

South Belt-Ellington Leader

Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

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Sagmont to meet Feb. 6

The Sagmont Civic Club will hold a meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, at The Gardens, located at 12001 Beamer at Hughes Road. All Sagmont residents/homeowners are invited to attend. The meetings typically take place the first Tuesday of each month. For additional information, call Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

Kirkwood to meet Jan. 29

Kirkwood Civic Club's monthly meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 29, at the Sagmont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Road near Beltway 8. Meetings are set for the last Monday of the month, rather than the last Thursday. For information, call Kirkwood Civic Club President Ericka McCutcheon at 281-989-9990.

Coffee with the Constable

Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia will be at Donut Haven, 10802 Hughes Road from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. each Thursday as part of the weekly Coffee with the Constable. The next event will be Thursday, Jan. 25, with another event the following Thursday. For more information, call Sagmont Civic Club President Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

New Covenant feeds needy

New Covenant Christian Church, 10603 Blackhawk, distributes food the second and fourth Saturday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. or until supplies run out. The purpose is to provide food for community people in need. The next event is Jan. 27. For more information, call 281-484-4230.

Beltway 8 closure planned

At least one northbound frontage road lane on Beltway 8 will be closed from Fairmont Parkway to Spencer Highway continuously through 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31. No detour will be needed; drivers should expect delays.

At least one southbound frontage road lane on Beltway 8 will be closed from SH 225 to Pasadena Boulevard continuously through 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31. No detour will be needed; drivers should expect delays.

Gulf Freeway closures set

At least one northbound and one southbound main lanes and frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from SH 96/Calder/Brittany Bay to FM-519/Main Street until further notice.

The U-turn lane on the northbound Gulf Freeway frontage road (north to south) at FM-519/Main Street in La Marque will be closed until further notice.

The U-turn lane on the southbound Gulf Freeway frontage road (south to north) at FM-519/Main Street in La Marque will be closed until further notice.

The northbound Gulf Freeway exit ramp to SH-6/SH-146 in La Marque will close permanently at 9 a.m. Wednesday, July 5. Traffic must exit FM-519 and U-turn. Traffic will merge onto the Gulf Freeway southbound main lanes at next available entrance ramp.

The closures are associated with an ongoing construction project to widen the freeway from three to five lanes in each direction and the frontage roads from two to three lanes in each direction.

SH 35 closure planned

At least one northbound lane and one southbound lane on SH 35/Telephone Road will be closed at Airport Boulevard daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Thursday, Feb. 1.

Local COVID cases reported

There was a significant increase in the number of local COVID-19 cases and deaths this past week, according to Harris County health officials.

As of Tuesday, Jan. 23, there were 215 active cases in 77089, up 13 from the previous week. To date, 140 from the ZIP code have died from the disease, up two from the previously reported week. These marked the ZIP code's first deaths in several weeks.

In ZIP code 77075, there were 16 active cases, up nine from the previous week. This marked the ZIP code's first increase in several weeks. To date, there have been 86 deaths in the ZIP code, up two from the previously reported week. These also marked the ZIP code's first deaths in several weeks.

In 77034, there were 15 active cases, up nine from the previous week. This marked the ZIP code's first increase in several weeks. To date, 93 residents from ZIP code 77034 have died from the disease, no increase from the previously reported week.

According to Harris County Health officials, the vast majority of the fatalities suffered from pre-existing health issues.

Statistics are updated daily and include numbers from within the Houston city limits and throughout Harris County. To view an interactive map, visit covid-harriscounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/cumulative-data.

SH 3 closure planned

At least one northbound lane and one southbound lane on SH 3/Old Galveston Road will be closed from FM-646 to Clear Creek/Galveston-Harris County line daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday, May 24 (excluding weekends).

Pct. 2 vice unit closes out successful year

Special Operations Unit seizes millions in cash, drugs

The Special Operations Unit from Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's office recently closed out another successful year, taking millions of dollars worth of narcotics off the street and seizing hundreds of thousands in assets.

"Constable Garcia has continued to see the importance of having this specialized division active and combating major crimes within the precinct," a post on Garcia's Facebook page read. "This division did not disappoint and has

continued to exceed expectations." Formed in 2017, the elite unit tackles vice crimes and often involves undercover work. In addition to drugs, the unit also combats illegal gambling and prostitution.

Deputies from the Special Operations Unit have forged strong bonds with the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Galveston County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement branches.

The unit was briefly disbanded under the direc-

tion of former Precinct 2 Constable Chris Diaz but was reactivated by Garcia, who had campaigned on the issue.

"One of Constable Garcia's goals was to reactivate the Precinct 2 Special Operations Unit as soon as possible" a post on Garcia's Facebook page said at the time. "Constable Garcia realized the importance of having this specialized division active and combating major crimes within Precinct 2."

Records indicate that deputies from the Special Operations Unit made 80 case arrests during 2023, including 67 felony charges and 13 misdemeanor charges.

According to Precinct 2 officials, the unit confiscated nearly \$6 million worth of illegal drugs in

2023.

Deputies confiscated 44,937 grams of hydroponic marijuana, with an estimated street value of \$1,123,425; 36 grams of other marijuana, worth an estimated \$360; 42,270 grams of THC, worth an estimated \$94,500; 20 grams of crack cocaine, worth an estimated \$1,632; 945 grams of powder cocaine, worth an estimated \$13,571,260; 28 grams of heroin, worth an estimated \$3,360; 301 grams of methamphetamine, worth an estimated \$18,060; 49,990 grams of codeine/promethazine, worth an estimated \$149,970; 94 grams of ecstasy, worth an estimated \$4,342; 2 grams of synthetic marijuana, worth an estimated \$36; 550 pills of hydrocodone

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Seizures	Weight (gram)	Current Value / gram	Est. Street Value
ILLICIT NARCOTICS			
Hydroponic Marijuana	44,937	\$25.00	\$1,123,425
Other Marijuana	36	\$10.00	\$360.00
THC	42,270	\$100.00	\$4,327,000.00
Cocaine - Crack	20.41	\$80.00	\$1,632.80
Cocaine - Powder	945	\$100.00	\$94,500.00
Heroin	28	\$120.00	\$3,360.00
Fentanyl	39	\$150.00	\$5,850.00
Meth - Crystal	301	\$60.00	\$18,060.00
Codeine / Prometh	49,990	\$3.00	\$149,970.00
PCP	0	\$100.00	\$0.00
Ecstasy	94.4	\$46.00	\$4,342.40
Suboxone	69	\$50	\$3,450.00
Synthetic Marijuana	1.8	\$20.00	\$36.00
PHARMACEUTICALS			
Number of pills			
Hydrocodone	550	\$12.00	\$6,600.00
Xanax	2,760	\$10.00	\$27,600.00
Oxycodone	3493	\$10.00	\$34,930.00
Soma	1533	\$15.00	\$22,995.00
Other	2,932	\$10.00	\$29,320.00
ASSET FORFEITURE / SEIZURE			
Number/ Amount of:			
Vehicles	1		\$20,000
Property	4		\$91,500.00
Other Assets	0		\$0.00
Fed Seizures	0		\$0.00
Currency			\$466,272.00
Total Values			\$6,431,203.20

House catches fire on Kirkshire

Family loses everything; community urged to help

The South Belt community is urged to come together to help a family who recently lost everything in a house fire. The blaze also sent two Houston firefighters to the hospital.

According to Houston Fire Department officials, firefighters responded to the blaze in the 10600 block of Kirkshire Drive around 10:10 a.m. to find fire coming from the roof of a one-story house. Firefighters made an offensive attack and ensured everyone was safely out of the home.

The roof was ventilated, and the utilities were secured. While controlling the fire, part of the ceiling fell and injured two firefighters. They were alert and were transported to the hospital for evaluation. Both firefighters were released from the hospital after being examined.

Crews extinguished the fire which caused extensive damage. HFD officials estimated the property damage at \$275,000.

The fire reportedly started in the fireplace and spread.

In all, 33 personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from stations 23, 70, 71, 52, 61, 93 and 24.

The American Red Cross was notified to assist the residents, who have no renters insurance. The residents were temporarily housed in a local extended-stay hotel. Social workers with Pasadena ISD are also helping the family.

The fire victims have close ties to Dobie High School, as the mother works at the area school, while one son is a current senior at the school and his older brother is a graduate who is now serving in the U.S. Army. The older brother was in town on leave at the time the fire and lost his service uniform.

Also residing in the house were a grandfather, a military veteran, and 13-year-old niece. Pasadena ISD officials and the Leader are collecting clothes, blankets, gift cards, financial donations and other items for the fire victims.

"It makes my heart happy how everyone is jumping in to help," said Pasadena ISD Associate Superintendent Alyta Harrell. Harrell and her family lost their home and belongings in a late night house fire so she understands the family's plight.

Clothing donations are sought in the following sizes:

Mother, 40: Pants 12/14; medium shirt; shoe 8-9.

Male, 17: Pants 30/32; medium shirt; shoe 9.

Male, 23: Pants 32/32; large shirt; shoe 9 1/2.

Niece, 13: Pants 12/14; large shirt.

Grandfather, 61: Pants 32/32; large shirt; shoe 9.

Donations may be dropped off at the South Belt-Ellington Leader office, located at 11555 Beamer at Beltway 8.

Leader continues its look back at 2023

The Leader continues its look back on 2023 with a list of some of the significant stories of the year. For highlights up to May 11, see previous editions of the Leader.

May 11

A man was found shot to death around 12:30 a.m. Sunday, May 7, outside Bombshells Restaurant & Bar, located in the 12800 block of the Gulf Freeway at Fuqua. Jaime Torres, 26, was found unresponsive, shot multiple times. Prior to the incident, the victim had been kicked out of the restaurant for being too aggressive, investigators said. According to the victim's friends, his vehicle, a black Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, was missing following the incident. The establishment has a long history of violent crime and fatal shootings.

The election results from the local May 6 school board elections have been calculated, with all three Pasadena ISD incumbents maintaining their seats. In the Position 5 contest, incumbent Kenny Fernandez handily defeated challenger Larry Sava-

la, taking home 65 percent of the vote. Position 6 incumbent Marshall Kendrick narrowly defeated challenger Andy Garcia, winning 53 percent of the vote. In the race for the Position 7 seat, incumbent Vickie Morgan was also successful in her bid for re-election, receiving 55 percent of the vote to Irene Tamayo's 38 percent and Jeff Snover's 6 percent. Morgan received 3,054 total votes, while Tamayo received 2,067 votes and Snover received 341.

May 18

The exorbitant water bills of several city residents living in the Sagemont Park subdivision made the citywide news after new digital meters erroneously caused readings to spike exponentially. The new readers estimated some residential usages as more than 100,000 gallons in just one day, compared to the average use of around 5,000 gallons per month. The incorrect estimates caused some bills to spike from around \$30/month to \$3,000/month. The billing problem would continue to haunt many for several months.

May 25

An arrest was made in the May 7 murder that took place outside Bombshells Restaurant & Bar. Jaime Salinas, 18, was charged with capital murder in the crime. Salinas is charged with shooting Jaime Torres, 26, multiple times during a robbery in which his pickup truck was stolen. In October 2022, Salinas was charged with taking a weapon from a peace officer. He reportedly also had multiple juvenile convictions.

June 1

A 95-year-old woman died from injuries suffered in a crash about 10:15 a.m. Friday, May 26, in the 13600 block of the Gulf Freeway near Beltway 8. According to Houston Police Department officials, the woman was a passenger in a red Cadillac CT6 traveling south on the freeway when the driver of a red Honda Civic also traveling south failed to control his speed and struck

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Little League to hold meeting Jan. 30

Meeting to discuss upcoming spring season

The Southbelt Little League invites the community to a town hall meeting at the El Franco Community Center, 9500 Hall Road, Tuesday, Jan. 30, starting at 7 p.m. This public gathering aims to discuss crucial topics pertaining to the Southbelt Little League spring season.

This town hall meeting provides an opportunity for open dialogue and collaboration between the Southbelt Little League leadership and

the community it serves. Attendees will have the chance to voice their opinions, ask questions and actively contribute to the decision-making process.

Southbelt Little League is committed to creating a positive and inclusive environment for youth sports. The presence of the community and participation in this town hall meeting is crucial to shaping the future direction of the league.

Commissioner visits leaders



Clear Brook City MUD leaders recently met with Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia (third from right) to discuss various ongoing projects in the South Belt community. Topics of discussion included local road repairs, Beamer Ditch improvements and the construction of an area park around the South Belt Storm Water Detention Pond. Shown above at the meeting with the commissioner are, left to right, Roberto Villafranco, Susana Castillo, Chris Clark, Kris Banks, Cecelia Ganje and Chuck Tylka.

Photo by Marie Flickinger

City warns of online parking scams

Fraudulent websites resemble city ParkHouston

The City of Houston has discovered fraudulent websites appearing at the top of Google search results for "ParkHouston app" and "Parkmobile app." These fake websites claim to be the city's paid parking application and require customer credit card information but will not allow a parking transaction.

ParkHouston encourages motorists to avoid becoming a victim of this scam and download

the ParkHouston or Parkmobile app via the Google Play and Apple App Store sites only.

"Last week, the City of Austin reported this same scam involving websites appearing at the top of Google search results for its payment app. At least three customers in Austin reported paying money to a fake website," said ParkHouston Deputy Director Maria Irshad. "While Park-

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Garcia meets with CBCMUD

Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia recently met with Clear Brook City MUD officials to discuss various ongoing projects in the South Belt community.

Discussion items included local road repairs, Beamer Ditch improvements and the construction of an area park around the new retention pond local detention pond near Dixie Farm Road and Beamer.

Local road repairs include Scarsdale, Blackhawk and Sagegen.

Garcia said the project to make Beamer Ditch improvements is on schedule and expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Work is soon expected to begin on a new park surrounding the South Belt Storm Water Detention Pond. Clear Brook City MUD is contributing \$1 million toward the endeavor.

Clear Brook City MUD officials were enthusiastic about the meeting with the commissioner.

"CBCMUD is excited and honored to have Commissioner Adrian Garcia representing our local community," the Clear Brook City MUD board said in a statement. "He and his team have been very responsive to the needs of the area which include road repairs, police and safety concerns and a joint venture between CBCMUD and the county on the development of an area park and walking trail at the South Belt Storm Water Detention Pond that was completed in 2023. Commissioner Garcia has an excellent team who are focused on building great relationships with area leaders and residents. Commissioner Garcia is making a huge difference for the South Belt community."

In My Opinion

Americans walk away from both parties

Since 1990, Gallup has been asking respondents a straightforward question: "In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?" Gallup asks the question several times each year, and at the end of the year averages their findings for that year. Gallup's most recent summary found that 43% of respondents identified as independents and 27% with each of our two major parties. That ties the previous high annual average in 2014.

This is just the latest data point confirming a trend that has been in place since the early 1950s, when nearly 90% of Americans identified with one of the two legacy parties. In 2006, more Americans identified as independents than with either of the parties for the first time. Since then, alienation from the two parties has accelerated.

Most of the recent defections have been from the Democratic Party, probably reflecting President Biden's unpopularity. There was a similar erosion of Republican support during Donald Trump's presidency as his popularity plummeted. Generally, around a presidential election, support for the two parties firms up as voters begin to focus on their choices. But the long term trend could not be clearer. Americans are gradually walking away from both parties.

Many, if not most, people are doing so for an obvious reason. The positions of neither party represent the large swath of voters who want moderate solutions to the problems facing the country. The partisans have attempted to belittle those who advocate for moderate solutions as being wishy-washy and not standing for anything. Not so. They just do not agree with the extreme solutions advocated by the two incumbent parties.

Take abortion as an example. We have one party that wants to ban it completely or allow very narrow exceptions. The other party wants women to have a completely unfettered right to have an abortion at any time. But the polling has shown for decades that about 70% of Americans believe that a woman should have an unrestricted right to have an abortion until about 12-15 weeks of pregnancy, but after that needs to have a compelling reason to do so. And that consensus holds across all demographic groups.

The same is true on virtually every so-called divisive issue. A plurality, if not an outright majority, of Americans want common-sense, moderate policies. They want a strong national defense, economic policies that encourage well-paying jobs – not hand-outs – and a reasonable social safety net. They are not isolationists but also do not want to be the world's policeman.

But because we have ceded control of our elections to the two incumbent parties and allowed them to shamelessly gerrymander voting boundaries, their primary voters control the outcome in most jurisdictions. As a result, most elected officials do not give a tinker's damn about what most people want, but instead only what their primary voters want. And they are too busy virtue signaling to their primary voters actually address the problems and issues our country faces.

Since 1980, Gallup has been asking people, "In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?" Through the early 2000s, about half the American people averaged as saying they were satisfied, with noticeable drops only around recessions. But since about 2005, that has fallen into a range of about 20%-30%. Americans have been particularly gloomy since the onset of the pandemic, averaging just below 20%. I do not think it a coincidence that their dissatisfaction coincides the rise of extreme partisanship.

Elected officials share their words

Greetings from Council Member Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz

Happy New Year! As we embark on a fresh start in 2024, I am filled with a sense of renewed optimism and purpose. I am deeply honored to continue serving as your Councilwoman and am thrilled to announce my re-election. My commitment to our district remains unwavering, and I am eager to work alongside our new Mayor and fellow City Council members to keep District D moving forward.

The path ahead is exciting. Together, we will focus on building new relationships and alliances, advocating even more vigorously for opportunities and positive changes in our community. We have already made significant strides, but there is much more to be done. Our unity and shared vision for District D are our greatest strengths.

Our priorities are clear: we will work tirelessly with department leaders to ensure city services operate at the highest level and respond most effectively to your needs.

Your feedback and engagement have always been the driving force behind our improvements and initiatives. Please continue to share your thoughts and concerns with us; your voice is crucial in shaping the future of District D.

Quality of life remains at the forefront of our agenda. We are dedicated to enhanc-

Pollster Frank Luntz has been asking his focus groups for some time: "Do you agree with the statement, 'I am as mad as hell and I am not going to take it anymore.'" Recently, 72% of participants have been saying that they agree with that statement, which is the highest since Luntz has been asking the question.

I have no idea what is going to happen in the 2024 election, but I am sure it is going to be a "you-know-what" show. But regardless of the outcome, I suspect that the spectacle is going to be so abhorrent to a majority of the American people that they are going to finally stand up and demand that the two incumbent parties relinquish their duopolistic stranglehold on our country.

Prior resident Barry runs for state seat

I trust that your Christmas holidays have been full of family and fun so far. I wanted to share that I have recently announced that I am running for Texas House District 29 and I need your help to get there. This is a seat that has been held by long time conservative and State Farm Agent Ed Thompson. Ed has announced his retirement and I am running to fill his vacancy.

My conservative values have always guided me towards giving back to my community and now I would like to expand and give back at the state level. As you will see, I have extensive experience which gives me the unique ability to understand the consequences of those decisions in Austin.

My Experience:
Appointed to Pearland Economic Development Corporation in 2014 – 2016;
Elected to Pearland ISD Board of Trustees in 2016 – 2022;
Elected to Pearland City Council in 2022 – 2023

Founding Chair of the Pearland Education Foundation-2014;
Chair for the Northern Brazoria County Education Alliance(2012, 2020 and 2021);

Founder of Barry Insurance Group in 2005 and US Navy 1989-1993.

As you can see that I have the experience to understand how laws in Austin affect businesses, schools and cities. Experience matters!

I am a proven relationship builder in business and elected office. Throughout the 24+ years that I have been in Pearland and Brazoria County I have built many relationships and relationships are what it takes to get things done in Austin. Today I ask that you help me in the fight to keep Texas HD 29 Republican and Conservative.

I can't tell you how important it is, now more than ever, that our elected officials support:

- Border Security
- Fighting the woke agenda
- Strengthening our education system
- Insurance Carrier stability
- Boosting our business-friendly environment
- Helping Texans retain more of their hard earned dollars

The values that make Texas the Greatest State in the Union

This campaign (through November 2024) will cost around \$400k. I have already put in \$10k myself and I am asking you to help me get to Austin to protect our conservative values in House District 29. For your convenience, I have included a DONATE link below. Every donation counts, regardless of the amount!

Can I Count on you?
DONATE: Support - Jeff Barry Campaign (anedot.com)
Primary Election Date is March 5,

Early voting starts Feb. 20
Happy New Year!
Candidate HD 29

Jeff Barry
www.votejeffbarry.com
jeff@votejeffbarry.com

Publisher's note: Barry was a Green Tee resident and at one time housed his business at the South Belt Leader building.

Muecke responds to Jay Do's letter

Hello Jay Do, I see you still around, that is good. Yes, we did work together and did a lot of good for the community. The biggest is we helped reduce the opportunity to be flooded. Recently that the Parks Dept 50/50 Parks Partner ship helped rebuild our old Freeway Manor park. Many emails.

Now why am I replying. I feel you misunderstood or interpreted my article where a 17 year old was killed in a senseless cruel manor. I did not identify further for a reason, you did broadcasting her name. She, you, I and the citizens of Houston should be able to travel wherever 24/7 safely. That is not happening today. Yes, she was female, Yes she was 17, Yes it happened at 1:00 a.m. in the morning and Yes on our city streets. Reports by the print and TV almost each day describes criminal activities between midnight and 6 a.m. DWI, drive by shootings/road rage, police chase, murder, home invasions and

many other. The criminal is running wild. Many placed in a jail/prison for X number of months or years. Get out and again do criminal acts. Why, the jail/prison is just an inconvenience, no punishment. Yes, I said normal people (does not include criminals), true, have a day job and sleep at night. Now some work nights or have special needs to travel at this time - safely. I grew up in a small town, a teen with a driver's license and could use the family car to go where, when and how. Except that vehicle had to be in the garage at ten, not 10:01.

Yes, I know times change but we have to find a way to stop/reduce crime. Look at the Harris county jail, overflowing just like the many state prisons. Look at the cost of locking them up. You mention the ROOT CAUSE and I fully agree to that. That is punishment that is meaningful/realistic. You also said I used the words; disparaging remarks and inflammatory rhetoric; I do not think I used any words to fit this. No way was I blaming this young happy girl to be at fault.

Just stated some facts. I belong to the Clear Lake PIP program for many years, support the 100 club, the Texas Sheriffs. Our current police chief I think is doing a very good job but so short of officers. I have told him I support his efforts.

I still get involved and speak up. Wish more did so. Okay enough explanation, now I wish you well.

Jim Muecke

Deputies seize drugs, guns



Harris County Pct. 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's Special Operations Unit continues to combat area crime, seizing millions in drugs, cash and property in 2023. Created in 2017, the unit focuses on vice crimes and involves undercover work. The unit also combats illegal gambling and prostitution. Shown above are illegal drugs, weapons and currency confiscated by the unit during a recent operation. (See related story Page 1.)

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://houstonslibrary.org/>. For online learning, visit <https://houstonslibrary.org/online-learning-7556> or call 832-393-2580. Hours: 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. 25, 3 – 4 p.m. Family storytime.
Thursday, Jan. 25, 3 – 4 p.m. Open lab - computer class. Registration required.
Monday, Jan. 29, 11 a.m. – noon. Open lab - computer class. Registration required.
Visit <https://houstonslibrary.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.

Additional resources

The Houston Public Library has electronic resources, books, audiobooks, databases for research, tutoring, language learning, education and parent information for Texas residents with a library card. To get a card, visit the home page at www.houstonlibrary.org under Here's What's Happening. Click on Free Resources for All to access digital resources and access a link for a temporary card. Also, under Here's What's Happening, the card titled Online Resources for Kids accesses a Virtual Storytime provided on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m. The archived storytimes are found on Facebook under Houston Public Library Virtual Storytimes. Another virtual program is Craft. The Library's many free online resources and digital services are available 24/7 with a MY Link Library Card at www.houstonlibrary.org, including e-books and e-audiobooks, streaming TV, movie and music services, online classes and tutoring and databases. Until further notice, only electronic items (i.e. e-books, e-audio books, etc.) are eligible for holds and check-out. HPL has a collection of free e-books and audio books. Visit the catalog for previously requested hold selection may be in a digital format. Instructions on downloading the e-book or audio book are on the site.

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. 25, 10 – 11:30 a.m. Conversation club.
Thursday, Jan. 25, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Toddler time.
Friday, Jan. 26, 1 – 2 p.m. Genealogy.
Saturday, Jan. 27, 11 a.m. – noon. Young adult craft afternoon: vision boards.
Monday, Jan. 29, 11:15 – 11:45 a.m. Family story time.
Monday, Jan. 29, 6 – 7 p.m. Between the Lines book club.
Tuesday, Jan. 30, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Babies and books.
Tuesday, Jan. 30, 1 – 2 p.m. Homeschool hangout.
Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2 – 3 p.m. Pop culture club.
Wednesday, Jan. 31, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Kid's slime time.
Wednesday, Jan. 31, 6 – 7 p.m. Lofi study sesh.

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>.

Deaths

Gerald (Jerry) Kettler



Gerald (Jerry) Kettler went to be with his Lord and savior Jan. 7, 2024, due to complications from heart disease with which he was diagnosed in his 30s. He is preceded in death by his father, R. Lee Kettler and brother Mark Kettler.

Jerry is survived by his loving wife of 20 years, Elizabeth (Liz) Kettler; mother, Daphne Kettler; sister Lynn (Mark) Proctor; daughter, Jeri Lynn Kettler Jarrett (Ben); grandchildren Noah, EmmaLee, Caleb and Emerald Jarrett; niece Leslie Proctor; and nephews Luke, Matthew and Sam Proctor.

He is also survived by stepdaughters Michelle Duy, Vanessa Trant, Kimberly (Jorge) Vargas; stepgrandchildren Michael McDonald, Devin Giffin, Donald Giffin, Joshua Giffin, Deacon Bridgewater, Jorge Vargas, Lori Adams, Isadora Vargas; step-great-grandchildren June and Shelby McDonald; and numerous loving friends.

Jerry was born Sept. 9, 1955 and grew up in Houston. Jerry also served his country in the Air National Guard. He was employed for more than 26 years by Reliance Construction Services.

Jerry loved to ride horses and was quite the cowboy. He had many lifelong friends with whom he went on many trailrides. His love of riding is how he became fondly known by his nickname of "Rawhide."

Jerry also enjoyed riding motorcycles and later spent his free time on the weekends riding his motorcycle with friends or by himself enjoying the countryside and making new memories and friends along the way. He loved country music, fishing and watching his Cowboys football team with friends at the Windmill.

There will be a Celebration of Life by his loving family and friends on Jan. 27, 2024, at the Windmill Ice House, 8100 Alameda Genoa Road, from 1 to 4 p.m. Friends and family are welcome to bring pictures of past memories and good times to share.

Donations in Jerry's name can be sent to the American Heart Association.

Rita Louise Lusignan



On Jan. 4, 2024, Rita Louise Schenk Hasselfeld Lusignan passed away in the comfort of her home after a lengthy, courageous, hard fight with cancer.

Her sister, Ann Haffner was by her side. She attended Catholic schools from kindergarten through college as Catholic education was important to her parents. In college, she majored in Spanish and minored in French education and psychology at Fontbonne University in St. Louis. Rita taught high school Spanish for 35 years.

She taught in St. Louis, Mount Carmel in Houston, and 19 years in the Pearland ISD. She had resided in the South Belt area.

Rita was an active member of St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church for 40 years. She volunteered in the office, sang in the choir and was active with the Catholic Daughters and Sunshiners. Her faith gave witness to many.

Rita enjoyed traveling with friends and family, snorkeling and volunteering. She participated in two pet therapy groups with her dogs, visiting hospitals and care homes.

She was an enthusiastic dog lover. Friends knew they could call on her with any need. She was most kind and compassionate.

She is survived by two sons, Eric Michael Hasselfeld (Kelly) and Robert George Lusignan (Hahn); granddaughter, Katlyn Hasselfeld; three siblings; and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at St. Luke Catholic Church, 11011 Hall Road, on Jan. 25, 2024, at 11 a.m.

A rosary will be recited before the Mass at 10:15 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church Capital Campaign or the American Cancer Society.

This obituary is a correction of one run last week. The name was incorrect.

Hubert "Fred" Olson



Hubert "Fred" Olson passed away Jan. 12, 2024 at his home in Houston. Fred was born in San Antonio, Aug. 20, 1928, to Clarence G. Olson Sr. and Lucretia Agness Cabiness.

Fred was a devoted and loving husband to his wife, Anna of 65 years; caring father; and proud grandfather. Fred loved adventures and traveling to foreign countries with his wife, attending family gatherings at Caney Creek, and working in his always beautiful yard.

He was a talented athlete playing college basketball at Abilene Christian College and "shooting his age" in golf. Fred was a proud veteran of the U.S. Army serving in the Korean War, and a dedicated Farmers Insurance agent serving his customers for more than 50 years. He was a dedicated servant to the Lord, elder in the church, Bible School teacher, and an active church member in the congregations at Wayside and Sherman Church of Christ, Southeast Church of Christ, and most recently at Waters Road Church of Christ.

He was preceded in death by his wife in 2019; his infant daughter, Teresa Lynn in 1960; sister, Alice Jean Ford in 1965; and brothers Charles in 2014 and Clarence in 2022. He is survived by daughter, Debe Olson; son, Michael (Linda); and granddaughter, Maya.

Visitation will be welcomed Friday, Jan. 26, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Forest Park Lawndale Funeral Home, 6900 Lawndale.

Funeral services to celebrate Fred's life will be held Saturday, Jan. 27, at 11 a.m. at Southeast Church of Christ, 2400 W. Bay Area Blvd., Friendswood.

Leader obituary policy

Obituaries submitted to the Leader are published free of charge. They are edited to conform to the Leader style.

Pct. 2 vice has successful year

Continued from Page 1
worth \$6,600; 2,760 pills of Xanax, worth an estimated \$27,600; 3,493 pills of oxycodone, worth an estimated \$34,930; and 1,533 pills of Soma, worth an estimated \$22,995.

In addition to contraband, deputies seized \$466,272 in currency, \$20,000 in vehicles and \$91,500 in property.

Garcia pledged to continue the unit's efforts into 2024.

"Constable Garcia wants the Precinct 2 community to

know that he hears your concerns and that he and this specialized group will continue to combat the illegal activity in your community," a post on the constable's Facebook page read. "Please stay safe and God bless you all."

CCISD foundation plans for 2024

The Clear Creek Education Foundation kicked off the new year by hosting its 2024 Board Retreat recently. The morning was full of fun, fellowship, team building and welcoming our newest board members, in addition to swearing in the 2024 CCEF Chair, Melinda Mintz.

"As board chair for the Foundation in 2024, I hope to create more opportunities in CCISD classrooms to inspire student success. Our board will focus on engaging our amazing educators as they

have a direct impact every day on the students who are the future of our community."

Mintz is the Director of Hotel Sales for Houston First Corporation, the organization responsible for marketing Houston and surrounding areas as a tourist destination. She believes that supporting strong school districts helps create thriving destinations where people love to live, work and play.

Mintz is in her 5th year on the CCEF board and has a second grader in the district.

She has also been involved with CCISD DEIC Committee, BAHEP, Space Center Rotary Club, CIS-Bay Area, and HLSR.

"Since its inception 32 years ago, CCEF has funded grants of over \$5 million. We will be developing our strategic plan this year and this means looking toward the future and identifying key areas we can grow to best support CCISD. This will involve finding businesses, parents, and CCISD alumni that align

Continued on Page 3

Leader checks out social media

By Natalie Abarca
A member on multiple Facebook groups posted a picture of their missing dog, Dre. The dog accidentally ran out the front door Wednesday, Jan. 17, and he was last seen at the corner of Kirkfair Drive and Sage-

willow Lane at 4:40 p.m. If anyone has any information, contact the owner at 832-607-1105 or through the Facebook community pages.

The member updated the post and added video surveillance and photos of a truck that was seen pull-

ing over and picking up Dre at the location he was last seen.

The member describes the vehicle being a Ford F-150 platinum, black rims, tinted windows on rear doors, has a tow hitch and possibly a taillight out.

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Saturday Vigil	5:30 p.m.
Sunday	8 a.m. and 10 a.m.*
Sunday	1 p.m. Misa en Español*
Monday, Wednesday & Friday	9 a.m.
Tuesday & Thursday	7 p.m.

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Thursday 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday 4 to 5 p.m.

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Children's Faith Formation: 281-481-4251
Adult Faith Formation: 713-538-2862

All are welcome to come to worship and serve the Lord in a spirit of love, sharing, and hope.

Perfect attendance earns donuts



Chris Bui, Atkinson Elementary principal, shared a donut with students in Maria Hubley's pre-K class who earned the perfect attendance incentive for the second nine-weeks grading period. Left to right are Bui, Bianca Elizalde, Ayna Soto and Ismael Ponce Jr. All students who were present and not tardy for the entire nine weeks received a donut.

CBHS speech, debate team prepares for state meet



Members of the Wolverine speech and debate team worked hard last weekend to add new state qualifiers before their upcoming annual Texas Forensic Association state meet. Sophomore Emily Davis became the 13th qualifier. In addition, several other varsity members achieved accolades including Isabella Wills, Abiha Altaf and Yumna Kalajo. Members of the Wolverine team shown are (left to right) Ayla Yoakum, Khang Ngo, Stephen Wiggins, Greg Stuart, Kelyn Tran and Viann Nguyen.

(See related story on Page 4.)

CBHS Speech, Debate strive to qualify for state contests

On Jan. 19 and 20 the Clear Brook High School Wolverines Speech and Debate team once again was found hard at work at Clear Creek High School trying to get some last-minute state qualifiers on the board before their annual Texas Forensic Association state meet which is held every March.

At the end of the weekend, both varsity and novice competitors walked away proud.

The varsity contingent added one more state qualifier – sophomore Emily Joseph who placed third in Domestic Extemporeous Speaking.

She becomes the 13th member of the team to qualify for state but the 14th overall

qualified entry.

In addition to Emily's big win, the varsity team achieved the following accolades: Greg Stuart placed fifth in Student Congress and advanced to semifinals in Impromptu Speaking, Isabelle Wills placed fourth overall in Original Oratory, and Abiha Altaf and Stephen Wiggins placed fourth and sixth respectively overall in Informative Speaking. Fellow varsity members Viann Nguyen and Yumna Kalajo advanced to semifinals in their main event, Original Oratory while Ariella Calili and Isabelle Wills tried their hands at Public Forum Debate for the first time ever and placed top eight at the tournament.

Novices also saw some achievements. First-time World Schools Debate competitors Zaid Asad, Daniela Alba, Nathaniel Calili and Kendrick Toennies were the third-seeded team, missing the final bracket by a mere three points.

Additionally, Zaid advanced to semifinals in Foreign Extemp Speaking while teammate Kendrick Toennies went on to place fourth overall in this event, picking up his first two state points.

In addition, newcomers Bryce Kelly, Jonathan Kunjumon and Nathaniel Calili fought their way to the final round of Novice Extemp where they placed third, fifth and sixth respectively.

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Bush Elementary holds fun run



Laura Bush Elementary held their monthly fun run on Jan. 11. This month's theme was "Glow in the Dark" with glow sticks provided for all participants. These fun runs are lead by the physical education department to encourage running. Father, Su Le helps his daughter, Catherine put on her glow stick.

Melillo awards Herrera



Anthony Herrera, December Student of the Month, exemplifies the Melillo Middle School Motto: Hearts that Care, Hands that Serve and Minds that Think.

Clear Creek Foundation kicks off 2024

Continued from Page 2 with our mission so we can all be successful. Our community is stronger together, and I look forward to creating a plan to grow CCEF's impact for the benefit of everyone."

CCEF also swore in four new directors to the board, including Glencora Rodgers, Sarah Moutz, Scott Stillman and Cipriano Romero.

"The leadership team, comprised of officers and directors, boasts robust leadership skills and outstanding expertise, poised to expedite the progress of our programs and events in CCISD," said Jennifer Garcia, executive director, Clear Creek Education Foundation.

Since its founding in 1992, CCEF has been a nonprofit dedicated to building public education in Clear Creek ISD through grants and programs that empower every student to achieve academic and personal success. CCEF has contributed more than \$5.3 million to CCISD for innovative programs in the classroom.

Clear Brook's speech, debate team shines



Domestic Extemporaneous speaker Khang Ngo became the Clear Brook speech and debate team's 13th qualifying entry to the Texas Forensic Association state tournament that is being held in Houston prior to spring break. Khang bested all but one other competitor in this event to place second which earned him four points, ending in a to-date season total of 11 points. He also placed sixth in Impromptu speaking. Fellow team member Greg Stuart, who is qualified for Domestic Extemporaneous speaking at least three times over and who is also state-qualified in Foreign Extemporaneous speaking, walked away with a sixth place finish in the domestic division. Fellow team member Yumna Kalajo flexed her muscle in Original Oratory where she placed second in prelims, advancing to semifinals. Left to right are Yumna Kalajo, Greg Stuart, Khang Ngo and Gabe Torres. See related story on Page 3.

Leader looking back at 2023

Continued from Page 1
the rear of the Cadillac. The impact caused the Cadillac to strike the rear of a maroon Dodge Dart. The woman was transported to HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake, where doctors pronounced her dead Tuesday, May 30. The male driver of the Cadillac and the female driver of the Dodge were not injured. The male driver of the Honda, 37, remained at the scene, was determined not to be impaired and was questioned and released. No charges were immediately filed.
June 8
Patrol deputies with Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's office teamed up with the Pasadena Police Department and Precinct 8 Constable Phil Sandlin's office in a coordinated multiagency law enforcement initiative, targeting areas with high crime. The coordinated efforts among these agencies resulted in dozens of traffic stops, multiple narcotics seizures and other criminal investigations.
June 15
A former Precinct 2 deputy was arrested and charged Sunday, June 11, in the fatal shooting of his neighbor in the 10500 block of Kirkglenn Drive. The suspect, Frankie Luke Vernagallo, 79, was charged with murder in the killing of Jaime Hernandez. According to homicide investigators, Vernagallo had a years-long dispute with the victim, whom he claimed to run a crime ring out of his parents' home. Vernagallo frequently wrote the *Leader* and local police agencies, including the Houston Police Department and the Precinct 2 constable's office, reporting suspected criminal activity at his neighbor's house. Alleged crimes ranged from drug sales to storing stolen goods to armed robbery. The former deputy wrote 139 emails to the *Leader* since Nov. 11, 2011, including one letter just two hours before the shooting, describing a suspected drug deal. The email said he had also alerted both HPD and Precinct 2 about the alleged incident. Precinct 2 officials described Vernagallo as a "chronic caller" and suggested he suffered from mental health issues.
June 22
A pedestrian was killed about 6 a.m. Thursday, June 15, after being struck by a vehicle while attempting to cross the Gulf Freeway between Beltway 8 and Fuqua. Denetra Dawson was pronounced dead at the scene. The female driver, 51, was questioned and released with no charges filed.
A man was fatally shot about 3:40 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, in the 15800 block of SH 3/Old Galveston Road near El Dorado. According to Houston Police Department officials, officers responded to a crash at the above address 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 striking a parked, unoccupied vehicle and coming to a stop. Witnesses further reported seeing two men flee the scene on foot following the crash.

CCISD students compete

A total of 19 band, choir and orchestra students from four Clear Creek Independent School District high schools were selected as 2024 All-State members by the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA).
More than 70,000 high school musicians across the state audition each fall in their TMEA Region.
Students who rank the highest advance to compete against students from other Regions in Area.
Only the top 2.6 percent of musicians who initially audition become All-State musicians and qualify to perform in one of 18 All-State bands, orchestras and choirs.
The following students will perform at the annual TMEA Clinic/Convention in San Antonio, Feb. 7-10:
Clear Brook High School
Corey Gutierrez – Band
Hayden Flintoff – Orchestra.
Clear Creek High School
Emily Nickl – Band
Chloe Smith – Choir
Hayley Belmont – Choir
Juliana Garcia – Choir
Suri Xu – Orchestra
Nathaniel Clark – Choir.
Clear Lake High School
Oliver Lampson – Band
Galvan Tillman – Choir.
Clear Springs High School
Blake Anderson – Choir
Isaac Pan – Orchestra
Matthew Baumer – Orchestra
Zakrey Hernandez – Orchestra
Jesse Lawson – Band
Jonathan Procknow – Band
Enrique Polanco – Band
Renée Darling – Band
Morgan Townsend – Choir.

San Jac College announces Minnie Piper award; 10 awards of \$5,000 presented to professors

San Jacinto College announced its 2024 Minnie Piper Professor Award nominee and the Faculty and Staff Excellence Awards recipients.
Dr. Tyler Olivier, San Jacinto College Generation Park STEM department chair, is the College's 2024 Minnie Piper Professor Award nominee. Olivier has been teaching at San Jac for eight years, with nine years' experience at the collegiate level.
"Dr. Olivier is a proven biology professor who has effectively engaged a variety of students ranging from majors, nonmajors, dual credit, and Honors students at San Jacinto College," said Dr. Lamar McWaine, dean, strategic initiatives. "He creates innovative programs that expose students to learning outside of the classroom, such as his service-learning project in conjunction with Sheldon Lake State Park, in which more than 150 students have participated in coastal wetland and prairie restoration projects."
Olivier has lent his expertise to a variety of committees, including the Bio-manufacturing Advisory Committee, STEM Council, Service-learning Council, Honors Council and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers as the Generation Park Campus adviser.
Since 1958, the Minnie Piper Foundation has recognized outstanding professors from two- and four-year Texas colleges and universities, both public and private. As a nonprofit, charitable corporation, one of its biggest programs is the Piper Professor Program. Ten awards of \$5,000 are distributed annually to college professors for superior teaching based on submissions by each college or university.
San Jacinto College Faculty Excellence Award recipients include Elizabeth McKinley, accounting/general business, South; Diana Perez, cosmetology, South; Richard Garcia, maritime transportation, Maritime; Sheina Farooqui, occupational therapist assistant, South; and Cheryl Mott, college preparatory mathematics, Central.
Staff Excellence Award recipients include Earle Thomas, manager, financial aid/application process, District; Imelda Rodriguez, coordinator/resource specialist, Central; Genoveva (Veva) Garcia, manager, campus business offices, Central; and Goldie Tabor, coordinator, division operations, South.
The Administrator Excellence Award went to Joanna Zimmermann, associate vice

toward a brighter future."
Criteria for the college's Faculty and Staff Excellence Awards nominations include addressing the nominee's last two years of work and service in the following areas: ability to serve as a role model and work collaboratively with others; possessions of exemplary attributes or qualifications; contributions to addressing or meeting the needs of students and/or employees; and dedications, service, and involvement in the college community.

City warns of online parking payment scams

Continued from Page 1
Houston has not received any calls from customers in Houston, we want motorists to be aware and pay close attention to anything claiming to be an official parking app, otherwise you could lose one's money and one's vehicle might get towed or ticketed if one pays a fake site."
ParkMobile is aware of the issue and has reported it to Google. However, the ads remain active. The ParkHouston app and the Parkmobile app are the only apps authorized by the City of Houston for parking meter payments.
Residents should use the following steps to ensure they are downloading the correct app:
- Do not search for the apps in the Google search bar.
- Search for ParkHouston or ParkMobile apps in the Apple App Store or Google Play only.
- Download the app, and make all payments through the app.
If one accidentally makes a payment to a fraudulent website, they should notify their credit card company to dispute the charges. If this happens and one receives a parking citation, see the reverse side of the citation on how to contest the parking citation. One has 30 days to contest online or in person. One can also email parking@houston.tx.gov for assistance.

Mercado honored



Norberta Mercado was selected as Spotlight para-professional for the month of December 2023 at Melillo Middle School.

Remember When

45 years ago (1979)
Allen Sory, principal at Dobie for 10 1/2 years and the only principal since the school was founded, turned in his resignation.
Steve Gaskins, a Sageglenn resident, was named the chief of the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department.
40 years ago (1984)
As a result of action taken by Pasadena Independent School District trustees, Beverly Hills Intermediate School would receive a new roof and gym floor. The majority of the cost would be covered by insurance since the destruction was caused by Hurricane Alicia.
A traffic signal, requested by the Sagemont Civic Club, was to be installed at the intersection of Hughes and Beamer roads by the end of the year.
35 years ago (1989)
Pasadena Independent School District Superintendent Dr. Lon Luty, the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year, accepted the position of superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District in Fresno, Calif.
After 20 years of discussion, indecision, construction designs and revamped designs, the Texas Department of Highways decided to elevate I-45 from Airport to just past Almeda Genoa.
30 years ago (1994)
Stuchbery Elementary School held a daylong multicultural fair for students.
It was announced that EPA Region VI officials would defy recommendations to monitor for metals and dioxins at the Brio site.
25 years ago (1999)
Approximately 750 South Belt area residents welcomed The Gardens to the community at its grand opening.
The lawsuit against the Pasadena Independent School District and the coaching and training staff at Dobie High School concerning the death of Donald Roventini Jr. was dismissed by Judge Nancy Atlas.
20 years ago (2004)
Two male Clear Brook High School students were stabbed in a hallway on the second floor of the school

pickup truck traveling west. Lopez, 61, was transported to Memorial Hermann Hospital in critical condition. He was pronounced dead early the next morning. No charges were filed against the female driver of the Ford. The accident took place just one day after the road was opened to through traffic following a 22-month repair.
Houston City Council approved action to change the name of Ellington Field to Ellington Airport. The name change was intended to encourage general aviation and commercial investment at the facility. It did not impact existing tenants, who had the option of retaining the name Ellington Field for their own purposes.
Capt. Darla M. Reed, the highest-ranking HFD official to respond to an accident in July 2008 that killed 18-year-old Melissa Manriquez, was fired following an investigation. She reportedly told medics not to treat the victim because she incorrectly thought Manriquez was already dead. According to Reed's termination letter written by HFD Chief Phil Boriskie, paramedics on the scene initially reported to Reed upon her arrival that Manriquez had a faint pulse and labored breathing. Reed asked a medic to check again, but no pulse could then be found. Reed, a 19-year captain, then told the paramedics nothing could be done to help Manriquez and to place a white sheet over her. The letter said the captain then walked away to see if anyone else had been ejected from the vehicle, as she had seen a baby's car seat in the vehicle, and subsequently returned to the inside of the fire engine. Several people, however, noticed the white sheet was moving up and down. It wasn't until a second medic team arrived and found Manriquez still breathing that they transported her to Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital. Manriquez was then flown by Life Flight to Memorial Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center, where she died at 4:30 a.m.
10 years ago (2014)
Channea Ou, 58, fell from the 13500 block of the Gulf Freeway at Beltway 8, and was pronounced dead at the scene. According to police, Ou was driving a tan Honda Accord south on the connecting ramp from the South Sam Houston Parkway to the southbound Gulf Freeway around 9:50 a.m. when he struck the concrete guard rail. After the accident, Ou walked back along the path that his vehicle had taken and then returned to the vehicle where his wife was still sitting in the front passenger seat. He spoke to his wife in his native language, Cambodian, then ran up the connecting ramp about 400 feet and climbed onto the guard rail. Ou then fell, or purposefully jumped, to the service road below where he was pronounced dead.
According to the Precinct 2 Constable's office, a resident was letting his vehicle warm up at 4:30 a.m. in his driveway on Sagebluff when a man tapped a pistol on his window and told him to get out. The suspect then patted the victim down, stole his wallet and cellphone and fled the scene with a second male. After reporting the vehicle stolen, deputies were contacted by both the Pasadena and Houston police departments, which said the vehicle had later been used in two home invasions. No immediate arrests were made.
5 years ago (2019)
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

Clark recognized



Tara Clark, fifth-grade science teacher, received the Spotlight Teacher Award for the month of December 2023 at Melillo Middle School.

Over The Back Fence by Patty
LAILA CELEBRATES A BIRTHDAY
Best wishes for a happy birthday are sent Jan. 27 to Dr. Laila Hassan from her family, friends, office staff and the *Leader* staff.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DAVID!
Happy birthday greetings are sent to Davy Flickinger, *Leader* president, on Jan. 27. David is wished a great day by his wife Ellie; daughter Natalie and husband Jose Abarca; grandchildren Kelvin Lopez, Noah, Eliana Abarca, Isabella and husband Sebastian Delgado; parents Marie and David Flickinger; brother Fred and wife Leslie Flickinger; niece Kimberly and Matt Lipino; niece Courtney and husband Chris Durham and children Abigail, Jackson and Penelope; and the staff at the *Leader*.
SCHOOL DAZE
The following staff and personnel of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Jan. 25 through Jan. 31.
Frazier Elementary
Jan. 26 is the day for a double-layer birthday cake for **Ashley Jones**.
Genoa Elementary
Sing a happy birthday song to **Francisca**

Tarango Jan. 29.
Meador Elementary
The day for cake and ice cream for **Lety Gonzalez** is Jan. 29. Celebrate with cake and ice cream Jan. 31 with **Kourtney Roopwa**.
South Belt Elementary
Break out the party favors and balloons Jan. 28 for **Kayla Elmore**. Join in the birthday fun Jan. 30 with **Lauren Hughes**.
Melillo Middle School
Kelly Schwenk celebrates a birthday on Jan. 27. Sing a happy birthday song to **Kelly Jurek** Jan. 31.
Beverly Hills Intermediate
Jacqueline Resendez celebrates a birthday Jan. 26.
Thompson Intermediate
Sing a happy birthday song to **Lukus McCuiston** Jan. 27. Light the birthday candles Jan. 31 for **Kayla Matlock**.
Dobie High
Elke Cerre celebrates a birthday Jan. 30. Special birthday wishes are sent to Laura Guerrero Jan. 31.
FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS
Thursday, Jan. 26: **Gene Webster** and **Craig Green**; Friday, Jan. 27: **Cheryl Arnesen, Nicole Crader, Raquel Jones, Derek Cooley, Donald Gillock Sr. and Solomon Ard**; Saturday, Jan. 28: **Daryn Edwards, Toni O'Bryan, Chris Valvaneda, Nealda Whitley, Lewis Cambiaso, Edgar Ramirez and Jennifer Hernandez**; Sunday, Jan. 29: **Stephanie Martinez-Hinton, Yvonne Moffitt, Margarito Rivera, Debra Dorn, Lauretta Massiccott and Holly Conrad**; Monday, Jan. 30: **Bill Heavin, Karen Price, Kimberly Istre, Kristen Mata, Christine Cline and Amy Reichelderfer**; Tuesday, Jan. 31: **Maria Olvera, Erica Bush, Veronica Tanguma-Mejia, Ernie Banks, Josh Keim, Angeles Rios, Maria Zuniga and Craig Thompson**; Wednesday, Feb. 1: **Danice Oliver and Lee Terry**.
LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS
Send an email of announcements including congratulations, vacation, anniversary, etc. to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line by Friday noon for the next week's publication. For general birthdays, type "OTBF: Friends Celebrate Birthdays" in the subject line.

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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Dobie boys' soccer commemorates 40 years



Jon Schmitz (left), who guided the Dobie varsity boys' soccer team to 5A district championships in 1985 and 1987 as the Longhorns' first-ever head coach, joined current head coach Justo Manrique in showing off the program's commemorative 40th anniversary T-shirt. Manrique, Dobie's head coach since 2014, has led the Longhorns to nine consecutive District 22-6A championships.

JFD boys' basketball in thick of 22-6A race

South Houston has seized control of the 22-6A varsity boys' basketball race thanks to an unbeaten 6-0 run through the first half of league play, while Dobie has also played its way very much into post-season contention.

Heading into play Jan. 23 prior to press time, the all-important second half was set to begin with the Longhorns, winners of four of six games in league play, going against

second-place Memorial on the road.

The Mavericks, led by Louisiana State University commit Robert Miller III, defeated Dobie 69-52 back on Dec. 19. Memorial improved to 5-0 within

22-6A before South Houston won a head-to-head battle Jan. 20 by a 59-46 count, with the Trojans improving to 22-6 overall.

With little wriggle room within the league, South Houston and Memorial very well could find themselves going down to a Feb. 13 rematch for the 22-6A championship and top playoff seed.

As for Dobie, the Longhorns ended the first half with consecutive wins over Deer Park and Pasadena to get to 17-10 overall, including the 4-2 run in 22-6A action.

Senior Dylan Jackson,

a St. Thomas University commit, surpassed 1,000 career points against the Eagles and will be honored prior to the team's home game Jan. 26 against Channelview.

Things have gone very well in head coach Timir Patel's debut season as a senior-laden roster has blended well with sophomore Desmond Etienne and freshman Damon Miles.

Brook reloads
The District 24-6A varsity boys' race took shape after the first half of league play, with the Clear Brook

Continued on Page 8



Senior Dylan Jackson (1) surpassed 1,000 career points Jan. 20 as the Longhorns cruised past Pasadena. Jackson, who plans to play collegiately at St. Thomas University, will be honored Jan. 26 prior to the 7 p.m. varsity home game against Channelview at Dobie main.

Photo by Gloria Wallace

Dobie boys' soccer team begins repeat bid

A 4-1 win over Fulshear as part of the program's 40th anniversary celebration sent the Dobie varsity boys' soccer team into

league play against Deer Park after press time at 4-1-2 overall and every bit intent on chasing a 10th straight 22-6A crown.

The Longhorns, a Region III finalist a season ago, will play at Pasadena Jan. 26 and then host Memorial Jan. 30 at Dobie main, with both varsity matches set to start at 7:30 p.m.

UIL to realign Feb. 1

The University Interscholastic League will reveal its 2024-2025 through 2025-2026 biannual realignment plans Feb. 1, which is almost sure to bring about new district competition for the Pasadena ISD and Clear Creek ISD athletic programs.

The one "for sure" in the reveal? Pasadena High School is ticketed for Class 5A beginning next school year while Dobie, Memorial, Rayburn and South Houston will remain at the 6A classification. The *Leader* will post an up-to-date brief on its Facebook page Feb. 1, an in-print report to follow Feb. 8.

SBYSC continues sign up

The South Belt Youth Soccer Club continues registration for the spring 2024 season, with U-4 through U-20 age divisions available to players at southbelt soccer.org. Regular registration prices run through Feb. 14.

Players in the U-4 through U-8 divisions will pay \$85, while the fee is \$95 for the U-9 through U-12 divisions. The fee is \$105 for the U-13 through U-20 divisions. The fee includes a uniform shirt, socks and shorts while families must provide cleats, shin guards and a soccer ball. Visit www.southbeltssoccer.org for additional details.

JFD boys at Pasadena

Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.

JFD boys host Memorial

Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.

San Jacinto College softball eyes openers

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

No matter what combination of players complete the recipe, San Jacinto College head softball coach Kelly Saenz expects the final product to include another prize-winning trip come postseason time.

The 2024 season begins in Waco for the Ravens, who will play in the McLennan Community College Battle on the Bosque Jan. 26-27. McLennan hosts, with the Ravens, Odessa and Chipola also in play.

As usual, hopes are high for a San Jac team

that won 42 games a season ago.

On the heels of consecutive trips to nationals the previous two seasons, the 2023 squad rallied from an early loss to reach the Region 14 postseason tournament championship game before a loss to Bossier Parish ended the fun.

The pitching staff has been reshuffled entering the 2024 season, but with

a string of 40-plus win seasons now at three and counting, Saenz expects her current team to be a major contender when the Ravens host the 2024 Region 14 tournament in early May.

It all starts with sophomore Ari Wright, the College Park High School graduate who turned in arguably the best offensive statistical line in San Jacinto College program history in 2023 on her way to All-American honors.

Hitting .522 with 17 home runs and 71 runs batted in, Wright hit all but 12 of San Jacinto College's long balls for the season covering 61 total games. The team's other two top RBI producers were sophomores and have moved on.

Returning sophomores Maci Beam (.400), Chloe Foster (.375), Izzy Farmer (.374) and Maggie Evans (.349) are among the players who hit for high averages in their first collegiate seasons and could be counted on for more. And the 2023 recruiting class

Continued on Page 8

Ravens Open 2024 at McLennan, Waco

Jan. 26: vs. Odessa, 4 p.m.
Jan. 26: vs. McLennan, 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 27: vs. Chipola, 11 a.m.
Jan. 27: vs. Chipola, 1:30 p.m.

Dobie girls' hoops in final stretch



With a 41-31 win over Pasadena Jan. 20, the Dobie varsity girls' basketball team, including sophomore guard Audrey Volper (above) entered a final four-game stretch against Memorial Jan. 23 after press time aiming to make a postseason push.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

JFD boys host Channelview
Jan. 26, 7 p.m.
Dobie main
Brook boys host Clear Creek
Jan. 26, 7 p.m.

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2023 year in review offers look at sports highlights in April

As the *Leader* continues its year in review for 2023 the following is a look back at some of June and July's highlights.

June 1

Dobie varsity baseball head coach Miguel Torres, who guided the Longhorns to their first league championship in 14 seasons, was named the District 22-6A Coach of the Year following the 2023 season. Under Torres' leadership, the Longhorns won 23 overall games, including 11 straight victories to clinch the league crown.

He then led the Longhorns to a bidistrict playoff series victory over Beaumont West Brook. Senior outfielder Daniel Delgado, sophomore catcher Omar Serna and sophomore left-handed pitcher Aiden Sanchez were all unanimously chosen to the 22-6A All-District first-team by the league's head coaches following the season.

Dobie sophomore right-handed pitcher Cruz Torres, named the District 22-6A Newcomer of the Year after leading the Longhorns to the league championship, was invited to take part in the Greater Houston Area Baseball Coaches Association's Futures Game and Home Run Derby June 6 at Constellation Field in Sugar Land.

Undeclared at 11-0 until the area round, Torres was 6-0 in 22-6A play with a 0.80 earned run average.

District 24-6A three-way varsity baseball champion Clear Brook had starting pitcher Santiago Lejia unanimously chosen to the all-district first team, while Francisco Lejia was also named a first-team outfielder following the season.

The Lejias led the way for Clear Brook as the Wolverines won five of their final six district games to force a three-way tie at 8-4 with Clear Falls and Clear Springs for the 24-6A title.

The Wolverines represented 24-6A as the No. 2 playoff seed and ultimately lost in the bidistrict playoff round to Strake Jesuit.

Clear Brook second baseman Ismail Hatamleh was a 24-6A all-district second-team selection, as was catcher Trenton Flores, third baseman Logan Sariga and outfielder Trey Broussard. Outfielder Jaylen Price and pitcher Tyler Gaudet of Clear Brook earned all-district honorable mention accolades.

Zachary Tuxtorn of Clear Lake was named the Most Valuable Player

of the 24-6A ranks, and the league's Newcomer of the Year was Clear Falls pitcher David Ramirez, a sophomore.

Texas A&M University freshman sprinter Camryn Dickson returned to familiar territory as she and several of her Aggie teammates qualified for the NCAA Division I Track and Field Championships June 7-10 in Austin at Mike A. Myers Stadium on the University of Texas campus.

Dickson, a Class of 2022 Clear Brook graduate, Dickson ran the second leg of the 4x100 relay as she and teammates Jania Martin, Leeah Burr and Semira Killbrew boasted an NCAA West First Round top time of 43.35 seconds in the event heading to Austin.

Also at the May 24-27 West First Round at Sacramento State University, Dickson delivered A&M's ninth-best all-time clocking of 11.17 in the women's 100 to reach nationals. She also grabbed the last nonautomatic qualifying spot at 22.88 in the 200.

June 8

Alberto Campa, a Dobie graduate and current Colorado School of Mines men's distance runner, earned U.S. Track and Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association second-team All-American status after placing 10th in the 1,500 at the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field Championships, clocking in at 3 minutes, 56.03 seconds in Pueblo, Colo.

The National Junior College Athletic Association on June 6 named San Jacinto College freshman shortstop a second-team All-American in the Division I ranks. Wright was previously named the Region 14 MVP.

Despite falling one win shy of a third consecutive national tournament berth, the San Jacinto College softball program still had plenty to celebrate after finishing 42-19 overall in 2023.

Leading the way for the Ravens was freshman infielder Arianna Wright, who set all-time single-season marks in several offensive categories at San Jacinto College on her way to being named the Region XIV South Division and overall Conference Player of the Year.

Wright is now the program's single-season leader in batting average (.522), slugging percentage (.968), home runs (17) and runs batted in (71) as she delivered arguably the best all-around season in SJC softball history.

Along with the region

and conference honors, Wright was named a National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-Midwest Region first-team honoree.

While Wright established herself as an all-time great at San Jacinto College on the offensive side of things, sophomore pitcher Christian Haygood departed San Jacinto College as perhaps its top all-time pitcher.

A two-time Region XIV and Conference Pitcher of the Year, Haygood was 19-2 with a 1.50 earned run average in 2023 and collected 37 wins over her two seasons with San Jacinto College.

Like Wright, Haygood was named a National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-Midwest Region first-team performer. Wright and Haygood were San Jacinto College's top performers from the 2023 season, and they were joined by several teammates who also earned all-region and all-conference honors.

Outfielders Chloe Foster and Leslie Longoria as well as designated player Izzy Farmer were Region XIV All-South Conference honorees. Foster hit .375 and had 12 extra-base hits while scoring 39 runs.

Longoria, a Class of 2021 Dobie High School graduate, scored 37 runs and hit .386, second-best on the team. Farmer hit .374 with 29 runs batted in.

San Jacinto College's Region XIV All-South Conference second team honorees included catcher Haleigh McDonald and infielders Ella Casas and Emma Garcia.

McDonald drew praise for her outstanding defensive work as well as her guidance of the pitching staff behind the plate, and Garcia hit .361 and scored 63 runs over the course of 58 games played.

Casas, meanwhile, hit .311 and drove in 25 runs this season, scoring 14 runs along the way. Farmer and Longoria were All-Region XIV second-team selections.

June 15

Shelby Smith helped Lutheran South Academy win a Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools state softball championship in 2018 and then signed to join the Seton Hall University program.

After a bumpy ride that included the 2020 pandemic-shortened season, Smith capped her career by leading the Pirates to the Big East Tournament title.

In doing so, Smith was named the Most Outstand-

ing Player of the tournament as Seton Hall was invited to play in the NCAA Austin Regional.

Former Dobie High School star Yvonne Whaley, who went on to enjoy successful collegiate stints at both Texas Tech and Pittsburgh, made her Women's Professional Fastpitch league debut June 15 as her Oklahoma City Spark team took on the Smash It Sports Vipers in the opener of a three-game series.

The WPF, founded by USA Softball, expanded to four teams for 2023 and included the Spark, the Vipers, the Texas Smoke and USSSA Pride.

The 21st overall pick in the 2023 WPF Draft, Whaley was a first-team All-ACC and Women's Fastpitch Coaches Association Mid-Atlantic All-Region selection after hitting .439 with 17 doubles in her final season at Pittsburgh.

A four-year varsity starter at Dobie, Whaley scored 22-6A first team honors four times and was the District 22-6A Most Valuable Player in 2018.

Lutheran South Academy right-handed pitcher Roland Aguillon was named to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools All-State first team and shared co-Most Valuable Player honors after a brilliant junior season that saw him invited to take part in the Greater Houston Baseball Coaches Association's Futures Game at Constellation Field in Sugar Land.

Lutheran South Academy shortstop Victor Coronado was named to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools All-State honorable mention team and shared co-Most Valuable Player honors.

Coronado was also selected to compete in the Greater Houston Baseball Coaches Association's Futures Game.

June 22

Clear Brook High School joined the party as the Clear Creek ISD Athletic Hall of Honor announced its induction Class of 2023, with former Wolverine greats Terri Hunter Bolden and Jennifer Gordon Womack to be inducted.

The 2023 class, the Hall of Honor's seventh since its inception in 2016, was to be officially inducted during a ceremony Sept. 23 at Challenger Columbia Stadium in Webster.

Hunter made her biggest impact at Clear Brook on the basketball court and also competed in track and field. Gordon, meanwhile, lettered in four different varsity

sports, including volleyball, basketball, soccer and softball. Of the 2023 Hall of Honor inductees, perhaps the most recognizable name belongs to Steve McKinney, who enjoyed a decade-long run in the National Football League.

Prior to that, though, McKinney for two seasons starred at Clear Lake High School, playing both tight end and defensive end.

He was the Falcons' go-to pass-catcher in then head coach Larry Haynes' pass-happy attack in 1992 and 1993. Clear Lake High School retired McKinney's No. 88 jersey in 2005.

The 1993 District 24-5A co-Most Valuable Player actually signed with Texas A&M University with designs on playing defense but played just a handful of games at defensive end as a freshman in 1994 before moving to the offensive line as a guard.

A 1998 fourth-round draft choice of the Indianapolis Colts, McKinney started 60 games over four seasons with the Colts and then started 64 over four more seasons with the Houston Texans.

Over his career, McKinney started 134 of 144 career games.

Dobie senior Bella Perez scored District 22-6A Offensive Player of the Year honors as she hit .500 during the 2023 season with 38 runs batted in. Along the way, Perez, now at McNeese State University, had 15 doubles, two triples and five home runs. The district's premier catcher also scored 28 runs.

The Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association named Dobie sophomore catcher Omar Serna a second-team All-State selection for the 2023 season.

The 22-6A first-team All-District selection behind the dish, Serna, a Louisiana State University commit, hit .385 with 30 runs scored and 30 runs batted in to go with four homers and 10 doubles.

June 29

Dobie graduate and current Louisiana State University softball star Taylor Pleasants joined the U.S. Women's National Team 16-player roster to compete in the 2023 Japan All-Star Series, to be held Aug. 4-7.

Team USA was to compete against world-ranked No. 2 Japan in a three-game series held across three cities in Japan - Fukushima (Azuma Stadium - Tokyo Olympic Games softball venue), Iwakuni (Kizuma Stadium - host of WNT pre-Olymp-

pic training) and Yokohama (Yokohama Stadium - Tokyo Olympic Games softball venue).

The Japan All-Star Series squad was the second WNT roster scheduled to compete during the 2023 season in addition to the World Baseball Softball Confederation World Cup roster that featured LSU alumnae Aliyah Andrews and Savannah Jaquish in Dublin, Ireland July 11-15.

Athletes were selected based on previous and ongoing evaluations at the collegiate and professional levels as well as USA Softball National Team events, trials and camps.

July 6

The *Leader* detailed that Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Famer Brian Brazil, who won a Class 4A state football championship during a decades-long coaching career at Lewisville Hebron, would have the district's football stadium named in his honor.

Brazil, a Class of 1983 Sam Rayburn High School graduate who earned eight varsity letters in all with the Texans before playing football at Texas Christian University, went on to enjoy a storied head coaching career at Hebron before retiring following the 2021 season. Brazil, who was named Mr. Sam Rayburn in 1983 in recognition of his athletic achievements, died in early July following a short cancer battle.

Lutheran South Academy's Addison Trahan landed a coveted spot on the All-Greater Houston Golf Team in the private school category after helping the Pioneers to a 5A Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools state championship. Meanwhile, LSA's Geoff Stressman was honored as the Coach of the Year in the Private School Division.

Kirra Musgrove announced her intentions to attend Texas A&M University, where she plans to play for the Aggie women's volleyball program. Musgrove, currently a junior, has since guided the LSA program to the 2023 state final.

One of the most productive players anywhere across the state, Musgrove has delivered more than 1,600 assists to go with just over 1,000 digs and nearly 1,500 kills over three varsity seasons.

July 13

Hunter Hollan, who starred at San Jacinto College for two seasons as a left-handed pitcher before spending the 2023 season at Arkansas, was chosen 74th overall by the Cin-



Already a veteran in the District 22-6A varsity baseball ranks and one of the nation's most talked about sophomores, Dobie catcher Omar Serna was stellar in 2023 as a unanimous first-team catcher, hitting .385 this season with 30 runs scored and 30 runs batted in to go with four homers and 10 doubles.

cinnati Reds in the MLB draft July 10. He did sign with the Reds but had off-season arm surgery. He is currently 20th among the Reds' top 30 minor league prospects.

Texas A&M sprinter Camryn Dickson claimed a silver medal in the women's 100 at the USA Track and Field U-20 Championships July 8 in Eugene, Ore.

A winner of two state medals while at Clear Brook, Dickson enjoyed a solid freshman indoor/outdoor season with the Aggies during the 2022-2023 academic year.

At the U20s, the University of Georgia's Kaila Jackson won the women's 100 at 11.15 seconds, with Dickson second at 11.30. Georgia Southern's Naj Watson went 11.42 for third place and a bronze medal.

Dickson concluded her great performance at the University of Oregon by claiming a bronze medal in the 200, clocking in at a time of 22.85.

July 20

Former San Jacinto College baseball standout Sabin Ceballos was selected in the third round, 94th overall, of the MLB First-Year Player Draft and agreed to terms with the Atlanta Braves on a \$597,500 signing bonus.

Ceballos played his 2023 junior collegiate season at Oregon and was picked as the third base choice for the ABCA/Rawlings Gold Glove Team. Ceballos earned first-team All-Pac-12 recognition and was selected to the Pac-12 Conference and Nashville Regional All-Tournament Teams.

As part of a tremendous offensive season with the Ducks, Ceballos set single-season program records in home runs, slugging percentage and multi-RBI games while tying for the most RBI in a year.

He started 58 of 59 games played for the Ducks at third base (47), designated hitter (10) and first base (1) and batted .333 (71-for-213) with 18 home runs, 70 RBIs and 48 runs scored.

Ceballos had 40 plate appearances with the Augusta Hays, hitting .300 with a homer and eight runs driven in.

July 27

The South Belt Sharks concluded a successful summer swim season with a sixth place finish out of 17 teams at the Clear Creek Swim League Championship Meet July 15 at Clear Springs High

School. The Sharks won three of five head-to-head meets during the regular season and qualified 31 swimmers for the season-ending championship meet.

The Sharks received championship performances from Thien Luu and Matthew Bui in the boys' 9-10-year-old division as Luu won the 100 fly and was third in both the 50 free and the 100 individual medley.

As for Bui, he won the 100 IM and the 50 free and was also second in the 50 back. Bui and Luu also joined a pair of relays for the Sharks as the 200 medley relay took fourth with Caleb Villareal and Saul Rodriguez in the mix, while the same four competitors were third in the 200 free relay.

In the girls' 15- to 18-year-old division, the Sharks scored top-three medals. In the 200 medley relay, Laney Thompson, Allie Chu, Karissa Dorville and Tiffany Tran combined for second place, while the 200 free relay foursome of the same ladies, Thompson, Chu, Dorville and Tran, placed third.

Thompson was also fifth in the 100 back, ninth in the 100 fly and 11th in the 50 free. Tran was fourth in the 100 back, fifth in the 200 IM and eighth in the 50 free.

As for Dorville, she snagged second in the 100 fly, fourth in the 200 IM and ninth in the 100 back. Allie Chu wound up seventh in the 100 breast, and Cameron Chu took 10th in the 100 breast.

The Sharks were sixth in the girls' 100 free relay as Abigail Tupa, Mia Durgan, Kylie Tinajero, and Lina Castillo teamed, with the same four competitors placing seventh in the 100 medley relay.

Tinajero was also fourth best in the 25 fly. The Sharks' Jackson Miller completed a strong season as he was 12th in the 25 breast.

The Sharks' scoring in the 11-12 girls' division included Olivia Barnett winning the 50 free, taking fourth in the 50 fly and sixth in the 100 IM.

Barnett also joined in the fun in the 200 medley relay as she, Alani Ross, Anberlyn Gafford and Genelle Rodriguez combined for sixth place. Wilder Smith represented the Sharks in the 11-12-year-old boys' division as he finished ninth in the 50 breast.

South Belt's 13-14 girls' competitors included Yen Luu, 11th in both the 100 IM and 100 free, and Hope Gonzalez, 12th in the 100 IM. Zoey Vuong was sixth in the 100 free and seventh in both the 100 IM and 50 fly.



Daniel Delgado of Dobie delivered a star-studded senior season for the Longhorns, earning unanimous first-team All-District honors after hitting .440 with 35 runs scored and 19 runs batted in. He also stole 17 bases.

The Texas A&M track and field program qualified 28 athletes in all for the NCAA Division I Track and Field Championships June 7-10 in Austin at Mike A. Myers Stadium on the University of Texas campus. Among the Aggies' 13 women's qualifiers were the four members of the 4x100 relay group, which posted a time of 43.35 seconds to reach Austin. At right, that foursome included, left to right, Semira Killbrew, Camryn Dickson, Jania Martin and Leeah Burr. Dickson, a Class of 2022 Clear Brook graduate, also made her way to nationals in both the 100 and 200.



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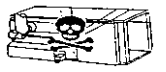
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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill," Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 713-686-6300 or visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/.

7:30 a.m. **Rotary Club of Pearland** - Meets at either Pearland Chamber of Commerce, 6117 Broadway St., Pearland, or online on Zoom. See Pearland Chamber of Commerce calendar or call 281-485-3634.

9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call 713-472-0565 for tours of exhibits.

9:30 a.m. **NASA Aglow Community Light-house** - 18516 Hwy. 3 in Webster. The public is welcome and encouraged to bring others. Call 281-910-1971 or visit aglownet.org.

11:30 a.m. **ABWA - Southeast Express Network** - Meetings are held at Big Horn BBQ, 2300 Smith Ranch Rd, Pearland. Reservations appreciated. Visit www.seenabwa.org.

Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners Group, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300.

6:30 p.m. **Pearland Area Republican's Club** - meets at VFW Post 7109 Pearland, 4202 W Walnut St., Pearland. Email pearlandarearepublicanclub@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/PARTX.

7 p.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - free discussion about Judaism and religion in general at Sawa Restaurant and Grill, 16608 El Camino Real, Houston. Contact socialaction@shaarhashalom.org.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

7:30 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.

7 p.m. **NA** - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 E. FM 518, Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or https://nastuff.com/.

9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.

9 a.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - All services are live and on Zoom. For details regarding services, Judaism classes, film series and lunch with the Rabbi, visit https://www.shaarhashalom.org.

8 p.m. **Serenity Now Al-Anon Group** - meets at CrossRoads UMC 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Family members and friends of problem drinkers/addicts share and discover choices available. Call 281-484-9243.

8 p.m. **AA** - meets at CrossRoads UMC, 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Call 281-484-9243.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

7:30 a.m. **AA** - "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 on Zoom. For details regarding services, Judaism classes, film series and lunch with the Rabbi, visit https://www.shaarhashalom.org.

11 a.m. **Al-Anon Meeting (Women Only, English)** - For women affected by an addict. Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, Cornell Conference room #111. Call 281-487-8787 or visit https://www.houstonalanon.org/.

1 p.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - offers a knitting class. Call 281-479-7285 beforehand.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

8 a.m./10:15 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - has worship and Bible study programs at 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). Call 281-479-7285.

2 p.m. **Grief Support Group** - Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy. Call 713-944-9186.

4 - 6 p.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - Interfaith Call for Peace event. Members of different faith communities expressing their messages for hope and peace throughout the world. Participating faiths include Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Unity, Unitarian Universalists, and many Christian denominations. Security will be present and there will be refreshments and fellowship.

5:30 p.m. **Celebrate Recovery** - A faith-based 12-Step program, in the Life Kids Chapel at Life Church, 9900 Alameda Genoa. Call 713-419-2635.

8 p.m. **AA** - See Friday's notice.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29

Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.

1:30 - 3 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Dance** - at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E. League City Parkway. Volunteers teach dance lessons. Call 281-554-1180.

6 p.m. **Scrabble Club #511** - Meets at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Join in the fun and improve crossword skills. COVID-19 vaccination required. Email huff_reunion@juno.com for details.

7 p.m. **AA** - St. Luke's 12 Step Recovery open meeting in the education Bldg. in room 4, at 11011 Hall Rd. Call 832-725-8479 or 281-309-2801.

7 p.m. **TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)** - #0683 chapter meets at the Methodist Church, 110 N Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. Call 832-858-4617 or 713-875-8820.

7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.

10:00 a.m. **CCART** - Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers meets at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway. Annual dues are \$50.

9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.

10:30 a.m. **Tri County Republican Women** - General meetings are held at the Golfcrest Country Club, 2509 Country Club Dr. Exact cash or check requested for lunch (\$15). RSVP at www.tricountyrw.club/ or call 832-250-8901.

11:30 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.

Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Southeast Houston Toastmasters** - Club #05324194 meets in-person at 10500 Scarsdale Blvd (SB Chamber of Commerce). Visit southeast.toastmastersclubs.org or call 832-722-9061.

7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.

9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.

Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.

12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Humpday Dance** - at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E. League City Parkway. Casual ballroom dancing offered. Call 281-554-1180.

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Former players reunite as Dobie boys' soccer program celebrates 40th anniversary at Veterans

At right, nearly two dozen former players were in attendance as the Dobie boys celebrated its 40th season Jan. 19 during a special halftime ceremony at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena. Those in attendance and their graduation year included, left to right, (front row) Gary Birsinger (85), Bill Stanley (91), Scott Brenneman (92), Jon Schmitz, Ricky Mitchell (88), Alan Birsinger (84), Jean Arreguin (21), (back row) Nick Ly (93), Bill Romere (87), Russell Goshorn (84), Steven Romere (85), Christopher Heitman (84), James Ragan (85), Ralph Barr (85), Kyle Larson (85), Matt Wilburn (87), James Bates (85), Thomas Carte (17), Alberto Chavez (19), Sebastian Leal (18) and Illsen Urrutia (19). Schmitz was the program's first head coach, covering the 1984 through 1989 seasons. The Longhorns won district titles in 1985 and 1987 during his stay.



Photo by Tori Mask

Basketball programs enter crucial second-half runs

Continued from Page 5
 bunch getting a 56-31 win over Brazoswood Jan. 20 as freshman Christian Brown scored 23 points. Combined with a 45-36 win over Clear Falls Jan. 18, the Wolverines went 2-4 through the first half of league play. Abdiel Jimenez went for 16 points against the Knights, with Brown chipping in 10. The Wolverines did well to defeat the two programs below them in the standings but will likely need a huge second-half

push to realistically have postseason chances. Dickinson, Clear Lake and Clear Springs went into play Jan. 23 after press time at 5-1 to lead the league, with fourth-place Clear Creek at 3-3. The Wolverines, 10-17 overall, went against Clear Lake Jan. 23 after press time and will host Clear Creek Jan. 26 in a head-to-head battle with big playoff implications. The Wildcats own a 57-47 first-round win over the Wolverines and can sweep the set.

At right, the District 22-6A varsity boys' basketball race shows the South Houston Trojans out in front at 6-0 with freshman Xavier Muhammad (24) dominating the glass. Yet Dobie and Israel Pinkney (23) have joined the playoff chase at 4-2 with the second half of the race starting Jan. 23 after press time.



Photo by Gloria Wallace

Cowboys, Cowgirls invite returnees

The Sagemont Cowboys and Cowgirls of the Bay Area Football League will soon accept registration for returning players as well as members of the drill and cheer squads as preparation for the 2024 season takes shape. The remaining in-person sign-up session for this month will be held Jan. 27, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at El Franco Lee Park. There will also be a new player registration session Feb. 3, also from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. A minimum \$100 deposit is due at the time of registration. For additional information, call Cowboys' athletic director Denny Wranich Jr. at 713-476-1491.

Lajaunie event continues fundraising

The Darren Lajaunie Tennis Scholarship Fund has started raising monies for 2024 as efforts to support academic scholarship funds to deserving Dobie High School senior tennis players continue. The fund, named in honor of Dobie graduate and lifelong tennis enthusiast Darren Lajaunie, also annually provides youth training funds to those furthering their games at the Harry S. Taylor Tennis Center in Pasadena. As the Lajaunie fund is a 501(c)(3) entity, all donations are tax deductible. For additional details, visit dltennisscholarships.com. For information by phone, call tournament founder Camille Lajaunie at 281-480-6933.

High school track season nears

The Dobie track and field program is preparing to open the 2024 season Feb. 2 at the Kethan Relays in Deer Park, with Pasadena ISD's longstanding Brown Relays coming to Auxiliary Stadium in Pasadena Feb. 9. The Dobie varsity girls' team, second at district in 2023, will be paced by junior Stacie Harris, the 22-6A champion in the 200 and long jump. The Longhorn varsity boys were also second at district in 2023.



San Jacinto College head softball coach Kelly Saenz (center) and her team are excited as the 2024 season begins in Waco for the Ravens, who will play in the McLennan Community College Battle on the Bosque Jan. 26-27.

San Jac softball is confident

Continued from Page 5
 shows plenty of promise. "To be honest, we are still having to make some

tough calls as to what the outfield and infield defensive alignments should be and just how the offensive lineup stacks up," Saenz said. "A lot of it is the depth of the roster. It's a great issue to have, but we have a lot of players who have shown they deserve to play. From an entire roster standpoint, we are deeper than we have been in some seasons. "We had a great fall season, and then the ladies came back from the holiday break ready to get started and put in the work. We also have great team chemistry, which is great." While Wright represents the key to the Ravens' offense, she will also expand her role in the circle after pitching just a few innings as a freshman. Kristina Nash, another sophomore who had a 2.88 earned run average over 34 innings in 2023, is a 2025 Texas A&M University-Kingsville signee who is in line for much more pitching. Another sophomore, Destiney Yoder, could be targeted for a relief role. Saenz is also excited to see freshmen Ashleigh Heiderscheit and Madison Carr, with sophomore Gianna Carrion also in the mix. With likely 60 or so games to cover, Saenz said the Ravens very well could turn to multiple arms to win games. "I think whether it's offense or with the pitching staff, a lot of players are going to get a chance to play," she said. "I like the makeup of the team. Everybody is excited to get started." "We'll be ready to go. We've had plenty of time to prepare."

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JFD girls host Eagles in 22-6A

At right, Dobie defenders Ashley Hernandez (8) and Kelly Flores (15) hope the good times start early and often as the varsity girls' soccer team continues the early portion of District 22-6A play.



Dobie girls host Pasadena
 Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.
 Dobie main

Dobie girls at Memorial
 Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.
 PMHS

Dobie girls host Channelview
 Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.
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