

South Belt-Ellington Leader

Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, January 16, 2025 Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com www.southbeltleader.com Vol. 49, No. 50

Leader seeks submissions

The *Leader* encourages local schools, groups and individuals to continue sending story ideas and photos they'd like to see included in the newspaper. Submissions have declined following the death of *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger in November. Contributions may be submitted to mynews@southbeltleader.com.

HPD's PIP set for Jan. 21

The Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at the Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, 11800 Astoria in the CES Classroom on the first floor of the main building. Guest speaker to be announced.

Sageglen to meet Jan. 20

Sageglen Community Association will hold a homeowner meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 20, at the Sageglen Community Building, 11610 Sageyork. All Sageglen residents are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served. For information, call 281-481-2160.

Knights hold blood drive

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will host a blood drive Sunday, Jan. 19, at St. Luke the Evangelist, located at 11011 Hall Road, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments are preferred but not necessary. Donors must bring identification. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, visit www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/geo.

Kirkwood to meet Jan. 27

The Kirkwood Civic Club's monthly meeting will take place 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 27, at the Sagemont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Road near Beltway 8. Meetings are typically held for the last Monday of the month. For additional information, call Kirkwood Civic Club President Ericka McCrutchon at 281-989-9990.

Freeway Manor to meet

Freeway Manor Civic Club will hold its first meeting of the year at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, at Bible Way Church, 10120 Hartsook. Residents of Freeway Manor, Sun Valley and Gulfway Terrace are encouraged to attend.

New Covenant feeds needy

Each month, New Covenant Christian Church, 10603 Blackhawk at Kirkfair, will have food distribution events the first and third Wednesday from 1 to 2 p.m. and the second and fourth Saturday of the month from noon to 1 p.m. or until supplies last. The purpose of the events is to provide food to people in need. For additional information, contact the church at 281-484-4230.

Coffee with the Constable

Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia will be at Donut Haven, 10802 Hughes, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. each Thursday as part of the weekly Coffee with the Constable series. The next event will be Thursday, Jan. 16, with another event happening the following Thursday, Jan. 23. For more information, call Sagemont Civic Club President Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

Gulf Freeway closures set

At least one northbound and one southbound main lane and frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from SH 96/Calder/Brittany Bay in League City to FM 519/Main Street in La Marque daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from 8:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. until further notice.

Beltway closures planned

Two northbound and two southbound Beltway 8 frontage road lanes will be closed at Fairmont Parkway daily from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. until further notice. Significant delays are expected.

Telephone closure planned

At least one northbound and one southbound lane on SH 35/Telephone Road will be closed from Airport Boulevard to Bellfort Avenue daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (excluding Sundays) until further notice.

Macy's announces closure of Alameda Mall store

Closure leaves mall without anchor store for 1st time in 60-year history

By James Bolen

The Macy's store at Alameda Mall will be one of six in the state to close this year, company officials announced this past week, describing the locations as "underproductive."

"Macy's Inc. today (Jan. 9) confirmed the closure of 66 Macy's non-go-forward store locations," a statement from the company read. "These closures are a part of the Bold New Chapter strategy, which was announced in February 2024. This plan is designed to return the company to sustainable, profitable sales growth which includes closing approximately 150 underproductive stores over a three-year period,

while investing in its 350 go-forward Macy's locations through fiscal 2026."

The 150 total closures includes select Macy's Backstage and Macy's Furniture Gallery locations.

The remaining five Texas locations to be closed this year include stores in Dallas, Flower Mound, Fort Worth and Plano (two stores to close).

The planned closure will leave Alameda Mall without an anchor store for the first time in its nearly 60-year history. The Burlington Coat Factory that served as the mall's other anchor, located in the store that once housed JCPenney,

closed approximately two years ago after another branch opened on Beltway 8 and Pearland Parkway/Monroe.

Late last year, the *Leader* heard reports the Alameda Mall Macy's would be replaced by a Fiesta Mart. Numerous calls to multiple sources, however, were able to verify this claim. Former Alameda Mall General Manager Terry Felton laughed at this suggestion, saying he found it very doubtful.

A similar round of Macy's closures in 2017 closed the store located at the Pasadena Town Square, and within a couple years without an anchor store, the mall was forced to close altogether.

Originally opened as Foley's in 1966, the Alameda Mall location changed its name in 2006 when the two companies merged. The location celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2016.

Around 2008, Alameda Mall was tentatively scheduled for a massive renovation similar to that of Gulfgate Mall with assistance from the city of Houston as part of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) plan. The renovation was later shelved, however, when the opening of the nearby Walmart on Rowlett Road attracted some of the mall's larger remaining tenants, such as Ross Dress for Less and the adjacent Circuit City (now also closed near Rowlett).

Unaffected by the recent cuts was the Macy's located at the nearby Baybrook Mall, which it-

self has undergone multiple significant renovations in recent years, including the addition of a parking garage and the installation of an outside park area surrounded by new dining establishments.

Unsure of Alameda Mall's future, Felton remembers his time there fondly.

"Sometimes I'll drive by it and get a tear in my eye," Felton said. "I think to myself 'what is going on?' I know it will never be a Baybrook (Mall), but it (Alameda Mall) made money and served a niche market. I was very passionate about it for many years."

Regarding the recent Macy's announcement, Felton is surprised the location remained open as long as it did.

"I'm amazed it stayed open for so long," said Felton. "I figured the final nail would have been made in that coffin a while ago."

According to Macy's officials, clearance sales at the closing stores are underway and will continue for approximately six to eight weeks.

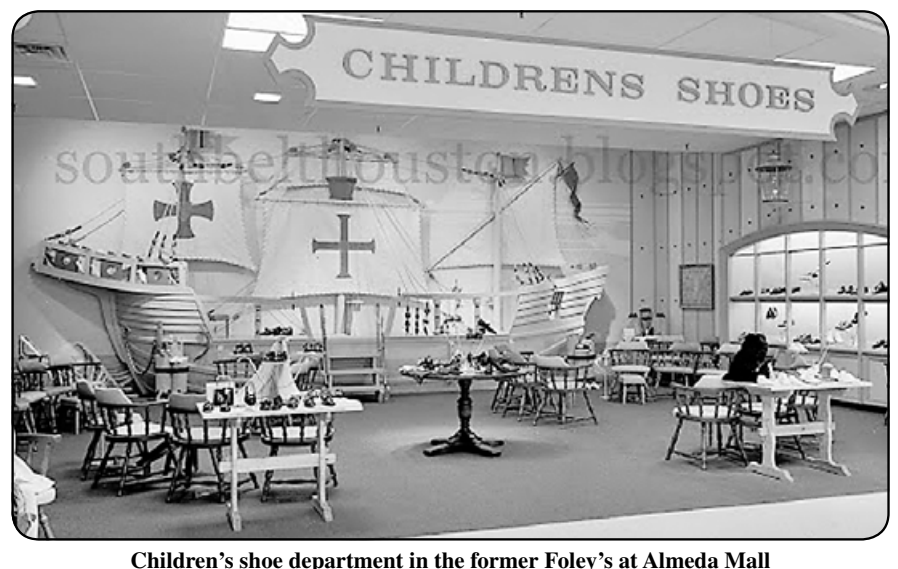
Merchandise purchased from a closing store on or before Jan. 13 cannot be exchanged or returned. Merchandise purchased prior to Jan. 13 may be returned through Feb. 11 per standard store policy.

For additional information on the closures or to see a complete list of affected stores, visit customerservice-macys.com/articles/store-closures.

Mall now a shell of former self



Former Foley's at Alameda Mall after opening in October 1968



Children's shoe department in the former Foley's at Alameda Mall

Leader remembers highlights of 2024

The *Leader* continues its look back at 2024 with a compilation of some of the year's more significant stories. See last week's edition for additional highlights from the year.

Jan. 11

John Whitmire was officially sworn in as the 63rd mayor of Houston Monday, Jan. 1, having defeated opponent U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee in November's general election. A longtime member of the Texas state Legislature, Whitmire replaced term-limited Sylvester Turner. Lee would unexpectedly die in July from pancreatic cancer at the age of 74, having served 30 years as representative for Texas' 18th Congressional District.

Also sworn into office Jan. 1 was former South Belt resident Fred Flickinger, who are elected to serve as Houston District E City Council member. The son of *Leader* founder Marie Flickinger and Clear Brook City MUD board member David Flickinger, Flickinger replaced David Martin, who was also term-limited. Martin ran an unsuccessful bid for Houston city controller, losing out to Chris Hollins, along with fellow candidate Orlando Sanchez.

Jan. 18

The South Belt community was struck by a hard freeze Tuesday, Jan. 16, as an Arctic front caused icy conditions across the country. The frigid weather – which dipped into the lower 20s – caused the closures of schools in Pasadena ISD, Clear Creek ISD and San Jacinto College. The freezing temperatures subsided by the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 17, with local students and city workers returning to their normal schedules.

Jan. 25

The South Belt community rallied around a local family who lost everything when their house in the 10600 block of Kirkshire Drive was destroyed by fire. The uninsured family had close ties to Dobie High School, as the mother taught there and the youngest son was a senior at the area school. Pasadena ISD also assisted in the family's recovery. Two Houston firefighters suffered minor injuries when the home's ceiling collapsed on them while battling the blaze. Houston Fire Department officials estimated property damage at \$275,000. The fire reportedly started in the fireplace and spread quickly from there. In all, 33

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Local deputies make large-scale drug busts

Pct. 2, Pct. 8 deputies independently make large drug busts on same day

Local deputies have made at least two large drug busts in recent weeks, taking thousands of dollars worth of contraband off area streets.

On Thursday, Dec. 19, deputies with Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's Special Operations Unit, with assistance from Precinct 2 patrol deputies and agents from the U.S. Marshals (Gulf Coast Violent Offenders Task Force) executed a successful arrest warrant on a known male located in the 10400 block of Sage-trail near Kirkville.

Upon executing the search warrant in the early morning hours, deputies were able to successfully take 24-year-old Ivan Benjamin Rosales into custody without incident.

As deputies were inside the home, they observed narcotics in plain view all throughout the home. Numerous amounts of narcotics, packaging items, several firearms and other illegal items were recovered.

Narcotics recovered included 18 pounds of

marijuana, cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, oxycodone and 375 pounds of promethazine/codeine.

Deputies also recovered several thousand dollars in U.S. currency and 12 firearms, seven of which were stolen.

Rosales was arrested for the felony warrant and charged with felony possession of marijuana and two counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

Garcia took to social media to thank the U.S. Marshals for their assistance with the arrest.

"Constable Garcia wants to thank the assistance from U.S. Marshals (Gulf Coast Violent Offenders Task Force) for assisting with this suc-

cessful arrest warrant and investigation, as well as all his deputies involved," a post on the constable's Facebook page read. "Constable Garcia will continue to target this type of illegal activity in an effort to make a difference in his neighborhoods within his precinct. Please stay safe and God bless."

Later that same day in a separate incident, deputies with Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Phil Sandlin's office made another large drug bust and cash seizure.

According to Precinct 8 officials, the incident began when a patrol deputy initiated a traffic stop on a driver for multiple infractions in the 11200 block of the Gulf Freeway near Edgebrook.

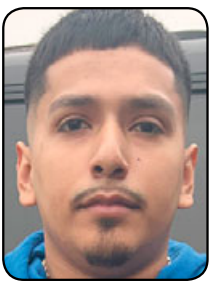
Upon making contact with the driver – identified as Nicholas Jerome Harris – the deputy noticed a strong marijuana odor emitting from the vehicle.

Harris was directed to step out of the vehicle and was found to have a large amount of U.S.

currency on his person.

Deputies then conducted a probable cause-based search of Harris' vehicle and discovered a large amount of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia. Seized narcotics included 8.5 ounces of marijuana, 18 grams of mushrooms, 18 grams of crack cocaine, 8.5 grams of methamphetamine, 10.24 grams of powder cocaine and multiple pressed pills.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office was contacted and accepted two felony charges for possession with intent to deliver. Harris, 40, was transported to the Harris County Joint Processing Center where his bonds were set at \$30,000 total.



Ivan Rosales



Nicholas Harris



Contraband seized by deputies with Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's office.



Contraband seized by deputies with Precinct 8 Constable Phil Sandlin's office.

Local officials sworn in



On Jan. 1, Constable Phil Sandlin Pct. 8; Judge Holly Williamson, justice of the peace Pct. 8, Pl. 1; Judge Jo Ann Delgado, justice of the peace Pct. 2, Pl. 1; and Constable Jerry Garcia Pct. 2, were sworn into office by Judge Louie Ditta, justice of the peace Pct. 8 Pl. 2. Left to right, are Sandlin, Williamson, Ditta, Delgado and Garcia.

Elected officials share their words

Carolyn Evans-Shabazz stresses unity

As we step into the new year, the promise of 2025 brings with it a renewed sense of hope, togetherness, and purpose for District D. Reflecting on the past year, it is clear that our strength lies in the power of community and collaboration. This year, that unity will be at the forefront as we tackle challenges, celebrate achievements, and work toward a brighter future for all.

Infrastructure improvements are on the horizon, and these enhancements will serve as a foundation for the growth and development of our beloved district. Addressing persistent issues like illegal dumping remains a top priority, and efforts are being doubled to ensure that our neighborhoods are clean, safe, and welcoming for everyone. Public safety is also a major focus, with initiatives underway to enhance security and protect the well-being of all residents.

A shining jewel of District D is the Houston Zoo, which continues to be a source of pride and inspiration for our community. The Zoo's commitment to accessibility and education—from discount-

admissions to free field trips for local schools—embodies the spirit of inclusivity that defines our district. It is more than a destination; it is a place where families connect, children learn, and the love for nature is fostered. Let us celebrate this remarkable asset as a cornerstone of our community.

As we move forward, 2025 will be a year of building bridges—not just physical ones, but bridges of understanding, collaboration, and support. By working together and uplifting one another, we can make remarkable progress in creating a District D where every resident thrives. Your voices, ideas, and actions are invaluable, and they will continue to shape our shared success.

Let's embrace this year with optimism, determination, and a commitment to unity. Together, we will make 2025 a year of growth, progress, and celebration for all of District D.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous and prosperous new year.

Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz
City of Houston, District D

Edward James Mikes Sr.

Edward James Mikes Sr., 86, a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully on Monday, Jan. 6, 2025, surrounded by his family. He was born in Shiner and grew up on a farm. Edward graduated from Shiner High School and later attended Baldwin Business College.

Edward was preceded in death by his parents, Annie (Janik) and Ladik Mikes Sr.; his grandson, Jeremy Mikes; his brothers, Robert Mikes, Ladik Mikes Jr., and Bennie Mikes; and his sister, Dorothy Rainosok.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 65 years, Dorothy (Velek); his sister, Adella Patek; his daughters, Karen Carnish (Craig) and Linda Trahan (Jim); and his sons, Eddie Mikes (Debbie) and Alan Mikes (Tina). Edward is also survived by grandchildren Anthony Mikes (Hollie), Travis Mikes, Shelby Catney (Cody), Matthew Mikes, Kevin Carnish, Zachary Trahan (Kaylee), and Katie Carnish (Travis); and great-grandchildren Jake and Allie Mikes, Luke, Layton and Lynnex Catney, Miller and Parker Mikes and Tanner Foulkrod.

In his younger years, Edward enjoyed playing the drums and excelled as a first baseman for the Shiner Clippers, earning the nickname "Shovel." Edward proudly served his country in the U.S. Army for two years, during which he was stationed in Germany. He cherished fishing trips with his sons and grandsons, always sharing memorable tales of his catches. Weekends were filled with watching the Astros and Texans (Oilers) and listening to Molly B's polka music. Edward and Dorothy enjoyed many laughter-filled vacations with Della and Jimmy Patek and Geraldine and Louis Patek. He was an active member of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church for many years and enjoyed being a part of the New Generation Seniors Club. Above all, Edward treasured time spent with his family, especially his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who

Deaths

brought him immense joy. Edward will be lovingly remembered for his incredible sense of humor, gentle nature, and the deep love he shared with his family and friends.

Visitation was held on Friday, Jan. 10, and a funeral Mass was held Jan. 11 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. Interment was followed at Shiner Catholic Cemetery, 153 CR 348 Shiner, Texas 77984.

To plant Memorial Trees in memory of Edward James Mikes Sr., visit https://sympathy.legacy.com/en-us/funeral-flowers/productdetails/?type=obituary&p=208327610&pn=edward-james-mikes-sr-affiliateId=4359&sku=tre-tim&pm=321&gl=1*12mmes*_gl_au*NzQ2MjQwODluMTcyOTc4MTUyMw.

Elizabeth Anne (Betty) Lessert



Elizabeth Anne (Betty) Lessert longtime P.E. teacher at Stuchbery Elementary School, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024, at Harbor House Hospice Center in Houston with Johnny Nunez, her longtime partner, at her side. Betty was born on April 25, 1947 in Borger to Walter Lessert and Hazel Tennant Lessert.

Betty graduated from Borger High School in 1965 and earned her bachelor's degree from Texas Tech

University in Lubbock. Betty went on to earn her master degree in education from TSU. While at Texas Tech, Betty was a cheerleader and a member of Chi Omega Sorority.

Betty dedicated her life to serving 32 years in education in both Friona and Pasadena. Most of those years were spent at Stuchbery Elementary where she left her mark on hundreds of students.

After retiring from education, she became the Director of M.I. Lewis Social Service Center in Dickinson. During her more than three years with M.I. Lewis, she was instrumental in establishing many community outreach programs and managed the organization through devastating impacts of both Hurricane Ike and Hurricane Harvey to the Dickinson community. She also served on the board of Dickinson Education Foundation and Dickinson Historical Society. Betty was honored by the Galveston Daily News for her community service.

Betty dedicated many years to Beta Sigma Phi, a service sorority. She served in many offices including president of the organization.

Betty is survived by her stepdaughters Michele Clark and husband Greg; and Jessica Benson and her husband Latsean. She had two grandchildren, Courtney Cross and Cameron Clark; and four great grandchildren. Betty is also survived by her longtime partner, Johnny Nunez, who was by her side throughout her journey.

Betty was preceded in death by her parents.

Betty's memorial service will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, at 2 p.m. at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Dickinson.

Donations in Betty's honor may be made to M.I. Lewis Social Service Center and Dickinson Education Foundation.

Stuchbery announces honor roll, merit roll

Stuchbery Elementary School officials have announced the second nine-weeks honor roll and merit roll for the 2024-2025 school year.

Third grade Honor roll
Cameron Baines, Sophia Banda, Braylon Jenkins and Madelyn Jimenez.

Merit roll
Sophia Velasquez, Sonaya Lopez, Hasani Ortiz, Bryan Hua, Kristin Nguyen, Madeline Jacuinde and Alerly Zamora.

Fourth grade Honor roll
Olivia Brito, Sophia Pachon, Miguel Perez and Kiyomi Anderson.

Merit roll
Anthony Nazario and Macie Salinas.

Schreiner University names honors list

Schreiner University has named qualified students to its president's and dean's list. Rodolfo Ibarra from the South Belt area was named to the roster of high achieving students on the dean's list for the 2024 fall term. To be eligible for the president's list, full-time students must earn at least a 4.0 grade point average for the term, passing all classes, and have at least 12 hours credit for the term. To qualify for the dean's list, a full-time student must have passing grades in all courses and, must earn at least a 3.50 grade point average and at least 12 hours credit for the term.

Man charged in 2023 murder

Charges have been filed against a suspect arrested in the fatal shooting of a man that took place back in June 2023 in the 15800 block of SH 3/Old Galveston Road near El Dorado.

The suspect, Marquise Lavell Ward, 25, was charged with murder in the 230th State District Court. He is accused in the death of Allen Bianchino, 28.

According to Houston Police Department officials, officers responded to a crash at the above address June 14, 2023, and found the victim unresponsive in the driver's seat of a disabled vehicle. He had multiple gunshot wounds and was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics.

Witnesses reported the vehicle was traveling on SH 3 before striking a parked, unoccupied vehicle and coming to a stop.

Witnesses further reported seeing two men flee the scene on foot following the crash.

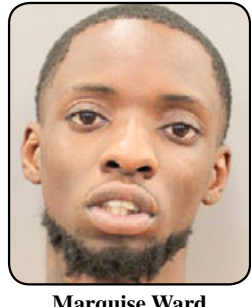
Investigators said police combed the area searching for the suspects but came up empty-handed.

At that time, the wanted suspects were described only as two black males, believed to be between 18 to 25 years of age.

Further investigation identified Ward as a suspect. On Dec. 26, officers with HPD Narcotics Division's Tactical Team arrested Ward and he was subsequently charged for

his role in this shooting.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information in this case is urged to contact the HPD Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or speak anonymously with Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS (8477).



Marquise Ward

Pct. 8 seeks theft suspect

Man accused of stealing nearly \$1K from Best Buy

Investigators with Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Phil Sandlin's office are seeking the public's assistance in identifying a suspect who recently stole nearly \$1,000 worth of merchandise from a store near Baybrook Mall.

According to Precinct 8 officials, the suspect in question entered the Best Buy retail store located in the 19400 block of the Gulf Freeway between El Dorado Boulevard and Bay Area Boulevard on Monday, Dec. 30, and left the business without paying for more than \$900 worth of merchandise.

The wanted suspect then reportedly fled the store in a black Honda sedan. He now faces felony theft charges.

Anyone with information in this case is urged to contact Precinct 8 Deputy Investigator J. Wingfield at 281-488-4040 or by email at



ConPct8@hctx.net. Tips can be submitted anonymously through the Precinct 8 website at constable8.harriscountytexas.gov.

City Council Member Flickinger shares planned local crime initiatives

Dear District E Residents, I hope you had a wonderful and blessed holiday season with family and friends. As we step into 2025, I'm looking forward to my second year on City Council serving District E.

I have ramped up several local crime initiatives working closely with the Houston Police Department's Kingwood, Clear Lake, and East Side divisions. In total, the District E HPD Divisions have been provided with over \$250,000 for increased patrol initiatives, crime suppression activities, utility terrain vehicles, and new jet skis for Lake Patrol. These initiatives and vehicles will increase police presence in District E helping to deter criminal activity. It is encouraged for residents to report incidents as they see them, "See Something, Say Something" and that can be done by calling the City of Houston's non-emergency, in the event of non-life-threatening incidents, at (713) 884-3131. In the event of a life-threatening event, residents should always call 9-1-1.

Resident attendance at local Houston Police Department "Positive Interaction Program" meetings is also highly encouraged. Those meetings usually take place once a month. These meetings provide residents the opportunity to meet the police officers patrolling the streets daily, get updates on crime statistics, learn about area crime initiatives, and create a more open dialogue with our police force learning more about how the Houston Police Department is making a difference in your area. Please

let my office know if you would like to be added to the email list for your respective area's meeting.

HPD-Clear Lake meets on the third Tuesday of the month, time: 6 p.m., at Memorial Hermann Southeast (11800 Astoria Blvd.).

Policing is not the only component of public safety, which is why this year you will continue to see infrastructure projects throughout the community in the form of concrete panel replacements and asphalt overlays, to improve drivability within the community funded through my Council District Service Funds. Road projects will be announced, in advance, through our office by press release and those press releases can be found online here as well as posted on my Facebook Page. This is in addition to the ongoing work on the Northpark Drive Overpass Project. You can find more information regarding upcoming work and possible traffic switches related to this project on the Lake Houston Redevelopment Authority's website. I encourage you all to please be courteous drivers, and obey signs, and flagmen when entering construction zones as this will help our crews stay on schedule.

Looking forward to a great year, please stay safe, and healthy. Lastly, to make you all aware the District E Office will be closed on Monday, Jan. 20, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Sincerely,
Fred Flickinger
City of Houston, District E

Meador performs holiday program



Dec. 19 Meador Elementary students performed their holiday program for students and parents on Dec. 19. Pictured above, left to right, are (front row) Christine Jimenez, Sophia Garcia, An Doan, Mallory Rodriguez, Nicolas Ramirez, (middle row) Jaiden Jackson, Isabelle de la Cruz, Ailyn Chairez, Jocelyn Valdez, (back row) Joshua Billups, King Speed, Aliyanna Knight and Dreyia White. The staff would like to praise the students, music teacher Tracy Nair and staff who assisted.



Pictured at right, left to right, are (first row) Nery Cedillos, Lucia Cabriales, Kyla Stollings, (middle row) Alyssa Nelson, Evelyn Alanis, Elijah Harrison, (back row) Freya Teniente, Tracie Nair, Aaliyah Jolivet and Zakiya Bradford.

Harris County Public Library hosts lecture

Harris County Public Library's Facebook will host a free lecture titled "Unpaving a Parking Lot - A look at the history, photos and purpose of GFG Demonstration Gardens" on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 11 a.m. to noon. No reservation is required, visit facebook.com/harriscountypbl events.

Local library events set

In case of storms or adverse weather, refer to library website for details.

Bracewell Branch Library
Bracewell Library is at 9002 Kingsport. Customers are encouraged to visit the building to browse, check out and return materials, use the computers and Wi-Fi, and check out holds. For information, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/>. For online learning, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/online-learning-7556> or call 832-393-2580. Hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, noon - 8 p.m.; Fridays, 1 - 5 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bracewell is closed Sundays.

Thursday, Jan. 16, 3 - 4 p.m. Open lab computer help.
Thursday, Jan. 16, 4 - 5 p.m. Family Storytime.
Tuesday, Jan. 21, 4 - 5 p.m. Board games at the library.
Visit <https://houstonlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/events> for more library events.

Book drop
The book drop is open. Library materials can be returned. The library continues to provide online resources to enjoy the library virtually. Large items such as FLIP kits or laptops should not be placed in the book drop, but taken inside.

Parker Williams Library
Parker Williams Library is open. Visit <https://www.hcpl.net/reopening> for reopening information or the main website at <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library>. The library will follow state and county guidelines for mask and social distancing.

The book drop is open. Social media links are Facebook.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary and Instagram.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary.

The following events are scheduled for Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.:
Thursday, Jan. 16, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Toddler time.
Friday, Jan. 17, 1 - 3 p.m. Genealogy.
Monday, Jan. 20, 6 - 7:30 p.m. Citizenship classes.
Tuesday, Jan. 21, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Babies 'n' books.
Tuesday, Jan. 21, 1 - 2 p.m. Citizenship classes.

Parker Williams "No-Contact Curbside Holds Pick-Up"
- After receiving notification that holds are ready for pickup, call 832-927-7870.
- Have a library card number and PIN handy.
- A pickup time and instructions will be given.
- Upon arriving, park in one of the two parking spots reserved for curbside holds.
- Be prepared to show a library card or other form of ID for verification.

Hours are Monday, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 - 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library> for details.

Online services
- Use HCPL Wi-Fi service with HCPL's drive-up Wi-Fi.
- Download e-books and audiobooks, stream movies, research and learn at www.hcpl.net.
- Attend an HCPL program or story time online through Facebook or YouTube.
- Check an account to renew loans or request books, e-books, comics or graphic novels.
- Stream classic films, indie cinema and award-winning documentaries on Kanopy.
- Listen to audiobooks through RBDigital or OverDrive.
- Read along and play with picture books on TumbleBooks.

Don't have an HCPL library card? Instant access can be obtained to all HCPL's digital materials and research tools with an iKnow Digital Access Card. Apply at <https://www.hcpl.net/services/iknow-card> for a HCPL card. For details, visit <https://www.hcpl.net>.

South Belt-Ellington Leader

The Voice of Community-Minded People

11555 Beamer 281-481-5656

E-mail: mynews@southbeltleader.com
Davy & Marie Flickinger, owners

Leader continues look back at 2024 highlights

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personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from stations 23, 70, 71, 52, 61, 93 and 24.

Feb. 1
A house caught fire Saturday, Jan. 27, in the 10000 block of Kirkbluff near Blackhawk. According to Southeast Volunteer Fire Department officials, the blaze started in the backyard when a heater ignited straw/hay bedding used to keep animals warm. In addition to SVFD, units from the Houston Fire Department and the Pearland Fire Department also responded to the incident. No injuries were reported.

Pasadena ISD was named one of five finalists in H-E-B's 22nd annual Excellence in Education Awards in the program's Large District division. Galena Park ISD would later be selected winner at the groups' banquet held in May.

Longtime area educator Hollis Powell died Thursday, Jan. 25, at the age of 91. Powell served in Pasadena ISD for more than 30 years, working at Meador Elementary and Atkinson Elementary – serving as the first principal for both campuses. Powell first worked as a teacher and later serving as principal of Meador from 1963 to 1969. At Atkinson, Hollis Powell served as principal from 1969 until his retirement in 1995. A service for Powell was held Wednesday, Jan. 31, in Jasper.

Feb. 8
On Jan. 26, San Jacinto College held a ribbon-cutting for its new Biomanufacturing Training Program at the south campus and Biomanufacturing Technology program at the school's new Generation Park campus. Through these programs, San Jacinto College will become the exclusive provider of the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) for the southern portion of the United States.

Space Center Houston CEO/President William T. Harris was presented the prestigious BAHEP Quasar Award at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's 30th annual Quasar Award Banquet, held Jan. 26, at the South Shore Harbor Resort and Conference Center in League City. U.S. Rep. Brian Babin and newly elected Houston Mayor John Whitmire were among the featured speakers of the evening.

Feb. 15
A male suspect was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the 2022 murder of Stephen Johnson, whose body was found wrapped inside the closet of an apartment unit in the 1300 block of Redford near Edgebrook and the Gulf Freeway. Zachary Charles Douglas pleaded guilty to the murder, court records indicate. While Johnson's body was found Oct. 3, 2022, investigators believe he was killed more than a month earlier on or around Aug. 21. According to Houston Police department officials, employees at the apartment complex at the above address noticed a foul odor and flies near the door of an apartment. Officers were called and gained entry to the apartment. During a search of the apartment, a male's decomposed body was found wrapped in blankets, inside a closet. An autopsy revealed Johnson died due to blunt force trauma. An investigation determined Douglas to be the shooter, and in 2023, he was charged with murder. At the time the charge was filed, Douglas was already in jail on an unrelated charge, having been arrested in January 2023. Douglas' motive for the murder remains unclear. HPD in 2022 deemed The Redford apartment complex a "hot spot" for violent crime, with at least 13 shootings being reported that year – five of which being fatal. The week before Johnson's body was discovered, there was a fire at the apartment complex, with badly burned human remains found inside one unit. The blaze was part of a lengthy arson investigation.

Dobie High School announced its 2024 Class of

Hall of Honor inductees, honoring four alumni and one former faculty member. Now in its 12th year, the Hall of Honor recognizes graduates who have made significant contributions to the community and serve as role models for current and future students. Alumni members to be inducted into the Hall of Honor included Mike Spencer, Class of 1981; Laurie Baker, Class of 1982; Michelle Manzanales, Class of 1993; and Devona Fanfair, Class of 2003. Former Dobie teacher Ann Brannen was the lone faculty member to be selected as a 2024 inductee into the hall. The group was officially inducted at a ceremony held at the school Feb. 23.

A well-rounded student, Spencer played on the basketball team, served on Student Council and worked as a photographer for the school paper. He was also a member of the varsity track team, setting a district high jump record. He attended San Jac on a track scholarship and was named an All-State Decathlete. Spencer began his career in dance in 1989 at Fred Astaire Dance Studios in Houston. In a very short time, he won Top Teacher awards at local, regional, and national competitions. He began competing professionally in 1992. He and his former partner won many local and regional competitions and three national championships. He retired from dancing in 2002 to focus on teaching, coaching, and judging. He has coached and trained a dozen dancers that became National and World Champions. Spencer came out of retirement in 2017, going on to win the 2018 National Championship and was named World Champion in 2019 and 2023. Spencer was inducted into the American Country Dance Association Hall of Fame. His world travels with dance competitions have given him opportunities outside of dance. Today, he does print modeling and has worked as a stunt man and choreographer in the film industry. Spencer currently resides in Biloxi, Mississippi with his wife, Celeste, where he volunteers in his community to teach dance to elementary students. He has one son and two grandchildren.

While at Dobie, Baker was a cheerleader in her junior and senior year. She represented GSL for three years and was an active member in the Key Club, JETS and NHS. Baker was a Trailblazer and was selected as a Rotarian. She was a member of Longhorn Council all four years and a member of the volleyball team. Today, Baker is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Camden Property Trust. Baker is responsible for the oversight and strategy of Camden's portfolio operations and investment funds. During her 30 plus years with Camden, Baker has held several positions including senior vice president of Fund and Asset Management. Baker served as the executive sponsor for Camden's technology initiative during the 2000s, which included \$10 million in technology investments and the roll out of Camden's web-based property management software, revenue management and several web-based solutions. Before joining Camden, Baker was vice president at Walden Residential Properties and spent nine years at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Chevy Chase, Md. She holds an MBA in finance from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Sam Houston State University. She serves on the board of directors executive committee for the National Multifamily Housing Council, is vice chair of ULI's Multifamily Council and a frequent speaker in the multifamily industry. Baker was the 2016 president of CREW Network, a past president of CREW Houston and was honored as one of the Top 15 Women in Commercial Real Estate in Houston. She is a licensed real estate broker in the

state of Texas and was recognized by Real Estate Forum as a Women of Influence in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2022. She received the 2022 Individual Corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award and received the Texas Executive Women on the Move Award for her efforts to improve leadership success for women and people of color.

During her time at Dobie High School, Manzanales was a cheerleader, lettered track and field triple jumper, as well as honor student. Now based in New York City, she is a critically acclaimed choreographer, sought after dance educator and a co-founder of the LatinX Dance Educators Alliance. Manzanales graduated from the University of Houston with a BBA in finance and spent more than a decade dancing professionally in Houston and Chicago before moving to New York. She served for seven seasons as the rehearsal director and artistic associate of Ballet Hispánico, a 50+ year institution recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures by the Ford Foundation. In addition to her leadership role at Ballet Hispánico, Manzanales has been named the 2024 Cecil H. and Ida Green Honors chair for the School for Classical and Contemporary Dance at Texas Christian University. She has been an invited panelist for Teacher's College, Columbia University's International Symposium and has presented lectures at the New York State Dance Education Association, Manzanales has served on the faculty and/or been a guest artist at numerous studios, schools, and college dance programs nationwide and internationally. Her choreography has been featured at Lincoln Center and the New York City Center Dance Festival. She has also set choreographies for many programs, including Rice University, Rutgers University, New World School of the Arts, Montclair State University and San Jacinto College South. She has also served multiple terms on the National Association of Schools of Dance's Committee on Ethics, and as a juror for numerous dance programs, notable the Ailey BFA program's Independent Study in Choreography and the American College Dance Association.

Fanfair's journey spans from high school track and field achievements to pioneering success in the startup world. With a high school triple jump best of 50'5", Fanfair held the ninth furthest jump in Texas history for more than a decade and secured state runner-up titles in both 2002 and 2003. His athletic prowess extended to the international stage, representing the United States on the Pan American Team in 2003. Transitioning from a standout athlete to a leader at Rice University, Fanfair captained the team to an outdoor championship victory in 2004 while consistently achieving top-four finishes at conference championships. Armed with a mechanical engineering degree and recognized as a National Science Foundation Fellow, he embarked on an entrepreneurial path. Currently, as the co-founder of Devland, Fanfair drives a venture studio and fund, catalyzing the success of startups led by women and people of color, with a total value of \$85 million. His commitment extends to running accelerators nationwide and building programs to support minority founders, particularly in Tulsa, Okla., to rejuvenate the city's entrepreneurial spirit. Fanfair has been married to his wife Danielle for 13 years, and the couple have an 8-year-old daughter named Sage.

Brannen was there when Dobie opened its doors and then stayed for 22 years as an English and journalism teacher, as well as adviser for both the Chaparral and Roundup publications. Under her guidance, her journalism students were regular winners of local and state awards, including many all-state and UIL awards. Brannen was seri-

ous about making sure they knew the history of Dobie High School. Her "Know Your School" activity required them to go out to explore and learn facts about the high school and its history. While she was teaching the basics of journalism or yearbook layout, she was also teaching business skills as she sent students out to sell ads. She was instilling tenacity when she sent student reporters to interview school or district leaders. She was making sure her students were unafraid to set goals and then work to achieve them. Brannen was unrelenting in her quest to help students reach their full potential. Often, it wasn't restricted to students in her classes. She seemed to know every student in the halls of Dobie and probably their parents as well. Even now, decades later, several of her former students remain in her orbit. She raised two Longhorns

of her own – Jeff and Amber (also a Dobie teacher) – and has five grandchildren. Today, Brannen works in the insurance business. She is still an active in the community with the South Belt Chamber of Commerce. She is fondly remembered by many former students as "the teacher who made a difference."

Feb. 22
Emergency crews from the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department responded to a house fire Sunday, Feb. 18, on Riverbend Canyon Lane in the Riverstone Ranch subdivision. The blaze, which started on the home's roof, was reportedly electrical in nature, SVFD officials said. At the time, fire officials said the incident was part of a "wave of recent house fires," with at least five such incidents taking place in just around two weeks.

Feb. 29
A commercial space mission with deep roots to

Ellington Airport/Houston Spaceport made history Thursday, Feb. 22, when it safely landed a robotic probe on the moon – the first time for a U.S. expedition in 50+ years. Led by local company Intuitive Machines, the IM-1, Nova C mission successfully placed a lunar lander called Odyssey near the moon's south pole at 6:23 p.m. ET after a few technical delays.

While backed by NASA, this marked the first time a private spacecraft successfully landed on the lunar surface. Commercial missions from both Israel and Japan have crashed in recent years, and the previous month, another NASA-backed mission from the company Astrobotic fell back to Earth after experiencing a fuel leak. NASA officials had given the mission only an 80-percent chance of success. Intuitive Machines was paid approximately \$100 mil-

lion by NASA to complete the endeavor. Beyond its international significance, the successful landing is a milestone in particular for the Ellington aerospace community, as it houses the Intuitive Machines headquarters, which served as a command center for the delicate operation. Further, the IM-1, Nova C mission was made possible in large part through training offered by San Jacinto College at its EDGE Center, also located at the Houston Spaceport at Ellington Airport. In recognition of this, a San Jacinto College seal featuring the names of all the students who contributed toward the project was aboard the Odyssey when it made its lunar landing. The seal included the names of the following San Jacinto College aerospace students:

Kevin Baez, Nicole Delaune, Oscar Gil, Gualalupe Hurtado, Greyson Netek, Jesus Murillo,

Austin Sommers, Logan Swann, Jose Ortiz, Delores Vanhooze, Joseph Weaver, Christopher Garcia, Alexander Villeda, Cyrus Shy, Nicholas Russell, Benjamin Tate, Adrian Garcia and Mary Faith Covey.

Launched from Florida Thursday, Feb. 15, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, the Odyssey landed near the Malapert crater, located near the moon's south pole. This location was selected in part because its near-continuous sunlight can better power solar cells and the pole's dark craters are believed to contain water in the form of ice. The hydrogen and oxygen elements found in water could provide oxygen to breathe or be used to produce rocket fuel, as NASA's long-term goal is to utilize the moon's resources to enable further exploration into space. Under NASA's Artemis program, the space agency plans to send the first woman and person of

color to the moon by the end of 2026. From there, NASA intends to create a lunar base, laying the groundwork for a future trip to Mars.

Houston firefighters responded to a house fire around 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, on Sagehurst near Sageglen. According to Houston Fire Department officials, the blaze had been reported by the neighbors as the home's residents were out to dinner. No injuries were reported, as the house was vacant at the time of the incident. The cause of the fire was not immediately clear. This marked the sixth significant house fire in the South Belt area in just three weeks. Houston Fire Department officials, however, said there was no connection between the blazes and the incidents shared no common characteristics.

The 2024 Year in Review will be continued in next week's *South Belt-Ellington Leader*.



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Melillo delivers to South Belt Leader toy drive



Melillo Middle School collected nonperishable food items and unwrapped toys to donate to the South Belt Leader food and toy drive. NEHS group members dropped off the items collected to the Leader. Pictured, left to right, are (front row) reading instructional coach Megan Medina, Daniel Patterson Jr., Mahim Alexander, Usman Aleem, Claudette Reyna, (middle row) Leonardo Segovia, Ba Tram, Vincent Nguyen, (back row) Camila Fernandez and Mikaela Portillo.



Pictured, left to right, are (front row) Camila Fernandez, Paultette Jimenez, Neveah Flores, Emma Villa, Leonardo Segovia, Maximus Ochoa, Ba Tram, Victor Hernandez, Nathan Chavez, Quan Nguyen, (middle row) Usman Aleem, Mikaela Portillo, Soraya Shah, principal Jennifer Saucedo, Camila Licon, Tyler Ragin, Zayan Jafri, Mae Green, Claudette Reyna, Benedict Duncan, Dannie Nguyen, (back row) Vincent Nguyen, math instructional coach Michelle Rush, reading instructional coach Megan Medina, Roselyn Ramirez, Austine Arce, Ava Ahmad, Daniel Patterson Jr., Jorge Sanchez, Mahim Alexander and Andrew Duong.

Fred Roberts announces Aviators of the month



These students were chosen as Fred Roberts Middle School Aviators for November and December for being self-directed learners. Pictured from left to right, are counselor Crissy Higham, sixth-grader Torrie Caniff, fifth-graders Khoi Nguyen, Maria Martinez and counselor Mike Evans.

Photo by Alexis Vega

Melillo students lead food, toy drive



Melillo collected a large amount of goods for their food and toy drive. Shown above is the class that collected the most amount of items. Pictured, left to right, are (front row) Alexia Lozano, Benjamin Pham, Jose Rodriguez, (middle row) Kevin Vo, Rogelio Palomino, Isaac Espinoza, Raul Jimenez, Barsam Shirkhani, Han Tran, Miah Nolasco, Jaqueline Pham, Angie Sanchez, (back row) Genesis Martinez, Fernando Valdez Castillo, Emma Nguyen, Sofia Contreras, Nahomi De La Fuente, Gabriela Gomez, Liam Montoya, Kayli Salinas and teacher Lauren Sanchez.

Remember When

45 years ago (1980)

The fifth-grade pod of Burnett Elementary school was damaged by fire.

South Belter breathed a sigh of relief after three continuous days of rain finally stopped. No flooding inside homes was reported.

Students at Stuchbery Elementary remained outside for more than an hour while police checked for a bomb after the school received a phone call stating that a bomb had been placed in the school. No bomb was found, and the children finished the regular school day.

Spring registration at San Jacinto College South was expected to reach more than 1,200.

40 years ago (1985)

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held at 11555 Beamer Road where the new offices of the South Belt Leader and South Belt Graphics and Printing would be located. Additional offices in the building would be leased to M & M Graphics, Tebco Co. and the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce. Construction was expected to be complete by mid-April.

A quarter-mile jogging trail at Sagemeadow Park was nearing completion. The \$12,710 trail was designed by the county and paid for by the Sagemeadow Maintenance Committee.

Construction of two additional lanes for Beamer Road between Scarsdale Boulevard and the South Bend subdivision was set to be underway by June 1986.

The completion of Fuqua from the Gulf Freeway to Old Galveston Road was underway and expected to be complete by midyear.

35 Years ago (1990)

Pasadena Independent School District expelled 11 Thompson Intermediate students for the sale, distribution and use of LSD on school district property.

Dobie High senior Jeremy Craft and sophomore Zach Burton earned spots on the University Interscholastic League All-State Choir.

Officials with the Environmental Protection Agency spoke to about 400 residents at a public meeting about the Brio site.

30 years ago (1995)

The Dobie High School Academic Decathlon team was headed to state finals after winning regionals in La Porte.

Marie Flickinger was one of two top vote-getters in the race to replace longtime San Jacinto regent Charles Ray Ogden.

South Belt business owners along with the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce met with the city of Houston deputy director of public works to protest the proposed installation of a 36 inch water line down Scarsdale Boulevard.

Dobie High School junior Heather Ogilvie was fourth runner-up in the Miss Teen Texas USA Pageant.

25 years ago (2000)

EPA filed a multimillion-dollar suit against 22 companies to recoup clean-

ing up costs of a 10-acre site on Conklin by South Belt and I-45.

City Council approved an \$80,000 traffic study within the boundaries of Dixie Farm Road on the east, Highway 35 on the west, FM 518 on the South and Blackhawk/Beamer on the north.

20 years ago (2005)

Former Tonight Show band leader Doc Severinsen visited San Jacinto College South campus' music department. Professional trumpet players were able to play Severinsen's trumpet, Destino, at the invitation-only event.

Harris County officials were working out final plans for two South Belt roadway connections. Blackhawk would be extended from Scarsdale to Dixie Farm Road, and Scarsdale would be extended westward to connect with Yost Road.

The Rev. Gordon Berg and wife Pat, founders of Action Ministries, assisted victims of the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami in Indonesia by collecting and shipping food to that country.

15 years ago (2010)

A benefit held to aid John Elam in his fight against cancer was a huge success, raising nearly \$50,000. Roughly 550 people showed up to support the 1985 Dobie graduate and football star in his effort to raise money for further treatment.

10 years ago (2015)

Beverly Hills Intermediate celebrated its 50th anniversary Jan. 16 with a banquet at the area school that was attended by dozens of current and former staff members, students and community members. All four of the campus' surviving principals were in attendance.

An off-duty police officer shot and killed a man Jan. 16 after he allegedly pointed a gun at the officer outside Bombshells Restaurant and Bar on the Gulf Freeway at Fuqua. Police said the victim had been kicked out of the restaurant earlier for fighting with other patrons.

5 years ago (2020)

San Jacinto College agreed to participate in the Harris County Promise program, a collaboration between SJC and Pasadena ISD that allows many local students to attend the school at no charge. The program is open to current graduating seniors from Dobie, South Houston and Rayburn high schools. Officials are hoping

to later expand the Promise program to the remaining Pasadena ISD high school campuses. The Promise program is available to all resident seniors, regardless of high school GPA or income. Eligible seniors who become Promise Scholars receive up to three years of guaranteed tuition and fees, assistance with books and additional support to help them complete their degrees. In order to keep the scholarship, students must attend full time (12 hours per semester) during fall and spring semesters, continue to complete FAFSA or TAS-FA applications, and earn at least a 2.0 GPA. Students in the program have up to three years to complete an associate degree or other recognized credential.

1 year ago (2024)

The South Belt community was struck by a hard freeze this week, as an Arctic front caused icy conditions across the country. The frigid weather - which dipped into the lower 20s on Tuesday, Jan. 16 - caused the closures of schools in Pasadena ISD, Clear Creek ISD and San Jacinto College.

Former U.S. Rep. Pete Olson - whose House District 22 encompassed much of the South Belt community - was recently named the new chair of the board for the Lone Star Flight Museum.

A former Navy pilot, Olson was unanimously elected to the position by the museum's board of directors.

Over The Back Fence by Nicole

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO MARY
Best wishes to Mary Clark who enjoys a birthday Jan. 20. Greetings are sent from her husband Chris and her friends at the Leader.

MIKE ENJOYS A BIRTHDAY

Mike Williams celebrates a birthday Jan. 20. Best wishes are sent for a special day from family and friends at the Leader.

SCHOOL DAZE

The following staff and personnel of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Jan. 16 through Jan. 22.

Atkinson Elementary

Blow out the birthday candles for Katherine Fielder Jan. 20.

Burnett Elementary

Send a birthday greeting Jan. 21 to Maria Hernandez.

Bush Elementary

Enjoy a slice of birthday cake with Myra Gomez Jan. 18.

Genoa Elementary

Send a nice birthday greeting Jan. 16 to Luz Salazar. Karina Estrada celebrates a birthday Jan. 18. Light the birthday candles Jan. 19 for Patricia Williams.

Meador Elementary

Send a special birthday wish to Melissa Hinojosa who enjoys a birthday Jan. 16. Sing a happy birthday song to Lizeth Flores Jan. 20. Join in the birthday fun Jan. 22 for

Joycelyn Webster.

Moore Elementary

Jan. 19 is the day for a party for Sandra Rodriguez and Marisol Salazar.

South Belt Elementary

Jan. 19 is the day for a fun celebration for Linh Moore. Mallory Stephens celebrates a birthday Jan. 20.

Stuchbery Elementary

Blow out the candles Jan. 19 for Charlene Provence.

Fred Roberts Middle School

Give a birthday shoutout Jan. 22 to Julie Lanham.

Melillo Middle School

Send a humorous birthday card Jan. 20 to Denise Martinez.

Beverly Hills Intermediate

Remember Irene Flores on Jan. 16 with a special birthday wish. Send a festive birthday greeting to Amber Estrada Jan. 22.

Thompson Intermediate

Lauren Soto and Telma Triana celebrate a birthday Jan. 19. A double-fun day is planned Jan. 22 for Alyssa Rosas and Leticia Sanchez.

Dobie High

Celebrating a birthday Jan. 16 is Jessy George. Jan. 17 is the day for a party for Fiorella Morin and Deborah Scheffer. Light the birthday candles Jan. 18 for Remi Yusuf.

A double-fun day is planned Jan. 19 for Cathy Meek and Yadira Razo-Perez. Jan 21 is the day for a fun celebration for Miguel Ovalle. Deena Delarosa and Elissa Nandin celebrate a birthday Jan. 22.

FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS

Thursday, Jan. 16: Rachel Perez, Heidi Ferguson, Troy Merkai, Samesia Bass-Hamlett, Kimberly Dann-Mandy, Dana Willis and Lisa Pennington; Friday, Jan. 17: Scott Greene, Tiffany Juarez, Donald Adams, Katherine Macias, Carla Parker, Jodie Lawson and Kevin Jasso; Saturday, Jan. 18: Charlie Boldt, Thera Malone, Lynn Carnes, Dwight Baker and Theresa Touchette; Sunday, Jan. 19: Janet Thompson, Lisa Gates, Grace Lazo, and Brenda Mahoney; Monday, Jan. 20: Jeremiah Orsak, Stephanie Johnson, Mary Belz and Mark Rouden; Tuesday, Jan. 21: Traci Fort, Kim Saucedo, Karen Harlan, Connie Birmingham and Lisa Allen-Bragg; and Wednesday, Jan. 22: Amber Estrada, Shad Taylor and Mitchal Nordstrom

LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS

Email announcements of anniversaries, vacations and graduations to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line by Friday noon for the next week's publication. For birthdays, type "OTBF: Friends Celebrate Birthdays" in the subject line.

Stuart places in academic decathlon

Clear Brook Speech and Debate team president and senior Gregory Stuart ventured out solo after the holiday break to the 50th anniversary of the Winston Churchill High School speech and debate tournament in San Antonio to work on his Extemp and Student Congress skills as he looks forward to the team's upcoming state meet in March. While he did well in Student Congress, he just missed the break but found his greatest success in Domestic Extemporeous Speaking. After beginning his first round with the topic "Does California Need to Ban Resettlement in Fire Prone Areas?" and then competing in two more preliminary rounds, he found himself situated in a grueling semi-finals round before finally seeing his name dropped from the rafters on a finals posting. His final topic for the meet was "What Viable Approaches Can the U.S. Pursue to Help Workers Shift from Fossil Fuel Employment to New Industries?" In this final round with a panel of five judges, he walked away fifth place with ranks of 1, 4, 4, 5 and 5 from the panel, besting 30 other competitors who began the meet with him in prelims on Friday, Jan. 10.



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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Basketball programs shoot for postseason shot

A Division II playoff seed all but secured, all that remains for the Clear Brook varsity girls' basketball team is to go get the District 24-6A championship.

The second half of league play began Jan. 14 after press time as the Wolverines took on a 1-6 Clear Springs team on the road. Clear Brook, tied with Dickinson and Clear Creek at 6-1 entering the final stretch run, will host the Gators Jan. 17 and then host Clear Creek Jan.

25 and a pair of games that will no doubt go a long way toward determining the eventual league champion. Deer Park was in fourth place at 4-3 after the first round ended.

Should the current top four teams in the standings advance to the postseason, Dickinson and Deer Park would be seated in the Division 1 bracket, with Clear Brook and Clear Creek then headed to Division 2.

Given Clear Creek's 47-41 first-round win over

Clear Brook, the Wolverines' best course of action is to win out.

While the Clear Brook girls are in terrific shape as far as the postseason is concerned, the Wolverine boys have also fashioned a quick start in league play with four wins and five overall games to sit in second place behind undefeated Clear Springs.

The Wolverines went up against the Chargers Jan. 13 after press time and will close out the first half of district play

against Dickinson Jan. 17. The second half of district play figures to be much of the same as the battle for postseason berths will go down to the wire.

Head coach Nathan Janak has his Wolverines in great shape for now, and the locals will aim to continue their hot play as the season progresses.

The postseason qualifiers are all but set in the 22-6A varsity girls' ranks as Dawson, Pearland, Manvel and Shadow Creek are almost assured of reaching

the playoffs.

At 4-6, Dobie continues to put together a solid season in his time with South Houston for fifth place. Dobie is 11-15 overall and will look to close out the regular season strong in head coach Rachel Flores' debut season.

Senior Ulani Davis and

junior Audrey Volper continue to lead the way as the locals have been competitive in every game.

The same goes for District 22-6A as far as the varsity boys are concerned as Shadow Creek, Pearland, Manvel and Pasadena Memorial currently hold the four playoff

seeds, with South Houston just a game back at 4-4.

The Dobie varsity boys have won a pair of district games within a very strong lineup of teams and, like the JFD girls, will be looking to gain as much momentum as possible as the final stretch of games plays out.

Ferguson sets 100 back record



Lutheran South Academy swimming legend Lauren Ferguson added to her legacy this season as she became the program record holder in the 100 back, delivering a time of 1 minute, 2.24 seconds at the HYCA Texas Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association meet Jan. 6.

Dobie volleyball's Ortiz to join Richland



Dobie varsity volleyball standout libero and Class of 2025 senior Hope Ortiz has signed a letter of intent to join National Junior College Athletic Association DIII volleyball power Dallas College Richland as part of head coach Grace Wells' eight-player haul for the 2025 recruiting cycle.

Ortiz, an honorable mention All-District selection for her play on the court in 2024 as well as an All-Academic Team honoree, will join a Dallas Richland program that finished ninth in the NJCAA Division III poll and was second in the 2024 Dallas Athletic Conference standings.



Dobie junior Audrey Volper and her teammates were 4-6 for a fifth-place tie in the standings thanks to solid play since the holiday break and are now focused on a strong finish to the regular season.

Sanchez proves worth as dual-sport star

By John Bechtle Sports Editor

Aiden Sanchez is in the midst of a high school senior season that he and many of his peers dream about.

Over the weekend, he collected the Dobie varsity football team's Defensive Most Valuable Player Award at the season-ending banquet.

With 12.5 quarterback sacks to go with five forced fumbles over nine games, Sanchez was truly the type of game wrecker along the defensive front

that the Longhorns needed and they ultimately rallied with a game-10 win over Manvel to reach the postseason.

Yet for as much success as Sanchez has had on the football field, he for two seasons has been equally as impressive as a left-handed starting pitcher with the Longhorns.

Verbally committed to attend San Jacinto College to play for the Ravens, Sanchez on Jan. 19 will begin preseason workouts with the Longhorns as

they prepare for the 2025 season.

Sanchez, who helped lead the Longhorns to a 22-6A district championship in 2023, will again play a big role for Dobie as the district 22-6A lineup of teams figures to be deeper than ever.

It would make perfect sense for Sanchez to finish

ish out his baseball career with the Longhorns this spring and then head for San Jacinto College beginning this fall, but his love of football could very well get in the way.

"I guess I really do consider myself a football player playing baseball," Sanchez said. "I love football. I have been injured

some during my football career, which has been frustrating, but I really do love football and would like the chance to play in college.

"Then again, I enjoy being a pitcher out there on the mound because you can control the pace of the game and the action. We'll have to see how things go.

Ideally, I would love the opportunity to play both sports, but we'll just have to see how things play out."

For those on the outside looking in, it's easy to understand the assumption that Sanchez is a standout pitcher looking to continue his baseball career at the college level.

That much is still a true, but the senior's terrific season on the gridiron in 2024 has perhaps provided other options in addition to the baseball diamond.

In today's world, the NCAA transfer portal as well as the seemingly endless ability for current college athletes to name their price and/or school has made it much more difficult for high school graduates to navigate the recruiting scene.

There are opportunities available for the five-star recruits for sure. For those like Sanchez who have put together a late run of success, it may take a little bit longer for things to come together.



Dobie senior defensive end Aiden Sanchez (19) led the District 22-6A ranks with 12 quarterback sacks and five forced fumbles as he proved to be a disruptive force for the Longhorns as they reached the postseason in 2024. While he is also a standout left-handed pitcher, Sanchez says his true love is football. Looking ahead, he hopes to have the opportunity to play both sports collegiately.

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SBYSC registration is online;

The South Belt Youth Soccer Club is offering early registration for the spring season through Jan. 19, with U4 through U20 age divisions available to players at southbeltsoccer.org. Regular registration prices begin Jan. 20.

Players in the U4 through U8 divisions will pay \$85, while the fee is \$95 for the U9 through U12 divisions. The fee is \$105 for the U13 through U20 divisions.

The fee includes a uniform shirt, socks and shorts while families must provide cleats, shin guards and a soccer ball. Visit www.southbeltsoccer.org for additional details.

Practices will start second half of January, games for the older age groups will start in late February and in March for the younger age groups, games will be played through mid-May.

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2024 Year in Review: Players and their teams stand out



The Lutheran South Academy boys' 4x400 relay squad captured gold medals for winning the event at the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A South Regional as, from left, Marcus Gaitan, Case Noack, Corey Griffin and Matthew Gaitan teamed.

The *Leader's* Year In Review for 2024 continues.

May 2

Atascocita advanced to the area round of the varsity softball playoffs at the expense of Dobbie after defeating the Longhorns 8-2 and 12-4 to sweep a best-of-three series April 19-20.

The Eagles won the series with a big closing stretch in the second and deciding game at San Jacinto College South.

Breaking a 3-3 tie with a pair of runs in the top of the fifth inning, Atascocita added two runs in the sixth and five more in the seventh to finish off the series.

In the series opener April 19, the host Eagles used a seven-run second inning en route to the 8-2 win. Dobbie, which entered the postseason as the second seed out of District 22-6A, finished the season at 19-14.

It was all about chasing the gold as the Lutheran South Academy track and field teams headed to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools State Championships in Hewitt, Texas.

The Pioneer boys' team headed to the championship finale as the South Regional team champion.

The Pioneers' Wilson Klein was one of several gold-medal seeking athletes heading to Waco as his regional clearance of 15 feet, 7 inches en route to a regional gold medal was both a school and personal record for the senior.

A time of 3 minutes, 27.25 seconds was good for a gold medal in the 4x400 as Marcus Gaitan and Matthew Gaitan were joined by Corey Griffith and Case Noack in the event.

Matthew Gaitan posted a time of 4:19.91 as the regional gold medalist in the 1,600, with teammate Reid Toner fourth for a state berth at 4:24.74. A time of 42.20 also had Case Noack reaching state in the 300 hurdles.

Senior Makynna Robbins was among LSA's regional medalists as she was third in the shot with a toss of 37-1/4. Robbins also reached state in the discus with a fourth-place toss of 112-0.

Pioneers Alma Martin and Lanie Ward both cleared 10-0 in the pole vault, with Martin ultimately second for a silver medal and Ward fourth.

Lutheran South's 4x400 relay squad closed the meet with a fourth-place time of 4:17.19 to advance to state as the group included Robbins, Stoeckel, Lydia Ward and Mia Fulton.

The Pioneers' Cassidy Pfeiffer delivered a time of 49.90 for fourth place in the 300 hurdles to advance. It was LSA's Lanie Ward third for a bronze medal in the 100 hurdles at 17.15, while Pfeiffer's clocking of 17.18 was fourth-best for a state berth.

A time of 50.43 earned the Lutheran South girls' 4x100 relay squad fourth place and a state invitation. The team included Emma Schepmann, Avery

McPhail, Reed Brenner and Lauren Bonnezace. The Pioneer boys' 4x100 relay squad took the bronze medal for third place at 43.95.

Lutheran South Academy, the defending Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A state girls' team champions, began the 2024 postseason by winning the district championship with a single-day team score of 359.

The Pioneers' Addison Trahan fired an 82 for third place, with Emma Poffinbarger fourth with an 83 and Audra Poffinbarger eighth with a 94.

Dobbie was set to take on defending 6A state finalist Pearland in an area round baseball playoff matchup after both programs swept past their opponents in the opening round as the state postseason opened.

The Longhorns reached the area round in consecutive seasons (2023-2024) after dispatching Summer Creek 10-4 in the opener May 3 at Summer Creek, then shut out the Bulldogs 3-0 a day later at Maguire Field in Pasadena.

Pearland, the 23-6A champion, handed Clear Brook 6-2 and 4-0 defeats to advance, taking out the Wolverines in the opening round for a second straight season.

The start of the series delayed a day, the Longhorns and Bulldogs got going at Summer Creek May 3 as junior righthander Cruz Torres was solid in his start for the locals.

With Torres allowing three hits and three earned runs over five innings, the offense came through with plenty of run support as A.J. Hernandez homered and tripled, driving in four runs. Juelz Martinez also homered, while Will Joiner III drove in a pair of runs and Isaiah Jones had three hits and scored three runs.

In the series clincher at Maguire, junior left-hander Aiden Sanchez blanked the Bulldogs over six innings while scattering six hits, and Martinez earned the save as he finished it off in the top of the seventh inning.

Hernandez drove in a pair of runs, Joiner knocked in another and Martinez went 2 for 4 with a run scored. Summer Creek finished the regular season with a 14-17 record.

In a final push for the ages, the Lutheran South Academy boys' team captured the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A state Track and Field Championship May 3-4 at Waco Midway High School.

The capper came as the Pioneers' 4x400 relay squad took third place for a bronze medal and 12 crucial team points in the meet's final event, thereby posting 107 points to surpass Fort Bend Christian (105.5) and Liberty Christian (102).

With a time of 3 minutes, 27.41 seconds, Case Noack, Corey Griffith, Matthew Gaitan and Marcus Gaitan teamed for third place and a bronze medal in the 4x400 to bring the Pioneers the state title.

Matthew Gaitan was the 5A gold medalist at the 800 distance at 1:57.06, and Marcus Gaitan's time of 1:57.64 won him a silver medal for second place. A time of 2:00.14 placed Jeremy Gaitan fifth.

Day-one field events proved to be equally valuable to Lutheran South as seniors Wilson Klein (pole vault) and Kris St. Clair (discus) won individual state championships. Klein cleared 13 feet for his gold medal in the pole vault, while St. Clair won his gold with a discus throw of 142-3. LSA's Cole Noack was sixth in the discus at 125-0. St. Clair threw the shot 46-6 for seventh in the shot.

Elsewhere in the running events, Matthew Gaitan claimed bronze in the 1,600 with a time of 4:22.38.

A time of 4:22.95 placed Lutheran South's Reid Toner fourth in the event. A time of 1:31.24 delivered by the team of Rhet Lavergne, Ben Hughes, Klein and Leblanc brought fourth place in the 4x200 relay. In a time of 43.85, Klein, Weber, Leblanc and Hughes teamed for fifth in the 4x100 relay. Jonah Weber missed out on a medal in the 200, but scored with

his fourth-place clocking of 22.978, with teammate John Leblanc sixth in a time of 22.980. Hughes went 43-10 3/4 for fifth in the triple jump, and a time of 42.60 placed Case Noack was sixth in the 300 hurdles.

May 16

Demond Stafford was out as Dobbie High School's varsity head football coach after two seasons after being approved for the same role at Spring Branch ISD's Northbrook High School following school board approval May 6.

Choccolocco Park in Oxford, Ala. was the host site for the NCAA's Division I World Series, with Florida SouthWestern state bidding for a fourth straight crown and top-ranked McLennan also aiming to win it all.

McLennan, 57-2 overall leading up to the series, earned the top seed at the World Series. Region 14 postseason tournament champion Galveston was at the World Series for the first time since 2018 as the No. 7 seed.

The Whitecaps would take on No. 10 seed Wallace State. San Jacinto College was back at the series for the third time in four seasons and drew the No. 12 seed.

The Ravens were led into the national championship tournament by star shortstop Arriana Wright, who was named the conference and region Player of the Year for the second straight season.

Wright hit .500 with 70 runs driven in, having delivered 27 doubles, 15 home runs and 77 runs scored, all team bests by a wide margin.

The Lutheran South Academy varsity girls' golf team repeated as the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A state tournament champions after posting a two-day total of 671 for a 20-shot margin of victory.

Seniors Emma Poffinbarger (80-77 for fifth place) and Addie Trahan (79-79 for sixth place) led the way at the Squaw Valley Golf Club. Members of the team were Olivia Rivas, Emma Poffinbarger, Audra Poffinbarger, Sofia Maxwell and Trahan.

Rivas, the Poffinbargers and Trahan were members of the 2023 state championship squad.

May 23

Alyssa Jones of Dobbie was named the Offensive Player of the Year in District 22-6A as she hit .435 during her senior softball season with 12 runs batted in, seven extra-base hits and eight runs scored.

Jones, now a freshman collegiately at UT-Permian Basin, played in all of the Longhorns' 33 games, helping the team a 19-14 overall mark, including 10-2 in league play.

Chloe Nunez of Dobbie was named the Utility Player of the Year in the district, while Persephone Soria was named the Rookie of the Year in the league.

In addition to Johnson, Viviana Fernandez, Vanessa De La Fuente and Natalie De Hoyos were named first team All-District performers.

May 30

Justo Manrique, the architect of the greatest era in Dobbie boys' soccer history, resigned as the Longhorns' head coach after 11 seasons and is now in the same role at Cypress Fairbanks ISD's Bridgeland High School.

The Longhorns in 2024 won the District 22-6A championship for the 10th consecutive season, which is one of the longest title runs in the Class 6A ranks regardless of sport during that time span.

Lutheran South Academy Class of 2024 senior Kat Maldonado, now at Texas Southern University, was a Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools All-State first team honoree following a standout senior season.

Two Lutheran South Academy players were honored as All-State second team picks, including Addison Smith and Bri Collazo.

The Pioneers' Lauren Brown was an All-State honorable mention pick. Brown, Collazo, Maldonado and Smith were first team All-District picks, while second team All-District choices included Emily Bankson, Alex Garza and Jill Whitehead.

The Pioneers' All-District honorable mention honorees were Jadyn Maldonado and Ava Zamora. Brown and Collazo were also Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Academic All-State honorees.

San Jacinto College softball alumna Christin Haygood was named the NCAA Division II World Series Most Valuable Player after leading her UT-Tyler team to the national championship following a best-of-three series sweep of Western Washington May 25 in Longwood, Fla.

Haygood threw four complete games at the series, carrying a no-hitter into the sixth inning of the deciding game.

At 23-1 overall for her junior season, Haygood was dominant throughout 2024 as UT-Tyler finished at 58-8.



The first-place San Jacinto College softball team, including freshman third baseman Madison Carr (12), shared the regular season conference championship with Galveston and eventually advanced to nationals for a third time in four years.

committing to play at the next level after graduation.

Sponsored by Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital, the event spotlighted students across the district's five high schools who are now continuing their athletic journeys in 13 different sports, ranging from wrestling to football.

"Continue to develop as a productive citizen through your work ethic, discipline and competition," said CCISD Athletic Director Kirby Killingsworth during the ceremony. "Accept the idea that you deserve the right to be a champion. We are excited to watch your journey," she added.

The graduating seniors also had the opportunity to listen to some words of wisdom by Clear Creek High School alumnus Sam Mathews.

He is a 2018 graduate who was named as Texas A&M's 12th Man designee for the 2023 football season.

The Clear Brook High School Class of 2024 graduates who signed National Letters of Intent to continue their education and collegiate playing careers included Jizzale Davis, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (track and field); Azayla Smith, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (track and field); Inayah Caldera, Southeastern Oklahoma State University (track and field); Maci Miller, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff (volleyball); Kasey Oliver, Western Gulf College (women's basketball); Shylie Brister, University of Texas at Austin (softball); Jaylon Owens, Louisiana Tech University (track and field); Zion Norl, Midland University (men's basketball); Joseph Trevino, University of Texas at Dallas (cross-country/track and field); Lily King, McLennan Community College (softball); and Alyssa Terry, University of Texas-Arlington (softball).

June 13

Al Campo Sr., a championship baseball player and coach - a man admired by his colleagues and beloved by those who played for him - passed away June 6 at age 84.

The Ravens reached the World Series for the third time in the span of four years. This time around, Temple walked off San Jacinto College 1-0 in the opening round with a seventh-inning run.

The locals got a brilliant pitching performance from sophomore Kristina Nash in a 4-1 win over Iowa Western, but then fell from the tournament field following a 3-2 loss to Galveston College in a game pitting the Region 14 regular season co-champions.

With the loss came the end of the stellar two-year career of sophomore shortstop Arriana Wright, who reset the standard for offensive players during her stay.

Wright, now at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Ariz., put together the greatest two-year run in SJC program history, and piled up the accolades to prove it.

Wright was a two-time All-Conference and All-Region Player of the Year and is the Ravens' career leader in the major offensive categories with 32 home runs and 144 runs batted in.

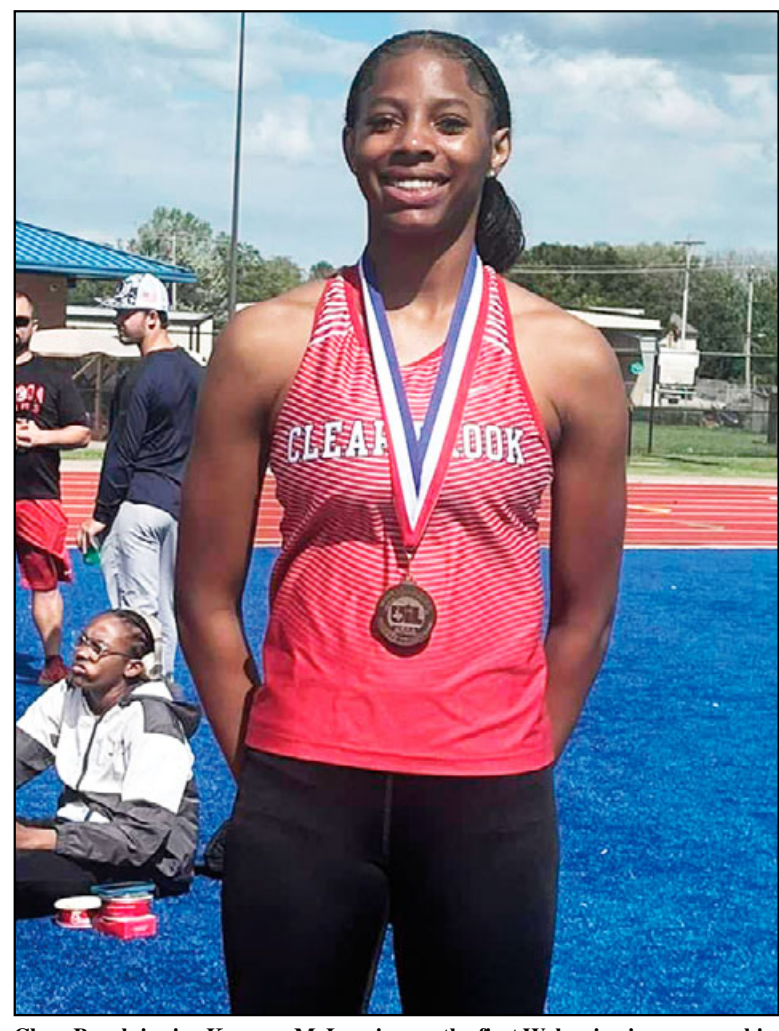
A 1958 Pasadena High School graduate, Campo twice earned All-District honors in baseball and helped lead the Eagles to the state semifinals as a junior. He batted .410 that season.

He lettered three years playing shortstop for the University of Houston, compiling a .361 batting average his senior year. His coaching career was long and varied.

The pinnacle came in 1985 when he coached Sam Rayburn's varsity baseball team to the state championship game. In all, his Rayburn ball clubs captured three district titles.

Campo was named the All-Greater Houston Coach of the Year and was selected to coach the South squad All-Stars in the Texas High School Coaches All-Star Game. Campo first doubled up as a Texans' assistant

Continued on Page 8



Clear Brook junior Kamryn McLaurin was the first Wolverine in program history to reach the 6A state high jump final.



Dobbie's A.J. Hernandez (right) drove in six runs in all in the Longhorns' bidistrict baseball series win over the Summer Creek Bulldogs.

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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16
7 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit <https://aahouston.org/meetings/>.
7:30 a.m. **Rotary Club of Pearland** - Check website for time and location <https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar> or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon at 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
9 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** See Thursday's notice.
Noon **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** - **Imperfect Nooners Group**, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at <https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners>. Call 713-686-6300 for more information. Meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
7 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or <https://nastuff.com>. Meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
8 p.m. **Serenity Now AI-Anon Group** - meets at CrossRoads UMC Fridays, 8 to 9 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Family members and friends of problem drinkers/addicts share, learn AI-Anon principles, that they are not alone, and discover choices available. For details, call 281-484-9243.
Alcoholics Anonymous - meets at CrossRoads UMC Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For details, call 281-484-9243.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 18
7:30 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
9:30 a.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - All services are live and Zoom online. For details on the 7 p.m. Friday night or the 9:30 a.m. Saturday service, Judaism classes, film series, and lunch with the Rabbi, visit <https://www.shaarhashalom.org>.
1 p.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - offers a knitting class, Saturdays 1 p.m. Call 281-479-7285 prior to coming.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 19
8 a.m./10:15 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - has worship Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday at 7 p.m. (Bible study, Book of Revelation, at 6 p.m.) and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). For details, call 281-479-7285 and leave a message, or stop by.
5:30 p.m. **Celebrate Recovery** - A faith-based 12-Step program, in the Life Kids Chapel at Life Church, 5125 Preston Ave. Pasadena, TX 77505. Call 713-419-2635 for details.
8 p.m. **Alcoholics Anonymous** - See Friday's notice.
MONDAY, JANUARY 20
Noon **Ballroom Dancing** - A ballroom dance group welcomes visitors every Wednesday to enjoy free dancing from noon to 3 p.m. at Hometown Heroes Park Ballroom, 1001 East League City Parkway, League City. Everyone is welcome to enjoy dancing to a selection of CD music provided by DJ Neva Schroder and guest DJs. This weekly dance does not include lessons. Free lessons are taught by Jerry Sanford at the same location on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. While these opportunities are free and provided by volunteers, the park system requires participants to register and get an activity card for all park activities. For more information about the activity card, ask at the front desk or call 281-554-1180.
5 p.m. - **New Directions Singles Social Group** is a singles group for those 55+. Meetings are the first and third Monday held in the community room at Maplewood Crossing, 600 Hobbs Road, League City. There will be a potluck dinner and may include group activities. For further information, call Carol at 281-508-1663. See their Facebook page: New Directions Singles Social Group.
6 p.m. **Scrabble Club #511** - Meets Monday at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Join the fun and improve crossword skills. COVID-19 vaccination required. Email huff_reunion@juno.com for info.
7 p.m. **TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)** - #0683 Friendswood chapter meets at Friendswood Methodist Church, 110 N. Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. For information, call Lynette Ringrose at 832-858-4617 or Dorothy Pourteau at 713-875-8820.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group, open meeting, 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or <https://nastuff.com>. Meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - St. Luke's 12-Step Recovery, open meeting Mondays, in the Education Bldg. in room 4, 11011 Hall Rd. For details, call Jesse at 832-725-8479 or Rita at 281-309-2801.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21
7 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
11:30 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Southeast Houston Toastmasters** - The Southeast Houston Toastmasters Club #05324194 meets virtually with the exception of the second and fourth Tuesdays (hybrid meeting) at sehoustont toastmastersclubs.org. In-person address 10500 Scarsdale Blvd. (SB Chamber of Commerce). Visit the website or call Karen Nunn at (832) 722-9061 for information.
7 p.m. **Houston Skyscraper Shadows Civic Club** - meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7900 Fuqua (inside Covenant of Faith United Methodist Church). No meeting in December. Contact Cathy@cheydor@sbcglobal.net or call 346-970-3507 for details.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22
7 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
Carmelites - a nondenominational senior citizen social group meeting at St. Bernadette Catholic Church, 15500 El Camino Real, in Clear Lake on the first and third Wednesdays for a time filled with fun, fellowship, lending library with books and puzzles, coffee and bingo. The meetings are open to those ages 55 and older, with no dues. Day trips and extended trips available. Deposits are now being taken for Poland. For details, call Marilyn at 713-444-6744.
Noon Ballroom Dancing - See Monday's notice.
7 p.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - See Friday's notice.
8 p.m. **Alcoholics Anonymous** - See Friday's notice.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23
7 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit <https://aahouston.org/meetings/>.
7:30 a.m. **Rotary Club of Pearland** - Check website for time and location <https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar> or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon at 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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2024 Year In Review: Summer months

Continued from Page 6
 football coach and later served as an assistant football coach at South Houston High School. He was the Trojans' head coach from 2001-2006. He was inducted in the Sam Rayburn Faculty Hall of Honor in 2016.

Several members of the 2024 San Jacinto College softball team were recognized for their success off the field, and sophomore shortstop Arriana Wright (College Park High School) was selected as a National Fastpitch Coaches Association and National Junior College Athletic Association All-American.

Twelve student-athletes were named to the Region XIV All-Academic team, including Wright and fellow sophomores Mia McLeer (Atascocita High School), Maggie Evans (Elkins High School), Kristina Nash (Woodville High School), Chloe Perez (Clear Springs High School), Kiren Diaz (Pasadena Memorial High School), Kylie Hernandez (Bryan High School), Chloe Foster (Alvin High School); and freshmen Clarissa Ramirez (Dobie High School), Iliana Melendez (Clear Lake High School), Emma Pierce (Dayton High School), and Ashleigh Heiderscheidt (Liberty Hill High School). NFCA All-American Scholar Athlete recognition went to Wright, Heiderscheidt, Pierce, Melendez, Diaz, Nash, Hernandez, Evans and McLeer.

As a team, San Jacinto College maintained a 3.338 GPA. "While winning on the field is important, I am extremely proud of this team for what they accomplished off the field," said head coach Kelly Saenz, who finished her 20th year at the helm of the program.

"We know that their academic preparation is going to take them far in their education after San Jac, and well past their softball careers, so I applaud the entire team for their focus and dedication to their academics."

The Texas A&M University women's team finished 10th nationally at the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track and Field Championships June 5-8 at the University of Oregon in Eugene as Clear Brook graduate and current Aggies' sophomore Camryn Dickson chipped in on the finish.

Dickson and teammates Jaydan Wood, Jermaisha Arnold and Clear Falls High School graduate Kennedy Wade were eighth overall in a time of 3 minutes, 25.89 seconds. Reaching the final earned the foursome a first team All-American designation. The Aggies were 12th overall in the 4x100 relay prelims in a time of 43.54.

Individually, Dickson was 19th overall at 22.98 in the 200 prelims and 23rd with a clocking of 11.40 in the 100 prelims.

The Clear Creek ISD Athletics Hall of Honor has announced its 2024 induction class as Clear Brook girls' basketball great Chameka Scott and the school's 1998 state championship girls' track and field team were to be among those recognized.

The 1998 Clear Brook 4x400 relay squad set what was a state record at the time, grabbing the state championship team



Dobie varsity football head coach Danny Fitzmorris (left), is shown with his son, Thomas Fitzmorris, on the night he was Pasadena ISD board-approved to take over the Longhorns' program. Fitzmorris, a

award in the school's final year within the Class 4A ranks. This was the second year of eligibility for Clear Brook athletes and the school's programs, with Terri Hunter Bolden and Jennifer Gordon Womack honored as the Wolverines' first-ever inductees in 2023.

Scott, a girls' basketball star who died in 2018 at the age of 33 from colon cancer complications, is one of the true greats in Clear Brook history, both on and off the court.

June 20

Just in time for the start of a new 2-year realignment cycle, the University Interscholastic League made a big change to its postseason format beginning with the 2024-2025 school year and surely continuing well into the future.

The UIL's legislative council met June 11 to make decisions on proposed rule changes in academics, athletics, music and policy.

The legislative council passed an amendment to set forth split divisions in the postseason for volleyball, boys' and girls' basketball, softball, boys' and girls' soccer and baseball.

This change to the current playoff structure in the listed sports now allows for split divisions in the postseason for Class 2A through Class 6A volleyball, softball and baseball programs, Class 4A through Class 6A boys' and girls' soccer programs and Class 1A through Class 6A boys' and girls' basketball programs.

June 27

San Jacinto College named Eric Weaver as the next head coach of the Ravens' baseball team. "We are pleased to welcome Eric Weaver back to San Jacinto College, this time as head baseball coach," said Dr. Allatia Harris, vice chancellor for strategic initiatives at San Jacinto College.

"Eric has extensive coaching experience at the JUCO Division I level and maintains excellent contacts in the Houston region, which will serve our program well. "His focus on developing student-athletes both on the field and in the classroom was among many things that stood out about Eric, and we look forward to supporting him as our next

baseball coach."

Weaver came to San Jac from Blinn College, where he served as associate head coach for the previous two seasons. Weaver was part of a Blinn program that went 47-17 in 2024 en route to winning the National Junior College Athletic Association national championship.

July 4

Texas A&M sophomore sprinter Camryn Dickson punctuated her sophomore season by advancing to the semifinals in the 200 at the United States Olympic Trials last week at the University of Oregon. A Clear Brook High School graduate, she also advanced to the NCAA Nationals earlier in the summer in the 4x400 relay.

Clear Brook's Patricia Barnes was one of several South Belt area summer track and field competitors who qualified for the Amateur Athletic Union's Junior Olympic Games.

Barnes competed nationally in the 800 at the JO's at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro. At the Region 17 Championships, Barnes qualified for nationals as she was second in the 800 in a time of 2 minutes, 26.57 seconds in the girls' age 15-16 division.

Clear Brook student Darwin Bolden II of the Pearland Track Xpress was the discus gold medalist and silver medalist in the boys' age 17-18 division to reach the Amateur Athletic Union's Junior Olympic Games at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro. Bolden won the discus at 162 feet, 9 inches and tossed the shot 48-11 1/4.

July 11

The Louisiana State University softball program had six athletes recognized on the 2024 Louisiana Sports Writers Association All-Louisiana College Softball Team, headlined by pitcher Sydney Berzon, who was named LSWA 2024 Pitcher of the Year and secured her second consecutive first-team selection.

Joining Berzon on the first team were outfielder Ciara Briggs, utility pitcher Kelley Lynch and shortstop Taylor Pleasants, a Dobie High School graduate. For the fourth consecutive year, Pleasants gained All-Louisiana first team status and is now the fourth LSU Tiger all-time to be a four-time All-Louisiana First Team selection, joining Savannah Jaquish (2014-2017), Bianka Bell (2013-2016) and Britni Sneed (1999-2002).

Pleasants started a career-high 61 games as a graduate senior in 2024 and finished with 46 hits, including a team-best 10 home runs and 46 RBIs. Pleasants had three walk-off hits in 2024, including two home runs over Boise State and No. 11 Texas A&M.

Pleasants also led the team with 131 assists, had 98 putouts, and helped turn 16 double plays from her shortstop spot. She is now a grad assistant on the

coaching staff at LSU.

July 18

Clear Brook High School Class of 2024 graduates Jaylon Owens and Josh Akinola were part of the H-Town Hurricanes' age 17-18 relay group that captured the silver medal in the Amateur Athletic Union's National Track and Field Primary and Club Championships, clocking in at 40.95 seconds out of Lane 5 to secure the honor July 13 at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Fla.

The Brook duo was joined by Sincere Timson and Jacorric Allen in the event. Owens, the District 24-6A gold medalist in both the 100 and 200 last spring as a senior with the Wolverines, also won a silver medal in the 200 in Jacksonville at 21.21.

Lutheran South Academy's Aniston Collins was selected to the USA Volleyball age 16 USA All-Tournament team after helping her Houston Skyline 16 Black club squad to a third place finish at the USAV Girls Junior National Championships at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas.

Collins, who helped Lutheran South reach the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A state tournament championship match in 2023 and subsequently earned a TAPPS All-Tournament Team selection, had more than 775 assists as the team went 41-8 overall.

Sanchez ready to lead JFD baseball

Continued from Page 5
 would love to play football perhaps at the JUCO level, he does have the opportunity at San Jacinto College in hand and could very well wind up playing for the Ravens beginning next school year.

In the classroom, Sanchez says he plans to study kinesiology with the idea of becoming a physical therapist.

For now, he's excited at to get out on the practice field with his teammates as the Longhorn varsity baseball team is looking forward to making a run at a third straight area around playoff berth and perhaps deeper into the postseason.

The Longhorns won the district championship two seasons ago and advanced to the area round playoff round after defeating Beaumont West Brook in the postseason. A season ago, Dobie defeated Summer Creek in the bidistrict playoff round as Sanchez threw six shutout innings in the series clincher at Maguire Field.

The Longhorns advanced to the area round, where they fell to eventual Region III champion Pearland.

Sanchez has obviously played a huge role for the Dobie program over the previous two seasons, and is looking for a solid finish to his high school career.

"It's going to be a little more difficult this year, but we want to make another run at a

district championship," Sanchez said. "I'm going to do everything I can to help us reach our goal. Whatever works out for me at the college level,

I'm sure everything will fall into place.

"I'm just blessed to be in this position and to have the opportunity to make some big decisions for

myself. I'm very happy with the things the way things have gone to this point and now it's all about trying to finish strong."



In 2024, the Dobie varsity baseball team defeated Summer Creek in the bidistrict playoff round as Aiden Sanchez threw six shutout innings in the series clincher at Maguire Field. He also went unbeaten in district play during the regular season.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf



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2024 Clear Creek ISD Hall of Fame inductee Chameka Scott attended Baylor University and was a member of the Bears' 2005 NCAA National Championship team. During that season, Scott started 35 games, averaging eight points and four rebounds per game. Scott also had a brief stay in the WNBA, including the 2006 season with the Sacramento Monarchs. As a four-year varsity player at Clear Brook, she was a four-time first team All-District selection and the league's Most Valuable Player in 2002.

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