

Kirkwood to meet Jan. 26

The Kirkwood Civic Club's monthly meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at the Sagemont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Road. Meetings are typically scheduled for the last Thursday of the month. For additional information, call Kirkwood Civic Club President Ericka McCutcheon at 281-989-9990.

Library donations sought

The Friends of Parker Williams Branch Library group is seeking donated materials from the South Belt community. Items sought include DVDs, CDs, gently used children's books and adult fiction. Donations can be dropped off during regular library hours at 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.

Local COVID cases reported

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

As of Tuesday, Jan. 24, there were 104 active cases in 77089, down three from the previous week. To date, 137 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 increase from the previous week. To date, there have been 81 deaths in the ZIP code, no increase from the previous week.

In 77034, there were 29 active cases, down one from the previous week. To date, 90 residents from ZIP code 77034 have died from the disease, no increase from the previous week.

This marked the fifth consecutive week with no COVID-related deaths in the immediate South Belt community. 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.

One middle northbound frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from NASA Bypass/NASA Road 1 to Bay Area Boulevard daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Monday, May 22.

Two outside southbound lanes on the Gulf Freeway will be closed from Texas City Railroad to SH 6/SH 146 in La Marque nightly from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. until further notice.

The northbound entrance ramps from both FM 519/Main Street and FM 1765/Texas Avenue in La Marque will be completely closed until further notice. Motorists should use the next available northbound entrance ramp.

Beltway closures planned

Two northbound and two southbound Beltway 8 frontage road lanes will be closed at Fairmont Parkway daily from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday, March 31. Significant delays are expected.

The closures are associated with the ongoing project to widen Beltway 8 from two to four lanes in each direction.

Ellington e-recycling set

The City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department's monthly electronic recycling event will take place Saturday, Feb. 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.

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

Knights host spaghetti dinner

The Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will have a spaghetti dinner at the Social Hall of St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church, 11011 Hall Road this Friday, Jan. 27, from 4 to 7 p.m. Cost is \$10.00 for spaghetti, meatballs, salad, bread and iced tea or lemonade - eat in or take out. Children 12 and under cost is \$5.00, eat in only. Proceeds will support the church capital campaign.

Strong winds rip through South Belt

The South Belt area was hit hard by thunderstorms the afternoon of Tuesday, Jan. 24, with strong winds leaving a path a destruction though much of the community.

A tornado touched down near Beamer just north of Beltway 8, causing extensive damage to Beamer Place Apartments and Beverly Hills Intermediate. No injuries were reported at either location.

Pasadena ISD Assistant Superintendent Alyta Harrell praised the Beverly Hills staff for their efforts of caring for the students, who were on campus at the time of the incident.

(Beverly Hills Principal Stacey Barber) and her team were amazing," said Pasadena ISD Assistant Superintendent Alyta Harrell. "The students and staff stepped up and literally saved lives. Once again, the South Belt came together as a community."

According to Harrell, the campus suffered extensive damage, including broken windows.

Harrell said the school district will offer support to those affected moving forward.

"Once everyone was safe, we then shifted to providing support," Harrell said, noting the school district has just begun to assess the extensive damage. "And with all the damage and destruction in the community, we're going to continue to provide support."

Pasadena ISD's Memorial High School, Bondy Intermediate and Teague Elementary were also reportedly struck by a tornado.

Pasadena ISD was closed Wednesday, due to lack of power at many campuses. At press time, it was unclear if the school district would resume classes on Thursday.

Power outages were widespread throughout the community, with many still without it at press time Wednesday.

Downed power lines were also common in the

community, with one such downed power line causing the closure of all southbound main lanes and frontage road lanes on the Gulf Freeway at Fuqua, causing extensive traffic delays for several

hours. Another similar downed line caused Sabo to be closed near Fuqua, adding to the significant traffic issues.

While less problematic than the wind, the

South Belt area also received substantial rainfall, with the gauge at the Beamer Ditch at Hughes Road recording 1 inch of rainfall in just 15 minutes, according to county officials.

Tornado touches down in South Belt community



A tornado touched down in the community Jan. 24, causing extensive damage. An overturned car is shown above on the eastbound Beltway 8 frontage road lanes at Blackhawk Boulevard.

Photo by Griz Gomez Molina



Strong winds toppled a vehicle on Kirkhall Drive in the Kirkwood subdivision during strong storms Tuesday. At press time, there were no known fatalities. See more photos on Page 2.

Photo by James Saint James

Proposed developments cause concern

Multiple developers are once again applying to the state for approval to construct subsidized apartment complexes in the South Belt community.

There are currently nine proposed complexes to be considered for government credit. See related map on this page.

The nine complexes would all be located within approximately 3 miles of each other, if approved. See related map on this page.

The topic of government-subsidized housing has long been a controversial one in the South Belt community.

A primary concern is the high concentration of existing low-income apartment complexes already in the area. There are currently at least 10 government-subsidized apartment complexes between Almeda Mall and Dixie Farm Road.

Low-income developments traditionally put an extra strain on local fire departments and

law enforcement agencies. According to officials from the Clear Brook City Municipal Utility District, the local Highland Meadow Village apartment complex has roughly five times more annual calls for police and ambulance service than single-family residences in the community.

A second traditional concern involves the added burden to area schools. If approved, students living in the proposed complexes would all attend Dobie High School, which is already overcrowded. Despite being recently constructed, the school currently has multiple portable buildings on campus, as it is overcapacity.

Three of the nine proposed apartment complexes would cater exclusively to seniors. Such developments traditionally attract less opposition from critics.

While both the *Leader* and the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce have expressed opposition to any additional subsidized family

developments in the area, they have each voiced their support for the proposed 55+ Laurel at Blackhawk development, which would be located on Blackhawk between Almeda Genoa and Fuqua.

According to *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger, the groups back the proposal because the seniors-only complex won't put an added strain on local schools like its family counterparts and

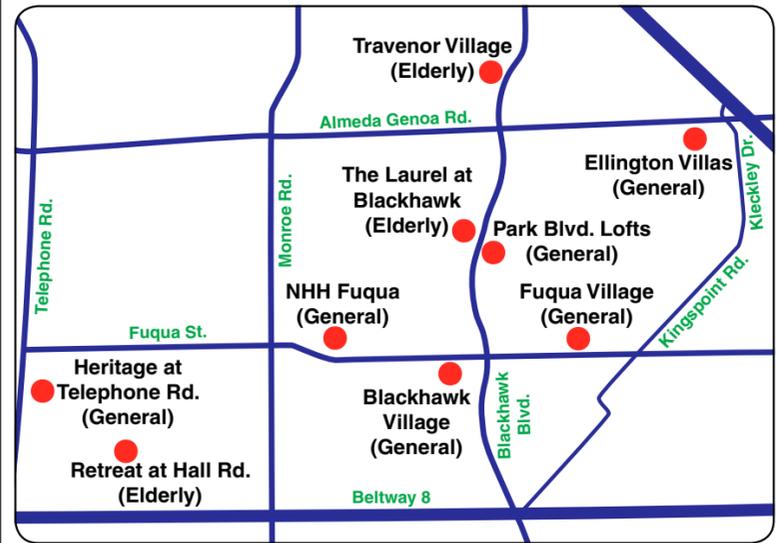
because such facilities are needed in the aging South Belt community.

In past years, the *Leader* has been supportive of multiple other 55+ developments in the South Belt community, including Southdown Trace Trail located near Beltway 8 and Conklin.

To move forward with the latest proposals, developers must first gain the community's support.

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Low-income complexes proposed



Developers have proposed nine new subsidized apartment complexes in the South Belt area, concerning some who feel there already too many such existing developments in the community. The yellow pins on the above map indicate where the proposed complexes would be located if approved by local officials. There are currently at least 10 such developments already located in the South Belt community.

HPD: violent crime down in 2022

Incidents down 9 percent compared to 2021

Violent crime in the city of Houston dropped in 2022, according to Houston Police Chief Troy Finner.

Based on preliminary crime data from 2022, the police chief recently presented a detailed crime summary report to Houston City Council, highlighting reductions in violent crime across all council districts.

According to Finner, the violent crime rate decreased by 9 percent compared to 2021.

The police chief attributed the decrease in violent crime to the hard work of Houston Police Department officers, Mayor Sylvester Turner's One Safe Houston initiative and the support of the Houston City Council and local citizens.

Preliminary data shows decreases in three other violent crime categories; with robberies down

by 9 percent, aggravated assaults down by 8 percent and rapes down by 18 percent.

Safety and security of our city is paramount. In 2022, for the fifth consecutive year, HPD officers and investigators arrested more than 21,000 individuals charged with felony offenses, totaling more than 105,000 arrests.

The city experienced an increase in property crimes in 2022. Thefts of catalytic converters by an organized crime ring and thefts of firearms not properly secured in vehicles, drove up the reported auto theft crimes by 11 percent.

To address the thefts, HPD leadership, officers, and support staff prioritized the education of Houstonians and utilized its partnerships and targeted surveillance in communities across the city to proactively prevent property crime.

Leader remembers 2022 highlights

The *Leader* continues its look back on 2022 with a list of some of the significant stories of the year. For highlights up to March 24, see the Jan. 19 edition of the *Leader*.

March 24

A man was fatally shot outside an apartment complex about 2:20 a.m. Wednesday, March 16, in the 1200 block of Redford near Edgebrook and the Gulf Freeway. According to Houston Police Department officials, patrol officers responded to a shooting at the above address and found the victim, Rufus Banks, lying on a sidewalk unresponsive suffering from a gunshot wound. Houston Fire Department paramedics arrived and pronounced Banks dead at the scene. At press time, there was no known suspect(s) or motive. No immediate arrests were made.

March 31

At its March 29 meeting, the Pasadena ISD board of trustees approved Demond Stafford as Dobie High School's new varsity football head coach. He became the 11th head football coach in the high school's 54-year history. Stafford replaced Kevin Berneathy, who now serves as head coach at La Porte High School. Under Berneathy's leadership, Dobie made the playoffs

four consecutive years from 2018 to 2021. Most recently, Stafford was head coach at Sam Rayburn, where he had served since 2019. He previously served as an assistant coach at Dobie.

April 7

During a special called board meeting on Feb. 15, the Pasadena ISD board of trustees unanimously called for a \$305 million bond referendum for the May 7 ballot. If approved, the proposed bond package will include major safety, security and technology upgrades. The bond was to be divided into three ballot propositions (Proposition A, Proposition B and Proposition C) that residents will have the opportunity to vote on individually. Proposition A (\$281,269,000) would replace four aging elementary campuses (Bailey, Jessup, Parks and Williams, all of which were constructed more than 60 years ago); Proposition B (\$14,921,000) would address technology upgrades; and Proposition C (\$8,810,000) would address athletics needs.

April 14

Three senior staffers for Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo were indicted Monday, April 11, on charges that they helped steer a controversial

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Area goes month with no COVID deaths

Marks 1st time since initial 2020 deaths

This past week, the South Belt community passed a milestone in its COVID-19 recovery efforts, as it marked the first time the immediate area went an entire month without any deaths attributed to the disease since the first local deaths were reported in early August 2020.

According to Harris County health officials, ZIP code 77089 had 137 COVID-related deaths as of Tuesday, Dec. 20. Approximately one month later on Thursday, Jan. 19, that figure was still being reported by the county.

Similarly, Harris County Health reported 81 COVID-related deaths in ZIP code 77075 on both Dec. 20 and Jan. 19.

ZIP code 77034 reported 90 COVID-related deaths on both Dec. 20 and Jan. 19, according to Harris County health officials.

By comparison, during the same time period the previous year, each of the three ZIP codes in the immediate South Belt community was reporting at least one COVID-related death per

week, totaling at least 15 deaths for the entire month.

At press time, there had been 11,466 COVID-related deaths countywide.

Both the infection rate and death rate of the disease have consistently dropped since the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine in the spring of 2021.

The trend of no new local COVID-related deaths has continued into its second month, with no new casualties now being reported again this week.

See related sidebar entry.

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.

Tornado, storm hits South Belt; no fatalities

See more photos in next week's Leader. Photos by Marie Flickinger, David Flickinger, Natalie Abarca, Kelvin Lopez and Patty Spence.



A tornado snapped a tree Tuesday on Kirkhall in the Kirkwood subdivision.



Strong winds caused significant damage Jan. 24 along Kirkhall near Sabo.



The Parker at Ellington apartments on Fuqua suffered wind damage.



A tornado leveled a steel building Tuesday, Jan. 24, on Genoa Red Bluff near SH 3/Old Galveston Road.



AMC Gulf Pointe 30 at Beltway 8 and Interstate 45 served as an emergency staging area.



A downed power line and an overturned truck closed the Gulf Freeway southbound lanes at Fuqua for several hours.



One of at least 80 vehicles damaged at Beverly Hills Intermediate is shown above.



Strong winds caused significant damage to a residence on Kirkhall in the Kirkwood subdivision.

Housing proposal

Continued from Page 1
 port, before moving up the ladder to City Council, then the state Legislature. The developments, however, do not specifically require Council approval, as state tax-credit awards are based on a varied point system. In the spring, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs will hold public hearings in various locations around the state or virtually to gather input on Competitive Housing Tax Credit applications. The hearing schedule

along with contact information for written public comment will be published on TDHCA's Public Comment Center of its website later in the spring. An interested party or neighborhood organization can provide comments on any and all applications at each hearing, or can provide written comments to the department by email at HTCPC@tdhca.state.tx.us or by mail at the following address:
 Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Public Comment – Multi-family Finance Division
 P O Box 13941
 Austin, Texas 78711-3941
 Residents should note that in order for input on Competitive Housing Tax Credit applications to be included in the materials relating to presentation for awards to be provided to the Governing Board of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, it must be received by the department by 5 p.m., local Austin time, June 1.

Local library events set

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

Bracewell Branch Library

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.

Parker Williams Library

Parker Williams Library is located at 10851 Scarsdale Blvd. Visit the website at <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library> or call 832-927-7870. The book drop is open. No late fees will be charged during the library closure. Social media links are Facebook.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary and Instagram.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary.

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 – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 – 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Closed Sundays. Visit <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library>.

South Belt-Ellington Leader

The Voice of Community-Minded People

11555 Beamer 281-481-5656

E-mail: mynews@southbeltleader.com

Davy & Marie Flickinger, owners

Deaths

Patricia Jean (McQueary) Hungate



Patricia Jean (McQueary) Hungate, 85, passed away peacefully on Jan. 15, 2023, at home, with family by her side. She was born on March 16, 1937, in Chicago, Ill to Thomas P. McQueary and Evelyn M. (Barnes) McQueary.

Patricia graduated from Reavis High School in Chicago. She married her high school sweetheart, Thomas Edwin Hungate, on Jan. 8, 1955, and they would have celebrated 68 years of marriage this year. Patricia was a devoted wife, loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and faithful friend. While she loved spending time with family the most, over the years she was involved in many hobbies and activities. She loved to bowl and was a league bowler in Florida and Houston.

Patricia and her husband were both sports enthusiasts, from local Dobie High Schools sports teams to their beloved Oilers (now the Texans) and Astros. She liked volunteering for many of her kids' various school activities such as her roles as Westbury and Dobie HS Bands' treasurer for many years. She volunteered for years at a clothing and household goods ministry, SEAM (Southeast Area Ministries).

Patricia and her husband loved attending her kids' and grandkids' performances, concerts, sporting events and recitals. She sang in the choir at St. Thomas More parish. Patricia loved doing crossword puzzles and solved them in pen – she was just that good. She loved watching game shows and, of course, got all the answers correct most of the time. One of her favorite pastimes was playing bingo. Patricia was a fan of her soap operas and was elated to attend a meet and greet with her General Hospital favorites. While raising her Hungate eight she had lots of opportunities to cook many meals for them that they loved and asked continually for her to make. Although there are way too many to name, just a few that her family mentioned were her yummy tuna noodle casserole, boiled peanuts and chicken and dumplings. And, of course, don't forget the deserts she made each year for birthdays and holidays.

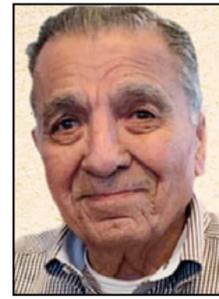
In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her beloved husband; her sister, Elaine (McQueary) Baczynski (husband Edward Baczynski); brother, Thomas McQueary (wife Sandy McQueary); son-in-law Robert E Towery; grandson, Jeremy Towery; and granddaughter, Jessica Mae Shirley.

She is survived by two sons and six daughters, Dawn (David) Eagan, Pamela (Marvin) Towery-Belt, Cheryl (James) Best, Lori (Bill) Carey, Nannette (Steve) Boehme, Thomas (Angela) Hungate, Teresa (Gary) Withrow, and Chris

Hungate; 18 grandchildren, Jennifer Eagan, Sarah (Chris) Eagan Baecke, Jeffrey Eagan, Jeriod (Carole) Towery, Leahanne (Michael) Alexander, Teresa N. Towery, Jacob Best, Rachel (Gabe Rivera) Carey, William Carey, Brianna (Dallas) Jacobson, Bailey Hungate, Mark (Brittany) Brown, Kristina (Chevosky Arnsworth) Carpenter, Matthew Withrow, Caleb Withrow, Liam (fiance' Caraline Winkel) Hungate, Olivia Hungate, and Maxfield Hungate; nine great-grandchildren, Steven Loyde, Kiera Maldonado, Adrian Arregoyte, Chevre Arnsworth, Chevosky Arnsworth, Tyler Withrow, Emmeline Alexander, Finnegan Alexander and Abigail Baecke; two siblings, sister Geri (Bill) Hambley and brother Michael (Susan) McQueary and extended family, friends, and neighbors.

A drop-in service of remembrance and celebration will be held Sunday, Jan. 29, from 1 to 4 p.m. (eulogy at 2 p.m.) at Walter Hall Park Banquet Hall, 807 SH 3, League City, TX 77573.

Joe Henry Moreno



Retired USMC Sgt. Maj. Joe Henry Moreno passed away peacefully into the presence of his Savior Jan. 18, 2023. Moreno was born Sept. 4, 1935, in Beeville, Texas to Myrtle and Joe Moreno. Joe retired from the U.S. Marine Corps with 41 years and 11 months of service. He was a 3rd Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, Council No. 3700, Pasadena. Joe loved to fish and hunt and spend time with his children and grandchildren.

Joe is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Ramona Trevino Moreno; son, Joe Frank Moreno and wife Tami Moreno of Pearland; daughter Karen Bailey and husband David Bailey of La Grange; daughter, Jan Muras and husband David Muras of La Grange; son, Raymond Moreno and wife Lorrie Moreno of Pearland; 10 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Joe is preceded in death by his parents, his sisters Hilda Lerma and Sylvia Brandon; and his brother Arturo "Ate" Moreno.

Funeral Mass services will be held Thursday, Jan. 26 at St. Luke the Evangelist, 11011 Hall Road, beginning with a Rosary to be recited at 10:15 a.m., a funeral Mass at 11 a.m. and a reception following. Funeral services are Friday, Jan. 27 will be at 11 a.m. at Trevino Funeral Home, 401 W. Springer St, Beeville, followed by interment at San Pedro Cemetery, Clarendon, TX 78102.

Pallbearers will be David Muras, Mason Muras, David Bailey, Homer Bailey, Cory Moreno and Phillip Adamcik. Honorary pallbearers will be Milton Dittrich and James Muecke.

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.

New Covenant Christian Church Day Care Christian Based Child Care



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



A tornado caused extensive damage at The Parker at Ellington apartments on Fuqua near SH 3.



Storm debris is shown above strewn along Fuqua near SH 3/Old Galveston Road.

Lunar New Year celebrated at Moore Elementary



Shown here are Moore Elementary students and teachers celebrating the Lunar New Year with a parade. Above, left to right, are (first row) Sandra Rodriguez (paraprofessional), Sofia Tahay, Autumn Silva, (second row) Makayla Marr, Sophia Nguyen, Darwin Nguyen, Jessica Tran, Noah Nguyen, Memphis Alvarez, Miriam Portillo, Kenny Huynh, (third row) Olivia Flores, Mikaela Portillo, Oliver Theriot, Christina Le-Tran (ESL teacher), (fourth row) Lyann Tran, Jaqueline Pham, Emma Nguyen, Emilie Zamora, Han Tran, Calvin Tran, Damian Hudson, Simon Nguyen, (fifth row) Justin Nguyen, Joshua Menaham, Zainab Mairaj, Tracy Tran, Sophia Mai, Dharma Figueroa, (sixth row) Noah Canales, Sylvia Theriot (ESL teacher), Priscilla Nguyen (ESL paraprofessional), Ava Ahmad and Robert Reyna.



Above are Noah Nguyen (left) and Jessica Tran, celebrating the Lunar New Year.



Shown with Nguyen are, left to right, ESL teacher Christina Le-Tran and paraprofessional Sandra Rodriguez.

Gala to support CCISD teachers

The Clear Creek Education Foundation (CCEF) is excited to announce its first Regency gala: A Royal Affair, Saturday, Feb. 4 at South Shore Harbour Conference Center to help raise money for Clear Creek ISD teachers by funding their innovative classroom grants. Everyone is invited to attend.

The evening's festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a three-course meal, live music with the Black Cat Choir Band, dancing, a Golden Raffle, a whiskey tasting and a live auction.

The CCEF Regency Gala: A Royal Affair is support-

ed by - Diamond sponsors Chemical Process and Production Inc. and Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins, Mott LLP; Queen's Court sponsors - Moody Bank, Texas First Bank and The Woodhouse Spa; Duke of Hastings sponsors - AMOCO Federal Credit Union, Bob Martin and National Signs; and Promenade sponsors - Michael and Kathy Reeves, Brian and Heidi Reigel, Bay Oaks Country Club, Lion Aviation, LLC, Waldron and Schneider, PLLC and Preferred Climate Solutions.

"What the Clear Creek Education Foundation does in our community is personal to me having been both an alumnus of Clear Lake High School and having my own children attend CCISD. The Foundation raises money to

help our schools make innovative changes in our classroom that might not otherwise occur. It is my absolute pleasure to assist with community events that help fund these projects like our upcoming gala. This will truly be the event of the season," said Chris Rylant, gala chairperson.

Tickets and tables are still available to purchase. Tickets are \$150 per person and tables (seat 8) are \$1200. All are invited to attend to dance the night away. In addition, a block of rooms are available

for this event at South Shore Harbour Resort. For more information on the gala, visit <https://www.clearcreekeducationfoundation.org/regency-gala-a-royal-affair>.

Since its founding in 1992, CCEF has been a non-profit dedicated to building public education in CCISD through grants and programs that empower every student to achieve academic and personal success. CCEF has contributed over \$5 million to CCISD for innovative programs in the classroom.

Beverly Hills Intermediate celebrates honor roll students

Beverly Hills Intermediate officials recently announced their honor roll students for the third six-weeks period of the 2022-2023 school year.

Seventh-grade
Yaslin Acosta, Arie Adams, Lilah Aguayo, Daniel Alvarez, Giovannie Alvear, Chloe Anderson, Andrea Arredondo, Gimenna Arredondo, Amiyah Barnes, Angelica Barragan, Zadi Batbarbee, Darryl Campbell, Javanni Capuchino and Mario Cardona.

Elizabeth Hernandez, Luna Hernandez, Mia Hernandez, Natalia Hernandez, Ineke Hicks, Lizbeth Hinojosa, Angela Huynh, Carden Huynh, Cruz Jasso, Karmen Jasso, Nhu Le, Alexander Limachi, Katherine Luviano, Ashley Ly, Emmerly Lynn and Karely Maldonado.
Diego Marban, Alexis Martinez, Cayson Martinez, Gamez Isaias Martinez, Hammad Matin, Kyndall McClain, Matthew Mellott, Janenish Muniz, Angel Mylles, Cathy Nguyen, Johnny

Franks, Issabella Gaitan, Isabella Garcia, Miguel Garcia, Ethan Guerrero, Damian Gutierrez and Yindiana Ayala Hernandez.
Lucas Nguyen, Steven Nguyen, Kendrick Norman, Avery Payne, Susan Plata Garcia, Martin Peng, Luis Perez, Toryn Provost, Harsh Rana, Bree Rennert, Rubi Reyes, Reyna Rivera, Je'Licia Rivet, Alyssa Rodriguez and Joseph Rodriguez.
Dayra Rojas, Kailani Rudd, Davien Sanni-Thomas, Emiliano Servin, Bella Sherwood, Destiny Sidiropoulos, Natalie Soto, Sanaa Stephens, Kolby Stubblefield, Shelby Talavera and Genesis Tamez.
Dawson Tran, Kahlan Tran, Kathleen Tran, Tammy Tran, Yen Tran, Gabriel Tre-

vino, Olivia Trevino, Omar Vega, Jose Villanueva, Julian Wagner Gonzales, Ethyn Ybarra and Candi Zuniga.
Eighth-grade
Marianne Aiello, Victor Alanis, Carlos Albarran, Katherine Alvarez, Brooke Anderson, Sunisa Anderson, Roy Azinge, Gissell Barba, Arianna Bermudez, Quamaine Bernard, Charles Bruno, Jeffrey Cano Rodriguez, Nicholas Cantu and Gabrielle Castilleja.
Lucas Cena, Ashlyn Coleman, Melanie Colindres, Jordyn Cooper, John Dang, Gabriel Darby, Angel Davis, Tahj Davis, Arcos De, Sadie Dias, Jonathan Diaz, Elizabeth Dinh, Devin Duong,

Ailey Espinoza, Makayla Flowers, Roberto Gomez and Marcos Gonzalez.
Angelina Guajardo, Celay Guerrero, Cleveland Hill, Hannah Hua, Emma Jacob, Joshua Jamaica, Monica Jasso, Ka'mauri Johnson, Ashia Jones, Ariana Kainer, Huy Le and Vu Le.
Thong Luong, McKenzie Mandani, Serina Martinez, Pretty Mccoy, Emma Mendola, Jillian Mikulski, McKenzie Milburn, Nadia Mondragon and Ashley Moreno.
Sophia Moya, Charleston Nash, Duy Nguyen, Kelvin Nguyen, Linh Nguyen, Mark Nguyen, Minh Nguyen, Vincent Nguyen, Jeremih O'neal, Estefani Orellana

Ramirez, Joseph Oviedo, Luciano Padilla, Kaitlyn Pecina, Vincent Pham, Andrew Posey, Emely Quijano and Amelie Ramirez.
Mia Ramirez, Cecilia Reyna, Adelyn Rincon, Tatiana Rodriguez, Cherish Rogers, Daniel Salamanca, Jacob Solis, Jonathan Solis, Samyria Spriggs, Nehemiah Stepney, Cecilia Suarez, Jennifer Tan, Aiden Tellez and Taylor Thomas.
Marlee Tillman, Tiffani Tillman, Ximena Torres-zuniga, Daniel Tran, Kaylie Tran, Alex Truong, Tuyet Truong, Thomas Turrubiar, Ruben Vasquez, Tina Vo, Novyanna Von Dran and Christopher Wickliff.

Meador Mustangs double as scientists, advance to district



Congratulations are in order for the five Meador Elementary students pictured here for being the campus science fair finalists. They will take their winning projects and represent Meador at the district science fair. Above, fourth-grader Samuel Nfor holds his award in front of his project titled, "Can U Taste It." While family members assisted with his experiments, Nfor used food coloring in a controlled liquid to test if color would affect the taste of something in this curious project.



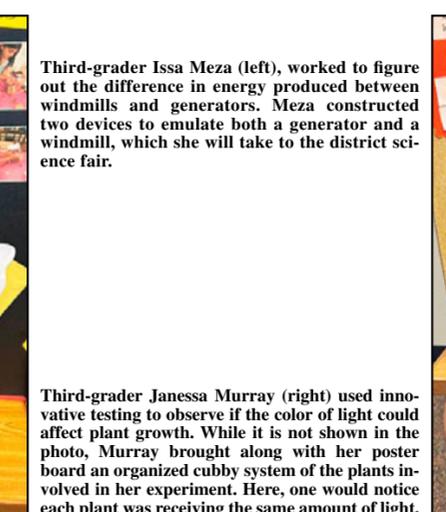
Third-grader Alana Rivas-Lopez tested the effects of pollution on the world's oceans in this insightful engineering project. Using a variety of materials Rivas-Lopez sought to understand how different liquids, as well as heat, affect the oceans that protect the earth.



Valkyrie Dennis, third-grader, took a medical approach with her project, having some of her family members assist her in experimenting to determine the differing effects various cardio activities have on the human heart.



Third-grader Issa Meza (left), worked to figure out the difference in energy produced between windmills and generators. Meza constructed two devices to emulate both a generator and a windmill, which she will take to the district science fair.



Third-grader Janessa Murray (right) used innovative testing to observe if the color of light could affect plant growth. While it is not shown in the photo, Murray brought along with her poster board an organized cubby system of the plants involved in her experiment. Here, one would notice each plant was receiving the same amount of light, the only difference being its color.



Third-grader Issa Meza (left), worked to figure out the difference in energy produced between windmills and generators. Meza constructed two devices to emulate both a generator and a windmill, which she will take to the district science fair.

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South Belt-Ellington Leader looking back at 2022 highlights

Continued from Page 1
 COVID-19 outreach contract to a small company with Democratic ties. Alex Triantaphyllis, Hidalgo's former deputy chief of staff who now serves as chief of staff; Wallis Nader, the judge's deputy policy director; and Aaron Dunn, a former top adviser who had recently stepped down, each face one count of misuse of official information and one count of tampering with a government record — all felony charges. The controversy surrounds an \$11 million vaccine-outreach contract that was awarded this past June to a company called Elevate Strategies. The one-woman firm Elevate Strategies beat out other entities for the bid such as UT Health, even though its bid was \$4 million higher, and the company scored lower on key evaluation criteria. The three indicted individuals all sat on the five-person committee tasked with selecting the contractor. A month prior to charges, Texas Rangers raided the offices of the three indicted staffers, seizing their phones, laptops and desktops.

April 21
 A man was fatally shot around 4:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 13, at an apartment complex in the 1300 block of Redford near the Gulf Freeway and Edgebrook. Robert Clark was pronounced dead at the scene. According to Houston Police Department officials, patrol officers responded to a shooting at the above address and found the victim lying on a sidewalk unresponsive suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. No immediate arrests were made.

April 21
 Dobbie High School chemistry teacher Selene Verhofsstad won the 2022 Shell Urban Science Educator Development award. This national science award has been given to only seven teachers in the nation over the past eight years. This award provides support to diverse educators in pursuit of professional development with active participation at the National Science Teaching Association's National Conference on Science Education and serves to increase the science educator talent pool of minority educators to meet the education workforce challenge of the future. The award consists of \$1,800 to be used to partic-

ipate in NSTA virtual conference offerings. Recipients will be invited to attend a variety of workshops and presentations that are of particular interest to urban teachers at the annual National Conference. Verhofsstad has been a science teacher at the area school for eight years, five of which have spent teaching chemistry. The esteemed educator is also a part of Pasadena ISD's Early College High School program.

April 28
 The Walgreens located in the 10800 block of Scarsdale at Beamer was robbed at gunpoint around 11:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21. According to officials with Precinct 2 constable's office, two young black males entered the store, displayed handguns and forced an employee toward the office and demanded he open the store's safe. The suspects fled the store with approximately \$5,000. No one was injured during the robbery. No immediate arrests were made.

The 10th annual Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place Thursday, April 28, at the Pasadena Convention Center. In honor of the event's 10th anniversary, 10 recipients were inducted. Inductees included Charlie Goehring — Track and Cross Country Coach (1971-2007); TJ Mills (deceased) — Football Coach (1977-2005); Wilburn Raby — Track Coach (1952-1980); Steve Prentice — Swimmer, South Houston (Class of 1970); Bryan Willingham — Football, Pasadena (Class of 1971); Ron Schroeder — Golf, Sam Rayburn (Class of 1975); Marlen Esparza — Boxing, Pasadena (Class of 2007); Bo Snelson — Football, Pasadena Memorial (Class of 2009); Snelson Family, including Billie (deceased), and her two sons John and Andy Snelson; and Dobbie Girls Softball Team, 1993 State Champions.

May 5
 Precinct 8 District Patrol deputies assisted with a multiagency narcotics investigation that resulted in the seizure of 603 pounds of marijuana, 1 kilo of cocaine, 2.65 pounds of methamphetamine and 1.4 pounds of heroin. Several weapons were also seized. This case was conducted over a 24-hour period that involved deputies from

three different shifts. For the eighth consecutive year, students from Dobbie High School have qualified for the state UIL Speech and Debate competition. Qualifying students included Jordan Leahmah, 10th grade; Yarezi Martinez, ninth grade; Valeria Arellondo, 10th grade; Malia Curry, 12th grade; Lexi Martinez, 12th grade; and Jocelyn Floyd, 11th grade.

May 12
 The results from the May 7 elections have been tallied, with voters deciding on multiple state and local contests. Locally, voters handily approved all three proposals of the \$305 million Pasadena ISD bond referendum. In the Clear Creek ISD election, Misty Dawson narrowly defeated Jessica Cejka in the race for District 1 trustee, beating her by just one vote. In the contest for Clear Creek ISD At-Large Position B trustee, incumbent Scott Bowen will maintain his seat, defeating challengers Kyrsten Garcia and Carl Nunn. In the Sagemeadow MUD election, incumbent Ted Heinrich was defeated by write-in candidate Seth Webb. Incumbents Edward "Figg" Figueroa and Dean Baier maintained their seats on the Sagemeadow MUD board.

A plane was forced to crash land in a field near Dobbie9 Friday, May 6. The airplane was to fly to San Antonio when it experienced problems taking off from Hobby and was forced to land. The plane crashed into the fence of a nearby residence before coming to a stop. While the crash coincided with the school's dismissal time, no one was injured, including the plane's four passengers. The accident knocked out power to surrounding residences for several hours.

A Houston police officer was shot during a drug operation Wednesday, May 4, at a gas station in the 14300 block of the Gulf Freeway at Astoria. Officer J. Sallee was transported by private vehicle and carried by eight of his colleagues into Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital in stable condition. The suspect, Jimmy Bryan, 23, was also shot during the incident. He was also transported to the hospital in stable condition.

Two drivers were killed in a head-on collision around 1:50 a.m. Wednesday, May 4, in the 9600 block of SH 3/Old Galveston Road near Fuqua. According to Houston Police Department officials, the driver of a red Toyota Tacoma pickup truck, 38, was traveling south near the above address and failed to stay in a single lane. The Toyota then veered into oncoming traffic and struck a silver Nissan Versa traveling northwest on Old Galveston Road. Both drivers were pronounced dead at the scene.

May 19
 Axiom Space broke ground on a new state-of-the-art headquarters at Ellington Airport, home of the future Houston Spaceport. There, Axiom Space — which is developing Axiom Station, the world's first commercial space station — will construct a campus containing employee offices, astronaut training and mission control facilities. The station will also contain engineering development, testing labs and a high bay production facility to house Axiom's space station modules under construction.

Weber Elementary volunteer Melissa Page was named Clear Creek ISD's Volunteer of the Year for the school district's entire elementary level. Page has volunteered at the area school for eight years and supports the teachers and Weber community by leading various events and donation drives and teacher appreciation activities.

May 26
 The results from the May 24 primary runoff elections were tabulated, with few surprises. In the race to decide who will be the Democratic nominee for House District 147, Jolanda Jones edged out opponent Danielle Keys Bess. Jones went on to face Republican Damian Jones in the November general election. In the race to decide the Republican nominee for Harris County Judge, Alexandra Mealer handily defeated opponent Vidal Martinez. Mealer went on to face County Judge Lina Hidalgo in the November general election. In the race to decide the Republican nominee for Harris County Precinct commissioner, former Precinct 2 Commissioner Jack Morman was victorious over opponent

Jerry Mouton. In the November general election, Morman faced Democratic incumbent Adrian Garcia.

A contract construction worker was killed around 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 18, in the 10400 block of Fuqua near Beamer. According to police, the victim, was placing safety cones around his trailer to block an east-bound lane at the above address when the driver of a Honda Odyssey van changed lanes to avoid the closure and struck the man. Witnesses told police the worker was possibly frightened by the vehicle and jumped into the roadway. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver was not injured.

Charges were filed against a suspect arrested in the fatal

shooting of a male that took place around 6:05 p.m. Saturday, May 14, in the 9200 block of Kingsflower Circle near Blackhawk and Beltway 8. Carlos Albert Garcia-Velasquez, 28, is charged with murder in the 228th State District Court. Jose Ramirez was pronounced dead at the scene. According to Houston Police Department officials, officers responded to a shooting at the above address and found the male victim inside his vehicle, parked in the driveway of the residence. He had sustained multiple gunshot wounds. Garcia-Velasquez was at the location when police arrived, and he was subsequently detained at the scene. Further investigation

identified Garcia-Velasquez as a suspect in this case, and the Harris County District Attorney's Office accepted charges on him for his role in the shooting.

June 2
 Dobbie High School named its 2022 Teacher of the Year and New Teacher of the Year. Coach Shane Brown was named Teacher of the Year, while Coach Hector Saldivar was named New Teacher of the Year.

Clear Brook High School was placed on lockdown Wednesday, May 25, after a scare involving a gun. According to Clear Creek ISD officials, the incident began when alert Brook students reported a social media post of a student holding a gun. While the photo was not taken on school grounds, law enforcement officers still viewed the post as a possible threat and removed the student in question from class to be searched. During the search, police discovered an unloaded gun and immediately placed the campus on lockdown. The lockdown was lifted once law enforcement deemed the campuses safe.

June 9
 Atkinson teacher Ambika Adimoolah was selected Pasadena ISD's 2022 New Elementary Teacher of the Year. Williams Elementary teacher Jessica Garza was named the district's Elementary Teacher of the Year, while South Houston High School teacher Tim Laza was named the district's Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Houston firefighters responded to an apartment fire around 1:30 a.m. May 27 in the 9900 block of Windmill Lakes Boulevard. According to Houston Fire Department officials, firefighters arrived on scene to find and extinguish a small fire that was confined to one bedroom. The fire caused approximate-

ly \$7,000 in damage. No injuries were reported.

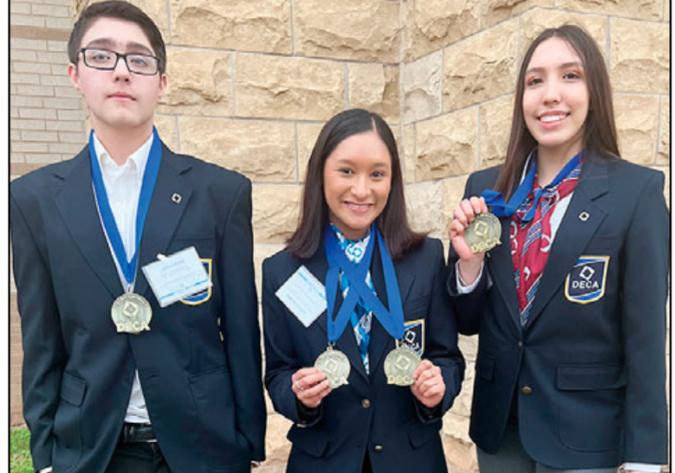
June 16
 A fatal crash that took place around 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 8, in the 13900 block of Beamer near Dixie Farm Road. According to Houston Police Department officials, Donna Davis, 58, was driving a red Kia Soul northbound at the above address when she had a medical episode, lost control of the vehicle, drove over the grassy median and into southbound lanes of traffic. The Kia then struck a blue Chevrolet Trailblazer traveling south on Beamer. Paramedics transported Davis to nearby Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. A passenger in the Kia and the driver of the Chevrolet were transported to the hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. Davis was discovered to have suffered a heart attack prior to the crash.

Murder charges have been filed against a suspect accused of fatally shooting a man the previous January at an apartment complex in the 1200 block of Redford near Edgebrook and the Gulf Freeway. Eddrel Antonio Brown, 28, is charged with murder in the 230th State District Court. He is accused in the Jan. 28 killing of Lee Jessica Garza was named the district's Elementary Teacher of the Year, while South Houston High School teacher Tim Laza was named the district's Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Houston firefighters responded to an apartment fire around 1:30 a.m. May 27 in the 9900 block of Windmill Lakes Boulevard. According to Houston Fire Department officials, firefighters arrived on scene to find and extinguish a small fire that was confined to one bedroom. The fire caused approximate-

To be continued in next week's *Leader*.

Dobbie DECA advances to state



Shown above, left to right, is Dobbie sophomore Jared Toro with juniors Gizelle Flores and Daniela Garza. Junior Ashley Jimenez is not pictured. The four Dobbie High School DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) students recently earned honors at the District Career Development Conference, which has qualified them to compete at the State Career Development Conference in Dallas March 9-11. Toro competed in financial consulting; Flores and Ashley Jimenez competed in project management community giving; and Garza competed in professional selling. The DECA advisers are Jeff McKnight and Amber Allan.

Math to be celebrated at Genoa

Mathematics will turn festive, so claims Genoa Elementary faculty. From Jan. 30 through Feb. 3 students and teachers will celebrate Math Spirit Week, and they invite all PISD students to spend each day celebrating characteristics of being a mathematician.

On Monday, Jan. 30 the theme is Students are Problem Solvers and Mathletes, so they will wear sports or athletic gear with numbers.

Tuesday, Jan. 31 students "shape" their minds by engaging in productive struggles, and will wear geometric shapes.

Wednesday, Feb. 1, students can dress like a math superhero to display their positive disposition and math superpowers.

Thursday, Feb. 2, students will commemorate the one hundredth day of school by wearing a representation of the number 100.

Friday, Feb. 3 to show that everyone is a mathematician, students will wear an example of math in real life.

Next week's issue of the *Leader* will include photos from Math Spirit Week.

Remember When

45 years ago (1978)
 Edward O'Brien, David Koetter and Larry Ehrlich were all awarded as outstanding players at the varsity football banquet.

The Pasadena Independent School District board of trustees approved the school calendar, scheduling of presentations of diplomas and summer school for the school year of 1978 and 1979.

40 years ago (1983)
 A crack down on drugs in Pasadena district schools resulted in the search of approximately 100 students at Pasadena High School.

Members of the United Sports Association were asked to approve baseball fields on Choate Road. Included in the improvements were lighting for four fields and a two-story concession stand.

35 years ago (1988)
 A Columbian citizen residing in the Kirkmont subdivision was charged with possession of an illegal substance after Drug Enforcement Agency investigators found two kilograms of cocaine at his home.

Speculation that Dr. E.T. Lon Luty had a short future as Pasadena Independent School District superintendent had become intense amidst his evaluation by the district's board of trustees. One year later, Luty accepted the position of superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District in Fresno, Calif.

30 years ago (1993)
 A decision by the Clear Creek Independent School District board of trustees left in question the issue of where Weber students would be schooled for the 1993-1994 school year.

Sagemeadow resident John Elam stepped down from his position on the Pasadena Independent School District school board after serving for nine nonconsecutive years.

25 years ago (1998)
 J.A. Babb, a 1982 Dobbie graduate, published his first book, titled *Letters for Your Children: A Wake-Up Call for Par-*

ents. A fifth-grade boy from Burnett Elementary was diagnosed with viral meningitis.

20 years ago (2003)
 An outside review of Pasadena Independent School District's updated growth study by American Metro Study indicated that 10,000 new homes or apartment units would be built in the western part of the district before 2006.

Aaron Gary Day, 21, of Sabo Village Apartments, was shot to death in a road rage incident in the 8100 block of the Gulf Freeway.

15 years ago (2008)
 The loose pit bull that threatened residents and deputies on Kirkbrush earlier in the month was euthanized. The owner of the dog turned it in to Harris County Animal Control within the allotted five days of being served papers, avoiding a court hearing. According to Detective Rick

Holloman of the Harris County Precinct 2 Constable's Office, the individual responsible for filing the necessary paperwork to have the dog declared dangerous, the canine's owner was unable to comply with the strict county regulations associated with keeping the animal.

The first phase to construct a new station for the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department was approved at the Clear Brook City Municipal Utility District meeting. To be located on Scarsdale adjacent to the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce, the station would replace the un-manned two-bay building found on the San Jacinto College grounds.

James Burkart was named the new pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church. Most recently, Burkart served as pastor at St. Katherine Drexel in Hempstead, where he had been since

2001 when the church was erected.

Greg Smith officially took over the helm as superintendent of the Clear Creek Independent School District. Most recently, he served as superintendent of the Alvin Independent School District, where he had been for six years. Smith replaced outgoing superintendent Sandra Mossman.

Former Sugar Land mayor and 22nd Congressional District hopeful Dean Hrbacek was found to have mailed out campaign brochures that included a doctored photo of himself, making the candidate appear thinner than he truly was. In the photo, Hrbacek's head was placed on someone else's suited body. The Patriot Group, Hrbacek's campaign consultants out of Austin, claimed responsibility for the gaffe. Hrbacek's campaign manager, Scott Brotschart, said the candidate had been so busy meeting

voters in the district that he had no time to take a genuine photo for the political mailing.

10 years ago (2013)
 The Jan. 26 special election to fill the state Senate District 6 seat formerly held by the late Mario Gallegos headed to a runoff between former Harris County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia and state Rep. Carol Alvarado. Garcia received roughly 45.4 percent of the ballots cast, while Alvarado received about 41.6 percent. Republican R.W. Bray, who lost to the deceased Gallegos in November's general election, received about 6.2 percent. Also running for the District 6 seat were Democrats Joaquin Martinez and Susan Delgado, Republican Dorothy Olmos, Independent Rodolfo "Rudy" Reyes and Green Party candidate Maria Selva.

5 years ago (2018)
 An elderly man was fatally shot in the parking

lot of H-E-B in the 9800 block of Blackhawk at Beltway 8 the afternoon of Saturday, Jan. 20. According to police, the incident took place around 1:05 p.m. The victim, That Huu Le, 75, had reportedly been followed by two male suspects to the store from a nearby Wells Fargo Bank, where he had made a cash withdrawal. As Le was exiting his vehicle, one of the suspects approached him, and an altercation ensued. During the dispute, the suspect fired multiple shots at Le. The suspects then fled the scene in a vehicle later recovered by investigators. Le was transported to Clear Lake Regional Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The cash withdrawal was reportedly still in Le's pocket when he was discovered. He left behind a wife of more than 50 years, five children and five grandchildren.

1 year ago (2022)
 Longtime Harris Coun-

ty Precinct 2, Place 2 Justice of the Peace George Risner officially launched his 2022 campaign to unseat Adrian Garcia as Harris County Precinct 2 commissioner. On the bench for roughly 35 years, Risner said his experience on the bench made him the best candidate to address the county's growing criminal justice problem. Although a Democrat himself, Risner said he felt compelled to run after seeing firsthand how the court system is failing under the current Democratic leadership. Risner's campaign was ultimately unsuccessful.

Gov. Greg Abbott announced \$10 million in trust fund grants associated with the Houston Spaceport at Ellington Airport. Of the \$10 million in grants, \$5 million will go to the Houston Spaceport Development Corporation, while the remaining \$5 million will go to the Cameron County Spaceport Development Corporation.

Over The Back Fence by Natalie

LAILA CELEBRATES A BIRTHDAY
 Best wishes for a happy birthday are sent Jan. 27 to **Dr. Laila Hassan** from her family, friends, office staff and the *Leader* staff.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DAVID!
 Happy birthday greetings are sent to **Davy Flickinger**, *Leader* president, on Jan. 27. David is wished a great day by his wife **Ellie**; daughter **Natalie** and husband **Jose Abarca**; grandchildren **Kelvin Lopez**, **Noah**, **Eliana** and **Isabella Abarca**; parents **Marie** and **David Flickinger**; brother **Fred** and wife **Leslie Flickinger**; niece **Kimberly** and **Matt Lipino**; niece **Courtney** and husband **Chris Durham** and children **Abigail**, **Jackson** and **Penelope**; and the staff at the *Leader*.

SCHOOL DAZE
 The following staff and personnel of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Jan. 26 through Feb. 1.

Frazier Elementary
 Jan. 26 is the day for a double-layer birthday cake for **Ashley Jones** and **Janielle Wiley**.

Genoa Elementary
 Sing a happy birthday song to **Francisca Tarango** Jan. 29.

Webster. Rubi Rocha enjoys a birthday Jan. 24. Special birthday wishes are sent to **Constance Peel** on Jan. 27. The day for cake and ice cream for **Lety Gonzalez** is Jan. 29. Break out the balloons and party favors Jan. 31 for **Kourtney Roopwa**. Join in the birthday fun Feb. 1 with **Kateri Angel-Williams**.

South Belt Elementary
 Give a birthday shoutout Jan. 26 to **Samantha Rhodes**. Break out the party favors and balloons Jan. 28 for **Kayla Elmore**. Join in the birthday fun Jan. 30 with **Lauren Hughes**.

Melillo Middle School
Kelly Schwenk celebrates a birthday on Jan. 27. Send a special birthday greeting Jan. 30 to **Evangeline Joyce**. Sing a happy birthday song to **Kelly Jurek** Jan. 31.

Beverly Hills Intermediate
Jacqueline Resendez celebrates a birthday Jan. 26.

Friends Celebrate Birthdays
 Thursday, Jan. 26: **Gene Webster** and **Craig Green**; Friday, Jan. 27: **Cheryl Arnesen**, **Nicole Crader**, **Raquel Jones**, **Derek Cooley**, **Donald Gillock Sr.** and **Solomon Ard**; Saturday, Jan. 28: **Daryn Edwards**, **Toni O'Bryan**, **Chris Valvaneda**, **Nealda Whitely**, **Lewis Cambiaso**, **Edgar Ramirez** and **Jennifer Hernandez**; Sunday, Jan. 29: **Stephanie Martinez-Hinton**, **Yvonne Moffitt**, **Margarito Rivera**, **Debra Dorn**, **Lauretta Massicott** and **Holly Conrad**; Monday, Jan. 30: **Bill Heaven**, **Karen Price**, **Kimberly Istre**, **Kristen Mata**, **Christine Cline** and **Amy Reichelderfer**; Tuesday, Jan. 31: **Maria Olvera**, **Erica Bush**, **Veronica Tanguma-Mejia**, **Ernie Banks**, **Josh Keim**, **Angeles Rios**, **Maria Zuniga** and **Craig Thompson**; Wednesday, Feb. 1: **Danice Oliver** and **Lee Terry**.

LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS
 Send an email of announcements including congratulations, vacation, anniversary, etc. to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line by Friday noon for the next week's publication. For general birthdays, type "OTBF: Friends Celebrate Birthdays" in the subject line.

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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Manrique's bunch wins two more matches, goes 9-0-1 through nondistrict soccer play

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

Poised with a near-perfect 9-0-1 record entering District 22-6A play at Deer Park Jan. 24 after press time, it's easy to see the Dobie varsity boys' soccer team as the clear-cut championship front-runner with the 12-match league slate now taking center stage.

Head coach Justo Manrique has already guided his program to a Region III best eight consecutive district championships, yet each quest must start anew and each match win by match win. To this point, the Longhorns look the part.

Manrique pointed out that the unbeaten nondistrict run is the program's first in a decade.

With 22-6A nemesis Deer Park no doubt paying close attention, Dobie downed Bellaire 4-1 Jan. 19 and then blanked Alief Taylor 2-0 a day later to win its first two matches of the Deer-hosted Battleground Invitational.

A Jan. 21 planned match between Dobie and Beaumont West Brook was canceled due to weather.

In the 4-1 win over Bellaire Jan. 19 at Abshire Stadium in Deer Park, Alex Escobar and Jordi Garcia found the net twice each, with Juan Lopez and Victor Hernandez assisting twice each.

The 2-0 win over Alief Taylor saw Andres Hernandez and Victor Hernandez score goals, with Daniel Blanco dishing the assists.

The Longhorns will host Pasadena Jan. 27 at 5:30 p.m. and then take on Pasadena Memorial Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m., with both matches at Pasadena ISD's Veterans Stadium.

The bar has obviously been set high within the program given the Longhorns' eight straight league crowns. The 2017 run brought a Region III championship and state semifinal appearance.

Still, it's hard to imagine many within or outside

the program expecting a 9-0-1 nondistrict stretch over three weeks to start the 2023 campaign. Dobie went 3-0-1 at the season-opening Pearl and Pasadena Cup to seize top honors at that event.

A week later, the Longhorns were one of 28 programs to compete in the Austin Lakes Elite Showcase, emerging as one of just three with an unblemished 3-0-0 record.

Then came the two wins at the Battleground Invitational.

Victor Hernandez has led the way in goals scored with 11 through Jan. 20, but the Longhorns have received a wealth of scoring punch, with 11 different players combining to score 34 goals.

Meanwhile, 13 different players have handed out 24 total assists.

Continued on Page 6

Dobie vs. Pasadena
Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m.
Veterans Stadium

Dobie vs. Memorial
Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m.
Veterans Stadium

At right, Dobie junior midfielder Daniel Saravia (6) has dealt a pair of assists this season as one of 13 different players who have set up goals during the Longhorns' impressive 9-0-1 start.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf



Pioneer swimmers earn state berths

Lauren Ferguson will lead the Lutheran South Academy program back to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division II State Swimming Championships Feb. 7 in San Antonio.

Ferguson is hunting for state gold this season after finishing third for bronze medals in both the 200 free and 500 free events a season ago.

Last week at the TAPPS District 3 Regional Championships in Houston, Ferguson won the 200 free and was second in the 500 free, setting the stage for her performance at state.

Tristan Haver and Elliott Miles, big contributors to the Lutheran South boys' state championship run a season ago, will also return to the state meet in as many as four events.

In the relays, the Pioneer boys punched their state ticket in both the 400 free and 200 medley events.

regional silvers in pocket. The same four competitors joined their talents in the 200 medley relay for third place and a state invitation.

Miles will also return to state in the 200 individual medley and 100 breast events after grabbing third in both events at regionals.

At state a season ago Miles was fourth in the 200 IM and fifth in the 100 breast.

Haver, a state qualifier in two individual events last season, will be one of the favorites for gold in the 100 free after winning the regional crown this time around.

Second at regionals last week in the 200 free, Haver will also aim at a state medal.

As for Beckum, he was fourth in the 100 back at regionals and ninth in the 50 free. Ordaz was 13th in the 100 breast and 17th in the 50 free, while Sam Hergengrader placed 14th in the 100 free and 19th in the 50 free.

Capping the LSA girls' effort at regionals, Ferguson was also part of the Pioneers' 200 free relay

Continued on Page 8

District basketball title races tighten

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

High school basketball programs across the state are in win-now mode as most district playoff pushes have narrowed down to a few precious nights.

In the varsity girls' races out of districts 22-6A and 24-6A, as few as four games remained at press time.

In the 22-6A girls' race, undefeated Deer Park (7-0) owns a pair of wins over Dobie and will almost assuredly win the league championship as well as the coveted top playoff seed.

Deer Park, which has put together a 23-3 overall record to this point, has scored 51-40 and 34-31 wins over Dobie while

remaining unbeaten in league play.

Dobie, meanwhile, will see its two-season grip on the league championship come to a close but can still ensure the No. 2 seed with a second victory over Memorial, with the two programs slated to go head-to-head Jan. 25 after press time.

Over in the District 24-6A varsity girls' race, the Clear Brook Wolverines are bidding for back-to-back undefeated championships, with the program now having won 20 consecutive league games since the start of the 2021-2022 season.

The District 22-6A varsity boys' race may boil down to a rematch between South Houston and

Deer Park for the top spot, with the Trojans owning a first-round win over the Deer.

Pasadena owns the most overall wins among the seven programs league-wide but currently sits in fifth place.

South Houston and Deer Park are both 5-1 through the first half of district action, with Memorial at 4-2 heading into a Jan. 25 game with Dobie.

Dobie lost first-round games to Deer Park, Memorial and South Houston but then defeated the Eagles to grab the tiebreaker edge for the No. 4 playoff seed.

Down the stretch, the Longhorns would benefit greatly by beating a team

in front of them.

Dobie will not repeat as district champion but can still make the postseason with a strong second-half run.

With six games to play, wins are as critical as ever for all teams.

CB boys stay close
Will the Clear Brook boys' squad see its playoff fortunes boil down to a head-to-head matchup Feb. 4 against Clear Springs at home?

Actually, it's probably a position the Wolverines wouldn't be disappointed to see.

At 3-3 at the end of the first half of league play, the Wolverines were

Continued on Page 6



Logan Sariga (20) and his Clear Brook varsity boys' basketball teammates are looking to win their way into playoff position while the Dickinson Gators, with Tyler Thomas (32) and Harrison Karse (14) chipping in, are holding down first place in the District 24-6A standings with five games for most of the field.

Photo by Andy Tolbert

San Jacinto College softball team debuts at McLennan tournament

A new program mascot to go with new color concepts on the uniforms and equipment bags.

Sure seems like a great time to hit the field with a vastly new roster of players, which is exactly what

the San Jacinto College Ravens' softball program will do as the 2023 regular season opens with the locals heading to the Jan. 27-28 McLennan Classic in Waco.

Counting San Jacinto

and McLennan, two national tournament contenders from a season ago, the tournament will also feature several prominent programs on a national level.

"We are definitely going to see where we stand in a hurry," said San Jacinto College head coach Kelly Saenz.

"When you consider Grayson, Chipola, Butler and elite programs like that, you know the competition is going to be tough. It's going to feel like being at a mininational tournament right out of the gate."

Any other year, San Jacinto would welcome the early competition. Truth is, the Ravens welcome all challengers.

But with as few as three regulars back from a season ago, this group will almost certainly face a few

Continued on Page 6

San Jac off to McLennan

Jan. 27: vs. Grayson, 2 p.m.;
vs. Odessa, 7 p.m.
Jan. 28: vs. Butler, 9 a.m.;
vs. Chipola, 11:30 a.m.

Dobie softball program sets Jan. 28 scrimmages

Dobie hosts Victoria West
Jan. 28, 9:45 a.m.

Dobie hosts Ridge Point
Jan. 28, 3:45 p.m.

At right, Dobie senior Marisa Perla (11) will do double duty in 2023 as she is expected to join senior teammate Sandra Quiroz to form a solid duo in the circle. Perla is also one of the Longhorns' top-producing offensive players as she looks to deliver in the middle of the lineup. Scrimmages begin Jan. 28 on Dobie's main campus and the regular season starts Feb. 13 as the Longhorns host Clear Brook at the Pasadena ISD Complex. Perla will look to build upon a junior season that saw her hit .520 with 41 runs scored, 53 hits and three triples, all team highs among returning players. Catcher Bella Perez, a McNeese State University signee, is back for her senior season after hitting .440 with 26 runs batted in during the 2022 season, while Angelina College commit Quiroz hit .333 with 19 runs batted in as a junior. Perla and Quiroz also combined to earn 20 of the 2022 squad's 22 overall wins in the circle, with 13 coming from Perla. As for Perla, she has announced via Twitter that she will play at Texas Southern University. Photo by Donna Alsdorf



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Dickson sixth in 200 at TTU



Clear Brook High School graduate and current Texas A&M University sprinter Camryn Dickson captured sixth place in the 200-meter dash as the Aggies competed in the Texas Tech Red Raider Invitational indoor track and field meet at the Sports Performance Center in Lubbock. Dickson was also 16th overall in the 60-meters at the completion of the preliminary heats.

Area varsity basketball programs continue to push for postseason

Brook girls host Clear Creek
Jan. 28, 1 p.m.

Brook boys at Clear Creek
Jan. 28, 1 p.m.

Dobie boys at Channelview
Jan. 28, 1 p.m.

Dobie boys host Rayburn
Feb. 1, 7 p.m.

Brook girls at Clear Springs
Feb. 4, 1 p.m.

Brook boys host Clear Springs
Feb. 4, 1 p.m.

Dobie girls host Channelview
Jan. 28, 1 p.m.

Dobie girls host Pas. Memorial
Feb. 1, 7 p.m.



Off to a 9-0-1 start through nondistrict play, the Dobie varsity boys' soccer team has shown true roster depth from across the board through three weeks. Jordi Garcia (10) is second on the team with six goals. Also in on the play is midfielder Daniel Saravia (6).

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

JFD boys' soccer unbeaten

Continued from Page 5
Manrique is thrilled that his group entered district play with an undefeated record, however unlikely it may have seemed weeks ago.

In the offseason, Manrique received word that Ronaldo Guzman, the 2022 District 22-6A Offensive Most Valuable Player, would miss the majority of his final season after suffering a knee ligament injury during club play.

As it stands, Guzman is a late-season return candidate. Victor Hernandez also dealt with preseason knee issues, and there have been plenty of aches and pains teamwide.

The primary concern of course is the health of the players, but along with the injuries came multiple schematic changes on the field.

Through it all, the Longhorns have hung together.

Dobie has a history of dominating the Pasadena/Pearland Cup and did so again to open this season as the locals opened at 3-0-1. A tie, 2-2 against Goose Creek Memorial, remains the Longhorns' nonwin.

In week two, Dobie was one of three unbeaten squads at the Austin Lakes Elite Showcase.

"The kids have stuck to the plan, and we are get-

ting contributions from a lot of different guys," Manrique said.

"We have had some guys come off the bench and give us a lift, and just have a lot of different guys chipping in."

"Dobie is always going to get everybody's best effort in the district race, but I do think we have established ourselves as a team to beat in the race."

"Every night, you have to be ready to play. We have had injuries and other internal team issues like everyone else, but for the most part have given ourselves a chance in every game. As a coach, that is really all you can ask of your players."

SJC softball opens Jan. 27

Continued from Page 5
early-season bumps in the road.

San Jacinto College will eventually rely greatly on 2022 Region 14 Pitcher of the Year Christin Haygood, who went 18-5 with a 1.50 earned run average while leading the way along the program's second consecutive national tournament appearance.

Haygood, a sophomore from Huffman, Texas, will get early-season work, but Saenz said the focus is to have the right-hander rested and ready to go when the games matter the most. On the offensive side of things, Emily Garcia of

Dickinson and Tabby Bailey of Deer Park are easily the most college-tested talents so quite a few players will be getting their first big chances to contribute.

Aside from Haygood, Saenz listed Reanna Nieman as another top option along with Hannah Benavides.

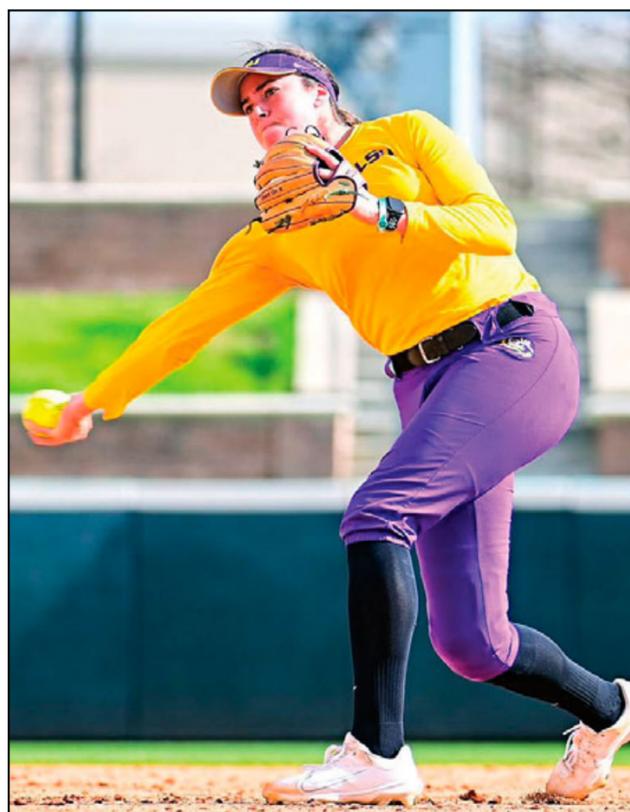
Lineup wise, the Ravens figure to have as many as five players vying for regular playing time in the outfield including Leslie Longoria, who was a four-year varsity starter at Dobie and is now in her sophomore season with San Jacinto College.

Days prior to the start of the regular season, Saenz and her staff were still making decisions within the infield, particularly at shortstop and second base.

"We have some questions, but we know players will step up and do the job. The general rule for us is that if you hit, you're going to play."

"Overall, we feel good about the group. You're not going to have a team with plenty of playing time every year, but we know that some of these ladies are going to step up when they have the chance. Our expectations remain high."

LSU's Pleasants draws national attention



Heading into the 2023 season at Louisiana State University, Tigers' star Taylor Pleasants is drawing attention as one of the nation's top performers. Pleasants, a Dobie graduate, ranks No. 41 on Extra Inning Softball's list and No. 53 by D1Softball. Pleasants, a 2021 All-American and two-time All-SEC honoree, concluded the 2022 campaign with a .295 average and led the team with 28 extra-base hits, including 15 doubles, 12 home runs and one triple. She was also second on the team with 48 RBIs. Pleasants currently ranks No. 3 all-time in the program's record book with a .610 slugging percentage and is tied with teammate Ciara Briggs at No. 10 all-time with a .425 on-base percentage. LSU opens its 2023 season Feb. 10, hosting the LSU Invitational in Baton Rouge.

Playoff races down to a few precious games as hoops' teams battle to advance

Continued from Page 5
rather thoroughly handled by Dickinson and Clear Falls, while Clear Lake won its straight up match-up with Brook by nine points.

The District 24-6A varsity boys' ranks do not currently hold any state-ranked teams, but Dickinson, Clear Falls and Clear Lake and Clear Falls all have at least 17 total wins.

Defending District 24-6A champion Dickinson held down first place at 5-1 halfway through the race, with Clear Lake, Clear Falls and Clear Springs all 4-2.

The Wolverines continue to lean on their veterans as they make a postseason push. At 3-3 entering the second half of league play, the locals need a big win or two.

At 16.4 points per game, Broderick Jackson Jr. leads the Wolverines in scoring, while fellow senior Ja'Michael Young is

at 14.8 points per game. Raymond Felton is at nine points per game, while Tristan Lisbony has scored eight points per outing.

Brook girls title hunt
With a playoff berth already secured along with a second consecutive 20-plus win season, the Clear Brook varsity girls' team

still has plenty for which to play. Heading into a Jan. 24 game against Clear Lake, the Lady Wolverines, 20-8 overall and 8-0 in league play, still had work to do in order to finish off what could potentially be a second straight unbeaten run.

A season ago, Clear Brook reached 30 total wins and went 12-0 in the District 24-6A action to win its first Class 6A district title.

Sophomore Rezia Castillo, the 24-6A Most Valuable Player a season ago, has again delivered in a big way as one of three second-year standouts for

the Wolverines. Kamryn McLaurin is averaging 12 points per game to lead the team, while Castillo is a smidge under 12 per game. Char-del Terrell averages more than 10 points per game.

Brook and Dickinson have been the class of the league, making the regular season finale at Clear Brook early next month a huge game.

Each of the four races involving 22-6A and 24-6A teams seem headed for a photo finish where the playoffs are concerned.

The Brook and Dobie squads are focused on reaching the postseason tournament.



Clear Brook's Tristan Lisbony (2) looks for a driving lane earlier this season against Pasadena. With half of the District 24-6A race remaining at press time, the Wolverines stood at 3-3, tied for fourth place.

Photo by Andy Tolbert



Jacque Giron (11) of Dobie rips down a rebound against Pasadena Jan. 20 win with teammate Valerie Okinloye (34) guarding the lane. With five games to

go in the regular season at press time Jan. 24, the Longhorns were looking to hold on to the second seed in District 22-6A.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf



Dobie's Aubree Myers (20) drives to the rim during the Longhorns' easy win over Pasadena. Dobie is aiming to hold on to the No. 2 playoff seed down the stretch.

Photo by Donna Alsdorf

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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26
7 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill," at Revive Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 713-686-6300 visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/
7:30 a.m. **Rotary Club of Pearland** - Meets either at Pearland Chamber of Commerce, 6117 Broadway St., Pearland, or on Zoom. See Pearland Chamber of Commerce website calendar or call 281-485-3634.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners Group, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27
7 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
7 p.m. **Congregation Shaar Hashalom** - All services are live and Zoom online. Visit https://www.shaarhashalom.org.
7 p.m. **NA** - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 FM 518, Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). Call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or https://nastuff.com/
8 p.m. **Serenity Now Al-Anon Group** - meets at CrossRoads UMC Fridays, 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Family members and friends of problem drinkers/addicts share and discover choices available. Call 281-484-9243.
8 p.m. **AA** - meets at CrossRoads UMC, 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Call 281-484-9243.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
12-2 p.m. **Food Drive** - New Covenant Christian Church hosts food drive at 10603 Blackhawk Blvd., Houston. Call 281-484-4230.
6:30 p.m. **Bay Area Genealogical**

Society meeting will be held at University Baptist Church, 16106 Middlebrook Drive, Houston Speaker: Fred Roe - History of New York and potluck luncheon. Visit info@txbayareagen.org.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29
8 a.m./ 10:15 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - worship at 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). Call 281-479-7285.
2 p.m. **Grief Support Group** - For adults who have lost a loved one. Meets at 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena. Call 713-944-9186.
5:30 p.m. **Celebrate Recovery** - A faith-based 12-Step program, in the Life Kids Chapel at Life Church, 9900 Alameda Genoa. Call 713-419-2635.
8 p.m. **AA** - meeting at CrossRoads UMC, 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Call 281-484-9243.

MONDAY, JANUARY 30
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon 713-472-0565 for appointment.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday's notice.
1:30 - 3 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Dance** - at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E. League City Parkway, Dance lessons offered. Call 281-554-1180.
6 p.m. **Scrabble Club #511** - Meets Monday at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Join in the fun and improve crossword skills. COVID-19 vaccination required. Call 281-488-2923.
7 p.m. **AA** - St. Luke's Group, 12 Step Recovery, open meeting in the Education Bldg. in room 4, 11011 Hall Rd. Call 832-

725-8479 or 281-309-2801.
7 p.m. **TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)** - Friendswood chapter meets at the Friendswood Methodist Church, 110 N Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. Call 832-858-4617 or 713-875-8820.
7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31
7 a.m. **AA Meeting** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. **Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum** - See Monday's notice.
9 a.m. **American Begonia Society** - Houston Satellite meets at Helen Hall Library, 300 W. Walker, League City. Call 281-481-2458.
11:30 a.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday's notice.
7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1
7 a.m. **AA** - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9:30 a.m. **Carmelites** - a nondenominational senior citizen social group meeting at St. Bernadette Catholic Church, 15500 El Camino Real, Clear Lake. Call 713-444-6744.
9:30 a.m. **Young at Heart Senior Club** - Meets at Covenant United Methodist Church, 7900 Fuqua. Lots of activities, trips, etc. Call 832-298-9480
Noon **AA** - Imperfect Nooners. See Thursday's notice.
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. **Hometown Heroes Humpday Dance** - See Monday's notice.
7 p.m. **St. Paul's Anglican Church** - See Sunday's notice.
7 p.m. **NA** - See Friday's notice.
8 p.m. **AA** - See Friday's notice.

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As 2023 season nears, Julks earns spring training invite with Astros

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

Spring training 2023 for the Houston Astros just got much more exciting for Corey Julks.

Coming off one of the most impressive power-induced seasons across minor league baseball in 2022, Julks last week was one of 19 players the world champion Astros named as non-roster invitees to spring training in Florida.

Julks led the Class AAA Sugar Land Space Cowboys in several offensive categories in 2022, becoming just one of only two minor leaguers to hit at least 30 home runs (31

and steal at least 20 (22) bases.

Taking organizational encouragement to heart, Julks made some adjustments at the plate aimed at increasing his overall power and run production, and it paid off.

Julks, who made 49 starts at third base and 61 in all at corner outfield spots, hit .270 across 590 plate appearances, scoring 100 runs and driving in another 89.

Along with the 31 long balls, 21 doubles and four triples, Julks slugged .523 for the season.

Listed as one of the Astros' Top 30 minor league prospects throughout

much of the 2022 season, Julks, who turns 27 next month on Feb. 27, certainly caused some heads to turn within the Astros' decision makers, but the plan remains the same as the 2023 campaign approaches.

"Of course, the dream is to play major league baseball for the Houston Astros, my hometown team, and to have my family and friends be able to come to the games and see me play," Julks said just days prior to learning of his spring training invitation.

"No matter what happens within the organization, I know there are still

things I can improve on, aspects of my game that I can put in work and improve. I was really happy with my increased ability to drive the ball with power to all fields last season, and I can still be more consistent.

"I stole 22 bases last season, but looking to be more aggressive in certain situations is something I'm focusing on.

"Plate discipline is something every player is always looking to improve, so there are plenty of things within my control that I can work on."

Chosen by the Astros in the eighth round of the 2017 MLB First-Year

Player Draft just months before the Astros won their first World Series crown that October, Julks is proud to be part of what is widely considered one of the game's top organization's in terms of player development.

The Astros do not possess the total number of top minor league prospects to be rated among MLB's best, yet players who ultimately make their way to Houston via their system more times than not pay big dividends upon arrival. Perhaps the day of Julks' arrival is close.

Then again, the vacancy sign at the big league level doesn't burn bright. While

the Astros over six seasons have played in four World Series and won two, the depth chart at the positions Julks plays hasn't seen a ton of turnover.

For 2023, Kyle Tucker is a Gold Glove right fielder, Alex Bregman is a two-time world champion at third base and left field is likely to be shared by Yordan Alvarez and Michael Brantley.

Julks played shortstop during his high school career at Clear Brook and shifted to the outfield at the University of Houston.

Over 542 career minor league games, Julks has shown flashes of both consistency and the versatility of having what it takes to play in the big leagues. It's all a matter of opportunity.

"It's a privilege to be able to play baseball for

a living, and if the plan is for me to be back in Sugar Land this season, then I'll be the best teammate and representative of the Astros' organization that I

can be. "As a player, all you can do is prepare yourself as best as possible and be ready when the opportunities come. I'll be ready."



Playing the entire 2022 season at AAA Sugar Land afforded Corey Julks (center) and his family including Daren Julks, his father (left) and Darren's wife, Tracy, the chance to connect after Space Cowboys' games.

Julks' 2022 at AAA Sugar Land

At bats: 523

Hits: 141

Batting Average: .270

Home Runs: 31

Runs Batted In: 89

Stolen Bases: 22

Doubles: 21

Triples: 4

Slugging Percentage: .523

Julks' Career Since 2017 Debut

At bats: 1,809

Hits: 479

Batting Average: .265

Home Runs: 60

Runs Batted In: 235

Stolen Bases: 86

Doubles: 102

Triples: 13

Slugging Percentage: .435



Corey Julks, a Clear Brook graduate, has been summoned to the Houston Astros spring training workouts as a nonroster invitee for 2023 largely on the strength of an impressive run of things at AAA Sugar Land a season ago that included 31 home runs, 100 runs scored and 89 runs batted in over 130 total games.

Baseball Scrimmage Action Upcoming

Clear Brook schedule — Feb. 4 Shadow Creek scrim., 11 a.m.; Feb. 6 at La Porte scrim., 4 p.m.; Feb. 10 at Pas. Mem. scrim., 3:30 p.m.; Feb. 14 at Santa Fe scrim., 4 p.m.; Feb. 17 at Dobie scrim., 3:30 p.m.

Dobie schedule — Feb. 4 Alvin scrim., 11 a.m.; Feb. 6 Angleton scrim., 4 p.m.; Feb. 10 at Bay. Sterling. scrim., 4 p.m.; Feb. 14 La Porte scrim., 4 p.m.; Feb. 17 Clear Brook scrim., 3:30 p.m.

Pasadena ISD Intermediate Track and Field

Feb. 14 Beverly Hills and Thompson 7th/8th at Dobie 4:30 p.m. San Jacinto and Bondy 7th/8th at Pas. Mem. Jackson and Queens 7th/8th at Pasadena Park View and Southmore 7th/8th at Rayburn Miller and South Houston 7th/8th at S. Houston

Feb. 22 Beverly Hills, Thompson, Bondy, Miller 4:30 p.m. and South Houston boys/girls at Auxiliary

Feb. 23 Queens, Park View, San Jacinto, Jackson 4:30 p.m. and Southmore boys/girls at Auxiliary

March 1 Bondy, Park View, Beverly Hills, San Jacinto 4:30 p.m. and Southmore boys/girls at Auxiliary

March 2 Queens, Jackson, Miller, Thompson 4:30 p.m. and South Houston boys/girls at Auxiliary

March 6 District Championships at Auxiliary, 4:30 p.m.
March 8 District Championships at Auxiliary, 4:30 p.m.

Dobie graduate Christmas-Kelly discusses joining Indiana Fever as assistant coach

The Jan. 19 issue of the *Leader* detailed Karima Christmas-Kelly's hiring as an assistant coach with the Indiana Fever of the WNBA.

Christmas-Kelly, a 2007 Dobie High School graduate, played parts of 10 seasons in the WNBA, including the 2012-2014 seasons with the Fever. Indiana won the 2012 WNBA crown with Christmas-Kelly playing a key reserve role after coming in a mid-season trade with Tulsa.

A four-year varsity girls' basketball letterwinner at Dobie who helped the Longhorns to the state tournament in 2004, Christmas-Kelly was twice an All-ACC selection while at Duke and was originally a second-round draft choice of the Washington Mystics in 2011.

Christmas-Kelly is both a member of the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame and the Dobie High School Hall of Honor.

Earlier this month, the *Leader* connected with Christmas-Kelly for a Q and A following the announcement of her Indiana hire.

Leader: You won a title with the Fever and have tremendous career memories with the franchise. Explain how regarding it feels to have the opportunity to "give back" to the next generation.

Christmas: I can tell you that the world works in mysterious ways. I was trying to figure out what was next and me knowing that I wanted to impact the next generation, but I didn't think it would happen so quickly.

I'm excited for this journey and being able to put a different spin on the league from a coaching perspective.

Leader: How did the coaching opp come about? Had you viewed this is a next step, were ya talked into it? Just how did it all come together?

Christmas: I definitely viewed it as a possible

next step, just wasn't sure if it would be collegiately or in the pros.

But I had great conversations early with the new head coach and now GM (my former head coach) when I was playing in Indy, and just felt right at home.

They value my knowledge for the game and ultimately believe that I can influence the next generation of WNBA players in a positive way.

Leader: Obviously your role will evolve, but what areas of the game/operation will you be focusing on for 2023?

Christmas: I think I will be immersed into it all. Right now we're dealing with free agency and building our roster for the upcoming season. So this has already been an eye-opening experience seeing the other side of the process that it takes to build a team.

As time goes on, scouting and game prep will become another piece of the routine that I will get more and more familiar with.

Leader: This transition must be exciting for you. Explain the excitement about being able to pass on your knowledge of the game. How will it feel to

be called "coach."

Christmas: I think it will take some time once it actually hits me. I'm excited and anxious to get to work and experience a season in that role.

I know I'm surrounded by great people who will help guide me in the best direction to help my team succeed.

Leader: Your husband (Austin Kelly) is a coach, and you two have likely discussed the intricacies of the role. Might this just be the first step to a lengthy career along the baseline?

Christmas: It just might!



Karima Christmas-Kelly played in the WNBA with the Indiana Fever during the 2012 season in which the Fever won a league championship. The Dobie High School graduate has now joined the Fever staff as an assistant coach working alongside first-year head coach Christie Sides. Indiana Fever photo

LSA swimming team headed to state meet

Continued from Page 5 team at regionals that just missed an automatic state qualification by placing fourth. The LSA foursome also included Haleigh Pham, Taryn Bladt and Jojo Miles.

The four competitors also represented Lutheran South in the 200 medley relay, capturing fifth place.

Elsewhere, Pham was eighth in the 100 free and 10th in the 100 breast, and Bladt took 10th in the 100 back and

16th in the 50 free. As for Miles, she was 13th in the 50 free and 16th in the 100 free.

The TAPPS 2022-2023 state meet will be held over three days at the John Davis Natatorium in San Antonio.

After winning the state boys' crown last season the Lutheran South boys were third at regionals this time around.

Ferguson, meanwhile, has gold medals in mind at state.

Lajaunie tennis making plans

The Darren Lajaunie Scholarship Fund Tennis Tournament will celebrate its 12th year with an exciting new format for 2023 that includes three doubles jamboree mixer events as organizers continue to raise funds for youth tennis and graduating senior class educational scholarships.

As the sponsorship efforts start for 2023, various sponsorship levels are available to individuals or businesses at DLTennisScholarships.com, where the "Be A Sponsor" tab may then be selected.

For students applying for the tennis camp and college scholarships on the same site, deadline for submissions is April 7, 2023. The scholarships will be awarded to all honorees in the latter part of April.

Dobie seniors who wish to apply for the college scholarships may do so by visiting the Lajaunie website or by picking up a packet in the school's counseling office.

The deadline for Dobie senior scholarship submissions is April 6, 2023.

The scholarship fund is named in honor of Lajaunie, a Dobie High School graduate and lifelong tennis enthusiast who died in 2011 after a lengthy cancer battle.

Over the years, the fund has provided dozens of youth tennis scholarships and college education scholarships to deserving players.

The three jamboree series events will be held at the Harry Taylor Tennis Center in Pasadena, with as many as 60 players (30 doubles teams) competing during the April 29, Aug. 19 and Dec. 2 events.

Individual players who would like to register without a predetermined playing partner will be paired with another player prior to the start of the first of the three jamborees.

Players/teams will earn points for performance during each jamboree segment, with an emphasis placed on competing in each of the three three-hour Saturday events.

The first segment — April 29 — will include a fun-filled April Fools theme.

Players may register for play at DLTennisScholarships.com.

Participants will be paired with a Dobie player and receive a Buddies Baseball T-shirt while also taking part in two

separate one-hour training sessions, an invitation to all Dobie home games, a meet-and-greet prior to the start of Dobie's season Feb. 20 and an end-of-season team mingling event.

Direct questions via email to jfdiamondclub@gmail.com or visit www.dobiediamondclub.com to register.

Youths offered JFD Buddies Baseball

Area youth baseball players will once again have the chance to take part in the Dobie baseball program's fun-filled Buddies Baseball group for 2023.

Youths ages 5 through 13 may join the program, which partners the youth players with those from the Dobie varsity baseball

program for just \$30. The Dobie Diamond Club is partnering with the Longhorns' baseball program to host the event. Registration deadline is Jan. 28.

Participants will be paired with a Dobie player and receive a Buddies Baseball T-shirt while also taking part in two

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