



HAPPY HALLOWEEN See Pumpkin Patches from Crosby to Mont Belvieu in this issue.

ELECTION DAY NOV. 4 - Vote on Amendments, Baytown Issues

Baytown voters to decide \$151 million bond for infrastructure

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Baytown residents will head to the polls on November 4, 2025, to vote on a sweeping \$151 million bond package that could shape the city's infrastructure and quality of life for years to come. The bond election, developed with input from a resident-led committee, features six separate propositions targeting roads, drainage, public safety, parks, and community facilities.

What's on the Ballot?

The bond package is divided into six propositions:

Proposition A: Major Thoroughfares (\$69.86 million)

Funds would go toward reconstructing and improving key roads such as Garth Road (Phases C, D, E), widening Cedar Bayou-Lynchburg, and upgrading W. Lobit Avenue. The proposition also covers sidewalks, streetlights, traffic signals, storm drainage, and utility improvements.

Proposition B: Neighborhood Streets & Pedestrian Improvements (\$30.45 million)

This includes the annual renewal of asphalt

streets across numerous neighborhoods, ADA-compliant sidewalk and pedestrian crossing upgrades, relocation of the North Alexander traffic signal, and a new trail connection from Jenkins Park to Goose Creek.

Proposition C: Drainage Infrastructure (\$14.03 million)

Funds would support West Baytown drainage improvements (Phases 2 and 3), design work for Rollingbrook drainage between Garth Road and

Continued. See \$151 MILLION BOND ISSUE, Page 2

Baytown prepares for pivotal City Council elections Nov. 4

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Baytown residents are gearing up for a significant election on November 4, 2025, with city council seats and major infrastructure propositions on the ballot. Early voting runs from October 20 to October 31, offering voters ample opportunity to cast their ballots ahead of Election Day.

Council Races: Who's Running?

This year, voters in Districts 1, 2, and 3 will select their representatives for the Baytown City

Council. District 1 features a contest between Laura Alvarado and Mercedes Renteria, III. District 3 is a three-way race with Kenrick Griffith, Renita Price, and Judith Ann Cushman DuBose vying for the seat. In District 2, Sarah Graham is running unopposed.

Each council member elected will serve a three-year term, helping to shape Baytown's future on issues ranging from public safety to infrastructure. Candidates recently outlined their priorities at a public forum, emphasizing community engagement, support for local

businesses, infrastructure improvements, and public safety.

Election Process and Voter Information

The City of Baytown holds its elections annually on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The filing period for candidates ran from July 19 to August 18, 2025, with early voting scheduled for October 20-31. To qualify, candidates must be U.S. citizens, registered voters in Baytown, at least 18

Continued. See CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS, Page 2

Crosby Methodist Church Celebrates 8th Annual Pumpkin Patch

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Crosby knows when fall has arrived—the grounds of Crosby United Methodist Church are transformed into a vibrant pumpkin patch, drawing families and community members from across the area. The tradition, which began eight years ago, has become a beloved fall staple in Crosby.

The pumpkins, grown on a farm in New Mexico, are delivered by truck at the end of September or early October.

"The patch opens the



Each year, athletes from the Crosby baseball team, soccer players, and even volleyball players from C. E. King lend a hand to church volunteers unloading the mountain of pumpkins.

day after delivery and remains open through October 31," said CUMC Pastor Jon Stouffer.

The event is a true community effort, with volunteers from the church, local high schools, and even sports teams pitching in to unload and arrange the pumpkins.

"For the last three years the Crosby HS Baseball team has come to help, as well as the soccer team one year, and the volleyball team from CE King HS one year," Stouffer said.

This year, the church received about 1,800 pumpkins, including a

wide variety of ornamental types.

"The ornamentals are amazing—a variety of smaller pumpkins and different shapes and colors too. We have winged gourds, swan gourds, and 'spookies,' which are smaller round pumpkins," Stouffer said.

Although the popular "elf-houses" (acorn-shaped pumpkins) were missed this year, the selection remains impressive.

The pumpkin patch is open Monday through

Continued. See CROSBY METHODIST CHURCH, Page 2

Congresswoman Garcia hosts telephone Town Hall

From community reports

Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia held a telephone town hall meeting this week, inviting constituents from Houston and surrounding areas to discuss pressing issues related to the ongoing government shutdown and the healthcare crisis. The live, interactive event allowed residents to ask questions directly and share their concerns about the impact of federal budget decisions on local families.

Focus on Healthcare and Budget Uncertainty

Opening the call, Congresswoman Garcia emphasized the importance of affordable healthcare and the urgency of resolving the government shutdown.

We need a spending deal that keeps health care affordable, not one that drives up costs for families and seniors, Garcia said. She highlighted that tax credits under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are set to expire at the end of the year, warning that if Congress does not act, treatments will double, and in some cases triple for millions of Americans.

Garcia noted the local impact, saying, Here in Texas 29, my district, that means that 111,000 of our neighbors will pay hundreds or even thousands more for next year. A family of four earning



\$64,000 will pay about \$2,600 more for the same coverage. This will make it unaffordable, and people will not get their coverage.

Constituents Voice Concerns

Throughout the event,

constituents raised questions about how the shutdown and proposed budget cuts might affect their daily lives. Deborah from Channelview asked about the future of school lunch programs and food assistance.

Texas has already announced that they don't have enough money to continue the SNAP program, which means there would be no more cards put in the mail. In terms of the school lunch programs, some of those were eliminated by the Department of Agriculture and every program theoretically expires on the 31st unless it gets

funded, Garcia responded.

Eleanor from Northside expressed concern about her Medicaid and Medicare benefits. Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, a former administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, reassured her, Most people who are on Medicare and Medicaid should not see their coverage disrupted. But things like home and community-based services, other types of benefits, that may change. States are under a lot of financial pressure.

Howard from Houston asked about Social Security payments.

The monthly checks will continue. You may end up getting a smaller check if premiums go up for your Medicare Part D program, but your monthly check will continue.

Healthcare Providers and Community Leaders Weigh In

Guest speakers included leaders from local health systems and community organizations. Ray Purser, board chair of Legacy Community Health Services, described the strain on community health centers.

Many patients who rely on the enhanced tax

Continued. See GARCIA TOWN HALL, Page 2

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Garcia Town Hall,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

credits will lose coverage. It's going to lead to an increase in the uninsured population, and we've already mentioned Texas already has the largest number of uninsured in the country. As more people lose coverage, they will turn to community health centers like Legacy for care. Our resources are already stretched, and additional demand could overwhelm our capacity.

Robert King-Hellier, senior vice president of public policy and government relations for Harris Health System, added, "We're looking at

probably a \$600 to \$700 million reduction in financing going to the safety net providers of this county. Harris County has the largest number of uninsured of any county in the nation. It's over one million.

Ripple Effects and Community Action

Orlando, a state employee, asked about the ripple effect on employer-provided health insurance.

It will have a ripple effect and it will end up impacting all of us because all our insurance costs, insurance companies will just start making adjust-

ments. So it will impact us, Garcia said.

The town hall concluded with a call to action from Garcia.

Continue to be an advocate, continue to do what you can to make sure people understand that the heart of the matter is healthcare. Our community has been through tough times before hurricanes, floods, pandemics and every single time we've stood back up together. This moment will be no different, she ended.

\$151 Million Bond Issue,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Main Street, and design/acquisition for West Main drainage improvements.

Proposition D: Fire Station #4 Design (\$4.25 million)

This covers the design and land acquisition for a new Fire Station No. 4, preparing the site for future construction.

Proposition E: Wetlands Center Education Facility & Arboretum (\$13 million)

Phase 1 of the Baytown Wetlands Center Education Facility and Arboretum Gardens would be funded, enhancing environmental education and public engagement.

Proposition F: Parks and Recreation Enhancements (\$19.76 million)

Improvements and expansions are planned for the Wayne Gray Sports

Complex, Unidad Park, and Gene & Loretta Russell Park, including new amenities and upgrades to benefit local recreation.

How Was the Bond Developed?

The list of projects was shaped by a resident-led bond committee, which reviewed and prioritized community needs before making recommendations to the city council. The council approved the propositions for the ballot after public input and debate about the city's most pressing needs versus its wants.

Tax Impact

While city officials say the tax rate will not increase immediately, projections show a possible increase of up to five cents over the next five to seven years, depending on property values and other local

tax levies.

Voting Information

Early voting runs from October 20 to October 31, with Election Day on November 4. Voters can check their registration status and find polling locations through the city's website or the Harris County Elections Office.

Why It Matters

If approved, the bond will fund critical infrastructure and quality-of-life projects that could accelerate Baytown's growth and address longstanding community needs. If rejected, many projects may face delays or cancellation.

For more details, residents can review the full list of projects and sample ballots on the City of Baytown's website www.baytown.org.

Baytown City Council Elections,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

years old, and meet residency requirements. Those convicted of a felony or found mentally incapacitated by a court are ineligible.

Why This Election Matters

With infrastructure, pub-

lic safety, and community priorities at stake, the 2025 Baytown City Council election is set to shape the city's direction for years to come. Voters are encouraged to review sample ballots, research candidate platforms, and

participate in early voting to ensure their voices are heard.

For more information, residents can contact the City Clerk's Office at (281) 420-6504 or visit the city's official election information page.

Crosby Methodist Church Celebrates 8th annual pumpkin patch,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The ornamentals, the smaller pumpkins, include different shapes and colors and are perfect for decorating.



More than 1,800 pumpkins, or half a truck, were delivered to Crosby United Methodist Church for their annual pumpkin patch.

Thursday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with October 31 as the last day for purchases.

In addition to pumpkin sales, the church hosted a Trunk or Treat event on the last Saturday of October, and a community clean-up on November 1 at

7:30 a.m.

Proceeds from the pumpkin patch support the church's ministries in the greater Crosby community.

"The farm that raises and sends the pumpkins shares about one-third of the profit with us, which we use for our ministries

in the Crosby community," Stouffer explained.

Leftover pumpkins find new homes with neighbors and friends, or are used as livestock feed, ensuring nothing goes to waste.

The church is located at 1334 Runneburg Road in Crosby.

Constitutional Amendments on the November 2025 General Election Ballot

Last day to register to vote: Oct. 6, 2025

Early Voting: Oct. 20-31, 2025

Election Date: Nov. 4, 2025

- 1** Creates two state funds to support career and technical education at Texas State Technical Colleges, aimed at preparing students for high-demand jobs.
- 2** Prohibits the imposition of a tax on the realized or unrealized net capital gains of individuals, families, estates, or trusts.
- 3** Allows judges to deny bail in certain serious felony cases, including violent crimes, first-degree sexual offenses, and continuous human trafficking.
- 4** Dedicates a portion of existing state sales tax revenue to the newly created Texas Water Fund. This fund will support projects to improve water infrastructure and supply across the state.
- 5** Exempts from property taxes any animal feed that is held by a retailer for sale. The exemption is intended to support agricultural and rural businesses.
- 6** Prohibits the Legislature from imposing an occupation tax on registered securities market operators or taxing securities transactions conducted by those entities.
- 7** Extends property tax relief to surviving spouses of veterans who died from service-connected causes, as recognized under federal law.
- 8** Although Texas currently has no estate or inheritance tax, this proposition prohibits the state from imposing an estate or inheritance tax on a decedent's property or on the transfer of an estate, inheritance, legacy, succession, or gift.
- 9** Increases the exemption from property taxation for personal property used in a business from \$2,500 to \$125,000. This applies to equipment, tools, and inventory used by the business to produce income.
- 10** Allows the Legislature to grant temporary property tax relief for homes rendered uninhabitable due to fire damage.
- 11** Increases the additional school district homestead exemption for homeowners 65+ or disabled from \$10,000 to \$60,000, raising their total exemption from \$110,000 to up to \$200,000 to provide property tax relief.
- 12** A proposal to modernize the State Commission on Judicial Conduct by updating its structure and expanding its authority. The goal is to improve transparency and accountability in the judicial system.
- 13** Increases the school district homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 for all homeowners to provide property tax relief.
- 14** Creates the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas with \$3 billion in state funding to support research and treatment of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and related conditions.
- 15** Affirms in the Texas Constitution that parents have the right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children. May affect how school and health policies are implemented.
- 16** Although it's already law, this proposition adds to the Texas Constitution that only U.S. citizens may vote in any Texas election.
- 17** Authorizes a property tax exemption for property owners along the Texas-Mexico border who install border security infrastructure and related improvements on their land.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

MB Parade Applications Are OPEN



Parade applications for the 2025 Christmas on the Hill Parade are officially open. This year's theme, Country Christmas, is bringing small-town charm and country cheer to the streets of Mont Belvieu. From festive farm scenes to western winter wonderlands, we're celebrating the season the down-home way with twinkling lights, toe-tappin' tunes, and a whole lot of holiday heart. Dust off your boots and get ready for a Country Christmas on The Hill that's full of festive flair as one of the biggest and best holiday traditions in Texas rolls down Eagle Drive on December 7.

Gather your group and get ready to spread some holiday cheer! All of the parade details, guidelines, and an online application are available at www.montbelvieu.net/parade. Applications for this year's parade will close on Monday, November 3.

Parade FAQs

1. How much does it cost? Each accepted entry will be assessed a \$50 fee. Parade managers will reach out to accepted entries with payment information.
2. How long is the parade? The parade route is a little over a mile long and will take approximately 90 minutes.
3. Are there prizes/awards? Yes! Parade entries will compete for one of 7 highly coveted parade awards. The full list of categories can be found at www.montbelvieu.net/parade
4. Will the parade still only go down one side of Eagle Dr.? Yes. Parade entries should orient themselves to present to the Barbers Hill ISD side (East side) of Eagle Dr.
5. What is the parade route? A map of this year's route can be found at www.montbelvieu.net/parade

Baytown Habitat Uncorked

Formerly known as Opening Doors
November 6 | 6pm - 9pm
Yepez Vineyard
12739 FM 2354
Baytown, Texas 77523

This special evening is all about the heart of Habitat, the "whys" that inspire us, the families who move us, and the hope we build. You will have opportunities to take part in our raffle and silent auction to raise critical funds to help local families build safe and affordable homes.

\$50 per person Includes: Dinner Dessert | Drink Ticket

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PCT.3 & Baytown PD Team Up to Recover Stolen Property for Baytown Saints Youth Soccer

Harris County Pct. 3 Parks Division was contacted in reference to a burglary at the Baytown Soccer Complex where the Baytown Saints Youth Soccer Club storage facility was broken into in the early morning hours. A John Deere side-by-side, along with several thousand dollars worth of tools and equipment were stolen during the burglary.

Thankfully, some of the tools and equipment had trackers on them. With the assistance of Harris County Pct. 3 Day Shift Patrol and the Baytown Police Department, 98% of the stolen property, along with the John Deere side by side, were recovered and returned back to the Baytown Saints Youth Soccer Club.

Later in the day, the suspect was arrested by Day Shift Patrol and The Baytown Police Department on other theft related charges.



Charges are pending for the burglary to the Baytown Soccer Complex. Great teamwork, great

Families Flock to Mont Belvieu 2025 Pumpkin Patch Festival for a Day of Fall Fun

By Gerardo Hernandez

MONT BELVIEU, TX — Smiles, laughter, and the scent of pumpkin spice filled the air this weekend as hundreds of families gathered for the annual Pumpkin Patch Festival hosted by Mont Belvieu Methodist Church.

Originally set for Saturday, October 25, the festival was briefly postponed to Sunday afternoon due to rain, but the change in schedule didn't dampen the community's enthusiasm. By the time the gates opened at 1 p.m., families were already lined up along Eagle Drive, ready to enjoy one of Mont Belvieu's most beloved fall traditions.

The church grounds were transformed into a vibrant autumn wonderland, featuring pumpkin displays, local vendor booths, children's games,



inflatables, and festive photo spots. Parents snapped pictures of their kids posing beside hay bales and towering stacks of bright orange pumpkins, while volunteers from the church handed out treats and helped families pick the perfect pumpkin to take home.

More than a dozen local vendors participated, offering everything from homemade crafts and fall décor to baked goods and specialty coffees. Children enjoyed face painting, pumpkin bowling, and the always-popular bounce houses, while adults browsed booths and chatted over hot chocolate.

Proceeds from pumpkin sales and donations during the event will support local outreach programs organized by the church, including food drives and youth activities.

Officer and Two Children Airlifted After Deadly Crash in Baytown

BAYTOWN, Texas - Two children and a police officer were flown to the hospital after a deadly crash near the intersection of West Baker Road and Country Club Drive, officials said.

All lanes of West Baker Road, from Village Lane to Country Club Drive, were closed as an investigation into the major accident was underway Thursday night, the Baytown Police Department said.

Baytown PD said the crash, which occurred shortly after 7 p.m., involved an on-duty Baytown police officer driving a marked patrol unit. They added that the officer suffered a leg injury and was flown to the hospital, where they are now stabilized.



The driver behind the wheel of the other vehicle was a Baytown woman and was occupied by five minors, Baytown PD said. They also said two of the minors were flown to the hospital, while the remaining occupants were treated at the scene for their injuries. Baytown PD added that the extent of their

injuries is unknown. While the Harris County District Attorney's Office said the crash was deadly, Baytown PD could not confirm whether or not there was a fatality. The district attorney's office did not say which party was killed in the crash.

"This is a tragedy for everyone involved and impacted by this event," said

Baytown Police Chief John Stringer in a press release. "Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers are with the children and family involved, as well as our officer, the officer's family, and the Baytown officers who responded to the scene. While this has been a difficult time for everyone, we are grateful that our officer is in stable condition.

The department's Traffic Reconstruction Team is investigating in accordance with standard procedures and is cooperating fully to ensure a transparent and factual review of this incident. We ask for patience and objectivity from the community as we gather all information, which may take some time. I would also like to recognize the professional and compassionate response of our officers who provided aid to all involved."

The Baytown Police Department's Crash Reconstruction Team, along with the Harris County District Attorney's Office Vehicular Crimes Division (VCD), is conducting the investigation into the crash.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**



Republicans Getting the Blame for the Shutdown

Republicans Getting the Blame for the Shutdown

So far, more Americans are blaming Republicans than Democrats for the shutdown – and it is not close. Since the shutdown began, four polls have asked Americans who they blame most for the shutdown. In addition, one poll was conducted just before the shutdown began. This is the summary of those five polls.

Blame for Shutdown	Democrats	Republicans	Both	Not Sure	Net Blame Republicans
Washington Post	30	47		23	17
Navigator	26	45	21	8	19
Morning Consult	32	45		23	13
PBS/Marist	27	38	31	4	11
NYT/Siena (before shutdown)	19	26	33	21	7
Average	27	40	28	16	13

As one would expect, the partisan breakdown of who is to blame closely tracks party identification. But among the all-important independent voters, Republicans are clearly losing the blame game. Independents are almost twice as likely to fault Republicans. However, being true to their moniker, a plurality of independents blame both parties equally.

Blame for Shutdown	Independents				Net Blame Republicans
	Democrats	Republicans	Both	Not Sure	
Washington Post	22	50	39		28
Navigator	8	39	42	11	31
Morning Consult	24	41	35		17
PBS/Marist	19	36	41	5	17
NYT/Siena (before shutdown)	13	26	42	19	13
Average	17	38	40	12	21

Of course, these results are far outside the margins of error on these polls. And while it may be fair to characterize several of these pollsters as left-leaning, these results are so lopsided that there can be little doubt that the shutdown, at least so far, is hurting Republicans more than Democrats.

I was surprised by these results. Traditionally, the minority party holding the government hostage has borne the blame for shutdowns, so I expected to see the same pattern this time. I think there might be a couple of reasons why the Republicans are getting blamed this time around.


First, most past shutdowns were instigated by a Republican minority. Over time, shutdown politics may have become a core part of the Republican brand in the minds of many Americans. Additionally, all previous administrations have denounced the damage that a shutdown could cause. However, the Trump administration has almost embraced it. In a White House interview on September 30, Trump said, “We can get rid of a lot of things that we didn’t want — and they’d be Democrat things.” My guess is that kind of language is hitting many voters, especially independents, crossways.

However, there may be another reason why Republicans are being blamed. While they have attempted to frame the shutdown as a dispute over healthcare for illegal immigrants, many Americans may be focused on another issue that more directly impacts their pocketbooks – the Affordable Care subsidies. A CBO report last year estimated that the expiration of the subsidies would affect 12-14 million Americans, with 2-4 million losing their healthcare coverage and another 9-10 million seeing substantially higher premiums.

Republicans only won the popular vote in all House races in 2024 by 3.8 million votes. Having 12-14 million Americans hopping mad over losing their health insurance or seeing much higher premiums is probably not a winning strategy for the midterms.

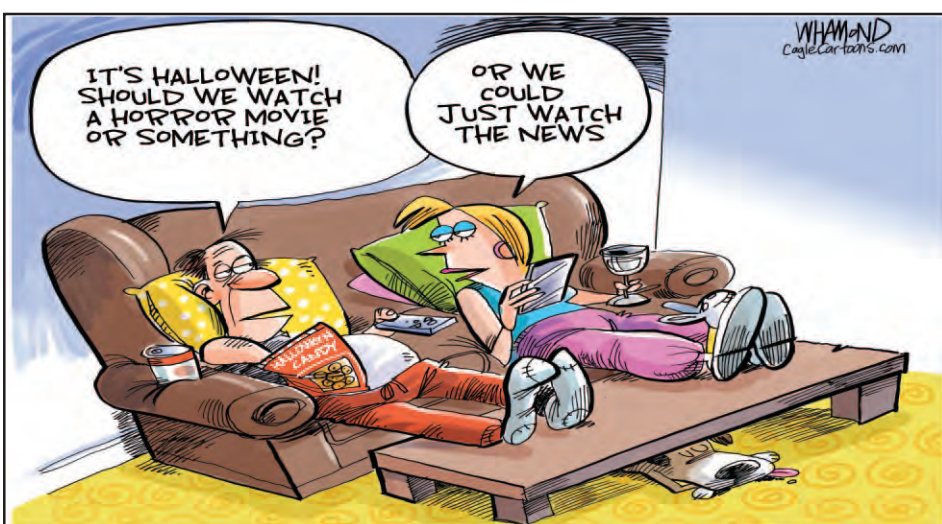
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Americanisms



“Halloween is not only about putting on a costume, but it’s about finding the imagination and costume within ourselves.”
— *Elvis Duran*

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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By **Gary Borders**



Early Voting Underway for November Election

Early voting began Monday across Texas with voters deciding the fate of 17 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution, as well as local races for city and school board, bond measures, and tax proposals. The Houston Chronicle reported that many of the propositions intend to lower property taxes for homeowners and businesses. There are two proposed changes to the homestead exemption.

Prop 13 would raise the exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 for all homeowners. The amendment’s authors say that it would save homeowners an average of \$363 annually. Prop 11 would raise the tax exemption for disabled Texans and those 65 and older from the current \$10,000 to \$60,000, bringing their total homestead exemption to \$200,000.

The additional property tax exemptions would cost the state \$4 billion in property tax revenue over the next two years.

Prop 9 would raise the tax exemption for businesses’ personal property from \$2,500 to \$125,000. Other propositions include small property tax cuts for specific groups, such as surviving spouses of deceased veterans.

Prop 4 would create a \$1 billion annual fund for water infrastructure projects, financed by state sales tax revenue. Half of the money, if it passes, would go for new water projects. The other half would go to fix deteriorating infrastructure.

A non-partisan explanation of all 17 propositions provided by the Texas Legislative Council can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/mt3yjfwd>.

AUSTIN STATE REP. HINOJOSA RUNNING AGAINST ABBOTT

State Rep. Gina Hinojosa, D-Austin, has joined the race for governor, the Austin American-Statesman reported. She accused incumbent Gov. Greg Abbott, seeking his fourth term, of being beholden to wealthy donors.

“Our fight right now is against the billionaires and the corporations, who are driving up prices, closing our neighborhood schools and cheating Texans out of basic health care. That’s who Greg Abbott works for,” she said in



a video announcing her campaign.

Hinojosa has served in the House since 2017 and fought against the school voucher plan passed earlier this year.

Also running thus far in the Democratic primary are Andrew White, a Houston businessman and son of the late Gov. Mark White; Bobby Cole, a rancher and retired firefighter; and Bay City Councilman Benjamin Flores.

PARENTAL RIGHTS LAW LEAVES FAMILIES, SCHOOL NURSES CONFUSED

A new form required after passage of the state’s new education law has left both parents and school nurses confused, the Texas Standard reported. Senate Bill 12, which was billed as a parental rights law, requires parental permission before a school employee can provide physical or mental health care.

Unclear wording in a few paragraphs is being blamed by some for the confusion. School nurses worry they might unknowingly break the new law, according to Becca Harkle-road, executive director of the Texas School Nurses Organization.

“The law was very clear that if you provided any services without written consent, disciplinary action was coming your way,” she said. “So that gave a lot of people pause.”

The bill’s authors, state Rep. Jeff Leach, R-Plano, and former state Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, acknowledged the confusion and urged educators “not to suspend common sense when it comes to providing basic care for the children at their schools.”

Leach and Creighton have asked the Texas Education Agency to provide “consistent

and clear guidance” to schools on how to implement the law. That guidance was released last month, but Jack Frazee with the Texas Nurses Association said he is awaiting additional details from TEA to provide more clarity.

FOREST SERVICE AWARDS \$164 MILLION TO VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Texas A&M Forest Service has approved \$164 million in funding for Texas volunteer fire departments to purchase 558 fire trucks and 321 slip-on units through a grant program established in 2001.

The state uses a tiered approach to wildfire response, with local VFDs as the first on the scene, followed by state response if needed.

“Texas fire departments are the front line of local response, and their equipment capacity is vital to response time and effectiveness,” said Al Davis, Texas A&M Forest Service director. “This historic funding reflects the strong support of the Texas Legislature and governor. Their investment allows us to continue supporting and equipping firefighters who protect Texas lives and property.”

TEXAS CONTINUES TO RANK TOPS IN TRADE

With 32 official ports of entry and two intermodal logistics facilities to connect different modes of transport, Texas continues to lead the nation in overall value of trade commodities, according to the comptroller’s office.

The state’s trade value fell to \$634.6 billion during the 2020 COVID pandemic but has increased by 67.6% since then, to \$1.1 trillion.

Port Laredo leads the country in total trade with \$339.5 billion of commodities coming through that port of entry. Port Houston ranks first in the nation in exports flowing out of the port at \$129.9 billion.

ANOTHER DRY, HOT OCTOBER FOR MOST OF TEXAS

This month is shaping up to be a repeat of last October, with much of the state staying both drier and warmer than average, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. By the end of September, 24% of the state was in drought, up four percentage points from late August.

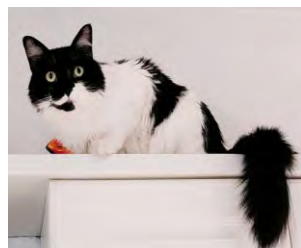
While a very wet July slowed down the expansion of drought conditions, soil moisture across the state has been much reduced since. With 40% of the state now classified as abnormally dry, the National Weather Service is predicting drought conditions to expand to cover most of Texas. The next few months are expected to be warmer and drier than normal in the state.

Those dry conditions are increasing the chances of wildfires. The forest service now classifies Texas at Level 3 in what it calls Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels, with wildfire activity affecting several regions. Level 5 is the highest level.

As of Sunday, there were three active wildfires in Texas, the largest being the 195-acre Bronco Creek fire in Wheeler County in the Panhandle. It was 75% contained.

THE POSTSCRIPT
By **Carrie Classon**

Living with Felix



My cat, Felix, is lying at the foot of the bed. I wiggle my toes. Felix puts his teeth around them and I can feel the little points of his incisors. He lets me know he could bite—but he does not. That’s because both Felix and I have learned a lot.

We have had Felix for almost two years. Before we adopted Felix, he lived for two years on the street—at least that is what the vet said. The vet said teeth do not lie, and Felix’s teeth were two years old. My husband, Peter, is convinced that Felix is much younger because he was so small when we adopted him. And it’s true, he became much bigger and more muscular once he started getting regular nutrition. But Felix knew nothing about living in houses or living with people and, to be honest, we knew nothing about living with Felix.

The first time Felix felt comfortable enough to sleep on the bed, he bit our toes—hard. He bit them as if he planned to bite right through them.

“OWW!” Peter yelled the first time it happened to him. Peter took to wearing very heavy socks to bed. I’m not sure when or how it happened, but eventually Felix learned that those enticing little mice under the blankets were actually body parts that belonged to us.

The biggest problem wasn’t the toes, however. It was that Felix had never used a litter box. He used it right away when we adopted him—but not all the time, and that was a problem. We put down plastic to discourage him from going in the corners. We hid our dirty laundry to prevent him from peeing in that. We took him to the vet. She explained that he had to be stressed. Only stressed-out cats don’t use the litter box. Peter and I were skeptical.

Because Felix seemed entirely relaxed. In fact, when we caught him peeing where he shouldn’t, he seemed totally chill. “What’s the issue?” he seemed to be asking.

And again, I don’t know how he figured it out, but eventually he just stopped peeing anywhere but his litter box. He isn’t any less stressed. He just decided that peeing in one place was less hassle.

I’ve had other cats, but I have never had a cat as athletic as Felix. He quite literally bounces off the walls. He gets up speed in the hallway, then hits the wall at a high rate of speed and ricochets onto another wall before tearing off in the opposite direction. He makes a ferocious sort of growl when he does this. It is very exciting living with Felix.

I don’t know if he will ever be as cuddly as other cats I’ve had, and I don’t really care. Felix likes to be petted but won’t sit on a lap. He sleeps in the bed, but always far enough away so we can’t touch him. He does not like being picked up or carried around, although he now tolerates it for a short while. Maybe living on the streets for a couple of years made him a little more independent. Maybe that’s just how he is made.

But I think, as much as people and cats can understand one another, we’ve come to an understanding with Felix. He is part of our family. He misses us when we are gone. He always wants to know what we are doing. He purrs loudly and often. And he doesn’t bite our toes anymore—at least not very hard.

Till next time,
Carrie

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FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 10: Texas face tough test at home against Denver: High-octane Cowboys offense takes on Arizona on MNF

As the calendar turns from October to November, things are starting to gear up at the college and pro level.

In high school action, there are a number of important games.

Friday, Oct. 31

North Shore at C. E. King at 7 p.m., at Panther Stadium

Saturday, Nov. 1

Channelview at Atascocita at 6 p.m., at Turner Stadium in Humble

Galena Park at Houston Westbury at 12 noon, at Delmar Stadium

In the NCAA, teams are beginning to jockey for position as the first College Football Playoff (CFP) rankings will be released on Nov. 4 on ESPN. In the NFL, the Week 9 schedule has a number of intriguing matchups that could go a long way in determining who's in and who's out once the playoffs roll around.

This week's college schedule is so-so, while the NFL will take center stage, once again.

In the Big 12, No. 14-ranked Texas Tech, which lost 26-22 at Arizona State two weeks ago with backup QB Will Hammond running the offense, travels to Manhattan, KS to take on a struggling Kansas State team. This will be no walk in the park for Joey McGuire's team, which has not beaten the Wildcats since 2015 and has lost eight straight games to them. Tech's last win at KSU came in 2008. Ouch!

In the SEC, No. 14-ranked Oklahoma visits No. 17-ranked Tennessee with the winner remaining somewhat alive in the conference title race.

The ACC has an interesting matchup at No. 9-ranked Miami travels to Dallas to take on a dangerous and unranked SMU team. Two weeks ago, the Hurricanes, who were ranked No. 2 at the time, were upset at home, 24-21 by previously unranked Louisville, while the Mustangs picked up a big 35-24 win at Clemson.

In the NFL, the Texans host a very solid Denver team at NRG Stadium at noon on Sunday. Two weeks ago, Denver trailed the Giants 19-0 after three quarters, but scored 33 points in the fourth quarter en route to a wild 33-32 win. This will be a tough game for the Texans who will be facing one of the league's top defenses.

Week 9 begins with a good one on Thursday Night Football as the Atlanta Falcons take on one of the surprise teams of the 2025 season when they travel to Foxborough to take on the New England Patriots.

Another surprise team, the Indianapolis Colts, who moved to 6-1 two weeks ago with a 38-24 win over the Los Angeles Chargers in LaLa Land, visit the Steelers in the Steel City.

The Sunday Night Football game features Seattle at Washington, in a key game for both teams. Two weeks ago, the Commanders were blown out at Dallas, 44-22, and star QB Jayden Daniels suffered his second injury of the season when he sustained a hamstring injury. If he is unable to play, Washington could be in a world of hurt.

Week 9 concludes on Monday Night Football with the aforementioned Dallas Cowboys hosting the reeling Arizona Cardinals.



KEENEY'S KORNER
By
MIKE KEENEY

Before we look at this weekend's games, let's review last week's record. An 8-4 week brought the season record to 58-36 (60%).

Now, onto this week's games.

NCAA

Oklahoma at Tennessee - This is the only game on the NCAA schedule this weekend that pits two ranked teams as No. 14 OU visits No. 17 Tennessee in an elimination game in the SEC for both teams. Actually, both teams have little chance to play in the SEC title game. There are just too many teams ahead of them in the conference standings. Two weeks ago, the Vols picked up their second league loss, falling at Alabama, 37-20. They would like nothing more than to gum up OU's SEC title hopes. Tennessee has a potent offense led by QB Joey Aguilar (1,948 yards, 15 TDs), running back DeSean Bishop (604 yards, 7 TDs) and wideouts Chris Brazzell II (39 receptions, 602 yards, 7 TDs) and Braylon Staley (41 receptions, 523 yards, 3 TDs). That unit will face a stout Sooner defense. Two weeks ago, that unit gave up just seven points in OU's 26-7 win at South Carolina. The OU offense will be led by QB John Mateer (1,567 passing yards, 7 TDs/209 rushing yards, 5 TDs), running back Tony Blaylock (393 yards, 4 TDs) and big-play wide receiver Isaiah Sategna III (37 receptions, 493 yards, 4 TDs). Tennessee coach Josh Heupel is a former Sooner QB, and he would like nothing more than to stick it to his old team on Saturday in Knoxville. My pick, Tennessee 27, Oklahoma 23

Miami at SMU - No. 9-ranked Miami heads to Dallas to take on the SMU Mustangs in a key ACC game for both teams. Two weeks ago, the Hurricanes saw their undefeated season come to an end when they were upset at home by Louisville, 24-21, while SMU picked up a huge road win with a 35-24 win at Clemson. The 'Canes need the good Carson Beck (1,484 yards, 11 TDs, 7 interceptions) to show up in Dallas. He has talent around him in running back Mark Fletcher (446 yards, 6 TDs) and big-play wideouts Malachi Tony (38 receptions, 510 yards, 3 TDs) and CJ Daniels (30 receptions, 343 yards, 5 TDs). The Mustangs will present the Miami defense with all kinds of troubles with QB Kevin Jennings (1,948 yards, 17 TDs), running back TJ Hardon (431 yards, 5 TDs) and wide receiver Romello Brinson (34 receptions, 502 yards, 3 TDs). I think Jennings has a big day as the Mustangs pull off the upset and put a huge damper on Miami's CFP hopes. My pick, SMU 33, Miami 30

Texas Tech at Kansas State - This is a very important game for No. 14 Texas Tech and their Big 12 and CFP hopes, and they take on a team they have a bad history against. The Red Raiders have not defeated KSU since 2015, and are riding an eight-game losing streak against them. Two weeks ago, Joey McGuire's team suffered its first loss of the year,

when it fell at Arizona State, 26-22. Red Raider fans hope that starting QB Behren Morton (1,501 yards, 13 TDs) returns to this game. Morton sustained an ankle injury three weeks ago in Tech's win over Kansas, and backup QB Will Hammond (578 passing yards, 6 TDs/278 rushing yards, 5 TDs) struggled in his first start. If Hammond gets the starting assignment this week, he must pick up his game. It would help if Tech turned to its running game, with Cameron Dickey (633 yards, 8 TDs) and J'Koby Williams (378 yards, 5 total TDs). If Tech can establish the run, that will open up the passing game for wideouts Caleb Douglas (29 receptions, 413 yards, 1 TD) and Coy Eakin (29 receptions, 407 yards, 4 TDs). The Tech defense needs to get back to its dominant ways, but will have its hands full with dual-threat QB Avery Johnson (1,556 passing yards, 13 TDs/238 rushing yards, 3 TDs). Look for the Tech defense to be the difference maker in this one as the Red Raiders pick up a huge road win. My pick, Texas Tech 34, Kansas State 20

NFL

Atlanta at New England - Don't look now, but the New England Patriots look like they are back. After years of hard times after the departure of Hall of Fame QB Tom Brady, the Pats have drafted wisely, acquired key free agents and have a real coach in former NE linebacker Mike Vrabel. The Pats won five of their first seven games and were atop the AFC East standings heading into last Sunday's home game against Cleveland. They have a solid QB in second-year man Drake Maye (1,744 passing yards, 12 TDs/200 rushing yards, 2 TDs) and big-play wideouts in former Texans Stefon Diggs (39 receptions, 456 yards) and Kayshon Bouette (20 receptions, 356 yards, 4 TDs). Their defense is solid as well, and will get tested by perhaps the best offensive player in the league in Falcons running back Bijan Robinson (524 rushing yards, 11 TDs/30 receptions, 390 yards, 2 TDs). Look for the Pats defense to limit Robinson as New England picks up another win. My pick, New England 26, Atlanta 16

Denver at Houston - These are tough times for Texans fans. Two weeks ago, Houston fell to 2-4 after its 27-19 loss on Monday Night Football at Seattle. Their playoff hopes took a big hit with that loss and this week they face a Denver team that has one of the best defenses in the NFL. This will be a tough test for the beleaguered Houston offensive line, and could be a long day for QB C.J. Stroud (1,305 yards, 9 TDs). Stroud needs a big day from wide receiver Nico Collins (26 receptions, 339 yards, 3 TDs) as the run game is non-existent. The Houston defense is decent, but will take on a Denver offense that scored 33 points in the fourth quarter two weeks ago in a thrilling 33-32 comeback win over the Giants. Denver has a dual-threat QB in Bo Nix (1,556 passing yards, 11



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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCORES/SCHEDULES

LAST WEEK'S SCORES
FRIDAY, OCT. 24

Barbers Hill 48, Galveston Ball 0
Baytown Sterling, BYE WEEK
Dayton 34, Splendora 7
Goose Creek Memorial 44, Channelview 28
Huffman Hargrave 52, Livingston 35
La Porte 28, Crosby 21

NEXT WEEK'S GAMES
THURSDAY, OCT. 30

Baytown Lee at Lamar Consolidated at 7 p.m., at Guy K. Traylor Stadium in Rosenberg

FRIDAY, OCT. 31

Barbers Hill, BYE WEEK
Baytown Sterling at Port Arthur at 7 p.m., at Port Arthur Memorial Stadium in Port Arthur
Crosby vs. Porter (Senior Night) at 7 p.m., at Cougar Stadium
Dayton vs. West Fork at 7 p.m., at Bronco Stadium
Huffman Hargrave at Little Cypress-Mauriceville at 7:30 p.m., at Battlin' Bear Stadium in Orange

SATURDAY, NOV. 1

Goose Creek Memorial at Humble at 1 p.m., at Turner Stadium in Humble



TDs/172 rushing yards, 3 TDs), running back J.K. Dobbins (523 yards, 4 TDs) and wide receiver Courtland Sutton (33 receptions, 469 yards, 3 TDs). My pick, Denver 24, Houston 20

Indianapolis at Pittsburgh - The Colts have been one of the biggest surprise teams thus far, winning six of their first seven games to sit atop the AFC South standings. Indy has revived QB Daniel Jones' career (1,790 passing yards, 10 TDs/83 rushing yards, 4 TDs) and running back Jonathan Taylor (697 rushing yards, 10 TDs/23 receptions, 185 yards, 1 TD) is having one of the best years of his career. The Colts also have a big-play rookie tight end in Tyler Warren (33 receptions, 439 yards, 3 TDs). Jones will get a real test against a very solid Steeler defense, as will the Indy defense when it takes on Aaron Rodgers (1,270 yards, 14 TDs) and wideout DK Metcalf (22 receptions, 406 yards, 4 TDs). Look for the Pittsburgh defense to be the difference maker as the Colts march to the division crown hits a bump in the road. My pick, Pittsburgh 23, Indianapolis 20

Seattle at Washington - The Seahawks visit the Commanders on Sunday Night Football and bring their high-powered offense and stifling defense to the nation's capital. Two weeks ago, both units were key factors in Seattle's 27-19 home win over the Texans, while Washington suffered a 44-22 blowout loss to the Cowboys in Arlington. In that game, star QB Jayden Daniels (1,031 passing yards, 8 TDs/211 rushing yards, 1 TD) suffered a right hamstring injury, so his status for this game is unknown. If he's unable to go, Washington could be in a world of hurt against one of the league's top 10 defenses. Seattle also has a solid offense led by QB Sam Darnold (1,754 yards, 12 TDs), running back Kenneth Walker III (430 yards, 3 TDs) and electrifying wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba (50 receptions, 819 yards, 4 TDs). Seattle is not afraid to play on the road, as evidenced by their three road wins so far this season. Look for the 'Hawks to pick up another road win on Sunday night. My pick, Seattle 30, Washington 22

Arizona at Dallas - Week 9 concludes with

Monday Night Football when the Cowboys host the Cardinals. Two weeks ago, the Dallas offense rolled once again, with a 44-22 home win over Washington. It marked the third time the Cowboys have scored 40 points in a game this season. QB Dak Prescott (1,881 yards, 16 TDs) is having an MVP-like season and he has a load of weapons around him in running back Javonte Williams (592 yards, 7 total TDs), big-play wideouts George Pickens (36 receptions, 607 yards, 6 TDs) and CeeDee Lamb (21 receptions, 332 yards, 1 TD in 4 games) and dependable tight end Jake Ferguson (51 receptions, 334 yards, 6 TDs). The Dallas defense is playing a bit better and will get tested by dual-threat QB Kyler Murray (962 passing yards, 6 TDs/173 rushing yards, 1 TD in five games) and big-play tight end Trey McBride (47 receptions, 421 yards, 4 TDs). Look for the Dallas offense to roll once again. If the Cowboys hope to remain in the playoff hunt, they must win games they are supposed to win, and they are supposed to win this one in prime time. My pick, Dallas 36, Arizona 23.

Say "Bon Voyage" to the iconic Sam Houston Tour Boat

New Vessel will replace the ship in 2026

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Cue the confetti and prepare for fond farewells: Port Houston's beloved tour vessel, the M/V Sam Houston, is celebrating its 67th birthday and preparing to retire in 2026. Since her first voyage on July 30, 1958, the Sam Houston has been more than just a tour boat, she's become a living symbol of Houston's rich maritime heritage.

As the Sam Houston approaches her final season, Port Houston is honoring her legendary service with a public storytelling campaign, inviting Houstonians to share their memories and experiences aboard the iconic vessel.

Over the decades, the Sam Houston has welcomed more than two million passengers, including out-of-town visitors, local students, royalty, celebrities, political leaders, and astronauts. Each guest has had the chance to experience the pride and backbone of Houston the Houston Ship Channel up close.

"The Sam Houston is more than just a boat; she's a symbol of Port Houston's legacy, hospitality, and connection to the community," said Charlie Jenkins, CEO of Port Houston. For 67 years, she's offered a front-row seat to the heart of maritime operations, helping guests understand the vital role our port plays in regional prosperity and global trade. As we celebrate her final season, we also reflect on the impact she's made and the stories that will live on well after her last voyage.

Looking to the future, Port Houston has announced plans to build a new tour vessel. The new boat will expand maritime education outreach, better accommodate guests with restricted mobility, and reinforce the port's commitment to environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality. The new vessel is expected to launch its



maiden voyage within the next 12 to 14 months.

At 95 feet long and with a capacity of 100 passengers, the Sam Houston has been the backdrop for countless inspiring and uplifting stories. Families have enjoyed rewarding daytime outings, and the boat has even played Cupid, sparking love stories that began on her decks and sailed into happily ever after.

The Sam Houston has launched adventures, sparked lifelong friendships, and captured the spirit of our maritime community and our city, said Maria Aguirre, director of community relations. As we mark nearly 70 years of memories, we're inviting everyone to share their favorite moments.

Port Houston encourages anyone with a special memory of the Sam Houston to send their stories written, video, or audio to communityrelations@porthouston.com. These memories will be compiled and shared through Port Houston's

social channels as the Sam Houston approaches her well-earned retirement in 2026.

"While we don't yet have a specific date for the M/V Sam Houston retirement, it is expected to be in Q2 or Q3 of 2026, and the new vessel would begin tours at that time," said spokesperson Christine Abbruscato. Until then, guests can continue to make reservations on the 1st of the month for the following month, and more info can be found at: <https://porthouston.com/community/tours/sam-houston-boat-tour/>.

The new vessel doesn't yet have a name, but it will be hybrid-electric, aligning with Port Houston's sustainability goals. The capacity will be larger, and it will better serve guests with restricted mobility. The Port Commission approved this purchase at its March 2025 meeting at an amount just under \$7 million, with funds sourced from Port Houston operations.

The current M/V Sam Houston holds 90-100 people, and the new ship will hold 150. While there are no plans for a merchandise store on the new vessel, guests can expect soda, water, and a light snack to be served onboard.

As the Sam Houston prepares to sail into retirement, Port Houston invites the community to celebrate nearly seven decades of memories and look forward to a new chapter in Houston's maritime story.

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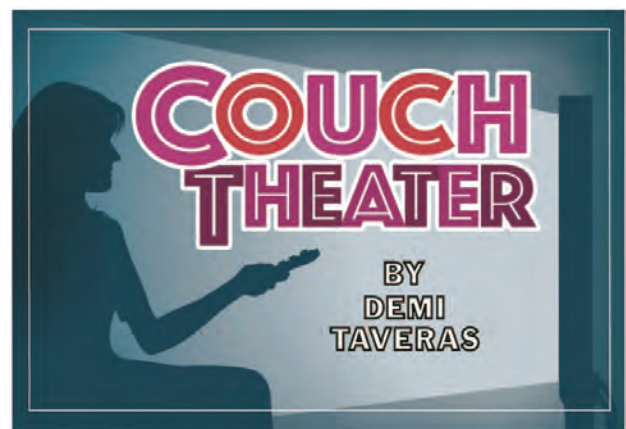
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Colin Farrell, left, and Tilda Swinton star in "Ballad of Small Player."

"Ballad of Small Player"

"It: Welcome to Derry" (TV-MA) — The new prequel series to the "It" films just premiered its first episode in the nick of time for Halloween, although episodes will continue releasing weekly well into December. Taylor Paige ("Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F") and Jovan Adepo ("His Three Daughters") play a couple who move to the fictional town of Derry, Maine, to find some normalcy for themselves and their son. Little do they know that Derry, of all places, doesn't have much normalcy to offer them. Just as they arrive at their new home, a boy goes missing, leaving the police department at a loss as to how it happened. But if you know the "It" franchise, you know it all comes down to the kids and their sleuthing. Hopefully, they're prepared for what they're going to find ... (HBO Max)

"Devil in Disguise: John Wayne Gacy"

(TV-MA) — The final pick for spooky-season viewing this year is this true-crime drama series about the life of 1970s serial killer John Wayne Gacy. Michael Chernus ("Severance"), who's usually known for more comedic roles, takes on the role of the titular character and presents a more menacing side to him than we've ever seen before. The series focuses on the many personalities of Gacy that he showed to his community — him as a contractor, a politician, and even a clown — but also the psychopathic side he kept hidden. As an investigation launches against Gacy and his crimes, viewers can watch along to see how he tries to slither out of the consequences of his own actions. All eight episodes are out now. (Peacock)

"Ballad of a Small Player" (R) — Hailing from "Conclave" director Edward Berger is this new psychological thrill-

er led by Colin Farrell ("The Penguin"). Based on the novel by Lawrence Osbourne, the film follows gambling man Lord Doyle (Farrell), who is down on his luck but still gambling his life away in Macau, China. Between his incessant gambling and heavy drinking, Lord is a mess. So, when private investigator Cynthia Blithe (Tilda Swinton) shows up in Macau looking for him to settle the debts from his past, the high stakes get even higher for Lord to win some money. The setting of Macau is a vibrant playground for the storytelling of this film to kick off, and viewers can enjoy yet another stellar performance from Farrell when the film premieres on Oct. 29. (Netflix)

"Hedda" (R) — Last but far from least is this drama film based on the play "Hedda Gabler" written by Henrik Ibsen, but it puts an interesting spin on the original play. Tessa Thompson ("Creed III") portrays the title character, a woman named Hedda, in the 1880s who finds herself bored with her current life and marriage, even though money and a mansion are exactly what she thought she wanted. Then, over the course of one night, as if from wishful thinking, life tosses her the curveball she's been wanting — in the form of an ex-lover, Eileen, showing up at the party that she and her husband are throwing. The sole presence of Eileen puts the vibe of the night at an imbalance, leaving it to Hedda to find an equilibrium not only for the night but for the rest of her life. Out on Oct. 29. (Amazon Prime Video)

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Q: My husband and I just finished bingeing "Better Call Saul." We've also watched "Breaking Bad." Since there aren't any other shows in this "universe," what show would you suggest that's similar? — G.K.

A: If I had to choose a series in a similar vein, I would stream "Fargo," which is an FX series available now on Hulu. It's an anthology series created by Noah Hawley and based very loosely on the Academy-Award-winning film of the same name. The series debuted in 2014 and is similar to "Better Call Saul" in that both are black comedies about ordinary people who find themselves committing felonies.

Each season of "Fargo" takes place in the frozen tundra but during a different year. Season one starts out in 2006 and centers around a meek insurance salesman named Lester played by Martin Freeman ("Sherlock"), who finds himself mixed up with a sociopathic fixer played by Billy Bob Thornton ("Landman").

Season two is set in 1979 and is arguably the best of the installments. It stars Jesse Plemons ("Civil War") and Kirsten Dunst ("Roofman") as they attempt to cover up a hit-and-run homicide of the son of a local crime family. Its impeccable cast also includes Kieran Culkin ("Succession"), Jean Smart ("Hacks"), and Ted Danson ("A Man on the Inside"), just to name a few of the stars.

The remaining three seasons take place in 2010, 1950 and 2019. They didn't earn as much critical acclaim as the first two, but they featured noteworthy performances by Ewan McGregor ("Star Wars"), Carrie Coon ("The White Lotus"), Chris Rock ("The Trainer"), and Jon Hamm ("Landman").

Q: Why is Amelia being written out of "Grey's Anatomy"? She's one of my favorite characters on the show. — D.S.

A: Caterina Scorsone has played Dr. Amelia Shepherd on two different series since 2010: "Private Practice" and "Grey's Anatomy." Her character decided to take a much-needed sabbatical, but the actress will be back in 2026 after an eight-episode break.

Deadline reported last year that "Grey's" reduced its number of guaran-



Kristen Dunst & Jesse Plemons in season two of "Fargo"

teed episodes for its veteran cast members from 18 to 14 as a cost-saving measure. However, Scorsone will only appear in 10 of 18 episodes this season. This might be the choice of the actress. The good news is that the fan-favorite will be back!

Q: With retail stores selling holiday decorations earlier and earlier every year, what about the TV movies, like the Hallmark Christmas movies? When are they starting? — M.C.

A: As a matter of fact, the Hallmark Channel kicked off year 16 of its "Countdown to Christmas" programming on Oct. 18 with the movie "A Royal Montana Christmas," starring Fiona Gubelmann ("The Good Doctor") and Warren Christie ("The Resident"). The network plans to air 24 original holiday movies in total until Dec. 21.

One of the most anticipated Hallmark movies is the Buffalo Bills/Hollywood romance inspired by the love story of quarterback Josh Allen and movie star Hailee Steinfeld ("Sinners"). "Holiday Touchdown: A Bills Love Story" will premiere on Nov. 22 at 8 p.m. ET.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.
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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

THIS IS SO UNFAIR, I'M REALLY EXPECTED TO WAIT UNTIL THE HOLIDAYS FOR PRESENTS?
YOU KNOW... THERE MAY BE A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO THIS.
SO, DAD, DID YOU THINK ABOUT IT?
GIVE IT UP. TEARING PAGES FROM THE FRIDGE CALENDAR WON'T MOVE UP CHRISTMAS.

by Dave T. Phipps

TIGER
by BUD BLAKE

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I'M BATTING A THOUSAND TODAY
...UNFORTUNATELY THEY WERE ALL FOUL BALLS.

Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOO!

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Music note is missing. 2. Leg is moved. 3. Clothespin is missing. 4. Sheet is longer. 5. Window is wider. 6. Arm is not showing.

October 27, 2025 Posting Date

King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
18				19			20			
23	24	25		26			27	28	29	
30				31			32			
33				34			35			
38	39	40		41			42	43	44	
45				46			47			
48				49			50			
51				52			53			

ACROSS
1 Dandies
5 Patient's need, briefly
8 Small town
12 "Yeah, right!"
13 Brazilian city
14 Screenwriter James
15 Buyer's offer
17 "Pinocchio" fish
18 Six, in Milan
19 Devoured
20 Dexterity
21 "See ya!"
22 Knock
23 Apiary homes
26 Business magnates
30 "Shake —!" ("Hurry!")
31 Singer Carly — Jepsen
32 Aussie hoppers
33 Lend a hand
35 Composer Joplin
36 Priestly garment
37 "Humbug!"
38 Music category
41 JFK Library architect
42 "— the season ..."
45 During
46 "Troy" actor

DOWN
1 Little lies
2 Theater award
3 Mani counter-part win
4 NASCAR sponsor
5 Banal
6 Grown-up nits
7 Iowa college
8 Rear veranda
9 Hybrid fruit
10 Stagger
11 Earth sci.
16 Light beams
20 Pouch
21 "Excuse me?"
22 Deli bread
23 "So there!"
24 — -de-France
25 Speed (Abbr.)
26 Make lace
27 Tic-tac-toe
28 "— so fast!"
29 Retired jet

31 Barbecue coating
34 World Cup cheer
35 Stated
37 Pulsates
38 Wanders
39 Send forth
40 Jazz singer Simone
41 Baby carriage
42 Scrabble piece
43 Slanted type (Abbr.)
44 Ocular woe
46 Crunchy sandwich
47 Soup cooker

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Trivia Test Answers

1. Six (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island)
2. District
3. Sciatic nerve
4. Ventricle
5. Sublimation
6. 1979
7. Cullen
8. Opossum
9. Jan
10. Pennsylvania

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY: How many U.S. states are part of New England?
- LITERATURE: What district does Katniss Everdeen represent in "The Hunger Games"?
- ANATOMY: What is the longest nerve in the human body?
- COMICS: What is Captain America's shield made of?
- SCIENCE: What is the process called when a solid becomes a gas?
- HISTORY: In what year did the Three Mile Island nuclear accident happen?
- MOVIES: What is Edward's last name in the movie "Twilight"?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the only marsupial found in North America?
- TELEVISION: Which character on "The Brady Bunch" is famous for saying, "Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!"
- ENTERTAINERS: Pop singer Taylor Swift was born in which U.S. state?

Solution time: 23 mins.
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