pointed out. Stair climbing events occur across the country throughout the year.

The money doesn't go just to firefighters' families who lost loved ones during 9/11.

"These funds assist fallen hero's families across the country," Thompson said. The foundation has been giving out money since 1992. Crosby has been so fortunate in that they have only had one Line of Duty Death (LODD) since its inception.

The stair climb replicates the climb firefighters had to make with full gear on to reach the top of the World Trade Center's 110 stories. Many participating firefighters and community members, if they choose, are outfitted in full gear to do the climb, while others choose to walk the track the equivalent of

steps.

"It takes about 12 trips around the track to do that," Thompson said.

As they walk or climb, each participant is given a tribute badge of one of the 343 firefighters killed on 9/11 to remember and pay tribute.

"The climb is on the home side bleachers, up and down four times," he said. At the completion of their climb, participants walk to the east end of the stadium where they stand before the color guard who rings the bell signaling the end of their climb.

On-site registration and check-in are hosted on the visitors' side of the stadium at 5 p.m.

"The donation is \$35 for adults and children can come in for free with their families and participate if

Continued. See Crosby Firefighters to Honor 9/11, Page 5

IN THE STARS

Highlands Little League Opening Day March 22

Highlands Little League Opening Day Saturday, March 22, with Parade at 10pm, ending at Kaminski LL Park.

Fish Fry Benefit 11am to 3pm to replace stolen equipment. Only \$10 per meal ticket.

Sponsored by Sampson Lodge, Highlands Rotary Club, and Baytown Shrine Club.

Info: Jason Davis, 832-888-5550

Crosby Huffman Chamber Luncheon March 20

Crosby Huffman Chamber of Commerce Monthly Luncheon, Thursday March 20 at 11:30am.

Program: Business Spotlight.

Marathon Hearing on Voucher Bill

Education Committee hears 300 speakers in 23 Hours; Most opposed

State Representative Brad Buckley, Republican House public education committee chair and author of the chamber's voucher proposal, opened the hearing on House Bill 3 Tuesday morning, stating: "My intent is to provide families with the opportunity to choose the best possible educational setting for their child, and I believe House Bill 3 provides this choice while prioritizing Texas' most high needs and vulnerable students."

After hearing testimony over the next 23 hours—more than 300 registered to speak—the committee left the bill pending without an immediate vote. The bill's numerous opponents who testified often echoed Democratic Representative James Talarico's statement, that "There is



a disconnect between the rhetoric and what the bill actually says."

HB 3 is a universal voucher program that would provide an estimated \$10,330 to students (and more for those with disabilities) who attend private schools and \$2,000 for homeschooled students in the program. The

amount for private school students is set at 85 percent of the average local and state funding public schools receive per student statewide; it is estimated to grow to \$10,889 by 2030 in the bill's fiscal note. Lawmakers have initially set aside \$1 billion for the program for 2027, while the Legislative Budget

Board estimates the program's net cost at nearly \$4 billion by 2030.

Proponents of the bill touted that HB 3 prioritizes low-income students and students with disabilities. If applicants exceed capacity, the bill lays out a priority order favoring kids with disabilities and in households at or below

200 or 500 percent of the federal poverty line. Despite that language, critics argue there are barriers for such families.

"Prioritization in a lot of states is window dressing because what matters is who actually gets the funds; who actually gets admitted; or who's already been admitted," Talarico said.

Democratic Representative Harold Dutton argued high tuition rates made private schools cost-prohibitive for low-income students, citing an average private school tuition of around \$27,000 in the Houston area. "If you get \$10,000, you're still \$17,000 short. And for most of these families that

Continued. See VOUCHER BILL OPPOSED, Page 6

Silo Art Studios offer a unique interaction with the Artists

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

From young families shopping for art to decorate their new home, to investors seeking out that special promising artist, The Silos at Sawyer Yards maximizes the 80,000 square foot space of private art studios and creative flex space to attract even the occasional art enthusiast.

What could be more creative than a developer turning the once Riviana Rice packaging plant and silos into divided space to house more than 100 established and emerging artists, arts groups, and creative entrepreneurs.

The gem of the space comes every Second and Third Saturday of the month, when resident art-



Studio #214 — For 50 years, Grace Phillips has been creating her abstract art, even while she lived in Dubai in the Middle East. While in Dubai, she served as the director of a gallery at the Dubai International Art Center before returning to Houston. For a private viewing, please call Grace at 832-703-8650, or email her at grace.phillips1015@aol.com. Her work is on display at www.gracephillipsart.com.

ists open their studios to welcome the public. The notion that artists are willing to spend valuable time discussing their feelings, thoughts, and inspiration behind their work is not novel, but rare.

Last Second Saturday, as shoppers awakened from



Studio #113 — Mei-ing Hoffman is an artist and Associate Publisher for Grafikpress newspapers. Her email is meihoffmanart@gmail.com, and can be reached at 713-906-4585. These beautiful paintings were done by Mei-ing Hoffman. She can be reached at her Studio on the Second and Third Saturday of each month from 12 noon to 5 p.m. You can also see her work online at paintingsbymeimei.com.

their winter slumber, foot traffic at The Silos was particularly busy.

When the front doors swing open for first-time visitors and novice art enthusiasts, they are greeted by an impressive array of art displays, akin to a museum exhibi-

tion, showcasing various genres of fine arts. Visual art includes realism, impressionism, surrealism, pop art, expressionism, minimalism, abstract expressionism, rococo, dada, conceptual art, portraiture, still life, landscape, and historical painting, to name a few.

Before running to a dictionary to refresh your memory on all those terms, ask the artist. They are happy to explain their art and in doing so, give depth to the meaning and purpose of the work.

In studio #209, Patricia Blackwell makes an interesting use of oval canvas.

"It's figurative artwork that's acrylic and pan pas

Continued. See SILO ART STUDIOS, Page 2

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Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation Honors Outstanding Teachers at 16th Annual Students' Choice Awards

The Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation proudly hosted the 16th annual Students' Choice Awards on February 25, 2025, celebrating the incredible impact of educators across the district. The heartfelt event honored 15 outstanding teachers who have made a lasting difference in the lives of their students.

Each year, seniors reflect on their journey and honor the teachers who have shaped their lives in meaningful ways. This year, more than 490 nominations were submitted, highlighting the deep connections between students and their educators. The honorees were recognized during an emotional evening featuring personal student testimonials, video tributes, and awards presented by district and foundation leaders.

"Tonight, we celebrate teachers who go beyond academics to inspire, encourage, and uplift their students," said Dr. Randal O'Brien, Superintendent of Schools. "These educators have shaped the futures of countless young minds, and we are honored to recognize their dedication."

The event featured a special video the Goose Creek CISD Community Engagement Team produced, capturing the heartfelt stories of stu-



Pictured, from left, Gracie Gaskey, Kelly Mills, Jessica Pantoja, Ashley Finnerty, Alison Hernandez, Rex Miller, Katherine Barrientes, Randi Dodson, Keylin Arroyo, and Stacey Mullins



Pictured, from left, Adrienne Schoppe, Lawreenbelle Yuipco, Drake Pryor Newman, Kevin Puente, Melanie Nichols, Cheyanne Barber, Raye Lovell, Robert Richard, Jessica Sosa, Alyssa Rostron



Pictured, from left, Steven Denton, Ashlee Acker, Xavier Goodley, Anitria Collette, Kenia Pena, J. Marie Brookreson, Silvia Torres, Lori Alexander, Rudy Patterson, and Ernest Bryson

Students' Choice Award Winners					
Student First Name	Student Last Name	Student's Campus	Teacher First	Teacher Last	Teacher Location
Lawreenbelle	Yuipco	IMPACT Early College HS	Adrienne	Schoppe	Impact
Kevin	Puente	IMPACT Early College HS	Drake	Newman	Horace Mann
Kenia	Pena	Robert E. Lee HS	Jacqueline	Brookreson	REL
Abigail "Raye"	Lovell	Robert E. Lee HS	Robert	Richard	Highlands Jr
Alyssa	Rostron	Ross S. Sterling HS	Jessica	Sosa	Alamo
Xavier	Goodley	Ross S. Sterling HS	Anitria	Collette	Crockett
Silvia	Torres	Ross S. Sterling HS	Lori	Alexander	Sterling
Ashlee	Acker	Ross S. Sterling HS	Steven	Denton	Sterling
Jessica	Pantoja	Ross S. Sterling HS	Ashley	Finnerty	Sterling
Cheyenne	Barber	Ross S. Sterling HS	Melanie	Nichols	Sterling
Katherine	Barrientes	Ross S. Sterling HS	Randi	Dodson	Sterling
Keylin	Arroyo	Ross S. Sterling HS	Stacey	Mullins	CBJ
Jackson "Rudy"	Patterson	Stuart Career Tech HS	Ernest	Bryson	Stuart
Alison	Hernandez	Stuart Career Tech HS	Rex	Miller	Stuart
Gracie	Gaskey	Stuart Career Tech HS	Kelly	Mills	Stuart

dents and their teachers. The ceremony also acknowledged the ongoing support of the Education Foundation, which has contributed more than \$2 million to Goose Creek CISD, including over \$1.9 million in grants for innovative teaching initiatives.

"We are proud to recognize these incredible teachers who exemplify excellence in education," said Adelina Gomez-Abshire, President of the Education Foundation. "Their

passion and commitment to student success embody the mission of the Foundation—to enrich teaching, inspire learning, and maximize opportunities for all students."

In addition to the honoree recognitions, the Foundation highlighted its upcoming Día del Niño celebration, an annual spring fundraiser dedicated to supporting cultural enrichment for Goose Creek CISD students.

The Goose Creek CISD

Education Foundation extends its gratitude to event sponsors, including Aramark, Awards & Engraving, Pfluger Architects, and Texas Roadhouse, as well as the dedicated community members, students, and district staff who made the evening a success.

For more information about the Education Foundation and its initiatives, visit

www.gccisd.net/page/EducationFoundation.Home

Silo Art Studios offer a unique interaction with the Artists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tels on canvas," she said. "I just needed to do something, and to draw, so I did that every day."

Blackwell's process begins with the canvased oval on the floor of her studio. "All you do is throw paint on the canvas first," she said, and then she paints the photo-like object she calls "realism" on top. She's no novice, and the work can be done in as short a period as an hour. The detail in the painting is exquisite and comedic at times.

At the end of another hallway is delightful Grace Phillips, whose studio #214 is just as artfully decorated as her abstract art.

"No images, and I do use a lot of black," she said. For 50 years, she has been creating art, even while she lived in Dubai in the Middle East. "I was really involved in the art scene in Dubai and served as director of a gallery at the Dubai International Art Center," she said.

She lived there for 20 years before returning to Houston and has since delved back into art locally. Her husband has a PhD as a geophysicist, the left brain in the family, and she has an art degree, the right brain, she joked. "We've had a lot of life experiences, and we retired and came back to Houston," she said.

Elaine Rose Lanoue at studio 218 is a self-avowed contemporary acrylic semi-representational and abstract painter who works together with her husband, Guiteau Lanoue, in their studio at The Silos.

Some of her work is post-impressionism with a little more abstract angle, whereas her husband's works are more cubist, and he likes Picasso. Lanoue has been painting for 60 years. "I've been making a living at this since 1970 and I will be 82 at the end of the month," she said proudly.

Lanoue starts her works very abstract, "then I start to see it," she said. "French Impressionists were more squares of color where mine are not. They're loose." "The reason the movement was so popular — and controversial, too — was they used to do very tight, like Rembrandt, detailed paintings. Then these guys come



Studio #118 – This beautiful and colorful work of art hangs in the Ongrounds Art Gallery and was composed by Oluseyi Soyeye. He can be contacted at The Silos inside Studio #118 or by calling him at 281-760-7679 or by email at ongrounds2000@gmail.com. His work is also viewable at www.oluseyisoyeye.com.



Studio #218 – Elaine Rose Lanoue is a self-avowed contemporary acrylic semi-representational and abstract painter who works together with her husband, Guiteau Lanoue in their studio at The Silos. Her impressionism with a hint of the abstract comes from an incredible 60-year career with a brush in her hands. Her Studio is loaded with beautiful art to take home. She can be reached at 832-541-5058 or by email at elaine.lanoue@yahoo.com.



Studio #209 – Patricia Blackwell has been creating art from just about anything including a unique shaped oval canvas. Her figurative artwork that's acrylic and pan pastels on canvas draws attention. Visit Blackwell in her Studio #209, or email her at pblackwellart@gmail.com, or phone her at 713-855-5499.



Studio #122 – There's nothing like working with your friends. Artists Mary Rogas, Cora Salvino, and Suzanne Buckland share a corner studio. Cora does glass work, and Mary does abstract, floral and figurative work, while Suzanne does oil, acrylic, and mixed media collage.

Studio #113 — Mei-ing Hoffman is an artist and Associate Publisher for Grafikpress newspapers. Her email is meihoffmanart@gmail.com, and can be reached at 713-906-4585. These beautiful paintings were done by Mei-ing Hoffman, including the cityscape of an Italian village. She can be reached at her Studio on the Second and Third Saturday of each month from 12 noon to 5 p.m. You can also see her work online at paintingsbymei.com.

out and it's much different," she said.

Van Gogh, she said would walk up to the canvas and use the tube of paint, turn it, and leave its mark. The style is different today.

Mary Rogas, Cora Salvino, and Suzanne Buckland share a corner studio. Cora does glass work, and Mary does abstract, floral and figurative work, while Suzanne does oil, acrylic, and mixed media collage.

Mei-ing Hoffman at studio #113 is a part-time artist and full-time Associate Publisher for Grafikpress newspapers, which publishes several community newspapers reaching most of the North and East Harris County area. She has only been in The Silos since last September.

"I did my first painting six years ago, because my best friend wanted to have a bird, so I painted a bird," she said. When she finished, she looked at it and realized she might be able to paint professionally.

She is often inspired by the movement of nature, light, shadow, four seasons, and water. She has a great eye for composition, although she has never been officially trained. "I've been running a commercial printing company, so I do know color and color schemes," she said.

She tries a lot of different styles, although one of her favorites is impressionism. She has also done small sculptures using recycled wire and other found objects, as well as free-hand pencil sketches that burst with feeling, despite their simplicity.

Besides sharing her own art with a wider audience, one of the things Mei appreciates most about being part of The Silos at Sawyer Yards is the sense of community. The artists there encourage her and share painting techniques with her.

Most of the artists are available on the Second and Third Saturday of the month from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Others are also available during the week by appointment.

Drop by and visit them at their studios. The Silos at Sawyer Yards are at 1502 Sawyer Street, off I-10 at the Taylor Street exit near downtown Houston.

Barbers Hill Dayton Press

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THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Chambers County Tax Assessor Collector Recognized by State Department of Motor Vehicles

CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS - On March 11, 2025, Chambers County Tax Assessor-Collector Laurie Payton was recognized by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles for outstanding performance and efficiency in processing title and registration transactions and awarded the Bronze Level Performance Quality Recognition Award.

The Performance Quality Recognition Program is a voluntary program offered to every elected Tax Assessor-Collector by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. Awards recognize Tax Assessor-Collectors who provide exemplary customer service and for going above and beyond in providing vehicle title and registration services.

The Program focuses on a variety of items based on industry best practices, including:

- Remitting fees on time
- Consistently applying statutes, rules and policies governing motor vehicle transactions
- Maintaining bonds required by statute or rule
- Performing efficiently and with low error rates
- Processing transactions in a timely fashion
- Having a fraud, waste and awareness program
- Focusing on customer satisfaction
- Implementing cost saving measures

This year, only seven of the State's 254 counties will receive recognition through this program for their exceptional work in 2024.

"Since taking office on February 1, 2023, Mrs. Payton's goal has been to provide an exceptional level of customer service to stakeholders by creating and maintaining a team who stays abreast of current laws and best practices," said Chuck Lee, Vehicle Titles Registration Division Assistant Section Director for Regional Services during the award presentation in Commissioners Court. "Mrs. Payton has worked tirelessly to improve the overall service provided to the citizens of Chambers County by employing a top-down approach to service, ensuring that her staff have all the tools they need to succeed."

Mrs. Payton thanked Mr. Lee for his praise but graciously reminded the Court that receipt of the award would not have been possible without the work of her staff.

"The receipt of this award would not have been possible without the hard work of my staff," said Mrs. Payton. "I appreciate their hard work and dedication to public service, hard work and excellence."

Since the inception of this program in 2017 there have been a total of 10 Gold, 10 Silver and 23 Bronze award recipients.

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

Former Battleship Texas Berth to Undergo \$40M Historical Restoration

San Jacinto battleground to look like 1836

Now that Battleship Texas will finally dock in Galveston after years of negotiations, its former home at the San Jacinto battleground will undergo a \$40 million transformation.

Why it matters:

The work is part of a larger \$142 million makeover that aims to enhance the visitor experience of the historic site east of Houston.

Catch up quick:

The battleship — at the time considered the most powerful weapon in the world — was commissioned in 1914 and retired in 1948 when it was docked at the San Jacinto site as a museum. Today, it is the only surviving U.S. naval ship that served in both world wars, including both theaters in World War II.

In 2023, Battleship Texas Foundation officials announced their intention to move the ship's berth to Galveston. Last week, the Galveston Wharves Board of Trustees approved an agreement allowing the foundation to permanently dock the ship at Pier 15.

Driving the news:

An artificial cove dredged



The berth dredged to house Battleship Texas, seen here in 2013, will be restored to its original landscape. Photo credit Smiley N. Pool/Houston Chronicle via Getty Images

to house the massive ship at the San Jacinto site will be infilled, and the area will be returned to what researchers believe it looked like in 1836, at the time of the final and decisive battle of the Texas Revolution.

The effort is crucial to providing visitors a historically accurate depiction of the site during the battle, Amy Rogers, executive director of the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site and Museum, tells

Axios.

What they're saying:

"You do get a lot of people who would be confused by (the battleship's placement at San Jacinto)," Rogers said. "I wish I could say it was only schoolchildren, but they would say, 'No wonder they won the battle, look at the big ship they had.'"

"We've been going through the historical records and everything that we can find," Rogers said of

the meticulous work determining the 19th century landscape.

What they found:

Rogers said historians and researchers discovered that area of the battleground was likely marshy wetlands and that the restoration will also provide habitat for the region's wildlife.

By the numbers:

State lawmakers approved the money for the effort in 2023 along with

another \$102.7 million for enhancements to the 1,200-acre battleground, which will include a new visitor's center and improvements to the battleground monument.

The bottom line:

"Being able to restore that portion of the grounds ... is going to add significantly to the interpretation," Rogers said of the battleship's former berth. "It definitely played a part in the story."

West Chambers County Pilot Club Hosts "Cruising the Fifties" Gala on March 22

West Chambers County Pilot Club, Inc. will hold its annual fundraising Gala on Saturday, March 22, 2025 from 6:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M., at Barbers Hill High School, Mont Belvieu TX. The theme of this year's Gala is "Cruising the Fifties on the Hill".

For more information contact W.C.C.P.C. at P.O. Box 1032, Mont Belvieu, TX 77580, Email wccpilotclub@gmail.com or Linda Gilmore at rayegil2@yahoo.com or to purchase tickets contact any West Chambers County Pilot Club member or call Treasurer Diana Jackson - 505-220-7499.

*Dinner tickets are \$15.00 each donation.

*Drawing for a Queen blue/white quilt, tickets are \$ 5.00 each or 5 tickets for \$20.00

*Drawing tickets for a Ruger American .308 Winchester/7.62 NATO Bolt-Action with Vortex

*Crossfire II Scope are 1 ticket for \$20.00 each. There will only be 200 tickets sold.

There will be a Texas Guides Outdoor Adventure, half day guided Fishing trip in Trinity Bay, and a half day Freshwater Fishing trip with Lake Livingston Adventures on Lake Livingston, both will be in the Live Auction.



(Pictured l-r) West Chambers County Pilot Club Past President/Director Linda Polk with 2025 "Cruising the Fifties on the Hill" Gala Bronze Sponsor Chamber County Constable Ben L. "Butch" Bean.



(Pictured l-r) 2025 "Cruising the Fifties on the Hill" Gala Bronze Sponsor Lisa Dagle Bean and West Chambers County Pilot Club Past President/Director Linda Polk.

Rep. Brian Babin Supports Continuing Resolution to Keep Government Open

Washington, D.C. - Today, Congressman Brian Babin (TX-36) voted in favor of a clean continuing resolution (CR) to ensure the federal government remains open while Republicans continue working to implement President Donald Trump's agenda.

"While Democrats are busy campaigning for a government shutdown, House Republicans are focused on keeping the government running and



U.S. Rep. Brian Babin

delivering for the American people," said Rep. Babin. "This clean CR freezes spending, prevents wasteful Democrat priorities, and allows us to stay laser-focused on securing our border, draining the swamp, and putting America first."

President Trump has made it clear: a clean CR is essential to advancing his administration's top priorities. This measure ensures we can:

Freeze reckless spending and put a stop to Democrats' runaway inflationary policies.

Continue mass deportations of illegal migrants and allow ICE agents to enforce our immigration laws without obstruction.

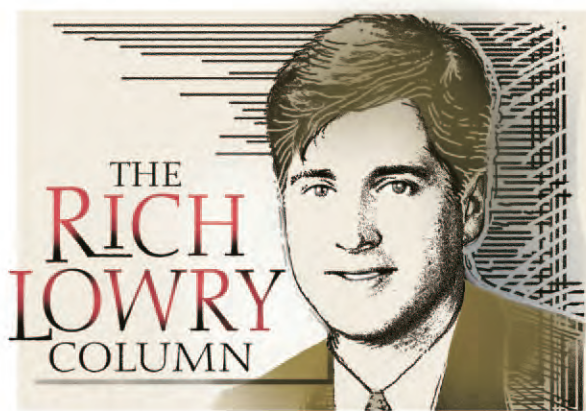
Eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending, ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly.

Keep America safe

and prosperous by pushing forward with critical national security and economic policies.

"The American people are tired of Washington's dysfunction," Babin continued. "Democrats seem eager to grind the government to a halt, but Republicans refuse to let them win. We are committed to delivering results, not roadblocks. This CR is a victory for Southeast Texans and the American people."

OPINION PAGE



Canada is not the enemy

Canada is not the enemy. Canada has always been an inoffensive country, and how is that working out for it? President Trump has made more threatening sounds about Canada than about Russia.

The madman theory has much to recommend it ... when dealing with Hamas or the Houthis. No one heretofore has thought it has similar benefits when handling relations with Ottawa.

It's important to realize the magnitude of the threat Trump is making. About three-quarters of Canadian exports go to the United States, accounting for 20% of Canadian GDP.

This is the kind of thing a much larger country does to a miscreant nation when it is punishing it for pursuing an illicit nuclear weapon, invading a neighbor or engaging in human rights abuses.

Canada's sin is to be party to a free-trade agreement — the USMCA — that it negotiated in good faith with the same U.S. president now browbeating it.

Defenders of Trump's approach to trade tend to cite China as an example of how pure free-trade theory doesn't work in the real world — China is an authoritarian society, engages in massive intellectual theft and other unfair practices, and can't be trusted not to cut off supply chains on a crisis.

None of this applies to Canada, a friendly, English-speaking country that shares our values and fights wars alongside us, not against us.

That doesn't mean there aren't legitimate complaints about Canada. But the fentanyl trade and illegal border crossings aren't really among them (Canada is not Mexico). It is true that Canada protects politically sensitive sectors of its economy, most notably dairy and lumber.

These matters have long been the subject of U.S.-Canadian negotiations. Whatever else you think of Canada's dairy policy, it isn't an emergency as contemplated under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act that Trump is using as the legal basis for his tariff threats.

If nothing else, President Trump is succeeding in deranging Canadian politics. It's not just the possibility of ruinous tariffs, but the talk of Canada as the 51st state, a somewhat amusing joke that — as Trump keeps talking about it — now has to be considered half-serious.

This is disrespectful at best and threatening at worst. Why should we care? Well, it is a boost to Justin Trudeau's party in impending elections and a drag on the conservative populist Pierre Poilievre.

Trump has suggested that he believes he can use economic coercion to induce Canada to submit to annexation. The opposite is likely true; the more we troll Canada and disrupt its economy, the greater the anti-U.S. reaction.

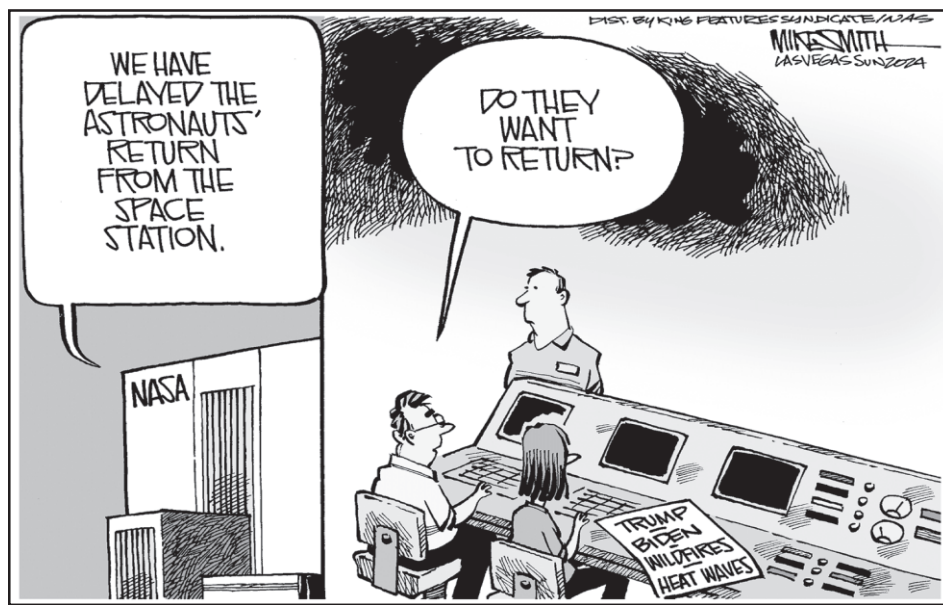
Trump should take as a win greater Canadian efforts against fentanyl and on the border (although these aren't hugely consequential), while kicking complaints about Canada trade practices to next year when the USMCA is scheduled to come up for review anyway.

At the top of our list with Canada should be pushing it to spend more on its military. As part of that, we should seek to deepen what is already an incredibly close defense relationship — with a particular focus on securing our interests in the Arctic — rather than foundering on gratuitous enmity.

John F. Kennedy said of Canada: "Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder."

The man in the Oval Office, unfortunately, has a different idea.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

House Proposes \$7.5B in New School Funding

Critics say a House bill proposing \$7.5 billion in new funding for public education doesn't go far enough, The Dallas Morning News reported. House Bill 2 would raise the per-student allotment by \$220, to \$6,360 a year.

The bill by Rep. Brad Buckley, R-Salado, would increase the amount of allotment used to raise salaries for non-administrative staff from the current 30% to 40%.

"The pay teachers receive demonstrates the level of respect afforded to our children," said Megan Holden, a 10th-grade English teacher at an Austin-area high school. "They are getting the message that Texas doesn't value them or their future."

The basic allotment would need to increase by \$1,300 to keep up with inflation since 2019, according to The News. That's the last time the allotment was increased.

The Texas Senate has already passed its version of a public education bill: a measure that would give \$10,000 raises to teachers with at least five years working in districts with fewer than 5,000 students, with teachers in larger districts getting \$5,500 raises.

The average teacher in Texas made \$62,500 last year, according to the Texas Education Agency, up from \$54,000 in 2019. According to the federal Consumer Price Index, cumulative inflation over that period is about 20%, meaning teacher salaries have not quite kept up with inflation.

STATE WORKERS MUST RETURN IN PERSON TO OFFICES

Gov. Greg Abbott has directed heads of state agencies to phase out remote work "as soon as practicable," the Texas Standard reported. That follows a similar mandate for federal workers issued by President Trump last week.

"Texans expect their public servants to be present and engaged in the work on their behalf," Andrew Mahaleris, the governor's press secretary, said in a statement. "With remote federal workers returning to the office where possible, it's important that state agencies ensure they do the same."

No written policy has been



given to department heads, but they were directed to transition to in-person work "as soon as practicable."

RISK OF WILDFIRES INCREASING; FEDS PROVIDE FUNDING

Wildfire season is underway in the state with burn bans in place in 111 counties, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. The Welder Complex fire in Sinton was the only active fire as of Sunday. It had burned 803 acres and was 95% contained.

Abbott's office announced last week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved the state's request for federal assistance for the Welder Fire in San Patricio County and the Duke Fire in Bexar County. The approval from FEMA makes the state eligible to be reimbursed for 75% of the costs associated with fighting the two fires.

On a single day last week, state emergency responders battled 41 new wildfires that burned more than 4,400 acres.

TEXAS SENATE OKS PLAN FOR \$3 BILLION DEMENTIA RESEARCH

Creation of a multibillion-dollar dementia research center is a step closer to fruition after the Texas Senate overwhelmingly passed a measure authored by state Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston. The Austin American-Statesman reported the bill would create the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. If the measure is ultimately passed and signed into law, it still must be approved by voters as a constitutional amendment.

"Dementia is a disease of particular concern because it robs a person of their thoughts and memories — the very essence of that person," Huffman said. "It leads to a loss of quality of life and independent function that

places an immense burden on families and loved ones, and our overall health care system."

The institute would be modeled after the state's cancer prevention institute. It would distribute grants to universities and other research organizations to fund studies on dementia prevention and treatment.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR NUCLEAR DISPOSAL CASE

The Supreme Court this week will hear longstanding arguments in a case that could result in Texas hosting the nation's first independent disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel, Inside Climate News reported. The state government and a Texas oil company sued the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2021 over its licensing of a temporary storage site in Andrews County for up to 11 million pounds of spent uranium fuel.

Thousands of tons of high-level radioactive waste are now stored at nuclear power plants across the country. For decades federal authorities have tried to develop a national, permanent site in the face of considerable opposition.

In August 2023, the Fifth Circuit of Appeals canceled a site license to Waste Control Specialists, writing that U.S. law dictates construction of a permanent repository, not a temporary one as proposed by the NRC.

"It plainly contemplates that, until there's a permanent repository, spent nuclear fuel is to be stored onsite at-the-reactor or in a federal facility," Judge James Ho wrote. "The Atomic Energy Act doesn't authorize the Commission to license a private, away-from-reactor storage facility for spent nuclear fuel."

MEASLES CASES IN SOUTH PLAINS NEAR 200

The number of measles cases reported in the South Plains region of the state reached 198 as of last Friday, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Twenty-three people have been hospitalized and one unvaccinated school-aged child has died.

More than two-thirds of the cases have been in Gaines County, southwest of Lubbock. An unvaccinated New Mexico adult in Lea County, just over the border from Gaines County, died last week.

Measles is highly contagious, and DSHS has said additional cases are likely to occur "in the outbreak area and the surrounding areas."

SPRING BREAK DRUNK DRIVING PREVENTION CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

Many college students are celebrating spring break this week, and the Texas Department of Transportation has launched a campaign to prevent drunk driving accidents as part of its "Drive Sober. No Regrets" initiative.

During the 2023 spring break period, TxDOT said there were 375 alcohol-related crashes resulting in nine deaths in Texas involving drivers between the ages of 17 and 30.

Students can save lives by designating a sober driver, using ride shares, taxis and mass transit, or simply staying put after drinking.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Perfect for the Day



I had not planned on a party; that was the trouble.

There is something ridiculous about a woman who has collected so many dresses that they barely fit in her adequately sized closet, showing up at her own anniversary party with nothing to wear. But that is the position I was about to find myself in.

Every time I've come to Mexico, I've brought one especially nice dress. Every time, it has hung in my small closet in Mexico, untouched. The restaurants we go to just don't require a serious dress. A nice pair of capris or a casual summer dress is much more appropriate for anywhere my husband, Peter, and I go.

But we hadn't even thought about an anniversary party when we packed to leave for this trip. I distinctly remember looking at a lovely dress that takes up no space at all and thinking, "Is there any point in schlepping this all the way to Mexico?"

No, I decided. Wasted space, I decided. Then, a couple of weeks before our 10th anniversary, I suggested to Peter that maybe we should have a party. It was at night, so Peter was mostly asleep. I have found this is a good time to spring new ideas on Peter. "A party?"

"Yes! An anniversary party!" "Hmmm." This might have sounded as if Peter was thinking it over, but I knew he was falling asleep. However, now that the subject had been broached, I could say the next morning:

"So! What do you think about the party we were talking about last night?"

Perhaps Peter's subconscious had been at work, because he didn't seem opposed to the idea in the morning. "No presents!" he said. "No presents," I agreed.

"I don't like it being all about me," he added.

"I don't think it will be. We have a lot of friends here now, and a lot of them don't know each other. I think it could be fun to introduce them. Plus, I think the hotel would enjoy throwing a party."

This part, Peter knew, was true. Our chef, Daniel, is a very good cook. He loves to try new things out on us. But most days, he's busy making hamburgers and enchiladas and french fries. Getting a chance to make something a little fancier for an invited party is exactly the kind of thing that gets him excited.

So Peter mentioned the still hypothetical party to a couple of people on his walk that day, and they said they'd love to come, and before we knew it, we had a plan. Then we started a list with everyone we'd like to invite.

"Maybe 16 people," I told Chef Daniel.

"It could be up to 20," I said a little later.

"No more than 25."

"We have 25 confirmed. There might be a couple more."

At that point, the entire indoor part of the restaurant was reserved for us and the menu was planned, and I ordered a very large chocolate cake. It looked as if the party was on.

And I still had nothing to wear.

Peter, who knows I own more dresses than any sensible person should, was not taking this mini clothing crisis seriously. So I decided to follow suit.

I went to the store that sold Indian imports, and I bought a very long, very bright, very unserious skirt. I will wear it with a string of shiny beads, and it will be perfect for the day — a day that is not especially serious and was not expected, but came together exactly as it should.

Till next time, Carrie

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Crosby Firefighters to honor 9/11 heroes with memorial stair climb on March 29,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

they'd like," the district chief said. Paying participants receive a badge, a T-shirt, and a challenge coin to commemorate the event.

Online registration continues now until midnight the day before the event by visiting their event website at <https://nff.akaraisin.com/ui/crosby25>.

"Once they're complete, they'll keep the badge. Then they can research that individual that they climb for," Thompson said.

The event continues to grow as Crosby and surrounding communities support the firefighters. The Crosby High School band will play music and start the event with the



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

national anthem.

"This year the RE/MAX Skydivers will fly into the stadium bearing the U.S. flag and also carrying in one of our helmets," Thompson said.

To register, visit <https://nff.akaraisin.com/ui/crosby25>.

Highlands Seniors Donate \$500 to Little League After Equipment Theft



The Highlands Seniors Helping Seniors nonprofit presented Austin Moore from Highlands Little League with a check for \$500. The money is intended to help defray the cost to replace maintenance equipment that was stolen recently in Highlands. From left, Debra Reeves, Joan Szijarto, Moore, Sandy Williams, Sheila Merrill, and Gene Brown.

Highlands Little League Opening Day is Saturday, March 22, with Parade at 10pm, ending at Kaminski LL Park.

Fish Fry Benefit 11am to 3pm to replace stolen equipment. Only \$10 per meal ticket.

Sponsored by Sampson Lodge, Highlands Rotary Club, and Baytown Shrine Club.

Info: Jason Davis, 832-888-5550

Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee Joins National Legal Fight Against Mass Firing of Federal Workers

Houston, Texas — Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee is joining a nationwide legal challenge against the federal directive ordering the immediate termination of nearly all probationary federal employees—an unprecedented move that threatens essential services millions of Americans rely on.

"This reckless mass firing puts public safety, disaster response, and critical services at risk," said Menefee. "Harris County depends on agencies like FEMA, the EPA, and HHS to protect our residents—whether it's responding to hurricanes, ensuring clean air and water, or keeping our public health system running. Gutting the federal workforce overnight is dangerous and irresponsible."

Harris County and the County Attorney have partnered with 45 other local governments in filing an amicus brief in *American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, et al. v. United States Office of Per-*



Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee announced He is joining a nationwide Legal Challenge against the federal directive ordering the immediate termination of nearby all nearly all probationary federal employees.

sonnel Management, et al. The brief warns that slashing federal jobs will disrupt key programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security payments, while also crippling emergency response, public health efforts, and local economies.

"Once again, Donald Trump is playing politics with people's lives," Menefee said. "This mass firing won't just devastate families—it will gut research institutions, hurt small businesses, and weaken local econo-

mies. In Harris County, these cuts could lead to fewer resources for residents who depend on federal services every day. This isn't just about jobs—it's about protecting our communities, our economy, and our future."

The coalition is urging the court to block the directive immediately, warning that without intervention, local governments will be forced to absorb the fallout of lost federal jobs and disrupted services.

CHAMBER NEWS

Crosby-Huffman Chamber Welcomes Kathy's Kuts to Membership



Crosby-Huffman Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors welcomed Kathy Hallmark, owner of Kathy's Kuts, into the chamber on Thursday. Hallmark's business is located on 14026 FM 2100 in Suite D behind the Millenium Project Solutions main building. She's open Tuesday through Saturday 10 – 5, and available by appointment till 7 p.m. She's been in business since at the Crosby location for 13 years and spent 20 years in Channelview on Sheldon Road.

Crosby-Huffman Chamber Welcomes The Rusty Bucket to Community



Crosby-Huffman Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors welcomed Marie and Robert Bush, owners of The Rusty Bucket, into the chamber on Thursday. The Rusty Bucket is located on 5307 S Main St. in Crosby. They're open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday and closed on Monday. The business has antiques, used, vintage, and consignment items.

Goose Creek CISD History Fair Winners Advance to Texas History Day



Goose Creek CISD is proud to announce the outstanding achievements of students who participated in this year's History Fair. Students displayed impressive research, creativity, and dedication, earning top placements in the competition. Those who placed first or second will advance to Texas History Day, scheduled for

April 5 at the University of Texas in Austin.

This year's History Fair centered around the theme "Rights & Responsibilities in History," inviting students to explore the complex relationship between individual freedoms and societal duties throughout history. The competition highlighted various projects, reflecting the stu-

dents' ability to connect historical events to contemporary issues. Their hard work and innovative presentations were evident in every competition category.

Goose Creek CISD extends its congratulations to all participants and wishes the advancing students the best of luck at Texas History Day.

Marathon Hearing on Voucher Bill,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

are poor families, that creates, you know, a mirage that they can now access it.”

Representatives of the Texas Private Schools Association and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops spoke of financial assistance that private schools could offer to some families.

Talarico called for a hard cap on income for eligible families and a provision that would give current public school students priority over current private school students to be added to the bill. “What we’re talking about is we are sending our limited, precious taxpayer dollars to the wealthiest families in the state who are already sending their kids to private school. And if you say that’s not the purpose, then put it in your bill.”

Democratic Representative Diego Bernal recommended adding a mandate for private schools to waive the difference between the tuition and the voucher amount for low-income applicants.

“That would be an inappropriate regulation into the private school and an inappropriate intervention

into that process with the parent,” responded Jennifer Allmon, executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Matthew Ladner, a senior policy adviser with the right-wing Heritage Foundation, testified that “private schools wouldn’t participate” if that mandate was included in the proposal.

Voucher opponents expressed concerns that it would mostly be current private school students who would ultimately take advantage of the program. Josh Cowen, a professor of education policy at Michigan State University, testified that only a quarter of voucher program participants nationwide came from public schools. The bill’s fiscal note estimates that of 350,000 students currently attending private schools statewide, “50 percent would apply to participate in the program in the first year, increasing 5 percent each subsequent year.”

HB 3’s per-student funding formula, along with details of its student prioritization and some provisions related to kids



Demonstration by the Texas American Federation of Teachers on the Capitol steps, opposing the Voucher bill.

with disabilities, distinguish it from its counterpart Senate Bill 2, which the Texas Senate has already passed.

Under HB 3, students with disabilities in private school could receive up to \$30,000 a year—but private schools do not have to offer special education services, as public schools are required to under federal special education laws, said Steven Aleman, a policy specialist with Disability Rights Texas. “There is no state law or federal law for that matter that requires an IEP [Individualized Education Program] for students with disabili-

ties] be developed by a private school for a student with a disability. The rights that a student gets pursuant to IDEA [the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act], you forgo those rights when you go to a private school.”

Laura Colangelo, executive director of the Texas Private Schools Association testified that 19 percent of private school students currently enrolled have “special needs” and that services students can receive are dependent on the student’s contract with the private school.

Others testified that

private schools did not admit or accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. “My name is Phil Lee, sixth grade, and I use a power walker because I have cerebral palsy,” a student testified. “My mom has tried and looked at private schools for me, but they turned me away because I’m in a wheelchair.”

Liz Piñon, a mother of kids with disabilities and education associate with the pro-public ed Intercultural Development Research Association, testified, “We’ve explored the possibility of private schools all over DFW, but the outcome was always the same. As soon as they learned about our children’s disabilities, the doors were closed.”

“If we truly want to support students with disabilities, we must strengthen, not abandon, our public schools instead of draining money from our public schools. Why not fix our system, fully fund our special ed schools, reduce those class sizes, hire and train more special ed teachers, and expand access to transition programs to prepare students for life after high school?” Piñon

said. Criticism of the bill came from both sides of the political aisle, with conservatives denouncing the program’s high cost to taxpayers. “I’m coming to you as a Texas retired teacher and as a conservative from Harris County. I’m a Republican precinct lead, and I wanted to remind you to please represent your Texas constituents. ... My input for you today is to kill this bill,” Mary Ann Jackson said.

Mary Lowe, who testified as a member of the conservative public education group Families Engaged, said the debate around vouchers was “ripping the party apart.” She added, “This bill has an open-ended check for the taxpayer.”

Last week, the education committee heard testimony on House Bill 2, what Buckley has called “a historic school funding bill.” While applauding the bill’s investment in special education funding, school district leaders and teachers criticized the bill for insufficient increases to the state’s basic allotment and to teacher pay.

Goose Creek CISD Recognized Among America’s Best Midsize Employers by Forbes

By: Kendall David, GCCISD Executive Director of Community Engagement

Goose Creek CISD is honored to be named in Forbes’ 2025 list of America’s Best Midsize Employers, securing the #129 spot among 498 distinguished organizations. This recognition is particularly noteworthy, as Goose Creek CISD is among a select group of public school districts nationwide to receive this honor.

This recognition results from a comprehensive evaluation conducted by Forbes in collaboration with market research firm Statista. The assessment involved surveying random employees across the United States, focusing on organizations with 1,000 to 5,000 employees. The study focuses on various aspects of the workplace, including salary, work environment, training programs, and opportunities for advancement. The final list comprises the top 1,199 organizations, with 498 categorized as midsize employers.

Goose Creek CISD’s recognition can be attributed to its commitment to fostering a culture of growth and excellence. The district has gained national attention through its “Here, We Grow Giants”

marketing campaign, which highlights its dedication to growing students and staff into leaders through innovation, collaboration, and opportunity. With one of the higher teacher salaries in the state, Goose Creek CISD ensures that employees are valued and compensated competitively. The district’s investment in early childhood learning, college and career readiness, and innovative programs further reinforces its mission to develop the whole child.

A key factor in the district’s recognition is its commitment to providing a trusted learning environment, with a strong emphasis on data security, student safety, and staff well-being. Goose Creek CISD offers a dedicated staff wellness facility, supporting employees’ physical and mental health. Additionally, the Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation provides innovative teaching grants, empowering educators to create dynamic and impactful learning experiences in the classroom.

“Being recognized by Forbes as one of America’s Best Midsize Employers is a testament to our district’s commitment to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for our staff,” said Dr. Randal O’Brien, Superintendent of Goose



Creek CISD. “Our employees are the foundation of our students’ success, and this accolade reflects their dedication, innovation, and hard work.”

Established in 1919, Goose Creek CISD serves nearly 24,000 students across Baytown and Highlands, Texas. The district has six high schools, six junior high schools, and 18 elementary schools, employing over 4,000 individuals. In recent years, Goose Creek CISD has achieved major milestones, including the recognition of seven schools as Apple Distinguished Schools, the

designation of three career academies as national models, the expansion of its P-TECH program for career-focused education, and the attainment of AVID Demonstration School status at three campuses.

This national recognition highlights Goose Creek CISD’s dedication to creating a positive workplace culture that attracts and retains top talent, ultimately benefiting the students and Baytown and Highlands community.

To learn more visit <https://www.forbes.com/lists/best-midsize-employers/>.



1. Mickey 17 (R) Robert Pattinson, Steven Yeun
 2. Captain America: Brave New World (PG-13) Anthony Mackie, Harrison Ford
 3. Last Breath (PG-13) Woody Harrelson, Simu Liu
 4. The Monkey (R) Theo James, Tatiana Maslany
 5. Paddington in Peru (PG) Hugh Bonneville, Emily Mortimer
 6. Dog Man (PG) Pete Davidson, Poppy Liu
 7. Anora (R) Mikey Madison, Paul Weissman
 8. Mufasa: The Lion King (PG) Aaron Pierre, Kelvin Harrison Jr.
 9. Rule Breakers (PG) Nikohl Boosheri, Ali Fazal
 10. In the Lost Lands (R) Milla Jovovich, Dave Bautista
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Edwina Findley, left, and Uza Aduba star in "The Residence."

"The Residence"

"The Residence" (TV-MA) — This whodunnit series hails from the production company Shondaland...

Family" (TV-MA) — This limited drama series has two heavy hitters in television — Ellen Pompeo of "Grey's Anatomy" fame and Mark Duplass from shows like "The Mindy Project" and "The Morning Show."...

"Happy Face" (TV-MA) — This true-crime drama series was adapted from Melissa Moore's real-life story as the daughter of the "Happy Face" killer Keith Hunter Jespersen...

"Picture This" (PG-13) — For their latest original film out now, Amazon Prime enlisted the help of two actors who were sure to bring this rom-com to life: "Bridgerton's" Simone Ashley and "After's" Hero Fiennes Tiffin...



Q: Who is the actor playing "Daredevil" in the new series on Disney+? What else has he been in? — E.O.

A: Charlie Cox was born in London and studied drama there before landing his first on-screen role in 2001 in the BBC series "Judge John Deed."...



Charlie Cox as Matt Murdock/Daredevil.

Q: I read that Jen Shah from "The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City" will be getting out of prison early. Have there been any other "Real Housewives" besides Shah and Teresa Giudice who have gone to prison? — L.S.

A: Jen Shah and Teresa Giudice (of "The Real Housewives of New Jersey") are the only two Bravo network Housewives to serve time in federal prison...

sentencing is Karen Huger of "The Real Housewives of the Potomac," who wrecked her car and was charged with a DUI in 2024. She's currently serving a one-year sentence at a county correctional facility in Maryland.

Q: I thought the new revival of "Frasier" had been canceled, but now I'm reading that Kelsey Grammer says it will be back. Is this true? — R.R.

A: Yes, the "Frasier" reboot was recently canceled after two seasons by Paramount+. I think the obvious reason it never caught on like the original series was that it was missing three very familiar faces...

Star Kelsey Grammer is hopeful that another streamer or network will pick it up. In fact, he's confident that "Cheers" star Ted Danson will also co-star or at least appear on the series.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions

HOCUS-FOCUS puzzle by Henry Boltinoff with two panels to compare

March 17, 2025 Posting Date King Crossword

King Crossword grid with across and down clues

Answers for King Crossword

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez with 10 questions

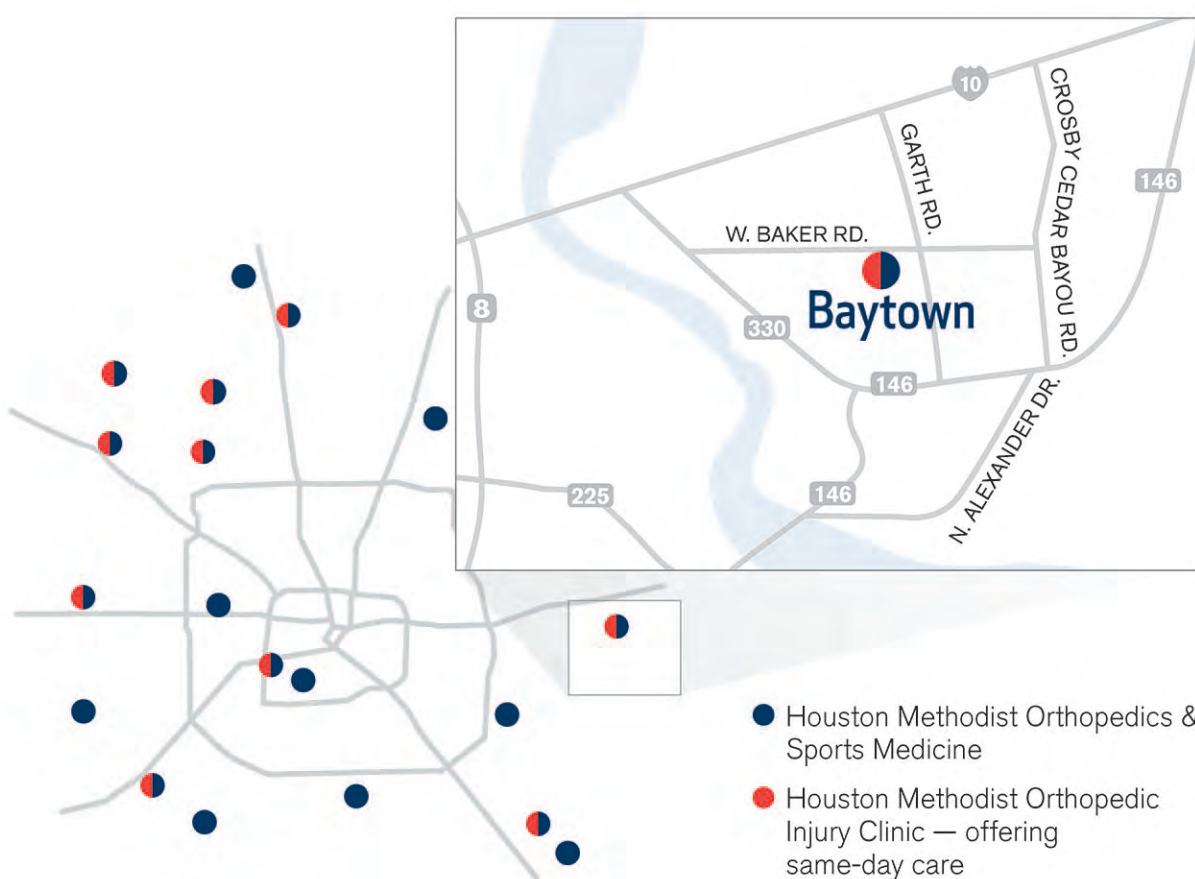
Answers for Trivia Test: 1. Aviator Charles Lindbergh; 2. Tom Cruise; 3. "Emma" by Jane Austen; 4. Sound navigation and ranging; 5. The General Lee; 6. 1950s; 7. Portugal; 8. Night blindness; 9. Dwight D. Eisenhower; 10. Radius



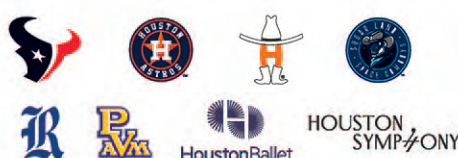
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