



South Belt-Ellington Leader

Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, February 8, 2024

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

Vol. 49, No. 2

H-E-B holds health screening

H-E-B Blackhawk, 9828 Blackhawk at Beltway 8, will hold health screenings the second Saturday of the month. The next event is Feb. 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free blood pressure and glucose screening will be available.

Genealogy group meets

The Parker Williams Genealogy Group meets the first and third Friday of the month from, 1 to 3 p.m. at Parker Williams Library on Scarsdale. Meetings are free and community members interested in researching family histories are invited. The next meeting is Feb. 16.

Coffee with the Constable

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

New Covenant feeds needy

New Covenant Christian Church, 10603 Blackhawk, distributes food the second and fourth Saturday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. or until supplies run out. The purpose is to provide food for community people in need. The next event is Feb. 24. For more information, call 281-484-4230.

Gulf Freeway closures set

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

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

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

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

SH 35 closure planned

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

Local COVID cases reported

According to Harris County health officials, the number of reported COVID-19 cases in ZIP code 77089 has significantly increased from the previous week, while slightly decreasing in ZIP codes 77075 and 77034.

As of Tuesday, Feb. 6, there were 236 active cases in 77089, up 18 from the previous week. To date, 141 from the ZIP code have died from the disease, up one from the previous week.

In ZIP code 77075, there were 15 active cases, down two from the previous week. To date, there have been 84 deaths in the ZIP code. (Harris County reported 86 deaths the previous week.)

In 77034, there were 11 active cases, down four from the previous week. To date, 94 residents from ZIP code 77034 have died from the disease, up one from the previous week.

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

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

Beltway closures planned

At least one northbound frontage road lane on Beltway 8 will be closed from Fairmont Parkway to Spencer Highway until further notice. No detour will be needed but drivers should expect delays.

At least one southbound frontage road lane on Beltway 8 will be closed from SH 225 to Pasadena Boulevard continuously until further notice. No detour will be needed but drivers should expect delays.

MUD sets up online portal

Clear Brook City MUD has an online portal that allows residents to set up recurring credit card payments. To set up an account, CBCMUD residents may visit www.cbcmud.com.

SH 3 closure planned

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

Master Gardeners hold sale

Harris County Master Gardeners will hold a 2024 spring plant sale this month, featuring fruit trees and tomatoes. Online sales will take place through Feb. 15 at hcmga.tamu.edu/shop. In-person sale and online order pickup will take place Feb. 17 at Genoa Friendship Garden located at 1210 Genoa Red Bluff near Beltway 8.

San Jac launches biotech training program

College has exclusive training rights in southern U.S.

On Jan. 26, San Jacinto College held a ribbon-cutting for its new Biomanufacturing Training Program at the south campus and groundbreaking for Biomanufacturing at Generation Park.

Through this program, San Jacinto College will become the exclusive provider of the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) for the southern part of the United States.

Biomanufacturing Training Program

At San Jacinto's south campus, the program marks the initiation of the college's comprehensive biotechnology offerings, beginning with an onboarding certificate designed to equip new

professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to enter the field.

The Biomanufacturing Training Program, a two-week hybrid initiative, integrates theoretical knowledge, hands-on experience and exposure to industry practices. Furthermore, the program is customizable to meet the specific training needs of industry partners. Future offerings will expand to cover all aspects of biomanufacturing, specialized instrumentation and equipment training, and advanced techniques, ensuring that San Jacinto College remains at the forefront of biotechnological education.

"As we unveil the Biomanufacturing Training

Program, we are taking a significant step toward meeting the growing demands of the biotechnology sector right now," said Dr. Christopher Wild, executive director, San Jacinto College Center for Biotechnology.

"This program is designed to provide a seamless entry into the field for new professionals,

with a focus on experience and exposure to industry practices."

"We are delighted that San Jacinto College has joined the NIBRT Global Partners Programme to help train the biopharma manufacturing workforce of the future," said Darrin Morrissey, CEO

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Chamber gala to feature mayor



Newly elected Mayor John Whitmire (left) will be the guest speaker at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce's annual gala, scheduled to take place Friday, March 8, at Hope Village Event Center in Friendswood. Whitmire is shown above with state Rep. Dennis Paul at the recent BAHEP Quasar Award Banquet. (See related story on this page.) Photo by Marie Flickinger

MUD candidate filing ends Feb. 16

The deadline to file as a candidate in the upcoming May 4 municipal utility district board elections is 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16.

To be qualified to serve as a director, a person shall be at least 18 years old, a resident citizen of the state of Texas and own land subject to taxation in the district or be a qualified voter within the district.

To run for election to the district's board of directors, a person must file an application for a place on the ballot. The application must be filed with the secretary of the district's board of directors or his designated agent by mail, fax or in person. An application may be downloaded/printed from the website of the Texas Secretary of State at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/

pol-sub/2-21f.pdf.

A person may run for election to the district's board of directors as a write-in candidate and to do so must file a declaration of write-in candidacy. The declaration must be filed with the secretary of the district's board of directors or his/her designated agent by mail, fax, email or in person. A declaration form may be downloaded/printed from the website of the Texas Secretary of State at www.sos.texas.gov/elections/forms/pol-sub/2-23f.pdf

The deadline to file write-in candidacy declaration for May 4 general election is by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 20.

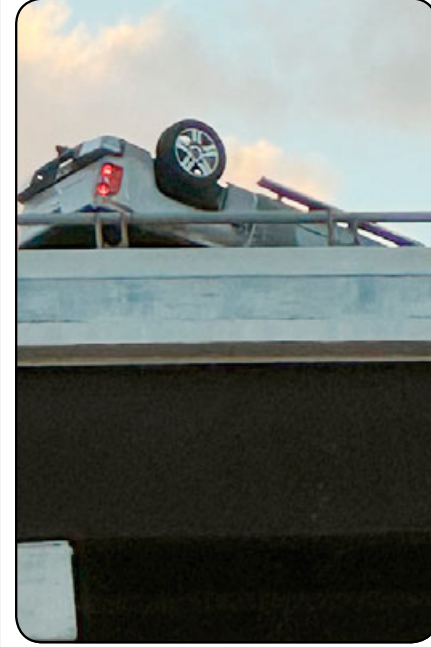
The location(s) of the election will be posted when the determination is made.

BAHEP honors Harris

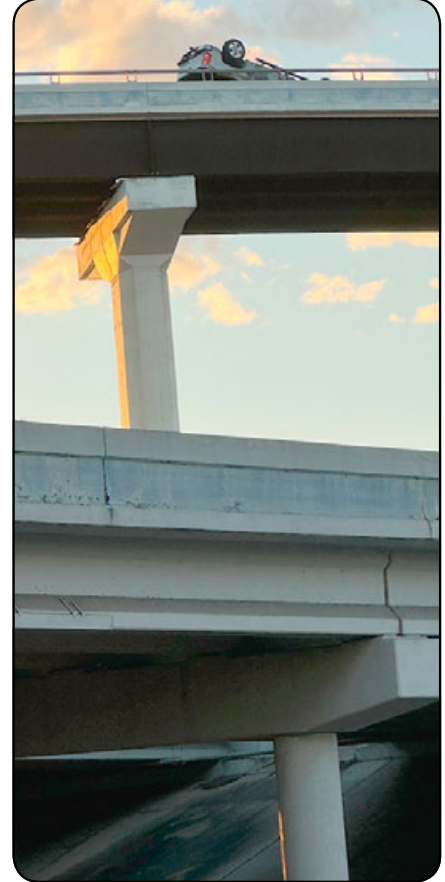


Space Center Houston CEO/President William T. Harris (third from left) was presented the prestigious BAHEP Quasar Award at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's 30th annual Quasar Award Banquet, held Jan. 26, at the South Shore Harbor Resort and Conference Center in League City. Shown above with Harris at the ceremony are, left to right, U.S. Rep. Brian Babin; Houston Mayor John Whitmire; Tim Kropp, 2023 BAHEP board chair; Gwen Griffin, 2024 BAHEP board chair; and Brian Freedman, BAHEP president. Photo by Genesis Photographers

Car hangs from overpass



To the shock of bystanders below, an automobile accident at the intersection of Beltway 8 and the Gulf Freeway left a flipped vehicle hanging from the peak of the overpass Saturday, Feb. 3. A witness stated that five vehicles had to be towed from the site of the crash. Two ambulances transported victims from the scene in unknown condition. Constable Jerry Garcia's officers responded to the scene. Photos by Marie Flickinger



Sagemont billing causes confusion

California address confuses some; online payments encouraged

Several Sagemont residents have expressed concern in recent weeks about payments to Sagemont Maintenance Fund going to an address in California.

According to Sagemont Maintenance Fund officials, this is because the funds are being placed in a lockbox that is being managed by a company located in California.

Officials further said there is a dedicated portal where Sagemont homeowners can make online payments, view invoices and import

ant documents and update contact information. To view the portal, visit app.payhoa.com/auth/join/15891-sagemont-maintenance-fund-inc.

Sagemont homeowners are encouraged to make online payments through the portal if able. Homeowners who would prefer to mail a check should send payment to P.O. Box 981506 West Sacramento, CA 95798.

For additional information or to arrange payment by another method, contact Jeff Turnipseed at 346-297-1480.

BAHEP holds annual Quasar banquet

Space Center Houston CEO William Harris recognized

For 30 years, the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership has presented its acclaimed Quasar Award for Economic Development Excellence to an outstanding elected official or business leader who has demonstrated a strong and continual effort to support the business foundations of the greater Bay Area Houston communities.

On Jan. 26, William T. Harris, president/CEO, Space Center Houston, was honored for his exceptional leadership and contributions to the region's tourist industry at the Quasar Award Banquet held in the Crystal Ballroom at South Shore Harbor Resort and Conference Center in League City.

Many representatives of the region's leadership from business and education as well as elected officials attended the 2024 sold-out banquet, including U.S. Rep. Brian Babin; Houston Mayor John Whitmire and Houston District E City Council Member Fred Flickinger who represents both the South Belt/Clear Lake and Kingwood communities.

BAHEP President Brian Freedman led the evening's festivities by recognizing a number of distinguished attendees or their representatives

and followed with a recap of BAHEP's 2023 successes and the organization's goals for 2024.

Tim Kropp, 2023 BAHEP board chair and executive vice president, MRI Technologies, also noted the organization's 2023 accomplishments and introduced the evening's honoree.

Harris was humble in his acceptance speech, giving thanks to his team.

"As we know from NASA, you can't do it alone. It takes a team," said Harris. "I couldn't be successful here without that remarkable team. I want to take a moment to recognize members of my board of directors who are here this evening. Please stand for a moment and be recognized."

Harris stressed the importance of giving back. "Inspiration changes the world," said Harris. "For me, fundamentally, what we are about is helping people pursue ambition, excellence, inspiration, and push out those boundaries and realize what they can contribute. Always remember that we have a lot of privilege living in this country and that we have an obligation to give back. Thank you so much for this incredible recognition which I accept on behalf of my team. I'm truly humbled."

Leader looks back at memorable 2023

The Leader continues its look back on 2023 with a list of some of the significant stories of the year. For highlights up to Aug. 17, see previous editions of the Leader.

Aug. 17

A man was found fatally shot about 7:05 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 12, at Blackhawk Park, located in the 9400 block of Blackhawk near Fuqua. Fernando Romero, 29, was pronounced dead at the scene. According to Houston Police Department officials, officers were dispatched to a person-down call in a park at the above address after a passerby observed a male lying on the bleachers. Officers arrived and observed the male, later identified as Romero, had suffered multiple gun-

shot wounds. Contrary to online reports, the incident is not believed to be a suicide. No immediate arrests were made in the case.

Aug. 24

Antonio "AJ" Armstrong Jr. was found guilty of capital murder in the 2016 killing of his parents, Antonio Armstrong Sr. and Dawn Whitely Armstrong, a 1992 Dobie graduate. According to county officials, jurors in the third trial deliberated for approximately 10.5 hours - roughly half the time as the previous two hung-jury counterparts. Now 23, Armstrong was spared the death penalty because he was only 16 at the time of the murders. Automatically sentenced to life in prison.

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In My Opinion

Houston Chronicle's Campaign to Unseat Kim Ogg

In the run-up to next month's primary, the Houston Chronicle has published over two dozen derogatory stories about Kim Ogg.

These stories have regularly given Ogg's adversaries and her opponent a platform to voice their criticisms with the imprimatur of being objective news stories. Their coverage of Ogg dovetails with the its campaign to convince Houstonians that their concern about violent crime is overblown, notwithstanding that in poll after poll Houstonians across every demographic have identified violent crime as their top concern.

Last week the Houston Chronicle published its latest article in its campaign to unseat Ogg. It is one of the most biased, misleading stories I have ever seen in the paper. The headline was "Thousands of Houstonians are sent to jail with no legal basis under DA Ogg, judges say." The story blatantly manipulates statistics, omits critical facts, and includes some outright false statements.

Let's start with some background, which the Chronicle failed to provide.

There must be "probable cause" that a person has committed a crime before that person can be forced to stand trial. Probable cause is established by evidence that presents facts or circumstances that would lead a reasonable individual to conclude that the person has committed a crime. That standard is obviously subjective and one on which good faith observers can readily disagree.

The initial determination of probable cause is made by a law enforcement officer when making an arrest. In Harris County, after a person is arrested, they are taken to the Joint Processing Center (JPC), not our hell-hole county jail as the story implies. The person is held there while potential charges are processed. They can be held pending charges for up to 24 hours for misdemeanors and 48 hours for felonies. Within that time the person must be either released or charged and taken before a magistrate.

During that time, the District Attorney's Office (DAO) makes its own evaluation of whether there is probable cause to charge the person based on the evidence submitted by the officer. If the DAO concludes there is no probable cause, no charges are filed, and the person is released.

This highlights one of the critical omissions from the Chronicle story. The DAO intake office has refused to press charges requested by police 114,000 times since 2018, nearly 38,000 times just last year. In other words, since 2018 114,000 Houstonians were not subjected to the burden of defending themselves in a criminal case because the DAO declined to prosecute. So, the Chronicle's headline could just as easily have been "Thousands of Houstonians avoid jail because DA Ogg refused to file charges." But that headline would not be very good clickbait, nor would it have fit the Chronicle's political agenda.

The crux of the Chronicle's story is that the DAO is charging people when there is no probable cause. They base their conclusion on the number of times that a judge has dismissed a case for lack of probable cause. According to the Chronicle story, in 2016 (the year before Ogg took over the office), 2,067 cases were subsequently dismissed by the trial judge.

By 2022, that number had grown to 4,560, about 120% increase.

From this, the Chronicle concludes that "[t]his means prosecutors are sending more and more Houstonians to an already-overcrowded jail with no legal basis." This statement is flatly untrue.

First, the story conveniently omits that the DAO does not have the final say on whether probable cause exists. In addition to the police officer and the DAO concluding that probable cause, so must a magistrate.

No one is sent to the Harris County jail unless a magistrate has also concluded that there was probable cause. Most of the dismissals cited by the Chronicle story occurred before the magistrate which means the person was never transferred to the Harris County jail.

The conclusion also ignores that 60-70% of the dismissed cases were misdemeanors. Defendants charged with a misdemeanor are almost universally released on bond.

Almost of misdemeanor defendants are released directly from the JPC and are again never transferred to the Harris County jail.

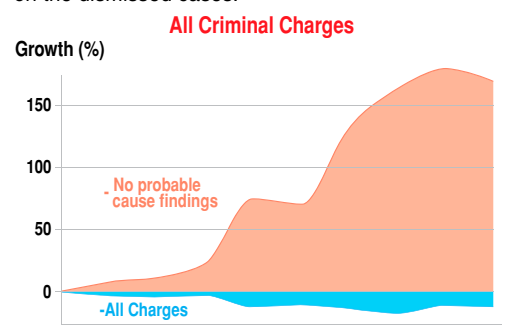
If thousands of people had been sent to jail without probable cause as the story states, it would show up as an increase in jail population since Ogg became DA.

But according the Harris County Jail dashboard the number of inmates in jail now is almost exactly the same as when Ogg took over has been mostly flat over her tenure.

The Chronicle investigation did not determine, or chose not to report, exactly how many of the defendants whose cases were dismissed were actually transferred to the Harris County jail and held for longer than the 24/48-hour limit, but it would clearly be a very, very small fraction of those cases that were dismissed, not the entire number as the story implies.

Further, just because a judge ruled there was no probable cause, that does not necessarily mean the person was innocent. Indeed, in about 25% of the felonies cases that were dismissed, a grand jury later returned an indictment after additional evidence had been collected.

My pet peeve about the story, however, is this graph. It was intentionally designed to sensationalize the data on the dismissed cases.



2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022
Source: Harris County State District Courts, Harris County Criminal Courts-at-Law
Created by Caroline Ghisolfi

First, note that the scale of the graph is in percentage. This is a well-known technique to dramatize relatively minor changes over time.

Had the Chronicle instead graphed the actual num-

New Covenant Christian Church

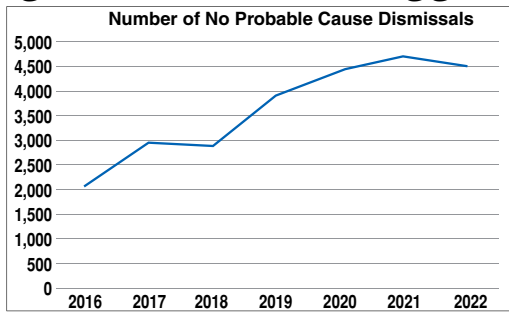
Day Care Christian Based Child Care

Now Enrolling

New Covenant Christian Church provides Christian based child care for the local community. Director Nedra Jackson and her staff are here to take perfect care of your children while you work.

281.481.2003

www.newcovenantchristianchurchhouston.com
10603 Blackhawk Blvd. Houston, Tx 77089
Blackhawk @ Kirkfair



ber of dismissals over time, it would have looked like this.

Quite a bit less dramatic.

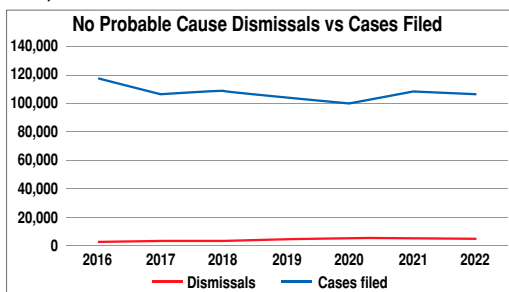
Also, two other well-known techniques were used to sensationalize the chart's appearance. It included data from 2013-2015, which are irrelevant to Ogg's administration, and it shaded the area under the line. Both have the effect of making the "hill" look larger.

If the Chronicle was really interested ascertaining how accurate the charging process has been, then it should have compared the dismissal to the total number of cases filed to determine the "error rate." The Chronicle reporters had that data because it is included in their graph. But to determine the frequency of dismissed cases as a percentage of total filings requires readers to do their own math and get out a magnifying glass to read the tiny text.

You will notice at the bottom of the Chronicle's chart, there is a thin area shaded gray with a legend to the right that says, "All Charges." There is no scale on that part of the chart, which should always be a big red flag. You must click on each year to see that the small gray area actually corresponds to 100,000-120,000 cases being filed annually. So, the thin gray shaded area represents data in the 0-120,000 range while the expansive pink shaded area represents data in the 0-5,000 range.

If you run the math, you discover that the dismissals for a lack of probable cause averaged 3.7% of all of the cases filed during Ogg's tenure. Or stated differently, the DAO intake division got it right 96.3% of the time. The year before Ogg became DA, the rate was 98.2%.

If you put the number of cases filed and the number of dismissals on the same chart at the same scale to compare the two, this is what it looks like.



I am probably piling on now, but I feel compelled to point

The Chronicle story blames the supposed poor performance on a lack of experienced prosecutors assigned to the intake division. The DAO provided me with a roster of the lawyers currently assigned to that unit. The median tenure was 14 years of experience. Only four lawyers have less than three years of experience. Quite a contrast to the picture painted by the story. According to the DAO, this roster was also provided to the Chronicle. If that is the case, someone at the Chronicle made a conscious decision not to include the data on the actual experience numbers in the story and instead relied on her opponent and his surrogates to characterize the experience of the attorneys in the division.

The story also fails to mention that the increase in dismissed cases coincides with the pandemic. During that time, most communication was virtual. Frankly, I am surprised the increase in the dismissal rate was not much higher during that timeframe. You will notice that number of dismissals began to decline in 2022 as the pandemic subsided. It also coincided with the nearly complete turnover of the courts from Republican to Democratic judges. Regardless of whether you think that was a good thing or not, it would be incredibly intellectually dishonest to ignore that the new judges likely have a different approach on how to handle probable cause hearings. The Chronicle's reporters state their story was based on more than a dozen interviews with criminal attorneys. However, only two are identified and one, Lauren Byrne, has been an outspoken critic of Ogg since she left the DAO in 2020 and is a campaign surrogate for her opponent. I called three of my friends who practice criminal law. All three said they had not experienced any issues with the intake process.

As many of you know, I wrote for the Chronicle for a little over a decade. I can tell you that when I was there, this story would have never made it out of editorial. There was a well observed separation between the news and the opinion sections of the paper. Reporters wrote news and opinion editors articulated the paper's opinions. The Chronicle, to its credit, held true to that division long after much of the media had become captives of their partisan camps. And there are some reporters at the Chronicle who still work very hard at separating their personal politics from their reporting. But unfortunately, they are increasingly the exception. If the Chronicle wants to endorse Ogg's opponent, the paper certainly has the right to do so. But it should be done on the editorial page, not through slanted, one-sided articles published under the guise of being objective news stories or investigations. Doing so is a disservice to Houstonians and debases the integrity of the paper.

Bill King
Publisher's note: Bill is so right on. In today's world we should be able to count on the news sources. Unfortunately in most cases, that is no longer true. We thank Bill for taking the time to explain this.

Kim Ogg really is getting hammered and it is my opinion, as well as of many others, it is because she has arrested employees who worked for Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. Hidalgo gave an 11-million-dollar contract to one woman, after the county declared the medical center facility was not qualified to handle the COVID publicity contract, yet Hidalgo believed a one-woman company operating out of her residence located over a garage could?

More to come. **Marie Flickinger**

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST

Catholic Church

Rev. Douglas J. Guthrie, Pastor
Rev. Kingsley Nwoko, Parochial Vicar

11011 Hall Rd.
(between Beamer & Blackhawk)
www.stlukesatholic.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

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

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions)
Thursday 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday 4 to 5 p.m.

Parish Office: 281-481-6816
Children's Faith Formation: 281-481-4251
Adult Faith Formation: 713-538-2862

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

Animal shelter reopens Feb. 13

In a testament to resilience and community spirit, the Pasadena Animal Shelter will unveil its newly reconstructed facility with a ribbon-cutting scheduled for Feb. 13, at 10 a.m. Media tours will be available after the ribbon-cutting.

"We faced a significant setback, but the outpouring of support from the community, volunteers, and various organizations has been nothing short of extraordinary," said Brandi Bass, Shelter Marketing Specialist. "This ribbon-cutting ceremony is a chance to recognize them, as well as a celebration of our collective efforts to rebuild not just a structure, but a haven for the animals that depend on us."

Damage caused by the Jan. 24, 2023, tornado went far beyond what could be seen from the outside. Comprehensive inspections revealed that the tornado not only severely damaged the roof, but also negatively impacted crucial operating systems within the building.

The rebuilding process has been nothing short of a labor of love, with the community rallying together to support the shelter's resurrection.

"We've taken this opportunity to not only rebuild, but also improve our facilities," said Mayor Jeff Wagner.

"The new Pasadena Animal Shelter is equipped with upgraded electrical and HVAC systems, new floors, and a new roof which includes a stabilized system with support columns drilled into concrete foundation piers. This reinforces the strength of the roof to better withstand extreme weather."

CCART holds February meeting

The Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers (CCART) will hold its February meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 13. The meetings are held at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway in Seabrook. The gathering will feature a presentation on Stroke Awareness by Kim Randle.

The meeting will start at 9:30 a.m. with a social gathering for coffee. The business meeting will begin at 10 a.m.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be a fried/baked chicken lunch. CCART will provide the chicken and members are asked to bring a side, salad or dessert to share. All Texas retired school employees from the area are invited. Annual dues are \$50.

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, Feb. 8, 3 - 4 p.m. Family story time.
Thursday, Feb. 8, 3 - 4 p.m. Adult computer class. Registration required.

Monday, Feb. 12, 11 a.m. - noon. Adult computer class. Registration required.

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 6 - 7:30 p.m. African-American read-in. Registration required.

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.

Additional resources

The Houston Public Library has electronic resources, books, audiobooks, databases for research, tutoring, language learning, education and parent information for Texas residents with a library card. To get a card, visit the home page at www.houstonlibrary.org under Here's What's Happening. Click on Free Resources for All to access digital resources and access a link for a temporary card. Also, under Here's What's Happening, the card titled Online Resources for Kids accesses a Virtual Storytime provided on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m. The archived storytimes are found on Facebook under Houston Public Library Virtual Storytimes. Another virtual program is Craft.

Houston Public Library's many free online resources and digital services are available 24/7 with a MY Link Library Card at www.houstonlibrary.org, including e-books and e-audiobooks, streaming TV, movie and music services, online classes and tutoring and databases. Until further notice, only electronic items (i.e. e-books, e-audio books, etc.) are eligible for holds and check-out. HPL has a collection of free e-books and audio books. Visit the catalog for previously requested hold selection may be in a digital format. Instructions on downloading the e-book or audio book are on the site.

Parker Williams Library

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

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

The following events are scheduled for Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.:

Thursday, Feb. 8, 10 - 11:30 a.m. Conversation club.
Thursday, Feb. 8, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Toddler time.
Friday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. AARP Tax aid.
Friday, Feb. 9, 1 - 2 p.m. Genealogy group.
Saturday, Feb. 10, 11 - 11:45 a.m. Songs and History of the Mardi Gras Indians.
Saturday, Feb. 10, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Tai Chi.
Monday, Feb. 12, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. AARP Tax aid.
Monday, Feb. 12, 11:15 - 11:45 a.m. Family story time.
Monday, Feb. 12, 6 - 7 p.m. Silence book club.
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Babies and books.
Wednesday, Feb. 14, noon - 1 p.m. Community craft: Valentine Perler Bead keychain.
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2 - 3 p.m. Pop Culture club.
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Tai Chi.
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 6 - 7 p.m. Passion pages: romance book club.

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

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

Online services

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

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

Donald Winford Hovis



Born Dec. 29, 1942
Died Jan. 25, 2024

Donald (Don) Winford Hovis was born the sixth child to Clark and Ruby Hovis in Jackson, Mo. on Dec. 29, 1942. Don had a fulfilling childhood alongside his seven siblings in Jackson. After graduating high school, he proudly joined the Navy alongside his cherished friends Jim Midget, Bill Schaefer, Larry Schroeder, Jack Priest and Ronnie Randall. During this time, his adventures led him to Corpus Christi, where he met Marolyn. Following a brief engagement, they married in 1962.

Don and Marolyn spent their early years of marriage stationed in Sanford, Fla. where Don served aboard the USS Enterprise during a nine-month assignment. Afterward they spent a few years in Missouri where they welcomed their daughter Tracie. They

Death

later moved to Texas and established a permanent home, where they welcomed their daughter Donna. Don enjoyed camping, sports and traveling with his family. He and Marolyn were active members of the Church of Christ.

Throughout his diverse career, Don excelled as an insurance salesman, a Navy firefighter and food service manager. He had an entrepreneurial spirit that led him to restaurant ownership and the start of a janitorial supply company. Ultimately, Don most enjoyed working with the public in the food service and hospitality industry. He proudly retired from the Marriott corporation in 1996. It wasn't unusual to hear that he was a favorite boss, mentor, and friend to his colleagues. He was often described as kind-hearted, generous, and a man of integrity.

Although Don had an accomplished career of which to be proud, his proudest accomplishment was his family. Don and Marolyn celebrated 61 years of marriage on December 8, 2023. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He never missed an opportunity to attend his family's activities and support their interests.

In his retirement years, Don enjoyed attending family reunions in Missouri and spending time with his family. He was an amazing storyteller and enjoyed sharing stories from his childhood and life's

adventures. His storytelling was enhanced by his great sense of humor and love for a good prank. He was a passionate sports fan and huge supporter of the Houston Astros. He affectionately referred to them as "The Lastros" and cheered them on - win or lose.

Don is survived by his loving wife; his daughters Tracie Baker (Marvin) and Donna Hovis (Herman Ortiz); his grandchildren Krista Kelley (Adam), Kaylee Mace, Dillon Baker, Victor Salazar, and Gabriela Salazar; and his great-grandchildren Emma Kelley and Landon Kelley. Don was preceded in death by his parents, Clark and Ruby Hovis; his sister, Kathryn Rhodes; and his nephews, Lance Hovis and Travis James.

In addition to his immediate family, he is also survived by his siblings Betty Looney, Gene Hovis, Carol McClard, Sharon Evanstad, Ronnie Hovis (Cheryl), and Layne Hovis, as well as his brother-in-law and sister-in-law Lonnie and Lorene Sykes. Numerous nieces, nephews and cousins also survive him.

"Wherever a beautiful soul has been, there is a trail of beautiful memories..."

- Ronald Reagan

Friends and family are invited to share remembrances at the Celebration of Life Feb. 17 at 10 a.m. at Waters Road Church of Christ, 3616 Waters Road in Pasadena.

Board members celebrate Thompson



Pasadena ISD officially dedicated the new Thompson Intermediate campus at a ceremony held at the area school. Thompson Principal Tanis Griffin (left) is shown above at the event with Pasadena ISD board members Marshall Kendrick, Nelda Sullivan and Kenny Fernandez.

See more photos Page 3.

Elected officials share their words

Biden's LNG freeze threatens Texas jobs, European security

By U.S. Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA)

By U.S. Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) authored the following op-ed underscoring the devastating economic, environmental, and national security impacts of President Biden's decision to freeze new LNG export projects. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/cornyn-freezing-lng-exports-threatens-texas-jobs-18645141.php>

President Joe Biden's decision to freeze liquefied natural gas export permitting to non-free trade agreement countries — an action taken to appease left-wing climate activists — is disastrous policy no matter which way you cut it. LNG exports are critical to our energy, economic and national security while providing major environmental benefits.

Since Russian troops invaded Ukraine nearly two years ago, American LNG has served as a vital lifeline for countries in Europe and across the globe. In 2022 alone, European LNG imports increased by 60%. The U.S. met the majority of that demand, providing affordable and reliable energy to our friends and allies. Thanks to America's energy producers, these countries have reduced their reliance on Russian natural gas and bolstered their energy security. Biden's LNG freeze threatens to reverse that progress. It may force European leaders to make an impossible decision: gamble on an unreliable supply of American LNG or prop up Putin's war by switching to Russian gas to keep the lights on.

Dangerous conflicts are unfolding outside of Europe as well. Iran's terrorist proxies are ramping up attacks in the Middle East and disrupting vital trade corridors. At the same time, tensions are escalating in the Indo-Pacific from Chinese aggression. Bottom line: This is the absolute worst time to jeopardize our economic and national security.

Furthermore, LNG exports are uniquely suited to help decrease global emissions. Looking at the U.S. alone, the shift to natural gas for electricity generation has reduced emissions significantly more than the added amount of renewables, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Our emissions are lower today than they were in 2005, despite significant economic and population growth. This all happened thanks in large part to the natural gas revolution. But it doesn't fit into the preferred narra-

tive for left-wing climate activists. Soon, our allies will have to turn to other producers like Russia and Iran or switch to coal to meet energy demand. All these options produce far more emissions than American LNG and are extracted with inferior environmental standards.

Biden's decision to halt new LNG export projects is sure to bolster hostile nations, line the pockets of dictators and increase global emissions. It's a dangerous move that hurts our allies and helps our adversaries.

While the freeze pauses numerous projects in the queue — projects that won't come to fruition for years — this decision demonstrates the fundamental misunderstanding on the part of the Biden administration on how industry works. Purchase agreements are lined up well before LNG export facilities come online. For example, a project planned on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico has already signed a 20-year contract to supply American energy to Europe. The uncertainty created by this decision jeopardizes pending and future critical projects, which could affect job growth in Louisiana and Texas, our nation's economy and our allies' security for years to come.

The economic impact cannot be overstated. In September 2023, nearly 95% of domestically produced LNG was exported from Louisiana and Texas. Nationally, it's a significant economic boon, as well. According to the American Petroleum Institute, the oil and natural gas industry employs almost 2.6 million Americans and supports 9.8 million jobs in the U.S. A report commissioned by the API estimates that increased exports could create more than 450,000 jobs and increase the U.S. gross domestic product by \$73 billion. The decision to halt new LNG projects for more than a year will have a chilling effect on new investments that would help make that growth possible.

This newest talking point for the Biden campaign trail is yet another example of missing the forest for the trees. Biden is so focused on pleasing climate activists that he's lost sight of the bigger picture. At the end of the day, the freeze is a war on American energy, a war on American workers, a war on our allies and a war on America's national security. Why is Biden prioritizing the demands of uninformed climate activists over the security needs of our country?

San Jacinto College holds groundbreaking



On Friday, Jan. 26, officials with San Jacinto College and the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training held ribbon-cutting at the south campus to celebrate the opening of its new Biomufacturing Training Program, followed by a groundbreaking at the Generation Park Campus for its future Center for Biotechnology, set to open in 2025. NIBRT officials traveled all the way from Ireland to attend the functions. Shown above at the groundbreaking at Generation Park Center for Biotechnology. left

to right, Shawn Cloonan, McCord Development; John Milne, Killian O'Driscoll and Kate Cotter, NIBRT; Nicole Bradley, San Jacinto College; Ryan McCord, McCord Development; Detry Dokes, Brenda Hellyer and Christopher Wild, San Jacinto College; John Moon Jr., Marie Flickinger and Dan Mims, San Jacinto College Board of Trustees; Kelly Waterman, Office of US Senator Ted Cruz; and Mike Sullivan businessman and Board of Trustee Lone Star Community College. Photo by Melissa Trevizo

San Jac College has exclusive rights to training 12-state area

Program to be taught at South, Generation Park

Continued from Page 1
of NIBRT. "The Global Partner Programme provides access and support to our award-winning curriculum to ensure trainees receive the best-in-class training on all aspects of biopharma manufacturing."

"We look forward to working with the great team at San Jacinto to deliver this training in the greater Houston region."

At approximately 4,000 square feet, the San Jacinto College Biomufacturing Training Program facility houses the latest industry equipment, including biosafety cabinets, benchtop bioreactors and wave bioreactors, automated viability and cell counters, filter integrity tester, and more.

The resources of the Biotechnology offerings at San Jacinto College will continue to expand to meet the needs of this thriving industry.

To learn more about the biotechnology program at San Jacinto College, visit www.sanjac.edu/programs/areas-of-study/stem/biomanufacturing-tech.

Center for Biotechnology
San Jacinto College will make major strides in the biotechnology field with the opening of its new Center for Biotechnology on the Generation Park Campus.

The state-of-the-art facility, is being built in collaboration with McCord Development will provide comprehensive, hands-on training with realistic good manufacturing practices simulated environments.

The center will offer an associate of applied science degree in biomufacturing technology, and shorter credentials for post-graduates, to meet workforce needs. The facility's cutting-edge resources and immersive training environments will ensure graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge essential for success in the dynamic biopharmaceutical industry.

"The center and the overall components of the Biotechnology program will play a vital role in meeting the growing demand for

skilled professionals in the biotechnology sector," said Dr. Brenda Hellyer, chancellor, San Jacinto College. "We are committed to equipping our students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the dynamic biopharmaceutical industry."

"Our vision is to not only meet the workforce needs of today but will also shape the future of biotechnology education and training in our region."

"We are thrilled to have San Jacinto's new Center for Biotechnology at Generation Park, reinforcing our commitment to fostering Houston's life science ecosystem."

"The world-renowned NIBRT program will provide quality workforce training in the pharmaceutical manufacturing space, strengthening Houston's ability to attract and retain world-class companies in the industry," said Ryan McCord, President of McCord Development.

The Center for Biotechnology is scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2025.

Economic Alliance Houston Port Region holds annual banquet at San Jac College



Economic Alliance Houston Port Region recently held its annual membership banquet at the San Jacinto College-LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy and Technology. Shown above at the event are, left to right, U.S. Rep. Randy Weber, Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale and Harris County Commissioner Tom Ramsey.



On Feb. 1, the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region held its annual membership banquet at the San Jacinto College-LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy and Technology. Shown above at the event are, left to right, Jay Guerrero, regional director John Cornyn's office; Brenda Hellyer, chancellor San Jacinto College; and ???, U.S. Rep Brian Babin's office.



The Economic Alliance Houston Port Region recently held its annual membership banquet at the San Jacinto College-LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy and Technology. Shown above at the event are Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale (left) and Economic Alliance Houston Port Region President/CEO Chad Burke.

PISD administrators, Thompson staff celebrate the official opening of new Thompson



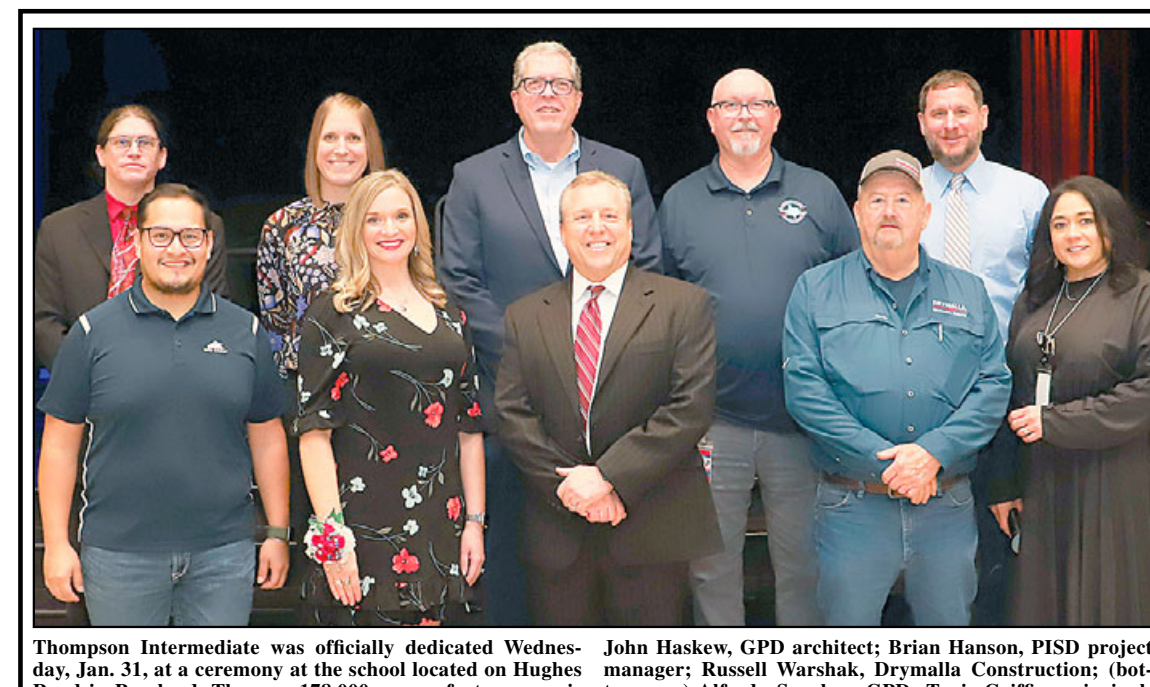
A dedication ceremony for the new Thompson Intermediate campus was held Wednesday, Jan. 31. Approved by voters in 2017 as part of a \$135 million bond referendum, the new campus is located on a 21-acre plot of land on Hughes Road near South Belt Elementary. Shown above at the event are, left to right, (front row) Ca-Lishea Woods, Denise Medina, Christine Veltman, Tanis Griffin, Prudencio Reyna, Kelli Moneyhun, Arianna Ibarra, (back row) Travis Teichelman, Lauren Soto, Gina Teston, Marybeth Nicol, Leticia Sanchez and Jill Butler.



Pasadena ISD officials officially dedicated the new Thompson Intermediate campus at a ceremony held at the area school Wednesday, Jan. 31. Shown above at the event are, left to right, (front row) Kevin Fornof, Tanis Griffin, Melissa McCalla, Jeremy Richardson, Alyta Harrell, (back row) Troy McCarley, Toni Lopez, Bobby McCain and Darla Massey-Jones.



Pasadena ISD officials officially dedicated the new Thompson Intermediate campus at a ceremony held at the area school Wednesday, Jan. 31. Sgt. Everett B. Valdez (right) is shown above at the event with Dobie JROTC Color Guard members, left to right, Loriana Bentacourt-Mejia, Viridiana Guzman, Lexy Rodriguez and Ariana Alaniz.



Thompson Intermediate was officially dedicated Wednesday, Jan. 31, at a ceremony at the school located on Hughes Road in Pearland. The new 178,000-square-foot campus is located on Hughes Road just inside the Pearland city limits. Shown above at the event are, left to right, (front row) Jim McSherry, GPD architect; Lisa Michela, GPD architect; John Haskew, GPD architect; Brian Hanson, PISD project manager; Russell Warshak, Drymalla Construction; (bottom row) Alfredo Sanchez, GPD; Tanis Griffin, principal; Kevin Forno, PISD associate superintendent; John Boyd, Drymalla; and Alyta Harrell, PISD associate superintendent.

Council members enjoy BAHEP gala



Houston City Council members old and new alike were in attendance at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's annual Quasar Award banquet, held Jan. 26 at the South Shore Harbor Resort in League City.

Shown above at the event are, left to right, At-Large Position 5 member Sallie Acorn; outgoing District E member Dave Martin; District C member Abbie Kamin; and incoming District E member Fred Flickinger.

Atkinson students of the month recognized

Atkinson Elementary has named some of their students of the months of November/December.



"Kindergartner Ayleth Fuentetaja is a great example of a student who always shows citizenship to her classmates and teachers. She's a role model for her friends and classmates. She follows school and class rules, and cares that everybody in the classroom does the right thing. It is pleasure to have her in class," said teacher Ludi Perez.



"Matheus Mendez is a wonderful example of someone who has great citizenship traits. He cares for his classmates and follows school rules consistently. He tries to do the right thing all of the time and is a great role model for all of his peers as well. He listens well and is always respectful too," said his first grade teacher, Sheri Graham.

BAHEP honors Harris



Space Center Houston President/CEO William T. Harris was presented the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's 2024 Quasar Award at the group's annual banquet, held Jan. 26 at the South Harbor Resort in League City. Harris is shown above at the event with U.S. Rep. Brian Babin.



"Avah Montgomery is a very caring third-grader who always helps classmates and teachers and is a role model to classmates, because she exemplifies good citizenship. She is respectful and responsible and is prepared for class and treats everyone by the golden rule. We are so proud of her. Keep up the great work Avah, says her teacher, Diane Davis.



Sofia Fernandez is in Maria Moncada's second grade class. Moncada notes "She exhibits good citizen personality traits. Sofia cares about classmates, respects school and classroom rules, is honest and trustworthy and respects rights of others. I am very proud to have Sofia in my class."

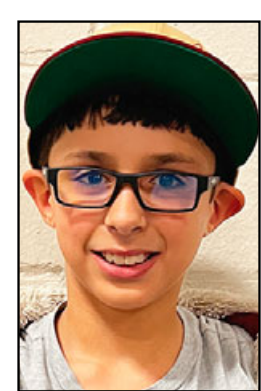
BAHEP chair, Flickingers visit



Newly elected Houston District E City Council member Fred Flickinger (left) and his wife Leslie are shown above with BAHEP President Brian Freedman at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's annual Quasar Award banquet, held Jan. 26 at the South Shore Harbor Resort in League City.



Janelynn Torres works in the best interest of others. She's fair and treats everyone equally. She is kind, courteous, respectful, and compassionate, and takes time to listen to others and interacts gently and with patience. She's a great role model and exhibits excellent citizenship. We're proud and enjoy having her in class," says Tulu Sarkar her home-room fourth grade teacher.



"Arlo De La Rosa has come a long way and shows remarkable improvement of how to be respectful and responsible. He is a role model to his classmates but to his fellow friends across the sped hallway. I'm so proud of him and the way he is evolving. We love you Arlo and keep believing in oneself," said Prachi Bhatt his home-room teacher.



Olivia Arrambide, is always kind to her teachers and peers," says her teacher from Aushanay Banala.

Leader looks back at memorable 2023

Continued from Page 1

A fire at a homeless encampment located behind a sound barrier wall along Beltway 8 near Sabo led to an arrest early Saturday, Sept. 9. A homeless individual returning to the fire to grab some belongings was detained and found to have open warrants. Additional charges for arson were pending further investigation. Investigators said the suspect may have been responsible for at least five other similar fires in the area.

Following several weeks of drought conditions, the City of Houston on Aug. 27 entered Stage 2 of its Drought Contingency Plan, placing strict rationing on water use for residents living in the city limits. South Belt residents outside the city limits who were serviced by local municipal utility districts will be unaffected by the rations.

Houston firefighters responded to a house fire around 12:45 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2, in the 9000 block of North Jewel Bend near Fuqua and Blackhawk. According to Houston Fire Department officials, the fire was unintentional in nature, stemming from an outdoor grill. The fire caused an estimated \$60,000 in damage. Firefighters were able to save approximately \$252,000 in property. No injuries were reported. Firefighters from stations 52, 23, 70, 36, 61 and 29 responded to this incident.

Houston firefighters responded to a house fire around 9:50 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, in the 300 block of Cobbleton Drive in the Sycamore Valley subdivision near Dixie Farm Road and the Gulf Freeway. According to Houston Fire Department officials, the electrical fire was unintentional. The fire caused an estimated \$70,000 in damage. No injuries were reported. In all, 49 personnel responded to this incident, including crews from stations 93, 23, 70, 71, 52, 61, 72, 94, 37,

24, Rescue 42 and Rehab 17.

Dobie High School named its homecoming king and queen at its varsity football game against Pasadena High School Thursday, Sept. 28. Santos Magana was crowned king, and Shaira Balanta was crowned queen. The Longhorns routed the Eagles 59-13.

Charges were filed against a suspect wanted in the fatal stabbing of a man that took place about 4:10 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 28, in the 8200 block of Garden Parks Drive near Fuqua and Blackhawk. The suspect, Cory Madison Kellett, 29, was charged with murder and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. The victim, 23, suffered multiple stab wounds. According to Houston Police Department officials, patrol officers responded to a stabbing at the above address and found the victim had been transported to HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake where he was pronounced dead. A preliminary investigation and witness statements determined the victim got into a verbal altercation with a male suspect in the driveway of the residence at the above address. The suspect then produced a knife and stabbed the victim.

A man was shot in the leg during an attempted robbery at a taco truck in the 900 block of Edgebrook near Theta around 4:30 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 9. According to Houston Police Department officials, officers responded to a shooting call and found the wounded man down the street from the taco truck. The victim said he had just ordered his food and was about to enter his truck when a suspect in a ski mask pointed a gun at his head and demanded money. As the victim began to give the suspect his money, he noticed the gunman was distracted and attempted to get in his truck and flee. The suspect fired multiple shots, striking the victim in the leg, before fleeing the scene in an unknown vehicle. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital for surgery and was expected to be OK.

A man was fatally shot around 1:25 p.m. Monday, Oct. 16, at a business at the corner of Beamer and Fuqua. Daniel Abdelmalak, 25, was pronounced dead at the scene after being shot multiple times. According to Houston police officials, the shooting stemmed from an argument over a business transaction. A physical altercation escalated into a shooting, investigators said. All three nearby schools - Meador Elementary, Morris Middle School and Beverly Hills Intermediate - were placed on lockdown for approximately 1.5 hours as a safety precaution until deemed safe by police. Malcolm Jakobe Lewis, 20, later turned himself in to police for the killing and was subsequently charged with murder.

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To be continued in next week's Leader.

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To be continued in next week's Leader.

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45 years ago (1979) Jodie Fiore of Beverly Hills Intermediate School represented the Pasadena Independent School District at the annual Chronicle Spelling Bee. She had been to the finals of the competition the previous four years.

Many South Belt area residents were questioning the leash laws and what authorities to contact about the problem of dogs running loose.

40 years ago (1984) The supervisor of health services for Pasadena Independent School District reported 1,531 flu-like cases in the district in the previous week.

Texas State Teachers' Association considered the South Belt Leader for the Texas School Bell Award for increasing public understanding of school achievement, problems and programs.

San Jacinto College was concerned that it could lose \$3.5 million in funding because of the state financial crisis.

Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner El Franco Lee announced he planned to take over maintenance of a portion of Hall Road, even though that part was within city limits.

The winning slogan for the South Belt area was chosen. It was "Still Believing in Excellence," which used the first letters S-B-E for South Belt-Ellington. The slogan was submitted by Sagemeadow resident Larry Elender.

way 8 as Sam Houston Parkway with an amendment for South Belt, received its first reading in Austin.

The Dobie varsity girls' basketball team rallied in the final eight minutes for a 39-35 victory over South Houston to capture its first district victory.

30 years ago (1994) Joe Roach, Houston's first new District E councilman in

1985

DOUBLE BIRTHDAY WISHES Bobby Griffin sends birthday wishes to two family members enjoying a birthday the same day. Grandson Kenney Griffin, son of Angela and David Griffin, and son-in-law Jim Giles of Kirkwood South celebrate their birthdays Feb. 8. Birthday wishes are also sent from Kenney's wife Lacie and daughter Ellie Vera; and Jim's wife Tracy and children Cody, Kristen and Aaron and his wife, Ashley and sons, Jaxson and Jace.

CHRIS ENJOYS A BIRTHDAY Chris Clark marks a birthday Saturday, Feb. 10. Birthday greetings are sent to Chris from wife Mary and "babies" Zelda and Maude. Special birthday wishes are sent from the Leader staff as well as a big thank-you for all he does for the community.

LILY TURNS SIX! Happy birthday wishes are sent to Lilian (Lily) Margaret Scarberry who celebrates her sixth birthday Monday, Feb. 12, from dad Austin, mom Tiffany and big sister Jade Scarberry; grandparents Jannie and Robert Scarberry, former longtime South Belt residents; aunts Jenny (Hayes) Laney and Stacey (Hayes) Flowers; uncles Stephen Flowers, Joey Hayes and Tyler Scarberry; and cousins Brayden and Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno, and Kennedy, Owen and Evie Flowers.

DEAN CELEBRATES AN ANNIVERSARY Congratulations are in order for Dean Baier and his wife Barb as they celebrate the three years of their marriage. Dean and Barb married

Feb. 13, 2021. Here's to many more wonderful years of marriage.

SCHOOL DAZE The following staff of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Feb. 8 through Feb. 14.

Atkinson Elementary Give a birthday shoutout Feb. 12 to Eileen Guinon. The day for a party for Diana Trevino is Feb. 14.

Frazier Elementary On Feb. 9, Jennifer Wilson enjoys a birthday.

Three more businesses, Re/Max South Belt real estate office building, Sonic and a five-bay self-serve car wash and detail shop, were planned for Scarsdale.

25 years ago (1999) Harris County flood control officials unveiled their \$4.5 million plan to reroute

Mud Gully so the waterway, which flowed into Clear Creek, would bypass the Brio and Dixie Oil Processing Superfund sites.

A thousand more students were taking classes at San Jacinto College than in the previous year, a 5.8 percent increase in enrollment.

20 years ago (2004) Voters approved Clear

Creek Independent School District's \$264 million bond package by a 64 percent to 36 percent margin.

Because of the growing student population at San Jacinto College South campus, plans for a new parking lot were announced. It would provide students with about 660 additional parking spaces.

The Dobie Academic Decathlon team won the regional competition at the Clear Lake High School Ninth-Grade Center.

Beverly Hills Intermediate School student Brandon Nguyen won the school's spelling bee and the district competition, earning the right to represent the Pasadena Independent School District at the Houston Chronicle spelling bee.

15 years ago (2009) Sagemont Church constructed a massive cross on its property near Beltway 8. In the works since 2007, the completed structure stood 170 feet tall with a span of 60 feet at the horizontal beam. It was made of painted steel and weighed 90 tons and took three days to erect.

Dr. Dixie Melillo was honored when the Pasadena Independent School District middle school that bore her name was officially dedicated. Melillo founded the nonprofit organization, The Rose. Melillo Middle School opened at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year to serve fifth- and sixth-grade students from the Burnett Elementary, Frazier Elementary, Stuchbery Elementary and Thompson Intermediate attendance zones. Construction of the building was funded by a bond issue approved by district voters in 2004.

Former longtime Dobie swimming coach Dennis Shippey was found safe after missing for three days. Shippey, 63, had last been seen walking his dog, Lucky, at Strawberry Park in Pasadena. He was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and had reportedly been without his medication. At the request of Shippey's family and the Pasadena Police Department, Texas EquuSearch joined the search for the missing man. Both Shippey and his dog were found in a field in Rosharon by two hunters. Shippey was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

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10 years ago (2013) Judge John Dietz ruled that Texas' education funding was inadequate and inequitable across the state.

In his ruling, Dietz specif-

ically called on the state to provide the resources necessary to give all students a real opportunity to graduate from high school ready for college or a career, provide equitable funding to bring all Texas school districts up to the funding levels necessary to meet Texas' high standards and provide local communities with meaningful discretion to provide local enrichment above state requirements. The Pasadena Independent School District and the Clear Creek Independent School District were among 600 school districts to file suit against the state when the Legislature cut 5.4 billion from public education in 2011. This reduction occurred at a time when the state increased unfunded requirements for school districts and testing requirements.

Sagemeadow resident Javier Rene Ortiz III, 30, died in an explosion at the Air Liquide facility in La Porte. The explosion happened in a lab that was used to mix industrial gases, such as nitrogen and hydrogen, which are used to process food, beverages and electronics. Ortiz was initially reported as missing following the incident. His body, however, was discovered later that evening.

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Remember When



DOUBLE BIRTHDAY WISHES Bobby Griffin sends birthday wishes to two family members enjoying a birthday the same day. Grandson Kenney Griffin, son of Angela and David Griffin, and son-in-law Jim Giles of Kirkwood South celebrate their birthdays Feb. 8. Birthday wishes are also sent from Kenney's wife Lacie and daughter Ellie Vera; and Jim's wife Tracy and children Cody, Kristen and Aaron and his wife, Ashley and sons, Jaxson and Jace.

CHRIS ENJOYS A BIRTHDAY Chris Clark marks a birthday Saturday, Feb. 10. Birthday greetings are sent to Chris from wife Mary and "babies" Zelda and Maude. Special birthday wishes are sent from the Leader staff as well as a big thank-you for all he does for the community.

LILY TURNS SIX! Happy birthday wishes are sent to Lilian (Lily) Margaret Scarberry who celebrates her sixth birthday Monday, Feb. 12, from dad Austin, mom Tiffany and big sister Jade Scarberry; grandparents Jannie and Robert Scarberry, former longtime South Belt residents; aunts Jenny (Hayes) Laney and Stacey (Hayes) Flowers; uncles Stephen Flowers, Joey Hayes and Tyler Scarberry; and cousins Brayden and Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno, and Kennedy, Owen and Evie Flowers.

DEAN CELEBRATES AN ANNIVERSARY Congratulations are in order for Dean Baier and his wife Barb as they celebrate the three years of their marriage. Dean and Barb married

Feb. 13, 2021. Here's to many more wonderful years of marriage.

SCHOOL DAZE The following staff of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Feb. 8 through Feb. 14.

Atkinson Elementary Give a birthday shoutout Feb. 12 to Eileen Guinon. The day for a party for Diana Trevino is Feb. 14.

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Hancock Elementary Join in the birthday fun Feb. 12 with Kristy Chapa.

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Dr. Dixie Melillo was honored when the Pasadena Independent School District middle school that bore her name was officially dedicated. Melillo founded the nonprofit organization, The Rose. Melillo Middle School opened at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year to serve fifth- and sixth-grade students from the Burnett Elementary, Frazier Elementary, Stuchbery Elementary and Thompson Intermediate attendance zones. Construction of the building was funded by a bond issue approved by district voters in 2004.

Former longtime Dobie swimming coach Dennis Shippey was found safe after missing for three days. Shippey, 63, had last been seen walking his dog, Lucky, at Strawberry Park in Pasadena. He was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and had reportedly been without his medication. At the request of Shippey's family and the Pasadena Police Department, Texas EquuSearch joined the search for the missing man. Both Shippey and his dog were found in a field in Rosharon by two hunters. Shippey was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

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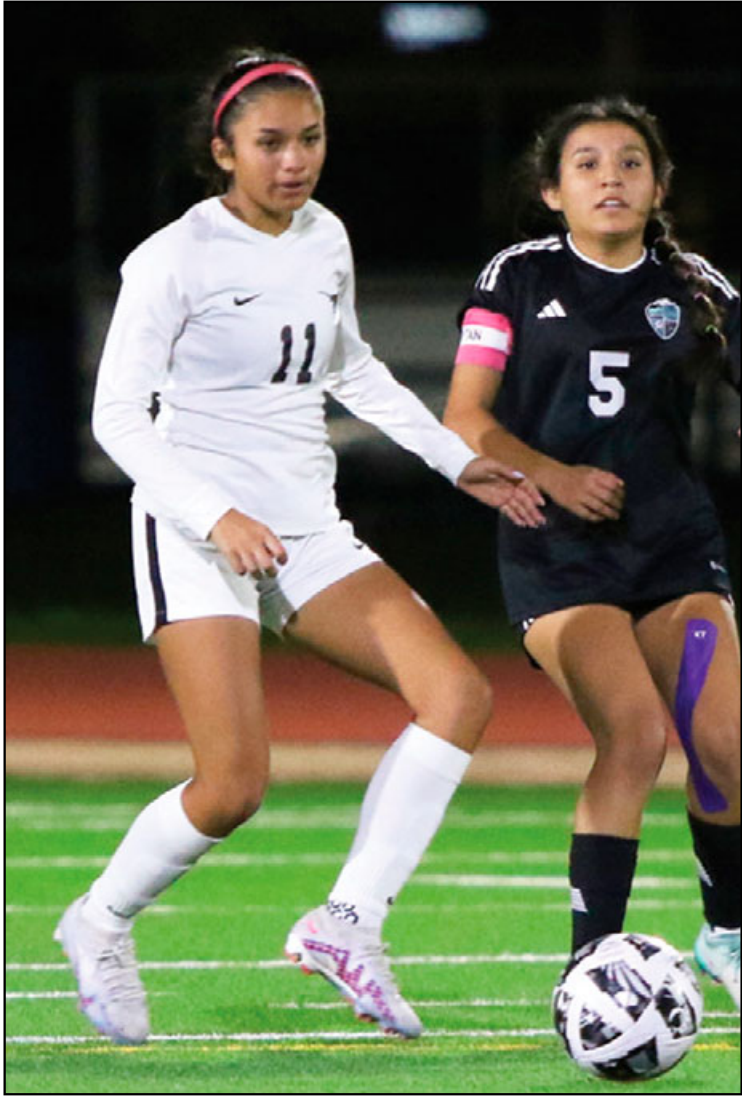
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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

22-6A soccer leader is Dobie



Dobie varsity girls' soccer player Jaylece Rodriguez has played a big role as the locals were 12-2-2 overall prior to play Feb. 6 and were in first place at 3-0-1. At right is Memorial's Leah Chavez (5). Photo by Donna Alsdorf

JFD boys' basketball aims to secure three seed



Dobie senior Julio Cisneros (shown) joined teammate Dylan Jackson with more than 1,000 career points scored, with both players achieving the feat within days of one another. Photo by Gloria Wallace

The Longhorn varsity boys control their own destiny in their quest for the No. 3 playoff seed, closing the regular season at home Feb. 9 against Deer Park and then playing at Pasadena Feb. 13.

The four playoff spots within the 22-6A ranks will go to South Houston, Memorial, Dobie and Deer Park. As of press time prior to Feb. 6 play, South Houston was still unbeaten at 9-0, having downed Dobie 71-62 Feb. 2.

The Trojans and Memorial (8-1) have secured the top two seeds and will meet Feb. 13 at Memorial to close the regular season. The Trojans already own a 59-45 first-round win over the Mavericks.

Deer Park and Dobie were tied for third place at 6-4 as of Feb. 3, but the Deer were set to challenge South Houston Feb. 6 while Dobie was on a bye. Deer Park will then close its regular season against Dobie.

Of note, Dobie senior Julio Cisneros has joined teammate Dylan Jackson with more than 1,000 career points scored, with the Dobie crowd having celebrated the milestone with Cisneros prior to the Feb. 2 South Houston game at Dobie main.

The Clear Brook varsity boys went into play Feb. 6 after press time at 11-19 overall and winners of three of nine league games. Still, the Wolverines just may go down to the final day of the regular season with a chance at the No. 4 playoff seed out of District 24-6A.

Clear Springs and Dickinson were both 9-1 as of press time and had secured the top two playoff seeds, with 6-3 Clear Lake also having qualified for the postseason.

Reloading with youthful talent this season, the Wolverines have indeed endured their fair share of growing pains. Senior Zion Norl has excelled as one of just three final-year players on the roster.

As bright as the future may look for the Clear Brook boys, they hope there's more this year.

Dobie boys host Deer Park Feb. 9, 7 p.m.
Dobie boys at Pasadena Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Brook boys host Clear Falls Feb. 9, 7 p.m.
Brook boys at Brazoswood Feb. 13, 7 p.m.

Harris leads Dobie track at Deer Park's Kethans

Coming off a 28-point individual effort at the Kethan Relays in Deer Park, 2023 regional qualifier Stacie Harris will be one of the marquee athletes in action at Pasadena ISD's Brown Relays Feb. 9 at Auxiliary Stadium in Pasadena.

PISD Brown Relays Feb. 9, 11 a.m. Auxiliary Stadium

UIL fires up competition in revamped 22-6A

Coaches have long valued the benefit of scheduling top-notch competition as a means to strengthen the abilities and results of their own teams.

With that in mind, the revamped District 22-6A alignment, which will again include Pasadena ISD programs Dobie, Memorial, Sam Rayburn and South Houston and is set to begin with the start of the 2024-2025 school year, will deliver plenty of competition.

Alvin, Alvin ISD's Manvel and Shadow Creek will soon join the 22-6A ranks along with Pearland and Pearland ISD program Dawson.

Currently a Class 5A program, Manvel is making the move to Class 6A with an enrollment of 2,594. Dawson, Pearland and Dawson are all coming from 23-6A.

The tendency is to look at varsity football first when realignments are announced, and let there be little doubt that the revamped 22-6A football race will be a doozy.

Football
 Pearland, Dawson and Shadow Creek finished in a three-way tie for the title in 23-6A last season at 6-1, with Pearland extending its season to the area round. Manvel, meanwhile, delivered an "off" year by its standards, missing the postseason at 5-5 overall within District 10-5A.

In terms of Division I and Division II playoff bracket possibilities, the four largest enrollments belong to Dobie (3,825), Pearland (3,540), Memorial (3,169) and Al-

Dobie football picks its nondistrict slate

Defending District 22-6A football champion Dobie will take on the Clear Brook Wolverines and Klein Bearkats on its nondistrict schedule for 2024 and 2025 after Region III head coaches met following the University Interscholastic League's Feb. 1 reclassification and realignment announcement.

Boasting league championships in 2020 and 2023, the Dobie varsity football program has built a string of six straight postseason appearances.

Beginning next school year and repeating in 2025-2026, the reloaded District 22-6A lineup will include Pasadena ISD's Dobie, Memorial, Sam Rayburn and South Houston in addition to Alvin, Dawson, Manvel, Pearland and Shadow Creek.

In 2023, Dobie, Memorial, Dawson, Manvel, Pearland and Shadow Creek all reached the postseason.

The UIL has set Aug. 29-31 as the opening week of the 2024 high school football season.

Continued on Page 8

22-6A Beginning in 2024-2025
Dobie (3,825)
Pearland (3,540)
Memorial (3,169)
Alvin (2,869)
Rayburn (2,788.5)
Dawson (2,605)
Shadow Creek (2,603)
Manvel (2,594)
South Houston (2,285)

Realignment: Deer headed to 24-6A

The University Interscholastic League's bi-annual realignment has certainly brought an increased level of competition to 24-6A beginning next school year and continuing through 2025-2026.

The addition of Deer Park to a mix that already included Brazoswood, Dickinson and the Clear Creek ISD five pack of Brook, Creek, Falls, Lake and Springs will deliver plenty of great matchups in all.

Choose any sports on the boys' or girls' sides and the Deer have been there and done that. Regardless of the matchup in the team sports, Deer Park will be no worse than on equal footing with the competition.

Considering the Division I and Division II play-off football brackets, Deer Park (4,066) and Dickinson (3,859) will now be the top candidates to be slotted in the large school

24-6A Beginning in 2024-2025
Deer Park (4,066)
Dickinson (3,859)
Clear Springs (2,800)
Clear Lake (2,648)
Clear Creek (2,584)
Clear Falls (2,563)
Clear Brook (2,563)
Brazoswood (2,491)

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Leader remembers top 2023 team, individual efforts

As the *Leader* continues its year in review for 2023, the following is a look back at some of August, September and October highlights.

Nov. 2

District 22-6A champion Dobie finished off its regular season with an impressive 6-0 run through the league and prepared to welcome Atascocita in the bidistrict playoff round as a Class 6A Division I host seed as the varsity football playoffs began Nov. 9-11.

The Longhorns, scoring 64 points in week-nine in a win over Sam Rayburn and 72 more to close out an 8-2 regular season with a 72-28 week-10 win over South Houston Oct. 27 at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena.

Playing terrific football for six weeks, Dobie won a thriller over Deer Park back on Sept. 22 as quarterback Juan Huerta scored on a sneak in the final minute of an eventual 38-35 win.

Boosted by that incredible second-half rally to defeat Deer Park, the Longhorns then ran the table the rest of the way in head coach Demond Stafford's second season. Dobie last won district in 2020 before a postseason loss.

The Dobie varsity volleyball team advanced to play Dawson in the area playoff round after downing Kingwood in five sets, 37-35, 22-25, 18-25, 28-26, 15-7 on Oct. 31 at Channelview. The Longhorns headed to the second round for the first time since 2017 and were 32-8 overall, a program all-time best.

With each stride, Lauren Garza was inching closer and closer to a place in history. She couldn't have known it at the time, but the talented junior had sent her head coach, Mo Hickman, past coaches and sportswriters alike, on a hunt for history.

At 19 minutes, 01.73 seconds, Garza, the District 22-6A champion, went on to become Dobie's first female cross-country runner to qualify for the Class 6A State Championships at the 5,000-meter distance.

Placing 19th overall among the talented Region III field Oct. 24 at Kate Barr Ross Park in Huntsville, Garza was the 10th and final automatic individual to punch her ticket for the state meet. Along the way, she helped her Dobie team finish 16th overall as a group.

The talented sophomore represented the Longhorns in Round Rock at the 6A State Championships Nov. 4 at Old Settlers Park. Garza joined 2019 state qualifier Alberto Campa as the only Dobie cross-country

runners to reach state in the 6A classification.

Dobie Class of 2022 graduate Natalie Onozie surpassed the 500 assist mark in her first season with the Albany State University women's volleyball program.

A nursing major, Onozie played her freshman collegiate season at Alverno College in Milwaukee. Onozie has flourished at Albany State with three regular-season matches remaining, registering 511 assists and 181 digs.

Nov. 9

The new program best time to beat is 19 minutes, 36 seconds at the 5,000-meter distance with all the marbles on the line. It's the bar that junior Lauren Garza set after she became the first female in the history of the Dobie cross-country program to qualify for the state meet at the 5,000-meter distance.

Garza finished 99th overall in the 6A state run Nov. 4 at Round Rock's Old Settlers Park. Regardless of how things went on that day, Garza permanently placed herself among the all-time greats at Dobie.

Once a Get Fit Jog participant in elementary school, Garza was a key contributor to District 22-6A championship squads as a freshman and sophomore, then was the league's top overall medalist in 2023.

The Lutheran South Academy varsity volleyball team headed back to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial School State 5A Championships following a five-set thriller of a win over St. John XXIII's Nov. 4.

With a 24-26, 25-17, 25-10, 28-30, 15-9 win over St. John XXIII's, Lutheran South continued its season with a state semifinal berth. The Pioneers, with a 40-7 overall record, looked to avenge a 2022 state semifinal loss to Fort Bend Christian Academy.

Senior twins Matthew Gaitan and Marcus Gaitan finished fourth and fifth overall, respectively, closing out their Lutheran South Academy cross-country careers by leading the Pioneers to a third-place team award at the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A State Championships Oct. 30 in Waco.

Making one last run as Pioneers in the ultimate TAPPS event, Matthew Gaitan covered the 5K course at the Cottonwood Creek Golf Club in a time of 16 minutes, 25.94 seconds to capture fourth place, while Marcus Gaitan crossed the finish line at 16:30.43 for fifth place. Another pair of senior

twins, Marcelo and Franco Parra of San Antonio TMI, were first and third, respectively, while leading their group to the team title with a low of 54, inching out second-place San Antonio Christian's 55.

Lutheran South was third as a team with 86. The Parras, both Princeton University bound, ran in the lead group throughout as Marcelo Parra was the top overall medalist in a time of 16:09.53. Sophomore Adrian Rule was second at 16:13.87, and Franco Parra's third-place time of 16:24.39 was just ahead of those coming from the Gaitans.

Freshman Jeremy Gaitan and sophomore Reid Toner of Lutheran South went 12th and 13th best, with Gaitan finishing at 17:04.68 and a time of 17:05.29 getting Toner to 13th. The Pioneers' fifth overall finisher was Josh Gaitan, the freshman twin brother of Jeremy Gaitan. Josh Gaitan was 53rd at 19:09.37.

A program-record 32 regular-season wins. The first trip to the area playoff round since 2017. A handful of individual career achievements for several of the team's key seniors. The Dobie volleyball season had it all.

A five-set win over Kingwood in the bidistrict round and all of the emotion that came with that could have played a role in the team's tough three-set area round loss to Dawson, but the memories will endure. Fully aware that the season, as special as it promised to be, would one day in November come to an end, Dobie varsity volleyball head coach Dawn Sexton said she took special care to enjoy the journey.

"I know I thought about it the first day of practice, and really tried to soak it all in even then," she said. "Having 10 seniors on the roster is special in and of itself, but we also felt like we could achieve some big goals as a program."

Nov. 16

A thrilling five-set win over Fort Bend Christian Academy had the Lutheran South Academy varsity volleyball team a win away from a 5A state championship before defending title holder Liberty Christian ended the locals' hopes. Liberty Christian's 25-22, 26-24, 25-18 win in the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools 5A state championship volleyball match Nov. 10 left the LSA bunch with a 41-8 overall record.

Junior Kirra Musgrove led the Pioneers with 15 kills while senior Remy Keller had seven in her final match. Senior Taylor



Beverly Hills Intermediate eighth-grade student Cruz Jasso won his second straight Pasadena ISD District Championship Cross-Country individual title as he led the way at 10 minutes, 35 seconds over the two-mile course Nov. 10 in Pasadena. Jasso was also the seventh-grade boys' overall champion in 2022.

Crain, a Baylor signee, had 14 digs from her libero spot, and sophomore Aniston Collins dealt 14 assists.

Lutheran South fell in the 2022 state semifinals in four games against Fort Bend Christian Academy and appeared headed for another shortfall this season in the semis. But down two sets and facing elimination for a second time, the Pioneers put together a scintillating run to victory. In the end of arguably one of the greatest wins in program history, LSA came up with a 20-25, 22-25, 25-13, 25-14, 15-11 state semifinal win over Fort Bend Christian Academy as Musgrove erupted for 28 kills, 20 assists and 15 digs, while Collins added 26.

It wasn't to be in the final as Liberty Christian wrapped up a 38-7 record with its second state title.

State-ranked Atascocita built a 23-0 lead over District 22-6A champion Dobie and went on to defeat the Longhorns 66-28 in a Class 6A Division I bidistrict playoff football game Nov. 10 at Pasadena ISD's Veterans Stadium.

The Longhorns, who saw their season end at 8-3 overall, got big plays from its stars as senior Ethan Nguyen had an 82-yard touchdown reception on the wheel route and sophomore tailback De' Marcus Hodges rushed for 159 yards and a score. Senior quarterback Juan Huerta threw for a touchdown and ran for another in the game.

Clear Brook High School graduate Kailin Newsome added more chapters to what has already been a storybook collegiate volleyball career as she and her Southeastern Louisiana University teammates celebrated the program's first-ever Southland Conference regular season crown.

Newsome, the all-time kills leader at Clear Brook, originally signed with SLU out of high school and played her freshman season with the Lions in 2020-2021, winning Southland Conference Freshman of the Year accolades. She played the 2021-2022 season at Wichita State University, then returned to SLU for 2022-2023 and was a first-team All-Conference selection as she guided the Lions to the postseason conference tournament title.

With more than 1,100 career kills, Newsome three times during the sea-

son was named the Southland Conference Player of the Week and has helped the Lions to a 26-4 overall record, including 20 straight wins.

Nov. 23

The cream certainly rose to the top at the conclusion of the 20th anniversary of the McDonald's Texas Invitational high school basketball tournament, with four stateranked programs battling it out for Division I gold bracket championship crowns on the thrilling final day.

At the final buzzer, North Crowley won its second straight boys' Division I gold division championship game Nov. 18 in the grand finale of the three-day event at Phillips Field House. The Panthers, ranked third in the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Class 6A preseason state poll, edged No. 10 South Grand 54-53 this go-around after having beaten Richardson 50-43 in the DI gold bracket final in 2022.

San Antonio Brandeis, which was at No. 25 in the TABC's Class 6A girls' state rankings, impressed fans for three days in first reaching the Division I girls' gold bracket title game and then earning the crown with a 56-48 victory over No. 11 Converse Judson.

The District 22-6A boys' field of entrants fared very well over the three days. Deer Park, Pasadena Memorial and South Houston all made impressive runs in the tournament after last season finishing as tri-champions in 22-6A. Deer Park went unbeaten in the tournament with wins over Clear Brook (67-48) and Bridgeland (54-43) before taking down Barbers Hill 56-53 in the DI gold bracket championship game. In pool play Nov. 16, the Deer first defeated Cy-Ridge 64-60 and then handled Angleton 67-61 to advance to DI gold bracket play.

The Pasadena Memorial boys, with senior and Louisiana State University signee Robert Miller III leading the way, reached the Division I silver bracket final before falling 64-53 to Denton Guyer.

South Houston also excelled at the McDonald's event, losing only to Barbers Hill 57-53 in the Division II gold semifinals but then edging Bridgeland, led by former Clear Brook and Pasadena head coach Jason Pillow, by a 47-45 count.

Beverly Hills Intermediate eighth-grade student Cruz Jasso won his second straight Pasadena ISD District Championship Cross-Country individual title as he led the way at 10 minutes, 35 seconds over the two-mile course Nov. 10 in Pasadena. Jasso was also the seventh-grade boys' overall champion in 2022.

Clear Brook senior Joseph Trevino was honored by the Texas High School Coaches Association All-State honorable mention selection in the sport of cross-country.

Trevino, a multisport standout with the Wolverines who also plays basketball and competes in the track and field distance events, met the THSCA requirement of a grade point average of 92 or better from his freshman through junior academic years. SAT and/or ACT scores are also considered. Trevino advanced to the Region III Cross-Country Championships three straight seasons, finishing 23rd overall last month. He is now playing varsity basketball, where he is in his second season with the Wolverines.

Nov. 30

Delivering career totals as good as any in Dobie varsity volleyball program history, Dobie senior Lexie Gonzalez capped her star-studded career by being named the District 22-6A Setter of the Year and a first team All-District honoree as she had 586 kills and 313 kills as a senior.

The Lamar University signee had 1,625 assists, 1,158 digs and 1,021 kills over four varsity seasons, including the 2020 pandemic-shortened season. Her grade average of 94 or better also placed Gonzalez on the 22-6A All-Academic Team each school year. A three-time first team All-District selection, Gonzalez was the 22-6A Offensive Player of the Year as a junior.

Dobie freshman Amaya Langellier was honored as the District 22-6A Newcomer of the Year and a first team All-District selection after putting together a stellar debut with the Longhorns' varsity volleyball team. On the court, Langellier delivered 259 kills, 98 total blocks and 58 service aces. Langellier has maintained a grade average of 94 or better to this point in the fall semester, earning her a spot on the 22-6A All-Academic squad.

Clear Brook High School graduate Caleb



Tariq Riley (6) was an acrobatic pass catcher for the Longhorns in 2023 as Dobie used an improved passing game to go undefeated and win the District 22-6A championship during the 2023 season. Riley went on to earn All-District accolades.

Chapman was a first team All-Conference pick at Incarnate Word in 2023. Chapman led the Cardinals in touchdowns with eight and was the second-leading receiver with 656 total yards for 65.60 per game.

In his final game against HCU, he had a season-high 170 receiving yards and three touchdowns. Chapman was second in the Southland Conference in scoring touchdowns and was named to the Phil Steele Preseason All-Southland Team.

Dec. 7

Rushing for 1,672 yards and 20 touchdowns in the regular season to lead the 22-6A ranks, Dobie junior star running back Cameron Mathews was the right choice for overall league Most Valuable Player as the league's head coaches made their annual All-District selections.

Dobie sophomore running back Demarcus Hodges was honored as the Newcomer of the Year in the District 22-6A ranks as he wound up with 833 yards rushing, including 10 touchdowns.

A new era within the Dobie varsity girls' soccer program was underway as first-year head coach Theresa Kamara now leads the Longhorns into the 2024 season and moved forward.

Hired in August, Kamara had already guided her varsity squad to more total wins than in 2023, and the Longhorns started 22-6A play by defeating Deer Park for the first time in 14 years.

Dec. 14

Three Gaitan brothers, including Rice University signees Marcus and Matthew Gaitan as well as their freshman brother, Jeremy Gaitan, were among five Lutheran South Academy athletes to score All-District 5A-5 honors following the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools cross-country season.

Pioneer sophomore Reid Toner also was selected on the boys' side, while LSA senior Lydia Ward was recognized on the girls' all-league team.

The Gaitan trio competed at the TAPPS state championships, with a 5K time of 16:25.94 placing Matthew Gaitan fourth. Marcus Gaitan was fifth at 16:30.43.

In his first high school state meet, Jeremy Gaitan placed 12th with a time of 17:04.68. Toner was next with a clocking of

17:05.29 for 13th place. In her final cross-country race for the Pioneers, Ward was in at 13:57.27 for 32nd place overall for the two-mile distance at state.

At the district meet at The Woodlands, the Pioneer boys were team champions as Matthew Gaitan was the top overall medalist at 15:59.56 in the 5000-meter event, with Marcus Gaitan third, Jeremy Gaitan fifth and Toner seventh. Ward was fifth in the 3,200-meter race at 13:29.70.

Select Lutheran South Academy football players scored postseason all league accolades for 2023. Pioneer offensive lineman/linebacker Cole Noack earned first-team honors at both positions, while Kai Conerly was a first-teamer at running back.

LSA's Braeden Robinson was a first-team selection at both receiver and defensive back, and defensive lineman Kris St. Claire and defensive back Jalen Bess also earned spots on the first-team defense.

Pioneer defensive lineman Mason Hoggatt, linebacker Matthew Furness, tight end/defensive lineman David Streeter, St. Claire (offensive line), Bess (receiver) and Brycen Gilbert (defensive back) were second team All-District picks.

The Pioneers' all league honorable mention picks included Conerly at punter, athlete Prynce John Hill, Wade Laverne at placekicker, J.D. Leblanc at quarterback, Jack Wade at linebacker and Miller Denton along the offensive front. Furness, Hoggatt, Noack and St. Claire were Academic All-State honorees for the Pioneers for academics.

Dobie High School graduates Johnathan Baldwin (2021) and his brother, Jalen Baldwin (2023) joined the University of Nevada Las Vegas Rebels as they concluded a successful 2023 football season with a Guaranteed Rate Bowl appearance against the Kansas Jayhawks Dec. 26 at Chase Field in Phoenix.

The Rebels, 9-4 overall, were coming off a 44-20 loss to Boise State in the Mountain West Conference Championship game as Johnathan Baldwin had his most productive game of the season with 10 total tackles and a pass breakup.

The junior safety played in 11 games during the season, collecting 66 total stops, four pass breakups and a pair of interceptions.

Jalen Baldwin joined UNLV as a walk-on last summer and effectively red-shirted in 2023. Both Baldwins were three-year varsity starters with the Longhorns.

The Touchdown Club of Houston selected its group of private school finalists for a variety of postseason awards, with Lutheran South Academy's Cole Noack among the choices for the Ironman Award and Matthew Furness in the Defensive Player of the Year category.

Longtime San Jacinto College head baseball coach Tom Arrington resigned his dual roles effective immediately as he continued to recover from a back injury, leaving the storied program without its Hall of Fame leader with the 2024 regular season weeks away from opening.

A winner of more than 1,000 career games as San Jacinto College's head baseball coach, Arrington was inducted into the NJCAA's Hall of Fame in 2018.

His teams six times reached the JUCO World Series championship round, and while Arrington exited without a crown, his 40 overall head coaching wins at Grand Junction is tops nationally.

"As previously announced, San Jacinto College North campus Athletic Director and head baseball coach Tom Arrington has resigned," college administration stated in a related release.

"Coach Arrington led a successful baseball program for San Jacinto College as a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association Baseball Hall of Fame, and we wish him the best in his future endeavors.

"David Wood will serve as the interim head coach for the San Jacinto College Baseball program through the 2023-2024 baseball season."

"Prior to working at San Jac, coach Wood was head coach at the University of St. Thomas for the 2022 and 2023 seasons, where he led the team to its first Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference baseball tournament appearance. From 2011 to 2021, Coach Wood was on the coaching staff at St. Edward's University. Wood played for the Kansas City Royals organization from 2007 to 2009.

"The College will begin a national search in Spring 2024 for its next permanent head baseball coach."



At 19 minutes, 01.73 seconds, junior Lauren Garza, the 2023 District 22-6A champion, went on to become Dobie's first female cross-country runner to qualify for the Class 6A State Championships at the 5,000-meter distance. She then delivered a time of 19:36 at state.

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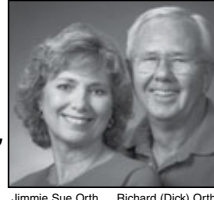
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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8
7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill," Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 713-686-6300 or visit <https://aahouston.org/meetings/>.
7:30 a.m. **Rotary Club of Pearland** - Meets at either Pearland Chamber of Commerce, 6117 Broadway St., Pearland, or online on Zoom. See Pearland Chamber of Commerce calendar or call 281-485-3634.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call 713-472-0565 for tours of exhibits.
9:30 a.m. **NASA Aglow Community Light-house** - 18516 Hwy. 3 in Webster. The public is welcome and encouraged to bring others. Call 281-910-1971 or visit aglow.net.
11:30 a.m. **ABWA - Southeast Express Network** - Meetings are held at Big Horn BBQ, 2300 Smith Ranch Rd, Pearland. Reservations appreciated. Visit www.seenabwa.org.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners Group, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at <https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners>. Call 713-686-6300.
6:30 p.m. **Pearland Area Republican's Club** - meets at VFW Post 7109 Pearland, 4202 W Walnut St., Pearland. Email: pearlandarearepublicanclub@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/PARCTX.
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9
7:30 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
7 p.m. **NA** - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 E. FM 518, Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or <https://nastuff.com/>.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
7 p.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - All services are live and on Zoom. For details regarding services, Judaism classes, film series and lunch with the Rabbi, visit <https://www.shaarhashalom.org>.
11 a.m. **Al-Anon Meeting (Women Only, English)** - For women affected by an addict. Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, Cornell Conference room #111. Call 281-487-8787 or visit <https://www.houstonalanon.org/>.
1 p.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - offers a knitting class. Call 281-479-7285 beforehand.
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11
8 a.m./10:15 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - has worship and Bible study programs at 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). Call 281-479-7285.
2 p.m. **Grief Support Group** - Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy. Call 713-944-9186.
8 p.m. **AA** - See Friday's notice.
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.
1:30 - 3 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Dance** - at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E. League City Parkway. Volunteers teach dance lessons. Call 281-554-1180.
6 p.m. **Scrabble Club #511** - Meets at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Join in the fun and improve crossword skills. COVID-19 vaccination required.
8 p.m. **AA** - See Friday's notice.
Email huff_reunion@juno.com for details.
7 p.m. **AA** - St. Luke's 12 Step Recovery open meeting in the education Bldg. in room 4, at 11011 Hall Rd. Call 832-725-8479 or 281-309-2801.
7 p.m. **TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)** - #0683 chapter meets at the Methodist Church, 110 N Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. Call 832-858-4617 or 713-875-8820.
7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13
7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
10:00 a.m. **CCART** - Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers meets at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway. Annual dues are \$50.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
10:30 a.m. **Tri County Republican Women** - General meetings are held at the Golfcrest Country Club, 2509 Country Club Dr. Exact cash or check requested for lunch (\$15). RSVP at www.tricountyrw.club/ or call 832-250-8901.
11:30 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Southeast Houston Toastmasters** - Club #05324194 meets in-person at 10500 Scarsdale Blvd (SB Chamber of Commerce). Visit sehouston.toastmastersclubs.org or call 832-722-9061.
7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
7:30 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Thursday's notice.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday noon notice.
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Humpday Dance** - at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E. League City Parkway. Casual ballroom dancing offered. Call 281-554-1180.

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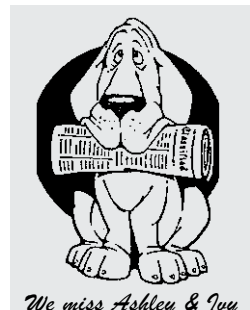
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SBYSC continues sign up

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

Players in the U-4 through U-8 divisions will pay \$85, while the fee is \$95 for the U-9 through U-12 divisions. The fee is \$105 for the U-13 through U-20 divisions.

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

Lajaunie continues fundraising

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

Tran, Flores third in mixed

Kayla Tran and Diego Flores shone brightest for the Dobie contingent at the rain-affected Jerry Franklin/Bobby Kramer Invitational, taking third place in the mixed doubles B division with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Clear Brook at Dobie main. Tran and Flores defeated third-seeded Randle in the opening round, then tripped Clear Brook before a semifinal loss to Pearland. The locals then got the best of the Wolverines for third place.

Dobie boys' soccer falls at Channelview

The defending 22-6A champion Dobie varsity boys' soccer team remained at the top of the standings as of press time prior to play Feb. 6, but the Longhorns clearly had seen that the road to the crown might be bumpy.

A 4-1 win over Memorial Jan. 30 sent the Longhorns to a quick 3-0-0 start in league play, good for nine points and the top

spot. But the Channelview Falcons, playing at home Feb. 3, sent Dobie to its first district loss in a day shy of two full years, winning 2-1.

The Longhorns lost one their top defenders, Andres Hernandez, early in the match with Channelview and could be without him moving forward in the short term, but Dobie head coach Justo

Manrique believes his group will bounce back.

"We have to control the things we can control, and that includes taking care of our bodies, focusing on our training every day and staying sharp," Manrique said.

"We have great character kids, they are a tight group and have shown the ability to bounce back. "It is definitely tough in

this district, and you have to sometimes battle things beyond your control on the field, but we will move forward. It's just one loss, and we are still right there."

A third of the way through its 22-6A schedule, Dobie remains in first place with those nine points, but the competition has proven to be tough on a nightly basis.



Cameron Mathews (2), the reigning Most Valuable Player in the 22-6A will lead the Longhorns into a reloaded league alignment that in 2024 will include Alvin, Dawson, Manvel, Pearland and Shadow Creek.

22-6A Boys' Soccer Standings Prior to Feb. 6 Play

Teams	W	L	T	Pts.
Dobie	3	1	0	9
Channelview	2	0	1	7
S. Houston	2	1	1	7
Deer Park	2	1	0	6
Rayburn	0	0	3	3
Memorial	0	3	1	1
Pasadena	0	3	0	0

JFD softball plays Brook

A varsity softball team carrying four sophomores and three freshmen is not as unusual as in previous decades, but it just might serve to verify a bit of a reload within a Dobie program that is set to open the regular season Feb. 12 against Clear Brook. The expectations will remain the same. Head coach Robin Rackley's varsity squads have five straight full seasons of 20 or more wins, and the program that won Texas' first-ever state championship in 1993 has never missed the playoffs. At right, Dobie freshman Vanessa De La Fuente as she showed in 2023 to be among those representing the next wave of great talent for the Longhorns. In 24 total appearances, De La Fuente was 8-6 with two saves and a 3.61 earned run average.



Dobie tracksters excel at Kethans

Continued from page 5 Christina Rodriguez ninth in the 400, and Chonte Powers placed sixth at a time of 17.44.

The Longhorn girls' relay teams were fifth in the 4x100 and sixth in both the 4x200 and 4x400 events. In the 4x100, Dobie had Powers, Aniya Menefee, Joseph and Harris in at a time of 51.975.

The 4x200 group, including Powers, Menefee, Joseph and Lillian Herte, posted a time of 1:55.16. A time of 4:35.67 also had Dobie sixth in the 4x400 as Rodriguez, Rhema Sanni-Thomas, Menefee and Herte teamed.

Dobie senior Roderick Drumgo led the boys' squad at the Kethans, throwing the shot 46-0 for fourth place and placing sixth-best at 130-0 in the discus.

C.J. Richard, an Illinois

State University football signee, was fifth in the 200 with his time of 24.33. A time of 52.77 landed junior Tariq Riley fifth in the 400.

Hurdler Amari Taylor placed sixth in the 110s in a time of 17.82, and his ninth-place time in the 300s was 46.26.

The Dobie relay teams were fourth in the 4x200, fifth in the 4x100 and sixth in the 4x400. In the 4x200, the Longhorns grouped Richard, Deshaun Singleton, Titus Randle and Marcus Jones for a time of 1:35.82.

As for the 4x100 fifth-place team, it was Lionell Thomas, Randle, Jones and Deshaun Hines in at 44.94 for fifth place, and the sixth-place 4x400 team included Damien Rosas, Riley, Francisco Dunn and Ariel Cortez for a clocking of 3:41.26.

CB hosts Wolverine Relays; Akinola takes long jump

The Pearland boys and George Ranch girls were the big winners as Clear Brook hosted the Wolverine Relays to open the 2024 track and field season Feb. 2.

The Wolverines came up with a gold medal in the mixed 1,600-meter relay as Jizzale Davis and Azayla Smith teamed with Joshua Shelton and Jaylon Owens at 3 minutes, 35.34 seconds.

Clear Brook's Joshua Akinola was the gold medalist in the long jump as he cleared his way to 22 feet, 11 inches.

It was Akinola, Malik Merrick, Owens and Thurston Roberson for sixth place in the 4x100 relay.

In the varsity girls' division, Brook's Aaiayln Banks was third in the discus at 100 feet, 2 inches, and she was also seventh at 30-2 in the discus.

Dobie varsity girls' basketball team closes out regular season



Senior Jady Johnson (22), an all-league player for Dobie a season ago, was to play in her final regular season game Feb. 6, after press time as the locals were focused on a strong finish.



Freshman Tiara Charles (24) represents the future of the Dobie varsity girls' program as the locals will join a revamped 22-6A alignment beginning next school year.

UIL realignment stacks big competition in 22-6A

Continued from page 5 matches in 2023 and was second in its district.

Team tennis Dobie, the class of the Pasadena ISD ranks, has for decades had to deal with Deer Park. While the Deer are moving out, the frontrunner in the new-look 22-6A mix will be regional power Dawson.

Boys' basketball State-ranked Shadow Creek has won 19 straight games as of press time and was 11-0 in 23-6A, with Dawson not far behind. Fans can expect those two programs to be top-tier, while Pearland and Manvel are solid.

South Houston, the current 22-6A leader, has several gifted seniors this season but will return guard Jordan Buckner and freshman Xavier Muhammad, who already has surpassed South Houston's single-season rebounding total of 327.

Girls' basketball Pasadena ISD programs will be confronted with an exceptionally deep talent

pool in varsity girls' basketball. A quick overview of the current state of the game has 22-6A newcomers Pearland, Dawson and Manvel all doing very well. Pearland, the defending Region III champion, has 30 total wins. Dawson, which won the Division II gold title at the McDonald's Texas Invitational, is led by head coach Sharee Griffin.

Manvel, making the jump to the 6A ranks, is currently 28-6, undefeated in district play, and state-ranked.

Soccer Dobie, the nine-times-straight champion of 22-6A, has competed successfully against the very best programs at both the regional and state levels and will merely adjust accordingly.

On the girls' side of things, incoming Pearland would seem to be the strongest of the programs among the newcomers.

Softball While state power Deer Park is leaving 22-6A,

current 6A state champion Pearland is returning. Dawson won 27 games last season en route to the area playoff round, and Alvin was second in league play and pushed Deer Park to a deciding third game before losing in the bidistrict round.

Baseball Defending 22-6A champion Dobie got over the hump last season and topped longtime power Deer Park for the league title. The Deer will now become a nemesis of the Clear Creek ISD programs but...

Pearland, the current Region III champion and state finalist, will now test Dobie's talent, and Alvin was second behind the Oilers a season ago despite a 15-16 overall record.

As for the individual/team sports such as cross-country and track and field, merely going from six to now eight other programs to contend with will surely raise the overall level of competition.

Ravens sweep past Bossier

Slamming eight home runs in a two-game sweep of Bossier Parish Feb. 1, the San Jacinto College softball team came away with 20-12 and 8-0 victories to pull even at 3-3 through the first two weekends of the National Junior College Athletic Association Division I season.

Playing on the south campus for the first time after opening the season in Waco, the Ravens enjoyed a 10-run, first-inning outburst in the opener en route to a big-time 20-12

win. Sophomore All-American Ari Wright went deep twice in the game, driving in four runs and scoring four times, while Madison Carr also homered twice, knocked in three runs and scored three times.

Vivien Thames and Mia McLeer also hit homers as the Ravens cleared the fence six times in all among their 20 hits.

Khloe Foster doubled and tripled, and Illiana Melendez had three hits. In the 8-0 second-game win, Giana Carrion shut

out Bossier on four hits over five innings, and Foster homered twice and drove in five runs.

It was only two games, but with Wright, Foster and Carr doing damage at the top of the lineup and others adding to the attack, the Ravens just may be onto something offensively.

San Jacinto College returns to action Feb. 9 against Grayson for a pair of games, with the opener at 3 p.m. Navarro visits Feb. 10 for two games, beginning at 2 p.m.

UIL's 24-6A revamp adds talented Deer

Continued from Page 5 (2,584) and Clear Brook (2,563). Brazoswood will cast 24-6A's smallest enrollment at 2,491.

Of note, Deer Park boasts a string of more than two decades of varsity volleyball league championships, yet the CCISD five-program field should push the Deer all the way moving forward.

Deer Park's cross-country programs are legit, as is the school's team tennis outfit. The Deer Park softball program should step in as the 24-6A frontrunner, and the baseball program isn't far behind.

Perhaps the depth of the 24-6A field grew by just one from seven to eight, yet the level of competi-

tion for playoff berths and such is sure to be much more challenging.

The overall realignment

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