

76 Year-Old gets Her Wish: a Carriage Ride, Page 3

OP-ED: Budget Bill Opinions, Page 4

Buddy Benches at Highlands Elementary



Highlands Elementary built BUDDY BENCHES for students that asked for a Break space.

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star Courier

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HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## Young Athlete's Life Takes a Turn with Heart Condition Diagnosis

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

For more than a decade, Scott Stephens has fought to make sure another Crosby parent doesn't suffer the same outcome as his family when his son died of sudden cardiac arrest at the untimely age of 18 years old.

Stephens has appeared before the UIL Medical Advisory Committee, the Legislative Council, and 50 to 60 trips to Austin to make his plea to the legislature. Cody's Law was finally passed and signed by Gov. Greg Abbott on Father's Day weekend in 2019.

Stephens and the Cody Stephen's Go Big or Go Home Memorial Foundation has continued its quest for screening athletes across the state of Texas at a feverish pace. That includes Cody's home district where another life was recently saved.



Jullian Pereida (JuJu) has had a life-saving procedure and is ready to continue on with life. His interests have had to change since he can no longer play football.

"He was a student at Channelview High School and North Shore Rotary bought them a machine to screen students," Stephens said. As far as he knew, they were supposed to be screening athletes.

It's not the experience one mom had with her son.

Crosby ISD has a strict policy on screening athletes and Julia Pereida and her husband Rogelio had no idea how their life was about to change.

For Jullian Pereida, a young football player, life took an unexpected turn when he discovered he had hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a serious heart condition. The diagnosis came after Jullian's family moved to Crosby, where heart screening for athletes is mandatory.

Jullian, who had been playing football in Channelview, never had an ECG screening there, despite the school having the necessary equipment. It wasn't until the family relocated to Crosby that Jullian underwent the mandatory heart screening, which revealed the abnormality.

The diagnosis was a shock to Jullian and his family.

"He has hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, HCM," said Scott Stephens, a heart health advocate whose son died with a similar diagnosis. The condition means

that Juju's heart muscle is abnormally thick, which can lead to serious complications.

Jullian's mother, Julia Pereida, expressed her gratitude for the mandatory screening in Crosby.

"I never thought to do it either, which I kicked myself in the butt for," she said. The diagnosis has altered Jullian's life significantly. He may never play football again, but the screening likely saved his life.

The Pereida family has faced numerous hospital stays and adjustments to their daily lives.

His cardiologist told him that if he hadn't received the ECG within six months, they would be having a totally different conversation.

Jullian now has a loop recorder implanted under his skin to monitor his

Continued. See CROSBY HEART SCREENING, Page 6

### IN THE STARS

#### Designer Purse Bingo Friday Aug. 8th

Seniors Helping Seniors High-Town will host a Designer Purse Bingo on Friday, August 8 at 6:00pm at the Baytown Fairgrounds, 7900 N. Main St. in Baytown 77521.

Tickets \$50, inquire at 281-787-4256. Benefitting Seniors Helping Seniors.

Visit our Website for all Star-Courier news and Back Issues: www.STARCOURIERNEWS.COM

### CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

## Crosby ISD notes Progress on Sixth Grade Campus and High School Expansion; and Academic Achievements

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

Happy July everyone!

I wanted to update the community on the progress of our two major construction projects in the district: the future Sixth Grade Campus and the expansion of Crosby High School. First, the Sixth Grade Campus. We have begun the design phase for the campus that will be built between the existing Crosby Middle School and Crosby High School. My administration has started to explore the first design options from



Dr. Paula Patterson  
Crosby Superintendent

the architectural firm, Stantec. While it will be some time before the blueprints are finalized, we can share a few details about the general scope of the campus. The school will have capacity for up

to 800 sixth grade students with about 120,000 square feet of classrooms, fine arts areas, a gym, and cafeteria. This past school year, there were about 500 sixth graders who attended CMS, so this building will give the district room for the additional student growth we expect in the next ten years. My administration is still deciding on the best options for the configuration of the Sixth Grade Campus, but traffic flow is one of our top priorities during this design phase. We are analyzing

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 5



On June 17, construction crews poured the final concrete for the lip of the expanded CTE (Career and Technical Education) Center as part of the new Crosby High School expansion. The CTE expansion is on the foreground. The new academic wing is just behind the bus portico. The new academic wing will feature 32 classrooms and 8 labs with room for an additional 912 students, bringing the functional capacity of CHS to 2837 students.

## Highlands Rotary builds "Buddy Benches" for students at Highlands Elementary



Rotarians Wayne Prescott, Robert (and Ann) Woodall, Cora Miller, Denise Smith, and GayLynn Millioern, HES Staff, and Students try out the new BUDDY BENCHES which will be installed outside the school. Students asked for a quiet area to retreat when school got too active. Rotarians built the benches from scratch.

## Crosby FD battles multiple ATV Blaze



Vehicle Fire at Xtreme Off Road Park and Beach in Crosby destroys 18 ATVs

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

An early morning alarm sent three area fire departments to Xtreme Off Road Park and Beach at 1927 Gulf Pump Road to extinguish a raging fire involving approximately 18 ATVs, SXSSs, and UTVs.

All three fire departments brought their water trucks to the rural area without fire hydrants.

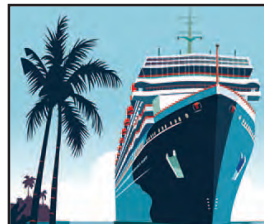
The fire was reported by people passing by and the fire departments arrived at 6:50, said Brandi Dumas, spokesperson for the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office.

Dumas said the business was closed at the time the fire erupted.

"After reviewing video footage, we can see what time the fire started which was around 6:20 a.m.," she said. "We don't know what caused the fire, but we do know that there was no

Continued. See ATV FIRE, Page 5

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# SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

## GCCISD Education Foundation Announces Over \$246,000 in Donations to Support Student Programs and Innovative Teaching



Pictured, from left, Charles Johnson, Baytown Mayor, Jo Ann Fenley, Dr. Randal O'Brien, GCCISD Superintendent, Dr. Anna Espinoza, Connie Tilton, ExxonMobil, Susan Moore-Fontenot, Mike Wilson, and Jim Campisi, GCCISD School Board President. (Photos by: Carrie Pryor-Newman)



Pictured, from left, Charles Johnson, Baytown Mayor, Richard Clem, GCCISD Board Member, Jo Ann Fenley, Dr. Randal O'Brien, GCCISD Superintendent, Dr. Anna Espinoza, Connie Tilton, Susan Moore-Fontenot, Helen Berrott-Tims, GCCISD Board Member, Mike Wilson, and Jim Campisi, GCCISD School Board President. (Photos by: Carrie Pryor-Newman)

Story by: Nancy Bonds, GCCISD Director of Communications

During the June 2 School Board meeting, the Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation proudly announced two major contributions totaling more than \$246,000, demonstrating its continued commitment to elevating education and empowering students and educators across the district.

The evening began with the recognition of a designated grant from ExxonMobil, one of the Foundation's most longstanding and generous partners. Representing ExxonMobil was Connie Tilton of the Public & Government Affairs team, who joined Foundation leadership in presenting a \$51,000 donation. This gift will directly support the following Goose Creek CISD programs:

- Partners in Education – \$15,000
- MATHCOUNTS – \$1,000
- K-12 Science Department – \$30,000
- Robotics Program – \$5,000

"We are incredibly grateful to ExxonMobil and Connie Tilton for their continuous support and dedication to our students," said Dr. Anna Espinoza, GCCISD Director of Education Foundation and Partnerships.

The Foundation also announced its largest annual investment in classrooms to date through the 2025–2026 Innovative Teaching Grant program. This year, 145 applications were submitted by teachers across the district. After a thorough review by the Foundation's Programs Committee, 49 grants were awarded, 44 from the current cycle and five mini grants from the 2023–2024 cycle, generously funded by businesses and individuals during the Foundation's annual gala.

In total, the Education Foundation awarded \$195,844.85 in classroom grants, continuing its mission to enrich teaching, inspire learning, and provide opportunities for excellence in education for all Goose Creek CISD students.

For more information about the GCCISD Education Foundation and how to get involved, please visit the Goose Creek CISD website!

## Gentry Junior School Student Achieves Rare Spelling Bee "Three-Peat"



With quiet determination, sharp focus, and a strong work ethic, Ethan Wheeler, an eighth-grade student at Gentry Junior School, has made history in Goose Creek CISD as a three-time district Spelling Bee champion. His journey from a curious third grader at Travis Elementary to a seasoned competitor reflects not only personal growth but the very spirit of the district's theme: *Here We Grow Giants*.

Ethan first entered the world of spelling bees in third grade. Though he won at his school level that year, he missed his very first word at the district competition. But instead of being discouraged, he used the experience to spark a commitment to improve.

"It's not about winning," Ethan shared. "The goal is to do better than the year before. Talent can only get you so far, but hard work

is what really counts."

His methodical approach to preparation has become a key to his success. Ethan begins studying months in advance, using specialized spelling books, breaking down lists, and prioritizing the words that matter most. His father plays a critical role in his study sessions, quizzing him and circling hard to challenging words until Ethan can spell them correctly three times in a row.

This year's most formidable word? Samhain—a tricky one that tested his preparation. But Ethan says the most challenging words are the ones he didn't study. As for his favorite word? Okefenokee takes the prize for being the funniest-sounding.

Now a seasoned competitor, Ethan is quick to offer advice to others who may be interested in spelling bees: "If you enjoy spelling and you're willing

to work hard, give it a try. Get your word list early, have someone quiz you, and stay calm. If you win, you win. If you lose, you lose. That's life."

He reflects on his unique journey with wisdom beyond his years: "I've won the Spelling Bee every year, but I've also lost the Spelling Bee every year."

As Ethan wraps up his final year of eligibility, he looks ahead with gratitude and pride. "I never thought I had a huge relationship with spelling in third grade. It started small, and it kept building and growing from there. I'll miss the Spelling Bee, but I'll move on to something new."

In Ethan Wheeler, Goose Creek CISD celebrates not just a champion speller but a giant in the making—proof that great things grow from small beginnings.

## IMPACT ECHS Wins Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award



Pictured, front row from left, IMPACT Principal Laura Reyes, Karla Mendez, Tara Rambarran, Laura Portillo Rodriguez, Grecia Villareal, Shona Bhowmick, and IMPACT teacher Dr. Lindsey Antonini; Back row left, Emily Quintanilla, Donnalyn Massicott, Eliana Alegria, Lawreenbelle Yuipeco, and Nicholas Garza. Story by: Dr. Lindsey Antonini, IMPACT Teacher. (Photo by: Melina Arriaga)

IMPACT Early College High School has been awarded the Gold level of the prestigious Presidential Volunteer Service Award for Group volunteering. Multiple students worked together over the 2024-25 academic year to accumulate over 3,700 service hours, far exceeding the 1,000 hours required for the Group Gold award. According to the organization's website, the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President's Volunteer Service Award to recognize the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. This year, IMPACT ECHS also submitted 12 individual service awards for students who achieved Silver and Bronze level totals. Their names and award levels are provided below:

- Nicholas Garza, Senior – 226 service hours, *Silver Award*
- Shakuntala Bhowmick, Junior – 224 service hours, *Silver Award*
- Laura Portillo Rodriguez, Junior – 181 service hours, *Silver Award*
- Donnalyn Massicott, Senior – 141 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Grecia Villareal, Junior – 141 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Eliana Alegria, Senior – 140 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Lawreenbelle Yuipeco, Senior – 137 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Emily Quintanilla, Senior – 136 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Taradevi Rambarran, Sophomore – 126 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Grethel Carrillo, Senior – 120 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Roberto Del Rio, Senior – 120 service hours, *Bronze Award*
- Karla Mendez, Senior – 102 service hours, *Bronze Award*

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THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

### ON THE HILL

#### Summer Activity Guide

Summer is the best time of year in Mont Belvieu. With so many things going on, who can keep up? We're here for you this summer to keep the kids engaged in sports, activities, and events to keep their minds and bodies energized.

##### City Events

Discover the vibrant pulse of Mont Belvieu's community life, where Parks and Recreation hosts an exciting array of events throughout the year.

From lively concerts to bustling markets and captivating outdoor movie nights, there's something for everyone to enjoy in our picturesque park setting. Join us as we bring the community together for unforgettable experiences and cherished memories.

Whether you're tapping your feet to the rhythm of live music, browsing the stalls at our bustling markets, or cozying up under the stars for a cinematic adventure, City Park is the place to be for summer fun.

##### Operation 36@ Junior Golf Academy

We have brought the Operation 36@ Golf Program to Mont Belvieu! Operation 36@ is an effective program to teach beginner golfers, ages 7-18 years, to learn to play.

Learn more and register online at [www.montbelvieu.net/juniorgolf](http://www.montbelvieu.net/juniorgolf)

##### Eagle Pointe Summer Membership Special

3-Month Membership  
Individual: \$129.00  
Family: \$159.99  
On sale from May 1, 2025, until July 31, 2025.

##### Eagle Pointe Wave Pool

Eagle Pointe Wave Pool offers the ultimate summer escape with its pristine beach and thrilling wave experience. From toddlers to the elderly, everyone can enjoy the pool's gradual depth from ground level to six feet. Relax in shaded areas, play sand volleyball, or let the kids enjoy the play area. Grab a snack at the concession stand and enjoy background music as you lounge in paradise.

##### Hours of Operation

Daily Hours: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
Season: May 24th - August 10th  
Post-Season Weekends:  
August 16th & 17th  
August 23rd & 24th  
August 30th - September 1st

Visit our New Website for Chambers County News:  
[www.BHDPRESS.com](http://www.BHDPRESS.com)

## Mont Belvieu Urges Residents to Prepare Early as Hurricane Season Begins

Hurricane season is nothing new to us in Mont Belvieu, but every storm is different — and every storm has the potential to be dangerous. While hurricanes get the most attention, tropical storms and even tropical depressions can still bring serious threats like storm surge, heavy flooding, damaging winds, tornadoes, and dangerous surf conditions.

##### Be Prepared Make a Plan

**\*Identify an out-of-town contact.** It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

**\*Memorize phone numbers.** Be sure every member of your family knows the phone numbers and has a cell phone or the ability to call emergency contacts. If you have a cell

phone, save emergency contacts as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you have listed them as emergency contacts.

##### \*Use text messaging.

Make sure all family members know how to use text messaging. Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

##### \*Subscribe to Mont Belvieu INFOrc Alerts at [www.montbelvieu.net/INFOrc](http://www.montbelvieu.net/INFOrc).

With this system, the City can give you important information via phone, text or email. Register your cell phone as well so you will receive alerts when you are not at home.

##### \*Consider the various types of emergencies that

could occur in our area. Flooding, hurricanes, chemical spills, etc. Discuss with your family what you would do in each situation. Depending on the circumstances, you may have to shelter in place or evacuate. Have a plan for both possibilities.

##### Build a Kit

No matter what the disaster, you need to have food, water, and essential supplies available. Chances are, you already have many essentials for a disaster kit. Gather them first; then go shopping for the rest. Pack your supplies in a portable container. If you have a large family, divide them into two or three containers. Keep your supplies near your car, ready to load at a moment's notice. And don't forget to periodically replace items that may expire, such as food and batteries.

##### -Flashlight

- NOAA Weather Radio
- Extra batteries
- Water: 1 gallon per person, per day, for at least 3 days
- First aid kit
- Medications, prescriptions, medical equipment, etc.
- Food: 3-day supply of non-perishable canned foods and can opener
- Pet supplies
- Food, water, leash, photos, medicine, sanitation, toys, and a crate
- Important documents (i.e. copies of insurance, birth certificates, etc.)
- Toiletries
- Cash
- Change of clothes
- Baby supplies
- Emergency contact list
- Tool kit

In addition to your full emergency supply kit, you should have one or two smaller "Go Bags" in your workplace, vehicle, or other places you

spend time. A "Go Bag" is a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation, especially if you are not at home when an evacuation order is issued. A "Go Bag" should be packed in a sturdy, easy-to-carry, preferably water-resistant container such as a backpack or suitcase on wheels.

##### Stay Informed

Register for Mont Belvieu INFOrc alerts. Mont Belvieu INFOrc Alerts are important notifications sent by the City of Mont Belvieu directly to residents. These notifications include information and updates on emergencies, traffic, road construction, amber alerts, water issues, evacuations, and much more. Listen to instructions from local officials for information on evacuation times and routes. After the storm, stay at your destination until advised to return home by local officials.

## Elderly area Resident Has Special Wish Granted!

Crosby, Texas – Bernadine Bushnell, a resident of Crosby, Texas, had her wish to take a carriage ride and have dinner in downtown Houston granted, thanks to the Houston chapter of national nonprofit Twilight Wish Foundation. Bushnell is 76 and has courageously battled both breast and liver cancer. She lived in New Orleans for years and always wanted to ride in a horse-drawn carriage there but never had the opportunity. Bushnell's wish was granted on June 21, 2025 when she and her daughter, Stephanie Jones, enjoyed a lovely dinner at world-famous New Orleans restaurant Brennan's and then took a carriage ride through downtown Houston.

In addition, Bushnell



Bernadine Bushnell enjoying her dinner at Brennan's

is a huge Snoop Dogg fan and wished to meet him. Although the Houston chapter was not able to arrange that, a life-size cardboard cutout of Snoop Dogg joined them for dinner! A huge thank you to Brennan's of Houston for donating the dinner and to Hurn Alison of Houston Carriage for do-

minating the carriage ride. Thank you also to Belmont Village, A Sacred Choice Funeral Home and Senior Living Specialists – Houston for funding the cost of transportation and gratuities for this special wish.

Twilight Wish Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization whose



Bernadine Bushnell and daughter Stephanie Jones ready for their carriage ride

mission is to honor and enrich the lives of seniors through intergenerational Twilight Wish celebrations. Since its founding in 2003, Twilight Wish has granted over 7,100 individual wishes to seniors throughout the U.S. Twilight Wish grants wishes to seniors who are 65 and older or a

permanent resident of a nursing home and earn less than 200% of poverty level. If you would like to nominate a deserving senior or get involved with Twilight Wish, please visit the website at [www.twilightwish.org](http://www.twilightwish.org) or call 215-230-8777 ext. 104.

### PET MATTERS

In Memory of Susan Hoffman



## Pet Safety in Hot Weather

As temperatures begin to increase this summer, we would like to share some heat tips to keep your pets happy and healthy. Pets are part of our family so let's make sure to keep them safe and look out for any signs of heat stroke.

If you suspect your pet is having a heat stroke:

1. Get your dog out of direct heat.
2. Check for shock. Signs include, collapse, body temperature 104° F+, bloody diarrhea or vomit, depression stupor, seizures or coma, excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart rate, salivation.
3. Take your dog's temperature.
4. Spray your dog with cool water then retake temperature.
5. Place water-soaked tow-

els on the dog's head, neck feet, chest and abdomen, turn on a fan and point it in your dog's direction, rub Isopropyl alcohol (70%) on the dog's foot pads to help cool him but don't use large quantities.

6. Take your dog to the nearest veterinary hospital.

During a heat crisis, the goal is always to decrease the dog's body temperature to 103° F in the first 10-15 minutes. Once 103° F is reached, you must stop the cooling process because the body temperature will continue to decrease and can plummet dangerously low if you continue to cool the dog for too long.

Even if you successfully cool your pet down to 103° F in the first 10-15 minutes, you must take the dog to a veterinarian as soon as possible because consequences of heat

stroke will not show up for hours or even days. Potential problems include abnormal heart rhythms, kidney failure, neurological problems, and respiratory arrest.

It is important to know if your pet is predisposed to dog heat stroke, which is true of dogs with short snouts such as bulldogs, pugs and many other breeds. Other common causes of heat stroke include: a previous episode of heat stroke, leaving a dog in a parked car, excessive exercise in hot, humid weather (this may be exercise that your dog can usually handle but not in warmer weather), lack of appropriate shelter outdoors, thicker-coated dogs in warm weather and underlying disease such as upper airway, heart or lung disease.

##### Never leave your pet in

##### the car

In nice weather you may be tempted to take your pet with you in the car while you travel or do errands. But during warm weather, the inside of your car can reach 120 degrees in a matter of minutes, even if you're parked in the shade. This can mean real trouble for your companion animals left in the car.

If you do happen to see a pet alone in a car during hot weather, alert the management of the store where the car is parked. If the owner does not return promptly, call local animal control or the police department immediately.

##### Keep your pets safe and healthy year-round

Make sure your pet is always wearing a collar and identification tag. If you are

separated from your pet, an ID tag may very well be his or her ticket home.

Check with your veterinarian to see if your pet should be taking heartworm prevention medication. Heartworm disease, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, can be fatal in both dogs and cats. Another warm weather threat is fleas and ticks. Use only flea and tick treatments recommended by your veterinarian. Some over-the-counter flea and tick products can be toxic, even when used according to instructions.

Download the Pets First Aid App! This will provide critical first aid information for your pet at your fingertips. Find it in the Apple App Store », Google Play », or Amazon Marketplace »

OPINION PAGE

OPINION

The government passed a Controversial Budget Bill last week. Here are some opinions on this legislation:

PRO: By Congressman Brian Babin

Washington, D.C. - Today, U.S. Congressman Brian Babin (TX-36) voted in favor of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, landmark legislation that advances President Trump's America First agenda, delivers historic economic relief to American families, and puts an end to some of Washington's most reckless and radical policies.

The legislation stops taxpayer funding of the abortion industry, prevents the largest tax hike in American history, and shields small businesses from the crushing weight of federal overreach. It unleashes domestic energy production, restores law and order at the southern border, and reins in out-of-control government spending.

"This bill puts America First in every sense," said Rep. Babin. "It means bigger paychecks, lower taxes, secure borders, and strong national defense. It ends the Biden-era madness and delivers exactly what the American people have been asking for — common sense and accountability. With this vote, we're protecting our children, defending our sovereignty, and restoring the American Dream for working families. I was proud to cast my vote for this historic bill, and I look forward to seeing it signed into law by President Trump."

Key provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act include:

- Delivering the largest tax cut in U.S. history for middle- and working-class Americans
--Eliminating taxes on tips, overtime, and tax breaks for seniors
--Stopping taxpayer funding of the abortion industry
--Unleashing domestic oil, gas, and nuclear energy
--Permanently funding mass deportations and codifying Trump's border security policies
--Hiring 10,000 ICE agents, 5,000 Customs officers, and 3,000 Border Patrol agents
--Restoring fiscal sanity and slashing the deficit by \$2 trillion
--Funding for the Golden Dome Missile Defense System to confront 21st-century threats
--Modernizing our air traffic control system
--Banning taxpayer-funded sex changes for minors

This is a defining moment for our country — a bill that keeps our promises, secures our future, and puts American families back in control.

CON: By Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia The Fight Continues After Passage of the "Big Ugly Bill"

Earlier this week, my Democratic colleagues and I fought hard all night and into the morning to stop the Republican budget from passing.

Unfortunately, despite our efforts, Republicans passed the legislation, and it's now headed to the President's desk.

This bill is terrible for Texas and for our nation. Here's why:

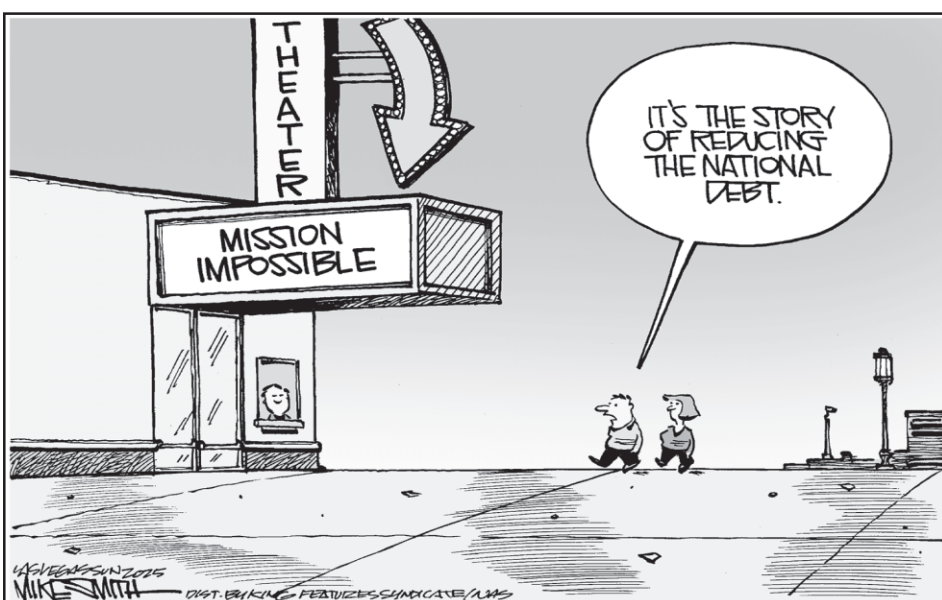
- Health Care: 1.6 million Texans, and 17 million people nationwide, could lose health care coverage due to deep cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.
--Hunger: It makes the biggest cuts ever to SNAP food assistance, putting children, seniors, and families at risk of going hungry.
--Debt & Giveaways: It adds \$4 trillion to the national debt — all to fund tax breaks for billionaires, while leaving working families behind.

This bill is cruel and reckless. But let me be clear: the fight is not over. I'll keep standing up for Texas families every single day and my office is always here to help you with questions or assistance you might need. We'll get through this together.

CON: By Ruben Salazar Shame

Middle and working class families are so screwed with the passage of this "Big Beautiful Bill". Gutting Medicaid, SNAP, and other essential lifeline services for American citizens should NEVER be on the table. Shame!

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.



THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Planned Forgetfulness



I do a funny thing in the middle of June. I try to celebrate the summer solstice.

I don't do anything particularly romantic. If you have visions of me leaping over bonfire flames or dancing around a maypole wearing a flower crown or attempting to contact my inner goddess, you would be disappointed.

All I do is try to remember some of what I've forgotten.

I've always thought the winter solstice was the proper ending to the year, rather than New Year's Eve. New Year's Eve is a date on the calendar, and it feels a bit arbitrary. New Year's Eve has acquired a reputation for being a night when people drink too much and make promises they fully intend to break. None of this sounds like a great way to end a year.

There is nothing arbitrary about the winter solstice. It is the shortest and darkest day of the year, the true beginning and end of a cycle. I do not find it surprising that my ancient ancestors spent as much time as they did precisely calculating when the sun was going to return as they watched it get farther and farther away until, in northern climates, it barely reached the horizon before beginning its descent again. I'd be worried, too.

But there is another day on the other side of the year, when the sun is up longer than any other day, before those days begin to grow shorter. The warmest weather is still ahead, but the days will, imperceptibly at first, shrink. And that is the summer solstice. I think it's good for me to take notice—even if I don't dress in flowing robes while doing it.

It's good to remember that the days are growing shorter. It's good to remember all the things I said I'd like to do this year and know that the time to do them is half gone. It's good to appreciate the fact that every day the sun rises in the sky is precious and that things do not always remain as they are.

This all sounds rather highfalutin. What I do in actual practice is this: I take a longer than usual walk and I start a new journal. I start a new journal on each of the solstices. But before I start a new one, I read the previous journal. This is not always entirely pleasant.

"Ooh. Did I really say that?" I read about all of my intentions—those realized and those abandoned.

"Oops. I completely forgot about that."

I am struck by how little changes from day to day and how much can be altered in six months' time. It makes me humble and grateful and embarrassed and pleased all in one sitting. And, at the end of it, I take a long walk. I can usually walk later at night on the summer solstice, and walking in all that extra light is fun.

"OK, so, what's next?"

Sometimes I come up with a motto for the next six months, which I never remember. Sometimes I come up with a list of lofty goals, which I promptly forget. I know I will forget them. But even if I plan to forget, for one day in the middle of the year, I remember all I have to be thankful for—my frustrations and my triumphs and all the things I was desperately worried about and scarcely remember today.

Once every six months I am reminded of how incredibly short my attention span is—and how many wonderful things I forget.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



Vouchers could change homeschooling

The passage of the state's first voucher program means homeschool families in Texas will soon be eligible for up to \$2,000 to use toward educational costs such as tutoring or curriculum. From 500,000 to 600,000 Texas children are being homeschooled — between 8% and 10% of all school-aged children, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Homeschooling in Texas is largely unregulated, with no requirement for parents to submit curriculum for review. Students are also not required to take the standardized tests given in public schools.

Any family that is currently homeschooling its children can apply for the \$2,000, with priority given to children with disabilities or those in low-income households. Homeschoolers who want to switch to a private school can get up to \$10,000 a year to help pay for tuition.

If there are more applicants than can be handled by the \$1 billion allocated, the state will hold a drawing to determine who gets into the program. The Legislative Budget Board has predicted that about 270,000 homeschoolers will apply in the first year.

GROUPS FIGHT REPEAL OF TEXAS DREAM ACT

Several civil rights groups have joined Austin Community College trustees in suing to protect the Texas Dream Act, which allowed college students without legal status to obtain in-state tuition, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

The U.S. Department of Justice sued to outlaw the 2001 Texas Dream Act, and state Attorney General Ken Paxton declined to defend the state against the lawsuit. Joining ACC's suit against the repeal are the American Civil Liberties Union, the Texas Civil Rights Project, Democracy Forward and the National Immigration Law Center, as well as a private law firm in Dallas.

The plaintiffs requested



an "emergency ruling" allowing them to intervene as defendants in place of the state, arguing that ending the act would cause "irreparable harm" to both students and higher-education institutions, which stand to lose millions in tuition funds.

"This is a fight to protect access to higher education for all Texans, but also a fight to uphold one of the basic tenets of our democracy," Efrén C. Olivares of the National Immigration Center said in a news release.

Ending the Texas Dream Act would affect more than 20,000 students.

TEXAS LOTTERY COMMISSION TO BE DISBANDED

While the sales of lottery tickets will continue, the commission charged with its oversight is being disbanded after stories broke of lottery couriers buying millions of tickets in order to virtually guarantee winning a \$95 million Lotto Texas prize. The Texas Tribune reported the lottery will be run, starting in September, by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Recent legislation signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott also prohibits online ticket sales. Players can purchase up to 100 tickets in person at lottery retailers only during store hours.

The lottery raises \$2 billion annually for the state.

EX-PAXTON AIDES ALLEGE WITNESS TAMPERING DURING IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Legal filings in a federal

suit from top aides to Paxton claim his right-hand deputy threatened to fire employees if they gave unfavorable testimony about Paxton during his 2023 impeachment trial, the Chronicle reported. Paxton was acquitted by the Texas Senate after that trial.

He has since launched a bid to unseat U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the 2026 Republican primary.

The allegations are detailed in a suit filed last week by former Solicitor General Judd Stone and Chris Hilton, the former chief of the general litigation division. They claim that current First Assistant Attorney General Brent Webster made the threats. Webster has not commented on the allegations.

NEW SEXUAL CONSENT LAW TAKES EFFECT THIS FALL

The Legislature has overhauled the state's sexual consent laws, through what is known as "the Summer Willis Act," the Statesman reported. It is named after a former University of Texas student-athlete who was drugged and sexually assaulted in 2014 at a fraternity party. The case could not be prosecuted because of loopholes in the Texas law that did not clearly define consent in cases involving intoxication or impairment. The bill passed by a wide bipartisan margin in both chambers.

"The loophole my rape fell under was because I voluntarily accepted a drink from one person and another person raped me," Willis said in a PBS interview.

The Summer Willis Act provides a clearer definition of consent, including an affirmative definition of consent, the withdrawal of consent, and incapacitation due to substance use.

ABBOTT ORDERS ESTABLISHMENT OF SCREWORM RESPONSE TEAM

Abbott last week directed the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Animal Health Commission to create a joint Texas New World Screwworm Response Team. That's in response to the recent northward spread of the screwworm.

"The mission for the Response Team is clear: to lead Texas' prevention and response efforts and ensure that Texas remains informed, prepared, and aligned to prevent the re-emergence of this destructive parasite," Abbott's news release said. "We stand ready to protect our land, livestock, and wildlife."

Animal imports at the southern border have been halted due to growing outbreaks in Mexico. Previous outbreaks in the 1950s and 1960s were largely halted by breeding sterile flies, and a similar effort is underway. The New World screwworm is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on livestock, wildlife, and in rare cases, humans.

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information for the Barbers Hill, Dayton, and North Channel editions, and details about the staff and subscription rates.

# Crosby ISD expands for growth: New Sixth grade campus in design phase, CHS nears completion of major CTE and Classroom addition,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing the best options for how the building will face, the best placement for the car rider line, and the best design for the school bus pick-up and drop-off lines. We will continue to keep the community updated as the design progresses. The Sixth Grade Campus is being funded by remaining monies from the voter-approved 2017 bond.

Meantime, the Crosby High School expansion is only a few months away from completion. On June 17, construction crews poured the final concrete for the lip of the expanded CTE (Career and Technical Education) Center. The building is going to supercharge the district's CTE program, allowing us to offer a brand-new carpentry career pathway for students. We'll also grow our welding pathway with a second welding lab. And that's just the CTE Center! When the new academic wing opens late this fall, the total classroom space inside CHS will grow by 50%. To give you some perspective, the enrollment at CHS on the last day of school in May was 2081. This expansion will increase the capacity to 2837 students at CHS. As you can see, this expansion will give the district significant space for additional student growth and will add years to the lifespan of CHS before more space is needed.

Turning to academics, Crosby ISD students have shown growth in the STAAR results released from the 2024-25 school year. Although the final scores will not be available until August, we know that student cohorts, most especially, have shown

tremendous growth. For example, current fifth graders improved from their fourth-grade math scores by 14 points in the "Meets" category and by eight points in the "Masters" category. It was a similar story for current fourth graders who improved from their third-grade math scores by double digits (16 points in the "Meets" category and 12 points in the "Masters" category). More bright spots were our fifth grade reading scores which climbed 12 points in the "Meets" category. High school biology scores were also up nine points year-to-year. We attribute these and other successes to the three district initiatives we emphasized starting last summer: better instruction, more time on task, and "write a little a lot." There are some subject areas we need to and will improve upon, and our laser focus on those three classroom initiatives will be a significant factor in future success.

Here's another example of our staff members modeling lifelong learning! Congratulations to CHS Principal Mr. Brad Hadnot, CES Principal Mrs. Dana Kratky-Fox, DES Principal Ms. Kellie Hall, and CMS Associate Principal Mrs. Allison Weaver. They all graduated from the Executive Education Academy hosted by Rice Leadership Partners at Rice University. Our campus leaders spent the past year studying in Cohort 16. Principal Hall said, "I'm leaving empowered, equipped, and ready to lead with purpose." We couldn't agree more, and we are proud of these four CISD staff members who



Construction crews are adding playground upgrades at each elementary campus in Crosby ISD. At Newport Elementary School, crews have added a new concrete lip around the perimeter of the school.



Construction projects are happening at each campus in Crosby ISD during the summer break. Inside Drew Elementary School, the entire front office area is being redesigned with several safety upgrades.



Crosby High School Band's Drum Major, Peyton Abernathy, won first place in the drill down exercise at the Drum Major Camp hosted by Stephen F. Austin University. Peyton was crowned the best drum major out of 40 competitors.



Congratulations to CES Principal Mrs. Dana Kratky-Fox, DES Principal Ms. Kellie Hall, CMS Associate Principal Mrs. Allison Weaver, and CHS Principal Mr. Brad Hadnot (left to right). These campus leaders all graduated from the Executive Education Academy hosted by Rice Leadership Partners at Rice University.

demonstrate the need to grow throughout the course of their careers. Job well done!

Finally, a tip of the hat to the Crosby High School Band's Drum Major, Peyton Abernathy. He won first place in the drill down exercise at the Drum Major Camp hosted by Stephen F. Austin University. He was crowned the best drum major out of

40 competitors. Way to go, Peyton!

We hope families continue to enjoy the summer break. We want to remind everyone that the first day of school will be Thursday, August 7. We are asking

parents and guardians to verify returning students and register new students by July 24 to give our transportation department time to route bus routes for the first day of school. Until then, be safe

and be blessed. We are Committed to Students! Go Cougars!

# Fire Destroys 18 ATVs at Xtreme Off Road Park in Crosby,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

human interaction that caused it," she said in a preliminary statement.

Dumas said the video revealed that one ATV caught fire and eventually burned long enough to eventually spread to other bikes. The ATVs appeared to be lined up close to a small building allegedly used for repair and rental. Online comments on social media allege insurance fraud, but Dumas said otherwise.

"There was nobody there (at the park) when the fire started," she said.

The video surveillance shows one ATV sparking and then the other ATVs surrounding it caught fire.

They were lined up there because they allow customers who frequent

the business to park their ATVs there, she said.

The park and beach have overnight accommodations and trails for ATVs, SXSs, and UTVs to travel during the day.

Dumas said approximately 18 high-end ATVs were destroyed or damaged in the fire. None of the ATVs damaged were owned by Xtreme but were owned by customers of the business.

"Anytime you have machinery like that could cause a fire," she said.

The smoke rising from the fire could be seen as far away as Interstate 10 to the south.

"We used approximately 5,000 gallons of water from the trucks and numerous canisters of dry



ABOVE & AT RIGHT: As many as 18 ATVs were left charred following a fire at Xtreme Off Road Park and Beach off Gulf Pump Road in Crosby. The fire remains under investigation.

chemical extinguishers to put out the flames," said Warren Thompson, spokesperson with the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department.

The cause of the fire is still undetermined and remains under investigation.



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## Crosby's mandatory heart screening credited with saving young athlete's life after hidden heart condition found,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Jullian's mom Julia has been by his side since they discovered he had a heart issue. They are grateful to Crosby ISD for having a policy requiring the heart checkup with athletic physicals.

heart. Despite the challenges, the family is grateful for the early detection and the care they have received.

Jullian's story highlights the importance of mandatory heart screenings for young athletes. "Heart screening saves lives. I see evidence every day," said Stephens. The Pereida family hopes that more schools will adopt similar policies to prevent other families from facing the same ordeal.

As Jullian navigates his new reality, he remains hopeful. While he may grieve the loss of his football career, he has a chance at a future he might not have had without the screening. His story is a testament to the life-saving power of early detection and the importance of advocating for mandatory heart screenings in schools.

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Notice is hereby given that Original Letters Testamentary for Docket No. 533380; Estate of MICHAEL ROCHELLE WATSON, Deceased; In Probate Court No. 2 of Harris County, Texas, were issued on JUNE 26, 2025 to:

**SHIREL (SHERRY) WATSON**

The residence address of the administrator is in Harris County, Texas. The mailing address is:

c/o Weston Cotten  
1500 E. Wallisville Road  
Highlands, TX 77562

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.  
Dated this JUNE 26, 2025

*Weston Cotten*  
by WESTON COTTEN  
Attorney for the Estate

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We are having a family barbecue... ...and then watching fantastic fireworks! Kids: color stuff in!

# Newspaper Fun!

www.readingclubfun.com Animills LLC © 2025 V25

## Happy 12<sup>th</sup> of July!

The Declaration of Independence is the document that told the world that the 13 colonies were united as one country - the United States of America. It told that all ties to England were broken. The people wished to have a voice in their own government.

Independence Day

Philadelphia

July 4, 1776

Liberty Bell

The Spirit of '76

George Washington

Answer the six questions below and fill in the puzzle.

1. What was rung to call people to the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence?
2. In what city was the Declaration of Independence signed?
3. A painting was done for America's 100th birthday. It shows a boy, a father and a grandfather marching off to war to fight for freedom. What is the painting called?
4. Upon what date was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
5. What is the name of the holiday celebrating our nation's birthday?
6. What is the name of the General who became our first President?

Follow this color key to see how many stars are in our nation's flag:  
 ● = Blue + = Red

+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	●	●	●	+	+	+	+
+	●	+	+	+	●	+	+
+	●	●	+	+	●	+	+
+	+	+	●	+	+	●	+
+	●	●	+	+	●	+	+

I love to wave my flag at parades and at the fireworks. I'm very proud of my country. Do you know how many stars are on our nation's flag? There is one for each state in the union. Color in the squares.

## All Told!

I am a symbol of freedom. I called people to meetings that rang of liberty. I announced the first time that the Declaration of Independence would be read to the crowds on July 8, 1776. Can you follow the dots to see me? Put my name on the blanks:

36. 37. 35. 34. 33. 32. 31. 30. 29. 28. 27. 26. 25. 24. 23. 22. 21. 20. 19. 18. 17. 16. 15. 14. 13. 12. 11. 10. 9. 8. 7. 6. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ i \_ e \_ \_ y \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_ e \_ \_

## Fireworks Fun!

Little Mouse is jumping for joy! He can barely wait to get to the fair and fireworks. Can you help him?

## Fun at the Fireworks!

Don't you love going to the fireworks at night? It's a great way to join in the fun on Independence Day. You experience fireworks with all of your senses. Can you fill in the blanks with what you might see, hear, taste, smell and feel during the celebration?

I can see colors \_\_\_\_\_ in the sky and bonfires \_\_\_\_\_.

I can hear fireworks \_\_\_\_\_ and car horns \_\_\_\_\_ and people \_\_\_\_\_.

I can taste watermelon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, a hotdog, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

I can smell sulfur \_\_\_\_\_ and food \_\_\_\_\_.

I can feel the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ grass under my feet and \_\_\_\_\_ for my country in my heart!

# ENTERTAINMENT

### Amber Waves

HEY MOM, AS YOU KNOW, MY BIRTHDAY IS COMING UP SO I MADE OUT A WISH LIST.

I'LL GIVE THIS TO YOU TO LOOK OVER. FEEL FREE TO CROSS OUT STUFF YOU ALREADY GOT.

JUST REMEMBER, "IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE."

UH, YEAH... I JUST GAVE YOU MY WISH LIST. NOW I WAIT FOR MY BIRTHDAY TO RECEIVE.

### TIGER

I LIKE THIS TOWN, IT'S FRIENDLY...

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO

HI, BONNIE. BUS OFF NOW, HUGO

HIYA, TIGER. NOT NOW, HUGO. I GOTTA FINISH THIS

LATER, HUGO, I'M BUSY WITH THIS KIT

HIYA, SUZY. I GOTTA GO MEET SOMEONE, HUGO

I'M EATING NOW, HUGO, I'LL SEE YA

BUT NOT ALWAYS SOMEBODY TO DO IT WITH

### The Spats

I'M GOING TO THE BEAUTY SHOP

GREAT!!

...PICK ME UP A COUPLE OF BEAUTIES!!

by Dave T. Phipps

by Bud Blake

by Jeff Pickering

### Weekly SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 |   | 8 |   |   |   |   | 9 |   |
| 1 | 9 |   | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2 | 4 | 7 |   | 6 |   |   |   | 8 |
|   | 8 | 5 |   |   | 6 |   |   |   |
|   |   | 1 | 3 | 8 |   |   |   |   |
| 7 | 2 |   | 4 | 6 |   |   |   |   |
| 9 |   | 2 |   | 1 | 8 | 4 | 7 |   |
|   |   | 4 | 2 | 3 |   |   |   | 1 |
| 1 | 7 | 8 |   | 5 | 4 |   |   | 2 |

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3x3 box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Tree is moved. 3. Rock is moved. 4. Mountain is different. 5. Ear is larger. 6. Fingers are different.

### King Crossword

July 7, 2025 Posting Date

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ACROSS

- 1 Bump into
- 5 Small batteries
- 8 Gush
- 12 Jai —
- 13 Wall St. deal
- 14 Abhor
- 15 Fish story
- 16 X, at times
- 17 " — the picture!"
- 18 Chevy model
- 20 Rhine feeder
- 22 Kindergarten follower
- 26 Defy authority
- 29 Make lace
- 30 PBS funder
- 31 Grand Ole —
- 32 Doubtfire or Miniver
- 33 Dele undoer
- 34 Corp. boss
- 35 "Give — break!"
- 36 Main ideas
- 37 Renewed energy
- 40 "Trust Exercise" author Susan
- 41 Verdi works
- 45 Tactic
- 47 Coffee vessel
- 49 Crimson Tide, briefly
- 50 Anger
- 51 French pronoun
- 52 Mellowed
- 53 Kimono ties
- 54 Briny expanse
- 55 Scarce
- 8 Bake eggs
- 9 Christmas shows
- 10 Aries summer
- 11 Drenched
- 19 Like Abner
- 21 Literary rep
- 23 Milkshake insert
- 24 Bug spray ingredient
- 25 Diner grub
- 26 Mythical birds
- 27 Duel tool
- 28 Veggie with florets
- 32 T-shirt sizes
- 33 Courtroom huddle
- 35 6 on a phone
- 36 Econ. measure
- 38 "But of course!"
- 39 Ancient Greek region
- 42 Sitarist's music
- 43 From the U.S.
- 44 "Maureen" singer
- 45 Expert
- 46 Ad- — (improvised)
- 48 Shad product

DOWN

- 1 Polite query
- 2 Biblical kingdom
- 3 Lawman Wyatt
- 4 "30 Rock" creator
- 5 Wedding setting
- 6 Prez on a penny
- 7 Piano compositions
- 8 Like Abner
- 9 Christmas shows
- 10 Aries summer
- 11 Drenched
- 19 Like Abner
- 21 Literary rep
- 23 Milkshake insert
- 24 Bug spray ingredient
- 25 Diner grub
- 26 Mythical birds
- 27 Duel tool
- 28 Veggie with florets
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- 39 Ancient Greek region
- 42 Sitarist's music
- 43 From the U.S.
- 44 "Maureen" singer
- 45 Expert
- 46 Ad- — (improvised)
- 48 Shad product

### Trivia Test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a female goat called?
2. TELEVISION: What is the name of the town in "Gilmore Girls"?
3. GEOGRAPHY: How many states does the Appalachian Trail cross?
4. MOVIES: Which actress voices the character Jessie in "Toy Story 2"?
5. U.S. PRESIDENTS: What is believed to have caused President Zachary Taylor's death?
6. ANATOMY: What is the most abundant protein in the human body?
7. GEOMETRY: How many sides does a hexagon have?
8. LITERATURE: Serial killer Hannibal Lecter first appears in which novel?
9. ASTRONOMY: What are planets outside our solar system called?
10. MUSIC: Who was the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame?

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

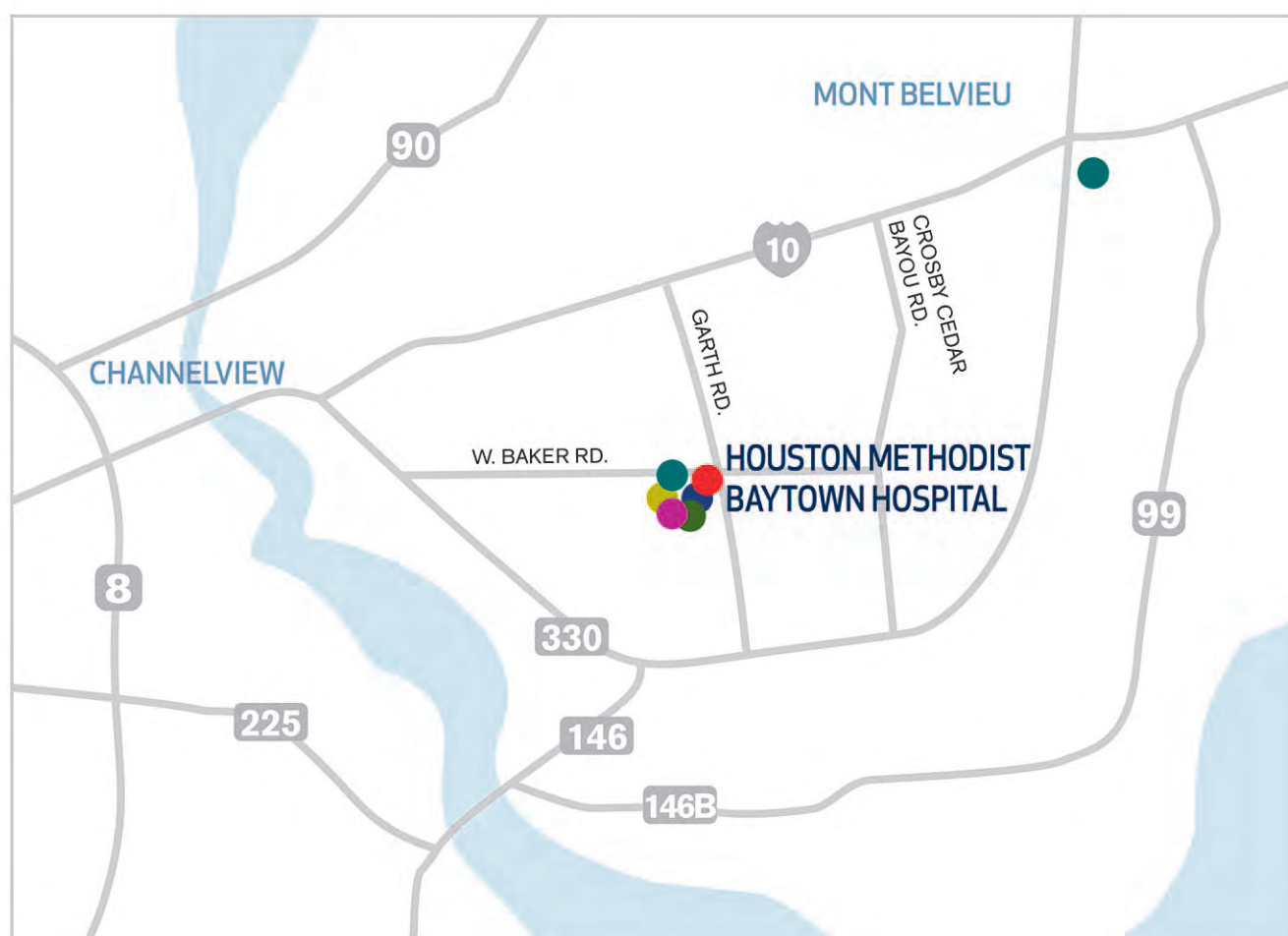


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