

Happy New Year!

South Belt-Ellington Leader

Voice of Community-Minded People since 1976

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

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Leader seeks submissions

The *Leader* encourages local schools, groups and individuals to continue sending story ideas and photos they'd like to see included in the newspaper.

Submissions have declined following the death of *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger last month. Contributions may be submitted to mynews@southbeltleader.com.

Sagemeadow to meet Jan. 16

Sagemeadow subdivision's annual HOA meeting will be held at The Gardens, 12001 Beamer at Hughes Road, Thursday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. Board member elections will be discussed. All residents are encouraged to attend. This and all meetings are open to the public. For additional information, visit, www.sagemeadow.org.

HPD to hold PIP Jan. 21

The Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at the Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, 11800 Astoria in the CES Classroom on the first floor of the main building. Guest speaker to be announced. Begun in 1983, HPD's PIP involves police and community members working together for safer neighborhoods. PIP meetings typically take place the third Tuesday of each month. For additional information, contact HPD Officer Richard Buitron at 832-395-1776 or Richard.Buitron@HoustonPolice.org.

Ellington eRecycling set

The City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department's monthly electronic recycling event will take place Saturday, Jan. 11, at the Neighborhood Recycling Center at Ellington Airport from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Recycling electronics keeps potentially harmful materials, such as mercury, cadmium, lead and cathode ray tubes out of the waste stream and the environment.

Items accepted are PCs, servers, keyboards, mice, laptops, game consoles, monitors, small kitchen appliances, memory chips, hubs and routers, printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, projectors, rechargeable batteries, cable boxes, car batteries, telephones, cellphones, PDAs, tape drives, hard drives, cords, cables and cameras.

The collection events take place the second Saturday of each month. For additional information, visit www.houstonsolidwaste.org or call 311.

New Covenant feeds needy

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

Telephone closure planned

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

Gulf Freeway closures set

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

At least one northbound and one southbound frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from Deats Road in Dickinson to FM 2004/Camp Wallace Access in Texas City from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. until further notice.

At least one northbound and one southbound main lane and frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from FM 519/Main Street in La Marque to Tiki Drive in Galveston daily from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and nightly from 8:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. until further notice.

CCART to meet Jan. 14

The Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers (CCART) will hold a meeting Tuesday, Jan. 14, at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway in Seabrook. The meeting will feature a presentation by members of the Dead Boats Society. A social gathering with coffee and cookies will begin at 9:30 a.m., with the meeting beginning at 10 a.m. All retired school employees from the area are invited. Annual dues are \$50.

Beltway closures planned

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

Leader remembers highs, lows of 2024

Year a devastating one for Leader, as both co-founders die within 2 weeks

Another year has passed, and per tradition, the *Leader* takes the opportunity to reflect on the highs and lows from the previous 12 months.

In reflection of 2024, it was a tragic year for the *South Belt-Ellington Leader*, with both of the newspaper's co-founders dying two weeks apart from each other in the latter part of the year.

Marie Flickinger died at 82 years old Monday, Nov. 11, with Bobby Griffin dying shortly after on Sunday, Nov. 24, at the age of 84. Both women had been battling illness in their later years. The deaths came just weeks before the *Leader's* 50th anniversary, set to take place next month.

Longtime friends, the pair met each other while neighbors in Genoa in the late 1960s, as the South Belt community was first being estab-

lished.

They would each go on to move into homes in the burgeoning new South Belt community in the early 1970s, with Flickinger moving to the new Sagemont subdivision and Griffin first moving to the Kirkwood subdivision before settling in the Sagemont subdivision.

The two women bonded over youth baseball, as their sons David Griffin and Fred Flickinger both played in the new Sagemont-Beverly Hills Little League.

It was this shared interest that sparked the women's journalistic careers, as they began publishing Little League reports in a Friendswood paper in the early- to mid-1970s.

Although the two housewives had no formal journalism training, Flickinger and Griffin

launched their own newspaper – then known as the *South Belt Press* – in February 1976.

Originally published out of Flickinger's house, the newspaper moved into its first office in 1979. The new headquarters was located in the strip center adjacent to the Eagle grocery store at Beamer and Hughes Road, now home to The Gardens.

In 1985, the newspaper – now known as the *South Belt Leader* – moved into its own building at the corner of Beltway 8 and Beamer, where it remains to date.

Despite their lack of formal training, the two publishers took on the challenging job of reporting on the growing community of the South Belt – a term Flickinger would later take credit for coining and popularizing.

The two women went on to forge and cultivate longstanding bonds with elected officials, educators, law enforcement, youth sports organizations, local business leaders and area churches.

What began as primarily youth sports and PTA meeting grew into a prosperous, sometimes 30-page, publication that garnered national attention during the 1980s for its Brio coverage.

In 1984, Griffin and Flickinger were instrumental in founding the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce.

In 1998 Griffin sold her interest in the *South Belt-Ellington Leader* to Flickinger and her son David, who would serve as the newspaper's president.

Griffin, however, would remain on the *Leader*

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Flickinger, Griffin remembered



The past year was a difficult one for the *Leader*, with the newspaper losing both of its co-founders – Marie Flickinger (second from left) and Bobby Griffin (second from right) – in just a two-week period. The pair are shown above with their respective husbands David Flickinger (left) and Kenneth Griffin (right) breaking ground on the *Leader's* current office on Beamer at Kirkfair near Beltway 8, as it appeared on the front page of the newspaper in January 1985.

Pedestrian killed in Telephone hit-and-run

Unidentified driver flees scene, remains at large

Houston police are searching for a hit-and-run driver responsible for fatally striking a pedestrian around 7:10 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22, in the 10100 block of SH 35/Telephone Road near Alameda Genoa.

According to Houston Police Department officials, an unidentified vehicle struck the pedestrian, who was reportedly in the southbound lanes of traffic, then fled the scene without rendering aid.

Responding paramedics from the Houston Fire Department pronounced the male dead at the scene. The man's identity was not immediately available.

The investigation was ongoing at press time.

Anyone with information on the identity of the wanted driver and/or the vehicle is urged to contact the HPD Hit and Run Unit at 713-247-4072 or speak anonymously to Crime Stoppers of Houston at 713-222-TIPS (8477).

City offers safety tips for heating

HFD urges alarms, warns of carbon monoxide poisoning

With temperatures now reaching the freezing point, the Houston Fire Department urges citizens to be careful and follow some simple safety tips when using space heaters, fireplaces and other supplemental heating sources.

Citizens should always remember: space heaters need space.

The Houston Fire Department recommends the following safety tips when using supplemental heating sources:

- Make sure to have a working smoke alarm and a working carbon monoxide alarm if using gas or a fireplace (including a wood-burning fireplace) for heating.
- Never leave children unattended in a room with a space heater.
- Children may also stick paper or toys in the grates of the space heaters especially gas space heaters.
- Keep all combustible materials, including one's self, at least 3 feet from the heater.
- Open face heaters should have a screen.
- Provide ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Vented gas/central heating

- Inspect annually by a qualified service technician.
- Do not use these type units without a proper vent pipe. Vent pipes must exhaust to the out-

side!

- If the flame is not blue, it is not burning properly. It is producing carbon monoxide, which can't be seen, smelled or tasted. Turn it off.

- Use flexible metal tubing with threaded ends to connect the heater to the gas valve. There should be a cutoff valve for the heater at the wall. Never use a rubber hose to connect a space heater to the gas valve.
- Use soapy water to check all connections and valves for leaks. Never use a match to test for a gas leak.
- Look for the American Gas Association label and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper usage.

Electric heaters

- Never overload outlets or breakers.
- Don't use extension cords for the heater. If the cord is hot to the touch, turn off the heater and unplug it.
- Electric heaters permanently installed in the wall or ceiling should have lint and dust removed regularly.

Fireplaces

- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.
- Never leave a fireplace fire unattended, par-

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Firefighters respond to Sagemont fire

Damage estimated at \$35K; cause under investigation

A Sagemont house caught fire around 8:15 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, in the 11100 block of Sagemont near Hughes Road.

According to officials with the Houston Fire Department, firefighters arrived on scene to find heavy smoke coming from the attic of a one-story house. The attached garage was heavily involved with fire and spreading to a nearby home.

Firefighters protected the exposure and made an offensive attack on the fire. Crews ventilated the roof and conducted a primary search.

The utilities were controlled, and the fire was extinguished.

Damage was estimated at approximately \$35,000. No injuries were reported.

HFD Arson investigators were requested to determine the cause and origin of the blaze. At press time, the fire remained under investigation.

In all, 49 HFD personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from stations 93, 23, 70, 71, 52, 61, 94, 37 and 24. Firefighters from the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department also assisted in extinguishing the blaze.

Hobby Airport expansion underway

To be complete in 2027, project to include 7 new gates

Houston Airports and Southwest Airlines recently came together to celebrate the expansion of Hobby Airport.

The event marks a major milestone in the continued growth and enhancement of Houston's first commercial airport. The event underscored Hobby Airport's commitment to providing an exceptional travel experience as it expands to meet the demands of increasing passenger numbers and future growth.

This latest expansion of West Concourse – built by Southwest Airlines in 2015 – will include seven new gates, a state-of-the-art baggage handling system, additional baggage claim carousels and a protective canopy connecting the terminal to the parking garage. These improvements, which are scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2027, aim to elevate the overall passenger journey and ensure a seamless, efficient travel experience.

"This expansion isn't just about adding more gates; it's about enhancing every aspect of the passenger experience," said Jim Szczesniak, director of Aviation for Houston Airports. "As North America's first and only 5-Star Skytrax airport, it's essential for Hobby Airport to offer

facilities and services that match our world-class reputation. Partnering with Southwest Airlines on this project allows us to create a truly remarkable experience for all travelers."

The celebration highlighted the strong, longstanding partnership between Houston Airports and Southwest Airlines, which has deep roots in the Houston community.

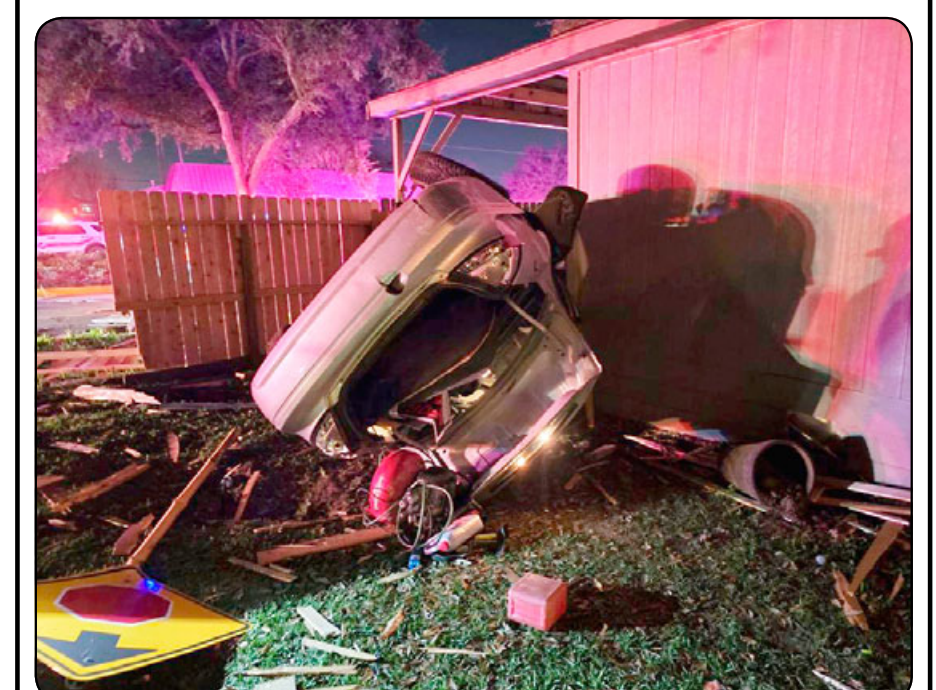
"Since our first year of service in 1971, we've operated nonstop at Hobby Airport," said Steve Sineros, vice president of Airport Affairs at Southwest Airlines. "It's a cornerstone market for us, serving as a base for our flight crews and as a gateway city to our international service. This expansion marks an exciting time for our future here, allowing us to grow our service and reach even more customers."

Sherri Hull, director of Governmental Affairs for Southwest Airlines, expressed her enthusiasm for the project and its significance to both the airline and the city.

"On behalf of the nearly 5,000 Southwest employees based in Space City, it's a pleasure to celebrate this milestone with Houston Airports," said Hull. "This expansion reflects our shared

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Police chase ends in car crash



A police chase on New Year's Eve involving the Pearland Police Department ended in an accident on Hughes Road just west of Blackhawk in which the suspect's vehicle crashed through a fence and into the backyard of a home as a holiday party was taking place. Debris from the accident caused one adult female guest to be transported to the hospital with facial fractures, while a child guest was treated at the scene for minor injuries. The uninjured driver was taken into custody by PPD.

Photo by Dean Baier

In My Opinion

Bill King discusses population estimates

The U.S. Census Bureau just released its population estimates for 2024. It estimated that the nation's population grew by nearly 1%, adding about 3.3 million people. Of that increase, however, 84% was from immigration (2.8 million). Without immigration, the population would have only grown by about .15% (518,000).

However, this probably understates the effect of immigration on U.S. population growth. First, more recent immigrants tend to have a higher birth rate than other U.S. residents. This study found that in 2019, the fertility rate for Americans born here was 1.69 compared to 2.02 for immigrants. In other words, immigrants are propping up the natural population growth.

Second, the Census Bureau's immigration numbers have been widely criticized as being too low. Last year, when the Census Bureau estimated that net international immigration into the U.S. was 1.2 million, the Congressional Budget Office estimated it was 4 million. So, the Census Bureau's estimate this year of 2.8 million sounds more reasonable. However, our immigration system is so broken that no one knows the actual number. But it is quite likely that if the U.S. were to stop all immigration today, our population would be falling.

Every state added population from international immigration. At 411,000, Florida had the most new residents from other countries, with New York a close second at 389,000. Texas had a 311,000 increase from international immigration. International immigration comprised 88% of Florida's total growth but only 56% of Texas'.

Only three states (Mississippi, Vermont, and West Virginia) lost population last year, but their losses were minimal. However, without international immigration, twenty states would have lost population. California would have been the biggest loser at 129,000. New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Massachusetts rounded out the top five in this category. The twenty states that would have lost population without immigration would have lost a total of 385,000 without it.

There was significantly less moving between states by Americans last year. In 2023, about 1.75 million people moved from one state to another. This year that dropped to 1.15 million, which is about a 34% decline. There has been a decline in interstate migration for several decades, most likely due to an aging population. However, this is an unusually large drop for one year. There has been some speculation about the cause and whether this represents a more persistent trend, but I was unable to find any hard data to explain this year's drop. The ability to work remotely and, therefore, less need to relocate for a job is probably a factor.

Texas led residents from other states by gaining 85,000. However, that was less than half of its gain from domestic immigration last year. North Carolina was a close second at 82,000. South Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee were third through fifth, respectively. Florida had a jar-dropping 65% decline in domestic immigration (185,000 to 65,000).

California continued to lead the way in losing residents, shedding 240,000 residents. New York lost 120,000. Illinois, New Jersey, and Massachusetts also had significant losses. Louisiana and Mississippi were the only southern states that lost residents to other states.

The new data strongly suggests that assuming the new Trump administration even comes close to making good immigration reforms and deportation promises, there will likely be some significant declines in the U.S. population. The declines will reach almost every part of the country and significantly impact the economy. There will undoubtedly be some benefits from a declining population, but there will also be significant and painful disruptions. There will almost certainly be labor shortages in many industries and a significant decline in economic growth.

Polling has consistently shown that Trump's more restrictive immigration policy has widespread support in the country across almost every demographic. It will be interesting to see whether the support continues as the reality of population decline begins to be felt.

Bill King

Juveniles accused of break-in

Victim refuses to press charges because of age

On the afternoon of Thursday, Dec. 26, deputies from Harris County Precinct 2 Jerry Garcia's office responded to a reported break-in or attempted break-in in the Meadowcreek Village area.

An investigating patrol deputy was assigned to look further into the matter, and within an hour, was able to identify three juvenile males as being the suspects involved in the case.

Upon notifying the vic-

tim of these revelations, the homeowner refused to press charges due to the young ages of the suspects. The parents of the juveniles were contacted by Precinct 2 officials, and the youths were released without charges - against the advice of responding deputies, who pledged to ramp up patrols in the area.

"After determining the involvement of the juveniles, the parents became involved and cooperated with our of-

fic," a post on the constable's Facebook page read. "Despite the evidence gathered against the juveniles, the property owner did not wish to pursue a criminal complaint against them. We respect the property owner's decision. Despite our efforts to bring this case to a resolution, we will continue to increase patrols. Constable Jerry Garcia will continue to encourage residents to report suspicious activity."

HFD offers heating safety tips

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ticularly when children are present.

- Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container and kept at a safe distance from one's home.
- Make sure to open the fireplace flue, if applicable.

Carbon monoxide
- Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill one before they are even aware of it.

- Carbon monoxide can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, disorientation and fatigue, often mistaken for the flu.
- Have a working carbon monoxide alarm if using gas appliances and/or a fireplace (gas and wood-burning).
- When one's carbon monoxide alarm sounds, ventilate the house with fresh air by opening windows and doors.

Hobby expansion underway

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commitment to investing in Houston's future and enhancing the traveler experience at Hobby Airport."

The new gates and infrastructure will not only support the expansion of flights and destinations but will also

streamline the baggage claim process with the implementation of the Leonardo Cross Belt Sorter, a best-in-class system popular in Europe and gaining traction in the United States.

"Passengers will spend less time waiting for luggage

and more time enjoying what Houston has to offer," said Szeszaniak.

For more information, visit www.fly2houston.com/newsroom/articles/houston-airports-southwest-airlines-celebrate-expansion-hobby-airport.

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

Thursday, Jan. 9, 3 - 4 p.m. Open lab computer help.
Thursday, Jan. 9, 4 - 5 p.m. Family Storytime.
Monday, Jan. 9, 11 a.m. - noon Open lab computer help.
Wednesday, Jan. 9, 6 - 7 p.m. Living English lessons.
Wednesday, Dec. 11, 6 - 7 p.m. Conversational living English lessons.
Visit <https://houstonlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/events> for more library events.

Book drop

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

Parker Williams Library

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

The book drop is open. Social media links are Facebook.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary and Instagram.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary.
The following events are scheduled for Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.:
Thursday, Jan. 9, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Toddler time.
Saturday, Jan. 11, noon - 1:30 p.m. Embroidery class (18+).
Monday, Jan. 13, 1 - 2:30 p.m. ESL Conversation Club.
Monday, Jan. 13, 3 - 5 p.m. Laser cutter bookmark craft (18+).
Monday, Jan. 13, 6 - 7:30 p.m. Citizenship classes.
Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1 - 2 p.m. Babies 'n' books.
Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1 - 2 p.m. Citizenship classes.

Parker Williams "No-Contact Curbside Holds Pick-Up"

- After receiving notification that holds are ready for pickup, call 832-927-7870.
- Have a library card number and PIN handy.
- A pickup time and instructions will be given.
- Upon arriving, park in one of the two parking spots reserved for curbside holds.
- Be prepared to show a library card or other form of ID for verification.
- Hours are Monday, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 - 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library> for details.

Online services

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

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>.

Darryl Terry Smith

Darryl Terry Smith of Houston was born to James E. Smith and Florence M. Smith on Sept. 20, 1950. Smith was called to be with the lord and savior at the age of 74, on Dec. 22, 2024, in the comfort of his home.

Visitation was held at Forest Park Lawnside Funeral Home on Wednesday Jan. 1. Funeral service was on Jan. 2, followed by the interment at Houston National Cemetery.

He was preceded in death by his parents, and by his son Damon A. Smith. He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Guadalupe B. Smith; their son, Darryl S. Smith; grandchildren Jaylene I. Smith, Isaiah S. Smith, Isaac A. Smith and Lexi R. Smith.

Darryl was drafted into the Navy while he was in high school, during the Vietnam War. He was stationed on the USS Wood County (LST-1178) where he was a plank owner and on the USS Harlan County (LST-1196) as a BM3. He was trained as an assault boat coxswain and was the only sailor entrusted to transport the captain from the ship to land. After serving four years, Smith was discharged honorably.

He then became employed with Mustang Tractor, working on highway construction, Abrams & Granite, and with Cemex until retirement.

In his leisure time, Smith enjoyed spending time with his family in a variety of ways including taking his grandchildren to museums, the zoo and parks. His most treasured time was spent teaching his grandchildren how to fish. He also enjoyed watching planes at Ellington Field, attending air shows, and camping. More than anything, he enjoyed spending time with his loving wife.

He always had a heart for helping others, especially with those less fortunate than he.

Anita Fay Keeling



Anita Fay Keeling, born on Oct. 13, 1928, in Reading, Pa. to Clyde and Esther Reichardt was sent to her eternal home with the lord on Nov. 29, 2024, surrounded by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was affectionately known to most as "Ma" and exemplified unconditional love for family, unforgettable tenderness and unwavering faith in God.

Growing up in a family of five children, Anita was a talented singer and dancer from a young age. She was eventually recruited to join her sister's professional dance troupe, which performed all along the East Coast and down to Key West, Fla., which became her favorite town.

She married Raymond H. Keeling Sr. on July 30, 1948, at her family's Lutheran Church. After meeting on a blind date, their romantic courtship included love letters exchanged between Pennsylvania and Anchorage, Alaska, where Ray was stationed.

According to him, their wedding reception spanned three days and nights. Following a long drive to Texas, Ma met her new in-laws and earned the nickname "up dump" due to her Pennsylvania Dutch roots where people "up dump the garbage and out the lights."

Anita and her family were citizens of the world, relocating to various military bases throughout her husband's 30-year career. During this time,

they lived in Japan, Germany and Maryland. She was the quintessential military wife, raising four children, supporting Raymond's career, mastering the art of pinochle, hosting parties, joining women's clubs, making lifetime friends, and above all creating a great family home. She made every move to a new home seamless, helping her family settle in, radiating love and positivity effortlessly, and preparing delicious meals perfectly timed for her husband's arrival. While the scenery, language, and weather may have changed, Anita's love and care remained an unshakable anchor for her family. Being a mother was such a gift for her.

Upon moving to Sagement, Anita and Ray became members of Sagement Church. Both loved the community they found there, including "Brother John" Morgan, Emory Gadd, and many other members now deceased.

Amongst those left to cherish her memory are her son, Raymond H. Keeling Jr.; daughters Gail Van Winkle, Kim Hubenak and Lynette Keeling; 15 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; numerous nieces and nephews; and extended family. She is also survived by her brother-in-law, three sisters-in-law, and their children, including her niece Eileen Oberman, who was like a first child to Anita and Ray after they moved to Houston. Every person encompassed in this list will forever cherish her memory.

Anita was preceded in death by her beloved husband; parents; sisters, Gloria Reichardt, Norma Scaletti and Alva Nagle; brother, Clyde Reichardt Jr.; and grandsons William C. Van Winkle and Christopher Hubenak who welcomed her home in heaven.

The memorial service for Anita Fay Keeling was held on Saturday, Jan. 4, at Sagement Church.

Paulette Dalton



Paulette Dalton, 78, a 51-year resident of the South Belt area, passed away on Dec. 20, 2024. Paulette was born on June 23, 1946, and grew up in Houston in the south Heights area. Paulette married her husband, Ronald V. Dalton Sr. in 1963. She graduated from Reagan High School in 1965 and was a stay-at-home mom until she went to work as a manager for a small hotel in Houston for 20 years. Afterward she went to work for Bayshore Hospital in the food services, taking care of new mothers in the maternity ward. Paulette worked there for almost 20 years before she decided to retire in 2015.

During her earlier years, she took care of four children who all attended Meador Elementary and Beverly Hills Intermediate, and graduated from J. Frank Dobie High School.

When the kids were attending Meador, Paulette was involved in the PTA from Christmas parties to the carnivals. During her spare time, Paulette enjoyed going to the thrift stores, watching movies and TV (especially "General Hospital"). She loved attending to her flowers and plants through the years always changing them through the seasons. No plants or flowers were too big or too small.

After her husband passed away, the love of her life was her dog, Peps. She took care of and looked after stray cats.

Paulette was preceded in death by her parents, Paul and Nelda Draeger and her husband.

She is survived by her four children Ronald V. Dalton Jr. and wife Angela of Pearland; Terri Dalton Cocek and husband Wade of Houston; Susan Dalton Stott and husband Anthony of Manvel; and Paul Dalton of Houston.

Paulette also is survived by her three grandchildren Dakota and Cheyenne Dalton and Lillian Cocek. Pallbearers were Ronald V. Dalton Jr., Wade Cocek, Anthony Stott, Paul Dalton and Floyd Arndt.

Visitation was held at South Park Funeral home in Pearland on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 8, at South Park.

Leland Coleman "Cody" Voss



Leland Coleman "Cody" Voss, age 88, was taken home to live with Jesus on Dec. 24, 2024, with his loving family surrounding him. Cody, as he was affectionately called, was born in Leesville, La. on April 27, 1936. He was preceded in death by his parents, Claude Clarence Voss and Lily Barbara Voss. He was the eldest of his siblings Gail, Kent and Sherry Voss and they shared a deep love for music and faith.

The family relocated to Texas, which became their forever home. Cody grew up attending Market Street Baptist Church, where his early love for music began to take shape. At 16, he and a church friend organized a Vacation Bible School in their backyard for neighborhood children, with Cody responsible for the music. It was around this time that he felt God calling him into a life of music ministry. Cody graduated from Galena Park High School and went on to Sam Houston State University, majoring in music with a focus on vocal performance.

During college, Cody had several musical opportunities. He worked as the choral director for the men's and women's prison choirs at the Texas State Penitentiary at Huntsville, and he was the featured vocalist in The Confederates, a popular men's quartet that had a busy performance schedule and was even offered a recording deal. During his senior year, he starred as "Curley" in "Oklahoma!" Though he received offers to pursue careers in opera and on Broadway, Cody never wavered in his conviction to use his musical talent to lead others in worship.

It was during a youth revival at River View Baptist Church that Cody met Suzy Pledger. They were married on Jan. 27, 1962, and their marriage of 62 years was marked by love, partnership, and shared ministry. Following his graduation from Sam Houston, Cody attended the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Over the years, he served as minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church League City (now Bay Area Baptist Church), Second Baptist Church Corpus Christi and Central Baptist Church in Bryan. Eventually, Cody committed to full-time music evangelism, leading worship and sharing the gospel across the country.

Even after "retiring," Cody continued to serve as an interim music minister in numerous churches. His final church service was at Forest Oaks Baptist Church, where he stood in the pulpit for the last time in Sept. 2023, at the age of 87.

Cody is survived by his beloved wife; children Cody-sue Congdon (David), Miles

Voss (Julie), and Elindabeth Kolar (Philip); grandchildren Evan Voss, Aidenn Buffalo (Cody), Abigail Congdon, Lexie Voss, Chloe Kolar (Miles Bergeron), Grant Congdon and Maggie Voss; and one great-grandchild, Everette Louise Bergeron.

Known for his firm convictions and deep love for family, Cody was always ready with a song of praise, a corny joke, or a kind word to uplift those around him. His voice, his commitment to God's work, and his legacy of faith will continue to resonate in the hearts of all who knew him.

The service honoring Cody's life was held Saturday, Jan. 4, at Peevey Funeral Home. Interment was followed at Forest Park East Cemetery in Webster.

Donald Ray Wilds



Donald Ray Wilds, born on March 10, 1944, passed away of cancer on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, at the age of 80 in Houston, with his brother by his side.

He was lovingly known to his many nieces and nephews as Uncle Donnie, then "Don" to all later in life. Don was born in Columbus, Ind. and spent all of his life in the Hoosier state - except during his military service - before moving to Texas in 2024.

Don attended Indiana University before entering the Army for three years, serving one year in Vietnam, during that war. Don was a bookstore owner and operator in Bloomington - next door to Indiana University - he was a big IU fan. As the co-owner of Caveat Emptor Used Books and the co-owner/manager of Vintage Phoenix Comic Books, Don spent his working years in a "job" he loved. He was an avid reader of sci-fi and collector of everything Elvis and Star Wars memorabilia!

Don got on the road (gifts of comic books and chocolates in tow) and joined in on family graduations, weddings and gatherings in Texas and California throughout the years. He enjoyed visiting during July 4th and Christmas reunions and card games, bridge and euchre being favorites. He was active in Republican politics and supported local races as well as state and national candidates - always ready for a good debate.

Don is survived by his brother, Dale Wilds; nieces, Durinda (Curtis) Tyler, Carol (Robert Lord) Wilds and nephew Ray (Lori) Wilds; 16 grand-nieces and -nephews and 27 great-nieces and -nephews. Don is predeceased by his sister-in-law, Anna Wilds and his parents Roy Raymond Wilds and V. Pauletta (Hammond) Wilds.

Eligible voters may apply for annual ballot by mail

The Harris County Clerk's Office reminds voters eligible to vote by mail that applications for an annual ballot by mail for all 2025 elections are now being accepted. Registered voters who are 65 or older, have a disability, or meet other requirements under Texas law may submit an annual application started Jan. 1.

"An annual ballot by mail ensures that eligible voters can conveniently participate in elections throughout the year," said Harris County Clerk Tennesha Hudspeth. "It's essential to complete the application accurately to avoid any delays in receiving your ballot."

What is an annual ballot

Services were held Saturday, Jan. 4, at Peevey Funeral Home. Don was laid to rest in the Houston National Cemetery located at 10410 Veterans Memorial Drive on Monday, Jan. 6. One can honor Don's passing by contributing to a Cancer or Veteran's Charity of one's choice.

Evelyn Therese Wilkerson



Evelyn Therese (Culmer) Wilkerson passed away on Dec. 12, 2024. A native Houstonian, she was born Sept. 3, 1929, to Howard Bertram Culmer and Mary Catherine McHale. She grew up in the Heights until her family moved to West University in 1940. She attended Christ the King School and St. Anne's School and graduated from St. Agnes Academy in 1947.

After graduation, Evelyn worked at Sanitary Farm Dairies for about three years. She met Charlie Buford Wilkerson in August 1948, and they were engaged in January 1949 amid a rare Houston snowfall. They married on July 25, 1950. Charlie and Evelyn lived in Bellaire before moving to Overbrook off Bellfort. "Bubba" and "Puddin'" as they were known to friends, family, and neighbors, lived in Sagement Park since 1981.

Puddin' was a master at baking pies from scratch and continued her father's tradition of making "Tootsie Rolls" out of leftover dough. She enjoyed working crossword puzzles and watching game shows, especially "Jeopardy". She also loved going to the casinos in Louisiana.

Survivors include children Karen Havens (Robert Anderson) of Petal, Miss., Glenn Wilkerson of Sagement Park, Mary Crochet and husband John of Spring Branch; Stephen Wilkerson and wife Penny of Deer Park, Kathy Cross and husband Robert of Houston, Johnny Wilkerson of Huffman, George Wilkerson of Pearland, and David Wilkerson and wife Becky of Splendoria; 17 grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren, great-great-grand-

children, nieces, nephews, and cherished friends.

Evelyn's husband of 57 years preceded her in death in Feb. 2008. She was also preceded in death by her parents, 10 siblings, son Charlie Wilkerson Jr. in 2017 and grandson Joshua Wilkerson in 2010.

Visitation was held Sunday, Dec. 22, from 5 to 8 p.m., at South Park Funeral Home.

A memorial service was held Monday, Dec. 23, at 10 a.m., at South Park Funeral Home, followed by interment at South Park Cemetery.

Friends and relatives of Evelyn will cherish many wonderful memories, and she will stay forever in their hearts.

Carol Berg Tennesen



Carol Berg Tennesen, 72, a resident of Pearland for 16 years and a former South Belt resident, passed away on Dec. 30, 2024. She was born on May 24, 1952, to Arthur Arvin Berg and Gladys Sophie Svendsbye in Fargo, N.D. Carol met her husband, Robert Tennesen, in Chicago in 1976 after earning a master's degree from the University of Chicago and starting to work as a project manager in market research. She was a member of the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Pearland.

She is preceded in death by her parents, and her brother, David Berg.

She is survived by her husband of 45 years; daughter, Erica Tennesen and partner Lauren Upchurch; son, Steven Tennesen and Stephanie; sister, Laurel Dolph; nephew, Matt Berg; and grandchildren Madeline Tennesen and Violet Tennesen. She will be missed by her extended family and her many friends.

Visitation was held Wednesday Jan. 8, at Epiphany Lutheran Church at 5515 Broadway St., Pearland. Service was held, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025, followed by burial at South Park Cemetery in Pearland.

Memorials may be sent to the National Ataxia Foundation.

Car crashes into local restaurant

A car crashed through the front window of the Boba Bird restaurant in the 10300 block of Blackhawk at Kirkville near Dobie High School shortly before 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7.

While the single-automobile accident caused extensive damage to the storefront in which the area restaurant is located, no customers or em-

ployees were injured in the incident, according to a post on the business's Instagram page.

At press time, the cause of the crash and the driver's condition was unclear.

Footage of the accident from the restaurant's surveillance system was widely distributed on social media.

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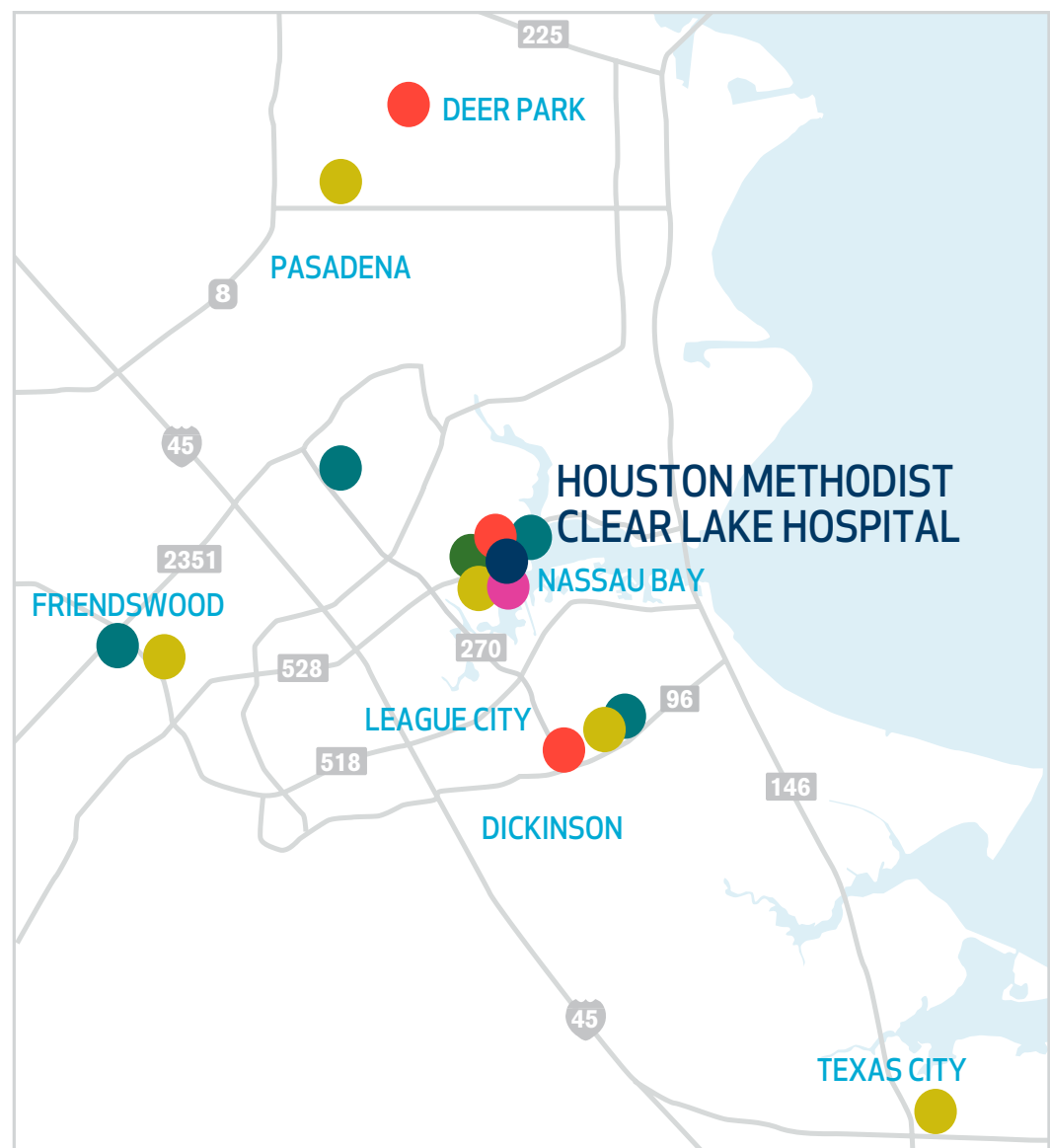


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South Belt-Ellington Leader looks back at highs, lows of previous year

Hurricane Beryl strikes South Belt community, leaving behind extensive wind damage, power outages

Continued from Page 1
staff, proofreading stories into her eighties.
Affectionately known as the "Mayor of South Belt," Flickinger's legacy went far beyond the newspaper,

however, with her volunteering and advocating in the South Belt community in numerous capacities for several decades.
A founding member of St. Luke the Evangelist

Catholic Church (and former member of St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church), Flickinger made history in the 1970s by becoming one of the first two women in the Archdiocese of

Galveston-Houston – along with Jennie Schubert – to administer communion. Flickinger was recognized at St. Luke's inaugural gala in 2023.
Flickinger again made

history in the 1990s when she was the first woman elected to the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees, later serving as its chair. During her tenure at San Jacinto, the college received numerous honors and recognitions. The Marie Spence Flickinger Fine Arts building on the college's South Campus is named in her honor.

Flickinger also worked closely with Pasadena ISD, and in 2015, was named the school district's Distinguished Citizen of the Year. The esteemed citizen was recognized for her efforts in piloting the Early College High School program, which allows participating students to earn an associate degree by the time they earn a diploma.

Dobie High School – the alma mater of her sons Fred and Davy – honored Flickinger in 2015, inducting her into the campus's Hall of Honor for her volunteer efforts in the community.
In 2018, Flickinger was recognized by Gov. Greg Abbott, receiving a Governor's Volunteer Award for her emergency efforts during Hurricane Harvey, which included establishing and coordinating a temporary shelter at Dobie High School, feeding and housing more than 1,650 displaced residents.

Flickinger's involvement in the South Belt community also included coordinating the annual Fourth of July parade and fireworks display, the annual South Belt Spectacular

Cook-off and the annual South Belt-Ellington Leader Christmas drive, which provided food and toys to approximately 35 area families in need last month.
Hundreds attended both Flickinger's funeral and a celebration of life event at San Jacinto College (originally planned as a retirement party), with dozens of community leaders and elected officials publicly praising Flickinger for her lifelong efforts.

Hurricane Beryl
Another tragedy affecting many South Belt residents took place early Monday, July 8, when Hurricane Beryl struck the area with brute force, causing extensive damage.
The rain gauge located at the Beamer Ditch at Hughes Road recorded more than 8 inches of rainfall during the storm, according to county officials.

Despite the high amount of rain, however, it was Beryl's winds – topping out around 90 mph – that wreaked the most havoc locally. The strong winds caused approximately 2.25 million residents in the Greater Houston area to lose power – some up to two weeks.
While high water was reported throughout the South Belt community, the Leader received no reports of flooded homes, as with past hurricanes. Local flood experts attributed much of this success to drainage improvements made by Harris County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, including the South Belt Stormwater Detention Basin, the Clear Creek Federal Flood Risk Management Project and the Beamer Ditch Project.

As with past storms, such as 2017's Hurricane Harvey,

the South Belt community came together to help their neighbor in need.
The Leader received multiple reports of residents helping others remove downed trees and fences, sometimes so that traffic ways or drainage ports could be cleared of debris.

According to local officials, Beryl claimed at least seven lives in the Greater Houston area. Most of the deaths were caused by falling trees but at least one resident – a civilian with the Houston Police department – was killed by floodwater and another death appeared to be caused by lightning.

Prior to arriving in the United States, Beryl reportedly killed at least 12 people in the Caribbean.
Peaking as a Category 5 hurricane, Beryl originally made landfall in Jamaica as a Category 4 storm. Beryl made its Texas landfall as a Category 1 hurricane in Matagorda. Beryl was downgraded to a tropical storm as it made its way inland.

As Beryl proceeded north, the South Belt area found itself on the dirty side of the storm.
At the request of Texas Acting Gov. Dan Patrick, President Joe Biden on Tuesday, July 9, declared

Beryl a federal disaster, providing relief to 121 affected counties in the state.
This marked the second time in just two months that such a federal disaster was declared in the community, as a derecho wind storm had also struck the area in May, causing widespread damage.

Following the storm, a massive cleanup effort began in which crews from the city, county and local utility districts collected millions of pounds of storm debris over the next several months.

See next week's Leader for additional highlights from 2024.

Fred Roberts Middle hosts annual "Hank's House o' Hot Chocolate"



Fred Roberts Middle School fifth grade-reading teacher Angie Rodriguez (left) hosted her annual short play "Hank's House o' Hot Chocolate." Her students took turns performing as cus-

tomers and server. Everyone was served hot chocolate and treats after the performances. Joining in the fun were assistant principal Karen Pena and fifth-grader Ezekiel Maciel.

Remember When

45 years ago (1980)
The Sagemeadow Civic Club issued a resolution regarding their dissatisfaction with the handling of complaints received by Storer Cable.

40 years ago (1985)
A 40-year-old man was knocked unconscious after a board from 20 feet above fell on his head as he worked inside the water storage tank being constructed on Scarsdale. Emergency medical technicians from the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department lowered him from an 80-foot platform in a Stokes basket rescue device.

Final plans were being made by the U.S. Postal Service for completion of a branch station in the Windmill Lakes area north of Alameda Genoa Road.
Larry and Mary Ellen Morgan of Sagemeadow won \$150,000 in a give-away from KIKK radio. After answering a trivia question the previous August, he became eligible for the end-of-year giveaway.

35 Years ago (1990)
To prevent the opening of two highly contaminated pits at the Brio Superfund site, attorney Steve Carrigan filed for a temporary restraining order in Judge David Hitner's federal court. Officials for the Brio Task Force had previously scheduled opening the pits for test sampling late in the month but moved it up two weeks.
To kick off the new year, the South Belt-Ellington Chamber

of Commerce planned a Mardi Gras Ball.
Dobie High School senior Mike Curtis, son of Richard and Janetta Curtis of Sagemeadow, was selected Pasadena Independent School District's only band student to be named All-State. He was one of 28 trumpets selected.

30 years ago (1995)
A \$2,475 landscaping project at the front of Dobie High School was slated for a Groundhog Day planting. The project was organized by the South Belt Civic Coalition, the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce and the South Belt-Ellington Rotary.

The Green Tee Terrace Homeowners Association offered a reward for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the damage to the light posts at the Scarsdale entrance to the Green Tee Terrace subdivision in early January.
Thieves broke into the concession stand, stealing much of the equipment at the United Sports Association fields on Dixie Farm Road.

Taking a different angle toward its own policy, Clear Creek ISD administrators accepted medical reasons for allowing Weber Elementary School students to transfer to another district school.
25 years ago (2000)
Two suspects were arrested and charged in connection with the attempted capital murder of Tracey Lynn Deel.

20 years ago (2005)
A mix-up between the

city of Houston and the Clear Brook City M.U.D. resulted in fireworks being sold in that area.

With the arrest of a South Belt resident, Precinct 2 constable's deputies were able to solve more than 40 local burglaries.
Several business owners complained after contractors attempted to collect fees for the city of Houston dumpsters. The owners claimed they did not lease the dumpsters, their landlord did, and, therefore, they should not have to pay fees.

A total of 34 PISD schools were recognized by the Texas Education Agency for outstanding student achievement. Moore and Frazier elementaries and Beverly Hills Intermediate were the local schools recognized.

15 years ago (2010)
A hard freeze struck the South Belt area. Fortunately, the community was spared any serious problems.

10 years ago (2015)
A South Belt woman was responsible for reuniting a family with a pair of young French bulldogs that had been taken from their East Houston home by a FedEx delivery man. The story made national headlines after surveillance footage captured the driver in action. South Belt resident Beth Radcliffe found the dogs near the intersection of Kirkville and Sagecanyon and took them to Kirkwood Veterinary Hospital to see if they had been chipped. Aware

of the theft, Kirkwood's Dr. John Gregory reached out to the owners, who then picked up the puppies from his office. Radcliffe said she was offered a reward for finding the puppies, which cost \$3,000 each, but she declined to accept. The FedEx driver, who said he was merely getting the animals out of the cold, was suspended.

A former Dobie student was one of three Houston police officers to abruptly leave the force Monday, Jan. 12, amid an alleged ticket-rigging scandal. Officer Robert Manzanales, a 1986 graduate, took a dishonorable retirement, while fellow officers Gregory Rosa and John Garcia both resigned. Manzanales had been with the department for more than two decades. A fourth officer, Rudolph Farias, committed suicide when the scandal first broke the previous August. Later in November, Manzanales was sentenced on two felony counts to three years deferred adjudication and 120 hours community service.

5 years ago (2020)
One man was fatally shot and another injured Wednesday, Jan. 8, in the 11800 block of Algonquin near Scarsdale. Jesse Perez, 24, was pronounced dead at the scene. A second man, 22, was transported to an area hospital in stable condition. Police said Perez was shot inside his apartment, while the second victim, a neighbor checking on the commotion, was shot in an adjacent hallway as the suspect fled. Javon Chatman, 22,

was later charged with capital murder and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

1 year ago (2024)
John Whitmire was sworn in as mayor of Houston Jan. 1, in a small, private ceremony at 12:01 a.m. and then again Jan. 2, at the inaugural ceremony at Wortham Theater.

Whitmire became the 63rd mayor of America's fourth-largest city. He came into office following a landslide victory in the mayoral runoff election on Dec. 9. The new mayor declared he would focus on working with the police and fire departments to make the city safer; creating a balanced and transparent budget; improving city services, such as garbage pick-up, homelessness, cleaning up illegal dumping and the Permitting Office; and upgrading infrastructure, including the water system and flooding and drainage.

The inaugural ceremony took place Jan. 2 at Wortham Theater. In addition to the mayor, City Controller Chris Hollins and 16 at-large and district City Council members were also sworn in, including former South Belter District E Council Member Fred Flickinger.

Following the inauguration, the newly sworn-in mayor and City Council members returned to City Hall for a Council meeting. Whitmire opened the doors to City Hall, welcoming Houstonians to shake his hand and share issues of concern.

Over The Back Fence by Nicole

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, KRISTEN!
Kristen Giles celebrates her 24th birthday Jan. 13. Her parents, Tracy and Jim Giles, and brothers Cody and Aaron and wife Ashley and sons Jaxson and Jace Giles extend their best wishes for a wonderful birthday. Kristen is a Dobie graduate.

DR. JOHN MORGAN CELEBRATES
Greetings are sent to Dr. John Morgan, founding pastor of Sagemont Church, from friends and the Leader staff as he celebrates a birthday Jan. 14. Affectionately called "Brother John" by many who know him, he founded and pastored the church for more than 50 years.

SCHOOL DAZE
The following staff and personnel of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Jan. 9 through Jan. 15.

Atkinson Elementary
Sing a happy birthday song to Sheri Graham Jan. 11.

Burnett Elementary
Karina Diaz celebrates a birthday Jan. 9. Birthday greetings go out to Jocelyn Chavez Jan. 14.

Bush Elementary
Give a birthday shoutout Jan. 9 to Vicki Sheppard. Light the candles Jan. 11 for a celebration for Cynthia Covarrubias.

Hancock Elementary
Jan. 10 is a day of celebration for Vanessa Esquivel for her birthday. Break out the balloons and party favors for Mayra Nieto on her birthday Jan. 11. Join in the birthday fun Jan. 13 with Veronica Sandoval.

Meador Elementary
Blow out the birthday candles for Tara Merida and Anne Hamilton Jan. 11.

Fred Roberts Middle School
Light the birthday candles on a birthday cake Jan. 13 for Jorge Rocha.

Moore Elementary
Send a happy birthday wish Jan. 14 to Zuemy Carranza. Blow out the candles Jan. 15 for Diana Moreno.

South Belt Elementary
Jan. 9 is the day for a celebration for Arielle Taylor. Light the candles Jan. 11 for Monica Salazar.

Stuchbery Elementary
Sing a happy birthday song to Johnna Vega Jan. 13. Remember to wish Jennifer Ortiz a happy birthday Jan. 14.

Melillo Middle School
Jan. 10 is the day for a double-layer birthday cake for Jesseca Adamek and Nancy Guerra. Send a special birthday greeting Jan. 11 to Khoa Tran.

Beverly Hills Intermediate
Send a birthday greeting Jan. 11 to Kacee Peterson.

Thompson Intermediate
Special birthday wishes are sent to Tiffany Nelson Jan. 10. Melinda Harrison enjoys a

birthday Jan. 15.

Dobie High
Jan. 9 is the day for a party for Seema Sultana. Enjoying a birthday Jan. 10 is Camille Calo Widaski. Light the birthday candles Jan. 11 for Daniel Fitzmorris and Stacy Thomas. Jan. 13 is a day of celebration for Audrena Soto for her birthday.

FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS
Thursday, Jan. 9: Jennifer Gonzalez, Mary Meyer, Jill Rea, Mike Escobedo, Monette Falzon, Cecelia Faske and Holly Lyons; Friday, Jan. 10: Jennifer Murillo, Roy Gunter and Caron Cantu; Saturday, Jan. 11: Kelly Cavazos, Myles Barkman, Amy Villareal, Kathleen Wenzel, Deirdre Davis and James Mouton Jr.; Sunday, Jan. 12: Rosalind Vela, Troy Vessel, William Carpenter, Jose Pena, Barry Francis and Tammy Overstreet; Monday, Jan. 13: Scott Langefeld, Claire Mules, Gregden Martin, Betty Shamblin, Jessica Hynes, Joseph Farrias and Shane Poynter; Tuesday, Jan. 14: Tracy Oliver, Laurie Lynn, Tiffany Defreitas and Louis Casas; and Wednesday, Jan. 15: Denise Montano, Patrick Lesley, Heather White, Cody Fountain and Barbara Bennett-Northern.

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

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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Spring athletics already well underway across area

The "spring" portion of the high school sports schedule is well underway, with the boys' and girls' basketball and soccer seasons having resumed nearly before the 2025 celebratory confetti had settled.

The Dobie varsity girls' soccer team is out of the gate strong after winning a second straight Iowa Colony Wagon Wheel Invitational championship following a shootout win over Clear Creek Jan. 4.

Dobie, now under the guidance of first-year head coach Kyle Jurek, hosted Alief Elsik Jan. 7 after press time and now awaits

the start of the 22-6A race Jan. 14, hosting Dawson at Dobie main.

The Longhorn varsity boys' program also enjoyed a winning opening weekend, winning a pair of games by separate 2-1 counts over Klein Collins and host the Woodlands and tying another, 2-2 against New Braunfels as head coach Josh Kluka debuted for Dobie.

Dobie now heads to the Lake Travis Invitational Jan. 9-11 to face San Antonio Johnson, Laredo United and host Lake Travis in the event.

Later this month, the

Clear Brook hoops stands out in 24-6A

The Clear Brook varsity basketball programs have done just fine for themselves to this point in the 2024-2025 season and will be looking to finish what they started as the all-important 2025 portion of the schedule has resumed.

As the post-holiday schedule resumed Jan. 3, Jace Walker had a team-high 21 points as the Wolverine boys defeated Clear Falls 53-49 on the road, staying undefeated at 3-0 in league action along the way.

Clear Brook also improved to 16-8 overall with the win as Christian Brown added 13 points.

In other games with big implications within 24-6A, Clear Springs made a significant statement with a 79-42 win over host Dickinson as freshman star Madden Hill led all scorers with 18 points.

The Chargers improved to 21-3 overall, including 3-0 in league play while Dickinson head coach Milecka Loydrake told the Leader that it's all about focus and doing

hosted Clear Lake Jan. 7 after press time, will play at Brazoswood Jan. 10.

The Clear Brook varsity girls' basketball team figured to have most of the heavy lifting out of the way following early victories over Deer Park and Dickinson to start the first half of 24-6A play, but then came a loss to Clear Creek.

The Wolverines, once ranked as high as No. 3 in the state, fell to 3-1 in league play with the loss heading into Christmas eve, then responded with a dominating unbeaten run at the Fort Bend ISD Showcase, returning home with the tournament championship.

The locals tipped off the 2025 portion of the schedule at home Jan. 3 against Clear Falls, winning 51-42 to keep pace at 4-1 atop the 24-6A standings with Dickinson and Clear Creek.

At 23-2 overall and 4-1 in league play following the win over Clear Falls, Wolverine head coach Milecka Loydrake told the Leader that it's all about focus and doing

Clear Brook, which

Continued on Page 8



Junior Leslie Sarduy (1), a three-year starter at second base, is now a veteran on a Dobie varsity softball team that includes just four seniors. Through the first half of district play, Dobie went 5-1 and was 13-10 overall.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf



Dobie varsity baseball head coach Miguel Torres will lead his program into the start of preseason workouts January 17. Preseason scrimmages may begin Feb. 1, and the regular season will begin Feb. 17 as they'll be takes on Goose Creek Memorial.

Dobie girls' basketball shows improvement

State-ranked Dawson (8-0) and Pearland (7-1) topped the District 22-6A varsity girls' basketball standings following the opening round of games on this side of the calendar, followed closely by Manvel and Shadow Creek.

Dawson and Pearland are ticketed for the University Interscholastic League's first-ever Division 1 of season bracket, with Manvel and Shadow Creek therefore headed to Division 2.

While it appears that each of the five Pasadena ISD programs along with Alvin will miss out on the fun, certainly not all is lost. Dobie, sitting in fifth place at 3-4 as of press time, has put together a competitive season under first-year head coach Rachel Flores.

The Longhorns grabbed a third-place trophy at the Fort Bend ISD Showcase, winning three of four games along the way Dec. 27-28.

Dobie downed Lamar Consolidated, lost to Foster and finished with wins over Clear Springs and then Dulles to claim a commemorative plaque.



Desire Lewis (23) of Dobie has added her skills to the varsity level this season, and she and her teammates will look to finish strong over the latter portion of the schedule.



Sophomore Kianni Sengal (3), in action against South Houston in late December, has had a solid debut season at varsity level and is very much a key to the future within the program as the Dobie varsity girls' group aims to finish strong in 2024-2025.

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SBYSC registration is online; early prices set through Jan. 19

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

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

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

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

Baldwin declares for NFL draft

Class of 2021 Dobie High School graduate Johnathan Baldwin has announced his intentions to enter the 2025 National Football League draft after completing a four-year career at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has been a standout at safety with the Rebels.

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2024 Year in Review: Area programs chased top honors



Dobie Class of 1987 graduate Matt Wingo was part of the 2024 induction class into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame. The group was honored as part of a special evening March 6 at the Pasadena Convention Center. Wingo was a star linebacker at Dobie and currently ranks sixth in career tackles at Texas Tech University.
Photo by Gloria Wallace

The *Leader* continues its review of the area's 2024 sports action.

March 14

Amanda Nguyen Westman, a 2010 Dobie High School graduate, was all smiles as she was inducted into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame March 6.

An All-District player in both volleyball and softball, Nguyen Westman went on to become a highly decorated softball player at Army. She is currently the youngest Hall of Fame inductee.

A rematch with reigning District 22-6A champion Deer Park would have to wait, but things were otherwise going very well for the Dobie varsity softball team as it coasted through the rest of the league.

Heading into spring break week with wins over Memorial and Channelview, Dobie had quickly improved to 12-10 overall, with three straight 22-6A wins included in the mix.

In the final game for Dobie before the break, the Longhorns won at Channelview 8-0, doing much of its damage during

a five-run second inning. Junior Viviana Fernandez had two hits, drove in three runs and scored twice while Karyme Leal doubled and drove in two runs. Persephone Soria also knocked in a pair of runs as the locals erupted for 15 hits.

Jackie Peralta was brilliant in the circle for the Longhorns, shutting out the Falcons on three hits while striking out nine as Dobie improved to 3-1 in 22-6A action after an opening loss to Deer Park.

A four-run fourth inning combined with a solid complete-game performance from sophomore Vanessa De La Fuente was enough to lift the Longhorns to a 9-3 win over rival Memorial.

Allowing five hits and two earned runs while striking out seven, De La Fuente went the distance for the win. Leal smacked her third home run of the season, and Fernandez doubled and knocked in three runs.

Amaya Corona doubled in a pair of runs as Dobie earned another win.

The Longhorn boys took another step toward being prepared for the 22-

6A Championships with a third-place honor at the 409 Relays in Texas City. The Dobie girls, meanwhile, were sixth with 41 points.

Angleton did not score in the 4x400 relay, the final event of the meet, but still held on for the team championship with 111 points. Host Texas City used a 4x400 win to secure second place with 110, while the Longhorns compiled 99 points for third place.

Success in the relays once again lifted the Longhorns as they came away with second place in both the 4x100 and 4x200 as well as third place in the 4x400 for a total of 44 points.

As for the 4x100, the Longhorns' group included Ke'Lijah Jackson, Cameron Mathews, Marcus Jones and Titus Randle for the silver medal in a time of 42.64 seconds.

The Longhorns delivered a time of 1 minute, 29.11 seconds in the 4x200 for second place as that group included Jaylon Broussard, Mathews, Jones and C.J. Richard.

Finishing strong in the meet with a third-place

clocking of 3:32.34, the Longhorns went with Johan Villavencio, Tariq Riley, Broussard and Richard.

Mathews flew to the tape in a time of 21.76 for the gold medal-win in the 200, and Roderick Drumgo threw the shot 50 feet, 3 1/2 inches for the victory.

Drumgo also came up with a throw of 142-6 in the discus for third place and a bronze medal.

At 41-10, Dobie's Demarcus Hodges was second for a silver medal in the triple jump, with Villavencio grabbing a silver for second place at 2:03.39 at the 800 distance.

Riley delivered a clocking of 49.98 in the 400 for third place, while Justin Ray cleared 9-0 for third place and a bronze medal in the pole vault. At 19-5, Hodges was sixth in the long jump.

Kyla Lobo made her season debut at Texas City following the finish of the varsity soccer regular season as she was second for a silver medal in the 3,200 at 13:13.59.

Teammate Mariah Medina was fifth in a time of 13:43.10. In a time of 5:57.37, Lobo took third place at the 1,600 distance, with Aracely Alvarado in at 6:07.70 for fifth place.

Junior Stacie Harris was fourth in the long jump with a best of 17-1, and she (12.78) and Kylar Joseph (12.91) were fourth and fifth, respectively, in the 100.

Harris also took part in the 300 hurdles, finishing fourth in a time of 50.65, while Joseph cleared 4-8 in the high jump for sixth.

Izeliiah Williams, Christina Rodriguez, Joseph and Tailin Curtis wound up with a time of 1:50.03 for fourth place in the 4x200.

Jaylon Owens captured gold in the 100 and Clear Brook teammates Darwin Bolden (discus), Joshua Shelton (400) and Joseph Trevino (3,200) took silver medals as the Wolverines made several statements at the Generation Park Track and Field Invitational, hosted by Summer Creek High School.

Azayla Smith led the Clear Brook girls as her 800 time of 2 minutes, 17.08 seconds earned her a silver medal.

Owens was first to the line in 10.66 seconds to earn gold in the 100, while Shelton, a 2023 regional qualifier in the 400 as a freshman, was in at 48.93 for his silver medal.

Only a couple of weeks removed from the basketball court, Trevino was second in the 3,200 with a time of 10 minutes, 07.93 seconds.

Bolden, who like Trevino was delayed in the field events while playing basketball, performed very well as his throw of 151 feet, 1 inch earned a silver in the discus. Joshua Akinola was fourth in the 200 in a time of 22.50, and was eighth at 10.87 in the 100.

Akinola also went 22-3 in the long jump for sixth place. At a time of 41.04, Jalen Erkin was seventh in the 300 hurdles. A throw of 45-1 1/2 in the shot was good enough for Kenneth Christian to place fourth.

Triple jumper Ja'Darrell Brooks took seventh in the event at 42-6 1/2, and Camdyn Barnett chipped in with a sixth-place throw of 133-8 in the discus event.

In addition to Smith's medal win, Jizzale Davis delivered more high-lights for the Brook girls as she narrowly missed a top-three medal as her 100 time of 12.10 was fourth, and she was also in at 24.83 for sixth in the 200.

Kamryn McLaurin cleared 5-4 for fourth in the high jump, with teammate Galicia Bernard seventh at 4-10. At 35-2 1/2, Kyra Freeman was seventh in the triple jump. Aailslyn Banks was ninth in the shot with a toss of 32-3 1/2.

The District 22-6A co-champion Dobie varsity girls' soccer team delivered arguably its finest season in program history after finishing the regular season at 18-3-3. The 18 wins were the most ever for the Longhorns for a single season, and the team combined to score 81 total goals while posting 13 shutouts.

Senior Aylin Reyes scored 20 goals to lead the way offensively. At 9-1-2 in 22-6A action, Dobie tied for first place with Memorial as the two teams played to a pair of ties.

UHV head softball coach Lindsey (Ferguson) Ortiz has been a UH-Victoria softball lifer. The Dobie graduate has been a part of the Jaguars since the program's inception in 2008 as a player, helping UHV win its first Association of Independent

Institutions conference title and first NAIA Tournament appearance in 2009.

She became the team's assistant coach in 2010 before being named UHV's second-ever head softball coach after Keri Lambeth ahead of the 2014 season. With a sweep of Texas A&M-San Antonio last March, Ortiz recorded her 300th career win.

She is the quickest UHV head coach to reach 300 wins, doing so in the middle of her 11th season at the helm. The previous mark was held by UHV baseball coach Terry Puhl.

"I felt proud," Ortiz said, "not only of myself, but of our program. It's been such a blessing to be a part of UHV softball since the very beginning.

"I know and appreciate every player who has come through this program, and that's very special to me."

Ortiz has been a part of every single one of UHV softball's firsts, either as a coach or a player, including coaching the program to their first Red River Athletic Championship in 2016 and the university's first-ever World Series appearance in 2021.

April 4

Alief Elsie proved victorious over Dobie in the latest chapter of what had become quite a postseason back-and-forth battle between the two elite varsity boys' soccer programs as the Longhorns saw their season come to a close following a 2-1 loss to the Rams at Crump Stadium.

It was Dobie winning 1-0 a season ago over the Rams in the same round as the Longhorns eventually advanced to the Region III championship match against Seven Lakes.

For 2024, it was the year of the Rams as Dobie, a winner of 10 consecutive District 22-6A titles, saw its season end at 18-3-2 overall.

There was still a long way to go in the Region 14 softball race, but there was also plenty to like about San Jacinto College's strong 9-1 start. A 5-0 start to conference play was only briefly interrupted by a loss to Alvin, but the Ravens quickly used two-game sweeps of Lamar StatePort Arthur and Coastal Bend.

On March 27, the locals defeated Lamar State 1-0 and 6-1. In the opener, Ravens' starting pitcher Gianna Carrion went the first five innings, allowing two hits while striking out five. Kristina Nash closed out the shutout win with two innings.

San Jacinto did not get much going offensively, scoring an unearned run in the bottom of the first inning, with Carrion and Nash handling the rest.

In the ensuing 6-1 win, Maggie Evans and Vivien Thames drove in two runs apiece as the offense got things rolling a bit. Lamar State was held scoreless until the top of the seventh inning as freshman Ashleigh Heiderscheit scattered eight hits, surrendering just a solo home run in the final inning to earn a complete-game win.

Playing at Angelina March 29, the Ravens won a pair, this time by 5-2 and

6-5 counts to improve to 9-1 overall in league play, tops in the South Division. Junior left-hander Aiden Sanchez spun a one-hitter and the Dobie varsity baseball offense came alive with multihit performances from Juelz Martinez, Isaiah Jones and Will Joiner III in a 9-0 blanking of the Memorial Mavericks.

The Mavs dealt Dobie a third one-run defeat in District 22-6A play March 26, getting to 5-0 in the standings before the Longhorns bounced back two days later. Sanchez improved to 4-1 overall on the mound as he fanned five over seven innings.

Martinez was 3 for 4 with a pair of doubles, scored twice and drove in a run while Jones doubled, scored a run and drove in another. Joiner was 2 for 2 with a run scored.

Joshua Akinola, Darwin Bolden and Kamryn McLaurin captured gold medals as the District 24-6A Track and Field Championships opened April 1 at Challenger Stadium in Webster.

Akinola's win came in the long jump as he went 22 feet, 1 1/2 inches for the win. Bolden, a sophomore, was the champion of the discus as he led the way at 156-11.

Teammate Camdyn Barnett also qualified for the area round as he was third with a distance of 139-6.

To lead the Brook girls, McLaurin cleared 5-4 in the high jump for the gold medal. At 42-1/2, Clear Brook's Cedric Barnes was third for a bronze medal in the triple jump, and a time of 9 minutes, 50.160 placed Joseph Trevino fourth as he advanced to the area round in the 3,200.

Aailslyn Banks was second in the discus for a silver medal as she was at 119-6. Banks also threw the shot 35-4 1/4 for the bronze medal and third place as she advanced to the area round.

April 11

Junior Stacie Harris was just one of Dobie's top track and field athletes looking to advance to the regional championships as the school's programs began the postseason at the District 22-6A Championships. A regional qualifier in the long jump as a sophomore in 2023, Harris stayed on course last April as she claimed the gold medal at 17 feet, 6 inches. Harris also captured gold in the 400 in a time of 1:00.44, while teammate Christina Rodriguez was third for a bronze medal at 1:03.11. The top four finishers in all events made their way to the District 21-6A/ District 22-6A Championships.

As for the team standings, Deer Park bid adieu to the 22-6A ranks by putting together a couple of dominant performances. The team race was expected to include the Deer and Dobie from the start, and that's exactly how things went. The Deer girls were in control throughout, eventually collecting 283 points, with Dobie a distant second with 147.

And while the boys' race to the team crown was a bit closer, the Deer came up with 194 points to out-distance second-place Dobie's 131 points.

As for Dobie, its foursome entered the meet as the gold-medal winner at 42.39, with Marcus Jones, Titus Randle, Ke'Lijah Jackson and Cameron Mathews teaming in the event. The Longhorns doubled their fun in the 4x200 relay with a gold-medal win of 1:28.61 as the group included Jaylon Broussard, Juan Booker, Jones and Mathews.

Junior Tariq Riley came up with a school record of 49.68 in the 400 preliminaries and went on to win the gold medal in the finals at 49.81. Senior Roderick Drumgo delivered a throw of 55 feet, 1 inch in the shot as he won the 22-6A gold medal and headed to the area round. A best throw of 134-



Amanda Nguyen Westman, a 2010 Dobie High School graduate, was all smiles as she was inducted into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame March 6. An All-District player in both volleyball and softball, Nguyen Westman went on to become a highly decorated softball player at Army. She is the youngest Hall of Fame inductee.
Photo by Gloria Wallace

0 in the discus was good for the bronze medal as Drumgo advanced in that event as well. A time of 22.21 was second-best for Mathews in the 200, and Broussard also advanced with a fourth-place time of 22.49.

The Longhorns scored key points in the long jump as sophomore De'Marcus Hodges (19-11 3/4) and senior Malachi Hobbs (19-3) were silver and bronze medalists, respectively, to qualify for areas.

Hodges also advanced with a bronze-medal grab of 42-3 in the triple jump. Booker (11.09) and Jones (11.29) moved on in the 100 as Booker was the third-place bronze medalist and Jones took fourth.

Sophomore distance runner Johan Villavencio continued his season as he was the 22-6A bronze medalist in the 800 at 2:02.16.

In the 4x400 relay finale, Dobie was second in a time of 3:30.68 to advance with silver medals as the group included Jaylon Broussard, Villavencio, Francisco Dunn and Riley in the meet finale.

The Longhorn varsity girls also entered the area round with solid hopes of advancing to regionals. Junior Lauren Garza, a state qualifier during the cross-country season, was a clear athlete to watch after she won the 3,200 at the 22-6A Championships at 12:25.52, while senior teammate Kyla Lobo was third at 13:01.69 to advance to areas as well.

Garza also moved on to the area meet at the 800 distance as a time of 2:29.87 was good for the silver medal at the 22-6As. It was more of the same in the 1,600 as Garza (5:54.24) was the bronze medalist, with Lobo (6:00.93) fourth.

The Dobie girls also moved on as the 22-6A gold medalist in the 4x200 relay at 1:48.31 as the team included Izeliiah Williams, Tailin Curtis, Lillian Herte and Kylar Joseph.

Dobie closed the championships as the 4x400 relay gold medalist at 4:08.67 as the winning foursome included Christina Rodriguez, Harris, Aniya Menefee and Herte.

Harris (13.00) and Joseph (13.08) went 3-4 in the 100 to advance.

The Dobie girls placed fourth in the 4x100 relay as Aniyah Walker and Aniya Menefee teamed with Curtis and Joseph for a time of 56.39.

In first-day field events, Dobie junior Mia Hypolite was the bronze medalist for third place in the discus at 92-1 1/2, and Joseph cleared 4-8 for fourth place to reach the area round in the high jump event. At 31-10 1/4, Curtis placed fourth in the triple jump.

A pair of games against Clear Springs followed by a two-game set against Dickinson to close the regular season was to decide Clear Brook's final spot in the 24-6A varsity baseball hierarchy, and it had been that way all season.

Case in point: The Wolverines traveled to previously unbeaten Clear Creek April 2 and dealt the Wildcats a late 3-1 defeat, only to see the Wildcats score a six-inning unearned run in a 1-0 win April 5 at Clear Brook

Continued on Page 8



Alana Goree, a three-year varsity volleyball player at Dobie and All-Academic Team honoree during her career with the Longhorns, was a collegiate academic scholarship recipient for 2024.



The District 22-6A co-champion Dobie varsity girls' soccer team delivered arguably its finest season in program history after finishing the regular season at 18-3-3. The 18 wins are the most ever for the Longhorns for a single season, and the team combined to score 81 total goals while posting 13 shutouts. Senior Aylin Reyes (above) scored 20 goals to lead the way offensively. At 9-1-2 in 22-6A action, Dobie tied for first place with Memorial as the two teams played to a pair of ties.

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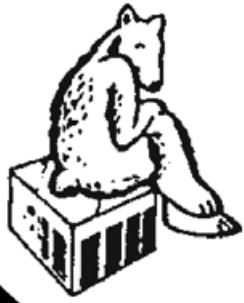
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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/.
7:30 a.m. Rotary Club of Pearland - Check website for time and location https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
9:30 a.m. NASA Aglow Community Light-house - Second Thursday of the month, 9:30 a.m., Praise Chapel, 18516 Hwy. 3 in Webster. The public is welcome and encouraged to bring others. For details, call 281-910-1971 or visit aglownet.org.
11:30 a.m. ABWA - Southeast Express Network - American Business Women's Association-South American Business Women's Association - Meetings are held January - November on the second Thursday of the month at Big Hom BBQ, 2300 Smith Ranch Rd., Pearland, TX 77584. Lunch is 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (\$20 cash or check). Includes networking with professional business women and guest speakers. Women of all ages/occupations invited. Bring business cards. Reservations appreciated. Visit www.seen-abwa.org.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10
7:30 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum See Thursday's notice.
Noon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners Group, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300 for more information. Meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or https://nastuff.com/. Meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
8 p.m. Serenity Now Al-Anon Group - meets at CrossRoads UMC Fridays, 8 to 9 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Family members and friends of problem drinkers/addicts share, learn Al-Anon principles, that they are not alone, and discover choices available. For details, call 281-484-9243.
Alcoholics Anonymous - meets at CrossRoads UMC Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For details, call 281-484-9243.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11
7:30 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum See Thursday's notice.
9:30 a.m. Congregation Shaar Hashalom - All services are live and Zoom online. For details on the 7 p.m. Friday night or the 9:30 a.m. Saturday service, Judaism classes, film series, and lunch with the Rabbi, visit https://www.shaarhashalom.org.
1 p.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - offers a knitting class, Saturdays 1 p.m. Call 281-479-7285 prior to coming.
8 a.m./ 10:15 a.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - has worship Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday at 7 p.m. (Bible study, Book of Revelation, at 6 p.m.) and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). For details, call 281-479-7285 and leave a message, or stop by.
5:30 p.m. Celebrate Recovery - A faith-based 12-Step program, in the Life Kids Chapel at Life Church, 5215 Preston Ave. Pasadena, 77505 Call 713-419-2635 for details.
8 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous See Friday's notice.

MONDAY, JANUARY 13
Noon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) See Friday's notice.
6 p.m. Scrabble Club #511 - Meets Monday 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. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - St. Luke's Group, 12-Step Recovery, open meeting Mondays, 7 p.m. in the Education Bldg. in room 6, at 11011 Hall Rd., 77089. For details, call Rita at 281-309-2801.
TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) - #0683 Friendswood chapter meets at the Friendswood Methodist Church, 110 N.Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. For information, call Lynette Ringrose 832-858-4617 or Dorothy Pourteau 713-875-8820.
7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) See Friday's notice.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
10 a.m. CCART - The Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers meets the second Tuesday, monthly, Sept.-May, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway in Seabrook near Landolt Pavilion. Texas-retired school employees from surrounding school districts welcome. Annual dues are \$50.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum See Thursday's notice.
10:30 a.m. Tri County Republican Women -

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - See Thursday's notice.
Noon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300 for more information. Meets Mondays - Fridays.
Noon Ballroom Dancing - casual Ballroom Dance, open to the public, held every Wednesday afternoon is from 12:30 to 3:00 pm at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 East League City Parkway, League City. Everyone is welcome to come with or without a partner. The dance itself is free as music is provided by volunteer, Neva Schroder. The city requires an activity card for participants in all of the city's many activities. Call the park office (281-554-1180) for answers to any questions regarding the activity card. Visitors are welcome to walk in to observe or participate.
7 p.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - See Sunday's notice.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - See Friday's notice.
8 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous - See Friday's notice.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/.
7:30 a.m. Rotary Club of Pearland - Check website for time and location https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon at 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**General meetings are held the second Tuesday, except June and July, Golfcrest Country Club, 2509 Country Club Dr., Pearland. Lunch available for \$20. Exact cash or a check requested. To RSVP, visit www.tricountytw.club/11:30 a.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - See Sunday's notice.
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Southeast Houston Toastmasters Club #05324194 meets virtually with the exception of the second and fourth Tuesdays (hybrid meeting) at sehouston.toastmastersclubs.org. In-person address 10500 Scarsdale Blvd. (SB Chamber of Commerce). Visit the website or call Karen Nunn, at 832-722-9061 for information.
7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - See Friday's notice.**

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2024 brought out the best in South Belt area's athletes, their teams

Continued from Page 6

As the two teams split a home-and-home series. With the exception of Clear Creek's 4-0 start to league play, the remainder of the 24-6A had had trouble gaining any real traction.

While the seven-program alignment lacked a star-studded frontrunner, five of the seven programs were well within striking distance of an eventual postseason berth.

For the Wolverines, the formula had been fairly simple. Starting pitchers Ryan Benavides and Trenton Flores had been terrific, giving the Wolverines a chance to win every night. In the Wolverines' 3-1 win over Clear Creek April 2, Harrison Payne's two-out, two-run single in the top of the first inning gave the Wolverines a 2-0 lead.

Benavides took it from there. After allowing an RBI double to Clear Creek's Ryan Babcock in the bottom of the first inning, Benavides surrendered just two baserunners the rest of the way.

Striking out seven and allowing just two hits, Benavides needed just 77 pitches to close out the win. Three nights later, the Wildcats used a pair of Clear Brook throwing miscues to win 1-0.

Qualifiers from Clear Brook continued their "postseason" run at the District 23-6A/District 24-6A Area Track and Field Championships April 10 in Dickinson as the best of the best went head-to-head.

In the boys' division, the Wolverines had many star-studded performances, led by senior Jaylon Owens' trio of gold medals as he won the 100 and 200 sprints and also carried the baton in the team's 4x100 relay win. Senior Joshua Akinola and sophomores Joshua Shelton and Darwin Bolden also came up with gold medal wins, adding big 10-point bumps for each to the Wolverines' bottom line.

Owens had several big wins in the sprints throughout the regular season, then continued his push at the 24-6As. He won the 100 gold medal at 10.514 seconds, with Akinola right behind in a time of 10.644.

Both athletes were also in on the fun as the Wolverines swept the medal haul in the 200, with Owens, Shelton and Akinola finishing 1-2-3 for 24 team points.

Akinola came up with personal records in the 100 and 200 while punching his ticket for the area championships.

It was Owens edging Shelton at the tape for the gold medal at 21.295, with Shelton next for a silver medal in a time of 21.885. At 23.424, Akinola was third for a bronze medal as each qualified for the area round.

Shelton remained strong in his signature 400 event as he cruised to the

win at the 24-6A finals in a time of 48.059. Akinola and Bolden were two of the Clear Brook stars on Day One April 1, with Akinola making his way to the 22 feet, 1 1/2 inch mark to win a gold medal in the long jump.

Bolden's top throw of 156-11 was the gold-medal standard in the discus, and teammate Camdyn Barnett advanced as his throw of 139-6 landed him third for a bronze medal.

Shelton, a regional qualifier in the 400 as a freshman, started his 2024 postseason run by winning the event at 48.059. It was Thurston Roberson, Akinola, Shelton and Owens in the 4x100 relay for the gold medal in a time of 41.590 as the Wolverines added 20 points to their team crown.

Jalen Erskine went 39.329 for third place and a bronze medal in the 300 hurdles to advance, with Cedric Barnes also grabbing a bronze in the triple jump at 42-1 1/2. Senior Joseph Trevino moved on to the area round as he was fourth in a time of 9:50.160 at the 3,200 distance.

Clear Falls was the runaway team champion in the varsity girls' division with 173 points, followed by Dickinson's 133. Clear Creek was third with 89, and the Wolverines had 73 for fourth place. Jizzale Davis and Kamryn McLaurin were gold medalists for Clear Brook. Davis won the 200 at 24.460, while a leap of 5-4 won McLaurin the high jump gold. Clear Brook also advanced to the area round in the 4x400 relay as Davis teamed with Azayla Smith, Patricia Barnes and Kyra Freeman for second place at 3:57.659.

Aailslyn Blanks won a silver medal in the discus with a top throw of 119-6, and she advanced in the shot as well after a third-place showing of 35-5 1/4. The Wolverines also landed a pair of bronze medals.

Davis was in at 11.934 for third in the 100, and a time of 2:19.436 landed Smith third at the 800 distance. Smith also reached the area round with a fourth-place time of 57.807 in the 400.

Jackie Peralta blasted a home run to lead the way to a run-rule shortened 11-1 win for Dobie over Memorial April 5 as the locals swept the season series over the Mavs.

At 7-2 in 22-6A prior to the start of play April 9, the Longhorns had secured the No. 2 playoff seed behind unbeaten Deer Park.

Four runs in the second inning and six more in the third allowed Dobie to shorten the game to five frames. Freshman Persephone Soria tripled and drove in four runs, and Leslie Sarduy had two singles, scored two runs and drove in another.

Natalie Dehoyos knocked in two runs and scored twice as Dobie im-

proved to 15-12 overall while getting past Memorial.

April 25

Dobie junior Stacie Harris made a return trip to the Region III Track and Field Championships in the long jump as she joined senior thrower Roderick Drumgo in representing the Longhorns April 19-20 at Humble ISD's Turner Stadium.

Also an accomplished sprinter over her three varsity seasons at Dobie, Harris again enjoyed a stellar season in the long jump, where a second-place, silver-medal winning effort of 18 feet, 4 1/4 inches has her in the field at regionals.

Drumgo, a Class of 2024 senior, used a shot throw of 52 feet, 3/4 inches for his silver-medal win as he picked up his invitation to Humble for regionals.

Clear Brook track and field athletes remained very much in play as the regional round arrives statewide, with the ultimate goal of reaching the University Interscholastic League's all classes State Championships May 2-4 at Mike A. Myers Stadium on the University of Texas campus in Austin.

The Wolverines have several athletes still in the mix for possible state berths. Clear Brook sprinter Jaylon Owens continued his postseason push as he headed to the Region III Championships as the 100 and 200 gold medalist at first the District 24-6A and then the 23/24 area round levels.

Going against the top sprinters from 23-6A and 24-6A at Dickinson April 10, Owens was first to the tape in the 100 at 10.51 seconds, then completed the sprint sweep at 21.73 for double golds as he continued his remarkable senior season.

While Owens rolled through 2024 as one of the state's elite sprinters, sophomore teammate Joshua Shelton reached regionals for the second straight season in the 400.

A time of 49.38 had Shelton on the stand as the area gold medalist, and was in the field in the 200 as his bronze-medal time of 22.16 was good for a regional berth.

Owens and Shelton were joined by Joshua Akinola and Thurston Roberson in winning the 4x100 area title at 42.20 as the Brook foursome earned the right to go against nationally ranked groups from Atascocita and North Shore, as well as other qualifiers, at regionals.

Darwin Bolden made regionals in the discus as he was second for a silver medal, coming up with a toss of 166-5.

Aailslyn Blanks kept her standout sophomore season alive with a silver-medal win in the discus at 129-6. Clear Brook junior Kamryn McLaurin was the 23/24 area high

jump champion as she cleared 5-7 for the gold medal, snagging a regional invitation along the way.

Clear Brook junior Jalen Erskine continued his run in the 300 hurdles as his fourth-place clocking of 40.21 sent him to regionals. Jizzale Davis was fourth in the girls' 100 at 11.88 to reach the regional round, but was fifth in the 200 at 24.95, missing out on regionals by one slot.

The Wolverines' 4x400 relay team advanced to regionals as a fourth-place qualifier in a time of 4:01.21 as the group included Davis, Azayla Smith, Patricia Barnes and Journey Wilson.

The Region 14 South Division race had all but narrowed to a two-team race as frontrunning San Jacinto College aimed to hold off No. 13 nationally ranked Galveston as the conference season hit the home stretch.

San Jacinto, 11-3 through 14 of 24 scheduled league games, bounced back nicely from a series sweep against Blinn and was tied in the loss column with the Whitecaps, who entered play April 16 at 9-3.

Realistically, the Ravens' eventual finish in the standings was to be determined over the season's final three days, when a home series against Blinn would come April 27 before an April 29 two-game set on the island against the Whitecaps.

At 32-18 overall, San Jacinto College had a reasonable shot at a 40-win regular season as sophomore and returning All-American Arriana Wright had delivered a huge offensive season.

Through 46 games of reported stats, Wright was hitting .515 with 55 runs batted in, including 21 doubles and 11 home runs out of the leadoff spot. The .515 batting average was 10th nationally.

Chloe Foster was at .348 with 43 runs batted in and 17 extra-base hits, and freshman Madison Carr was at .413 with 37 runs batted in.

Three sophomore pitchers, including Gianna Carrion, Kristina Nash and Wright, joined freshman Ashleigh Heiderscheit as the primary arms in terms of usage.

April 25

Clear Brook's Kamryn McLaurin added her name to the both lengthy and impressive list of state track and field qualifiers as the junior high jumper earned the wild-card ninth and final spot in the 6A field following the completion of the statewide regional rounds.

One big step toward the ultimate goal remained as Lutheran South Academy qualifiers competed in the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 4A/5A South Regional Championships April 25 at Matador Stadium in Seguin.

The Pioneers, part of the 5A mix, were aiming to reach the TAPPS 4A/5A/6A state championship round May 3-4 at Midway ISD's Panther Stadium in Hewitt. The top four finishers in each event from the North and South regions would move on to state. Lutheran South delivered an impressive performance in the first round of the postseason, which was the 5A District 5 Championships April 12 on the LSA campus at Glassel Stadium.

The Pioneer boys wound up winning the district championship, while the LSA girls were third as a team. Senior Wilson Klein was among the many stars on the boys' side of things as he surpassed the school record in the pole vault, getting over the 15 feet, 5 inch mark for the gold medal in the event.

Cole Noack also advanced to regionals in both events as he took second (136-0) in the discus and fourth (36-1) in the shot.

Marcus Gaitan went for it in the 400 as his time of 49.76 earned him a silver medal and regional berth, while teammates John LeBlanc (third at 22.60) and Jonah Weber (fourth at 22.66) both qualified at the 200 distance.

Matthew Gaitan was at the front for a gold medal at 4:24.57 in the 1,600, with sophomore teammate Reid Toner the silver medalist in a time of 4:28.25.

Jeremy Gaitain's fourth place clocking of 4:37.09 also earned him a regional invitation. Toner has also reached regionals in the 3,200 after he took second for a silver medal in a time of 9:52.12.

Lutheran South sophomore Case Noack was second in the 300 hurdles in a time of 42.85, while junior teammate Shamon Madison advanced in the 110 hurdles, third at 17.23.

Lutheran South's Kai Conerly tied for second place and took a silver medal in the high jump at 6-0, while teammate Ben Hughes went 21-6 for a silver medal in the long jump.

Hughes went one better as the gold medalist in the triple jump at 42-2 3/4, and teammate Ben Edwards was fourth at 39-1 1/2 to reach regionals.

The most competitive event in the entire boys' meet came in the 800 as four athletes dashed to-

ward the tape. Senior Matthew Gaitan took the gold in a time of 1 minute, 59.24 seconds, with twin brother Marcus Gaitan in for the silver medal.

Jeremy Gaitan, a freshman, also advanced to regionals in the event as he was fourth in the 800 in a time of 1:59.83. Kristopher St. Clair of Lutheran South was dominant for a gold medal in the discus with a throw of 149-6, and his top toss of 49-10 1/2 was second.

While Klein was the gold medalist in the pole vault, senior teammate Evan Rockett cleared 10-6, advancing to regionals as the fourth-place finisher.

The Pioneers scored big points toward the eventual team championship, winning a gold and a pair of silver medals in the relays for 52 points.

Junior Cassidy Pfeiffer and sophomore teammate Lanie Ward reached regionals in the 100 hurdles, with Pfeiffer third (17.25) and Ward fourth (17.36). Pfeiffer also was in at 55.15 for the fourth-place spot in the 300 hurdles.

Lutheran South's Emma Schepman cleared 4-8 for second place in the high jump, with teammate Elli Stoeckel third at 4-6. Schepman also moved on to regionals in the long jump as she was at 16-8 1/2 for a bronze medal.

Ward and teammate Alma Martin both cleared 10-6 in the pole vault, with Ward taking second via fewer tries and Martin third for a bronze.

Senior Makynna Robbins came up with a personal best of 112-11 in the discus to reach regionals as the district silver medalist, with teammate Chidera Anagbogu fourth at 86-5 to advance. At 36-7 1/4, Robbins was third in the shot.

Dobie boys' soccer senior co-captain Alex Escobar was named the District 22-6A Offensive Most Valuable Player following an outstanding final season that saw him lead the district champions with 15 goals scored.

Dobie co-captain Geo Arango was the easy choice for Goalkeeper of the Year in the District 22-6A boys' soccer ranks as he allowed 0.57 goals per match as the last line of defense for the league champions. Arango had 13 shutouts in his final season as a senior.



Genesis Roman (5) came through with a fine first season with the varsity program and represents the next wave of talent as the Longhorns aim to build upon the 2024 successes.



UH-Victoria head softball coach Lindsey Ortiz, a Dobie graduate, has now collected more than 300 career victories with the Jaguars since taking over the lead role in 2014. At right is Jaguars' catcher Kenzie Chambers in 2024. Story courtesy of UH-Victoria athletics. Photo by Sam Fowler



Jaylon Owens (left) of Clear Brook positioned himself to be one of the area's most discussed athletes with the track and field postseason as he was on a roll. Owens clocked in at 21.64 seconds to win a gold medal in the high school boys' 200 and also won gold in the 100 in a time of 10.78 at the 72nd TSU Relays March 15-16 at Texas Southern University in Houston. Wolverine sophomore Joshua Shelton (right) captured gold in the 400 with the win at 49.61, and sophomore Darwin Bolden (not shown) was fourth in the discus with a throw of 139 feet.



Clear Brook varsity softball head coach Robin Rackley reached 400 career wins as her team defeated Rayburn 11-1 March 19 at the Pasadena ISD Complex. She and her program will start 2025 pre-season workouts Jan. 10, and the regular season opens Feb. 10 at Clear Brook. Photo by Donna Alsdorf

CB basketball rolls on

Continued from Page 5

what it takes to finish out this incredible run the team has been on. Fortunate enough as a player to be part of state-ranked programs at Clear Springs, Loydrake said she did her best to warn her team against getting too high or too low during the process.

And with all due respect to Clear Creek, it's all about getting back to business and making a run at the 22-6A championship.

In terms of the postseason, Clear Brook's student enrollment of 2,563 is tied with Clear Falls for sixth-lowest leaguewide, meaning the Wolverines are all but assured of a Division II designation should they advance.

While nine games remained prior to Brook's Jan. 7 tilt at Clear Lake Jan. 7, the Wolverines had clearly established themselves as title hunters along with defending league champion Dickinson and Clear Creek, with Deer Park fourth at 3-2.

JFD Boys' Soccer Hits the Road
Lake Travis Invitational
Jan. 9 Laredo United, 6 p.m.
Jan. 10 S.A. Johnson, 9 a.m.
Jan. 11 Lake Travis, 2 p.m.