



South Belt-Ellington Leader

Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

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St. Luke's to hold fish fry

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will host its Lent Fish Fry Friday, March 10, from 4 to 7 p.m., at St. Luke's Catholic Church Social Hall, 11011 Hall Road, and via an outside drive-thru. Dinner includes fried fish, French fries, hushpuppies, ice tea and corn on the cob for \$15.

Sagemeadow meeting, election

The Sagemeadow HOA will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16, at The Gardens, 12001 Beamer. Homeowners are encouraged to attend. For agenda, guest speaker or other more information, visit www.sagemeadow.org.

Election

The Sagemeadow HOA will hold its annual election Saturday, March 25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Sagemeadow MUD building, 10755 Hall. Voters will decide who will serve as HOA's chairman for the next three years. Homeowners interested in submitting their candidacy may do so at the monthly meeting March 16 or by written on the day of the election. Proxy ballots and election information is available on the website at www.sagemeadow.org.

Gardens market planned

The Gardens Spring Market will take place Sunday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 12001 Beamer. New vendors can get an outside booth at no cost. For more information, go to The Gardens Pop-Up Shop on Facebook or call/text Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

Knights hold blood drive

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will host a blood drive Sunday, March 19, at St. Luke the Evangelist, located at 11011 Hall Road, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments are preferred but not necessary. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/354751.

Ellington e-recycling set

The City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department's monthly electronic recycling event will take place Saturday, March 11, at the Neighborhood Recycling Center at Ellington Airport from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Residents are encouraged to arrive early, however, as the event ends once trucks are full. Recycling electronics keeps potentially harmful materials, such as mercury, cadmium, lead and cathode ray tubes out of the waste stream and the environment. Items accepted are PCs, servers, keyboards, mice, laptops, game consoles, monitors, small kitchen appliances, memory chips, hubs and routers, printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, projectors, rechargeable batteries, cable boxes, car batteries, telephones, cell-phones, PDAs, tape drives, hard drives, cords, cables and cameras. The collection events take place the second Saturday of each month. For additional information, visit www.houston.solidwaste.org or call 311.

Cowboys/Cowgirls register

The Sagemont Cowboys and Cowgirls are registering for the 2023 football season. Football players ages 5, 6 and 9 as of Aug. 1, 2023, may contact Denny Wranich Jr. at 713-876-1491, while drill/cheer girls ages 5 to 13 as of Aug. 1, 2023, may call Jemyre Felton at 832-309-7133.

Local COVID cases reported

The number of active COVID-19 cases in the South Belt community is roughly on par with the previous week, according to Harris County health officials.

As of Tuesday, March 7, there were 96 active cases in 77089, up four from the previous week. To date, 139 from the ZIP code have died from the disease, no increase from the previous week.

In ZIP code 77075, there were 20 active cases, no change from the previous week. To date, there have been 83 deaths in the ZIP code, up two from the previous week.

In 77034, there were 27 active cases, down four from the previous week. To date, 92 residents from ZIP code 77034 have died from the disease, up two from the previous week.

This marked the first deaths reported in ZIP code 77034 since Nov. 3. See related story on this page.

According to Harris County 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.

Gulf Freeway closures set

At least one northbound main lane and one southbound main lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from FM 518 to FM 517 in League City daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and nightly from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Friday, March 31.

Both the northbound entrance and southbound entrance ramps from FM 518 in League City will be completely closed until further notice. Motorists should use the entrance ramps from SH 96.

The northbound exit ramp to FM 517 in Dickinson will be completely closed until further notice. Motorists should use the northbound exit ramp to Holland/Hughes.

Two outside northbound frontage road lanes on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from West Medical Boulevard to Bay Area Boulevard daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday, May 5.

1st local COVID deaths reported in 10 weeks

ZIP codes 77089, 77075, 77034 each report 2 new deaths

This past week marked the first time in 10 weeks any COVID-related deaths were reported in the immediate South Belt community – the longest stretch since the first deaths were reported in August 2020.

According to data from Harris County health officials, this past week ending March 2, there were two new COVID-related deaths reported in ZIP code 77089 and another two new deaths in ZIP code 77075. In 77089, that brought the total number of COVID-related deaths to 139 from 137. In 77075, the number of COVID-related deaths climbed from 81 to 83.

ZIP code 77089, which accounts for far more of the local deaths than the other two ZIP codes, has seen a significantly higher frequency of COVID-related deaths reported than its two counterparts.

The last COVID-related deaths in the immediate South Belt community were reported in the Dec. 22/Christmas edition of the *Leader*, in which the number in ZIP code 77089 jumped from 135 to 137.

The number of COVID-related deaths in ZIP code 77034 had been stagnant at 90 since the Nov. 3 edition of the *Leader*, and the number of

deaths in ZIP code 77075 had been stagnant at 81 since the Aug. 18 edition of the *Leader* – approximately six months.

Harris County officials said reporting of COVID-related deaths may be delayed.

At multiple times the past 10 weeks, the number of reported deaths would temporarily increase before reverting to the previous figure without explanation from the county. This happened independently in each of the three local

ZIP codes at various times.

The fatal trend continued this week, with two new COVID-related deaths being reported in ZIP code 77034, increasing the total from 90 to 92. (See related sidebar entry on this page.)

According to Harris County officials, the vast majority of the fatalities suffered from pre-existing health issues. For the latest Harris County COVID-19 statistics, visit covid-harriscounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/cumulative-data.

South Belt Cleanup set for March 25

The inaugural South Belt Cleanup will take place Saturday, March 25, beginning at 9 a.m. at Beverly Hills Intermediate. (A headline in last week's *Leader* erroneously listed the date as March 2.)

A joint project between Knights of Columbus Council 9201 and the Sagemont Civic Club, the cleanup will target the area from the Gulf Free-

way to Blackhawk, east to west, and from Fuqua to FM 1959/Dixie Farm Road, north to south. Volunteers will not clean Dixie Farm Road out of safety concerns. Organizers are currently seeking volunteers. All volunteers must sign a waiver. For more information or to register as a volunteer, contact Mike Work at mrwork2@att.net or 832-338-5156.

Dobie officials report online threat

Unrelated glitch causes unplanned lockdown drill

This past week, Dobie High School officials reported that a social media threat was made online against the school and that a glitch in the campus's new PA system caused an unplanned lockdown drill.

Campus officials stressed in a letter to parents the two incidents were unrelated. The letter further stressed the need for students to speak out if they are aware of any potential threats to the school and the severity of such crimes.

The following is a message sent out to Dobie parents notifying them of the two incidents:

"Earlier this morning, you were informed about a glitch in the software due to a newly installed PA system that resulted in a lockdown drill. The campus was secure, and the lockdown was determined to be a false alarm.

In a separate and unrelated incident, a student posted a social media threat involving a

weapon. Pasadena ISD police reacted quickly and were able to identify the student who posted the video and confirmed there had been no direct threat made to our campus. The student making the post intended it as a joke.

Our school must remain a safe haven for learning, and we have zero tolerance for threats against school safety. We urge parents to discuss this issue with their children, so they understand the serious repercussions of making such posts or statements.

Thank you for working with us to keep our campus safe. Please continue to notify us of anything suspicious through phone calls, emails, or by utilizing our Anonymous Alert App. We will continue to practice safety protocols throughout the year to keep our students and staff informed and safe for any emergency that arises."

County opens detention pond



Harris County officials held a ribbon-cutting Thursday, March 2, for the official opening of the long-awaited South Belt Stormwater Detention Basin. Located on 174-acres near Beamer Road across from San Jac College, where the Southbend subdivision once stood, the detention pond will hold more than 500 million gallons of stormwater. Shown above at the ceremony are, left to right, Clear Brook City MUD general Manager Cecelia Ganje, Clear Brook City MUD board member Chris Clark, *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger, Harris County Flood Control District Director Tina Peterson, Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia, former HCFCD Chief Engineer Steve Fitzgerald and Clear Brook City MUD board member Chuck Tylka. Photo by Alesia Caldwell Black

Parking investigation leads to arrest

An illegal parking investigation in the 11300 block of Fuqua near the Gulf Freeway led to an arrest for an open warrant around 1:30 a.m. Monday, Feb. 27.



Christopher Tobar

Deputies with Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia's office observed a vehicle parked in the handicapped space at an open business with no visible handicapped placard. Upon seeing this, a deputy entered the establishment and asked a patron if that was his vehicle outside parked in

the spot, still running. At this time the deputy learned that this patron was the driver of the vehicle, that he did not have a handicap placard or a disability allowing him to utilize the space, and that he was unaware that he could not legally park in those spots.

While identifying this male, the male advised the deputy that he had an open warrant. This was investigated further, and an open misdemeanor warrant for unlawful carrying of a weapon was found on him.

At this time 27-year-old Christopher Tobar was taken into custody for the open warrant without incident. Tobar was transported to the Harris County Jail, where he was booked.

Garcia makes Pct. 2 promotions

Guinn, Kritzler promoted from lieutenant to captain

Two Precinct 2 lieutenants with strong ties to the South Belt community were promoted to captain Monday, March 6, during a ceremony held by Constable Jerry Garcia.

Capt. Zerick Guinn has served Harris County for 27 years. He's spent a total of 19 years with the Precinct 2 constable's office and served as the contract sergeant over the South Belt community from 2005 to 2012.

Guinn has been a South Belt resident for more than 20 years.

Guinn will now assume the position as Precinct 2 Command Staff over the Civil/Writs Division, Internal Affairs, Warrant and Recruiting/Training divisions.

Capt. Michael Kritzler has served Harris County for the last 18 years, with a total of 19 years in law enforcement. Kritzler has spent almost nine years total with the Precinct 2 constable's office, including serving as the contract sergeant over the South Belt from 2012 to 2016.

Captain Kritzler moved from California to the South Belt in the 1980s with his family. His parents are still residents of the South Belt living in their same house.

Kritzler will now assume the position as Precinct 2 Command Staff over Administrations, Community Outreach, Technical Operations and Special Operations divisions.

Leader completes 2022 year in review

The *Leader* continues its look back on 2022 with a list of some of the more significant stories of the year. For highlights up to Nov. 24, see the March 2 edition of the *Leader*.

Nov. 24

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership President Bob Mitchell retired from the group after more than 20 years of service. A longtime South Belt resident, Mitchell served as president of the organization since 2008. An advocate of the coastal barrier system, Mitchell was appointed to the Gulf Coast Protection District board of directors by Gov. Greg Abbott in 2021. Mitchell was replaced by former aide Brian Freedman.

Dec. 1

A security guard who accidentally killed an innocent woman when firing his weapon during an incident outside a Fuqua bar in 2021 was charged with murder. The suspect, Moises Castillo, 28, was charged with murder in the death of Ada Aguilar, 47, who was fatally shot Nov.

14. According to Houston Police Department officials, witnesses said a man was driving a truck recklessly in the parking lot of the La Playita Bar & Grill on Fuqua just east of the Gulf Freeway around 3:35 a.m., reportedly smashing other vehicles and forcing patrons to run for safety. A security guard from the bar, later identified as Castillo, reportedly came outside to address the situation and ended up firing his weapon at the reckless driver. When police arrived at the scene, the victim was already dead next to her car. She appeared to have been driving through the parking lot when she was inadvertently struck, police said. Police questioned both the security guard and the driver of the truck, but no immediate charges were filed. Further investigation, however, determined Castillo was a suspect, and he became a fugitive. On Monday, Nov. 21, members of HPD's Major Offenders Fugitive Apprehension Team arrested Castillo without incident, and

Continued on Page 4

Reckless driver arrested on Beltway 8

A male was arrested for driving recklessly on Beltway 8 around 6:15 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25.



Johnny Williams

According to Precinct 2 officials, deputies with Constable Jerry Garcia's Toll Road Division observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed swerving in and out of traffic. Deputies immediately began to try to catch up to this vehicle. Upon catching up to this vehicle, deputies observed the driver cut off numerous vehicles, causing them to slam on their brakes and almost wreck.

The suspect's vehicle was also observed slam-

ming on their brakes, causing the vehicles behind them to swerve and slam on their brakes to avoid additional collisions. Upon witnessing all of these violations, deputies immediately activated their emergency lights and performed a traffic stop on this vehicle.

The vehicle was stopped at the 8100 block of Beltway 8, where further investigation was completed on the driver's erratic driving. Upon completion of this investigation, deputies determined that the driver's actions placed numerous other drivers at severe risk of injury, and charges of misdemeanor reckless driving were accepted.

Johnny Williams, 37, was taken into custody at this time without incident, and transported to the Harris County Jail, where he was booked.

Garcia posted a warning to his Facebook page that such dangerous driving will not be tolerated in Precinct 2.



Pct. 2 makes promotions

At a ceremony held Monday, March 6, Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia (center) promoted both Lt. Zerick Guinn (left) and Lt. Mike Kritzler to the position of captain. Both Guinn and Kritzler have longstanding ties to the South Belt community, where each served as the Precinct 2 contract sergeant. Guinn has served Harris County for 27 years, 19 with Precinct 2; while Kritzler has spent 18 years with Harris County, nine with Precinct 2.

Elected officials share their words

Sen. Mayes Middleton moves to reform windstorm insurance association

Feb. 27 I filed Senate Bill 1217 and Representative J.M. Lozano filed House Bill 2880, to reform the administration of the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association to benefit coastal ratepayers. This legislation will reduce windstorm insurance costs for SB 1217 and HB 2880 substantially reforms Texas Windstorm Insurance Association's administration, including moving the Association's headquarters from Austin to the coast, changing the TWIA Board of Directors to give more consideration to coastal policyholders, requiring Board meetings to be in TWIA coverage area, prohibiting TWIA from automatically increasing costs on policyholders without a vote of the Board, and reforming catastrophe modeling and the probable maximum loss which drive increasing costs to policyholders.

Windstorm insurance continues to be an unsustainable cost for homeowners and small businesses on the Gulf Coast. Senate Bill 1217 will bring much needed reform to TWIA and will bring transparency to and reign in windstorm insurance costs. "This bill puts the interest of Coastal Texans front and center of windstorm insurance considerations. For too long coastal policyholders have suffered under a system that has been slanted against them. This bill will prioritize Coastal Texans." "Windstorm insurance and the administration of TWIA need reform. The coastal delegation of the Legislature spends most of the interim working on behalf of constituents who are TWIA policyholders to bring common sense practices to the administration of windstorm insurance in Texas. "This bill is the product of years of working to reform TWIA and to make coastal windstorm insurance reasonably affordable," said Representative Lozano.

Local library events set

Bracewell Library is located at 9002 Kingspoint. 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. Closed Sundays.

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
(Modified during COVID-19)

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Saturday Vigil | 5:30 p.m. |
| Sunday | 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.* |
| Sunday | 1 p.m. Misa en Español* |

*Also Available on Facebook Live

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| 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.

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New 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

In My Opinion

Fuller encourages vote for PISD's Kendrick

What a blessing to grow up in Pasadena, Texas! Born in West Texas, I got here as fast as I could when my father Bill Storey moved our family to this growing town in 1963 where he would serve as City of Pasadena Personnel Director for more than 30 years. Mom taught at Pomeroy Elementary; and from an early age, I knew the importance of a good education.

What a joy to attend Fisher Elementary where my fifth-grade teacher Shirley Stansberry taught me how to channel my energy and be her "little helper." She understood my hyperactivity and channeled it in a positive direction, helping me learn not only my multiplication facts, but also how to make a difference in the classroom and beyond. She was a life-changer Parkview Junior High and Sam Rayburn High School prepared me to continue my education at Sam Houston State University. As an adult, I raised three children (all Texas Aggie graduates) who each obtained a doctorate degree. Throughout my career spanning more than 40 years, the value of quality education and community development remain paramount.

I am proud to live in Pasadena and can readily boast about our amazing school system, Pasadena ISD. Despite challenges related to the COVID pandemic, PISD showed significant gains in Academic Growth, achieving an "A" rating (90 percent) according to a 2022 accountability report released by the Texas Education Agency.

PISD has always benefited from the leadership and stability of an outstanding School Board and an excellent administration. Vickie Morgan, Board of Trustees President, has faithfully served the district for 37 years, steadfast in his commitment to the district for more than 34 years. Nine years ago, Kenny Fernandez, now Assistant Secretary, joined the Board to add his energy to the governing body. Thus, Morgan, Kendrick, and Fernandez collectively have 80 years of experience in educational leadership. What an incredible service record! The Board of Trustees was recognized as the Region 4 Board of the Year and selected as one of five Honor Boards recognized by TASA/TASB in 2019. This is a record of which our citizens can be proud! I know I am!

As the upcoming Board of Trustees election approaches, I want to wholeheartedly commend Vickie Morgan, Marshall Kendrick, and Kenny Fernandez, along with other members of the Trustees, for a job well done! Early voting begins April 24. I hope you will join me in rewarding excellence by voting early or on May 6 for: VICKIE MORGAN,

Leader checks out social media

By Natalie Abarca

A member of the Nextdoor app is alerting community members to be careful going to Walmart on Fairmont Parkway near Beltway 8. The member states there is no security in the parking lot any longer and there are people that are being robbed during the daytime and

it is worse at night. The member also states there have been at least two trucks stolen every night and police have been seen every night investigating car theft.

A member of People of Sagemont 2 Facebook page posted having seen a person who was breaking into cars

MARSHALL KENDRICK, KENNY FERNANDEZ.

Let's keep this amazing team of committed leaders working for our children. Our students are, after all, the future leaders of tomorrow! PISD PROUD.

Moodys promote voting for PISD's Kendrick

Dear Pasadena ISD Voters, We would like to affirm and support the candidacy of Marshall Kendrick for PISD School Board. We have known Marshall for over 30 years and know him to be of the highest character and integrity. We can attest to his love and support for the administrators, teachers, and students of Pasadena Independent School District.

We ask that all voters who care about the future of our children and our district to cast their vote for Marshall on May 6th. Please vote to keep Pasadena ISD one of the top ranked districts in the state.

Again, I encourage all citizens to exercise their right to vote. Let's keep Pasadena Independent School District great!

Muecke addresses Wilfalk, gives suggestions

Director Wilfalk, I want to thank you for attending the Clear Lake PIP meeting last evening. I have been a longtime member and find each meeting interesting and all the speakers. WE had a fair crowd but it really should be standing room only.

You know I speak up, yes I tell it like it is, but try to do it in a positive way. I appreciated you're going into all the details of running the Solid Waste department. All city departments have these issues as you do. The biggest is in hiring the proper people who are motivated to work. Your idea of training the drivers I feel is very good. You train them how to do this job, just not driving a truck. I wish you well on this. The other is your equipment, as I told you these trucks take one hell of a beating and many need to be replaced. Now a suggestion. You mentioned the trucks have to pick up and then go to a location to dump so they can get back to picking up. Waste is bulky when it goes to the land fill. Why not build/construct a large shredder so the trucks can dump into, and it is shredded into very small bits and pieces. More can be hauled in a truck to the land fill. This will then decompose much faster. Some years back a Newspaper from 1936 was found in a land fill in Arizona rolled and when opened, fully readable.

As I said I knew Director Hays and I did communicate with him some. Hope to do the same with you. Thanks for your presentation.

James E (Jim) Muecke

and homes Sunday, March 5 after 10 p.m. near Clear Brook City Park. The suspect is described as a young male wearing a white hoodie. The member later commented that their neighbor reported the incident to local authorities. The member asked the community to stay alert and be careful.

Deaths

Sue Pistone



Sue Pistone, 75, heard God's heavenly whisper and went to be with her Lord and savior. Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023. She had a strong will to live and defied the odds of cancer and congestive heart failure for many years. Sue truly lived by her mantra "Life is time...Make it count!"

She was born in Ft. Worth on Dec. 1, 1947. A former longtime South Belt resident, she graduated from Ball High School in Galveston, where she was proud to be a Tormettes dancer. She had a passion for success and making a difference in the lives of others. She excelled at every step in her career and was a charismatic leader. From the Credit Union where her boss chose to do her secretarial duties so she could take over his collection responsibilities because she was so great with people, to being top salesperson with Sarah Coventry, to building and owning her own successful real estate company, and being an accomplished professional speaker - specializing in organization, time management and personal and professional development. She loved sharing her "golden nuggets" and so many still use her tips today, including her Color Coding System, 1-31 System and Visualization Board. She loved organizing and planning and thinking outside of the box. She was excited and honored to chair the 1997 National Speaker's Association Convention, thrilled by all it achieved. Outside of career, Sue loved her children and grandchildren more than life and loved making memories and experiences they would cherish for a lifetime. She enjoyed taking her family and friends on trips which included New York, Cabo, a Disney cruise and many escapades with her grandchildren - "Bridge to Terabithia," high noon tea and weekends with Mimi, to name a few.

Preceded in death by her grandmother who thought "she could do no wrong," her parents,

her brother and her son-in-law, Todd Krampitz. Sue is survived by her children and grandchildren Tammy Pistone Delamater (David), children Blake, Reagan, and Austin; Michelle Edmunds (James), children McKennah Jenkins (Reilly), Chase; Charlie Pistone, Jr. (Gretchen), children Mason and Meagan; Julie Pistone Krampitz (Chris Hallard); and her sisters, Valli Thompson, Frankie Edwards, Lisa Mohony and Angie Graves.

Sue is known as the lady with a smile on her face, a sparkle in her eye, and a message from her heart. Her proudest accomplishment is her "Four Beautiful Children" who will carry on her legacy. They will remember the joy of their road trips singing her motivational rap and listening to positive inspirational messages.

One of Sue's golden nuggets is "Anytime you need instant enthusiasm snap your fingers, as a physical trigger letting your body know something good is about to happen, and repeat these words 'I'm great, I'm terrific, I'm the best!' ... and you are!"

In lieu of flowers, the family continues her passion of helping others and is setting up a college fund for one of Sue's caregivers. Anyone wanting to donate should contact the family.

Suzette Ann Stone Torres



Suzette Ann Stone Torres was born on Jan. 28, 1970, to Ann Catherine Stone and Benjamin Stone in Pasadena. She passed away on Feb. 27, 2023. She married Chon Torres in the early 1990s, and to this union they had five children.

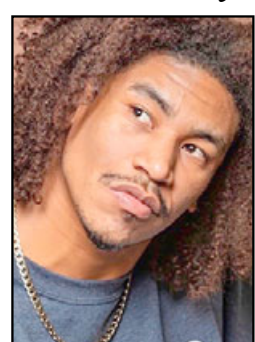
Suzette loved Mickey Mouse and animals. She was a devoted wife and mother. She enjoyed watching her children grow up and play and dance with the Sagemont Cowboys and Cowgirls. She was an avid volunteer in all the schools that her children attended.

She always showed her children love and support through her presence and participation. She was at every event in which they participated, from marching in parades to football games and competitions.

Suzette leaves her memories to be cherished by her children, Sean "Chop," (Linda "Boo") Torres, Roxy Torres, Andrew Torres, Javier (Alexis) Torres and Elezabeth Torres; grandchildren Savannah "Savanna Banana" Torres, Sara "Monkey" Torres, Javier Torres Jr.; many grandpuppies; and all her farm animals.

To honor Torres' life, a rosary was recited on March 2, and funeral services were held on March 3 at South Park Funeral Home in Pearland.

Cedrick Darnell Kelly



On Monday, March 6, 2023, Cedrick Darnell Kelly Jr., loving son, brother and uncle of nieces and nephews, passed away at age 35 a week shy of his 36th birthday in his sleep.

Cedrick was born on March 14, 1987, in Biloxi, Miss. to Cedrick and Tina Kelly. His family moved to Houston in 1992 and by 1997 he was a known athlete in the Sagemont area. He attended Thompson Intermediate School and Dobie High School where he was a member of the choir, basketball team, cross-country team and track team.

Cedrick had a passion for making people happy. He loved dancing and capoeira. He was known for his quick wit, his infectious smile and his kind and compassionate spirit.

Cedrick is survived by his parents, his sister Amber James and brother-in-law Donald James Jr., his brother William Scott IV and nieces and nephews Sebastian James, Zoe James, Alexandria James, William Scott and Brielle Scott. Funeral service is to be announced.

For donations, contact Amber James at 832-971-7376.



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memorialhermann.org/orthopedics

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Melillo places 1st in PISD UIL Academic Challenge



Melillo Middle School won first place in PISD's first UIL Academic A+ Challenge. Shown above are the students and faculty that participated, left to right, (front row) Zoie Sudario, Sophia Chacon, Xara Oddo, Arian Banda, David Sepulveda, Isabella Squier, Vincent Caseroño, Suri Nguyen, Mikey Castillo, Miguel Armenta, (middle row)

Diane Wheeler, Jennifer Saucedo, Dorin Murray, Viviana Salazar, Max Hernandez, Nicholas Gomez, Noah Stone, AJ Rodriguez, Kober Rodriguez, Dilan Torres-Burgos, (back row) Kelly Jurek, Jennifer Wicks, Julie Reed, Dahlia Salinas, Reid Hughes, Mia Martinez, Sofia Charles and Rainy Travis.

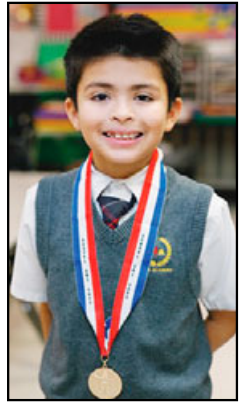
Beta students place in HLSR art contest

Shannon Dunlap, music teacher at Beta Academy, celebrated her students having received awards in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo art competition. Did Old McDonald have a blue and purple chicken? He did if it was created by

Beta Academy first grader Isaac Lopez. He and kindergarten Mia Vasquez produced award-winning art for this year's school contest at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Vasquez won Best of Show, and Lopez earned the gold medal. The children

worked for weeks on their mixed media pieces with water paint and pastels. Mia drew a pink cow that she described as happy, and Isaac made a giant, Halloween-inspired chicken with purple and blue accents. While preparing for the contest, the scholars' art

teacher, Lisa Morales, encouraged them to keep adding detail, and their diligence paid off. Their animal artwork will progress to the next round of judging and be displayed at the hayloft exhibit at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

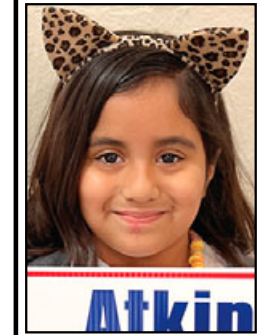


Isaac Lopez is pictured with his gold medal he received for his colorful chicken artwork, shown above.



Mia Vasquez holds her Best of Show award she received for her happy cow artwork, shown above.

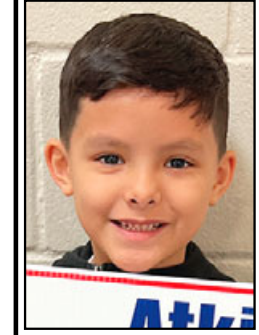
Atkinson students of the month



First-grader Kailee Garcia of Dee Davis' class displays the characteristics of honesty and fairness in her class. Davis explains, "Kailee is always honest and takes responsibility for her actions. When working with classmates she is fair and takes turns to ensure everyone gets a chance to participate. One of her best traits is being a friend to others. When a friend needs help, whether it is with a computer, classwork, or even emotional support, Kailee is always there to help. I am very proud of her."



Preschooler Miguel Castillo of Mercedes Schreiber's homeroom displays the traits of honesty and fairness in his class. He tells the truth and makes sure that his classmates are treated fairly. If someone does not have a snack, he will offer his own.



Kindergartner Mathews Mendez of Cheri Cundiff's homeroom exhibits honesty and fairness in his class. He is always willing to share and help others. He shows honesty by taking responsibility for his actions. Cundiff says, "He is an awesome student, and I am so proud of him."



Fourth-grader Paige McMullen of Tracy Nguyen's homeroom displays honesty and fairness. She takes responsibility for her actions and is always honest when it comes to admitting and apologizing when she has made poor choices. When it comes to fairness, Paige always contributes her part in small group or partner work. All her fourth-grade teachers are proud of her and all her accomplishments and growth in fourth-grade.



Augustine Saenz of Velma Medina's ECSE class has made so much progress and has shown improvement when it comes to sharing and helping his classmates. He always owns up to his mistakes and even apologizes for his behavior when appropriate.



Nguyen Kara of Prachi Bhatt's ABLE homeroom exhibits traits of honesty and fairness in her class. Bhatt explains, "She is like sunshine, spreading her honesty and helping nature in classroom. She is one of my best students and I'm proud of what she is doing and making her own identity as an individual."



Third-grader Braylon Gutierrez of Amber Watson's homeroom has shown honesty and fairness when working with others. He takes responsibility for his actions and apologizes when necessary. Watson says, "Braylon is a joy to have in class and participates during every day. All his teachers are very proud of his dedication towards his academics and responsibility!"



Second-grader Juan Rivera of Lilian Moreno's class takes turns and listens to everyone's ideas. He takes responsibility for his actions and comes forward when he has done something he was not supposed to do. He is honest with himself and lets Moreno know when and where he needs help.

CCART meeting set for March 14

The Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers will hold its March meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. The meeting will be held at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway in Seabrook with a musical program presented by the Noteables. The gathering will start at 10 a.m. with a social gathering for coffee and cookies. The business meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. All Texas retired school employees from the area are invited. Annual dues are \$50.

SE Houston Toastmasters Club hosts event

The Southeast Houston Toastmasters Club will host an open house, Tuesday, March 28. In-person networking will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m., while the hybrid online meeting will be from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Attendees have the option to attend in person or virtually. This meeting will be held at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce, 10500 Scarsdale Blvd. For more information, contact Karen Nunn at 832-722-9061.

Wolverines shine at SEFH competition

The hardworking students of Clear Brook High School who competed in the Houston Science and Engineering Fair took the time to explain their research and hard-earned recognition to the community.

Seniors Nicholas Ng and Catherine Nguyen placed first in aerospace engineering category, and also placed second from the Dilorio Foundation, and will advance to the state science and engineering fair.

Ng explained their project, which was based on the study of aerial animals with the goal of improving airplane technology.

"As seniors, we both intend to study biology and biochemistry in college. We took Science Fair as an opportunity to independently explore a different field of STEM: engineering. Our project was inspired by the biomimicry used in many different engineering designs such as bullet trains and airplanes which are modeled after birds.

"We decided to study planes because of their greater application to us. Drawing inspiration from different aerial-capable animals, we designed plane wings that mimicked the flight structures of the Pipistrelle nathusii bat and painted lady butterfly. With this, we were able to successfully improve the lift to drag ratio of an airplane wing.

"This project also pulled ideas from various classes we took over the years such as chemistry, physics, and calculus, so this experiment also proved as a way to apply our knowledge into a real-life situation. Our research was



Cathering Nguyen (left) and Nicholas Ng are shown presenting their project at SEFH.



Garza is shown here with his project at SEFH.

Fred Roberts Middle School selects aviators of the month



Fred Roberts Middle School officials recognized their aviators of the month for January. Shown above are, left to right, Lali Guerrero (principal), Kelvin Varughese, Crystal Vargas, Jason Tello, Christopher Martin, Oubrey Bermudez, Durriyah Hill and Crissy Higham (counselor).

Photo taken by Elizabeth Arrambide

PISD Feb. 18 chess tournament results released

Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, Pasadena ISD held its 12th annual Winter Chess Tournament at J. Frank Dobie High School. More than 300 students participated (an all-time record). Nearly 50 campuses participated, including 10 high schools, 11 intermediate schools, 10 middle schools, and 16 elementary schools with 36 of the schools from PISD, 11 were from other districts.

James Early, PISD chess coordinator, says, "My profuse thanks are due to all the campus chess coaches and other adult volunteers who came and helped. Thanks are due to our scorekeepers, hall monitors, and custodians who cleaned up after us. I am also grateful for all the campus administrators and central office personnel (including Toni Lopez, Dan Hoppie, Lindsey Lesniewski and recently retired Dr. Karen Hickman) who came to support the students. Special thanks are due to my co-directors Bob Bartel, Amanda Khan, Pamela Johnson, and Isaac Villarreal. Extra special thanks go to Jorly Thomas (Dobie principal) for letting us use his wonderful building, and to Dobie AP Carey Sink for helping with logistics."

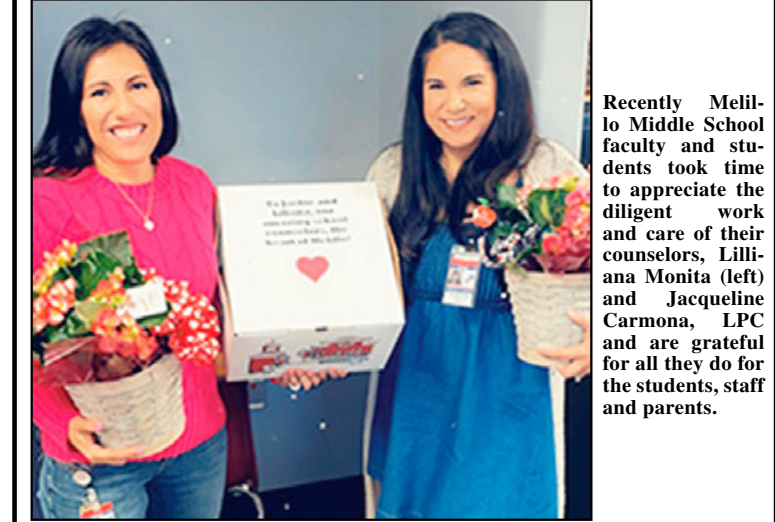
Each student played four games. Students received one point for each win and a half-point for each draw.

Below are the top eight finishers in each of the five divisions with their final scores.

- Third grade**
 - First place, Nathan Rivera; Frazier, score of 4.0.
 - Second place, Isaac Pargas; Golden Acres, score of 4.0.
 - Third place, Jax Desoto; South Belt, score of 4.0.
 - Fourth place, Emma Gray; Jensen, score of 3.0.
 - Fifth place, Juan Mondragon; Genoa, score of 3.0.
 - Sixth place, Miguel Trejo; Pomeroy, score of 3.0.
 - Seventh place, Kenley Allen; Genoa, score of 3.0.
 - Eighth place, Jose Tenorio; South Belt, score of 3.0.
- Fourth grade**
 - First place, Porter Bhuyen; Laura Bush, score of 4.0.
 - Second place, Alexis Vega; Genoa, score of 4.0.
 - Third place, Justin Jimenez; Genoa, score of 4.0.
 - Fourth place, Jonathan Pelico; Genoa, score of 3.5.
 - Fifth place, Victoria Hernandez; Genoa, score of 3.5.
 - Sixth place, Daniel Barnes; Garfield, score of 3.0.
 - Seventh place, Jose Guillen; Jensen, score of 3.0.
 - Eighth place, Milo Galvan; Genoa, score of 3.0.
- Fifth grade**
 - First place, Latif Garcia Bernal; Deepwater Elementary, score of 4.0.
 - Second place, Abner Morales; Fred Roberts Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Third place, Suri Nguyen; Melillo Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Fourth place, Cesar Sarmiento; Deepwater Elementary, score of 3.5.
 - Fifth place, Elias Reyes; Deepwater Elementary, score of 3.5.
 - Sixth place, Adam Bowman; Melillo Middle School, score of 3.0.
 - Seventh place, Stephen Robin; Leon Sablatura Middle School, score of 3.0.
 - Eighth place, Eli Spruce; Leon Sablatura Middle School, score of 3.0.
- Sixth grade**
 - First place, Alex Buntaer; Melillo Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Second place, Nathan Rubio; Dunbar Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Third place, Angel Covarrubias; Leon Sablatura Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Fourth place, Emilio Cardena; Fred Roberts Middle School, score of 4.0.
 - Fifth place, Simon Nguyen; Melillo Middle School, score of 3.0.
 - Sixth place, Nevaeh Bumgarner; Melillo Middle School, score of 3.0.
 - Seventh place, Joshua Bui; Carter Lomax Middle School, score of 3.0.
 - Eighth place, Wyatt Lozano; Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success, score of 3.0.
- Intermediate**
 - First place, Carden Huynh; Beverly Hills, seventh grade, score of 4.0.
 - Second place, Alen Por-

- Third place, Damian Chavez; Beverly Hills, seventh grade, score of 4.0.
- Fourth place, Juan Martinez; Beverly Hills, eighth-grade, score of 4.0.
- Fifth place, Carlos Albarran; Beverly Hills, eighth grade, score of 3.5.
- Sixth place, Mario Menjivar; Miller, eighth grade, score of 3.0.
- Seventh place, Nathan Miller; Deepwater Jr. High, eighth grade, score of 3.0.
- Eighth place, Lekai Zhou; Fairmont Jr. High, seventh grade, score of 3.0.

Melillo counselors heart of the school



Recently Melillo Middle School faculty and students took time to appreciate the diligent work and care of their counselors, Lilliana Monita (left) and Jacqueline Carmona, LPC and are grateful for all they do for the students, staff and parents.

CCISD hosts UIL VEX robotics championship

Clear Creek ISD made history by hosting the first UIL Robotics 2023 VEX Pilot State Championship at the CCISD Robotics Event Center Feb. 10-11. The VEX robotics competition, presented by the Robotics Education and Competition Foundation (RECF), is the largest and fastest growing middle school and high school robotics program globally. For the last two seasons, CCISD hosted "Proof of Concept" events for the University Interscholastic League (UIL) to be considered as a state

championship location. "It is amazing to be trusted by the UIL to host their very first ever championship in the two-year pilot phase of the program," said CCISD Robotics and Engineering Program Manager James Jobe. "It has been a great privilege to work with RECF with the support of the Texas Workforce Commission."

To qualify for the state championship, high school teams must have scored as finalists at local qualifying events during the 2022-2023 season. The top 84 teams, representing every UIL Division from 1A to 6A, competed for the top trophies at state.

Clear Brook High School's 3118B Astros and Clear Springs High School's 2344A Bolt Bots were both State Finalists in the 6A division. The Bolt Bots team was also named as the Robot Skills Champion. "I am very proud of our students and sponsors for the work they have put in," said Jobe. "We also feel very fortunate to provide this space for robotics teams throughout the region and state to compete at."



Shown, left to right, are James Jobe (CCISD robotics and engineering program manager); Bobbi Mitchell (RECF event engagement manager for Texas); Joseph Lumpkin (Clear Springs High junior); Steven Downs (Clear Springs High senior); Diego Sepulveda (Clear Springs High senior); Jonathan George (Clear Brook High sophomore); Misbah Aziz (Clear Brook High junior); and David Trussell (UIL state contest director).

Leader completes look back at 2023 highlights, low points

Continued from Page 1
he was subsequently charged.
Dec. 8
A man was fatally shot around 4:15 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, outside a nightclub in the 11500 block of Fuqua just east of the Gulf Freeway.
Leonardo Silva, 19, was pronounced dead at the scene. According to police, there had been an altercation in the parking lot of the La Playita Bar & Grill prior to the shooting. The bar was the site of another fatal shooting in 2021. (See previous entry.)
Dec. 15
Judge George Risner stepped down from the bench after more than 35 years of service. Risner most recently served as Harris County Precinct 2, Place 2 justice of the peace, a position he had

held since 1987. A lifetime resident of Precinct 2, Risner was first elected to Galena Park City Council when he was just 19 years old, seeking to improve recreation in his community. After graduating from Galena Park High School, Risner attended Houston Community College, Kilgore College and Lee College before enrolling at the University of Houston. Risner has served in many groups, including Pasadena Rotary Club; Waltrip Masonic Lodge; Harris County Mayor and Councilman's Association; Pasadena ISD; Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo; and multiple chambers of commerce. The judge is married to Bobbie K. Risner and has four children and seven grandchildren.
Dec. 22

Intoxication manslaughter charges were filed against a driver accused of causing a fatal crash that killed a woman early Sunday, Dec. 11, in the 9500 block of Clearwood Street near Edgebrook and the Gulf Freeway. Jose Martinez Vasquez, 19, was charged in the death of Paola Garcia, 26.
Dec. 29
The South Belt community was hit with a deep freeze this Christmas holiday, with temperatures dipping into the teens. The cold air was unaccompanied by precipitation, however, largely sparing the area of ice and its related hazards.
The *Leader's* 40th annual Christmas program was a success, providing assistance to approximately 40 families in need.

Laura Bush Elementary promotes emotional health



Shown above are, left to right, (front row) Kaleb Guevara, Camila Trevino, Uriel Ontiveros, Hector Flores, (middle row) Elijah Mitchell, Kevin Guidry, Khanh Tran, Aaron Lopez, Victoria Gutierrez, (back row) Sgt. D. Jimenez, Officer A. Triplett, Heidi Mejias and Suzanne Anderson, Laura Bush Elementary counselor. As part of its educational program, Laura Bush Elementary promotes social emotional learning, self-awareness, manners, problem-solving, empathy, responsibility and grit. The faculty and students at Laura Bush are grateful to FedEx, the Houston Police Department and the Greater Houston Police Activities League (GHPAL) for the generous donation of EQtainment's products: "Q's Race to the Top" board game with book and "Q's Race to the Top On The Go," a game that assists students in improving their manners, social skills and emotional control.

White named National Merit finalist



Congratulations are in order for Dobie's Early College High School senior Jacob White, for being named a National Merit finalist, bringing him one step closer to consideration for a National Merit scholarship. Out of 1.5 million students, more than 16,000 students were named as National Merit semifinalists in September 2022. White was the lone Pasadena ISD student who received this recognition, earning him a chance to advance toward the opportunity to apply for a Merit Scholarship award.

SJC job fair shows success

San Jacinto College held a job fair at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology building on Feb. 16.
Approximately 200 people visited with various departments to learn about full- and part-time faculty and staff positions available at the college. Many departments were represented, including student services, recruitment, human resources, fine arts and industrial technology. Vershonda Williams, director of Outreach and Recruitment was one of the many department directors on hand to answer questions about the application process, job requirements and benefits of working for San Jacinto College. Those interested in working for San Jac can find current job openings at careers.sanjac.edu.

Hobby Airport ranks No. 13

Following a report carried out by the experts at Travel Lens, the top 10 best airports in the U.S. for passenger satisfaction were revealed, William P. Hobby features in tenth place, with a passenger satisfaction rating of 803 out of 1000.
Hobby Airport has been named the 13th best overall in the U.S., after receiving an airport rating of 5.67/10.
The research also revealed the following about William P. Hobby.
- Average wait time is 17 minutes.
- The airport produces 94g/km of CO2 emissions per passenger.

Kindness abounds at Fred Roberts Middle School



Fred Roberts Middle School fifth-graders Lam Le (above) and Jacob Gonzalez (below) recently put the "I" in kind by performing random acts of kindness, during Kindness Week. Le helped a student who was struggling with their schoolwork and Gonzalez encouraged and motivated a friend during their STEAM Fair presentation.
Picture by Crissy Higham



Wolverine speech, debate compete for NSDA in June



Clear Brook speech and debate team recently won during the Feb. 24-26 weekend at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory, putting them in the qualifying status for NSDA in June. Shown are team members, left to right, (front row) Misbah Aziz, Gabe Torres, Greg Stuart, Daniela Paul, Ariella Calili, Emily Joseph (back row) Jasmine Tran, Khang Ngo, Merab Saim, Isabelle Wills and Danetta Paul.

Fresh off of their district winning TFA qualification total in CCISD for yet another year, the Clear Brook High School speech and debate team chalked up another winning total Feb. 24-26 at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory. A 12-member contingent of the team competing for National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) national qualifying status, will compete at the annual meet held in June in Phoenix. At their most recent meet, the team had members competing in informative speaking, original oratory, international extemporaneous speaking and United States extemporaneous speaking.
After preliminary rounds were completed on day two, day three found eight of the 12 members in either final or semifinal rounds. In finals for informative speaking, Misbah Aziz and Jasmine Tran took home the first and second place wins respectively, guaranteeing them a trip to Nationals. Additionally, team member Isabelle Wills scored well in finals of original oratory, ending in the fourth alternate position to the National meet.
Extemporaneous speakers also did well at the meet. Although she did not advance to the final round, a semifinalist now goes out to Elaina Joseph, one of the team's ambitious and accomplished freshmen. Those who did place in finals for extemporaneous speaking were Ariella Calili who placed third, earning her place at Nationals as well as Greg Stuart and Emily Joseph who are the first and second alternates respectively to Nationals in United States extemporaneous speaking. Additionally, senior Daniela Paul came away with the second place alternate position in her event, International Extemporaneous Speaking.
Capping off a successful weekend was team officer Gabe Torres who was elected by the South Texas NSDA Committee to be their NSDA Student Leadership Council nominee, a committee that will be formed over the summer. More than 100 students from across the country will be interviewed for a seat on this prestigious council to positively impact speech and debate initiatives across the country going forward.

Remember When

45 years ago (1978)
Texas Commerce Bancshares confirmed that it had been granted a charter for a new national bank to be known as Texas Commerce South Belt.
In a business meeting, the Pasadena Independent School District board of trustees raised the summer tuition, approved the evening school schedule, approved textbooks, made tax roll adjustments, approved personnel changes and recognized students for their accomplishments.
40 years ago (1983)
Frazier Elementary's principal, Gene Henson, was reassigned to Teague Elementary. Sagemont Bicycle Shop was burglarized of a Diamondback mini pro pit bike, worth \$340. The burglar broke through the front door to gain entry.
Dobie seniors Freeman Tomlin and Steve Geissen were chosen to be the Coaches All District 23-5A basketball team.

South's softball team won first place in the Okaloosa-Walton College tournament in Niceville, Fla.
20 years ago (2003)
Dustin Alan Jenkinson, 19, was in custody facing multiple charges after a drive-by shooting in the 9800 block of Sagequeen. Charges included aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon, a first-degree felony, and deadly conduct, a third-degree felony.
Johnny Carmona, sales supervisor and community coordinator for Sam's Club on Fuqua, won two national awards, the Literacy Hero Award and a good works and community involvement award.
15 years ago (2008)
The Texas Air National Guard took civilians on four of its F-16 refueling missions. The flights were part of TANG's annual family and employer appreciation day. One participating family member was longtime South Belt resident Laura Garner, wife of TANG Lt. Col. B.J. Garner. Also invited to cover the event were David and Marie Flickinger, publisher of the

South Belt-Ellington Leader.
A high-speed chase led to a suspect being arrested and charged with two felony counts, thanks in part to the efforts of a local resident.
Physics and journalism students from Dobie and South Houston high schools were among only five groups in the nation that were invited to participate in an international project to learn and report about a new supercollider project in Geneva, Switzerland.
The Pasadena Independent School District continued to offer students the option of taking courses online through its Virtual School. The program allowed students to take classes on their own time wherever internet access was available.
10 years ago (2013)
Longtime Houston Police Officer Randy Derr retired after serving nearly 34 years on the force. Many South Belt residents knew Derr from his extensive work with the Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program, a monthly meeting held to bolster relations between area residents and local police. A 1977 graduate of South Houston High School, Derr had been involved with the PIP meetings for 20 years.
5 years ago (2018)
Nearly 5,000 volunteers traveled from around the world to help families impacted by Hurricane Harvey rebuild their storm-damaged homes. The nonprofit groups Eight Days of Hope and the 4B Disaster Response Network teamed up with various missionaries, local churches and individual volunteers to assist those who were still reeling from the effects of Harvey, particularly those who had not already received assistance from other sources, such as FEMA or insurance. Members from approximately 500 churches - of all denominations - took part in the project.

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Over The Back Fence by Natalie

ROBERT MARKS A BIRTHDAY
Robert Scarberry, retired longtime Dobie auto collision repair teacher and former longtime South Belt resident, celebrates his birthday Thursday, March 9. Birthday wishes are sent from wife Jannie; children Jenny (Hayes) Laney and husband Josh, Joseph Hayes, Stacey (Hayes) Flowers and husband Stephen, Austin Scarberry and Tyler Scarberry; and grandchildren Brayden and Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno, Jade and Lily Scarberry, and Kennedy, Owen and Evie Flowers.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DIDDY!
Diddy Clark celebrates a birthday Thursday, March 9. Best wishes are sent for a wonderful day from her family, friends and co-workers at the *Leader*.
EVIE TURNS NINE!
Stacey (Hayes) and Stephen Flowers of League City celebrate the ninth birthday of their daughter, Evelyn "Evie" Faith Flowers, on Saturday, March 11. Proud grandparents are Jannie and Robert Scarberry, former longtime South Belt residents, and Karen and Mike Flowers of Dickinson. Sharing in the celebration are big sister Kennedy; big brother Owen; aunt Jenny (Hayes) Laney Scarberry; uncles Joseph Hayes and Austin and Tyler Scarberry; and cousins Brayden and Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno and Jade and Lily Scarberry. Stacey is a 2005 Dobie High School graduate.
SCHOOL DAZE
The following personnel and staff of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays March 9 through March 15.
Atkinson Elementary
Sing a verse of a happy birthday song March 11 to Donna Koonce. Remember to wish Manuela Juarez and Maria Zavala a happy birthday March 15.
Burnett Elementary
Light the birthday candles on a cake for Hong Doan March 15.
Frazier Elementary
Birthday greetings go out to Mary Noyola on March 13. Blow out the candles March 15 for Mirtha Hernandez.
Genoa Elementary
Send a birthday greeting March 3 to Mirabel Garcia.
Meador Elementary
Remember to wish Hannah Schaper a happy birthday March 11. Bring out the party favors and balloons for Marissa Nevarez March 13.
Moore Elementary
The day for a party for Guadalupe Hudson is March 9. Join in the birthday fun March 15 for Esmeralda Chacon.
South Belt Elementary
Meaghan Rivas celebrates a birthday March 14.
Fred Roberts Middle School
Enjoying a special birthday March 10 is Alexys Gonzalez Hernandez.
Melillo Middle School
Diane Wheeler, Melillo principal, celebrates a birthday March 10. The day to celebrate with cake and ice cream for Troy Ralls is March 14.

Beverly Hills Intermediate
Carla Bradford enjoys a birthday March 14.
Thompson Intermediate
Light the birthday candles March 9 for Alexandra Alvarado and Stephanie Paulin. Give a birthday shoutout March 12 to Elicia Torres. Tiffany Laday celebrates a birthday March 14.
Dobie High
Celebrating a happy birthday March 7 is Heather Adams. Adrian Amador and Sandra Rodriguez share a birthday March 12. On March 14, birthday wishes are sent to Robert McGill.
FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS
Thursday, March 9: Cheryl Stell, Rudy Rivera, Leah Lister, Lance Botkin, Susan Zientek, Monte Long and Bo Richards; Friday, March 10: Jim Daigle and Sheila Dill; Saturday, March 11: Raquel Loya, Michael Martinez, Jesus Romero and Irma Manriquez; Sunday, March 12: Debbie Clark, Maria Riojas, Debbie Johnson and Heather Murphy Burris; Monday, March 13: Matthew Hanks, Heidi Delk, Shane Terry, Sharon Jobe, Max Hernandez and Becky Gilley; Tuesday, March 14: Allison Weatherly, Chris Williams, Curtis Scope, Ron Shafer and Angeliq Garcia; and Wednesday, March 15: Teri Posey, John Dies, Renee Guillot-Rodriguez, Jeanne Cook, Christopher Lozano and Melissa Robinson.
LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS
Email announcements to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line by Friday noon for the next week's issue.

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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Dobie softball crushes Eagles

A runaway 24-7 win over Pasadena March 3 has the Dobie varsity softball program back on track with 11 total wins as the Longhorns will now focus on the District 22-6A race for much of the way.

A 10-8 setback to current Region III champion Deer Park in addition to losses to regional powers Friendswood (8-2), Katy (10-4) and Clear Springs (14-0) at the

Friendswood Invitational March 2-3 slowed Dobie's early-season momentum, but it all came together for Dobie, 11-7-1 overall, against the Eagles at the Pasadena ISD Complex.

Leslie Sarduy and Sandra Quiroz drove in four runs each, and Miriam Castillo and Karyme Leal homered as Dobie needed just four frames to close out the Eagles on the

strength of a 12-run second inning.

Dobie, second to Deer Park in the 22-6A standings in both 2021 and 2022, is again well **Continued on Page 8**



At right, Dobie's Marisa Perla (11) celebrates with teammates in the dugout after a big hit against Deer Park. To this point, Perla has hit better than .500 at the plate and leads the team in extra-base hits. The Texas Southern University signee has also pitched well for the locals. The Longhorns are 11-7-1 overall.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

Dobie at Channelview
March 10, 6 p.m.

Dobie vs. Rayburn
March 21, 4 p.m. at Dobie

Dobie boys' soccer wins ninth straight crown

A 1-0 victory over South Houston March 6 at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena has allowed the Do-

bie boys' soccer program to extend one of the most remarkable runs in Class 6A Region III history.

The Longhorns' 1-0 win over the Trojans assured the locals of a ninth consecutive district cham-

ionship dating back to 2015.

While the Longhorns will play nondistrict games against Klein Collins and Terry prior to the postseason, the varsity squad wound up 22-6A action at 10-0-2 for 32 points, outscoring league foes using a plus 51 goal differential.

At 19-0-3, the Longhorns find themselves unbeaten deeper into a regular season than at any other in program history. Simply put, the Longhorns got the job done despite plenty of adversity prior to and then during the season.

Ronaldo Guzman, a scorer of 22 goals as a ju-

nior in 2022, tore a knee ligament in the offseason while playing at the club level. He has missed the entire 2023 season.

Victor Hernandez also injured his knee and did not become available to practice until last December. Still, he has rebounded to be a top goal scorer for the team during this remarkable run.

"I'm just so proud of this team for overcoming the injuries and pushing through every night to get the job done," said Dobie head coach Justo Manrique, architect of this nine-year league championship run.

"We have had so many guys step up and contribute, and that's the way we have had to get it done.

"We know that every night we are going to get the best effort possible from our opponents. Pasadena had us down at half-time (1-0) in both games, but we rallied. Even though we didn't win, the ties proved vital."

The bidistrict soccer playoffs won't begin until March 23-25. If Dobie plays the first round March 24 as expected, there will be plenty of down time between now and then.

Continued on Page 8



At left, Miguel Azua (21) and his Dobie varsity boys' soccer teammates finished off a ninth straight District 22-6A championship run with a 1-0 win over South Houston March 6 at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena. At 19-0-3, including 10-0-2 in the league, the Longhorns will play a pair of nondistrict games before beginning the bidistrict playoff round March 23-25.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

JFD tracksters take on CL field

Senior Ashley Dunn won the 400 and took silver in the 800 for second place as she led the Dobie varsity girls' track and field performance March 3 at the Falcon Relays.

Five girls' programs from District 22-6A, including Dobie, Deer Park, Memorial, Pasadena and South Houston, joined Baytown Sterling, Kingwood and Clear Lake in the field.

Deer Park used a big team effort to claim the crown with 207 points, with Clear Lake's 159 points good for second place. Dobie was then third in the team standings with 121 points.

The Longhorns also claimed gold in the 4x200 and 4x400 relays to score big points as the locals begin to focus on the upcoming postseason less than a month away.

Dunn, a key member of Dobie's District 22-6A championship cross-country program, won the 400 at the Falcon Relays in a time of

1 minute, 05.27 seconds, while Longhorns' freshman Christina Rodriguez

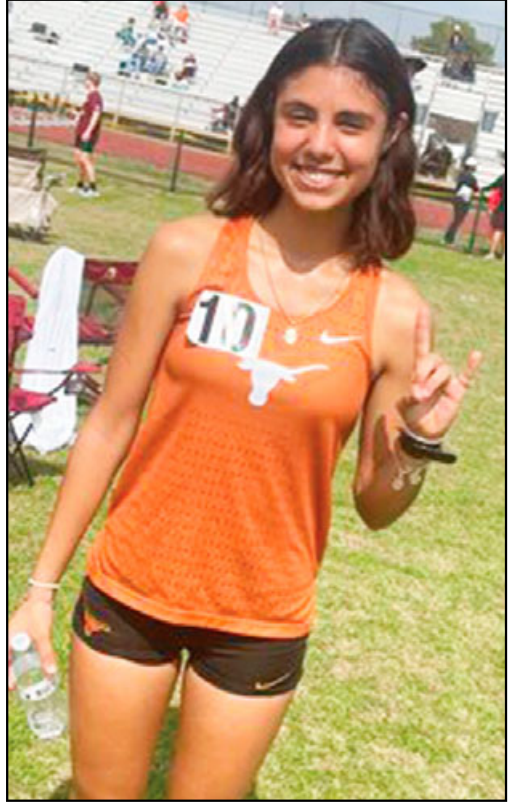
took third for bronze medal in a time of 1:07.28.

The Longhorns con-

tinued what has been a standout season in the relays with the two gold-medal efforts as well as a silver for second place in the 4x100.

Dunn and Rodriguez joined Stacie Harris and Sophia Perez for the gold-medal win in the 4x400 at 4:13.77, and the 4x200 group of Mia Sanchez, Perez, Bre'yanna Williams and Camille Steens took the gold in a time of 1:50.58.

Deer Park and Dobie **Continued on Page 6**



At left, Dobie senior Ashley Dunn delivered big-time performances in consecutive weeks, taking second in the 400 at the Maverick Underdog Relays and then winning the 400 and placing second in the 800 at the Falcon Relays, hosted by Clear Lake High School. She was also part of Dobie's 4x200 relay win at Clear Lake.

Clear Brook track and field scores big at Charger Relays

The Clear Brook varsity girls' and boys' track and field teams fared well at the Clear Springs Charger relays, with the athletes taking home some hardware.

A time of 2 minutes, 20.874 seconds earned the Wolverines a bronze medal for third place in the 800, and Jizzale Davis was fourth in the 400, finishing at 1:00.310 in the event.

The Clear Brook 4x100 relay team posted a time of 48.273 for second place and a silver medal as Juliana Hudson, Davis, Kyra Freeman and Ja'Delle Major teamed in the event.

With a great throw of 133 feet, 6 inches, Clear Brook senior Kennedy Thompson stayed unbeaten in the shot put, and Thompson was also sixth in the shot with a top per-

sonal throw of 35-1.

As a team, the Brook girls placed ninth with 37 points, and the Wolverine boys took eighth with 44 points.

In the 100, Brook's Raymond Felton was second for a silver medal in a time of 10.936, with teammate Jaylon Owens fourth at 11.083.

At the 200 distance, it was again Felton taking a silver medal at 21.531, with Owens fifth in this one at 22.754.

Felton and Owens also joined Joshua Akinola and Christian Wright for second place and a silver medal in the 4x200 relay in a time of 1:26.891 as North Shore nipped the locals at the wire for the win.

In the 4x400, the Wolverines were sixth in a time of 3:31.818 behind the efforts of Joshua Shelton, Jesse Shelton, Johnson and Wright.

In other events, the Wolverines' Joshua Shelton placed fifth in the 400 with a clocking of 50.581, and Joseph Trevino's time of 9:55.320 was sixth in the 3200.

The Wolverines' Kartier Johnson went 20-7 for

sixth in the long jump to add to his team's total score.

Dolphins registering FB, drill, etc

The Southbelt Dolphins of the Bay Area Football League are currently registering players each Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon at Blackhawk Park for football and drill/cheer and mascot members for the 2023 season, with activities beginning in July. Football players ages 5 through 12 as of Aug. 1, 2023 may register at \$275 per player, with full uniform included for the 10-game schedule. There is a \$50 discount available to those who recommend a registered first-year player. Drill team/cheer members in the 8 to 13 age group are welcome, as are mascot candidates ages 5 to 7. The Dolphins are also set to play an 8-game spring flag football 9 on 9 season at \$35 per player. For football opportunities, contact Raoul Garza at 281-818-7880. Reach out to Delores Garza for drill/cheer/mascot at 713-459-4721.

Barba paces Galveston softball

San Jacinto College will enter Region XIV play later this month as the two-time defending league champion with a pair of JUCO World Series berths. Yet while the Ravens still hold bragging rights, Galveston College has been gearing up for a big move. The Whitecaps were 19-3 through March 7 and had entered the National Junior College Athletic Association Division I national rankings at No. 18. In doing so, the Whitecaps have benefited from a torrid start from freshman Karlie Barba, a Class of 2022 Dobie graduate. With 12 doubles and eight home runs, Barba had driven in 22 runs while hitting .397.

Pleasants shows power with LSU

The Louisiana State University softball program was ranked 15th nationally and had started the 2023 season at 20-1 overall as of March 7 with Dobie graduate and star junior shortstop leading the way for the Tigers. As for Pleasants, she hit .359 with eight home runs and 31 runs batted in through the overall 21 games

Dobie's Giron is MVP of 22-6A basketball



Dobie senior Jacque Giron (11), who earlier in the regular season eclipsed 1,000 career points scored, was named the District 22-6A Most Valuable Player for the 2022-2023 season. See more All-District news and photos on Page 6.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

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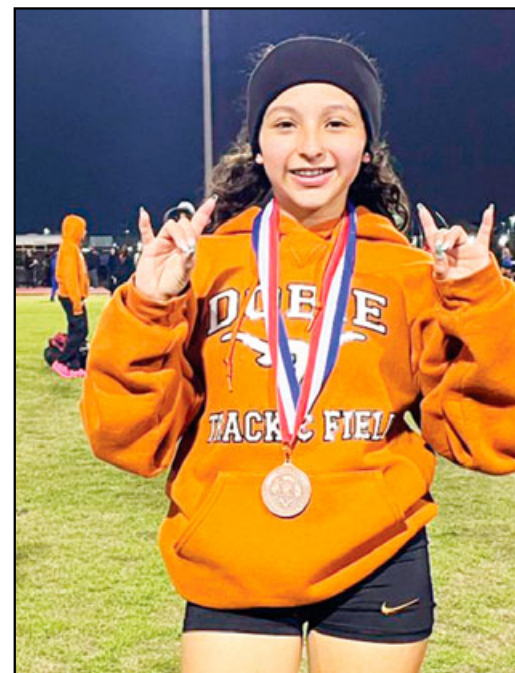
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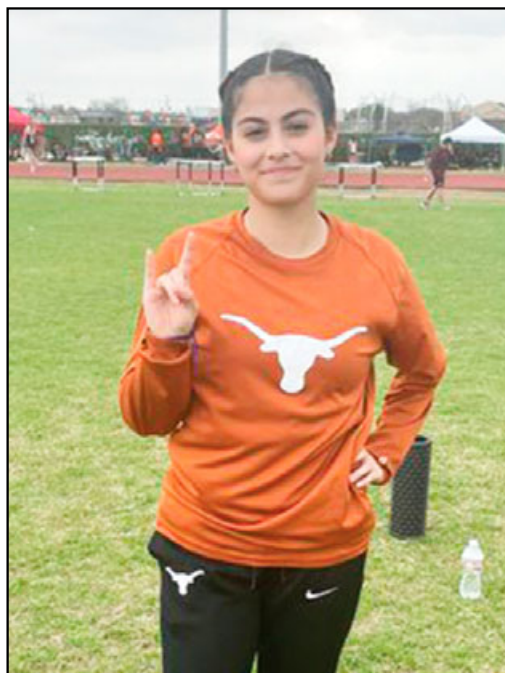
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Dobie sophomore distance runner Lauren Garza took third in the 1600 at the Maverick Underdog Relays and then was fourth at the Falcon Relays.



At the Falcon Relays, Mia Sanchez helped Dobie to second place in the 4x100 relay and was second in the 200.

Dobie track excels at Falcon Relays

Continued from Page 5
went stride for stride to the tape in the 4100, with Deer Park taking the gold for the win in a time of 51.49 and Dobie second at 51.83.

Dobie's foursome included Harris, Steens, Sanchez and Tailin Curtis.

Medals continued to roll in for the Dobie girls as a time of 27.38 placed Sanchez second in the 200, and a time of 50.49 was good enough for Harris to take silver for second place in the 300 hurdles. In the same event, Dobie's Jordan Davis was in at

56.35 for fourth place.

At 16 feet, 1 inch, Williams was second for silver in the long jump, while the sophomore duo of Curtis (13.15) and Chloye Matthews were fourth and sixth, respectively, in the 100. Junior Kyla Lobo, running the 800 in the same 800 mix as Dunn, was fifth in a time of 2:44.19.

At the 1600 distance, Dobie's Lauren Garza was fourth as the sophomore timed in at 5:54.29, while Lobo placed fifth in a time of 6:00.19.

Curtis (33-1), Perez

(32-4) and Davis (31-0) went fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively, in the triple jump.

On the boys' side of things, Dobie sophomore Cameron Matthews won gold in the 200 at 22.28, with teammate Marcus Jones, a freshman, seventh in a time of 23.55.

Jones was also in the 100 field as his time of 11.53 gave him a bronze for third place, and teammate Ethan Nguyen's time of 11.68 was seventh best. At 52.93, Dobie's Tariq Riley captured sixth in the 400, and a time of 2:10.34

gave Dobie's Damian Rosas a fifth-place spot.

The Dobie 4x200 relay squad was in at 1:31.53 for second place in the event, and the 4x100 group went 43.99 for third place.

A leap of 19-4 had Dobie's Jeremiah Jackson third in the long jump, and teammate Charles Richard made his way to the 18-10 mark for sixth place.

Jackson also grabbed a silver medal in the triple jump at 43-0, and a best of 42-9 had the Longhorns' Demarcus Hodges taking a bronze medal for third place.

Dobie's Giron heads 22-6A girls' hoops picks

District 22-6A champion Deer Park ended Dobie's two-year run atop the varsity girls' basketball standings, but the Longhorns again had the best player.

Dobie senior Jacque Giron, who late in the season eclipsed 1,000 career points scored, was named Most Valuable Player of 22-6A as the league's head coaches gathered to announce postseason award winners and All-District teams.

Newcomer of the Year honors went to Channelview's Zaniya Lewis, while undefeated 22-6A champion Deer Park took the remainder of the

league accolades. The 22-6A Offensive Player of the Year was Deer Park's Macie Whitfield, and her teammate, Elysabeth Ripley, was named Defensive Player of the Year.

Warren Brooks, who a season ago was Coach of the Year in District 24-6A while leading Clear Brook to an unbeaten title in that league, moved over to Deer Park and led the Deer to a 12-0 mark in 22-6A en route to another COY award.

Dobie, which went 10-2 in league play, had seniors Tabilah Curtis and Aubrey Myers named to the 22-6A first team in addition to junior Jady Johnson.



Senior Talibah Curtis of Dobie (21) was at her best with the ball in her hands as she helped lead her team to second place in the standings and also was named to the 22-6A All-Academic team for her achievements in the classroom.

District 22-6A Basketball Girls' All-District Selections

Most Valuable Player
Jacque Giron, Dobie

Offensive Player of the Year
Macie Whitfield, Deer Park

Defensive Player of the Year
Elysabeth Ripley, Deer Park

Newcomer of the Year
Zaniya Lewis, Channelview

Coach of the Year
Warren Brooks, Deer Park

First-Team Honorees

Talibah Curtis, Dobie
Jady Johnson, Dobie
Aubree Myers, Dobie
Jlynn Sanchez, Channelview
Faith Ramirez, Deer Park
Brooke Harralson, Deer Park
Caryme Molina, Pasadena
Hazar Baba, Memorial
Natalie Pineda, Memorial
Abigail Valero, Rayburn

Second-Team Honorees

Audrey Volper, Dobie, Fr.
Brooklynn Bush, Dobie, Jr.
Valerie Akinloye, Dobie, Sr.
Denice Sierra, Channelview
Raine Jenkins, Channelview
Laurynn Ham, Deer Park
Laila Williams, Deer Park
Tobie Addison, Deer Park
Cassandra Perez, Memorial
Denisse Rodriguez, Memorial
Leissel Rodriguez, Memorial
Abigail Ramirez, Memorial
Jesse Morales, Memorial
Miracle Soto, South Houston
Za'nyiah Agege, South Houston

Honorable Mention - Dobie

Ociana Means, Sr.
MacKenna Houston, Jr.
Ulani Davis, Soph.
Trinity Maxwell, Jr.
Madison Stewart, Soph.

All-Academic - Dobie

Valerie Akinloye, Dobie, Sr.
Brooklynn Bush, Dobie, Jr.
Talibah Curtis, Dobie, Sr.
Jacque Giron, Sr.
Jady Johnson, Dobie, Jr.
Ociana Means, Sr.
Aubree Myers, Dobie, Sr.
Madison Stewart, Soph.



Dobie senior Aubree Myers (20) made the most of increased playing time as a senior as her solid all-around play led to first team 22-6A accolades on the court. She was also an All-Academic team honoree.



Dobie junior Jady Johnson (22) was stellar during her first season at the varsity level with the Longhorns, meriting All-District first team honors with strong play inside. She also excels in the classroom as a member of the league's All-Academic team.

Seniors honored as girls' soccer tops Channelview



The Dobie girls' soccer program celebrated Senior Night Feb. 27 with a win over Channelview Feb. 27 at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena as seniors, left to right, Kaitlyn Webb, Angelica Medina, Karen Hernandez, Janet Armenta, Valery Marroquin, Maria Wence and Bella Cisneros were honored.

JFD girls' soccer takes aim at postseason



Aylin Reyes (5) and her teammates finished off league play at 8-3-1 within District 22-6A and will now await the bidistrict playoffs March 23-25.



Maria Wence (2) is part of a senior class that will lead the Dobie varsity girls' soccer team into the postseason.

Photos by Donna Alsdorf

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Dobie nines go unbeaten; Brook slowed at CCISD

Outscoring its four opponents by a combined 39-8, the Dobie varsity baseball team emerged from the Pasadena ISD Classic March 2-4 with an 8-3 overall record and will join a talented field at the Goose Creek ISD Invitational March 9-11.

Playing four games at Dobie during the PISD three-day event, Dobie opened with an 8-2 win over Baytown Sterling and then slugged past Alief Taylor 16-0.

The Longhorns edged Heights 6-3 on day two and then closed play with a 9-3 victory over Westbury.

At the Clear Creek ISD tournament at Clear Brook, March 2-4, the Wolverines played La Porte to a 1-1 tie but fell short in three other games. Runs were hard to come by as the Wolverines lost to Hebron March 2 then lost 9-6 to Brenham. The locals also fell to Texas City and Memorial.



The Dobie varsity boys' soccer team has secured a ninth consecutive District 22-6A championship following a win over South Houston March 6 at Veterans Stadium in Pasadena. With a pair of nondistrict matches prior to the playoffs, the Longhorns, including midfielder J.P. Rodriguez, will look to fine tune things as the bidistrict playoff round comes March 23-25.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

22-6A boys' soccer claims crown

Continued from Page 5

The lengthy wait will be the same for the entire state, with spring break playing a role in the schedule.

Looking ahead, Manrique can envision a first-round matchup against a very good Humble team and then Elsie standing in the way in the area round.

"We could go all the way, and that is certain-

ly the goal at this point," Manrique said. "We will have to adjust on the fly, but that is something that we have had to do all year. It's all a matter of playing your best soccer and coming away with wins at this point."

Down goes Rayburn
J.P. Rodriguez and Victor Hernandez had two goals each as the Longhorns stayed in front in

the standings with a 7-0 shutout win over Rayburn March 3 at San Jacinto College South.

With the seven goals against the Texans, the Longhorns posted 25 combined goals in wins over Memorial, Channelview and then Rayburn en route to a 19-0-3 overall record.

The win over the Texans got the Longhorns within one point of no

worse than a first place tie.

The ensuing 1-0 win over South Houston ensured the crown.

Dobie won the regional title in 2017, so the possibility exists. Perhaps top-end individual players will face Dobie, but the Longhorns believe they have the all-around team to get it done.



Miriam Castillo (18) has been a top run producer for Dobie and will look to continue to deliver in the clutch as the locals will now turn their focus to the District 22-6A race this month.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

Dobie softball falls to Deer Park

Continued from Page 5

on its way in 22-6A play. Deer Park still has a grip on the 22-6A title until further notice, and a 10-7 win over Dobie Feb. 28 at the Pasadena ISD Complex.

Deer Park scored two runs in the top of the first inning and six more in the second inning to lead 8-0 in a hurry. Sandra Quiroz, the Dobie home run leader with three, delivered a sixth-inning grand slam to get the Longhorns close,

but the Deer went on to win the game.

Emily Delgado doubled among her two hits and knocked in two runs, and Marisa Perla had two hits and scored a run. Freshman Chloe Nunez also had a pair of hits, and scored twice.

The Longhorns finished their third and final week of tournament play with an appearance at Friendswood, with the locals taking down Clear Brook 13-4 on the opening day

of action March 2.

Dobie, which defeated Clear Brook 8-7 to open the season Feb. 13, this time jumped on the Wolverines for seven runs in the fifth inning to break open a tight game.

Miriam Castillo had a grand slam in the fifth inning, and Perla also homered in the game. Sophomore Jackie Peralta pitched the final three innings in relief, allowing three hits and no runs to earn the win.

Goose Creek ISD Invite

- Clear Brook vs. Oak Ridge**
March 9, 9 a.m.
at Baytown Lee H.S.
- Dobie vs. Texas City**
March 9, noon
at G.C. Memorial H.S.
- Clear Brook vs. Dawson**
March 9, 2:30 p.m.
at Barbers Hill H.S.
- Dobie vs. Galveston Ball**
March 9, 5 p.m.
at G.C. Memorial H.S.
- Clear Brook vs. Baytown Sterling**
March 10, 9:30 a.m.
at Baytown Sterling H.S.
- Dobie vs. G.C. Memorial**
March 10, 9:30 a.m.
at G.C. Memorial H.S.
- Dobie vs. Atascocita**
March 10, noon
at G.C. Memorial H.S.
- Clear Brook vs. Northbrook**
March 10, 2:30 p.m.
at Baytown Lee H.S.

22-6A Boys' Soccer Standings Prior to March 7 Play

| Teams | W | L | T | Pts. |
|-------------|----|---|---|------|
| Dobie | 10 | 0 | 2 | 32 |
| Pasadena | 7 | 0 | 3 | 24 |
| Rayburn | 5 | 3 | 2 | 17 |
| Channelview | 3 | 5 | 2 | 11 |
| Deer Park | 1 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| S. Houston | 2 | 8 | 1 | 7 |
| Memorial | 1 | 8 | 2 | 5 |

Melillo Big Shoot Out winners excel at district level



Melillo Middle School fifth-grade students Abigail Dehoyos (left) and Dahlia Salinas tested their basketball skills against those of other Pasadena ISD students at the districtwide Big Shoot Out competition last month at Phillips Field House, with DeHoyos winning first place and Salinas taking runner-up honors.



Melillo Middle School sixth-grade student D'Marvia McVea was crowned the Pasadena ISD Big Shoot Out champion during the districtwide competition at Phillips Field House last month.

South Houston grad Jeff Neal combined football, powerlifting

Editor's Note: The following is the third of nine weekly features recognizing the Class of 2023 Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame inductees.

In the March 16 issue of the *Leader*, Dobie High School's Scott Lengefeld will be featured for his multisport talents.

By Al Carter
PISD Hall of Fame

Had he inherited his father's height, Jeff Neal might have enjoyed a long and lucrative career in the National Football League. His dad, George Neal, a lanky and beloved member of the South Houston High faculty, stood tall in terms of character, not just inches.

And character – far more than inches – has done the same for George Neal's son.

Jeff Neal made a

name for himself as an All-American offensive guard for Howard Payne University.

Largely overlooked by football scouts because of his height, he forged a half-dozen years on the payrolls of various pro teams, including the Houston Oilers. But football, it turned out, was just a prelude.

While toiling in the trenches, Neal turned his attention to strength training and powerlifting – and, in 1993, was named the NFL's strongest man.

In the late 1990s, with his football dreams behind him (and his bench-press tonnage up to 615 pounds), he won consecutive World Powerlifting championships. But Neal's Herculean exhibitions proved to be yet another prelude.

In 2000, he established Team Impact Ministries, an evangelical organization providing inspirational speakers – many of them athletes – to churches and schools.

Through his current association with SportsWorld ministries, Neal now shares messages of hope and fellowship with groups around the globe.

A 1986 South Houston High School graduate, Neal will be inducted into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame at a gala banquet on April 20 at the Pasadena Convention Center. Dobie High's 1981 state champion track team will also be honored.

The patriarch of the Neal family established his own kind of ministry. George Neal served as a Houston Police Department officer as a young man and was even shot in the line of duty.

In 1977, he joined the faculty at South Houston, where he taught law enforcement and criminal justice for 21 years. He also coached baseball, football and golf.

One of the most popular and influential instructors on campus, Neal was selected to the school's Teacher Hall of Honor shortly before his death in 2017.

At home and at school, Jeff Neal looked up to his dad. That was part of the problem.

easy to overlook. He landed an opportunity to play at Howard Payne, beefed up and made the most of it. He started all four years, earning all-conference honors his final two seasons and All-American laurels as a senior.

Neal also won the conference discus title. In 2001, Neal was inducted into the Howard Payne Sports Hall of Fame.

He earned pro opportunities that led to playing time in the Canadian and Arena leagues.

Although never on the Oilers' active roster, Neal was considered a member of the Oilers' family. In 1993, he held down a spot on the team's practice squad for 14 of the team's 16 games.

Neal says he has never regretted the absence of those elevating inches.

"Had I been taller," he says, "I probably wouldn't have had the drive and determination to do the things I've done."

And now Neal finds himself a Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame inductee, a distinction held by only the greats the district has had over the decades.

General admission seats for the Hall of Fame banquet are available.

For details on tickets and event information, contact Kathy Richardson at the Pasadena ISD Education Foundation office; by phone, 713-740-0034; by email, KRichardson@pasadenaisd.org.



Jeff Neal, a Class of 1986 South Houston High School graduate, played professional football for several seasons and has also carved out a niche in the powerlifting field.

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