

Stuffed Comfort Animals



little comfort when it's needed the most.

Tonya Kostka, Director at the Pct. 3 Highlands Community Center, smiles while holding some of the 1000 Stuffed Comfort Animals donated by the Community in a Successful "Stuffed With Care" campaign.

Good Stuff!

Community donates 1 000 Stuffed Animals To First Responders as Comfort companions

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HIGHLANDS — In the spirit of spring and community kindness, the San Jacinto Community Center in Highlands gave local first responders something special to keep on hand for children facing frightening emergencies: stuffed animals meant to comfort them in moments of trauma.

The center's inaugural "Stuffed With Care" drive collected more than 1,000 stuffed animals, which were distributed to the Harris County Sheriff's Office District 3, Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Ea-

gleton's office, and the Highlands Fire Department, including ambulances serving the area.

San Jacinto Community Center Director Tonya Kostka said the idea grew from seeing similar efforts elsewhere, but she wanted to make the impact broader.

"I thought, well, I'll go a step further and I will support all our first responders, not just our deputies that work the area," Kostka said. "So, we reached out and we supported the fire department as well."

Kostka said the campaign was designed with one simple goal in mind — helping children find a



Firefighters Chief Mike Carsner, Theresa Young, Captain Ryan Lopez, and Captain Chris Contreras from Highlands Fire Department were happy to receive several tote bags full of stuffed animals to give to children on their scenes who may be in trauma when they arrive.

sense of comfort when everything around them feels overwhelming.

"Whenever they're on a scene where there's a child that might need a little comfort, hopefully it helps. That was our plan," she said.

The drive began in mid-February, continued through March, and wrapped up in April. Donors were asked to provide new stuffed animals, with community members, seniors, and local businesses stepping up in a major way. Kostka de

Continued. See HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY CENTER, Page 6

IN THE STARS

Walk to Remember Event in Crosby

Join the Crosby/Baytown Chapter of Compassionate Friends for a Walk to Remember on Saturday, May 23rd, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Harris County Precinct 3 Park in Crosby, Texas. This event supports parents who have lost a child and is open to family and friends. Registration will take place at the pavilion, followed by a walk along the park trail. Participants are welcome to bring photos of loved ones to display. Compassionate Friends is a global support organization for grieving parents.

Mutton Bustin' Qualifier

Young rodeo fans age 8 and under, weighing 60 lbs or less, are invited to saddle up for the Mutton Bustin' qualifier at the Crosby Fair & Rodeo. The event takes place May 30, with registration required by May 27.

Harris County 311 Aims to Be One-Stop Shop for Residents Seeking Help

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HARRIS COUNTY — For residents trying to navigate county government, Harris County 311 is designed to make that process easier with one phone number, one portal and one place to start.

Speaking to the Highlands Chamber, Rina Fava, director of customer service for 311, described the service as "a one-stop shop for all services of the county." Launched in 2022, Harris County 311 was created to connect residents with county departments more quickly across a region that spans 1,777 square miles and serves about 5 million constituents.

Harris County is the



Speaking to the Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce, Rina Fava, director of customer service for 311, described the service as "a one-stop shop for all services of the county."

third largest county in the country, so the service makes sense, Fava said.

The service handles a wide

Continued. See HARRIS COUNTY 311 BECOMES, Page 6



Sinciere McRae was presented the Dickie Woods Memorial Scholarship for \$1,000. He plans on attending the University of Houston to major in computer science. He is joined by Woods family members Jennifer Woods, Kenneth McCann, EmmaLee Moreno, and Chamber Board Chairman Isabelle Dion.

Woman Detained After Fatal Shooting in Crosby



By David Taylor
Managing Editor

CROSBY TX- A woman in her 50s was detained Monday after telling Harris County sheriff's deputies she had killed her granddaughter and her boyfriend, but investiga-

tors found only one victim — a woman believed to be in her 20s who was fatally shot inside a Crosby home, authorities said.

Major Ben Katrib, a spokesman for the Harris County Sheriff's Office, said deputies were dispatched about 3:48 p.m. to

a meet-the-citizen call in the 17800 block of Adlong Johnson Road after a female caller asked for a deputy to come to the home. When deputies arrived, Katrib said, they spoke

Continued. See WOMAN HELD AFTER DEADLY, Page 5

Highlands Rotary Supports Perfect Attendance at Highlands Elementary



HIGHLANDS TX - In a generous gesture to promote education, punctuality, and healthy living, the Highlands Rotary Club has donated 10 bicycles and helmets for students at Highlands Elementary School.

These prizes will be

Continued. See HIGHLANDS ROTARY BIKES, Page 5



NOW BOARDING: FIRST CLASS
YOUR MEMBERSHIP JUST GOT UPGRADED.



VISIT CRCU.ORG/PASSPORT

NCUA

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Crosby High School Top 10 Class of 2025

Valedictorian



Josephine McAnespy

Our Valedictorian for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the Theatre International Thespian Society Troupe #11680 and the National Honor Society. She plans to attend University of Houston for Psychology in order to become a Therapist.

Salutatorian



Hillary Self

Our Salutatorian for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, the Anti-Bullying Committee, UIL, and the Science Honor Society. She plans to attend The University of Texas at Austin.

Ranked Third



Kimberly Padierna

Ranked third for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of Mu Alpha Theta, the Anti-Bullying Committee, the National Honors Society, the National Spanish Honor Society, Library Club, LEO club, and Student Council. She plans to attend Texas A&M University.

Ranked Fourth



Elliott Weaver

Ranked fourth for the 2025-2026 school year. He is a part of the National Honors Society, the Science Honors Society, and Mu Alpha Theta. He plans to attend the University of Houston.

Ranked Fifth



Natalie Killion

Ranked fifth for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the National Honor Society and the Science National Honor Society. She plans to attend the University of St. Thomas.

Ranked Sixth



Ashley Gonzalez

Ranked sixth for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of Mu Alpha Theta (Math National Honors Society), the Spanish National Honors Society, the Science National Honors Society, the National Honors Society, and the Anti-Bullying Committee. She plans to attend The University of Texas at Austin.

Ranked Seventh



Carys Murray

Ranked seventh for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the Cheerleading team, the National Honor Society, Student Council, and Mu Alpha Theta. She plans to attend Texas A&M University.

Ranked Eighth



Stephanie Godinez

Ranked eighth for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the Science National Honors Society, the National Honors Society, and Crosby High School Girls Soccer Team. She plans to attend the University of Houston.

Ranked Ninth



Keiry Perez

Ranked ninth for the 2025-2026 school year. She is a part of the Leos Club, the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, the National Arts Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, the Spanish National Honor Society, HOSA club, and Book Club. Keiry is currently undecided on her plans after high school.

Ranked Tenth



Hector Ochoa

Ranked tenth for the 2025-2026 school year. He is a part of the Robotics Club, Band, the National Honor Society, the Math National Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, and the Chick Fil A Leadership Academy. He plans to attend the University of Texas, Austin.

Goose Creek Memorial Top 10 Class of 2026

Valedictorian



Laksh Naikele

Salutatorian



Abel Garza

Ranked Third



Khyati Singh

Ranked Fourth



Haroon Malhi

Ranked Fifth



Aayush Koora

Ranked Sixth



Tina Chen

Ranked Seventh



Riley Bloom

Ranked Eighth



Krystal Murillo

Ranked Ninth



Manthan More

Ranked Tenth



Daniel Lin



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MUST BOOK BY 6/30

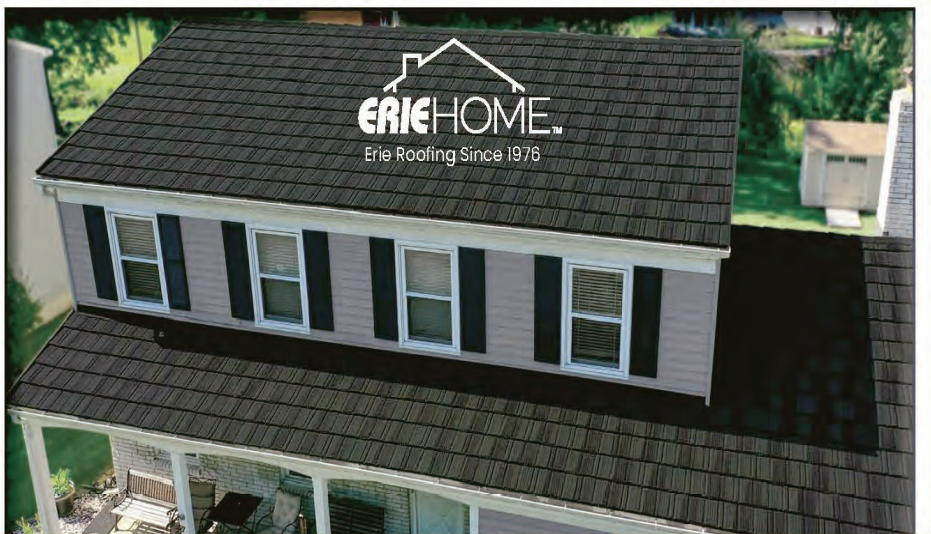
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THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Chambers County GOP Meeting Will be Held on June 18th

Save the Date!

The Chambers County GOP Organizational Meeting will be held on June 18th.

During this meeting, we will:

- Swear in the County Chairman and Precinct Chairs
- Elect officers
- Fill committees
- Review by-laws
- Conduct other official business of the party

We currently have three precinct vacancies to fill — Precincts 6, 8, and 19.

Please see the map below for locations.

We look forward to seeing everyone there and continuing to build a strong Republican team across Chambers County!

MB Traffic Signal Update - Effective Immediately

At the intersection of Eagle Drive & Perry Avenue, the flashing yellow arrow for left turns has been removed. This update is designed to improve safety and keep traffic flowing more smoothly through the intersection.

This change is ONLY at this intersection, all other signals and traffic patterns remain the same.

Barbers Hill HS Top 10 Class of 2026

Valedictorian



Adalie Hunt

She will be attending Dyson Business School at Cornell University, where she plans to major in Business. Among Adalie's high school highlights were her involvement in Student Council, National Honor Society, Mock Trial, the school newspaper, as well as serving as Co-Founder for the 'Hearts for Her' outreach program. Adalie has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by Mrs. Buntin, who was both "a mentor and a friend." Her advice for incoming freshmen is: "TRY".

Salutatorian



Ryan Rodriguez

He will be attending the University of San Francisco and plans to major in Biotechnology. Among Ryan's high school highlights were his involvement in the BHHS Soaring Eagle Band and UIL. Ryan has been most inspired during his time in Barbers Hill ISD by Mrs. Burgess (dyslexia teacher) for "always encouraging me, even when I felt like my dyslexia was holding me back." His advice for incoming freshmen is: "Remember to charge your Chromebook each night!"

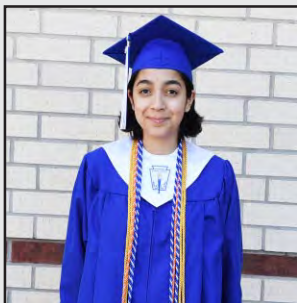
Ranked Third



Joshua Zamora

He will be attending the University of Texas at Dallas and plans to major in Mechanical Engineering. Among Joshua's high school highlights were his involvement in BPA, Robotics, UIL, Key Club and National Honor Society. Joshua has been most inspired during his time in Barbers Hill ISD by Clin Shaiju: "Thank you for showing me that the smartest people are not the ones who know the most, but the ones willing to guide everyone else forward with them." His advice for incoming freshmen is: "You can do anything with the power of friendship!"

Ranked Fourth



Ave Cruz

She will be attending Stephen F. Austin State University and majoring in Accounting. Among Ave's high school highlights were her involvement in the National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Art Club, Select Academic Team, Academic Decathlon and Student Council. Ave has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by Mrs. Batley "she has supported me since 6th grade." Ave's advice for incoming freshmen is: "Pull all of the all-nighters. Do the extra credit."

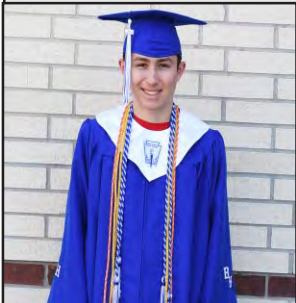
Ranked Fifth



Deegan Collins

He will be attending Lamar University and plans to major in Chemical Engineering. Among Deegan's high school highlights were his involvement in UIL Science, UIL Computer Science, UIL Math, Varsity Soccer and Boy Scouts of America. Deegan's favorite high school memory is: "Advancing to Round 3 in the soccer playoffs." Deegan has been most inspired during his time in Barbers Hill ISD by Mr. Oder because, "his classes were always fun." His advice for incoming freshmen is: "It only gets better."

Ranked Sixth



Carson Caldwell

He will be attending Louisiana Tech University and plans to major in Civil Engineering. Among Carson's high school highlights were his involvement in NHS Historian, Peer Assistance Leadership (PALs), Academic Decathlon and UIL Strategy Club. Carson has been most inspired during his time in Barbers Hill ISD by his Pastor. His advice for incoming freshmen is: "Don't try to conform to what you think society wants you to be, but be the best version of yourself no matter what people think."

Ranked Seventh



Handa Rafeeq

She will be attending the University of Texas at Austin and plans to major in Biology and Human Ecology (Pre-Med). Among Hamda's high school highlights were her involvement in Varsity Tennis, BPA, HOSA, National Honor Society, Student Council, Multicultural Club, Key Club and the American Red Cross. Hamda has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by her mother, who "always encouraged me to push my limits, but also to take it easy from time to time." Her advice for incoming freshmen is: "Talk to new people! You never know who might be a new friend."

Ranked Eighth



Kenlee Skidmore

She will be attending Ole Miss and plans to major in Biomedical Engineering. Among Kenlee's high school highlights were her involvement in Varsity Track, National Honor Society, PALs, UIL and FCA. Logan has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by Mr. Benny May because "he pushed me to trust myself and my capabilities." Logan's quote or motto that most inspires her is, "Trust the process." Her advice for incoming freshmen is: "Live in the moment."

Ranked Ninth



Angela Wang

She will be attending the University of Texas at Austin and plans to major in Economics. Among Angela's high school highlights were her involvement in PALs, BPA, Band and National Honor Society. Angela has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by her friends because "they are so incredibly talented and ambitious!" Angela's quote or motto that most inspires her is, "You only live once!" Her advice for incoming freshmen is: "Live a little for your current self and not for your future self! Don't stress too much over school."

Ranked Tenth



Georgia Keene

She will be attending the University of South Carolina and majoring in Psychology and Political Science on a Pre-Law track. Among Georgia's high school highlights were her involvement in Academic Decathlon, Debate, Mock Trial, National Honor Society, Key Club, BPA and Theatre. Georgia has been most inspired during her time in Barbers Hill ISD by her Academic Decathlon coaches because, "they taught me not to limit the scope of my interests." Her advice for incoming Freshmen is: "The more things you try, the more opportunities you have to find something you love."

Baytown Chamber of Commerce Celebrates Ribbon Cutting for TWFG Insurance – Stephanie Chatman



TWFG Insurance owner and agent, Stephanie Chatman, Arthur Chatman, Pastor Robert Harris, family, friends and Baytown Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors

Baytown, Texas – The Baytown Chamber of Commerce recently held a ribbon cutting ceremony to welcome TWFG Insurance - Stephanie Chatman as a new member of the Chamber. The business is located at 3021 N. Main Street in Baytown.

Owner and Agent, Stephanie Chatman was joined for the celebration by her husband, Arthur, pastor Robert

Harris, along with family members, friends, and staff as they commemorated this exciting milestone and the continued growth of the business within the Baytown community.

TWFG Insurance - Stephanie Chatman provides insurance solutions and personalized service to help clients protect what matters most. Community members interested in learn-

ing more about their services can visit their website or contact the office directly at 409-679-5815.

The Baytown Chamber of Commerce is proud to support local businesses like TWFG Insurance - Stephanie Chatman and looks forward to their continued success in the community.

WC County Pilot Club Supports Stage Door Theatre with Generous Donation



(Stage Door Donation Front row L – R) Sheree Caldwell, Board Member, Denise Hardin, Board Member, Dayton Fleischman, Finley Threadgill, West Chambers County Pilot Club President-Elect Judy Duncan, and Khloe Bourass, (Back Row L – R) Rayshell Threadgill, Micah Williams, Jesse Lexus, Marc Anthony Glover, Executive Director, Brilee Morris, Deanna Fleischman, Board Member.

BAYTOWN - In a gesture of community support, West Chambers County Pilot Club President-Elect Judy Duncan recently presented a donation to the Stage Door Theatre. The theatre, now situated at 5301 Decker Dr., Baytown, TX 77520, stands as Baytown's premier community theatre. Known for delivering professional-quality live entertainment, the Stage Door Theatre also plays a vital role in empowering youth and enriching the community through education, creativity, and unforgettable performances.

Road to Austin: Eagles face Leander in state semifinals

MONT BELVIEU - Barbers Hill defeated La Porte, 10-0, in five innings in Game 3 to claim the Region 3-5A-D1 softball title.

Considering the Eagles have won 26 contests by more than six runs this season, Saturday's blow-out was nothing new. Barbers Hill has won 22 of their last 23 matchups for a 37-5 record this season.

Barbers Hill will play Leander in the UIL Texas



5A Division 1 State Semifinals. All games will be played at Waller ISD Stadium in Waller.

Game 1: Wednesday, May 20 at 6 p.m.

Game 2: Thursday, May 21 at 6 p.m.

Game 3 (if needed): Saturday, May 23 at noon

☆

OPINION

By BILL KING



New FEMA Flood Maps for Harris County

Update!
New FEMA Flood Maps for Harris County
This week, FEMA issued updated flood maps for Harris County. This is the first update to the maps since 2007. The maps are currently proposed and subject to public comment. However, it is widely expected that they will soon be adopted largely in the proposed form.

These revisions are hugely consequential for Harris County. Their adoption will mean that thousands of acres of land will now be subject to more restrictive flood regulations. Thousands more will be subject to regulation for the first time.

The proposed FEMA maps can be found [here](#) (Click on Draft Database for Community Review and then zoom in to Harris County). The Houston Chronicle has also published an excellent map showing the changes in the flood map from the 2007 maps. Unfortunately, it is currently behind their paywall, so only subscribers can view it. However, the Harris County Flood Control District has also just put up a new map that shows the changes in very high resolution and is the most user-friendly of the three. On the HCTRA map, changes can be compared by clicking the “Manage Change Comparison” button in the upper-left corner of the map, then using the sliding bar to view the changes.

The maps designate areas within the 100- and 500-year floodplains — that is, those properties that have a 1% and a 0.2% of flooding in any given year. When you are looking at the FEMA maps, the 100-year floodplain is designated as “AE.”

The changes primarily reflect updated rainfall projections for southeast Texas adopted by NOAA in 2018 – widely known as “Atlas 14.” These models predict about a 25%-30% increase in rainfall in our region.

The new maps also reflect changes to the physical watershed, such as additional runoff from paved areas and improvements such as detention facilities. One silver lining of the new maps is that some areas have been removed from the floodplains due to the massive drainage projects completed in those watersheds. These included significant areas near Braes, Sims, Hunting, and White Oak. A particularly dramatic example of this is along Hunting Bayou near the NE corner of Loop 610, where hundreds of homes and businesses have been removed from the floodplain altogether. This includes virtually all of the Settegast neighborhood.

There are two immediate consequences of these changes. First, in nearly all cases, flood insurance will be required to obtain a mortgage on any property that has been moved into a 100-year flood plain. Second, any property moved into a 500-year floodplain will be subject to the regulations adopted by Harris County and the City of Houston after Hurricane Harvey. Generally speaking, these regulations require that any structure in a 500-year floodplain be raised to two feet above what is referred to as the “base flood elevation.” The base flood elevation must be calculated for each property.

While the new flood maps will mean that fewer homes and businesses will flood in future storms, they will also make it dramatically more expensive and difficult to build in Harris County. They will likely make it impractical to build in much of the County. That will, of course, encourage more development outside the County. In a perverse irony, much of the development will be shifted to Montgomery County, where the FEMA maps have not been updated. But of course, drainage from developments in Montgomery County mostly flows downstream into Harris County — once again making the case for a regional flood control authority.

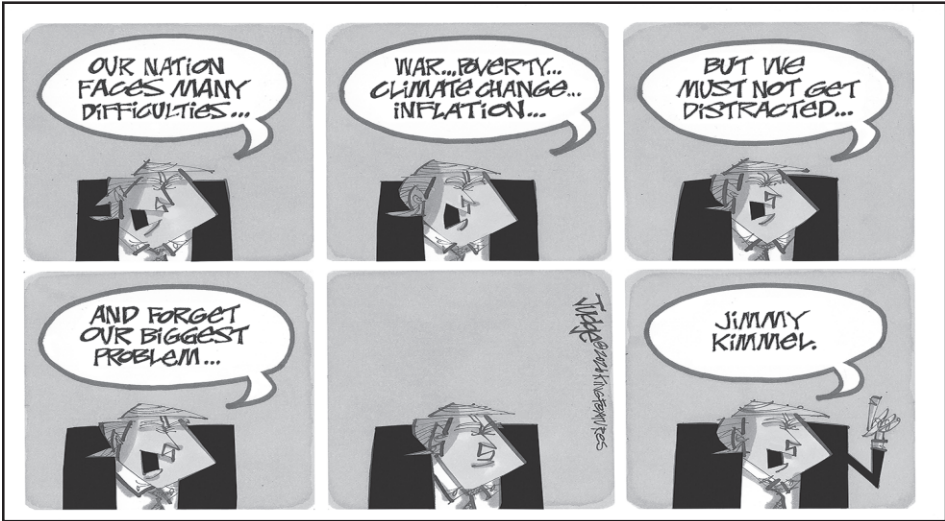
The maps will also cause additional brand damage to the Houston region. They will once again remind individuals and companies considering relocating here of our region’s vulnerability to flooding.

The new maps also underscore the importance of the Harris County Flood Control Authority’s timely completion of the 2018 bond program. The completion of those projects could serve as the basis for removing large tracts from the floodplains. The reductions in the floodplain along several of our watersheds show these projects can make a difference.

Building a giant metropolis on a flat coastal plain, subject to frequent hurricanes, reminds me of Robert Burns’ line in To a Mouse, “the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley (often go astray).”

Yet perhaps we need to think about our excess rainfall differently and not purely as a liability. In a nation increasingly concerned about freshwater scarcity, Houston’s hydrologic surplus could be a long-term strategic asset. Each inch of rain across Harris County represents roughly 29 billion gallons of freshwater. The challenge is not how to make it disappear faster, but how to capture, store, and recharge more of it. With smarter regional detention, aquifer recharge strategies, and reservoir management, Houston could convert its principal liability into a strategic asset, indeed, perhaps an entirely new industry.

EDITOR’S NOTE: *Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5832 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.*



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Top Lawmakers Back Lifting Camp Safety Law

Top Texas legislators are pushing to waive a new state law that requires camps to install broadband fiber optics in order to legally operate this summer, The Dallas Morning News reported. Scores of camps are struggling to meet the deadline. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dust-in Burrows released a statement last week saying they support lifting the law.

Nearly 20 camps have sued to block the law requiring them to install a fiber-optic network, arguing that it does not make their properties safer and would cost millions of dollars. So far only nine Texas summer camps are licensed to open, with fewer than two weeks before the season begins. Nearly 300 are still working to obtain licenses. The Department of State Health Services said last week that camps will be allowed to operate under existing licenses while their applications are reviewed.

The laws were passed in the aftermath of last year’s July 4 flooding, which killed more than two dozen campers at Camp Mystic along the Guadalupe River. In addition to fiber optic networks, camps must install emergency warning and public address systems and provide safety training for campers.

PATRICK BACKS MIDDLETON IN ATTORNEY GENERAL RUNOFF

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick is backing state Sen. Mayes Middleton, R-Galveston, in the GOP runoff for Texas attorney general on May 26. Early voting runs from May 18 to May 22. In the runoff, Middleton faces U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, R-Austin.

“Mayes Middleton has established a record as one of the most conservative senators in Texas history,” Patrick said on social media.

The News quoted Patrick as saying Middleton will make the



post “the strongest and most impactful AG office in the nation.”

Democrats Joe Jaworski, a former Galveston mayor, and state Sen. Nathan Johnson, D-Dallas, are in a runoff for their party’s attorney general nomination. Incumbent Ken Paxton opted not to run and is locked in a primary runoff with incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn.

Cornyn, Paxton in tight runoff race

Paxton is locked in a tight race against incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn for the GOP nomination, the Texas Standard reported. The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston recently conducted a poll that showed Paxton leading Cornyn, 48% to 45% with 7% still undecided.

The poll of those indicating they were likely to vote in the GOP runoff had a 2.83% margin of error.

In the first quarter of this year, Cornyn raised nearly \$9 million, including \$3.4 million after the March primary. Paxton raised \$2.2 million. Democratic nominee state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock, raised a record \$27 million in the first quarter, the largest-ever sum for a Senate candidate in the first quarter of an election year in any state.

TEXAS HAS BIGGEST TEACHER WORKFORCE, BUT THEY GET PAID LESS

Texas has the country’s largest teacher workforce but lags behind the na-

tional average in teacher pay and per-student spending, according to a report in the Austin American-Statesman.

A National Education Association report said teacher pay in Texas is about \$10,700 below the U.S. average. Texas public school teachers earned an average of \$63,749 in 2024-2025, which put it 33rd among states and Washington, D.C. The national average was \$74,495.

Texas had nearly 370,000 public school teachers in 2024-2025, the highest number in the country.

SMOKABLE HEMP AGAIN PULLED FROM TEXAS SHELVES

Smokable hemp products such as flower buds and rolled joints must again be pulled from store shelves as the state appeals the latest court ruling, according to The Texas Tribune. The ban was set to take effect on March 31, but lawyers for the hemp industry filed suit challenging the plan. A Travis County district judge temporarily halted imposition of the ban, but with the 15th Texas Court of Appeals agreeing to hear the state’s appeal of the lower court ruling, the ban is now back in effect.

“We are confident that the 15th Court of Appeals will reinstate our temporary injunction so that our vets, elderly, and adult consumers have reasonable access to these products,” said David Sergi, an attorney for the hemp industry.

Hemp retailers have said their businesses have lost over half their revenue since imposition of the new rules, which also include much steeper licensing fees.

TEXAS MOST AT-RISK STATE FOR HAIL DAMAGE

Everything is bigger in Texas, including the hail, according to Cotality’s 2026 Severe Convective Storm Risk Report, published in the Statesman. The state ranks as the most at-risk for hail damage, with 8 million homes exposed and a combined reconstruction value exceeding \$3.1 trillion.

Four Texas cities rank among the top 10 for homes at greater risk of hail damage. Dallas ranks second nationally, behind Chicago, followed by Houston in third, Austin in ninth, and San Antonio in tenth.

“Although most hailstones are typically pea- or dime-size, hail can grow to as large as golf balls and baseballs. In extreme cases, hail can reach the size of a softball, grapefruit or even a pineapple,” Statesman meteorologist Mary Wasson wrote.

A pineapple?

☆

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Sharon’s Book Club



I was never a part of any team.

I was terrible at sports. I was so bad at tennis in high school that my gym teacher sent me to the school nurse to have my vision checked. I didn’t bother to tell her I was wearing contact lenses.

In elementary school, I was never asked to jump rope. Jumping rope was popular when I was in elementary school, and I was not. I watched the girls jump and knew two things: I would never be asked, and I would be terrible at jumping rope if I were asked.

Instead, I read. Books were my escape and my friends. But I never thought of writing a novel until I was almost 60.

“Would you like to come to my book club?” a woman I had never met, named Sharon, asked me in January.

“Loon Point” had not yet been released. I was a bundle of nerves. And here was this stranger who read an article about me in her local paper, asking if I would come and talk about my book.

“Of course!” I said.

The weeks passed. I hoped “Loon Point” wouldn’t disappoint my publisher. I hoped people wouldn’t write terrible things about it in their reviews. I knew that getting a first book into the world is hard. But a lot of people read “Loon Point.” I gave my husband, Peter, the job of looking at the sales numbers that my publisher seemed determined to provide (even if it might have been better for my mental health not to have quite so much information). Peter told me that my little book was doing surprisingly well.

So the night of Sharon’s book club came, and she contacted me to make sure I had not forgotten. I had not. I would not have missed Sharon’s book club for the world.

When I drove up to Sharon’s house in suburbia, I saw there were a lot of cars already parked outside, and a few more people walking down the street, headed to her house carrying book bags, and I realized all these folks had come to Sharon’s house to hear about my book.

Sharon had made name tags because, as it turned out, this was not really an established book club after all. Sharon had just moved into her new house a year ago. She had invited friends from her old home and neighbors from her new home, and Denise, a friend she’d had since third grade. Many of these women were just meeting for the first time. Sharon just wanted everyone to have a chance to meet this local author she had hunted up and ask questions.

And everyone had questions about the book. They asked about how I wrote it, and they told me about the people in their lives who reminded them of the character Wendell. We talked about the first books we remembered reading as kids and what we were reading now. Everyone seemed to enjoy “Loon Point,” whether they had read it on a Kindle or on paper or listened to the audiobook. I don’t know when I have had so much fun.

Two hours flew by and, as I left, Sharon gave me a card and some beautiful pink flowers. I didn’t read the card until I got home.

“We look forward to following your career!” the card said. It was signed, “Your Home Team.” I’d never had a team before.

I put the flowers on my desk and thought how grateful I was to have been invited to Sharon’s book club.

Till next time,
Carrie

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Highlands Rotary bikes rewards perfect attendance at Highlands Elementary,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

awarded to one boy and one girl from each grade, from 1st to 5th, who have maintained perfect attendance throughout the school year.

The much-anticipated

drawing for these prizes will take place next week during the school's award ceremonies. Students who have achieved perfect attendance are encouraged to attend and participate

in the excitement. The Highlands Rotary Club extends its best wishes to all eligible students and hopes this initiative will inspire continued dedication to their studies.

Former Rivals Rally Behind Briscoe Cain in CD-9 Runoff

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

With just over two weeks remaining before the Republican runoff for Texas Congressional District 9, State Rep. Briscoe Cain is highlighting a wave of support from former opponents in the primary, arguing the endorsements show growing unity behind his campaign over rival Alex Mealer.

On Tuesday, May 12, Dan Mims of Channelview, who finished fourth in the March Primary polling, threw his support to Cain.

"I believe Briscoe will work hard for the citizens of our district and will give the Republican Party the best chance to beat the Democrats and win this seat in November," he said.

Mims said following the election, he took some time off to reflect. Both camps contacted him seeking his support, but he said he took his time to consider which of the two candidates would meet the needs of those who live in the district.

"Over the past few months, Mary (his wife) and I have gotten to know Briscoe and his family. Like me, Briscoe is from here and lives here. I believe he is a man of honor and integrity who will put the hard-working voters of this district ahead of the special interests trying to buy this seat. We deserve a representative who will go to Washington, D.C., to serve while remaining true to his Texas roots and loyal to the citizens of CD-9," Mims said firmly.

Mims said he didn't want someone who would go to work in Washington for the party or for the president, but rather with anyone willing to sit down

and talk through issues.

"We also need a representative whose home will continue to be in CD-9 — not someone who will just stop by occasionally," he said pointedly toward Mealer who is reportedly already scouting out a place to live in Washington.

"Your support of my campaign is greatly appreciated, and this request is made with the utmost respect for you and your desire for true representative governance," he told his supporters in a letter on Tuesday.

"I humbly ask that you join me in voting for Briscoe Cain in the upcoming runoff election for Texas Congressional District 9," he closed in his letter.

The news of the endorsement brought joy and appreciation from the Cain camp.

"Having Dan's endorse-

ment really means a lot. He's a community leader that I've known and watched and see the fruit of his leadership here, not just at San Jacinto College), but kind of really across the district," Cain responded.

"When he called to make the endorsement, I couldn't have been more excited. I had one of the biggest smiles I've had in a very long time," he said.

The endorsement comes on the heels of the other candidates in the race tossing their support to Cain as well.

Steve Stockman, Stovall, Sarmiento, and Blanco have also endorsed.

Cain has five times requested a debate with Mealer and she has canceled all five times.

Early voting for the Republican Runoff begins on May 18th – 22nd and the election day is Tuesday, May 26th.



Endorsements from former Republican primary opponents add momentum to Cain's campaign ahead of the May 26 runoff.

Crosby woman held after deadly shooting; no second victim located,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with a woman believed to be the caller, who told them she had killed her granddaughter and her boyfriend. Deputies entered the home and found a dead woman inside with apparent gunshot wounds. "No male victim has been located at this time," Katrib said.

As the investigation unfolded, authorities said the slain woman was not the suspect's biological granddaughter. Instead, Katrib said, the victim was "like a granddaughter" to the couple who own the house, while the detained woman appears to be someone the couple may have met online or through social media and allowed to stay with them. The homeowners were out of town at the time, he said. The suspect had not been charged late Monday and was being detained for questioning by homicide detectives while

investigators sought a search warrant to process the scene.

Katrib said deputies had been called to the same residence earlier in the day, around 1:30 p.m., after the suspect reported seeing "demons and things of that nature." "Deputies did ask all the right questions," Katrib said, "but there was not enough information at the time to justify an emergency detention order."

Authorities also said they do not believe there is an ongoing threat to the community.

The victim was found in a hallway, Katrib said. He told reporters deputies first cleared the residence to make sure no one else inside needed help before stepping back to obtain a warrant, a standard step before crime scene investigators process evidence.

"Once the search warrant is signed, we'll be able to know a lot more," he said.

Investigators were still trying to determine whether any boyfriend mentioned by the suspect actually exists.

"At this point, we don't have any indication that a boyfriend even exists, but we're still actively pursuing all information just to make sure," Katrib said. He emphasized that the information released on Monday was preliminary and could change as homicide detectives complete interviews and present the case to the Harris County District Attorney's Office. The victim was from out of town.

Anyone with information is asked to call the sheriff's office nonemergency line at 713-221-6000 or Crime Stoppers of Houston at 713-222-TIPS.

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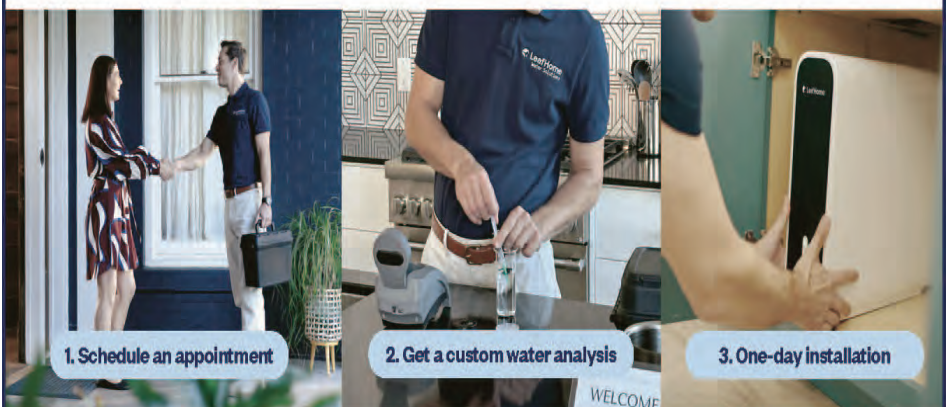
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Audien Hearing

Highlands Community Center gives first responders 1,000 stuffed animals to comfort children in crisis,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

scribed the response as overwhelming and heart-felt. "It was a labor of love," she said. "It was definitely coming from all angles."

Among the supporters were Crosby Sheffield Liquidation, the Rotary Club of Highlands, Randy Casey State Farm, and seniors who attend the center regularly and brought stuffed animals day after day.

For first responders, the donation is more than just a kind gesture — it's a practical tool for helping children cope during chaotic and traumatic situations.

Lt. Aaron Waybright of the Harris County Sheriff's Office District 3 said stuffed animals can offer immediate emotional reassurance at scenes where children may be scared and confused.

"When kids are in trauma, they look for what they consider a soothing trigger and that could be holding a stuffed animal and stroking the soft fur or just something that they can hold themselves tight while things are chaotic around them," Waybright said. "We really appreciate this. It will really be impactful."

Kostka said each law enforcement group received four large bags of



Harris County Pct. 3 constables Katie Evans and Sgt. Jeff Gonzales join Tonya Kostka, director at the SJCC, to receive their allotment of stuffed animals. The furry toys will be put in patrol cars and given to children who are in distress on the scenes that they service.

stuffed animals, while the fire department received even more to stock two stations and their emergency vehicles.

She also said the success of the first drive means it won't be the last.

"This will be an annual thing moving forward," Kostka said. "So we'll keep doing it each year."

As spring blooms across Highlands, the "Stuffed With Care" drive has already planted seeds of compassion that will continue growing — one child, one emergency, and one stuffed animal at a time.



Lt. Aaron Waybright of the Harris County Sheriff's Office District 3 said children are looking for what they consider a soothing trigger and often that comes in the form of a stuffed animal that brings them comfort.

Harris County 311 becomes 'one-stop shop' for residents,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

range of non-emergency needs, including potholes and signage in county jurisdiction, public health, flood control, permits, courts, parks, libraries, veteran services, animal control, homeless encampments and environmental concerns. During severe weather and recovery periods, residents can also call for help related to debris pickup and other county services.

Fava stressed that 311 is for non-emergency issues only and is Harris County centric.

"If you do have an emergency, such as a threat to your life or property, God forbid, or an active crime, fire, medical emergency, you call 911," she said, urging residents not to waste precious time in urgent situations.

Residents can reach the service by dialing 311, emailing the county, or using the online portal. Fava said the county also provides support in 300 languages through interpreter services available "24-7, 365 days a year," a reflection of the county's effort to provide what she called an "excellent constituent experience."

The system can involve automated routing before a caller reaches the right department, but officials say that process is part of a broader effort to improve

service.

"What we're trying to do is we're trying to leverage technology with our human resources," Fava said. "But sometimes you just want to talk to somebody because you're kind of confused."

One of the most common services is courts and potholes.

One common example is a pothole report. Fava said staff first gather the caller's address to confirm jurisdiction, then open a case in the county's ServiceNow system so field services can respond. Once the issue is fixed, the case is updated and closed, creating what local officials describe as a reliable tracking and follow-up system.

"Anything that has to do with field services, that's the most common calls we have. But at the same time, it depends on the time of the year, because if you have issues with the weather, like there is a disaster, that probably happens. At that point, before and after recovery, we get a lot of calls about trash pickup, but not necessarily the regular trash, but debris and anything that is a result of the disaster," she said.

Calls for whether courts are open or closed, times, and parking issues are also on the top of the list for calls of service.

Her message to resi-

dents was simple: "If you're not sure, if you have questions, you can talk to us."

Fava wanted to continue to detail additional services, "but we would be here for another two hours," she smiled.

Before answering questions, Fava elaborated on the 'phone tree.'

"Constituents say, 'Okay, great, but 3-1-1 is a common number. How do I know I'm calling you.' Really, it depends on where you are," she explained.

If the caller is in an unincorporated area of Harris County territory or close to an antenna within the county, the call will go to Harris County 311.

"But if you are within the city limits, it will go to City of Houston," she said.

The city and county have partnered together with a recording prior to answering the phone to help direct calls.

"Before you actually talk to anyone (in person), you will have the choice to either connect to the city or to county available services," she explained. "We ask you the address that you're calling about and we guide you accordingly."

For residents unsure of where to begin, Harris County 311 is intended to be that starting point. Dial 3-1-1 or connect online at www.harriscountytexas.gov/311.

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Bob Odenkirk star in "Normal."

“Normal”

“Project Hail Mary” (PG-13) — This sci-fi film starring Ryan Gosling (“The Actor”) became the second highest-grossing film of the year, pulling in \$656.3 million at the box office. It’s now available to rent and buy on demand following its successful theatrical run, which should make a lot of fans happy now that they can watch Grace and Rocky in action from the comfort of their homes! Originally a novel written by Andy Weir, the film follows middle school science teacher Ryland Grace (Gosling), who gets the opportunity of a lifetime to go on a one-way space flight for research that could potentially save humanity. The catch is that he wakes up on the interstellar spacecraft without his crew — and with amnesia. Luckily, he encounters a friendly alien named Rocky, and together the two fight to get the other back to their home planet.

(Amazon Prime Video)
“Ladies First” (R) — Inspired by the French film “I Am Not an Easy Man,” this comedy film premiering May 22 flips the patriarchy on its head by asking, “What if the power dynamics between men and women were reversed?” Sacha Baron Cohen (“Balls Up”) stars as a chauvinistic executive who gets bonked on the head after walking into a pole. Upon awakening, he realizes that he’s somehow transported himself into a matriarchal alternate reality. A woman who originally was his subordinate (Rosamund Pike) is now his boss; he suddenly lives alone in a smaller apartment with a cat; and he gets told by women to smile as he walks down the street. The only way for him to exit this reality is to change his misogynistic ways. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ll be outside trying to find a pole ... (Netflix)
“Normal” (R) — This

action/comedy film is led by Bob Odenkirk (“Better Call Saul”), who co-wrote the story alongside screenwriter Derek Kolstad. Odenkirk plays Ulysses, an interim sheriff who gets hired to serve the fictional town of Normal, Minnesota. Shortly after Ulysses starts the job, a robbery occurs at the local bank, whereupon he finds out that Normal’s law enforcement is corrupt and connected to a Japanese criminal operation. Little did Ulysses know that a small town could hold such dark conspiracies within its buildings, but it’s now up to him to invoke the law. Look out for Henry Winkler (“American Horror Stories”) and Lena Headey (“Ballistic”), who star as important townsfolk. It’s available to rent starting May 19. (Apple TV+)

“In the City” (TV-MA) — The spin-off of the Bravo reality series “Summer House” hits streaming this week with its pilot episode premiering on May 20! Naturally, fans will tune in to see some of their favorite cast members, like Kyle Cooke and Lindsay Hubbard, navigate their daily lives in New York City, rather than the Hamptons where they vacation and shoot “Summer House.” CEO and founder (of what?) Danielle Olivera is back again on the Bravo network, this time starring alongside her boyfriend/hotelier Eoin Heavey. Meanwhile, Andrea Denver from season six of “Summer House” also makes his return for the spin-off, with his wife, Lexi Sundin, joining the cast as well. Hopefully this episode holds off Bravo fans until the long-awaited “Summer House” reunion! (Peacock)
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Q: Is there any chance that there’ll ever be a continuation of the show “Breaking Bad” with the character Jesse Pinkman? — M.G.

A: Never say never, but the answer for now is “no.” Despite Aaron Paul’s fondness for the character of Jesse and his respect for “Breaking Bad” and “Better Call Saul” creator Vince Gilligan, he’s realistic about the potential for a future spin-off. If you didn’t catch the Netflix movie “El Camino” in 2019, it’s a very satisfying sequel to “Breaking Bad” without it being a series.

Paul’s been working steadily since he wrapped up his most famous character. He played Caleb Nichols in the HBO series “Westworld” and lent his distinctive voice to several characters on the animated series “BoJack Horseman.” He also has a few upcoming projects, including the horror film “Anything but Ghosts” with Bryce Dallas Howard (“The Help”) and the action thriller “Bear Country” with Russell Crowe (“Thor: Love and Thunder”).

In addition, it was recently announced that he’s been cast in the upcoming third season of “Fallout,” the hit postapocalyptic series on Amazon Prime Video. Both Walton Goggins and Kyle MacLachlan are said to be returning, and Annabel O’Hagan and Dave Register have been bumped up to series regulars. Filming is expected to start this month in Santa Clarita, California.

Q: Is cat expert Jackson Galaxy still making new episodes of his show for Animal Planet? I need help with my temperamental feline and would like to apply to be on the show. — Y.C.

A: No, Jackson Galaxy’s show “My Cat from Hell” ended its regular run on Animal Planet in 2020 after 11 seasons. Fortunately, you can still catch reruns of his old episodes on Animal Planet and Hulu or view his content on YouTube.

You can also read his helpful book “Total Cat Mojo: The Ultimate Guide to Life with Your Cat” and check out his website, JacksonGalaxy.com. Hopefully, with all these resources, you can keep your kitty happy, healthy and well-behaved!



Aaron Paul as Jesse Pinkman in “Breaking Bad”

Q: Wasn’t there a TV show from years ago where the lead guy from “Sons of Anarchy” played a college student? I never did watch it but would like to find it on streaming. — T.J.

A: Before Charlie Hunnam bulked up to play a motorcycle gang member in the FX series “Sons of Anarchy,” as well as a serial killer in Netflix’s “Monster,” he played a college freshman in a TV series that was created by Judd Apatow.

Apatow is credited with introducing audiences to future stars like Hunnam, Seth Rogen (“The Studio”), Jason Segel (“Shrinking”), and Linda Cardellini (“DTF St. Louis”), with Rogen and Segel both appearing in “Undeclared” and “Freaks and Geeks.”

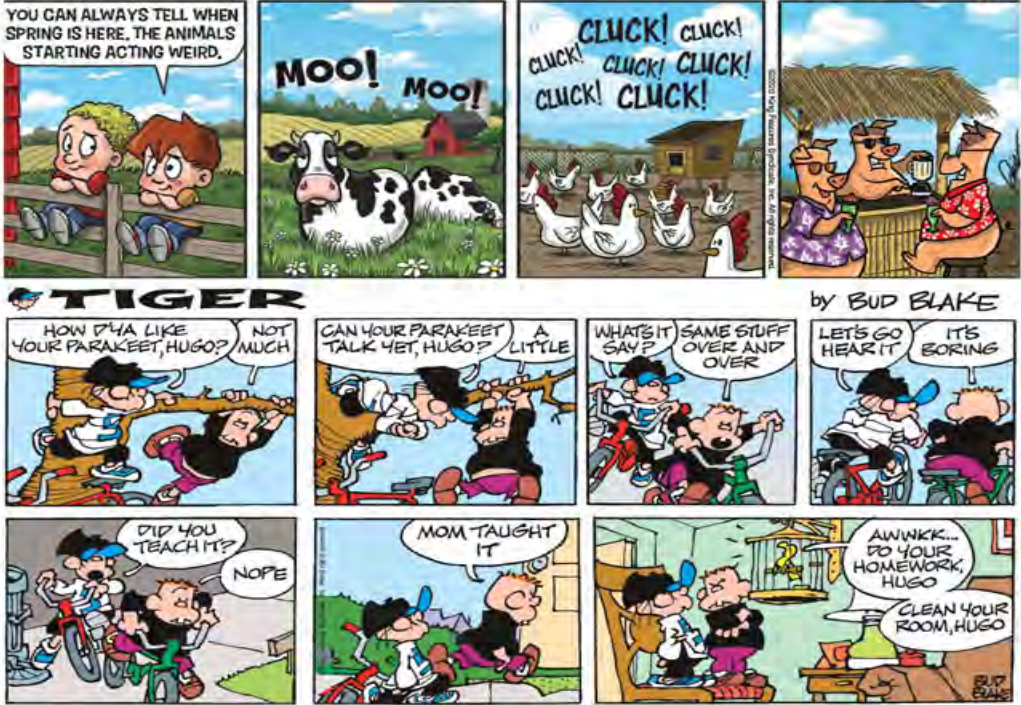
You can stream “Undeclared” on Netflix. Be sure to keep an eye out for appearances by Apatow’s buddies Adam Sandler, Will Ferrell and Amy Poehler. Unfortunately, even with this much star power, the show only lasted for one season on Fox.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

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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. Tie is different. 2. Hat is smaller. 3. Handle is added to purse. 4. Window is not as wide. 5. Man has more hair. 6. Arm is longer. 7. The man's shirt is different.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Detox center
 - 6 Gives up
 - 12 Swiss metropolis
 - 13 Unexpected
 - 14 Ingratiate
 - 15 Stahl of "60 Minutes"
 - 16 Disposition
 - 17 "La — Bonita"
 - 19 Casual shirt
 - 20 Third son
 - 22 Capote nickname
 - 24 Canine greeting
 - 27 Furnace fuel
 - 29 Branches
 - 32 President of South Africa, 1994-1999
 - 35 Pronto
 - 36 Monumental
 - 37 Half dozen
 - 38 Fannie —
 - 40 Former Laker Lamar
 - 42 Sashimi fish
 - 44 Neatnik's nightmare
 - 46 Jazzy James
 - 50 Legislative group
 - 52 Camelot king
 - 54 Aerie newborn
 - 55 Organize an art show
- DOWN**
- 1 Nevada city
 - 2 Within (Pref.)
 - 3 Obeys
 - 4 "Selma" director DuVernay
 - 5 Male singing voice
 - 6 Humpty's perch
 - 7 Skip — (fluter)
 - 8 Tax-collecting org.
 - 9 Birds of prey
 - 10 Duel tool
 - 11 Ocular woe
 - 12 Tiara jewel
 - 18 Rug cleaner
 - 21 — friendly
 - 23 "Awesome, dude!"
 - 24 Navarro of "The View"
 - 25 Scale members
 - 26 Pink wading bird
 - 28 Relaxed
 - 30 Roman 1051
 - 31 Coltrane's instrument
 - 33 Aromatherapy spot
 - 34 Sgt., e.g.
 - 39 Lauder of cosmetics
 - 41 Paris subway
 - 42 Cruising
 - 43 Lettuce unit
 - 45 Reply to "Shall we?"
 - 47 Spring meltdown
 - 48 Mild rebukes
 - 49 "How — you?"
 - 51 Cleric's tunic
 - 53 Scamper

May 18, 2026 Posting Date
King Crossword

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Weekly SUDOKU

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Solution time: 21 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. **FOOD & DRINK:** When fish eggs are served as food, what are they called?
- 2. **LITERATURE:** Which Dr. Seuss book about trying new foods has a character called Sam-I-Am?
- 3. **GEOGRAPHY:** What is the most populated country in Africa?
- 4. **U.S. STATES:** Which state's nickname is The Pine Tree State?
- 5. **ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What kind of animal produces mohair?
- 6. **GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** How many times does a standard dinner fork have?
- 7. **FOOD & DRINK:** In what year was Kool-Aid introduced?
- 8. **TELEVISION:** Which animated TV show features a baby named Stewie?
- 9. **MOVIES:** What is the name of the character played by John Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever"?
- 10. **SCIENCE:** What is a googol?

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1. Roe; 2. "Green Eggs and Ham"; 3. Nigeria; 4. Maine; 5. Angora goats; 6. Four; 7. 1927; 8. "Family Guy"; 9. Tony Manero; 10. The digit "1" followed by 100 zeroes

Trivia Test Answers



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