



Taste Chester's Famous Chili Recipe Saturday, February 7 at the Highlands Rotary Chili Feast. And win a new car at the same time! Raffle Tickets \$100, call 713-906-2337

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star Courier

Serving Highlands, Crosby, Huffman and Surrounding Communities since 1955 ■ [www.starcouriernews.com](http://www.starcouriernews.com)

VOL. 73, NO. 5 - \$1.00

© Copyright 2026

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## IN THE STARS

### Gold Medalist Simone Biles Black History Month Honoree

1<sup>st</sup> of a series...

By Allan Jamail

February 3, 2026 ~ this year 2026 marks a century of national commemorations of Black history. Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, George Cleveland Hall, William B. Hartgrove, Jesse E. Moorland, Alexander L. Jackson, and James E. Stamps institutionalized the teaching, study, dissemination, and commemoration of Black history when they founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) on September 9, 1915.

Black History Month, a month long commemoration of African American history and achievement that takes place each February in the United States. It began in 1976. From February 1, 2026 - March 1, 2026 people in the United States will celebrate the achievements and history of African Americans as part of Black History Month.

This week NC Star writer Allan Jamail selected USA Gold Medalist Gymnast Simone Biles Owens for his first of a series recognizing Black History Month/ African Americans and their achievements.

She's the most decorated U. S. female gymnast, holding a record of 11 Olympic

Continued. See BLACK HISTORY MONTH, Page 4

# UIL 2026-2028 Football Districts Announced: Crosby to 6A, GCM to 5A

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

The football gods in Austin have spoken and change is a comin'.

Each biennium, the University Interscholastic League in Austin gathers the enrollment figures for every high school in the state of Texas called 'Snapshot Friday' and then goes to work on realignment. The aim of the changeup every two years is fairness and addressing growth or the lack thereof in schools across the state. Some schools move up a division, some move down.

Region 3, District 23-6A was one of the most well-known districts around the state drawing such nicknames as the 'Little SEC' and 'District of Doom' (DOD). The



district included powerhouses in North Shore, Summer Creek, C. E. King, and Atascocita, all of whom have achieved the Regional Finals, and some on to the state semifinals and title games. The Mustangs secured their sixth state championship last year, while cross-channel rival C. E. King reached the state finals for the first time in program history. This marked

only the third occasion that teams from the same district with North Shore competed in both the Division 1 and Division 2 title games: NS and C. E. King (2025), NS and Summer Creek (2023), and NS and West Brook (2018).

Thus far, two coaches have left the DOD over the last two years: Craig Stump, Atascocita, 2025; and George Young, C. E. King. It's a pressure-

cooker environment and tough to compete in week after week.

There was speculation that the DOD would break up this time around moving the Humble schools out and the Pasadena schools in, but that didn't happen. The DOD lives.

Goose Creek Memorial (GCM) moved into the district two years ago but dropped down into Conference 5A Division 1 and will join sister school Baytown Sterling, Beaumont United, Beaumont West Brook, Galveston Ball, La Porte, Lufkin, New Caney, and Port Arthur Memorial.

The District of Doom has moved from District 23-6A and reformed into District 17-6A. Channelview, North Shore, Humble, Atascocita, Kingwood, Summer Creek,

and C. E. King all remain in the district. Moving in to take the place of GCM will be Crosby who moved up into the 6A Division this year by a mere three students—2218 with a cutoff for 6A at 2215.

It couldn't be a rougher introduction to the more fast-paced, physical play of 6A than joining the DOD. Enrollment in Crosby is booming with approximately 10,000 new homes to be built in the east Harris County area over the next 10 years.

The Cougars' new head coach Jabara Williams feels like they will be ready.

"We report the numbers and the UIL gives us our district," he said.

Williams biggest concern

Continued. See UIL REALIGNMENT RESHAPES DISTRICT, Page 2

## CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

### Crosby ISD Appoints Coach Jabara Williams as New Head Football Coach

Dear East Harris County Communities and Families,

It was my honor last month to announce that Crosby ISD and Cougar Football have found their new head coach. At that time, we briefly introduced you to Coach Jabara Williams, who has been coaching at Crosby High School for the past three years. Now, we want to give you a deeper look at Coach Williams and why we believe he is an excellent fit for this role.

Coach Williams began his football career in Garrison ISD as a student, working hard, just like our Cougars today, to be the best student and athlete he could be. His dedication earned him a spot at SFA, where he played college football and was nominated a two-time All-American and won the Southland



Dr. Paula Patterson  
Crosby Superintendent

Conference Defensive Player of the Year. He went on to spend three years in the NFL with the St. Louis Rams, Chicago Bears, and Dallas Cowboys. In his final year with the Cowboys, he returned to school to complete his degree in Criminal Justice before being invited to coach in Crockett ISD. He continued to grow as a coach and educator at Nacogdoches High School, coaching three sports and

helping me get the best out of them," he said. His previous coaches, who helped him win a state championship during his Freshman year of high school, instilled in him a winning culture by investing in athletes, not just teaching skills, but loving them, holding them to high standards, and helping them grow as people. Coach Williams hopes to have the same lasting, positive impact on his athletes.

On balancing academics



Coach Jabara Williams with Cougar Football Players

On balancing academics

and athletics, Coach Williams said his philosophy is simple: success in the classroom leads to success on the field. Our Cougars are students first, athletes second. He wants to help student-athletes build strong relationships with teachers, serve the community, and be role models for younger Cougars.

When discussing tradition and culture, Coach

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, page 2

## Cookies & Pictures with Santa: A Magical Success in Highlands

By Tonya Kostka,

Annual Cookies & Pictures with Santa was a HUGE success!

We are beyond grateful to everyone who helped make this magical event possible.

A big thank you to our wonderful partners who always show up for the Highlands community:

- Rotary Club of Highlands TX
- Highlands Horizons
- Highlands Lynchburg Chamber
- Seniors Helping Seniors High-Town, Inc.
- Highlands Fire Department
- Peet Bighorse & Georgiana Bighorse
- San Jacinto Community Center



And a very special thank you to the over 200 families who came out to enjoy cookies, hot chocolate, pizza, activities,

smiles, and holiday cheer with Santa. Your presence

Continued. See COOKIES & PICTURES WITH SANTA, Page 6

## KEENEY'S KORNER Will Seattle's defense end Patriots Dream season in Super Bowl 60?

And now, there are two left standing!

The New England Patriots and Seattle Seahawks will meet in Super Bowl 60 after winning their respective conference titles in decidedly different ways.

The Patriots, who finished 3-14 a year ago, won a hard-fought defensive struggle in the snow in Denver advanced to an NFL-record 12th Super Bowl with a 10-7 win thanks to cornerback Christian Gonzalez's late interception against Broncos back-up quarterback Jared Stidham late in the fourth quarter, while Seattle road the hot hand of journey-man QB Sam Darnold to a thrilling 31-27 win over the Los Angeles Rams in the NFL



title game.

While the Patriots will be playing in their 12th Big Game, Seattle will be playing in its fourth.

Both teams took different routes to reach SB 60, which will be played Sunday in Santa Clara, CA (home stadium of the San Francisco 49ers) at 5:30 p.m. local time on NBC (Channel 2).

After finishing 4-13 for the second straight season, New England

owner Robert Kraft fired head coach Jared Mayo and brought former Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel in to turn things around, and boy, did he ever.

Vrabel, who won three Lombardi Trophies playing for legendary head coach Bill Belichick, did one of the best coaching jobs in recent

Continued. See SUPER BOWL PREVIEW, Page 6

STAR-COURIER PHONES: 713-266-3444 • E-MAIL: GRAFIKSTAR @ AOL.COM • ADS: 713-977-2555

### ESCAPE HIGH RATES

DRIVE WITH CRCU!

CRCU.ORG/AUTO | 281.422.3611

# GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS

## Beacon Federal Credit Union Named GCCISD CTE January Partner of the Month

Story by: Kami Johnston, GCCISD CTE Business and Community Partner Facilitator

Goose Creek CISD (GCCISD) has named Beacon Federal Credit Union as the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Partner of the Month for January. This recognition highlights Beacon's deep commitment to student success through leadership, internship opportunities, and practical training.

Beacon Federal Credit Union has been a driving force behind the district's Global Business Academy since its partnership began in 2014. By leading the advisory board and hosting student interns, Beacon plays a vital role in preparing students for the professional world. Their involvement ensures that the next generation of business leaders gains the skills and experience necessary to succeed in a competitive workforce.

Adelina Gomez Abshire of Beacon states, "Through these partnerships, we've had the privilege of mentoring students and providing them with hands-on experiences within the credit union. We've watched them learn every-



From left, Willow Benedetto, Sr. Global Business Academy Student and Beacon Intern, and Jennee Trader, Baytown Branch Manager. (Photos by: Kami Johnston)

day operations, build confidence, and develop skills that prepare them for their future."

Senior Goose Creek Memorial Global Business Academy student Willow Benedetto, who interns with Beacon, said, "As a bank intern, you learn crucial technical skills like financial modeling, data analysis, and understanding financial statements, along with essential soft skills." Through these meaningful opportunities, Beacon Federal Credit Union continues to prove

itself as a cornerstone of student development and future workforce readiness.

Beacon's support reaches into various programs of study, including a strong partnership with the Digital Communications Academy. This partnership provides digital communications students with a unique platform to film content and manage Beacon's social media accounts. This collaboration gives students the chance to apply their digital skills to a professional brand,



Pictured, from left, Willow Benedetto, Sr. Global Business Academy Student and Beacon Intern, and Adelina Gomez Abshire, Vice President of Business Development and Marketing for Beacon. (Photos by: Kami Johnston)

building a portfolio of work while still in high school by creating commercials and digital posts for Beacon.

Beyond the classroom, Beacon Federal Credit Union maintains a constant, supportive presence throughout GCCISD. This partnership, which began in 2010 with Ashbel Smith and Bañuelos elementary schools, has grown into a comprehensive support system for the district.

From hosting job-shadowing days and attending career fairs to collaborating with the bilingual program, the team is dedicated to uplifting both students and staff.

This commitment extends to the highest levels of leadership, as Adelina Gomez Abshire, Beacon's Vice President of Business Development and Marketing, currently serves as the President of the Goose

Creek Education Foundation.

Beacon is perhaps most visible in local high schools through their annual "Reality Fairs," designed to prepare students for the financial demands of the real world. To date, they have hosted over 24 Reality Fairs, impacting more than 15,000 students. By providing these diverse experiences, Beacon remains a cornerstone of the CTE program, helping students turn classroom lessons into career success. As Abshire notes, "Beacon Federal Credit Union remains committed to supporting students through scholarships, internships, financial education, and mentoring opportunities—because investing in students today helps build stronger communities tomorrow."

It is this forward-thinking approach that makes Beacon an invaluable asset to the district, fostering a legacy of success that will benefit Baytown for generations to come.

For more information on how to partner with GCCISD CTE,

visit our website, <https://schools.gccisd.net/page/cte.SWC>

## GCCISD Crowns District Spelling Bee Champions



Pictured, from left, 1st place winner Arslan Aulakh, 8th grade student at Baytown Junior School; 2nd place winner Hira Aulakh, 6th grade student at Cedar Bayou Junior School; and 3rd place winner Cedrianna Rocha, 4th grade student at San Jacinto Elementary School. (Photo by: Carrie Pryor-Newman)

Story by: Nancy Bonds, GCCISD Director of Communications

Goose Creek CISD (GCCISD) proudly celebrated student excellence during its annual District Spelling Bee, where top spellers from across the district showcased their academic skills and focus.

After several competitive rounds, the winning word,

"welterweight," secured the championship title and highlighted the impressive vocabulary knowledge of this year's finalists.

**2026 GCCISD District Spelling Bee Winners:**

1st Place: Arslan Aulakh, 8th Grade — Baytown Junior School

2nd Place: Hira Aulakh, 6th Grade — Cedar Bayou Junior School

3rd Place: Cedrianna

Rocha, 4th Grade — San Jacinto Elementary School

The district extends its congratulations to all participating students, as well as to the teachers, families, and campus staff who supported and encouraged them along the way. The annual event highlights the district's dedication to literacy and recognizing outstanding student achievement.

## Blank Shirt, Fresh Start,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Williams described the team's "Blank Shirt." At the start of the offseason, each player receives a plain white T-shirt with their max stats listed. As they meet goals and demonstrate growth, coaches add notes of encouragement and recognition. At the end of the offseason, players move to their Crosby Cougars shirts for practice, symbolizing their development and dedication both on and off the field. Coach Williams is continuing this tradition at Crosby with his current roster of Cougar Athletes.

Beyond the field, Coach Williams is actively involved in the community through youth football, where his son is learning the game he loves so much. This past season, he helped to coordinate Youth Appreciation Night at a Crosby Cougars home game with the other coaches involved. Our younger student-athletes from both Crosby Youth Football League and Barrett Dragons were able to sit sideline as the varsity football team warmed up and prepared for their game. His wife, Courtney Williams, is an English teacher at Crosby High School, and their three



Coach Jabara Williams with Sophomore Caleb Spencer



Junior Cam Sonier wearing his Blank Shirt with his achievements and anecdotes from the coaching staff.

children also attend school in Crosby ISD.

We are excited to see the

impact Coach Williams will have on the Crosby Cougars football program this season, both on and off the field. His dedication to family, community, and student-athletes is an example for us all. Please join me in congratulating Coach Williams on his promotion and wishing him the best in the years to come.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Paula Patterson  
Superintendent of Schools

Crosby Independent School District

## UIL realignment reshapes District of Doom, welcomes new faces,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was depth. North Shore's enrollment almost double that of Crosby, giving them an advantage with a deeper pool to draw from.

"I see our numbers growing and that's the biggest difference between 5A and 6A," he said.

Williams said he saw the move up as a challenge.

"The work that we put in day in and day out that's what we work for. It might be a small hurdle or a big hurdle, you've just got to be ready to jump," he explained.

Edwin Egans, the new athletic director, said he's spending time evaluating the entire athletic program preparing for the move up.

"Being athletic director frees me up to do an overall view of the program, to help our coaches and look at our facilities," he said.

That growth has also affected the Mont Belvieu area where Barbers Hill ISD is growing exponentially as

well. Board trustees saw the growth coming and have proposed a \$98 million bond to build a new field house and updates to the stadium to accommodate a 6A Division crowd.

The Eagles move up has a softer landing than the Crosby Cougars moving into District 18-6A with the likes of Deer Park, Dickinson, Clear Brook, Clear Lake, Clear Creek, Clear Falls, and Clear Springs. While they may have dodged a bullet evading the DOD, should the Eagles make the playoffs next year, their first-round opponent will come from the DOD.

Also on the east side, Galena Park and Baytown Lee renew their decades old rivalry as they join Region 3, 5A Division, District 10. The rivalry had some dramatic moments when on October 13, 1961, the Jackets beat the Ganders 21-15 in front of a packed stadium for the district lead. The win vaulted the

undefeated Jackets into the playoffs and a trip to the state title game against Wichita Falls where they lost a nail-biter, 21-14.

One of the area teams that was supposed to move down in the classifications and a regular preseason opponent for the NS Mustangs is Spring Westfield.

The high school fell 70 students short of making the 6A Division cutoff but has opted to stay in 6A to join their sister schools in the same district. Joining Westfield in 6A, Region 2, District 14 again will be Aldine, Benjamin Davis, Eisenhower, MacArthur, Nimitz, Spring, and Spring Dekaney.

With the verification of the district teams, coaches are now inking in their preseason schedule and planning the rest of their seasons.

To see all the realigned districts in every division, visit our website at [www.starcouriernews.com](http://www.starcouriernews.com).

### 2026-2028 UIL CUTOFF NUMBERS / FOOTBALL ONLY

Football only		
CONFERENCE	ENROLLMENT	# OF SCHOOLS
6A	2,215 and above	251
5A-I	1,830-2,214	127
5A-II	1,305-1,829	119
4A-I	896-1,304	103
4A-II	550-895	102
3A-I	367-549	102
3A-II	246-366.9	102
2A-I	175.6-245.9	103
2A-II	105-175.5	102
1A-I	57.6-104.9	79
1A-II	57.5 & below	80

# Barbers Hill Press

## Dayton

Serving Mont Belvieu, Dayton, Baytown and surrounding communities since 1995

VOL. 31, NO. 5

© Copyright 2026

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

### ON THE HILL

#### Mont Belvieu Woman Arrested for Cockfighting Operation Busted Near Crosby

CROSBY, Texas — Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) deputies arrested a 45-year-old man and seized hundreds of roosters last December 27, after uncovering what authorities describe as an illegal cockfighting operation at a rural property near Crosby.

Responding to a tip around 2:30 p.m., deputies arrived at a residence in the 4200 block of Danek Road, near FM 1942, where they were met with noise from a large number of birds and signs of animal fighting activity, according to law enforcement. Once on the scene, investigators discovered approximately 300 live roosters and about 50 dead birds, many held in cages on the property.

The roosters were reportedly housed in and around a mobile home and other structures on the rural parcel. Sheriff's personnel also seized trailers, wire cages, and other equipment believed to be used in connection with the cockfighting operation.

Magdaleno Herrera, of Mont Belvieu, was arrested and booked into the Harris County Jail on a misdemeanor charge of "Cockfighting: Space, Owns, Trains, Equips", a state offense that includes providing a location and animals for cockfighting.

In addition to Herrera's arrest, five spectators were cited by deputies for their alleged involvement in or attendance at the activity. Authorities said several individuals attempted to flee the property when deputies arrived but were detained.

Deputies were assisted in the operation by Harris County Veterinary Public Health and local animal welfare organizations, which are expected to take custody of the rescued roosters for care and shelter following the raid.

Cockfighting, which involves roosters fighting often to the death for sport and gambling, is illegal throughout the state of Texas. Under state law, organizing or facilitating such events can result in felony charges, while owning or training fighting birds and attending cockfights carries additional misdemeanor penalties.

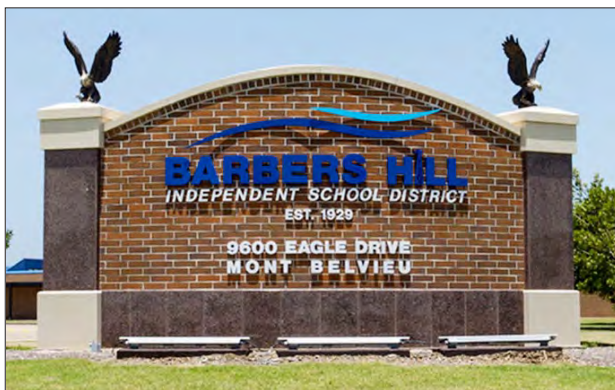
This Crosby case follows other recent animal fighting busts across Harris County and the broader Houston area, as law enforcement continues efforts to crack down on this form of animal cruelty and related criminal activity

## Barbers Hill ISD Trustees plan bond election for \$95 Million in Athletic Upgrades

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

The Barbers Hill ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to call a \$95 million bond election in May, aiming to renovate and expand athletic facilities in response to continued enrollment growth and the district's recent transition to Class 6A—the state's largest school classification. Notably, passage of this bond would not result in an increase to the Barbers Hill ISD tax rate.

The proposed bond would fund the construction, acquisition, and equipping of a multipurpose athletic fieldhouse, along with additional stadium improvements, including expanded fieldhouse capacity and new locker room facilities. The district's current fieldhouse, built in 1980 and paid off by 1998, has served generations of students. The new facility is designed to be multipurpose, capable of hosting



convocations and graduation ceremonies during inclement weather. Enrollment at Barbers Hill ISD has surged from fewer than 1,500 students in 1980 to more than 8,100 today, with projections indicating annual growth rates of 3 to 4 percent over the next decade. This sus-

tained growth has prompted the district to compare its athletic facilities to those of other Class 6A districts, leading to the current initiative.

Historically, the community has shown strong support for school improvements. Since 1998, Barbers Hill ISD has held eight bond elections, all passing by wide margins. The most recent bond, totaling \$378 million and approved by voters in 2024, funded the construction of two new campuses and districtwide improvements, receiving support from 82 percent of voters. This legacy of successful bond measures underscores the district's commitment to providing

quality facilities for its growing student population.

Election Day for the \$95 million fieldhouse bond is set for May 2, with early voting beginning April 20. The district's move to Class 6A was confirmed in December by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), with Barbers Hill High School's enrollment exceeding the 2,215-student cutoff for the state's largest classification. On Monday, the UIL announced the Eagles will join District 18-6A with Deer Park, Dickinson, Clear Brook, Clear Lake, Clear Creek, Clear Falls, and Clear Springs.

## Dayton ISD Senior Jimmy Rivera Named ACTE Region IV Outstanding Secondary Business Student

Dayton, TX — Dayton Independent School District is proud to announce that Dayton High School senior Jimmy Rivera has been named the Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) Region IV Outstanding Secondary (High School) Business Student for 2025. Rivera was recognized at the ACTE National Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee.

ACTE Region IV represents six states—Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Oklahoma—making this honor especially prestigious. Each of ACTE's five national regions selects only one high school student and one postsecondary student for this recognition each year. Rivera was one of only five high school students selected nationwide, placing him among the top CTE students in the country.

Rivera attended the conference alongside Mrs. Robin Chavez, Business Professionals of America (BPA) advisor, and Dr.



### CONGRATULATIONS, JIMMY RIVERA!

Dayton ISD Senior received the  
▶ ACTE Region IV Outstanding Secondary Business Student for 2025

Joshua Putman, Dayton High School business teacher. His recognition further underscores the strength of Dayton ISD's Career and Technical Education programs, as the district was recently named a 2026 Career and

Technical Education District of Distinction by the Career and Technical Association of Texas (CTAT), an ACTE affiliate.

An accomplished student leader, Rivera currently serves as President

of Dayton High School's BPA chapter and BPA State Parliamentarian, having been an active member of the organization for four years. He has also held leadership roles within the Texas Associa-

tion of Future Educators (TAFE), where he currently serves as Vice President and recently qualified for the TAFE State Competition.

Rivera's achievements exemplify how Career and Technical Education prepares students for both college and career success. He has accepted a full-ride scholarship to Stanford University, where he plans to study economics beginning in the fall of 2026.

"Jimmy's achievement reflects the high expectations, strong mentorship, and exceptional opportunities available to our students at Dayton ISD," said Dr. Travis Young, Superintendent of Dayton ISD. "We are incredibly proud of Jimmy and grateful for the dedicated educators who help prepare our students to excel at the highest levels—both in college and in their future careers." said district leaders.

Congratulations to Jimmy Rivera and the Dayton High School CTE team on this outstanding national achievement.

## Lemus Tax Solutions LLC Announces Second Location, Expanding Trusted Services in Taxes, Insurance, Notary, & More

Baytown, Texas — Lemus Tax Solutions LLC, a rapidly growing local provider of tax preparation, insurance services, notary public services, title transfers, and immigration form assistance, proudly announces the opening of its second location. Founded and led by CEO Alejandra Rodriguez, the company continues its mission of delivering honest, efficient, and customer-focused solutions to the community.

With over 12 years of experience, Lemus Tax Solutions LLC has established a strong reputation for reliability, problem-solving, and exceptional customer care. CEO Alejandra Rodriguez reflects on the milestone with deep gratitude and pride. Alejandra attributes the company's success to hard work, faith, and her dedicated Lemus Team. "Teamwork makes a business succeed and I love to encourage my team", she shared.



Baytown Chamber Ambassadors joined Lemus Tax Solutions, along with Alejandra Rodriguez and the Lemus Team.

Lemus Tax Solutions LLC continues to prioritize honesty, accessibility, and personalized service. Whether assisting with taxes, processing titles, or helping families with immigration forms, the team remains committed to being YOUR SOLUTION for a wide range of essential services

OPINION PAGE

Gold medalist Simone Biles

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Simone Biles, USA gymnast with record breaking

a World medal on every event, and the first female gymnast since Daniela Siliva in 1988 to win a medal on every event at a single Olympics or World Championships.

In 2022, President Joe Biden awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2023, she won her eighth U.S. Gymnastics title, breaking the 90-year-old U.S. Gymnastics title record previously held by Alfred Jochim.

Biles was born on March 14, 1997, in Columbus, Ohio, the third of four siblings. Her birth mother, Shannon Biles, was unable to care for Simone or her other children.

In 2000, Biles's maternal grandfather, Ron Biles, and his second wife, Nellie Cayetano Biles, began caring temporarily for Shannon's children in the north Houston suburb of Spring, Texas, after learning his grandchildren were in foster care.

Biles is known for performing extraordinarily difficult skills well. Her 2023 routine on vault and her 2024 routine on floor exercise are the most difficult ever performed in women's artistic gymnastics.

At the Olympic Games, Biles is a two-time gold medalist in the individual all-around. She is also a two-time champion on vault, the 2016 champion and 2024 silver medalist on floor exercise, and a two-time bronze medalist on balance beam.

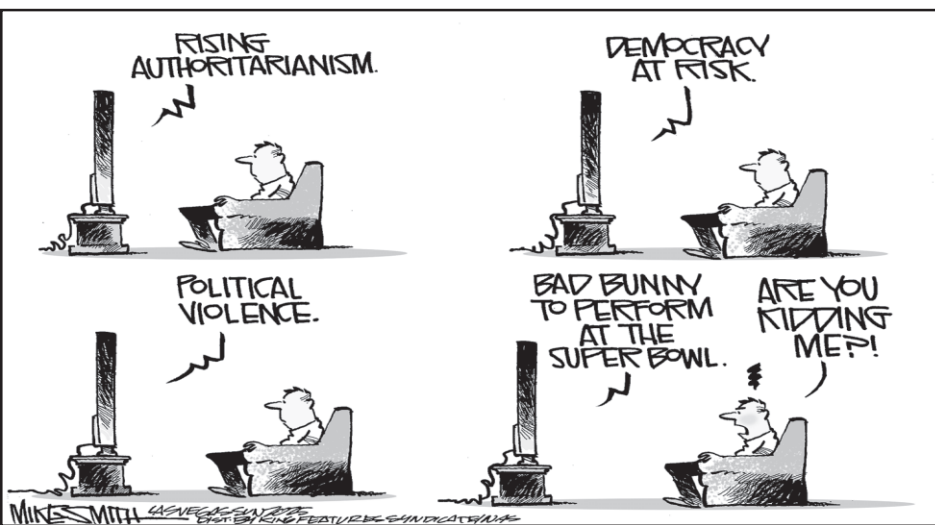
At the 2020 Summer Olympics, where she was favored to win at least four of the six available gold medals, she withdrew from most of the competition after the qualification round due to "the twists", a temporary loss of air awareness while performing twisting elements.

At the World Championships, she is the most decorated - male or female - artistic gymnast of all time with 30 total medals in which 23 of them are Gold.

Domestically, Biles has won a record-high nine United States national all-around championships; her win in 2024 made her the oldest female gymnast to ever win the title.

Simone is the sixth woman to win an individual all-around title at both the Olympics and the World Championships and the first since 1996 to hold both titles simultaneously.

She is the tenth female gymnast and first American female gymnast to win



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



Power Grid Holds up During Wintry Blast

The electricity grid that covers most of Texas was holding up as of Sunday during the latest winter storm, although localized power outages were reported in Deep East Texas and far West Texas.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas dashboard indicated demand was running comfortably below available capacity. As of Sunday, more than 128,000 customers were without power, according to power outage.us, with the most being reported in Nacogdoches, Cherokee, and Rusk counties.

Based on expected weather conditions, ERCOT anticipates there will be sufficient generation to meet demand, a spokesperson for the Electric Reliability Council of Texas said. "ERCOT will continue to deploy all available resources to manage the grid reliably and coordinate closely with the Public Utility Commission, generation providers, and transmission utilities."

Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration just prior to the storm for 134 Texas counties to ensure adequate resources were available to Texans.

CROCKETT, TALARICO HOLD FIRST DEBATE

U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett and state Rep. James Talarico both presented themselves as fighters during their first debate in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate, held in Georgetown last Saturday.

The two Democrats debated for an hour, The Texas Tribune reported. Crockett pitched herself as a political brawler who could expand the electorate, while Talarico emphasized his Christian faith and record fighting "tooth and nail" in the Texas House.

DATA CENTERS COULD STRAIN WATER SUPPLY

A new report says the boom in data centers across Texas could consume nearly 3% of the state's water by 2030, the Houston Chronicle reported. The Houston Advanced Research Center found the data centers, used to power artificial intelligence,



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

used 25 billion gallons of water in 2025. That amount could increase to 161 billion gallons annually by 2030.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas has already been warning that the data centers, which also require vast amounts of electricity, could potentially strain the state's power grid. ERCOT oversees most of the state's power grid.

"The data center surge presents a unique challenge that requires immediate attention," said HARC President John Hall. An estimated 575 data centers are already in place, concentrated in Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, Houston and San Antonio.

Texas lawmakers last year passed a law setting up a \$20 billion water fund, with \$1 billion disbursed annually starting in 2027 for infrastructure, after an initial allocation of \$2.5 billion.

ABBOTT ENDORSES MILLER'S GOP CHALLENGER

Gov. Greg Abbott has endorsed the Republican primary challenger to Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Abbott said he is backing challenger Nate Sheets because he is "committed to fighting for the best interests of Texas agriculture, upholding the rule of law, and restoring integrity."

Miller is seeking his fourth term to the office he has held since 2015. He has strong ties to President Donald Trump and was the first statewide elected official to endorse his candidacy in 2016. Sheets is a beekeeper and owns a honey company.

To date, Trump has made no endorsement in this year's primary.

QUORUM-BUSTING HOUSE DEMS FINED

The Texas House Demo-

crats who left the state last summer to delay a bid to redraw congressional maps each now face more than \$9,000 in fines, the Statesman reported. That includes \$7,000 in penalties for being absent and another \$2,354 to cover the costs the state spent trying to bring them back to the Capitol.

The members have until Feb. 9 to appeal. House Democratic Caucus leader Gene Wu, D-Houston, said members plan to protest to the House Administration Committee

"Breaking quorum is a constitutional right, and we will use every tool available to challenge these fines," Wu said. More than 50 of the 62 House Democrats flew to Chicago to stop the attempt by GOP members to redraw the maps in order to give Republicans a likely additional five seats. The walkout lasted two weeks.

Upon their return, the redistricting plan passed in the GOP-controlled Legislature and was signed into law. It triggered similar mid-decade redistricting attempts by both parties in other states.

ORPHANED OIL AND GAS WELLS REACH RECORD HIGH

The number of orphaned wells in Texas climbed above 11,000 by the end of last year, breaking a 20-year record, according to the Chronicle.

The Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates the state's oil and gas industry, reported about 2,000 new wells joined the list last year, bringing the total to 11,123. Orphaned wells are not actively maintained and have no operator on file at the commission. That means responsibility for cleaning and plugging them is on the state.

The price of oil fell roughly 20% last year, meaning more companies have gone bankrupt or out of business. The defunct operations sometimes leave unplugged wells behind.

"While there has been a recent increase in these populations due to various external factors such as operator bankruptcies and aging wells, we are in the process of taking significant actions to increase our well plugging efforts," said Bryce Dubea, a spokesman for the Railroad Commission.

APPEALS COURT REHEARS IMMIGRATION LAW CHALLENGE

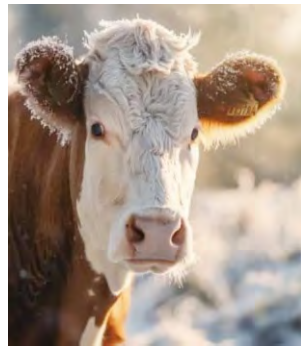
A 2023 law giving state police authority to arrest people suspected of crossing the border into Texas illegally is once again before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which blocked the law from taking effect in the initial legal challenge. The court heard oral arguments last week, The Texas Tribune reported.

The Biden administration sued to block the law after its passage, arguing that policing immigration rests with the federal government alone. A three-judge panel upheld an injunction blocking the law. Since then the state has appealed, asking for the case to be reheard by the entire 17-judge appeals court.

At the time the law passed in December 2023, the U.S. Border Patrol reported nearly 250,000 encounters with migrants along the border with Mexico. That number has plummeted in the past year, with just 4,264 migrant apprehensions reported in December.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

When Animals Talk



In Sweden, there used to be a widespread belief that animals could talk on Christmas Eve.

My Swedish mother read me stories about this as a child, and it is true. Apparently throughout Scandinavia, folks would give their animals treats so they wouldn't speak badly of them. This part makes me doubtful—not that the animals got treats, but that anything I gave my cat, Felix, would prevent him from giving his opinion—with or without the ability to speak.

Felix would tell you that he thinks he should get more treats all of the year and that he has grown tired of his current cat food and that he thinks he should get brushed at least an hour every day and that—under no circumstances—does he want his nails trimmed. He says this all the time. He just says it in Cat.

But I like the reminder to treat our pets especially kindly over the holidays because, whether or not they are talking about us, I'm sure the holiday season is chaotic and confusing. People are coming and going at strange times. Strangers come to the house, and the people who are supposed to be there are gone for long periods of time. Sometimes, our pets are asked to wear silly costumes and get a bath and then are taken to strange places, which I'm sure is exciting but also rather nerve-racking.

Lately, I've been giving out dog treats on my walks. I ask the owner if their dog would like a treat and, if it's OK, I give the dog a little holiday snack. Some are skeptical until they taste it. Some won't take it from my hand but will take it from their owner. But most dogs are happy to get a treat. I wish them a happy holiday and, when I see them again, they tug on their leash and, if they could talk they'd say, "Hey! It's the treat lady!"

There isn't much that makes me happier than making an animal happy, and I'm guessing that is how the Swedes felt when they gave the dog a bone or brought an extra bucket of oats to the cows. It must have been a reminder, when they looked into those surprised cows' eyes, that this day was different. Long before there was a Christmas to celebrate, there was the longest night of the year and, in Scandinavia, that would be a very long night indeed.

That night of the winter solstice, when the sun set so early and the dark lasted so long, would be a good time to remember the animals who had no way of knowing when the sun would be closer or when the days would be warmer or when the darkness would not last so long. Those animals would see the dark and feel the cold, just as their owners did, and they would want a little reassurance. They would want a bone to chew on or a little bigger supper. They would want the backs of their ears scratched and a reminder that they were not alone and they would not go hungry.

And that is what we all need—that is really all we need—this time of year. We need to be reminded that we are not alone. We have others who care about us. We will have a meal with a little something special about it, and we will remind others that they are cared for.

I will try to do that. With all the animals in my life—and all the people, too.

Till next time, Carrie

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information and subscription rates.

teleflora.  
**20% OFF**  
Valentine's Day Sale

**Hugs and Kisses Bouquet**

Whether for your significant other or your sister, aunt, or grandmother, this delightful floral gift is a sweet way to say "I love you." Sweet price, too.

The charming bouquet includes: white daisy spray chrysanthemums, pink carnations, red miniature carnations, red roses accented with fresh greenery.

SKU # T1Z100C

Reg. Price: **Your Price:**  
\$64.99 **\$51.99**



**Call 1-844-643-9208**  
to place your order

Use Promo Code MDVD094 to get 20% off  
Promo code is only valid for phone orders.

Product availability varies by market and minimum order values may apply. A shipping fee of \$20.99 is applied to U.S. orders; additional fees may apply for same-day delivery.

**FREEKICKS Program Will Help Renovate 25 Harris County Soccer Fields Ahead of FIFA World Cup 2026™**



**Harris County, TX, January 31, 2026** – Harris County will enhance 25 park facilities around the county and promote youth soccer engagement in the community ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026™, as part of an agreement that Commissioners Court approved with the Sports Authority Foundation to support the FREEKICKS Soccer Program.

"Growing up in Latin America, I've seen the power of soccer as a common language that can bring people of all backgrounds together and empower communities. Not only will the FIFA World Cup bring an incredible economic impact to our community, but it will help us improve our park infrastructure and further unite Harris County around a common language: soccer. I'm grateful to the Sports Authority Foundation and the Houston Host City Community for giving back to our community ahead of the World Cup this summer," said **Judge Lina Hidalgo**.

The Sports Authority Foundation and the FIFA World Cup 2026™ Houston Host City Committee have identified 25 fields in Harris County for improvement as part of the FREEKICKS program:

- Precinct 1: Alabonson Park (3 fields) and Blue Ridge Park (2 fields)
- Precinct 2: Moody Park (4 fields) and Keith-Wiess Park (4 fields) through an inter-local agreement with the City of Houston
- Precinct 3: Will build 8 new soccer fields at Baytown Soccer Complex
- Precinct 4: George Bush Park (4 fields)

By repairing and building soccer fields across the county, Harris County will help grow the next generation of soccer players and engage underserved youth ages 6-18 in an important global cultural event.

Harris County will host seven matches as a host city for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ this summer. The games are expected to generate approximately \$1.5 billion in revenue (the economic equivalent of hosting seven Super Bowls) and bring more than 500,000 visitors from all over the world to Harris County, according to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo is Harris County's chief executive and Director of the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Judge Hidalgo, alongside four county precinct commissioners, oversees a budget of approximately \$5 billion that funds services and institutions for the third-largest county in the nation, home to nearly 5 million people. For more information about Harris County and the Office of the County Judge, please visit: [cjo.harriscountytexas.gov](http://cjo.harriscountytexas.gov).

**IMPORTANT DATES**  
FOR THE 2026 TEXAS PRIMARY ELECTION

**JAN 1**

First day to apply for a ballot by mail

**FEB 2**

Last day to register to vote

**FEB 17**

First day of early voting

**FEB 20**

Last day for ballot by mail application to be received

**FEB 27**

Last day of early voting

**MAR 3**

Election day

**DENTAL Insurance**

Big dental bills? Get protection.



Get dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company, Inc.

Get your **FREE** Information Kit  
It's easy!  
Call or scan today



**1-855-402-1603**

or go to [Dental50Plus.com/Crosby](http://Dental50Plus.com/Crosby)

**SCAN NOW!**



Product/features not available in all states. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. To find a network provider, go to [physiciansmutual.com/find-dentist](http://physiciansmutual.com/find-dentist). This specific offer not available in CO, KS, NV, NY, OR - call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for a similar offer in your state. Certificate C254/B465, C250A/B438 (ID: C254ID; PA: C254PA); Insurance Policy P154/B469 (GA: P154GA; OK: P154OK; TN: P154TN).

**Donate Your Car**



Imagine the Difference You Can Make

**FREE TOWING & TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

- Every donated vehicle will be properly recycled, reducing waste and harmful emissions.
- Vehicle donations are fully tax-deductible and the proceeds help provide services to help the blind and visually impaired.

When you donate your car, you'll receive:

- ✓ a \$200 restaurant voucher
- ✓ a 2-night, 3-day hotel stay at one of 50 locations



**Call 1-866-413-5094**

Help Prevent Blindness  
Get A Vision Screening Annually  
**Heritage for the Blind**

**Cleaner, safer water for healthier living.**

**LeafHome**  
Water Solutions

Reduce contaminants in your homes water and enjoy the benefits of whole home filtration.

- Softer, cleaner water.
- Removes over 99% of harmful contaminants.
- One-day installation.

**Better Water in 3 Simple Steps**



★★★★★  
"As a mom with two young daughters, and a doula who stresses the importance of hydration, providing my family and clients with safer, cleaner water is very important to me. I'm grateful for companies like LeafHome that understand my needs and can provide the right solutions."  
**Emmy Robins**

Save up to **25% off**  
A custom whole-home water system\*

Schedule your free in-home water test

**1 (844) 991-2369**

Promo: 402 - Exp: 12/31/25

\*Promotional offer includes 15% off plus an additional 10% off for qualified veterans and/or seniors. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. MSRP: \$2000. ©2025 LeafHome Water Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. TX: 44095, WI: 142890.

# Keeney's Korner: Super Bowl Preview,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

memory as he turned his team around in just one year. In those three SB wins, Vrabel caught two touchdown passes (during his career, he caught 12 passes, which were all touchdowns).

Seattle head coach Mike McDonald arrived in the Emerald City in 2024 after serving as the defensive coordinator for the Baltimore Ravens. McDonald has built one of the best defenses in the NFL, as evidenced by that unit's No. 3 rating (the Texans' had the No. 1 rated defense) during the 2025 season.

If Vrabel leads the Pats to their seventh Lombardi Trophy, he would become the first person to win the SB as a player and head coach for the same franchise.

But picking up a seventh title won't be easy against a Seahawks team that is solid on both sides of the ball.

But they have gone 9-0 on the road this year and defeated the Los Angeles Chargers, 16-3, the Texans, 28-16 and Denver, 10-7 to reach the big game. Seattle will pose the biggest test of the season. The 'Hawks are loaded with talent on defense, but in their three playoff wins, the Patriots have beaten the No. 5 defense (LA), the No. 1 defense (Houston) and the No. 2 defense (Denver) to advance to Santa Clara.

Seattle routed San Francisco, 41-6 in the Division round, then outlasted the Rams, 31-27 in the NFC title game to reach Santa Clara. Their defense recorded 47 sacks during the season and have four players with six or more sacks (Byron Murphy, 7, Leonard Williams, 7, Uchenna Nwosu, 7, and DeMarcus Lawrence 6). They allowed just 17.2 points per game, and will look to fluster second-year NE QB Drake Maye (4,394 passing yards, 31 TDs/450 rushing yards, 4 TDs in regular season; 533 passing yards, 4 TDs/141 rushing yards, 1 TD in playoffs) early and force a turnover or two.

Maye's mobility could

be a big factor in this game as it was in the AFC title game when he scored his team's lone touchdown on a six-yard run. Seattle's defensive front will need to keep Maye in the pocket and prevent him from scrambling for big plays, but if he does get loose, the Seahawks linebackers must keep him from getting chunks of yards on the ground. Seattle's linebackers can run, and wouldn't be surprised if they assigned one of them as a spy to follow Maye all over the field.

But Maye isn't a one-man offense. He has two solid running backs in Rhamondre Stevenson (1,037 yards, 7 TDs/32 receptions, 345 yards, 2 TDs in regular season; 194 rushing yards in playoffs) and TreVeon Henderson (911 yards, 9 TDs/35 receptions, 221 yards, 7 TDs). Henderson hasn't done much in the playoffs, but he could be a key player for New England come Sunday. Look for New England to use him in the passing game hoping he gets free where his explosive speed could be featured.

Maye will look to make plays in the passing game to veteran wideout Stefon Diggs (85 receptions, 1,013 yards, 4 TDs).

While the Seattle defense will present New England with plenty of trouble, so too will the Pats defense. In three playoff games, the New England "D" has allowed 26 points (8.6 per game) and allowed 18 points per game during the regular season. While Seattle is a sack-happy bunch, the Pats are no slouches as evidenced by their 34 sacks in the regular season.

The Seattle offense will present a big test for the Patriots defense as QB Sam Darnold (4,648 yards, 25 TDs/14 interceptions in regular season; 470 yards, 4 TDs in playoffs) is having a career year. Darnold has turned into one of the feel-good stories of the 2025 season. After being drafted third overall by the Jets in 2018, Darnold bounced around to three

other teams before landing in Seattle this past offseason. A year ago, he led Minnesota to 14 wins and a playoff spot, but the team decided not to re-sign him in the offseason and go with J.J. McCarthy as their starting QB. The Vikings loss was Seattle's good fortune as Darnold led Seattle to 16 wins, the NFC West title and the top seed in the NFC.

Like Maye, Darnold is not a one-man show on offense. The Seahawks have plenty of weapons in running back Kenneth Walker III (1,027 yards, 5 TDs/31 receptions, 282 yards in regular season; 178 yards, 4 TDs in playoffs) and star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba (119 receptions, 1,793 yards, 10 TDs in regular season; 13 receptions 169 yards 2 TDs in playoffs). Look for Smith-Njigba to have a big day on Sunday. He loves to play in big games and has an uncanny ability to get open. He and Darnold have developed a solid relationship. While Smith-Njigba is definitely the star of the Seattle offense, it might be a secondary player like fellow wideout Cooper Kupp (47 receptions, 593 yards, 2 TDs in regular season) to come up with a key play during Sunday's game. Kupp caught a key touchdown pass in the NFC title game and has grabbed 9 passes for 96 yards in two post season games.

If the Patriots hope to pull off the upset, they can't let Seattle jump on them early. Look for the Patriots defense to try and force Darnold into making a key mistake or two early to give NE confidence. Many think this will be a blowout, but I don't agree with that assessment. New England is a tough football team, just like their head coach, so look for the Pats to be in this one late in the fourth quarter.

But I think when it's all said and done, the Seattle defense will make one or two more key plays late to send the Seahawks to their second Lombardi Trophy. My pick, Seattle 26, New England 23

# Cookies & Pictures with Santa: A magical success in Highlands,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

made the evening unforgettable! From all of us at San Jacinto Community Center and Tom S Ramsey, PE, Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner's Office We can't wait to see you again next year!



**12 HOLIDAY WINES**  
**PLUS BONUS GIFTS**  
**ONLY \$79.99**

**SAVE \$155**



Our experts handpicked this highly acclaimed collection to pair perfectly with your favorite dishes from Omaha Steaks. Uncork **12 bottles with bonus gifts for just \$79.99** (plus shipping and tax) as your introduction to the Omaha Steaks Wine Club – saving you \$155.

Then, look forward to 12 new selections every three months and enjoy a \$30 Omaha Steaks E-Reward Card with each future club case. You'll also save 10% on every 12+ bottle purchase and get free delivery every time you order. There's no commitment to continue and every bottle comes with our **100% guarantee**.

**OMAHA STEAKS WINE**  
POWERED BY LAITHWAITES

Order now at [GetOSWine.com/Sip456](http://GetOSWine.com/Sip456)  
 or call **1.855.581.4275** and mention code **AHNE001**

Savings off retail price. Offer subject to availability and club enrollment. Omaha Steaks Wine is operated independently from Omaha Steaks, LLC. Full terms and conditions online. Void where prohibited by law.

**Carter~Conley Funeral Home**  
 13701 Corpus Christi St.  
 Houston, TX 77015  
**(713) 455-5100**  
 \*Funerals \*Cremations \*Pre-Arrangements  
 Family Owned and Operated Since 1992  
[www.CarterConleyFH.com](http://www.CarterConleyFH.com)

**SHOP LOCALLY -- Save Time & Money** **Business Directory** **SHOP LOCALLY -- Save Time & Money**

  
**281-428-1187**  
**1-800-345-8471**  
**Sales & Repair Service**  
 Baytown, Texas  
 John Henderson  
**628 Cedar Bayou Rd.**

**CENTRAL AUTO INSPECTIONS**  
**FULL SERVICE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS**  
**713-702-3200**  
**JOHNNY GAENE**  
OWNER-INSPECTOR  
**911 S. MAIN**  
HIGHLANDS TX 77562

**Graphics Unlimited, Inc.**  
CORPORATE GRAPHICS AT ITS BEST  
**Signs & Banners**  
**281-462-1200**  
[www.graphicsunlimitedinc.net](http://www.graphicsunlimitedinc.net)  
 213 Kernohan • Crosby, TX 77532

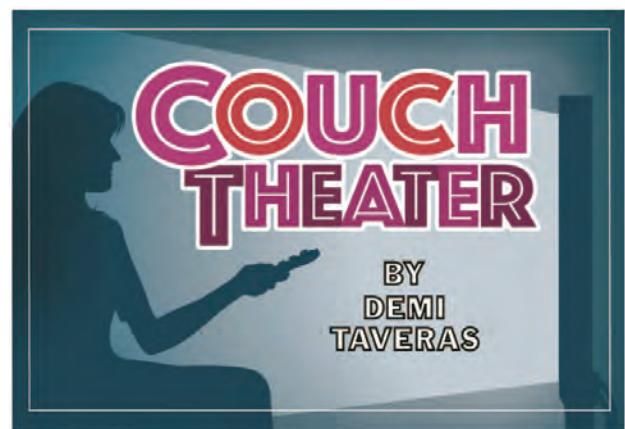
**WESTON COTTEN, ATTORNEY**  
 HIGHLANDS  
 281-421-4050 1500 E. Wallisville Rd.  
NOT CERTIFIED BY THE TEXAS BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

  
**HILL MATERIALS**  
 119 Listi Ln, Highlands [hillmaterials.com](http://hillmaterials.com)  
**WE DELIVER TO YOU**  
**(281) 843-5000**  
residential • commercial • industrial

SMALL ADS BRING **BIG** RESULTS  
 Ask about our Business Directory Package  
 13 Weeks + Story + Display for \$260  
 Ask about our Ribbon Cutting Package  
 Photo + Story + Web for \$260  
**713-266-3444**

**IBO CONCRETE WORK**  
 • Driveway Repair  
 • New Driveway  
 • Sidewalks  
 • Patio  
 Schedule your free quote today!  
**Victor 832-434-0768**  
[ibconcrete.com](http://ibconcrete.com) **IBOCONCRETE.COM**

**To advertise in the Business Directory, please call 713-266-3444 for details**



Timothee Chalamet star in "Marty Supreme."

"Marty Supreme"

"Marty Supreme" (R) — A24 scored another success, both critically and financially, with this sports comedy-drama film led by Timothee Chalamet ("A Complete Unknown"). Loosely based on table tennis player Marty Reisman's 1974 memoir, the film picks up in 1952 when a young Marty Mauser (Chalamet) is working as a shoe salesman while competing in table tennis professionally. Marty is determined to be great and make his dream of winning the British Open come true, even if he has to cut a few corners and step on some toes to get there. Meanwhile, Marty's a messy romantic whose eyes bounce between retired actress Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow) and his married childhood friend Rachel Mizler (Odessa

A'zion). So far, "Marty Supreme" has earned Chalamet a Golden Globe and a Critics' Choice Award for Best Actor; his sights are now on nabbing that Oscar statuette. Out to rent on Feb. 3. (Apple TV+)

"The Housemaid" (R) — After Sydney Sweeney's silly ad about jeans started to tank her career and cost her "Christy" film to bomb, she was forced to apologize and get it together ahead of the premiere of her erotic psychological thriller. (Which ended up being somewhat of a success!) Co-starring the lovely Amanda Seyfried ("The Testament of Ann Lee") and Brandon Sklenar ("Drop"), the film follows a young woman named Millie (Sweeney) who has a criminal past and becomes a live-in housekeeper for the wealthy

Winchesters. Millie soon learns that Nina (Seyfried), the mother and wife of the family, is mentally unwell and quickly begins to suffer the consequences of being her housemaid. It is only when Millie is pushed to the brink that she realizes why she was hired for the Winchesters and who this family really is. Out to rent on Feb. 3. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The 68th Annual Grammy Awards" (TV-PG) — CBS just won't let go of Trevor Noah as the host for the Grammys, making it the sixth consecutive time that the comedian has hosted. (They just don't make hosts like they used to...) But this is the final year that CBS will be broadcasting the ceremony, as the show has plans to move to ABC and Disney platforms after this year. Performers include Sabrina Carpenter, Pharrell Williams, and a medley that features all eight nominees for Best New Artists (including girl band Katseye and pop singer Addison Rae). Meanwhile, musicians like Bad Bunny, Kendrick Lamar, Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga and Billie Eilish are duking it out in the major categories of "Song of the Year," "Album of the Year," and "Record of the Year." Stream it now to skip all the pesky commercials and just get to the good parts. (Paramount+)

(c) 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

Q:I watch reruns of the old TV series "Castle" on the Lifetime Channel. I know that the actor who plays Castle, Nathan Fillion, is also in "The Rookie," but what happened to the actress who played Kate Beckett? Has she retired from acting? — M.D.

A:"Castle" was a detective-dramedy series that aired on ABC from 2009-2016 and starred Nathan Fillion and Stana Katic. Fillion went on to star in another ABC series called "The Rookie," which is currently in its eighth season. Last year, he also appeared as the Green Lantern in both the blockbuster hit movie "Superman" and the HBO series "Peacemaker."

Katic's career is still going strong, but she's starring in projects that have less of a profile. Most notably, she starred in the Amazon series "Absentia," where she played an FBI agent who was once declared dead but returns to find herself as the prime suspect in a murder. The mystery-thriller ran for three seasons before concluding in 2020, but you can find the entire series on Netflix now.

Katic will star in a series that is currently in development called "Entangled," which is about married CIA agents. But it hasn't started filming, nor has it found a network or a streamer to pick it up once it's been completed.

Q:When is the Nicole Kidman series coming out that is supposed to be based on the Patricia Cornwell mysteries? Where will it air? — D.N.

A:"Scarpetta," starring Nicole Kidman as a forensic pathologist, will debut on Amazon Prime Video beginning March 11. Dr. Kay Scarpetta is the protagonist in almost 30 bestselling novels by Patricia Cornwell. As if the new series based on the books didn't have enough star power with Kidman as the lead, it will also star another Oscar winner — Jamie Lee Curtis — as Kay's sister.

Q: Who is the actress with the curly hair in the new Peacock series "Ponies"? I know one of the main actresses was in "Game of



Stana Katic in "Absentia"

Thrones," but I don't recognize the other one. I love the show, though. — F.N.

A:Yes, that's Emilia Clarke who you recognized; she played Daenerys Targaryen in the epic series "Game of Thrones." But her co-star in "Ponies" is also worthy of recognition. Haley Lu Richardson is probably best known for her role as Portia, who was Jennifer Coolidge's character's assistant in season two of "The White Lotus" — a show where, as a cast member, you're almost guaranteed an Emmy nomination. While she didn't get an Emmy nod, she did win an Actor Award for being a part of the ensemble cast of "The White Lotus" in 2023.

Back in 2019, she starred opposite Cole Sprouse ("Riverdale") in the coming-of-age film "Five Feet Apart," which was directed by Justin Baldoni ("It Ends with Us"). While a second season for "Ponies" hasn't been announced yet, the show's creators have high expectations that it will have more stories planned for the fun '70s Russian spy series.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

(c) 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps



by Bud Blake



by Jeff Pickering

Weekly SUDOKU grid and instructions

HOCUS-FOCUS comic strip and puzzle

King Crossword puzzle and answers

Trivia Test Answers

Trivia test questions and answers



# THEIR ADVANCED TREATMENTS BEAT MY CANCER

From diagnosis to treatment to recovery, your dedicated Houston Methodist cancer center team uses leading research, cutting-edge technology and the latest treatments to create a personalized care plan for you. At eight cancer center locations throughout the Greater Houston area, you'll find the cancer expertise to help you feel whole again.

That's the difference between practicing medicine and leading it. **For you.**



HOUSTON  
**Methodist**<sup>®</sup>  
 LEADING MEDICINE

[houstonmethodist.org/cancer](http://houstonmethodist.org/cancer)  
 713.790.2700