



Harris County Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey led off the meeting with remarks urging the plan for the cleanup of the Superfund site San Jacinto River Waste Pits now. Photo by Antranik Tavitian.

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

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THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026

HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Community Demands Info on Cancer Risks Texas DSHS skips air pollution meeting

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HIGHLANDS – Community leaders, health experts, and residents gathered at the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands last Thursday to confront the findings of a recent Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) cancer study, which revealed significantly elevated rates of leukemia, lung and bronchus cancer, lymphoma, and cervical cancer across a massive area of East Harris County.

The panel, organized as a follow-up to Public Health Watch's October 2025 investigation, brought together advocates and experts to de-

mand greater transparency and immediate action. There was only one problem: the invited guests, Texas Department of State Health Services, was a no-show.

Since DSHS declined to participate, an empty chair and balloon marked their absence.

The event drew about 60 attendees and featured representatives from organizations including Texas Health and Environmental Alliance (THEA), Air Alliance Houston, Fenceline Watch, Channelview Health and Improvement Coalition (CHIC), and Public Citizen.

Before the panel began, Harris County Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey spoke his mind on the



Panelists (R to L) Environmental epidemiologist Dr. Inye Yuok of Air Alliance Houston, Jackie Medcalf of the Texas Health and Environmental Alliance join David Leffler of Public Health Watch at the air pollution meeting held in Highlands at the San Jacinto Community Center last Thursday.

An empty chair with a balloon marks the absence of representatives from the Texas Department of State Health Services at the meeting. It was their findings that prompted the meeting. Photo courtesy of Antranik Tavitian. Photos courtesy of Antranik Tavitian.

cleanup of the Superfund Site on the San Jacinto River.

"The waste pits have sat too long in a bureaucratic holding pattern. The site needs to move from planning to construction for remediation, he told the gathering.

"They've got a plan. I've been briefed on the plan. It's a good plan. Do it. Move forward. Fire the gun. There's always reasons to delay. I'm tired of it," he said frustrated with the bureaucracy.

Panelist Jackie Medcalf, founder and CEO of THEA, described the community's long struggle for answers to the exceeding-

CONTINUED. See PHW Meeting on Air Pollution, Page 5

IN THE STARS

Crosby Library Book Sale March 6,7

Friends of the Crosby Library will hold their "Spring into Reading" Book Sale.

Friday, March 6 - 1Pm - 6pm
Saturday, March 7 - 10am - 5am.

BOOK SALE SPECIALS:
A colorful reusable bag is available for \$10 per bag of all the books you can fit in it. Hard backed or paper back books
Children books are priced as marked and not included.

Children's books, mysteries, romance, cookbooks and craft books are just a sample of book choices, thanks to donations from patrons. All the proceeds from the Book Sale benefit the Crosby Library and support the Summer Reading programs.

Questions call the Library - 832-927-7790

CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Crosby ISD Heads to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

Dear East Harris County Communities and Families,

Spring is always a special time in Crosby ISD. Our campuses are energized, our students are focused, and our community spirit is on full display. One of the greatest highlights of this season is watching our Crosby Cougars represent us so proudly at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLSR).

From our youngest learners to our graduating seniors, our students step onto one of the largest stages in our region to compete, exhibit, and shine. Two areas where Crosby continues to distinguish itself are our exceptional art programs and our outstanding livestock exhibitions.



Dr. Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

Participation in HLSR is not a last-minute effort, but it is the result of months of dedication and preparation. Our livestock exhibitors begin their journey in late summer, while our student artists begin creating and refining their work in the fall. The commitment, discipline, and perseverance required speak volumes about the character of our students



and the guidance of our staff.

In our Visual Arts program, students from every campus submitted entries for local judging in early December. By the time we

returned from winter break, ribbons had been awarded and top entries selected to advance. Each elementary campus sends two Blue Ribbon pieces to HLSR. At the middle school

level, 10 Blue Ribbon students represent their campus, and at the high

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, page 2

Pct. 2 leads with Solar Power



SOLAR PANELS on top of the roof of Almendarez Community Center in East Aldine.

This month Commissioner Adrian Garcia debuted a first-of-its-kind solar energy project in Harris County at Precinct

2's Deputy Darren Almendarez Community Center in Aldine. Long before Winter Storm Uri brought widespread power outages

across Texas, Garcia initiated Harris County's

Continued. See PCT. 2 SOLAR POWER, Page 2

Trail Rides start Houston Rodeo



THE NORTHEASTERN TRAILRIDE goes past Sheldon Elementary School in Channelview, on the way to Memorial Park and then the Rodeo Parade in downtown Houston on Saturday, Feb. 21. There were 12 Trail Rides this year. The Spanish Trailride came through East Aldine on Thursday, traveling down Aldine-Bender and I-45 frontage. The Rodeo opens on Monday, March 2 with Riley Green performing.

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Crosby ISD heads to the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

school, 20 students advance.

This year, Crosby Middle School had more than 600 submissions which is an extraordinary testament to student engagement and creativity. From those entries, approximately 50 pieces were selected for final consideration, with 30 earning ribbons and 10 receiving district-advancing Blue Ribbons. We are especially proud of our standout achievements:

- *7th grader Suzy Kennedy – Best of Show
- *8th grader Valeria Hernandez – Gold Medal
- *High school sophomore Ella Jones – Best of Show
- *Persia Blue – Gold Medal
- *Sadie Manuel – Gold Medal

These honors reflect not only artistic talent, but also dedication, technical skill, and the courage to compete at a high level.

On the agricultural side, our FFA and 4H students

begin preparing months in advance by selecting their animal projects and committing to daily care, training, and conditioning. Showing livestock requires responsibility, time management, and resilience. Students work tirelessly to ensure their animals meet competition standards, practicing daily to refine their presentation skills before stepping into the show ring.

In recent years, Crosby ISD has celebrated multiple students whose projects were selected for Auction which is one of the highest honors at HLSR. This past November, senior and FFA Officer Thomas Pier and his steer, Iceman, were named Reserve Champion Middleweight Scramble Steer at the Calf Scramble Progress Show and are now advancing to compete in San Antonio. We are incredibly proud of his accomplishment and look forward to cheering on all

of our students throughout the season.

Events like HLSR do more than provide competition opportunities. They build confidence. They strengthen technical and leadership skills. They teach responsibility and perseverance. They open doors to scholarships. Most importantly, they allow our students to represent Crosby ISD on a major regional stage with excellence and integrity.

Cougar pride runs deep in our district. I encourage you to visit the Hayloft Gallery or attend the Livestock Auction at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo to see firsthand the incredible ways our students are demonstrating Cougar Excellence.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, our programs, and our community.

With Cougar Pride, Dr. Paula Patterson

GOOSE CREEK CISD SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Celebrating Career & Technical Education Month

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, a time to celebrate the programs that prepare students with the knowledge and real-world experiences needed for success in high-demand careers. Across Goose Creek CISD, CTE plays an important role in helping students discover their interests, build practical skills, and create meaningful pathways for their future.

Our CTE programs provide hands-on learning that connects classroom instruction to real-world opportunities. Students explore a wide range of career pathways while gaining experience through industry-aligned coursework, internships, certifications, and dual-credit opportunities. Partnerships with local businesses, industry leaders, and higher education institutions help ensure these experiences reflect workforce needs and prepare students for success after graduation. CTE academies are offered at Goose Creek Memorial, Ross S. Sterling, Robert E. Lee, and Stuart Ca-



Dr. Joe Rodriguez
Goose Creek CISD Superintendent

and problem-solving. Whether designing innovative solutions, creating digital media, exploring technical fields, or preparing for service-oriented professions, students are gaining the confidence and experience needed to pursue their goals.

The success of our CTE programs is made possible through the dedication of our educators and the support of our community and industry partners. Their commitment creates meaningful opportunities for students and strengthens the future of our region.

As we celebrate CTE Month, I encourage our community to recognize the impact of these programs and the students and educators who bring them to life each day. Goose Creek CISD remains committed to expanding opportunities that equip students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed and contribute to a strong, thriving community.

Thank you for your continued support of Goose Creek CISD as we prepare our students for bright futures.



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12 DAYS INSIDE CABIN STARTING AT \$3,549 ~~\$3,299*~~
BASED ON JUL 8, 2026 DEPARTURE

- Marvel at Alaska's natural beauty in Denali National Park
- Visit Alaska's the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Cruise Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias National Park
- Travel through the legendary Inside Passage



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16 DAYS STARTING AT \$4,099 ~~\$3,849*~~
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- Explore natural wonders of the Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest National Park, and the Painted Desert
- Discover Seligman, known as the "historic birthplace of Route 66," and visit the vibrant Hotel El Rancho in Gallup, where Golden Age movie stars once stayed

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Sterling Rangers Advance to Area Round with Bi-District Championship Win

FINAL SCORE

47 LAPORTE  **50** RANGERS 

The Ross S. Sterling High School Rangers boys basketball team, led by Head Coach Johnny Daniels, continued its postseason momentum Tuesday night, capturing the Bi-District Championship with a hard-fought 50-47 victory over the La Porte Bulldogs.

Fueled by strong community support and a determined team effort, the Rangers executed down the stretch to secure the playoff win and advance in the UIL postseason. The program expressed appreciation to the Baytown community for showing up and creating an electric playoff atmosphere.

Derrick Brooks earned Player of the Game honors, leading Sterling with 16 points, 8 rebounds, and 2 steals.

Recognized as the team's "DAWG" of the game, Mikey Smith contributed 15 points, 6 rebounds, and 3 steals, making critical plays on both ends of the floor.

Energy and effort defined the Rangers' performance throughout the night. Kahmari Houke added 7 points and 3 rebounds, while Andres Figueroa delivered a stand-out effort with 10 rebounds and relentless defensive play, helping control the boards and spark the team's momentum. Jalen Vaughn also contributed 8 points in the victory.

With the win, Sterling advances to the UIL Area Round Playoffs, where the Rangers will face the Crosby Cougars.

UIL Area Round Playoff Game Sterling vs. Crosby Location: Pasadena High School Date: Friday, February 27, 2026 Time: 7:00 PM

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Auditorium

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- Meet teachers and campus leaders.
- Get helpful information for you and your student!

Barbers Hill Press

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THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

\$1.7 Million Surplus & The First Balanced Budget Since 2023

Story by: Kendall David, GCCISD Executive Director of Community.

Goose Creek CISD (GCCISD) announced that the Board of Trustees approved the district's 2024-2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) during its regular board meeting on Monday night. The report reflects significant progress in stabilizing the district's finances and earned the highest-level audit unmodified opinion possible.

As a result of disciplined spending and cost-saving measures implemented throughout the school year, GCCISD closed the fiscal year with a \$1.7 million General Fund surplus. Additionally, the district enters the upcoming budget planning season with a balanced budget, marking the first time since 2023 that GCCISD has achieved this milestone.

Over the last four budget planning cycles, the district has implemented a total of \$38.3 million in budget reductions to address financial challenges and strengthen long-term fiscal stability. These actions reflect a strategic and proactive approach to financial stewardship while maintaining a focus on student success and operational effectiveness.

Looking ahead, the district's budget reduction work does not stop here. A budget reduction committee has been assembled with a goal of identifying an additional \$5 million in efficiencies and savings to ensure GCCISD is positioned to responsibly plan for potential employee pay increases, unanticipated emergency expenditures, and long-term financial stability.

"This audit outcome affirms the hard work and difficult decisions made to ensure GCCISD remains financially responsible and sustainable," said Brigitte Clark, GCCISD Chief Financial Officer. "Our focus remains on transparency, accountability, and making decisions that best serve our students, staff, and community—both today and in the future."

The approved ACFR provides a comprehensive overview of the district's financial position and is available for public review on the district website.

Lee College President Dr. Lynda Villanueva Resigns After Six Years

By David Isick,

The Board of Regents accepted her resignation during a Special Meeting this evening and appointed Chief Financial Officer Jacob Adkin as interim chief administrator.

The resignation comes just one week after a regular board meeting reportedly ended with Dr. Villanueva returning the keys to her company vehicle, a moment that suggested tensions between the President and the Board had escalated.

Hired in February 2020, Dr. Villanueva stepped into leadership at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. During her tenure, she frequently pointed to

record enrollment growth, the expansion and revamping of the Student Resource and Advocacy Center, and her role in negotiating the Lee College-Barbers Hill campus agreement. The Barbers Hill campus held its groundbreaking ceremony just yesterday, notably without the President present.

Supporters described her as a transformative leader who modernized operations and positioned the college for long-term growth. Critics, however, argued that her governing style was heavy-handed and that the administrative structure became increasingly top-heavy, with several well-compensated



Linda Villanueva

leadership roles filled by individuals from her previous place of employment (Brazosport College).

Recent shifts in the composition of the Board, including the departure of

Susan Moore-Fontenot, appeared to change the dynamic between the President and the governing body. In recent months, the Board pushed back on her initial budget proposal, reorganization efforts, and a high-profile personnel dispute.

That dispute came to a head at the February 2 Board meeting, where a six-hour public hearing took place. Lee College Foundation Director Selah Tacconi requested the hearing to protest the President's effort to terminate her employment. The proceeding included attorneys, cross-examination, and extended deliberation by the Board. Ultimately, the Board declined to up-

hold the termination. The hearing revealed concerns that the President may have acted hastily, lacked sufficient documentation, and did not provide convincing justification for dismissal.

CFO Jacob Adkin now assumes interim leadership at a pivotal moment for the institution. With the Barbers Hill expansion underway and budget discussions ahead, the Board will determine the direction of governance and begin the process of identifying permanent leadership. Historically, a Presidential Search Committee is established by the Board but they haven't decided yet on the process of selecting a replacement.

The Little Moments We'll Miss Someday

STUDENT COLUMN:

By Guadalupe Del Campo, Junior at Robert E. Lee High.

Memorizing facts, listening to teachers talk for hours, essays due by midnight - and having to balance your own personal life outside of the classroom on top of all that. And I start to think, where'd all the time go? I wish I could just go back to kindergarten, where my biggest concern in the world was making sure I knew how to count to a hundred, or better yet - graduate and get it all over with. Now instead of crying over a scraped knee, I cry over my math homework. When did letters get involved anyway?

These are supposed to be the best years of my life, childhood and adolescence. Yet all I, and others like me, do is take them for granted. We want to be adults - independent, mature, we want to be grown-up.

But I'm here to tell my fellow warriors in the battle we call school, it's not just about the grades, awards, or your class rank. It's not even about the clubs you're in or your extracurricular involvement. Our school years are so much more. They're about those small, unforgettable moments that we'll miss once we're out of school. I mean, just a couple of years ago, I was convinced flying cars were to be the norm by the time I was a high schooler. It's almost weird to even



Guadalupe Del Campo, GCCISD Student.

think about how much has changed since then. The mentality, maturity levels, aspirations and dreams.

Back in grade school, I remember looking at the middle school girls as if they were royalty. The ones who didn't have babyish bows in their hair, with cool non-

themed backpacks and even mascara on their lashes. The cool girls who knew way more than I did. In middle school I did the same, looking up to the "trendy" high school girls. But as I transitioned into that "trendy" high school girl, the only thing I truly worried about was getting older. The realization that the years of measuring my life in school-years are coming to an end, which in a way meant my childhood was too. Somewhere in between the chaos of impossible science projects, deadlines, and the curiosity of what the future upholds, I never truly slowed down to appreciate what I had around me. Always looking ahead, never realizing the present is right

here - it's now. It's bittersweet. I truly wouldn't exchange my memories for the world. As I carry on with the remainder of my time as a student, I'll reflect about the sweet, ephemeral flow of time in between my late night study sessions. So this is not only a reminder to my peers to make the most out of your school years, but a tribute to the forever students who once walked the halls I have, and the future students who will one day walk the halls we once walked. School isn't just a building, it's a time-capsule of our youth, ugly and all. Those four walls we gripe about right now will someday hold our memories, history, and love.

Barbers Hill Girls Basketball Team Returns to State Semifinals



The Barbers Hill girls basketball team defeated Iowa Colony, 62-52, Friday night in the Class 5A Division II Region III final at Channelview High School.

Barbers Hill (36-3), which entered the playoffs ranked No. 6 in the state, advances to the UIL state semifinals for the second consecutive season. The Eagles will face Region IV champion Cedar Park (26-10) on Tuesday, with a berth in the state championship game in San Antonio at stake. Tipoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Mumford High School in Bryan.

The Eagles fell short in their bid for a state title last season, losing to Liberty Hill in the 2025 cham-

ampionship game. "I think they were pretty hungry," Barbers Hill head coach Bryan Harris said. Harris surpassed 700 career victories earlier this season. "We're trying to chase greatness and finish unfinished business."

Barbers Hill held a 28-26 lead at halftime before pulling away in the third quarter, building a double-digit advantage. The Eagles maintained control the rest of the way to secure the regional title.

With the win, Barbers Hill extended its winning streak to 30 games. The Eagles showcased a balanced offensive attack, connecting from long range while consistently attacking the basket.

Junior guard Brooklynn Roberson led the team with 20 points. Senior forward Autumn Lecompte added 12 points, and junior Jayci Lackey contributed nine.

Barbers Hill has won three state championships in program history, capturing back-to-back titles in 1982 and 1983 before claiming another in 1997. This year's team is seeking to add to that legacy and stands just two victories away from doing so.

Cedar Park advanced to the semifinals with a 41-33 win over Kerrville Tivy in the Region IV final. The Timberwolves won Class 5A state titles in 2021 and 2022 and reached the semifinals in 2024.

The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940
By John Bishop
Directed By Patti Meiners
Date: March 29 & 30
Time: 7:00 pm
At Baytown Little Theater

Directed By: Patti Meiners

We are thrilled to announce auditions for the hilarious and sidesplitting murder mystery farce, *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* by John Bishop.

The creative team responsible for a recent Broadway flop (in which three chorus girls were murdered by the mysterious "Stage Door Slasher") assemble for a backer's audition of their new show at the Westchester estate of a wealthy "angel." The house is replete with sliding panels, secret passageways, and a German maid who is apparently four different people—all of which figure diabolically in the comic mayhem which follows when the infamous "Slasher" makes his reappearance and strikes again—and again. As the composer, lyricist, actors, and director prepare their performance, and a blizzard cuts off any possible retreat, bodies start to drop in plain sight, knives spring out of nowhere, masked figures drag their victims behind swiveling bookcases, and accusing fingers point in all directions. However, and with no thanks to the bumbling police inspector who snowshoes in to investigate, the mystery is solved in the nick of time and the "Slasher" unmasked—but not before the audience has been treated to a sidesplitting good time and a generous serving of the author's biting, satiric, and refreshingly irreverent wit.

Whether you're new to the stage or a seasoned performer, we want to see you at the Baytown Little Theater.

★ OPINION PAGE ★

★
OPINION
 By Nathan Cunneen, Texas State Director,
 American Federation for Children

Texas Education Freedom Account Program Surpasses 100,000 Applications

Dallas, TX – The Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) Program officially surpassed 100,000 student applications in just 12 days, reaching 101,797 Sunday. This historic milestone spotlights extraordinary demand from Texas families seeking expanded educational options.

Thanks to the excellent work of Acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock and his team, the program has experienced a smooth and successful rollout, with families across the state navigating the application process without major technical issues or delays. The strong early demand reflects both the urgency families feel and their enthusiasm for greater flexibility in choosing the best educational setting for their children.

Importantly, the program is not first-come-first-served. Families should continue applying! Applications received on opening day will have the same chance of success as those received by the March 17 deadline. Applications for students from low-income families and for students with special needs will be prioritized.

TEFA is already having a positive impact on communities who traditionally face the greatest barriers to accessing educational options. While all Texas pre-K through 12th grade students are eligible, early data shows that the overwhelming majority of TEFA applications have come from low-income and working-class families.

Statement from Nathan Cunneen, Texas State Director, American Federation for Children:

“This six-figure application milestone is a powerful testament to how popular education freedom is in Texas. Families are embracing the opportunity to customize their child’s education, and we are proud the program has launched so efficiently and effectively to meet that demand. We thank Acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock, his team, and Odyssey for their excellent work on the rollout of this program.


It is now clear that demand will exceed supply for the first year of the TEFA program. Texas lawmakers should take note and prepare to fully fund the program waitlist in future legislative sessions so that every family who wants a choice can access it.”

AboutAFC:

The American Federation for Children is the nation’s largest school choice advocacy organization and a leading force in advancing education freedom. AFC has helped pass more than 200 school choice laws nationwide, empowering families with meaningful options and elevating parent voices in education policy. The organization’s affiliated Super PAC, AFC Victory Fund, is focused on electing education reform champions at state and federal levels.

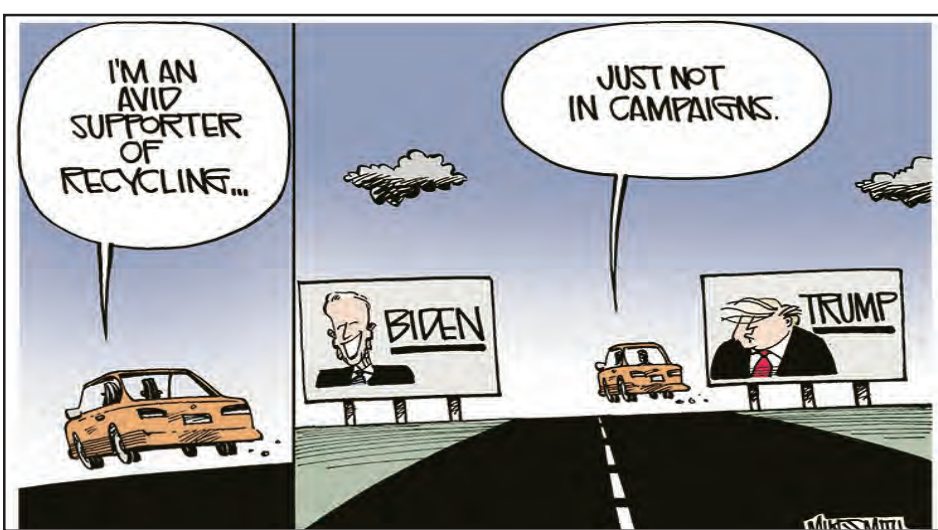
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Americanisms



“Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.”
 — Margaret Mead

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★
STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
 By Gary Borders

Early Voting Ends Feb. 27

Early voting in the March 3 primary ends on Friday, Feb. 27. Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson announced that Texas has 18.7 million registered voters for the primary.

“Nearly 19 million Texans are registered to vote, and my office and election officials across the state are working to make sure all Texas voters who want to participate in the primary election are confident in the process and ready to cast a ballot,” Nelson said.

When casting a ballot in person, voters are required to show identification. Cell phones are prohibited in a room in which voting is taking place. However, voters can bring written notes and printed sample ballots into the polling location for reference.

During the primary elections, voters must indicate which party’s primary they wish to vote in, though Texas law does not require voters to register with a party before casting a ballot.

Crossing over during primary season is not allowed. For example, if a voter casts a ballot in the Democratic primary, that person cannot vote in a runoff election in the Republican primary, and vice versa.

TALARICO GETS BOOST FROM COLBERT DRAMA

Both Democratic U.S. Senate candidate James Talarico and his primary opponent, U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, agree that Talarico got a boost from the brouhaha stemming from the refusal of CBS to allow talk show host Stephen Colbert to air an interview with him. The interview was instead posted on YouTube, where it has, to date, garnered more than seven million views. Talarico reported raising more than \$2.5 million in fundraising off what he called an attempt to censor him, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Talarico trailed Crockett by eight points in a University of Houston poll released earlier. No polling has been released since the video went viral.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr said in January that he was considering requiring TV talk show hosts to



offer equal airtime, but that has not been made official. Talk shows have long been exempted from that rule.

Crockett said last week the attempt to ban the interview only amplified it.

“It probably gave my opponent the boost he was looking for,” Crockett said.

The winner of the Democratic primary will face the winner of the GOP primary, which pits incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt.

MOST TEXANS ARRESTED BY ICE HAVE NO CONVICTIONS

The Trump administration’s deportation campaign promised to target gang members, murderers, and other criminal offenders. However, a review of federal data shows a lower percentage of people targeted had criminal convictions than in former President Joe Biden’s final year in office, according to the Chronicle.

Federal agents arrested about 54,000 people in Texas during Trump’s first nine months of office, more than double the number during a similar period under Biden. But the share of those with criminal convictions fell from about 60% under Biden to under 40% under Trump.

Over a third of the arrests made by ICE under Trump involved people with no criminal convictions and no pending criminal charges, compared to 13% under Biden.

“The statistics show the indiscriminate nature of the Trump administration’s policies around trying to meet its self-defined quotas of 3,000 arrests per day,” said Adriel Orozco, senior policy counsel at the American Immigration

Council.

Texas’ weekly ICE arrests increased by 135% during that same time frame.

TEXAS SUES DOW, CLAIMING ‘HABITUAL’ POLLUTION VIOLATIONS

The Texas Attorney General’s office has sued Dow Chemical Co., alleging hundreds of water pollution violations at its industrial complex at Seadrift, across from the Aransas Wildlife Refuge.

The Texas Tribune reported that Dow, North America’s largest chemical manufacturer, has been in “habitual non-compliance” with pollution permits.

A spokesperson for Union Carbide Corp., which operates the Seadrift complex for Dow, said the company “works closely with state and federal regulators to ensure compliance with all existing laws and regulations.”

The state’s lawsuit follows a 60-day notice of intent to sue filed in December by a local environmental activist. The state’s suit could supersede that pending litigation, according to The Tribune.

JANUARY WAS DRIER, WARMER THAN NORMAL

Two thirds of Texas is now in drought, according to hydrologist Mark Wentzel with the Texas Water Development Board. That is up 13 percentage points from late December.

“The small improvements in temperature and precipitation we saw in January weren’t enough to end drought expansion in our state,” Wentzel wrote.

Meanwhile, both the 2026 Old Farmer’s Almanac and the Farmers’ Almanac’s long-range spring outlooks for Texas are calling for warmer and wetter weather in Texas, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

“April will bring warm temperatures (5 degrees above average), while May will cool off slightly (1 degree above average),” meteorologists Bob Smerbeck and Brian Thompson wrote in their forecast explanation. “Rainfall will be above normal, and watch for a tropical storm in late May.”

WILDFIRE SEASON JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Texas A&M Forest Service has put the current wildfire preparedness gauge at Level 3, which means, “wildfire activity is impacting several regions of the state as the result of drought, dry vegetation or frequent fire weather events.”

Several wildfires broke out last week across the Panhandle as humidity levels dropped and winds gusts rose up to 65 mph.

Last Tuesday the service responded to nine wildfires affecting more than 18,000 acres. As of Sunday burn bans were in place in 151 Texas counties, covering all of the Panhandle and most of Central and West Texas. The wildfire potential is expected to increase this week as dry, windy conditions continue.

★
THE POSTSCRIPT
 By Carrie Classon

Sweeping Confetti



My husband, Peter, and I have landed in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and already the strange seems familiar again.

One of the things that impresses me every time I am here is the attention given to jobs that I don’t always think of as needing a lot of attention. Masonry work is meticulous and crafted to last centuries. Cloth is woven one thread at a time, creating utterly unique works. Gardening is done with such patience and consistency that there are blooms every month of the year. But this morning, I was noticing the street sweepers.

The street sweepers are legion. I have no idea what their actual numbers are, but in the center of the old town, where we stay, you cannot walk down a street from the first light of morning until well after dark without encountering a person dressed in red, with a homemade broom and a sturdy dustpan affixed to a stick. Litter does not stand a chance in this town. Stray leaves are corralled as they fall. And, to me, the most amazing thing is how they sweep up the confetti.

In San Miguel, there are a lot of reasons to celebrate. There are weddings every weekend, the city throws a party every week, and quinceañeras—the special 15th birthday party celebrations for girls in enormous poofy dresses—occur nearly every day. And most of these events involve confetti.

But between Valentine’s Day and Easter, cascarones are sold on the street by the boxful. Cascarones are just ordinary eggs with the insides blown out, filled with confetti. Children throw them at each other. Lovers smash them over each other’s heads. Everyone runs and laughs, hurling confetti-filled eggs at one another. It is a huge amount of fun. It is also terribly messy.

And so, every evening without fail, the street sweepers are out, sweeping every fleck of confetti and eggshell off the streets, a job that would be tricky under any circumstances, but is made much more difficult because the streets are made of brick and cobblestones.

They sweep up after parades and wedding processions. After the young quinceañera has hiked up her hoop skirt and moved on (usually revealing a pair of sensible sneakers beneath her voluminous skirts), the sweepers move in.

This morning, I was out earlier than usual, and I saw a pickup truck filled with street sweepers. There was a white fence around the pickup bed, and the sweepers were standing in the moving truck, talking and laughing as they were deposited at whatever street corner they were scheduled to start work. And I thought how much I have to learn from the street sweepers.

It is easy to sweep up the big messes. A lot of folks do it, in one way or another. They get paid for doing the bare minimum and that is the end of it. But to do a job—particularly a job that few people truly appreciate—to do that job really well takes a special kind of dedication and, I believe, repays the sweeper in a special way.

Showing up earlier than absolutely necessary, smiling at the person I am working with, doing a bit more than is required just to make the next person’s work a little easier—there is an intrinsic value to these things that brings joy and a sense of accomplishment.

The sweepers show me the value of a job well done, whether one is creating something that will last for decades, or sweeping up the confetti that will surely fall again later that day.

Till next time,
 Carrie
 Carrie’s debut novel, “Loon Point,” is now available at both local and online retailers.

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PHW Meeting on Air Pollution,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ly high cancer rate in the area.

“Living here in Highlands, my family and I and our neighbors felt like we had disproportionate rates of cancer. For years, we begged the EPA, we begged the state to study our health. We handed over the types of cancer that we most commonly saw in the community.”

Medcalf expressed frustration with the state’s refusal to release census tract-level data, which would allow residents to pinpoint risks in their neighborhoods.

“It stuck out like a sore thumb that they did not look at census level data. We want this information. We should have this information. I deeply believe that the data of the community lives with the community,” she insisted.

Environmental epidemiologist Dr. Inye Yuok of Air Alliance Houston reviewed the study and found the results deeply concerning.

“There were four types of cancers that were statistically significant. The most alarming to me was the leukemia rates, because they were three

times what we expected. That level alone should trigger further investigations. That should be the next step. There’s no question about it,” he said definitively.

Panelists and attendees criticized the state’s rationale for withholding detailed data, arguing that census tract information can be safely de-identified. “You’re absolutely right. They can de-identify the data. You do that all the time in research. You don’t need to add anybody’s name to it. You de-identify it and you can share that data. So you’re not missing anything,” said Dr. Yuok.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of community advocacy. Medcalf urged residents to use their voices.

“We have moved mountains before when we’ve all used our voices. On txhea.org, we have a petition on there. We have already submitted hundreds of petitions from residents asking for the state to release census level data, and she urged more participation.

Panelists explained that DSHS is currently undergoing a “sunset review,” a

periodic evaluation by the Texas Sunset Commission, and encouraged public participation.

You can send an e-mail to sunset@sunset.texas.gov and read DSHS review on the subject line. Or you can submit comments online. That’s one powerful way that you can get the state, the DSHS, to do what they have to do,” she urged.

The meeting closed with calls for continued engagement, voting for officials who prioritize environmental health, and monitoring upcoming permits and pollution releases. “Our reporting a couple years ago did push a Houston area representative to raise the pollution fines through the TCEQ for the first time in more than a decade. That was through the sunset process. Now we see the sunset process is up for DSHS, so we’re all going to be rolling up our sleeves,” said moderator David Leffler.

As the community awaits further action, the panel’s message was clear: transparency, accountability, and local voices are essential to protecting public health.



Panelists Environmental epidemiologist Dr. Inye Yuok of Air Alliance Houston, Jackie Medcalf of the Texas Health and Environmental Alliance join David Leffler of Public Health Watch at the air pollution meeting held in Highlands at the San Jacinto Community Center last Thursday. Photo courtesy of Antranik Tavitian.



An empty chair with a balloon marks the absence of representatives from the Texas Department of State Health Services at the meeting. It was their findings that prompted the meeting. Photo courtesy of Antranik Tavitian.



Harris County Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey led off the meeting with remarks urging the plan for the cleanup of the Superfund site San Jacinto River Waste Pits now. Photo courtesy of Antranik Tavitian.






East Harris County Cancer Cluster

Summary of the 2025 Texas Department of State Health Services Cancer Assessment

The study declared a 250-square mile area of East Harris County a cancer cluster.

Overview

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) conducted an assessment of cancer occurrence in East Harris County, Texas, from 2013 to 2021. The study was requested by the Texas Health and Environment Alliance (THEA) to evaluate cancer concerns for residents around the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site.

Findings

This assessment analyzed 22 types of cancer in people of all ages and 7 childhood cancers for a total of 29 cancer types. The rates were then compared to rates in communities across Texas. Four types of cancer were found at unusually high rates across the entire 65 census tract study area.

Limitations

The assessment did not provide findings broken down by census tract, preventing the identification of cancer hotspots. It also excluded the analysis for cancers with fewer than six cases, and the DSHS report lacked a clear action plan.

Next Steps

THEA urges you to request that DSHS release the detailed census tract data to help our communities better understand localized environmental health issues. This data will also help in determining next steps and ways to support communities living with disproportionate rates of cancer.

Cancers Found at Abnormally High Rates

- Cervical
- Leukemia
- Lymphoma
- Lung and Bronchus

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Pct. 2 Solar Power,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DERs (Distributed Energy Resources) program. DERs leverages County funds made available due to energy efficiency measures that have resulted in reduced energy costs plus investment credits to install solar panels at County facilities. The energy produced by the panels will aid in powering the facilities, allow for buildings to operate as emergency shelters during widespread power outages, and reduce the County's demand on power from the grid.



PRECINCT 2 COMMISSIONER ADRIAN GARCIA, center, with workers and officials at the opening of the Solar Power installation at Almendarez Community Center. The control equipment can be seen at left, for the solar panels that are on the roof of the community center. Also present at the dedication were Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, and East Aldine District Executive Director Richard Cantu.

Pct. 3 collecting Stuffed Toys for Kids

Tonya Kostka, director of the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands, and Tom S Ramsey, PE, Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner, have this message for the Community:

Help our heroes! We're partnering with our local first responders to provide children with stuffed animals/toys in emergency situations, offering a sense of comfort when they need it the most.

How you can help:

- From March 1st until April 30th, we are collecting NEW, SMALL stuffed animals and toys for our "Stuffed with Care" campaign.
 - Drop-off: San Jacinto Community Center (604 Highland Woods Drive, Highlands, TX 77562)
 - Hours: 8 AM – 8 PM, Mondays - Fridays
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Notice is hereby given that Original Letters Testamentary for Docket No. 538308; Estate of BLANCA DALIA HENDRY Deceased; In Probate Court No. 3 of Harris County, Texas, were issued on FEBRUARY 2, 2026 to:

HOLLI D. GILBERT

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

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

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. Dated this FEBRUARY 26, 2026

Weston Cotten
by WESTON COTTE5N
Attorney for the Estate

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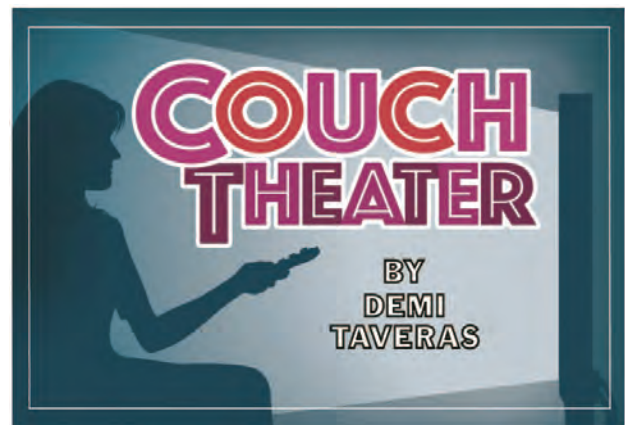
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Jason Bateman, left, and David Harbour star in "DTF St. Louis."

"DTF St. Louis."

"No Other Choice" (R) — From Park Chan-wook, director of the twisty erotic thriller "The Handmaiden" (2016), this South Korean thriller received three nominations at the Golden Globes but was unfortunately overlooked by the Oscars. Fortunately, however, it is impossible to overlook lead actor Lee Byung-hun, whom you might recognize as the Front Man from Netflix's hit series "Squid Game." Lee, once again, shows off his excellence in playing a complete psychopath; he portrays a veteran employee who gets laid off from his paper-making job and becomes desperate to land another high-paying job. This desperation propels him into dangerous action as he decides to literally take out the rest of the competing candidates. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Sentimental Value" (R) — The film distribu-

tor Neon has had great success with its foreign-language films this year. In addition to the previous film being one of Neon's successes for 2025, this Norwegian drama received a whopping nine nominations for the Oscars, including Best Picture. Its second-billed actor, Stellan Skarsgard ("Dune: Part Two"), also received the Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor this year. Also starring Elle Fanning ("A Complete Unknown") and Renate Reinsve ("The Worst Person in the World"), "Sentimental Value" is an emotional storytelling of a fractured relationship between two daughters, an actress and a historian, and their filmmaking father. As he attempts to get his latest project off the ground, he and his daughters are pushed to find common ground after years of estrangement. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"The 32nd Annual Actor Awards" (TV-PG) — Formerly known as the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards, the newly named Actor Awards ceremony is available to stream now. Like other popular award shows that refuse to provide fresh faces for the crowd, the ceremony was hosted by actress Kristen Bell ("Nobody Wants This") for the third time. "One Battle After Another" led the film category, while Seth Rogen's "The Studio" led the TV noms. The supporting role categories are the most surprising ones to watch since the Critics Choice Awards, Golden Globes and BAFTAs all selected different actors for this award so far. Meanwhile, Harrison Ford ("Star Wars," "Indiana Jones") received the Life Achievement Award for his legendary feats in Hollywood. (Netflix)

"DTF St. Louis" (TV-MA) — This new HBO series is led by David Harbour ("Stranger Things"), Jason Bateman ("Black Rabbit"), and Linda Cardellini ("Nonnas"). Described as a dark comedy miniseries, the show follows co-workers Floyd (Harbour) and Clark (Bateman), who are best buds minus the fact that Clark is secretly having an affair with Floyd's wife. After Clark successfully convinces Floyd to download a dating app called DTF St. Louis, Floyd shockingly ends up dead. With investigators now probing into his life, Clark must supply them with as much information as possible without giving up the fact that he was double-crossing his friend. The first episode is available now, with the subsequent six premiering on Sundays. (HBO Max)

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Q: What ever happened to the actress with blonde hair and blue eyes who starred in "Orange Is the New Black"? I haven't seen her in anything since. Is the show coming back? — Y.R.

A: You're thinking of Taylor Schilling, who starred as inmate Piper Chapman in the hit Netflix series "Orange Is the New Black." The series ended in 2019 after seven seasons, and there are no plans for its return. Schilling has done steady work since, including two episodes of her former co-star Nathasha Lyonne's Peacock series "Poker Face," but her next project is a lead one. It is a crime procedural produced by Dick Wolf ("Law & Order") and is based on the memoir "What the Dead Know" by former NYC medical examiner Barbara Butcher.

The series will carry the same title as the book but with Schilling playing a fictionalized version of Butcher named Ava Ledger. According to TVLine, Ava works as a death investigator helping the NYPD "crack their toughest cases" and is "highly intelligent, hypervigilant, and really good with dead bodies." The series is still in the early development stages, with only Schilling's casting being officially announced.

Q: Is it true that HBO paid James Gandolfini to not take the role of Michael Scott's replacement on "The Office"? Was this while he was filming "The Sopranos"? — D.S.

A: Yes, according to B.J. Novak, one of the writers and stars of the NBC comedy "The Office," he was one of several people who tried to convince James Gandolfini to join the show after Steve Carell exited in 2011. Reportedly, Gandolfini was a huge comedy fan, and his favorite movie was "The Rocket" starring Rainn Wilson, who played Dwight on "The Office."

"The Sopranos" ended in 2007, so scheduling for the show wasn't the issue. According to actors Michael Imperioli and Steve Schirripa (also of "The Sopranos"), Gandolfini had a deal with HBO to do the miniseries "The Night Of" and paid him \$3 million to decline NBC's of-



Taylor Schilling as Piper Chapman in "OITNB"

fer. Sadly, Gandolfini died in 2013, and James Turturro ("Severance") replaced him in the miniseries, while James Spader ("The Blacklist") was cast as the new boss on "The Office."

Q: Who is the actress who plays Harper on the HBO series "Industry"? I've never seen her before. — G.B.

A: The actress was born as Myha'la Herrold but simply goes by Myha'la. She was born in California and studied musical theater at the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. According to an article in Elle, she told her mother when she was just 6 years old that she was headed to the Big Apple someday because she wanted to be on Broadway.

"Industry" has quietly grown into a hit for HBO Max, but you can also catch her in the 2025 film "Swiped" opposite Lily James, "Dumb Money" with Paul Dano, and "Bodies Bodies Bodies" with Pete Davidson. Making her Broadway debut is still on Myha'la's bucket list.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

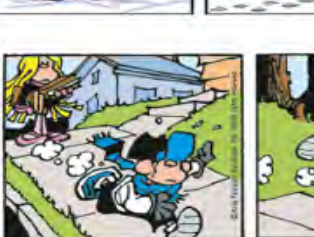
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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps



by Bud Blake



by Jeff Pickering



Weekly SUDOKU

8			4	5	6	7		
	5	6	2		7	4	3	8
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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 BOY!

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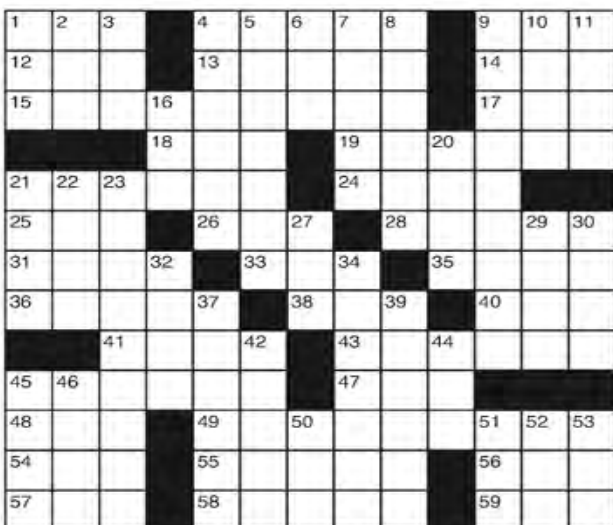
HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Page is added to newspaper. 2. Hat is smaller. 3. Arm is shorter. 4. Pillow is different. 5. Curtains is not as wide. 6. Curtain is added to newspaper. 7. Hat is smaller. 8. Hat is smaller. 9. "I think, therefore I am." 10. Eleven (11)

March 2, 2026 Posting Date
King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Lawn coating
 - 4 Daring deeds
 - 9 Droid
 - 12 "That feels so good!"
 - 13 Host
 - 14 Ruckus
 - 15 Type of cable
 - 17 Sine qua —
 - 18 Feathery wrap
 - 19 Garish
 - 21 Mellow yellows
 - 24 Winter blanket
 - 25 Mauna —
 - 26 Fire sign?
 - 28 Emulate Scott Hamilton
 - 31 Grecian vessels
 - 33 Evergreen tree
 - 35 "Zounds!"
 - 36 Army doc
 - 38 Karaoke prop, for short
 - 40 Assoc.
 - 41 Friendly
 - 43 Crude dwelling
 - 45 Brit's word of surprise
 - 47 Where Ger. is
 - 48 Help
 - 49 Timepiece attachment
- DOWN**
- 1 Apply cream
 - 2 Listener
 - 3 "— goes there?"
 - 4 Soft felt hat
 - 5 Diplomat's post
 - 6 Fed. health law
 - 7 Camping shelters
 - 8 Family cars
 - 9 Something to jump on
 - 10 Skunk's defense
 - 11 Theater award
 - 16 Jurist Fortas
 - 20 Stirred
 - 21 Grad
 - 22 "Encore!"
 - 23 Range of radio frequencies
 - 27 Skirt edge
 - 29 Like lemons
 - 30 Jittery
 - 32 Thailand, once
 - 34 Gets smart
 - 37 Embroidery yarn
 - 39 Waterpark slides
 - 42 Actress Loy
 - 44 Wall St. whiz
 - 45 Tub session
 - 46 Queue
 - 50 Doctrine
 - 51 Mimic
 - 52 Silent assent
 - 53 Insult



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Trivia Test Answers

1. Maine; 2. George Washington; 3. Lord Maximus Fargus; 4. Virginia Woolf; 5. Heck; 6. Florence Nightingale; 7. Malaysia; 8. The gallbladder; 9. "I think, therefore I am"; 10. Eleven (11)

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- U.S. STATES: Which state is home to the Acadia National Park?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president was an avid dog breeder who gave his hunting hounds funny names like "Sweet Lips" and "Madam Moose"?
- MOVIES: Who is the antagonist of "Shrek" in the first animated movie?
- LITERATURE: What is the pseudonym of the 20th-century author who was born Adeline Virginia Stephen?
- TELEVISION: What's the family's last name in the TV sitcom "The Middle"?
- HISTORY: Which famous nurse was known as the Lady with the Lamp?
- GEOGRAPHY: Ringgit is the common currency in which Southeast Asian country?
- ANATOMY: Which human organ stores bile?
- LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "Cogito, ergo sum" mean in English?
- MATH: What is the next prime number after 7?

King Crossword
Solution time: 22 mins.
Answers

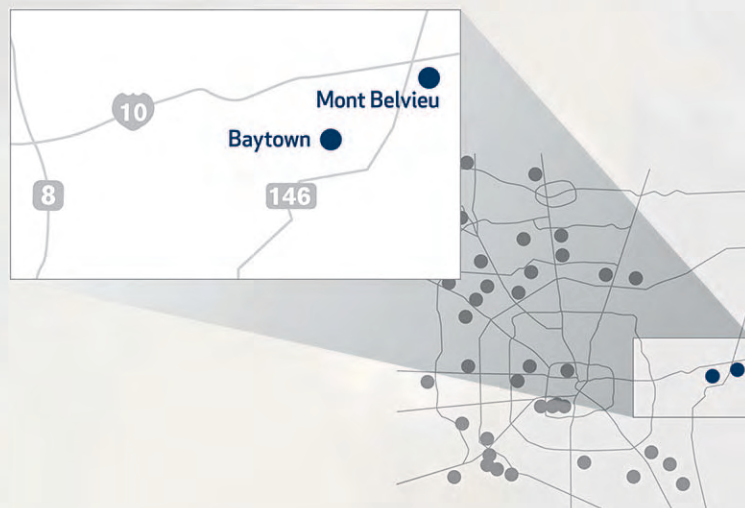
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