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HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

Back-to-School Fair

BAYTOWN — Goose Creek CISD students will have the opportunity to receive free school supplies and connect with community resources during the annual Back-to-School Fair on **Saturday, Aug. 8.**

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to noon, or until supplies are exhausted, at the Baytown Community Center, 2407 Market St. Baytown, TX 77520. For Goose Creek CISD students, and families must provide proof of student registration during check-in.

Students attending the event will receive free backpacks and school supplies while supplies last. Families will also have access to a variety of community resources, including information and services designed to support students throughout the school year.

Additional offerings include laptop giveaways, child identification services, birth certificate assistance and free lunches.

The event is presented by the City of Baytown in partnership with Communities In Schools Baytown and is made possible through sponsorships from local businesses and organizations.

Lake Houston non-profit brings adaptive water sports event, September 12

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

For more than three decades, Texas Adaptive Aquatics has helped people with disabilities trade the confines of a wheelchair, crutches or daily limits for open water, a tow rope and the rush of skiing behind a boat.

Now, with a rebuilt Lake Houston facility, a wheelchair-accessible ramp into the water and a September event on the calendar, the non-profit is inviting participants back to the lake for another day of adaptive water sports, lunch and community.

The event is scheduled for Sept. 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Lake Houston, according to Roger Randall, executive director of Texas Adaptive Aquatics.

“The event is designed



for people with physical disabilities and will include specialized equipment, boats, trained volunteers and lunch for participants and their families,” he said. The organization’s website says Texas Adaptive Aquatics is based at 103 Page Lane in Huffman and operates as a nonprofit sports training program for children and adults with disabilities.

“We get around the water and have a good time,” he said.

Founded in 1989 and incorporated in Texas in 1990, Texas Adaptive

Aquatics offers adaptive water skiing, sailing and kayaking opportunities for people with physical and/or mental disabilities, according to the organization’s background information. The non-profit says it supplies the equipment through donations and works to help skiers learn or rediscover water sports at beginner through advanced levels.

Randall said the mission is simple: get people out on the water.

“We are a water sports program for people with disabilities,” Randall said. “And we get them



out water skiing on the lake and get them out of their wheelchairs or give up their crutches and get them out behind the boat and have fun.”

The work began out of personal loss. Randall said he lost his fiancée in an automobile wreck in 1989 and reached a turning point.

“It came to a Y in the road,” Randall said. “I needed to do something positive or something negative, and the positive was to start this program and off we went.”

Randall had already been involved with adap-

tive water sports in Atlanta since 1985 before returning to Houston in 1989. The first Texas lake the program used was Lake Somerville, he said, but Lake Houston soon became home.

“We found out about Lake Houston, which was kind of a hidden gem,” Randall said. “And boy was it.”

The lake’s proximity to Houston made a difference.

“It’s within the city limits of Houston,” Ran-

Continued. See TEXAS ADAPTIVE AQUATICS WELCOMES, Page 2

Search Intensifies for Missing Huffman Teen

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

HUFFMAN, Texas — Authorities and child-safety advocates are urging the public to help locate Brielynn Gillespie, a 17-year-old reported missing from Huffman, Texas, after she was last seen on July 18, 2026. The case is listed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, which says Brielynn remains missing and asks anyone with information to contact law enforcement immediately.

According to the NCMEC poster, Brielynn Gillespie was last seen in Huffman, an unincorporated community in northeast Harris County near Lake Houston. Few public details have been released about the circumstances of her disappearance, including where she was last seen, what she may have been wearing, or whether investigators believe she is still in the area.

The missing-child case is listed under



Continued. See 17-YEAR-OLD BRIELYNN, Page 2

UIL heat safety rules now required for Texas schools

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Texas schools began the 2026-27 school year under new statewide heat safety requirements Friday as the University Interscholastic League moved its Wet Bulb Globe Temperature protocols from recommendations to mandatory standards for outdoor athletic and marching band activities.

The rules, effective Aug. 1, require UIL member schools to use WBGT readings to monitor environmental conditions and adjust practices and workouts when heat stress levels rise. WBGT factors in



temperature, humidity, wind speed and solar radiation, giving coaches, athletic trainers and school leaders a broader measure of heat risk than air temperature or the traditional heat index alone.

The UIL said the change followed several years of recommended use and a

recommendation from its Medical Advisory Committee, which cited continuing medical research, accepted national best practices and ongoing review of heat-related safety measures. The UIL

Continued. See NEW UIL SAFETY RULES, Page 2

Crosby HS Athletes Inspire Younger Cougars Through Sports Clinics



By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

CROSBY — Crosby High School student-athletes and coaches recently gave back to the communi-

ty by hosting sports clinics for younger Cougars throughout the district.

The clinics provided younger students with an opportunity to learn from high school athletes, devel-

op their skills, and gain valuable insight from those who represent Crosby athletics.

Continued. See ATHLETES MENTOR FUTURE COUGARS, Page 2

Huffman ISD Welcomes New Teachers Ahead of School Year

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

HUFFMAN — Huffman Independent School District welcomed its newest members of the Falcon family during a special event designed to introduce new educators to the district and community.

The district recently welcomed new teachers who will begin their careers with Huffman ISD, expressing appreciation for their decision to join the district and help support student success.

Officials said the new educators will play an important role in creating meaningful learning expe-



riences for students while embracing the district’s commitment to leading with passion, inspiring with purpose, exploring possibilities, and pursuing excellence in the classroom.

“We know these incredible educators are going to make a lasting impact on our students,” district of-

Continued. See ATHLETES MENTOR FUTURE COUGARS, Page 2

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Texas Adaptive Aquatics welcomes participants back to lake Houston for adaptive water sports event,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dall said. “It was a lot easier, closer to the city.”

The non-profit’s Lake Houston story, however, has included hardship. Randall said flooding has repeatedly challenged the program, including the 1994 flood and Hurricane Harvey. Harvey, he said, devastated the site.

“The lake came up 14 feet,” Randall said. “Everything got destroyed.”

The organization kept going by traveling around Texas and working with other nonprofits, Randall said. In addition to Lake Houston and Lake Somerville, he said the program has visited places such as Lake Palestine and Moody Gardens. The non-profit has also helped other groups learn adaptive water sports methods, allowing programs in other states to continue on their own.

“We work with other non-profits and they have folks and they bring the show on the road,” Randall said. “Just taking a circus on the road.”

Randall is known as “the Pied Piper of Lake Houston” and noted his longtime dedication to lake activities and Texas Adaptive Aquatics. Randall also organizes boat parades on Lake Houston as fundraisers and community events benefiting the non-profit, including the Freedom Boat Parade and the Christmas Boat Parade.

Randall said the organization’s new site gives the program a stronger footing after years of recovery.

“It’s a bigger facility, three acres and it’s got higher ground,” Randall said. “We built a brand new wheelchair ramp to go into the lake, so now the lake is wheelchair accessible.”

The facility also includes a lodge with bathrooms and air conditioning, he said, giving participants a place to cool off.

“It’s all nice, air conditioned so the quads can get in there and be in air conditioning,” Randall



said.

For the September event, Randall said about 25 participants is a good number because it gives each person plenty of time on the water. Some participants, he said, follow the program from event to event.

“Oh, yeah,” Randall said. “Folks that follow us around and they love skiing. It’s always a good time on the water.”

Volunteers remain essential. Randall said longtime volunteers help run events, and new volunteers receive hands-on training.

“We train them,” Ran-

dall said. “We have our normal volunteers that we’ve had for years. And so, but we take out new volunteers and we put them to work and it’s hands-on training.”

The organization accepts donations through its website, taasports.org, and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, according to its website.

For participants wondering what to bring, Randall kept the list short.

“Swimsuits, a towel, a camera and a smile,” he said, “and we take care of the rest.”

New UIL safety rules for texas schools,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Legislative Council approved making the standards mandatory for the new school year.

Under the plan, WBGT readings should be taken within 15 minutes before outdoor activity begins and every 30 minutes during practices or workouts. Schools may use a scientifically approved on-site instrument or an approved internet-based WBGT forecasting resource. The requirements apply to outdoor practices, including those held under covered pavilions, and to indoor facilities that are not climate controlled.

Schools are expected to use the required WBGT activity guidelines alongside professional judgment rather than react automatically to every small change in conditions. When readings move into more restrictive categories, school personnel should consider the current classification, trend, amount of practice already completed, remaining practice time, recovery opportunities, participant condition and acclimatization status before making modifications.

The new standards also strengthen emergency

preparation. Rapid cooling zones are required whenever outdoor athletic or marching band activities are conducted at WBGT levels of 79.7 degrees or higher in Class 2 areas or 82 degrees or higher in Class 3 areas. Those zones must include equipment capable of full-body immersion in ice water for a person experiencing heat illness or distress, such as a cold-water immersion tub or ice-water tarp. Shade, ice towels, sponges, misters and other cooling resources may supplement the requirement but do not replace it.

Emergency Action Plans should identify procedures for recognizing heat illness, activating emergency medical services when appropriate and providing rapid cooling through cold-water immersion or an equivalent method.

The practice limitations do not formally apply to contests, but the UIL says schools should still monitor conditions, maintain required rapid cooling zones and make responsible adjustments when needed. Possible contest modifications include adjusted start times, addi-

tional hydration opportunities, extra official time-outs, shaded areas, fans, ice towels, extended half-time, access to air-conditioned facilities and shortened quarters for sub-varsity contests when mutually agreed upon.

Violations will be handled like other UIL rules matters, with local District Executive Committees considering allegations and potential penalties. A DEC may also refer a situation to the State Executive Committee for further review.

UIL officials say the purpose of the required plan is statewide consistency, not a rebuke of coaches or athletic trainers. The league said schools should implement the protocols in good faith, communicate clearly across campuses and continue making student health and safety the priority as summer and early fall activities begin.

If a parent or student feels the new rules are not being followed, they should first contact the coach/leader and if satisfaction is not achieved, follow typical forms of complaints beginning with Level 1 hearings.

17-Year-Old Brielynn Gillespie missing form Huffman, - Help Needed!,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

NCIC number M968954151 and NCMEC case number 2095659. The investigating agency is the Houston Police Department, which NCMEC lists as the point of contact for tips at 713-884-3131. The NCMEC 24-hour call center can also be reached at 1-800-THE-LOST.

Community members in

Huffman, Crosby, Humble, Lake Houston and surrounding areas are being asked to stay alert and report any possible sightings or information, no matter how minor it may seem. The public is also encouraged to share the official NCMEC poster for Brielynn Gillespie so verified information circulates

widely and accurately.

Anyone who sees Brielynn Gillespie or knows where she may be should call 911 immediately, contact the Houston Police Department at 713-884-3131, or submit a tip through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

District greets new falcon educators,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



officials said, adding that they are excited to see the new teachers begin their journey with Huffman ISD.

The Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce also helped make the event special by providing lunch

for the new teachers and organizing door prizes donated by local businesses.

District leaders thanked the chamber and area businesses for their continued support, saying the partnership reflects the strong community spirit

that makes Huffman unique.

As the new school year approaches, Huffman ISD welcomed its newest educators and wished them success as they begin their work serving Falcon students.

Athletes mentor future cougars,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



District officials praised the high school athletes and coaches for taking time to mentor younger students and serve as positive role models within the community.

Their efforts highlighted the importance of lead-

ership, teamwork, and community involvement while inspiring the next generation of Cougar athletes.

“Thank you to our student-athletes and coaches for investing your time, sharing your talents, and

making a difference in the lives of our future Cougars,” district officials said.

The event reflects Crosby ISD’s continued commitment to building connections among students and strengthening the Cougar community.

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Barbers Hill Dayton Press

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ON THE HILL

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Dayton Independent School District Schools, Woodrow Wilson Junior High and Dayton High School, Nottingham, Stephen F. Austin Elementary, Richter Elementary, Kimmie Brown Elementary and Colbert Elementary. announced that it will operate the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for the 2026-2027 school year. Schools qualifying to operate CEP serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge and eliminate the collection of meal applications for free, reduced-price, and paid student meals.

This approach reduces burdens for both families and school administrators and helps ensure that students receive nutritious meals.

For additional information please contact the following person:

Dayton ISD
Attention: Carlton Robertson
School Nutrition Director
702 S. Cleveland St.
Dayton, Texas, 77535
(936)257-4113
Carlton.robertson@daytonisd.net
@daytonisd.net

Barbers Hill ISD Bans on E-Bikes



MONT BELVIEU - Barbers Hill ISD will prohibit the use of e-bikes and electric scooters on all district property beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

The decision comes in response to the growing number of e-bikes and electric scooters being used by students and the increasing safety concerns associated with their operation near campuses, parking lots, sidewalks, and roadways.

"Our first responsibility is to protect the safety of our students, staff, and visitors," Superintendent Greg Poole said. "The popularity of e-bikes and electric scooters has increased dramatically, but so have the risks. After carefully evaluating the situation, we believe prohibiting these devices on district property is the best way to help prevent a serious accident."

The ban applies to all Barbers Hill ISD campuses and facilities. Students and visitors are asked not to ride or bring e-bikes or electric scooters onto district property.

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Barbers Hill ISD School Supply Bash Draws Hundreds of Families

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

MONT BELVIEU — More than 600 students and parents attended the third annual Barbers Hill ISD School Supply Bash, an event that provided school resources, health services and community support as families prepare for the new school year.

The event was presented by ONEOK in partnership with the Mont Belvieu Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Mont Belvieu.

Families had access to district information and resources, while students received free sports physi-



cals and immunizations. Local businesses, nonprofit organizations and area churches also participated by distribut-



ing school-related items, information and giveaways.

District officials said the annual event

helps ensure students begin the school year with the resources they need while connecting families with organizations that support education and student well-being.

The Mont Belvieu Area Chamber of Commerce officials thanked event sponsors and Chamber members for making the event possible through their continued investment in Barbers Hill ISD students and local families.

The School Supply Bash has become an annual tradition aimed at helping students start the academic year prepared and ready for success. (Source MBA Facebook)

Barbers Hill ISD Opens Online Sales for 2026 Football Season Tickets

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

MONT BELVIEU — Barbers Hill ISD has opened online sales for reserved season tickets for the Eagles' 2026 home varsity football schedule, with all tickets to be sold either online or at the gate.

Current season ticket

holders may renew their reserved seats from **Aug. 3 through Aug. 14**, allowing them to keep the same seats they held during the 2025 season. Fans who wish to change seats may decline the renewal option and participate in the general public sale beginning **Aug. 17**, when any unclaimed reserved seats will

become available online.

Reserved season ticket packages are **\$40 per seat** and include admission to all five home varsity football games. Ticket sales are final and non-refundable.

All reserved tickets will be issued digitally. Fans who purchase a season ticket package will receive an individual digital tick-

et for each home game. District officials encourage attendees to save their digital tickets or download the HomeTown Fan app for convenient access on game days.

The Eagles' 2026 home schedule includes:

Aug. 28 – Aldine Nimitz (Hall of Honor)

Sept. 4 – Crosby

Sept. 18 – Clear Falls (Homecoming)

Oct. 16 – Dickinson (Youth Football and Middle School Night)

Oct. 30 – Deer Park (Senior Night)

District officials encourage fans to purchase tickets early to secure their preferred seating for the upcoming football season.

Houston Methodist Named Among Nation's Best Hospitals

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

HOUSTON - Houston Methodist Hospital has once again earned national recognition for patient care, being named to the U.S. News & World Report Honor Roll of the nation's best hospitals for the 10th time and retaining its position as the No. 1 hospital in Texas.

The annual 2026-27 rankings also mark the 34th consecutive year that Houston Methodist Hospital has been recognized in at least one medical specialty.

According to the hospital, it is ranked in 11 spe-



cialties, including 10 nationally and one regionally in rehabilitation. Six specialties placed among the nation's top 20: gastroenterology and GI surgery (No. 5), obstetrics and gynecology (No. 7), cardiology, heart and vascular surgery (No. 10), pulmonol-

ogy and lung surgery (No. 11), neurology and neurosurgery (No. 13), and cancer care (No. 19).

Additional nationally ranked specialties include orthopedics (No. 21, tie), diabetes and endocrinology (No. 23, tie), geriatrics (No. 24), and urology (No. 43).

Several Houston Methodist community hospitals also earned high marks in the statewide rankings.

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital ranked No. 3 in Texas (tie) and No. 2 in the Houston metropolitan area, with six ranked specialties, including five nationally and one regionally.

Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital was ranked No. 7 in Texas and No. 5 in the Houston area, while Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital placed No. 9 statewide and No. 6 in the Houston region.

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital ranked No.

14 in Texas and No. 8 in the Houston metropolitan area. Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital was ranked No. 21 in Texas (tie) and No. 10 in the Houston area (tie).

"This recognition reflects the remarkable dedication of our physicians and employees and their tireless focus on delivering unparalleled care to our patients," said Dr. Marc L. Boom, president and chief executive officer of Houston Methodist. "While we are honored by this recognition, its true significance lies in what it represents — an unwavering commitment to putting patients first."

THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



When Waiting Isn't Wasted

Don't you just hate it when the light turns red right before you get to it? Or how about when you're ready to check out and every single cashier has a line eight carts deep? Or—oh my word—when you are desperate for a coffee and they seem to be taking forever?!

We all prefer instant gratification. Many people demand it. But constantly expecting instant gratification can wreak havoc on perseverance and make it difficult to endure seasons of waiting.

In fact, it's been shown that constant exposure to rapid reward stimulation, like what we get from social media, can condition people to expect rapid feedback, lose patience quickly, struggle with sustained effort, and give up too quickly.

On the other hand, there are many benefits to active waiting. Studies have shown

that learning to delay gratification strengthens resilience, emotional regulation, perseverance, long-term thinking, and self-control. And that's without even going to the Bible.

In the Bible, we see that waiting seasons, when handled correctly, tend to strengthen character, dependence on God, wisdom, preparation, maturity, and more. The fact is, God often seems to do His deepest work in us while we wait for Him to move. Open almost any book in the Bible and you can find

examples.

Abraham waited about 25 years for Isaac.

David waited 15 years or more to become king.

Joseph waited 13 years between being sold into slavery and being exalted to rule.

These men, and many more, were shaped specifically during the waiting seasons of their lives. Had David become king the day he was anointed, he would not have been prepared for the responsibility. Much of his character was developed while he was on the run from Saul, and

without that season of growth he would have been a very different man.

But here's the key. This isn't passive waiting; it's active waiting.

Passive waiting says, "I prayed about it. Now I'm just going to sit here and wait." This type of waiting usually results in resignation, discouragement, inactivity, and hopeless delay. That is not the "wait upon the Lord" that the Bible is talking about in Isaiah 40:31.

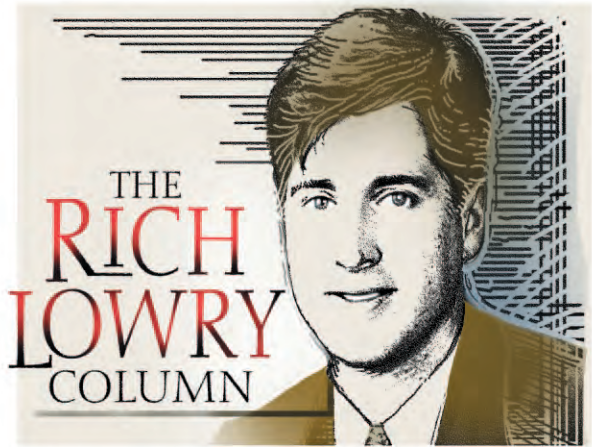
Active waiting says, "Ok God, I trust You and I'll stand

in faith. Now what do You want me to do in the meantime?" In active waiting we see preparation, perseverance, expectancy, and faithful obedience as we continue trusting God while we wait for His direction to become clear.

"I'll keep praying."
"I'll keep serving."
"I'll keep praising."
"I'll keep learning."
"I'll keep being faithful."
"I'll keep standing strong."
"I'll keep doing what You tell me to do."

Waiting seasons are almost always uncomfortable, but these are the times when God helps us grow the most. When we continue to trust Him instead of giving up in frustration, we often learn that the waiting season wasn't wasted at all. It was preparing us for what was coming next.

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The Preposterous case against the new defense bill

Congress has been known to slip indefensible special-interest provisions into large must-pass bills when no one is looking. What it has never done before is use such sleight of hand to hand over control of the U.S. military to a foreign country. But that’s what we’re told is on the verge of happening on Capitol Hill.

The House just passed the National Defense Authorization Act, a sprawling \$1.15 trillion bill that supposedly includes a provision buried in it “merging” the U.S. and Israeli militaries.

This provision, known as Section 219, has united some of the most fervent anti-Israel conspiracy theorists on the right and the left in denouncing the alleged betrayal of America, from Marjorie Taylor Greene to AOC, from Tucker Carlson to Cenk Uygur.

AOC has warned that the provision “is an existential threat to American sovereignty and democracy.” Marjorie Taylor Greene has said anyone who voted for the bill “sold out the American people to a foreign country.” Tucker Carlson wants literal treason trials.

So what is the substance of Section 219? Legislation often has obfuscatory titles, but this provision is deemed, with admirable clarity, the United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative. It calls for the secretary of defense to designate “an executive agent” to coordinate between the U.S. and Israel on “bilateral defense technology research, development, testing, evaluation, integration and industrial cooperation.” The Pentagon will come up with a plan for such cooperation and report back to Congress.

That’s it. There is nothing about merging the general staffs of the U.S. military and the IDF; nothing about creating a joint office where Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and his Israeli counterpart, Israel Katz, work together; nothing about giving Bibi Netanyahu partial control of CENTCOM.

That the United States would want a close working relationship with Israel on military technology is hardly surprising. Israel is one of the world’s most innovative societies and, given its precarious security environment, has become a leader in advanced defense technologies.

That a nefarious interpretation of the bill has gotten some traction underlines how any preposterous lie, so long as it’s about Israel, gets a hearing these days. Like many conspiracy theories, this one depends on a dark view of American society. We are allegedly so corrupt that we are handing control of our military to a foreign country without any senior military leaders or officials in an “America First” administration lodging a complaint. No wonder Tucker Carlson wants the kind of tribunals that attended the end of World War II.

At the first Nuremberg Trials, Wilhelm Keitel was found guilty of crimes against humanity and hanged; at the second Nuremberg Trials, Mike Johnson will be found guilty of supporting mutually beneficial technology sharing between allies — means of execution yet to be determined.

One perversity here is that Netanyahu conceives of the technological cooperation as a substitute for the U.S. military aid that he supports phasing out. In other words, enemies of Israel oppose U.S. military aid, and when a constructive plan is offered for how to go about ending it, they oppose that, too, as an Israeli plot.

Another perversity is that the U.S. should want a very close relationship with Israel on missile defense, an area where Israel excels and that, as we’ve seen in the Ukraine and Iran wars, is crucial to modern warfare. And yet, the same people who portray themselves as zealously protective of the U.S. national interest want us to turn our back on a source of technological advance.

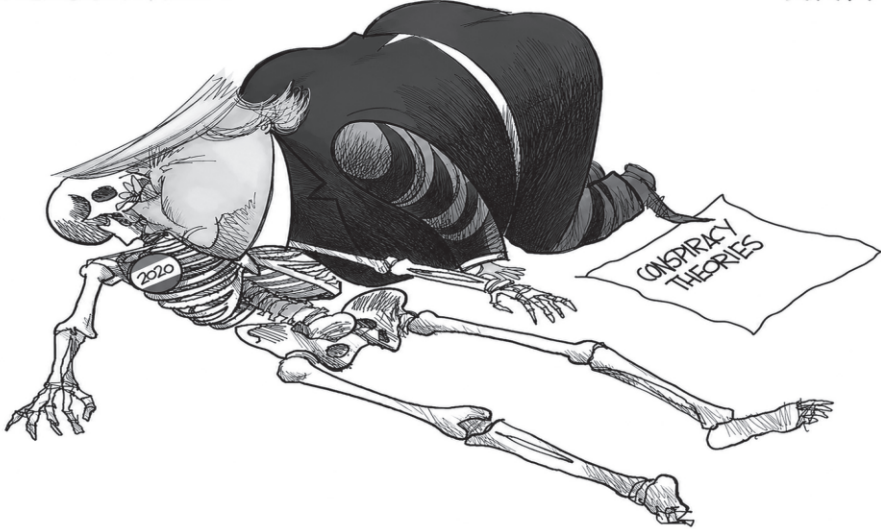
Israel naturally fits in the Western alliance, but nations ultimately pursue their selfish interests. If we spurn the Jewish state out of irrational animus, it will inevitably look elsewhere and perhaps build a stronger relationship with China. Then we will surely be told by the critics now obsessed with ending the U.S.-Israel relationship that Israel has shown its true colors and deserves even more of our scorn.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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MOUTH TO MOUTH RESUSCITATION

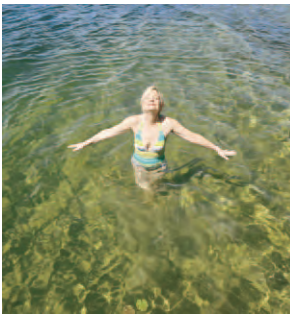


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KIRK



Swimming with the Sunnies



I spent last week ‘up north’ with my parents. While my husband, Peter, and my cat, Felix, stayed at home and played cat games, I drove up to my parents’ cabin four hours north.

The city was hot, but right now, even up north is hot. So I decided to go swimming.

I hadn’t been swimming in a long time. I walk in the woods every chance I get, but I don’t go in the water as often as I could. Sometimes it feels like a nuisance to get wet. Sometimes I get self-conscious putting on a bathing suit. Usually, I fret that the water will be too cold. I chicken out and take a walk instead.

But this last week was so warm that walking did not even sound tempting. So I put on the new brightly colored striped swimsuit I had bought used online (and had never worn), and I borrowed a beach towel from my mom, and I headed down the many steps from my parents’ cabin to the lakeshore.

I waded in slowly. The lake was much warmer than I remembered it being. I stood on the sandy bottom and attracted the attention of a school of sunfish. These sunnies were young and curious, and they were attracted to the bright-green-and-blue stripes of my swimsuit as well as my bright blue painted toenails. They came out from under the dock and surrounded me. They nibbled on my suit. They nibbled on my toes. One of them nibbled on my butt.

‘Stop it!’ I said and splashed them away.

They backed up for a moment, then came right back, still curious about this bright-colored new friend who had joined them in the shallow water.

‘Pesky fish!’ I shooped them away again. Still, it was good to know I’d won the Sunfish Seal of Approval. I dove in.

The first dive into a northern lake is always a shock. The top six inches of water on a hot day are several degrees warmer than the water below. But once I was fully wet, it was wonderful. I swam along the shoreline. There were tall reeds and lily pads. I checked out the cabins up and down the shore. The lake was quiet on this hot day in the middle of the week. A deer was eating tasty greens from the water’s edge. If I’d been so close to her on land, she would have run. Instead, she watched this peculiar water creature a little cautiously and continued to graze. I found some water lilies that were blooming and decided to bring some back for my mom. I picked three and then swam home with one arm, trailing lilies (and a little seaweed) behind me. Then I left the lilies on the beach and just floated for a time. Floating in the warm sunshine, a cold finger of water from deeper down occasionally found its way up as I slowly spun around, looking at the tall pine trees and the scattered clouds and the reeds along the shoreline.

It’s good to be in a lake, I decided. It was worth getting over my trepidation, putting on my new, brightly colored suit and diving in. I realized what I’d always known but forgotten: how the water is calming yet fills me with a wonderful energy.

I brought the lilies home to my mom, and we put them in a vase. She said she’d never had a bouquet from the lake before. And the next day, I went out swimming with the sunnies again.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



New Challenge to School Funding System

The Midland school district is suing Education Commissioner Mike Morath and other state leaders in another challenge to the state’s public school finance system, known as “Robin Hood,” according to The Texas Tribune.

Three legal challenges over the past three decades have failed, with Texas courts ruling that the recapture system complies with the state constitution. Under recapture, wealthier school districts — such as Midland, with its considerable oil and gas holdings — send money to the state, which then distributes it to school districts with low property values.

In the case of Midland, the district sent \$92 million back to the state in the 2024-2025 school year, sixth highest in the state. Austin ISD sent back the most money that year at \$771 million.

“They’re setting the tax rate. We collect the taxes. We send it to the state,” Guinn, the Midland school board president, said last week. “Then we get blamed as a local district and local board member for taxes being high. It’s just a revolving door.”

School administrators have contended that state leaders have not invested adequately in traditional public-school campuses, opting instead to promote charter schools and to create a voucher program that uses public funding for private or home schooling.

BREAKAWAY BUOYS DISRUPT RIO GRANDE BRIDGES

Hundreds of federal border buoys broke loose during recent flooding, disrupting traffic at international bridges, the Texas Standard reported. The floating border barrier was installed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. It consists of interconnected orange cylinders, each 4 feet high, 15 feet long, and weighing about a ton apiece.

Officials in Eagle Pass temporarily stopped traffic on the city’s two international bridges. That city is also the location of about 2,000 feet of a separate floating barrier installed by Operation Lone Star in 2023. Those buoys remained intact during the recent flooding.

“The state buoys remain intact where they were located initially and have not moved,” Gov. Greg Abbott said. “They’re being reinforced as we speak to make sure they’re not moved.”

Many of the federal buoys became lodged into the river, while others floated into Mexico, where some were reportedly recovered by residents and



sold as scrap metal. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol said in a statement that contractors were working to recover the remaining buoys.

STATE COULD OVERHAUL UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Texas could roll out a new funding model for four-year colleges that allocates more money to schools with higher graduation and retention rates, according to the Austin American-Statesman. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board presented the model to university representatives last week. It will propose the plan to lawmakers during next year’s legislative session.

Under current law, four-year colleges receive funding from the Legislature through formula funding, largely based on the number of courses offered and the number of students enrolled. Since 1999, funding has also come from institutional enhancement funding, which is not formula-based and varies widely, from \$56 to \$5,734 per student. Some lawmakers have criticized enhancements as a “slush fund.”

Sarah Keyton, deputy commissioner of the higher education agency, said the new funding model would make university budgeting more predictable.

The new model, if adopted by lawmakers, rewards universities for progress toward a degree and diplomas awarded. It was created with input from university leaders across the state.

“This formula could really accelerate our progress towards the goals of the state education plan (to) get more students earning credentials of value and entering the workforce and driving our statewide economy forward,” Keyton said.

STATE TAKES ACTION TO PROTECT RESIDENTIAL RATEPAYERS

At Abbott’s direction, the Public Utility Commission and

the Electric Reliability Council of Texas have taken action to shield residential ratepayers from the costs of data center expansion sweeping across much of the state. Those actions include:

- Requiring data centers to pay for transmission infrastructure and contribute to “meaningfully reducing” residential electric bills.
- Preventing large data centers from diverting existing power away from the ERCOT grid.
- Changing how data centers pay for the infrastructure needed to serve them.
- Developing stronger standards that data centers must meet before connecting to the grid.

A controversial data center project in Henderson County near Cedar Creek Reservoir has been pulled after the company said it couldn’t comply with Abbott’s standards, The Tribune reported. The site was expected to take 12 years to build out and to consume 5 million gallons of lake water per day by its fifth year. It drew considerable opposition from residents because of the location’s proximity to a developed subdivision.

41 SCREWORM CASES IN TEXAS TO DATE

Forty-one cases of New World screwworm cases have been confirmed in Texas by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Standard reported, with one additional case in New Mexico. The latest infestation was confirmed in a baby calf in western Starr County, the first detected case in the Rio Grande Valley.

The screwworm is the larval stage of a parasitic fly that feeds on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals. Without treatment, infestations can be fatal.

Federal and state officials are working to contain the outbreak, with several counties in South and West Texas under quarantine that limits movement of livestock.

1.6 MILLION EGGS IN TEXAS ARE RECALLED

Several brands of white and brown eggs sold in Texas are under a recall because they may be contaminated with salmonella, the Statesman reported. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Midwest Poultry Services is voluntarily recalling nearly 1.6 million eggs.

The company announced that the eggs were produced and distributed from Texas farms between June 6 and July 3, with sell-by or best-by dates between July 20 and Aug. 17. They were shipped to Kroger stores in Texas and Louisiana and Brookshire Grocery stores in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Mississippi, as well as other smaller retail outlets.

The recalled eggs will have an identifying code number printed on the left or right sides of the carton in date-coding ink only. Only codes P-1950 or 0840962 with a Julian Date between 157 and 184 printed on the side of the carton are subject to recall.

As of July 24, the company has not identified any illnesses linked to the recalled eggs.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park.

Email: gbborders@texaspress.com.

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Chambers County Sheriff's K9 Unit Conducts Safety Training at Anahuac Elementary



By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

ANAHUAC — The Chambers County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit recently conducted a training exercise at Anahuac Elementary focused on preparing deputies and their K9 partners for real-world safety situations.

During the training, deputies and their special-

ly trained dogs practiced controlled building searches and response drills throughout the campus. The exercises allowed K9 teams to simulate scenarios they could encounter during critical incidents while demonstrating the important role the animals play in helping protect schools and the community.

Sheriff's Office officials

said hands-on training in different environments helps K9 teams maintain their skills, improve response capabilities, and remain prepared for emergency situations.

The Chambers County Sheriff's Office thanked Anahuac Elementary for hosting the training and supporting efforts to enhance school and community safety.

Baytown Police Host Free Child Car Seat Safety Event

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

The Baytown Police Department is partnering with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to help parents and caregivers keep young passengers safe through a free child safety event on Friday, Aug. 7.

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Baytown Public Safety Building, where certi-

fied child passenger safety technicians will inspect child car seats, verify proper installation, and answer questions from families.

Officials said many child safety seats are installed incorrectly, which can increase the risk of serious injury during a crash. A properly installed and correctly fitted car seat can provide important protection for children while traveling.

The safety check is open

to new parents, families who have recently changed car seats, or anyone wanting to make sure their child's seat is installed correctly.

Appointments are required. Parents and caregivers can reserve a spot by calling 281-420-5376.

The event is part of an effort by local officials to promote safer travel for the youngest passengers in the community.



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Your child must be present.

WHEN

Friday, August 7th 2026
8:00a.m. – 10a.m.

WHERE

Public Safety Building
3200 N Main St.
Baytown, TX 77521

This event is a cooperative effort with:

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Child Passenger Safety Education and Training Program

**Save a Life**
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

dshs.texas.gov/injury-prevention/safe-riders

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Harris County seeks public input on FY2027 budget priorities

By Gerardo Hernandez
STAFF WRITER

HARRIS COUNTY — Harris County officials are asking residents and business owners to help shape the county's Fiscal Year 2027 budget by participating in a brief online survey aimed at identifying community priorities.

The survey is part of the county's annual budget planning process, which seeks public feedback on how limited financial resources should be allocated while continuing to provide essential services and address the county's growing needs.

County leaders said the input will help guide decisions on future invest-



ments and ensure the FY2027 budget reflects the needs and values of Harris County residents.

The survey takes approximately three to five minutes to complete and asks participants to identify which county services they believe are most

important.

To be eligible to participate, individuals must be at least 18 years old and either reside in Harris County or own a business within the county. Participants are also asked to consent to having their responses combined with those of other respondents for use in the county's budget planning process.

County officials encourage eligible residents to complete the survey and share their perspectives as the budget development process moves forward. Public feedback will be considered alongside other financial and operational factors as county leaders prepare the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget. (Source Harris County Precinct 2 website)

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Halle Bailey, left, and Rege-Jean Page stars in "You, Me & Tuscany."

“You, Me & Tuscany.”

“The Shards” (TV-MA) — Teen drama lovers, you continue to be fed this year, and this latest thriller series hails from none other than creator Ryan Murphy (“The Beauty”) and screenwriter Bret Easton Ellis (“American Psycho”). This series is based on Ellis’ semi-autobiographical novel from 2023 and takes place in 1981 Los Angeles. Igby Rigney (“Devil in Disguise: John Wayne Gacy”) lands his first main role in a TV series as he plays 17-year-old Ellis during his senior year of prep school. He feels like he’s on top of the world with his girlfriend and group of friends, until the arrival of a new student named Robert (Homer Gere) shakes up their dynamic. Simultaneous with Robert’s arrival is the unexpected presence of a serial killer named the Trawler, who

begins abducting people across the city. The first two episodes premiere on Aug. 5. (Hulu)

“The Devil’s Mouth” (PG-13) — Speaking of teen dramas, this survival thriller film features a cast with a couple of actors who got their big breaks in one! Lana Condor (“To All the Boys”) and Gavin Casalegno (“The Summer I Turned Pretty”) star alongside Kathryn Newton (“Ready or Not 2”) as a group of friends who wish to have one last adventure together in Thailand before graduating from college. So, the friends decide to sign up for a guided swim tour through a cave system called The Devil’s Mouth. All is well upon entering the cave, until they probe deeper into the cave and discover a deadly bull shark. With it out for blood, these amateur cave

dwellers will have to play the longest waiting game of their lives to see if they can escape this hell in one piece. Out now. (Amazon Prime Video)

“You, Me & Tuscany” (PG-13) — Halle Bailey (“The Color Purple”) and Rege-Jean Page (“Black Bag”) lead this oh-so-romantic comedy film premiering on Aug. 7. Bailey plays Anna, a young chef who put her culinary aspirations on hold after the death of her mother. After spending the night with an Italian man named Matteo (Lorenzo de Moor), who mistakenly tells her about his empty villa in Tuscany, Anna impulsively decides to fly to Tuscany and stay in Matteo’s villa without his knowledge. Once there, she immediately gets caught by his relatives and, to save face, states that she’s Matteo’s fiancée. While this appeases his family momentarily, she also encounters Matteo’s cousin, Michael (Page), and feels an intense romantic connection with him. Talk about trouble in Tuscany! (Peacock)

“Alley Cats” (TV-MA) — This British adult-animated series comes from the mind of Ricky Gervais (“The Office”), which we all should know by now is a perverse and hysterical place. The series follows a gang of feral cats, led by a large orange cat named Gus (Gervais), as they spend their time frolicking in alleys, neighborhoods, cemeteries and parking lots. While these cats do ordinary cat things like play-fight, scratch up furniture, and jump on people, they also ponder their existence and what it really means to be a beautiful ball of fluff in such a dangerous world. The six-episode series premieres on Aug. 7. (Netflix)

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Q: What’s up next for director Christopher Nolan? I feel like he can’t really top himself after such epic masterpieces like “Oppenheimer” and “The Odyssey,” right? — A.G.

A: It’s hard to top the year that Christopher Nolan had in 2023, where he took home Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director for “Oppenheimer.” However, he’s already generating Oscar buzz for his most recent feat, “The Odyssey,” which is the first feature film to be entirely shot on IMAX 70 mm cameras.

The man deserves a rest, however. In fact, he’s publicly stated that fans will have to wait at least three years after the release of this summer’s “The Odyssey” before seeing his name on the big screen again. Rumor has it that he’d love to direct a horror movie. He’s also admitted that a comedy would be the ultimate challenge for him.

Q: What happened to the “Supergirl” movie? I think I missed it in theaters. Was it not a big hit? — C.A.

A: Yes, unfortunately, “Supergirl” came and went at the box office and is considered a bomb. This is surprising since the movie was predicted to be a hit after its much-talked-about teaser scene during the credits of the extremely successful “Superman” movie a year earlier. “Supergirl” also starred Milly Alcock of the hit HBO series “House of the Dragon,” so it was assumed that her TV audience would follow her to DC. But this didn’t happen either apparently.

“Supergirl” had an uphill battle to climb with its \$170 million production budget and \$120 marketing budget, as well as it being released during the ultra-competitive summer movie season. Its release was followed by the release of two other family-friendly flicks: Universal’s “Minions & Monsters” and Disney’s live-action “Moana.” It probably didn’t help that Supergirl was portrayed as intoxicated during the infamous teaser trailer from last year.

According to Variety writer Rebecca Rubin, “a movie on the scale of ‘Supergirl’ would need to earn at least \$375 million to break even because theater owners get to keep about half of box-office returns.” In comparison, 2025’s “Superman” even-



Academy Award Winning director Christopher Nolan (“The Odyssey”)

tually earned \$618 million globally, and its upcoming sequel, “Man of Tomorrow,” is expected to be a surefire hit.

Q: What ever happened to the actress who played the hilarious, awkward teen Sue on “The Middle”? Wasn’t she supposed to have her own show? — L.B.

A: Yes, actress Eden Sher, who played lovable, dorky teen Sue Heck on the ABC sitcom, was supposed to star in her own spin-off of “The Middle” when it ended in 2018. She even shot a pilot for the sitcom. It was tentatively titled “Sue Sue in the City,” where a now-adult Sue had relocated from small-town Indiana to Chicago.

Sher’s still acting and doing voiceover work. She had a guest-starring role on the recent reboot of “Night Court” and appeared in the Christmas movie “A Keller Christmas Vacation.” She also hosts a rewatch podcast of “The Middle,” titled “Middling with Eden and Brock.” (Her co-host is actor Brock Ciarlelli, who played Sue’s ex-beau in the sitcom.)

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3-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. Line in sidewalk is moved; 2. Window sill is missing; 3. Rear car window is smaller; 4. House window is moved; 5. Man is thinner; 6. Briefcase is larger.

August 3, 2026 Posting Date
King Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 URL ending
 - 4 "Now I get it!"
 - 7 Shimmering fabrics
 - 12 Texter's "I think"
 - 13 Young bloke
 - 14 Mover's rental
 - 15 H.S. proficiency test
 - 16 Held in trust
 - 18 Census stat
 - 19 Wonderland visitor
 - 20 Hindu deity
 - 22 Moray, for one
 - 23 Ski lift type
 - 27 TV screen choice
 - 29 Beekeeper's place
 - 31 Blood line?
 - 34 Sweetie
 - 35 Monastery
 - 37 Play part
 - 38 Romanov ruler
 - 39 College URL ender
 - 41 Appear
 - 45 Chopin piece
 - 47 Roman 56
 - 48 Branch of government
 - 52 Puzzle
 - 53 — Called Wanda"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16		17				
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38				39	40		41	42	43	44
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48	49	50	51						52	
53						54				55
56						57				58

- 54 Actress Ruby
 - 55 Before
 - 56 Give up amateur status
 - 57 Pink Floyd's Barrett
 - 58 Rds.
 - 7 "Time" co-founder
 - 8 Sushi fish
 - 9 Goat's plaint
 - 10 Where Lux. is
 - 11 Devious
 - 17 Bruins' sch.
 - 21 Wedding setting
 - 23 Leans
 - 24 Sheepish
 - 25 Branch
 - 26 Bagel variety
 - 28 One for the road?
 - 30 Cpl.'s subordinate
 - 31 Sternward
 - 32 Hosp. areas
 - 33 Estuary
 - 36 Bigfoot's kin
 - 37 Hollywood's Hepburn
 - 40 Couples
 - 42 Santa's crew
 - 43 Tennis great
 - 44 Blends
 - 45 Repeat
 - 46 Sized up
 - 48 Binge
 - 49 "Avatar" craft
 - 50 Chips go-with
 - 51 Leb. neighbor
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Trivia Test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY: How many countries border Argentina?
- GAMES: What is a perfect score in a bowling game?
- TELEVISION: In the animated series "Family Guy," what kind of creature is often fighting with Peter?
- COMICS: What is the name of Batman's butler?
- FOOD & DRINK: What ingredient gives the Greek liquor ouzo its distinctive taste?
- LITERATURE: What are the names of Nancy Drew's best friends in the detective novel series?
- MOVIES: What brand-name underwear does Marty McFly have in the movie "Back to the Future"?
- SCIENCE: What is the Prime Meridian?
- U.S. STATES: Which state is home to the Carlsbad Caverns National Park?
- ASTRONOMY: What is the largest moon of Saturn?

Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Weekly SUDOKU

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

Answers

King Crossword

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