

Major League Baseball Season
Opens, Page 6

Crosby American Legion
Purse Bingo, Page 7

Crosby Fire Department
Awards Banquet

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

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Brian McClanahan received the Captain of the Year Award. Story Below and Page 2

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THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Crosby Growth Affecting Fire Dept. Recruiting Needs

Henderson named Firefighter of Year

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

CROSBY – At their recent Awards banquet, Luke Henderson was named Firefighter of the Year. Chief Alan Kulak said that the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department is looking for volunteers. The growth that is already occurring in the area combined with the future of 18,000 new homes east of Lake Houston to be built in the next 10 years means the forward-thinking department will need more volunteers, equipment, and firefighting apparatus to keep up with the growth.

“We’ve had a very busy year, and the growth of

Crosby is going to be challenging,” said Fire Chief Alan Kulak, “but we have the ability to meet the demands of the growth with the stations we have within the fire district.”

There are plans for additional stations and some station replacements, but he couldn’t announce those while the Emergency Services District negotiates land deals and contracts.

In 2023, the department responded to 1,313 an average of 3.5 calls per day. The 2024 numbers show a wicked 15.68 percent increase by 206 calls to 1,519, an average of 4.1 calls per day.

While the department remains a volunteer organization with stipend payments, volunteers are still required to stay at the station and occasionally spend the night.

“We have some stations



Firefighter of the Year Luke Henderson with Crosby Fire Chief Alan Kulak.

that weren’t built for staffing, and they’re (ESD) working on that right now. I don’t know how soon we’ll have one. We have three of them that were built sev-

eral years ago when we first started the ISO improvement plan,” Kulak said.

Kulak announced at their annual banquet that

the department boasts 61 firefighters, 24 new recruit firefighters, nine junior firefighters, nine explorer/mascots, and 10 ladies auxiliary support mem-

bers.

Commissioner Buddy Brewer, Jr. from Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 announced the ESD took delivery of two pumpers and one tanker; approved an agreement with HAAS Alert System; approved the purchase of four wildlands fire apparatus; approved a new security system for the fire stations; and approved a contract with Joiner Architects for designing a future Station 5.

“Call volumes are going up because we have a lot more residents. There is more traffic flow going through our towns and more auto accidents,” he said.

CVFD has a stipend

Continued. See CROSBY FD SEEKS VOLUNTEERS, Page 2

IN THE STARS

Purse Bingo at American Legion Crosby on April 4

Want a fancy purse? The David H. McNerry American Legion Post 658 will host a Designer Purse Bingo fundraiser on Friday, April 4, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. and Bingo begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person or \$600 to sponsor a table.

Melissa McBride, adjutant officer and vet at the American Legion Hall said there would be 15 rounds of bingo. “For those who haven’t played before, Designer Purse Bingo is where you play regular games of Bingo and instead of winning cash, you win a designer purse like Coach, Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Tory Burch and so on,” she said. The specialty purses are worth hundreds of dollars up to \$1,000 or more, some of which have been donated to the organization.

Purses are not the only prizes, there’s also a men and women’s set of Fossil watches, and charm and earrings from Swarovski.

CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

Crosby HS Expansion Near Completion, New Academic Wing and CTE Center Set to Open Fall 2025

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD Families,

I am so proud of the progress being made on the expansion of Crosby High School. On the exterior, the construction crews are about 95% of the way toward completing the installation of all doors and windows on the new academic wing and expanded CTE Center. The academic wing is starting to be covered with brick closely matching the exterior of the current CHS building. On the interior, the Board of Trustees and I toured the future classrooms and labs on March 24. We saw up close the work being done to create the 32 new classrooms and 8 labs. You can really see the learning spaces come to life like never before. The



Dr. Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

project is being funded by the voter-approved money from the 2017 bond. We broke ground in July 2024, and we will open the new wing later this fall of 2025.

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION OPENS

I want to share an important date for families, most especially those families that may be new to Crosby ISD. Pre-K and

Kindergarten registration will begin on April 1 for the 2025-26 Academic Year. The registration process is done entirely online using our digital enrollment portal, Skyward Family Access. You can find the link by visiting our home page www.crosbyisd.org or www.crosbyisd.org/kinderregistration.

Families must provide proof of residency, and the registration process can take as little as 10 minutes. For families that have additional questions, you can contact our district registrar staff at the following email address: kinder-registration@crosbyisd.org.

CROSBY ISD’S PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Let’s celebrate Crosby ISD’s 2024-25 Principal of the Year, Principal Brad Hadnot. He serves the stu-



Exterior of the new academic wing at Crosby High School. Weather-proof panels have been installed on the exterior of the addition, and now construction crews are applying brick to match the current façade of CHS. Crews are 95% finished with the installation of doors and windows.

dents and staff of CHS tirelessly each day. Principal Hadnot has 22 years in education, serving as a teacher, coach, campus administrator, and now principal. The district had the pleasure of surprising Principal Hadnot with the announcement on March 18. He will be honored at a banquet in April celebrat-

ing all the Principals of the Year in the greater Houston region.

CROSBY HIGH ALUM PJ HAGGERTY SHINES IN MARCH MADNESS

We love to share great news about our alumni.

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 7

San Jacinto River Residents Score Victory Against Dredging

Corps orders stop in Dredging and Barge fleeing

By Jackie Medcalf
THEA Exec. Director

EAST HARRIS COUNTY – Last April, the Army Corps of Engineers approved a permit to remove the rock breakwaters and dredge near the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site to allow a barge company to expand its fleet area. The action came over the objections of local residents and THEA who were concerned that the dredging and in-



crease in barge traffic could release more dioxin and other contaminants into the river and Galveston Bay. Hundreds of residents wrote letters expressing their concerns and we requested an environmental impact study prior to the permit approval and the Corps ignored the community requests.

So we sued. The legal group, Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit on our behalf alleging the agency improperly fast-tracked the permit which ignored community concerns and failed to properly assess the environmental impacts before giving the dredging project the green light.

Now, the community

has won a big victory. In a letter to Holtmar Land, LLC, the company that requested the permit, the Corps directed Holtmar to “to stop all activities previously authorized” under the permit. The Corps said the suspension “is in the public interest because the correct permitting pathway is in question.”

This is not the final decision, but it means the work needs to stop while the Corps considers whether fast-tracking a permit in the area was the appropriate path..

It also means that, since the community, recreational boaters, and businesses all share the

use of the river and the bay, companies and agencies can’t just ignore the concerns of residents.

THEA Submits Comments Opposing Latest Cleanup Plan For Superfund Site.

The EPA is currently considering the plan for cleaning up the Northern Pit of the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site. On February 26, THEA sent comments formally opposing the plan as currently written. The plan is the latest in a series of plans submitted by the companies responsible for the toxic waste site, International

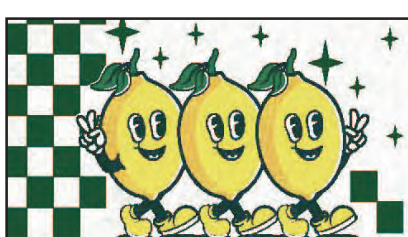
Paper and Waste Management, the parent company of McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation.

After reviewing the hundreds of pages of technical material, THEA informed the EPA that “we find that the design package remains incomplete and lacks critical elements necessary for the comprehensive and effective remediation of the complex site.”

THEA points out in the comments that the Responsible Parties, RPs, agreed to produce a plan

Continued. See SAN JACINTO RIVER DREDGING, Page 6

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Crosby Fire Department seeks volunteers as community growth sparks rising Need,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

program to pay volunteers for hours and expenses.

"It's not a payroll, just a certain amount of funds they can get for reimbursement for their time and being on shift at the fire station. We staff the stations with the stipend program," he said.

The savings allow the department to build out their infrastructure in preparation for growth. Newer stations have to be built bigger to accommodate larger apparatus.

"Many of the new trucks are four to five feet longer when I started 44 years ago," Kulak said. The two new stations can accommodate the new trucks, but the three older stations are too short.

Kulak also said they are about to start a new fire academy and it's not too late for new volunteers to sign up and get trained.

At the banquet, Assistant Chief Russell White was honored for his 40th year of service in the department.

"I can't say enough about him. He is a valuable asset to us in the department and in the community," he said. "I'm really privileged to be on this ride in the fire service with him for so many years. I'm on my 44th year and he's on his 40th. We've been working a lot of projects, and a lot of calls together over the years."

Kulak had nothing but praise for the men and women in his department.

"It takes a big group of people to do this role. I'm really blessed to have a great, great group of dedicated men and women, especially in the officer staff. Those guys do a jam up job and make my job smoother and with their expertise," the chief said.

FIREFIGHTER AWARDS

Firefighter of the Year – Luke Henderson

Rookie of the Year – Luke Henderson

2024 NFFF 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and Walk Top Fundraiser – E/O Don Fender

Officer of the Year – Jacque Darbonne

Public Relations Recognition Award – Warren Thompson

Explorer of the Year – Austin Bearden

40 Year Anniversary – Russell White

10 Year Anniversary – Warren Thompson

5 Year Anniversary – Jacobi Patterson

5 Year Anniversary – David Burns

5 Year Anniversary – John Mire

5 Year Anniversary – Paul Urialez

5 Year Anniversary – Carlos Diaz

5 Year Anniversary – Chris Martinez (not pictured)



Crosby VFD Captains from bottom to top, Casey Ward, Training Captain; Gage White, Station 81 Captain; Miguel Najera, Station 82 Captain; Dakota Ehlenburg, Station 83 Captain; David Burns, Station 84 Captain; and Matt Klein, Station 85 Captain.



Crosby VFD Officers are from left, Row 1, Warren Thompson, District 2 Chief; Alan Kulak, Fire Chief; Row 2, Brian McClanahan, District 1 Chief; Russell White, 1st Assistant Chief; Row 3, Jeff Stillwell, Safety Officer; Cameron Elles, 2nd Assistant Chief; and Row 4, Jacques Darbonne, Fire Marshal.



2024 NFFF 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and Walk Top Fundraiser E/O Don Fender



Officer of the Year – Jacque Darbonne



Public Relations Recognition Award – Warren Thompson



10 Year Anniversary – Warren Thompson



40 Year Anniversary Russell White



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5 Year Anniversary – John Mire

Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Mont Belvieu Easter Bunny Picnic April 12

Saturday, April 12, 2025 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | City Park Amphitheater

Celebrate spring with a day of family fun at the **Easter Bunny Picnic**. Enjoy interactive games, festive activities, and delicious food in a relaxed picnic-style setting. Bring your blankets, baskets, and a sense of adventure for a memorable experience.

Date: Saturday, April 12, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Location: City Park Amphitheater - 10900 Eagle Dr., Mont Belvieu, TX

What to Expect

Meet the Easter Bunny - Stop by the stage for a special photo opportunity.

Outdoor Movie Screening - Snag a spot on the lawn to eat your picnic treats while the film "Peter Rabbit" plays on the big screen.

Easter Egg Hunts - Search for hidden eggs, including special golden eggs.

Games and Activities - Participate in Easter-themed games and challenges to gather eggs.

Food and Refreshments - Choose from a variety of vendors offering picnic-style meals and Easter-themed treats.

Patriots Day Celebration April 21

Monday, April 21, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | City Park

Celebrate our local heroes at the Annual Patriots Day Celebration in collaboration with the Chambers County Veterans Association! Join us for a day filled with military appreciation, thrilling activities, and heartfelt recognition of our service members in and around Chambers County.

Enjoy games and giveaways for all ages, explore military vehicles at the touch-a-truck exhibit, get up close with local emergency response vehicles from Mont Belvieu Police & Fire Departments, and experience the excitement when a helicopter touches down at the stage field.

You have your marching orders! See you at the park on April 21st!

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

Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia Announces Retirement at End of Current Term

CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS - Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia has announced that he will retire at the conclusion of his current term, which ends on December 31, 2026. Judge Sylvia's retirement will mark the end of a distinguished 34-year career in public service, including 30 years as County Judge and four years as County Commissioner.

A lifelong resident of Old River, Judge Sylvia is a graduate of Barbers Hill High School and Sam Houston State University. He began his public service career in 1993 when he was elected Chambers County Commissioner for Precinct 3. In 1997, he was appointed County Judge following the untimely passing of Judge Oscar Nelson. He was subsequently elected to the position in 1998 and is currently halfway through his seventh consecutive four-year term.

Under Judge Sylvia's leadership, Chambers County has experienced significant growth, more than doubling in population from approximately 25,000 to 56,000 resi-



Jude Jimmy Sylvia

dents. The number of county employees has also increased from 300 to 650 to meet the evolving needs of the community. The county budget has grown from \$8.5 million in 1993 to \$75.7 million today, reflecting the expansion of services and infrastructure investments.

"Serving this County has been one of the greatest honors of my life," said Judge Sylvia. "Second only to being a husband, father, and grandfather."

Judge Sylvia expressed his gratitude to the people of Chambers County for their trust and support over the past three decades.

"I am thankful that the people of Chambers County have put their trust in

me for the past three decades, and I am proud of what we, as a County and a people, have accomplished," he said. While he acknowledges the bittersweet nature of his retirement, Judge Sylvia looks forward to spending more time with his family.

"I have worked every day to leave the County a better place than I found it, and I am confident that we have paved a foundation for continued positive growth," he said.

Judge Sylvia's leadership has played a crucial role in shaping Chambers County's progress, and his dedication to public service will leave a lasting impact on the community.

Bay Area Rehabilitation Center Hoping Medicaid Cuts don't Affect Them

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The Bay Area Rehabilitation Center, 5313 Decker in Baytown, has a lot going for them with their numerous programs invested in the community. They also have another valuable tool in their toolbox—experience. For 76 years, established in 1948, they have offered their services to individuals with disability or injury in and around the Baytown-Highlands-Crosby areas all the way to Beaumont.

Kimberly Watson, executive director for BAR, was at the Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon last Thursday to explain the various programs offered by the center.

"We have outpatient services which is speech for individuals with disability or injury, an aquatic therapy pool inside of our facility that is heated, a spa, and an early childhood intervention for those individuals from birth to three with developmental disabilities and or autism," she said.

They also have an Opportunity Center program that serves those individuals with disabilities that want to learn how to get job skills, reading, and literacy.

"We have a motor lab for



Anthony Hernandez and JT Hernandez (no relation) listen intently as their boss Kimberly Watson is introduced and prepares to speak to the Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce.



JT Hernandez, a client and employee at the Bay Area Rehabilitation Center, speaks about his personal experiences to the Highlands-Lynchburg Area Chamber of Commerce. The program is supported by Medicaid and is concerned about their future.

those who find motor skills a necessity," she said.

Last weekend, they hosted a community garage sale with proceeds designated for the Opportunity Center and its services for those clients.

"We'll have another

fundraiser on April 12th. It's an Easter egg hunt for anybody in the community, but it's geared towards those with individual disability," she said. Some of the eggs beep for those who are blind, and some are fuzzy for those that have

sensitivity to touch. They will also have an Easter bunny, a train, food, DJ, and more.

JT Hernandez was with Watson and spoke on how the center has impacted his life for the better.

"It makes me think of other people that are less fortunate too because for me, I'm fortunate enough to wake up in the morning, do my normal struggles with life, and then go to work there and help them however I can," he told chamber members. Hernandez has been a client since October of 2007.

"I sit back and most importantly, give credit to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who blessed me with this job," he said.

He offers his perspective to newer clients who are still experiencing some difficulties. Some days he's cutting grass, others he doesn't know what's coming next.

"That's what I like about this job. I never know what I'll experience the next day," he said.

Anthony Hernandez spends some of his time drawing signs for the garage sale or other events the organization needs.

"I also make necklaces and help around the facility however I can," he said.

Watson has personally witnessed unbelievable acts.

"Miracles happen there. I have witnessed so many things with people coming in unable to walk, and then walk out and our clients get good jobs in the community," she said.

Watson is hoping for yet another miracle in funding.

"Everyone has been watching the news about Medicaid. At least 50 percent of our funding is Medicaid, so we are very nervous. It would affect us tremendously and that's really why we're having little fundraisers," she said.

Watson estimated it is about \$660 million Texas is not talking about picking up.

"That would be detrimental to our program and a lot of other programs under that umbrella," she said.

Clients with occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy could be left out of the loop.

Watson said they combine grants, insurance, and private donations to make up the remaining portion.

"We have a contract with Health and Human Services for early childhood intervention," she said that helps.

"We're staying focused on the mission to provide services to the community," she said and will hope that they don't fall on the cutting block.

Family of Goose Creek CISD student killed in Baytown Playground Seeks Charges Against Suspect's Parents

BAYTOWN, Texas — The family of the teen shot and killed on an apartment complex playground in Baytown say they want the suspected shooter's parents to be charged as well.

Anaya Zachary, 14, died on Friday after Baytown police say she was shot in the 4600 block of Village Lane at about 4 p.m. by a fellow Goose Creek CISD student.

The male student, who has not been identified because he is a juvenile, has been charged with murder and is in custody at the Harris County Juvenile



Anaya Zachary, 14

Detention Center, according to police.

Police say they believe there was an altercation of some sort between Anaya and the suspected male shooter earlier in the day.

Anaya's family said they learned the incident happened on the bus. After the male student was dropped off, Janet Zachary said she was told he went home, put on a mask, and showed up to the complex where Anaya lived on Village Lane with a gun.

"She tried to turn around and run and he shot her twice in the back

and then when she fell, he shot her two more times," Janet said.

The medical examiner determined her death to be a homicide, noting that she had gunshot wounds to her torso and her right arm.

Janet is the 14-year-old's cousin. She said they brought Anaya to Baytown from Opelousas, Louisiana, for a better life.

"As hurtful as it is for us, her mother, who lives in Louisiana, we had to send her child back in a body bag," Janet said.

Janet said the male student's parents should face

consequences as it relates to the gun.

"That little boy didn't go purchase that gun," Janet said. "That little boy didn't go next door and get the gun. He didn't get the gun off the bus. For him to go home and get it, he knew it was there."

Baytown police said it has not been determined if the parents will be charged.

A memorial has been set up for Anaya on the playground where she was killed. Family says her body was returned to Louisiana for a funeral.

★ OPINION PAGE ★

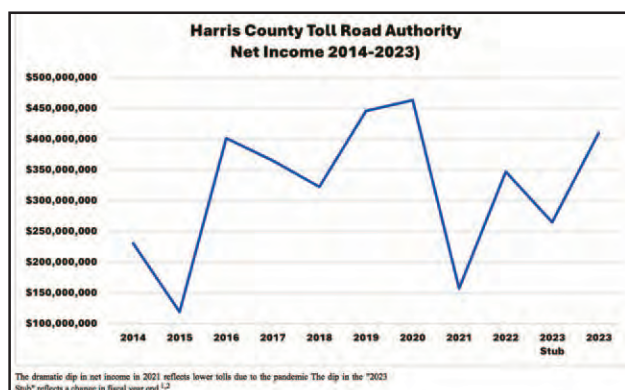
★ **OPINION**

By **BILL KING**



Toll Roads have become a Cash Cow for Harris County

Harris County toll roads are very profitable. Over the last decade, the toll revenue has grown from \$610 million annually to \$896 million, a 47% increase. Because the expenses for the toll roads are mostly fixed, the net income from them has soared, growing by 78% (\$230 million \$410 million). The cumulative profit over the last decade was just over \$3.5 billion.



The dramatic dip in net income in 2021 reflects lower tolls due to the pandemic. The dip in the "2023 Stub" reflects a change in fiscal year end.^{1,2}

Texas law provides that excess income from tolls must be used for "the study, design, construction, maintenance, repair, or operation of roads, streets, highways, or other related facilities." Using this authority Harris County annually transfers funds to its treasury. The transfers are included in the County's general fund but are shown as "restricted" since they are supposed to only be used for transportation projects. In the County's audits these restricted funds are referred to as the Mobility Fund. Over the last decade the County has transferred under \$2.2 from HCTRA.

As you can see, the transfers have been dramatically ramped up since the Democrats gained control of Commissioner's Court. From 2014-2018, the Court transferred 44% of HCTRA's net income. Since 2019 it has transferred 75%. I do not offer that observation as a criticism because I generally do not favor governmental entities hoarding funds, especially when we have pressing infrastructure needs. However, it does raise the question of why, in the face of this surge in toll revenues, the County needs to raise property taxes by the 8% currently being discussed. I also worry whether transferring such a large portion of the toll roads' income is prudent in the long term.

The other question the transfers raise in my mind is exactly how the mobility funds are actually being spent. The state law provides that the County may transfer excess funds "without state approval, supervision, or regulation." So, there is virtually no state oversight.

I have not been able to find much public information on how the funds are being spent. Harris County's monthly financial reports provide some general information about the transfers and expenditures. For example, as of **last month**, the County had spent about \$174 million from the mobility fund this year and had \$385 million on hand. But the expenses are shown in general categories such as "salaries" and "services and other" which are not particularly helpful in know how the money is being spent.

I was able to dig up a **Harris County Auditor report from December, 2022**. It found some documentation issues but concluded that "expenditures paid from the Harris County Mobility Fund generally complied with the Texas Transportation Code." (Emphasis added.)

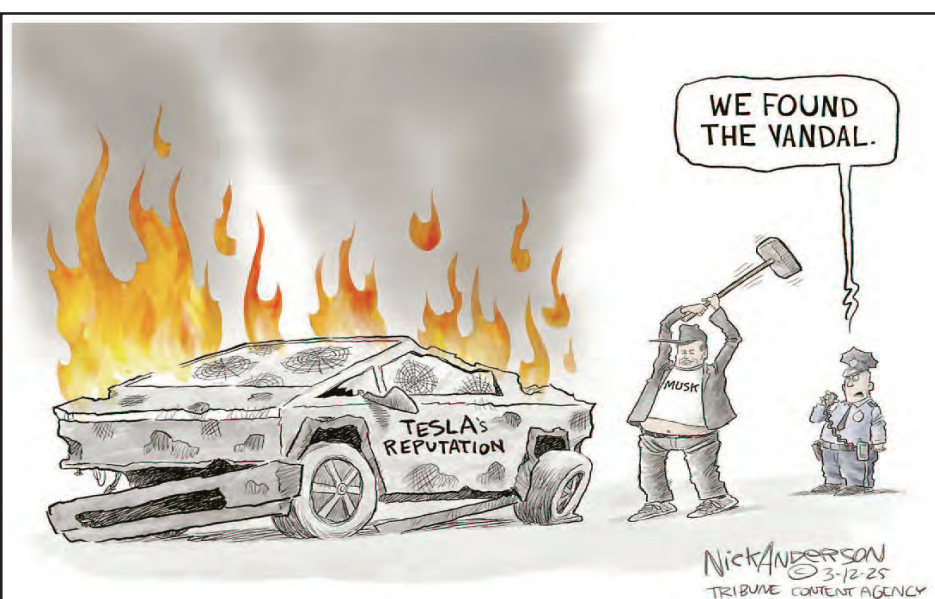
The combination of the ambiguous definition of how the transfers can be spent, the lack of state oversight, the relatively little transparency on how the funds are currently being spent and the County Auditor's qualification that the County's expenditures "generally" complied with state law, gives me some concern about how these funds are actually being spent.

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.

Americanisms

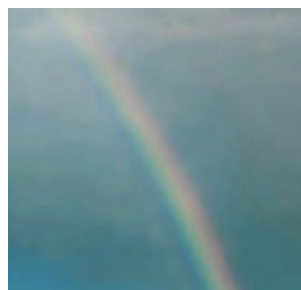
"I've failed over and over in my life, and that is why I succeeded."
— Michael Jordan

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★ **THE POSTSCRIPT**
By **Carrie Classon**

The Tornado



My friend Wally and I have a fractious relationship. This is no secret.

Wally has said he thinks optimistic people like me are self-deluded, always looking for reasons to be happy when there is a lot to worry about and not much to celebrate.

Wally used the metaphor of a tornado. He said that people like me would be down in the storm shelter—right beside him—but would ignore the destruction the tornado left behind.

"Do perpetually positive people even hear themselves?" he asked. "How nice that must be! To see the world in ways it might or should be while ignoring how it is. To look for the rainbow while ignoring the flood!"

Wally got me so irritated that I wrote a whole book about a character he inspired. Since I didn't figure I could ever change Wally's mind, I wanted to create someone, just like Wally, who believed he had the world's worst luck and that looking for things to be grateful for was an act of willful ignorance.

I wrote the book, and I shared it with Wally, and—to his credit and my astonishment—he wasn't angry with my depiction of him at all. He was tickled that something he'd said inspired me.

Wally keeps on inspiring me. He has some interesting observations about life and thoughts about how optimism might fall short. It's taken me much longer than it should have to realize that Wally makes some very good points.

Optimism can be clumsy. It can be ham-fisted. Disappointment and grief and setbacks and bad news and failures are all very real things, and the optimist's impulse is to sweep them under the rug in record time.

"Where is the upside? What is the lesson? How can I learn from all this?" the optimist asks, and Wally gets a little angry. And maybe he has a right to. Because somewhere, between the time when the tornado strikes and the optimist goes looking for the rainbow, maybe there is a moment that optimists, like me, tend to forget.

We forget to say we're sorry. Wally is worried about his future and the future of his children and grandchildren. When I tell him all this worrying isn't getting much done, he gets angry and, really, I don't blame him. Because I skipped a step. I skipped the step between the tornado and the rainbow.

Today, for a change, I remembered. "Oh, Wally," I said, "You always seem to think I'm scolding you when I try to cheer you and encourage you. I care about you. Do you not get that? I worry about you, and I want you to be happy."

"Thank you," Wally said. "Thank you so much."

And I realized that he really didn't know this. I get impatient with Wally's ruminating and doomsaying and daily dose of gloom. I want to remind him of all the things he has to be grateful for.

But I forget to tell him that I care. I forget to say I'm sorry he is troubled. I don't acknowledge how he feels. I jump right from the tornado to the rainbow.

I'm pretty sure Wally will regularly irritate me, and I will do the same for him. And yet I don't think he will ever be out of my life for good.

Because I will continue to remind him that things might not be as bad as he assumes. And Wally will remind me, in my endless quest for sunshine, it's important to recognize the hurt and fear that come with the tornado.

Till next time,
Carrie

★ **STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS**

By **Gary Borders**



Texas Farmers Concerned Over Growing trade War

Texas farmers are voicing growing concerns about tariffs being enacted by President Trump adversely affecting their ability to sell agricultural goods overseas, the Houston Chronicle reported. Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening said the tariffs could be especially tough on younger farmers.

"We understand that's his negotiating tool, but at the same time tariffs can be hard on agriculture," he said. "If you're in a good spot you can withstand this, but you worry about the producer who has only been in this for five or 10 years and doesn't have a lot of equity built up. Those are the operations that could be in trouble."

Drought and low commodity prices are already taking a toll on agricultural revenue. Cotton sank to its lowest price in four years this month after China announced a 15% retaliatory tariff on several U.S. agricultural goods. China, the largest purchaser of grain sorghum in the world, has almost completely stopped buying the crop from Texas farmers, Boening said.

Farmers are hopeful the Trump administration will provide federal relief as occurred during his first term. Voters in counties dominated by farms and ranches voted for Trump by 77.7%, the Chronicle reported.

DUST STORM IN PANHANDLE CAUSES FATAL CRASHES, FANS WILDFIRES

A dust storm that swept across the U.S. last week caused a number of deadly crashes and fanned dozens of wildfires, The Dallas Morning News reported. Three people were killed Friday in car crashes in the Texas Panhandle. One dust storm in Amarillo County caused a crash involving an estimated 38 vehicles.

"It's the worst I've ever seen," said Sgt. Cindy Barkley of the Texas Department of Public Safety. "We couldn't tell that they were all together until the dust kind of settled."

As of Sunday, The Texas A&M Forest Service reported eight active wildfires. The largest was the Windmill Fire in Roberts County in the Panhandle. It covered 23,000



acres and was just 50% contained. A total of 130 counties have burn bans in place.

BILL FILED TO CLARIFY STATE'S ABORTION BAN

The author of the bill that essentially outlawed abortions in Texas has filed a bill that would give doctors more latitude to end pregnancies during medical emergencies, the Austin American-Statesman reported. The bill, sponsored by state Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola, would remove language in the abortion ban that required pregnant women to have a "life-threatening condition" before doctors could legally induce an abortion.

The bill would also clarify that women in Texas can access abortions if they are at risk of a "substantial loss of a major bodily function," such as their fertility. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick last week designated Hughes' bill as a priority, increasing the chances it will pass. An identical bill has been filed in House by state Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth.

The abortion ban authored by Hughes passed the Legislature and was signed into law in 2021.

"Our medical communities are desperate for relief and protection ... so that they can practice reasonable medical judgment in the face of pregnancy complications," state Rep. Ann Johnson, D-Houston, said. "This bill goes a long way to putting doctors back in the position of acting immediately."

TEXAS CONTINUES TO LEAD NATION IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Lone Star State is known for its oil and gas in-

dustry, but information from the U.S. Energy Information Administration and reported by the San Antonio Express-News indicates the state's lead in solar and wind power increased in 2024.

However, natural gas continues to dominate electric generation both in Texas and across the nation at 43.3% of the country's electricity last year, while the use of coal continues to decline, down to 15.2% from 16.1% in 2023.

Coal-fired plants continue to close across the state and country, largely because they are more expensive to operate. There are 15 active coal plants in Texas, down from 20 a decade ago.

Texas generated 169,442 gigawatt-hours from wind and solar in 2024, nearly double that of California, which generated 92,316 gigawatt-hours from those resources. Iowa ranks a distant third, almost all from wind power.

"Texas is the most innovative, most interesting market, and clean energy is thriving because it makes sense economically," said Ric O'Connell, executive director of GridLab, a nonprofit that does technical analysis for regulators and renewable power advocates.

MEASLES OUTBREAK CONTINUES TO SPREAD

The Texas measles outbreak has now, in less than three months in 2025, surpassed the total number of cases in any full year since 1992, The News reported. A total of 259 cases have been reported, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, primarily in West Texas. The outbreak began in Gaines County, near the New Mexico border, which has reported 174 cases and one fatality — a school-age, unvaccinated child.

Four new cases were reported last week in Lamar County, 100 miles northeast of Dallas. Health officials said the four infected patients were not vaccinated and had traveled to Gaines County.

Measles is considered one of the most contagious viruses in the world and can spread rapidly among unvaccinated people.

FOUR TEXAS COUNTIES AMONG FASTEST GROWING IN U.S.

Census figures released last week show that Kaufman County, east of Dallas, was the fastest-growing county in the state and second-fastest growing in the country, The Texas Tribune reported. The number of people living in that county grew by more than 50,000 residents from 2020 to 2024. More than half the county's residents are commuters to jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"I do think a lot of people are attracted to that small town vibe," Kaufman Mayor Jeff Jordan said. "You're getting people that appreciate that and want to be a part of it."

Of the 10 counties in the U.S. that grew the fastest between 2023 and 2024, four were in Texas: Kaufman, Liberty, Montgomery and Caldwell counties.

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Nicole Kidman stars in "Holland."

"Holland"

"I'm Still Here" (PG-13) — To finish out the last of this year's award season darlings, this Brazilian political-biographical film was nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars...

"Running Point" (TV-MA) — This sports-comedy series led by Kate Hudson ("Glass Onion:

Knives Out") was such a success after its February release that it has already been renewed for a second season by Netflix. After her older brother, Cam (Justin Theroux), steps down as the president of their family business following a car accident, Isla (Hudson) is appointed as the new president of the Los Angeles Waves basketball team...

"Holland" (R) — Following the heels of her "Babygirl" campaign that unfortunately fell under the radar during award

season, Nicole Kidman stars in this new mystery thriller, opposite Matthew Macfadyen ("Succession"). Kidman and Macfadyen play the Vandergroots, who appear to be your usual suburbanites raising a child in the midwestern town of Holland, Michigan. But as Nancy's (Kidman) picture-perfect life begins to wrinkle due to a suspicion about her husband living a double life, she enlists the help of her friend, Dave (Gael Garcia Bernal), to get to the bottom of the situation.

"The Parenting" (R) — This campy horror film out now has such an incredible ensemble cast that one would expect it to be a sleeper hit, but its cringey plot and dialogue can only take these actors' performances so far. Nik Dodani ("Murphy Brown") and Brandon Flynn ("13 Reasons Why") respectively play Rohan and Josh, a young couple who plan a getaway to a country house so that they can introduce each other to their parents. Thinking that awkward moments with the in-laws will be the worst of their problems, Rohan and Josh are shocked to find out that their rental is, in fact, haunted by a 400-year-old evil entity.

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HOLLYWOOD by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Leonardo DiCaprio has been absent from big screens since "Killers of the Flower Moon," which was an artistic success but a box-office disappointment. However, 50-year-old DiCaprio has just completed "One Battle After Another," opposite Oscar winners Regina Hall, Sean Penn, and Benicio del Toro. It's scheduled to open on Aug. 8.

Brad Pitt wrapped the American sports action drama "F1," featuring the Formula One World Championship, and it opens on June 27. Pitt then jumped right into the action-adventure film "Heart of the Beast," which is about a former Army Special Forces soldier and his retired combat dog who fight for survival after crashing deep in the Alaskan Wilderness. Pitt still doing action/survival films at 61 says a lot about the gene pool that he came from.

George Clooney's next film is the Netflix coming-of-age comedy "Jay Kelly," with Adam Sandler, Laura Dern, Billy Crudup, Riley Keough, Jim Broadbent, Isla Fisher and Greta Gerwig.

As soon as Julia Roberts wrapped the thriller "After the Hunt" (due on Oct. 10), with Andrew Garfield and Chloe Sevigny, she jumped right into filming the thriller "Panic Carefully," with Elizabeth Olsen, Eddie Redmayne, Brian Tyree Henry, and Ben Chaplin.

Mark Wahlberg, who is approaching 54 years old, is still going full speed ahead. He shot "Flight Risk" in Las Vegas with Michelle Dockery and Topher Grace, which was directed by Mel Gibson (whose last film "Hackaw Ridge" earned six Oscar nominations and won two statues). Wahlberg then headed down under to Sydney to shoot "Play Dirty" with Dermot Mulroney, Tony Shalhoub, and Keegan-Michael Key for Amazon MGM Studios.

He loved it so much that he stayed on to shoot another film — the Amazon MGM action comedy "Balls Up," with Molly Shannon and Benjamin Bratt.



Leonardo DiCaprio in "Killers of the Flower Moon".

Is this the end of an era? Founded in 1915, Technicolor was used by Walt Disney for "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937), by MGM for "The Wizard of Oz" (1939), and by David O. Selznick for "Gone with the Wind" (1939), to name a few classics. The company recently notified its customers and employees that they're facing "severe financial challenges" and are anticipating closings and layoffs. It may mean that the upcoming "Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning" might be one of the last films ever in glorious Technicolor!

Dwayne Johnson must have been disappointed by his Christmas movie "Red One," with Chris Evans, Lucy Liu, Nick Kroll and J.K. Simmons. It only recouped \$185.9 million of its \$250 million cost. But the animated "Moana 2" must have cheered him up with its \$1.05 billion grosses. Next, he's got "The Smashing Machine" with Emily Blunt opening later this year and the live-action "Moana" due in July 2026. Guess his biggest challenge these days is wrestling with how to spend his estimated \$800 million net worth!

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps



by BUD BLAKE



The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Weekly SUDOKU grid and instructions. Includes difficulty level: Moderate to Challenging.

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

Trivia Test Answers: 1. The Himalayas; 2. "Gone With the Wind"; 3. Neptune; 4. The National Archives; 5. A conspiracy; 6. Baltimore; 7. Indonesia; 8. Title character in "Oliver Twist"; 9. Rembrandt; 10. Cold-blooded.

March 24, 2025 Posting Date

King Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues. Includes clues like 'Menagerie', 'Embedded spies', 'Frontline' airer, etc.

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. GEOGRAPHY: Mount Everest is part of which mountain range?
2. MOVIES: Which color film was the first to win an Academy Award for Best Picture?
3. ASTRONOMY: Which planet in our solar system is believed to be the windiest?
4. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Where is the U.S. Constitution stored?
5. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of lemurs called?
6. TELEVISION: Which city is the setting for the dramatic series "The Wire"?
7. GEOLOGY: Which country has the most active volcanoes?
8. LITERATURE: Which character in a Charles Dickens novel famously said, "Please, sir, I want some more"?
9. ART: Which Dutch artist is considered a master of light and shadow, creating dramatic effects in paintings?
10. SCIENCE: What is an ectothermic animal?

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BASEBALL SEASON OPENS:

New-Look Astros seek 9th straight trip to Playoffs; Can Anyone beat the defending champ Dodgers?

Opening Day to kick off another baseball season is one of the best days of the year if you are a true-blue baseball fan like myself.

Life begins again on Thursday as 28 of the 30 teams will begin their quests to replace the Dodgers as World Series champions. (It should be noted the 2025 season officially started March 18-19 in Tokyo when the defending World Series champion Dodgers played the Chicago Cubs in a two-game series)

The Astros will be one of those contenders when they host the New York Mets at newly-named Daikin Park at 3:10 p.m. Thanks to my recent retirement from Aldine ISD after 27 years in the Communications Department, I will be there with friends to watch Game No. 1 of 162. I can't wait!

There's nothing like Opening Day. The feeling of hope permeates the air for fans of their favorite teams from Houston, to Detroit, to Atlanta, to New York and points along the way.

Over the last 10 years, Astro fans have witnessed the Golden Era of Houston baseball. The Astros have won two World Series titles (2017 and 2022), four American League championships (2017, 2019, 2021 and 2022), six AL West titles and have made the playoffs nine of the last 10 years.

That's pretty impressive. And they've done it with three managers, A.J. Hinch, Dusty Baker and current skipper Joe Espada.

The 2025 season will see a lot of new faces and one very familiar face who may be playing a new position.

So, what's in store for our Astros in 2025?

Change, a lot of change, but a lot of optimism.

Gone is long-time third baseman Alex Bregman, who signed as a free agent with the Boston Red Sox, pitcher Justin Verlander, who signed as a free agent with the San Francisco Giants, right fielder Justin Tucker, who was traded to the Chicago Cubs for three players (more on those acquisitions later) and reliever Ryan Presley, who was also traded to the Cubs in a separate deal.

Joining the Astros this season will be third baseman



Isaac Parades, who was acquired in the Tucker deal from the Cubs and will take over at third base. Parades is 25 and has a lot of potential. He struggled with the Cubs after he was traded from Tampa Bay last year, but if he regains his 2023 form (31 home runs, 98 RBIs), the Astros should be in good shape at third base. He's not the defensive player that Bregman is, but not many are. Bregman is a Gold Glove winner, but at 30 are his best days behind him? I guess we shall find out.

The Astros also acquired a possible starting pitcher from the Cubs in 26-year-old Hayden Wesneski (3-6, 3.86 ERA) in '24 with the Cubs. Wesneski could become the fifth starter in the rotation. But the gem of the trade with Chicago could be 22-year-old third baseman Cam Smith. Smith was outstanding in Grapefruit action, but he's never played at the major league level. Houston worked him in right field during the spring to see if he could handle the job. The Houston outfield is very unsettled entering the '25 season, so much so that the team is considering moving its franchise player, Jose Altuve (.295 average, 20 HRs, 65 RBIs in '24) from second base to left field. If the move works, that would allow Yordan Alvarez (.299, 35 HRs, 86 RBIs) to pretty much serve as the full-time designated hitter.

The Astros also filled a huge void at first base with the signing of former Arizona Diamondback first baseman Christian Walker (.251, 26 HRs, 84 RBIs in '24). Walker is a solid all around first baseman and should give the lineup a boost with his power.

The Astros have a young catcher who can hit in Yanier Diaz (.299, 16 HRs, 54 RBIs in '24) and his improved defense is another big plus for the team. He also works well with the pitching staff, which is key for the position.

Speaking of pitching, the Astros starting rotation will be led by 31-year-old veteran left hander Framber Valdez (15-7, 2.91 ERA), who will be making his fourth straight Opening Day start against the Mets.

Valdez will lead a young but promising rotation. Hunter Brown (11-9, 3.49 ERA) had a breakout year in 2024 and could be in for a big year. If Lance McCullers is able to return at some point of the season (he hasn't pitched since Game 3 of the 2022 World Series due to elbow issues), that will only bolster the rotation. The back-end of the bullpen is solid with closer Josh Hader (34 saves, 3.80 ERA) and set-up man Bryan Abreu. Espada needs to find some capable arms to get to those two and don't be surprised if GM Dana Brown makes a trade to shore up the pen at some point this season.

The Astros should be the team to beat in the AL West, but they will get a strong challenge from Seattle (85-77 in '24) and the Texas Rangers, who are two years removed from winning the World Series.

Seattle has best starting rotation in the division led by Logan Gilbert (9-12, 3.23 ERA, 220 strikeouts), George Kirby (14-11, 3.53 ERA, 179 Ks) and Luis Castillo (11-12, 3.64 ERA, 175 Ks) and a solid closer in Adres Munoz (22 saves). The Mariner aren't an offensive juggernaut and did little to address that issue in the offseason. They will be led by budding superstar centerfielder Julio Rodriguez (.273, 20 HRs, 68 RBIs) and catcher Cal Raleigh (34 HRs, 100 RBIs).

The Rangers were decimated by injuries in 2023 and fell to 78-84. Look for them to bounce back this year behind second baseman Marcus Semien (.273, 23 HRs, 74 RBIs), shortstop Corey Seager (.278, 30 HRs, 74 RBIs), outfielder Adolis Garcia

(25 HRs, 85 RBIs) and second-year outfielder Wyatt Langford (.253, 16 HRs, 74 RBIs, 19 stolen bases). Langford is one of the best young players in baseball and could be in for a big year in Arlington. Pitching will be the key to the Rangers success in 2025 and they are already down two starters. Manager Bruce Bochy is hoping for a big year from seasoned vet Jacob deGroot.

In the AL East, the Yankees (94-68) are the team to beat and are the defending AL champs. They have one of the best players in baseball in reigning MVP Aaron Judge (.322, 58 HRs, 144 RBIs). NY lost a key piece of its offense when Juan Soto (.288, 41 HRs, 109 RBIs) signed with the cross-town Mets. The Yanks also have starting pitching issues as Gerrit Cole (8-5, 3.41 ERA) is out for the year with Tommy John surgery and last year's Rookie of the Year, Luis Gill (15-7, 3.50 ERA, 171 Ks) is out at least three months with an elbow injury. The Yankees acquired Max Fried (11-10, 3.25 ERA, 166 Ks) from the Braves. He and Carlos Rondon (16-9, 3.96 ERA) will have to be the bell cows in the rotation until help arrives.

Baltimore (91-71) appears to be the most complete team in the division. They are young and talented led by catcher Adley Rutschman (.250, 19 HRs, 79 RBIs) and shortstop Gunner Henderson (.281, 7 HRs, 37 RBIs, 118 runs scored). Grayson Rodriguez (13-4, 3.56) will lead the starting rotation.

Toronto will go as far as first baseman Vladimir Guerrero (.323, 30 HRs, 103 RBIs) takes them. The Blue Jays need a big bounce back year from shortstop Bo Bichette (.225, 4 HRs, 31 RBIs in just 81 games). Boston will look to Bregman (.260, 26 HRs, 75 RBIs) to move to second base to keep third baseman Rafael Devers (.272, 28 HRs, 83 RBIs). I don't think the BoSox have the starting pitching to contend with New York and Baltimore.

The AL Central should be competitive with division-winner Cleveland (92-69) and the surprising Detroit Tigers battling for the division crown. The Indians will once again be led by third baseman Jose Ramirez (.279, 39 HRs, 118 RBIs). Former Astros manager A.J. Hinch worked his magic once again in leading the Tigers (86-76) to a Wild Card berth and a sweep of his former team in the first round of the playoffs. Detroit

has perhaps the best pitcher in the AL in Cy Young winner Tarik Skubal (18-4, 2.39 ERA, 228 Ks, best in the AL). They have a nice, young team led by left fielder Riley Green (.262, 24 HRs, 74 RBIs).

In the National League, everyone will be chasing the defending World Series champs the Dodgers. LA has the best player in baseball in DH and reigning NL MVP Shotei Ohtani (.310, 54 HRs, 130 RBIs, 59 stolen bases). This is a loaded team with first baseman Freddie Freeman (.282, 22 HRs, 89 RBIs) the WS MVP, shortstop Mookie Betts (.289, 19 HRs, 79 RBIs, 16 SBs) and left fielder Tescor Hernandez (.272, 33 HRs, 99 RBIs). The starting pitching is also solid with the addition of former Cy Young winner Blake Snell and holdover starters Tyler Glasnow (9-6, 3.49 ERA) and Yoshinobu Yamamoto (9-6, 3.49 ERA).

San Diego (93-69) could give LA a run for its money in the NL West. The Padres have a solid everyday lineup led by third baseman Manny Machado (.275, 29 HRs, 105 RBIs), right fielder Fernando Tatis Jr. (.276, 21 HRs, 49 RBIs) and outfielder Jackson Merrill (.292, 24 HRs, 90 RBIs). The starting rotation is solid led by Dylan Cease (14-11, 3.47 ERA, 224 Ks) and Michael King (13-9, 2.95 ERA, 201 Ks). They also have a big-time closer in Robert Suarez (36 saves).

Arizona (89-73) could be in line for a Wild Card spot thanks to second baseman Katel Marte (.292, 36 HRs, 95 RBIs), third baseman Eugenio Suarez (.256, 30 HRs, 101 RBIs) and center fielder Corbin Carroll (22 HRs, 74 RBI, league leading 14 triples). The starting rotation is solid with the addition of Corbin Burns (15-9, 2.92, 181 Ks with Baltimore last year) and hold over Zac Gallen (14-6, 3.65, 126 Ks).

The Phillies (95-67) have perhaps the most complete team in the NL East led by first baseman Bryce Harper (.285, 30 HRs, 87 RBI), shortstop .295, 21 HRs, 68 RBIs) and DH Kyle Schwarber (38 HRs, 104 RBIs). Philly also has a strong starting rotation led by Zack Wheeler (16-7, 2.57 ERA, 224 Ks) and Aaron Nola (14-8, 3.57 ERA, 197 Ks).

The New York Mets (89-73) were one of the surprise teams in baseball in '24, going all the way to the NL Championship series where they fell to the Dodgers in six games. They are

hoping Soto will be the missing piece to an offense that also features first baseman Pete Alonso (34 HRs, 88 RBIs) and shortstop Francisco Lindor (.273, 33 HRs, 91 RBIs).

Look for the Atlanta Braves (89-73) to bounce back after injuries derailed them a year ago. The Braves have a potent offense led by third baseman Austin Riley (.256, 19 HRs, 56 RBIs in 110 games), first baseman Matt Olsen (29 HRs, 98 RBIs) and right fielder Ronald Acuna, who played in just 49 games after sustaining another knee injury. When healthy, Acuna is one of the best players in all of baseball. Chris Sale, (18-3, 2.38 ERA, 225 Ks) the '24 NL Cy Young Award winner, will lead the starting rotation and closer Raisel Iglesias (34 save) will handle close things out.

The Milwaukee Brewers (93-69) should be the class of a weak NL Central. Budding superstar outfielder Jackson Chourio (.275, 21 HRs, 79 RBIs, 22 SBs) could have a breakout season. The starting rotation will be led by Freddy Peralta (11-9, 3.68 ERA) and Colin Rea (12-6, 4.29 ERA).

The Cubs are hoping Tucker (.289, 23 HRs, 49 RBIs in just 78 games) bounces back to his 2023 form when he hit .284, had 39 HRs, 112 RBIs and 30 stolen bases. Chicago will count on Shota Imanaga (15-3, 2.91 ERA, 174 Ks) and Justin Steele (5-5, 3.07 RBI) to have big years as starters.

So, without further ado, here are one man's picks for the 2025 season:

- AL WEST - ASTROS
- AL EAST - BALTIMORE
- AL CENTRAL - DETROIT
- AL WILD CARDS - CLEVELAND, SEATTLE AND NEW YORK
- AL CHAMPIONSHIP - HOUSTON OVER BALTIMORE
- NL WEST - LOS ANGELES
- NL EAST - PHILADELPHIA
- NL CENTRAL - MILWAUKEE
- NL WILD CARDS - ARIZONA, SAN DIEGO, NEW YORK
- NL CHAMPIONSHIP - LOS ANGELES OVER PHILADELPHIA
- WORLD SERIES - LOS ANGELES OVER HOUSTON

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San Jacinto River Dredging,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nearly seven years ago and still haven't produced an acceptable final document. As THEA states, Given these significant concerns, we do not support the revised 100% RD as a complete design package. We urge the EPA to use the agency's legal authority granted under CERCLA to expeditiously remediate this site for the sake of efficiency and protection of the community and the environment. We appreciate the EPA's ongoing efforts to remediate the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site but the process has been allowed to stall for far too long.

Highlands Environmental Health Gets National Focus

Highlands residents have been alarmed about the number of family members and friends who have bat-

tered cancer. Sometimes it seems like their concerns fall on deaf ears. On March 6th, the national Environmental Health Network published a video op-ed we produced to call attention to the cumulative impact of environmental problems on the people of Highlands.

Investigative Series Focuses On San Jac Area Communities

The area is also coming under the investigative spotlight thanks to a podcast series produced by Public Health Watch. The group is launching a four-part series about the high cost community members pay for the unchecked environmental problems near Channelview and Highlands.

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Crosby High Students to Benefit from New Classrooms and Labs,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Crosby High School Class of 2022 graduate, PJ Haggerty, played in his first-ever March Madness game on Friday, March 21. In his time at CHS, PJ was part of the boys basketball team that made it to the regional finals in 2022, a first in more than 40 years. PJ's stats are incredible at the collegiate level! He averaged 21.8 points per game, the most of any player in the NCAA Tournament, and he recently scored a career-high 42 points for Memphis during the American Athletic Conference quarterfinal game. Memphis faced Colorado State in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, and even though Memphis didn't move forward, we are so proud to see what PJ accomplished this season. We'll be cheering you on next year.

CROSBY GIRLS SOCCER TEAM ADVANCES IN PLAYOFFS

The Crosby High School girls soccer team remains undefeated heading into the second round of the playoffs. The Lady Cougars ended the regular season with an 11-0-1 record, including no losses in district. They defeated College Station 2-1 on Thursday, March 20, to become Bi-District Champions and move to the Area round of the playoffs. It was an amazing finish with the game-winning goal coming in the last 10 seconds of the match by senior Jasmine Gaytan. Way to go!

CROSBY HIGH THEATRE EXCELS IN ONE ACT PLAY CONTEST

The Crosby High School Theatre Arts students advanced from the first round in the One Act Play contest. Their performance of "The King Stag" was tremendous on March 19, winning the following accolades: Best Performer: sophomore AJ Castro; All-Star Cast: senior Waylon Moody and sophomore Ian Blanchard; Honorable Mention All-Star Cast:



The students at Barrett Elementary School had a blast when the Crosby High School baseball team visited their school this month.



Crosby High School Theatre Arts students are advancing to the next round in the One Act Play contest. Their performance of "The King Stag" on Wednesday, March 19 garnered five awards, including best overall technical crew.

junior Josephine McAnespy and senior William Law; Outstanding Technician: sophomore Annabella Guerrero; and overall Outstanding Tech Crew. Congratulations to our students and to teachers, Mr. Raymond Blanchard and Ms. Jennifer Jones, for their hard work. You can see their second-round OAP performance on Saturday, March 29 at Kingwood Park High School.

CROSBY BASEBALL PLAYERS INSPIRE YOUNG STUDENTS

Kudos to the Crosby High School baseball team for visiting our elementary campuses this month! Our players have done everything from assist with car rider duty to reading books to our youngest Cougars. The little ones so en-

joy their time with the "big kids!"

CAREER DAY 2025: CROSBY HIGH SEEKS INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

We are excited to host Career Day 2025 at Crosby High School. We are looking for professionals from various career fields to participate as presenters on Friday, May 2, starting at 8am. If you or someone you know is able to share your knowledge and experiences with the next generation, please join us. We're looking for all types of industries! Use the following link to sign up: www.crosbyisd.org/careerday.

STAAR TESTING SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED FOR CROSBY ISD

Finally, a quick reminder about state testing



Superintendent, Dr. Paula Patterson, students, and staff members celebrated Crosby High School Principal, Mr. Brad Hadnot. Principal Hadnot was named Crosby ISD's 2024-25 Principal of the Year. Principal Hadnot will be honored at a regional awards ceremony in April.



Crosby High School baseball players have been visiting elementary students throughout Crosby ISD. The older students assist with car rider duty and read books to the younger Cougars.



Exterior of the expanded CTE (Career and Technical Education Center) at Crosby High School. This building will house additional welding and carpentry labs. In all, the CHS expansion is increasing classroom and lab space by 50% inside CHS.

season. No visitors are allowed on campuses during STAAR testing. Due to state testing, the district will resume classes on Fridays starting, April 4. Classes will be held on the following five Fridays: April 4, April 11, April 25,

May 2, and May 9. The district will be closed on Friday, April 18 in observance of the Good Friday holiday. The last day of classes will be Thursday, May 29. The Class of 2025 Commencement Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 30, at

7pm, at Cougar Stadium. We are about to add 500 new members to the Crosby High School alumni club!

We are Committed to Excellence! Go Coogs!

American Legion Hosting Purse Bingo Fundraiser, April 4

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Want a fancy purse? The David H. McNerny American Legion Post 658 will host a Designer Purse Bingo fundraiser on Friday, April 4, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. and Bingo begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person or \$600 to sponsor a table.

Melissa McBride, adjutant officer and vet at the American Legion Hall said there would be 15 rounds of bingo.

"For those who haven't played before, Designer Purse Bingo is where you play regular games of Bingo and instead of winning cash, you win a designer purse like Coach, Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Tory Burch and so on," she said. The specialty purses are worth hundreds of dollars up to \$1,000 or more, some of which have been donated to the organization.

Purses are not the only prizes, there's also a men and women's set of Fossil watches, and charm and earrings from Swarovski.

Sponsors donate many of the prizes. They are recognized at the event.

The bar will be open for those who wish to purchase beer or wine coolers, soda, or water.

"We will have homemade chicken alfredo and spaghetti with all the trimmings," she said.

McBride served in the U.S. Army for 10 years as an administrative specialist in 1992 and left in 2002.

The funds are for scholarships given to seniors at



Someone will win this beautiful Michael Kors purse at the Designer Purse Bingo hosted by the David H. McNerny American Legion Post 658 on April 4.



This lovely designer watch set by Fossil is one of many prizes that will be given out at the Designer Purse Bingo hosted by the David H. McNerny American Legion Post 658 on April 4.

Crosby, C. E. King, and Huffman high schools. Legion Hall members children can also apply for scholarships regardless of what high school they attend.

Though the Legion Hall is mostly for veterans, McBride said they also reach outside their walls.

"We try to help out with the community as much as we can other than just programs for vets," she said.

Large donations are tax deductible and for those who can't attend but would like to support the veterans, please call McBride at 832-922-3418.

Marines 'Family Night' at Crosby American Legion draws more than 300

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

When Post Commander Martin Maier opened the doors to the U.S. Marines for a recruiting event at the David H. McNerny American Legion Hall 658 in Crosby, he had no idea that there would be such a crowd, but it warmed his heart to see so many young people ready to serve their country.

An estimated 300 recruiters, Marines, and their family members attended a Family Night last Thursday night.

"We call it a Family Night and normally host it in late March or April," said Marine Staff Sergeant Nicolas Parra. "This way we can be able to share a meal and show the parents what their kids are going to be doing at boot camp when they show up."

Marines used the time to demonstrate and teach some of their basic drills in movement used by the military from location to location in boot camp.

"These are applicants from Baytown, North Shore, Channelview, Summer Creek, C. E. King, Deer Park, Pasadena, Humble, Atascocita, Barbers Hill, Dayton, and Crosby," he said.

Parra said he was happy with the location and hopes to host the Family Night at the American Legion Hall in Crosby every year from now on.

"Martin is a great person who helps us out, it's centrally located, we have a field in the back of the facility to demonstrate drills and drones," he said.

Drill instructors also took the opportunity to let some of the recruits know if they're not meeting the standards and to get in shape.

Approximately 150 of the young men and women were headed to boot camp in the next few weeks or months following graduation. A handful of them received their number and were headed to boot camp in the next few days.

"These applicants will learn how to be a better leader and when they get out of the Marine Corps, they'll have certifications, school, and college that



Marine Staff Sergeant Nicolas Parra looks at as recruiters check their list for boot camp dates when recruits report to boot camp in the next few months.

will give them an advantage," Parra said.

But they're not just taking any applicants. The Marines, he said, is not one of those not meeting their recruiting numbers.

"Recruiting is doing good and it's not affecting us any sort of way. We're doing what we need to do to be able to meet our mission," he said confidentially.

Most of the recruits at the Family Night will leave for boot camp between June and September.

For Maier, they are a dream customer to the Legion Hall.

"I love the Marine NCO's here who are the recruiters," he said. "They're the greatest guys. Every time they show up, their kids do all the work, and they clean up after themselves."

It was more than just physical labor.

The recruiters needed to do some training a month ago, just recruiters. They liked the facility and asked if they could come back for a Family Night.

"They paid for the food, and I was happy to do the grilling for them," he said. Maier ended up barbecuing 50 racks of ribs, 20 briskets, and also served 20 one-gallon cans of beans and corn. He expected them to come with an appetite. They did.

It's not the first time the Marine Corps has used the building. "We host their Thanksgiving Day

party and Christmas party," the post commander said.

When the recruiters asked to use the building, it was an easy answer.

"Of course," Maier told them. "You're always welcome here."

He's also reached out to the Air Force, Army, and Navy, but no one else took him up on the offer.

"The Marines take me up every time," he said, and Maier is an Army and Air Force vet.

"Our motto here at the American Legion is community, state, and nation. To me, this is a community event. I consider this an investment into the future," he said.

Maier hopes that once they have finished with their service, they will always remember they have a home in Crosby at Post 658.

Maier said he remembered going to the American Legion Hall before he joined.

"These guys took care of me. Fed me. I want to continue my service to my community that way, even though my time in the military is over," he pledged.

During the event he signed up three more members who appreciated the support for their own kids.

"To join the best fighting forces in the United States, it only takes a phone call to talk to a recruiter to find out if you qualify," Parra said. Call 1-800-MARINES.



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