

Leader seeks submissions

The *Leader* encourages local schools, groups and individuals to continue sending story ideas and photos they'd like to see included in the newspaper. Submissions have declined following the death of *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger in November. Contributions may be submitted to mynews@southbeltleader.com.

Sagemeadow holds election

The Sagemeadow HOA will hold its annual election meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at The Gardens, 12001 Beamer at Hughes. An election for one board member will be held at the event. The deadline for absentee and proxy ballots is Feb. 19. All Sagemeadow homeowners are encouraged to participate in the election. The meeting is open to the public. For additional information, visit www.sagemeadow.org.

City to collect heavy trash

City of Houston residents living in the South Belt community south of Fuqua will have heavy trash pickup Thursday, Feb. 13 (second Thursday of the month). City residents north of Fuqua (and west of the Gulf Freeway) will have heavy trash pickup Friday, Feb. 14 (second Friday of the month). February is for junk waste but tree waste will also be accepted. Pickups may be delayed. For additional information, visit www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste or call 311.

New Covenant feeds needy

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

Coffee with the Constable

Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia will be at Donut Haven, 10802 Hughes, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. each Thursday as part of the weekly Coffee with the Constable series. The next event will be Thursday, Feb. 6, with another event happening the following Thursday, Feb. 13. For more information, call Sagemont Civic Club President Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

Gulf Freeway closures set

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

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

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

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

Beltway closures planned

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

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

HPD's PIP set for Feb. 18

The Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, at the Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, 11800 Astoria in the CES Classroom on the first floor of the main building. Guest speaker to be announced.

Begun in 1983, HPD's PIP involves police and community members working together for safer neighborhoods. PIP meetings typically take place the third Tuesday of each month. For additional information, contact HPD Officer Richard Buitron at 832-395-1776 or Richard.Buitron@HoustonPolice.org.

Kirkwood to meet Feb. 24

The Kirkwood Civic Club's monthly meeting will take place 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24, at the Sagemont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Road near Beltway 8. Meetings are typically held for the last Monday of the month. For additional information, call Kirkwood Civic Club President Ericka McCutcheon at 281-989-9990.

Hughes/Sabo closure set

At least one southbound lane on Hughes/Sabo will be closed continuously at Beltway 8 until further notice. The closure is associated with an ongoing Houston Public Works project to replace a force water main at the intersection.

SJC named a top online school in nation

Area school ranks 42nd on Newsweek's list of country's top-250 online colleges

San Jacinto College has been recognized as one of America's Top Online Colleges for 2025, according to a new study released by *Newsweek*.

Published on *Newsweek's* website and print publications late last year, the ranking placed San Jacinto College 42nd out of 250 institutions nationwide to make the list.

California State University's online program topped the list.

"Online learning continues to expand in the United States as colleges and other education providers seek to attract students who live outside the immediate area and working adults drawn to the flexibility of online classes. Studies suggest online learning has yet to reach its peak and is expected to grow in coming years," said *Newsweek* Editor Nancy Cooper. "For those looking to further their knowledge – from individual non-degree courses for the curious or for

professional development to a full academic degree – online schools offer customized opportunities to people in all stages of life. With so many choices and no physical location to visit, finding the right program can be challenging."

San Jacinto College Chancellor Brenda Hellyer said the honor validates the area college's commitment to its online program.

"This recognition from *Newsweek* validates our ongoing commitment to providing accessible, high-quality online education that meets the needs of our diverse student population," said Hellyer. "Being ranked 42nd among the nation's top online colleges demonstrates that our investment in digital learning technologies and student support services is helping students complete their higher education credential."

The ranking was based on a comprehensive evaluation of online education programs across

the United States. The assessment considered four key pillars: institutional indicators, rating of experience, overall satisfaction and student recommendations.

Rankings were determined through an extensive study involving more than 10,000 individuals who have completed online college degrees in the United States. The evaluation criteria included organization, support, price, reputation, success, recommendation, practical relevance and overall satisfaction with the online learning experience.

Newsweek was assisted by data research firm Statista in calculating the study's findings.

San Jacinto College offers 26 associate degrees and 34 workforce certificates entirely online. Students can earn a degree in areas such as

computer information technology, health care, global logistics, general studies and business. The college's online programs offer students the flexibility to pursue their educational goals while maintaining work and family commitments, according to college officials.

"This prestigious recognition reflects the college's commitment to delivering high-quality online education and meeting the evolving needs of today's students," a statement from San Jacinto College read.

For more information about San Jacinto College's online programs, visit sanjac.edu/online.

For more information on the *Newsweek* study or to see the full list of America's Top Online Schools, visit www.newsweek.com/rankings/americas-top-online-college-2025.

BAHEP holds Quasar banquet



Dozens of community leaders and elected officials recently gathered for the annual Quasar Award Banquet, hosted by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP). Houston District E City Council Member Fred Flickinger (second from right) is shown above at the event with, left to right, Dustin Hodges (Flickinger's chief of staff), BAHEP President Brian Freedman and former BAHEP President and longtime South Belt resident Bob Mitchell. Texas A&M University Chancellor John Sharp was presented the 2025 Quasar Award.

House catches fire in Sycamore Valley

A house caught fire around 5:15 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9, in the 13700 block of Eastbourne Drive in the Sycamore Valley subdivision.

According to Houston Fire Department officials, firefighters arrived on scene to find smoke coming from a one-story house and found fire in the attic.

They controlled the fire and placed plastic over the contents in the rooms to prevent them from being damaged from the water and ceiling that had been pulled down by the crews to extinguish the fire.

Damage from the blaze was estimated at \$15,000. Firefighters were able to save approximately \$190,000.

The American Red Cross was requested to assist the residents. No injuries were reported.

Investigators said the fire was caused by an electrical wire that arced on a structural beam.

In all, 37 personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from stations 93, 70, 71 and 94.

Investigations are ongoing.

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Trucker no longer sought in fatal crash

HPD: Female Lexus driver now accused of causing accident

Houston police are no longer seeking the driver of an 18-wheeler involved in a Jan. 31 crash at Beltway 8 and Hughes/Sabo that killed one and injured several others.

Police had originally accused the driver of causing the multiple-vehicle accident that killed Francisco Medillin, 44, and injured his 9-year-old son.

HPD had even released an enhanced image of the driver's tractor trailer to the media in hopes of identifying the truck driver. Further investigation, however, determined it was actually a female driving a black Lexus RX350 who was responsible for causing the crash.

According to HPD investigators, the Lexus was traveling east on the Beltway 8 frontage road at a high rate of speed when it slammed into the rear of Medillin's silver Chevrolet Cavalier that was stopped at the traffic light at Sabo. The impact caused the Chevrolet to flip over and come to a rest on the sidewalk.

Houston Fire Department paramedics responded to the incident and pronounced Medillin dead at the scene. Medillin's son was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The female driver of the Lexus was transported to an area hospital in critical condition.

The investigation was ongoing at press time.

May 3 candidate filing deadline nears

Pasadena ISD, CCISD, SJC to hold school board elections

The deadline for potential candidates to file to run in an upcoming school board election is 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14.

On Saturday, May 3, area voters will decide who will serve in many Pasadena ISD, Clear Creek ISD and San Jacinto College board positions.

Pasadena ISD

To be decided in Pasadena ISD are the Position 1 seat currently held by Paola Gonzalez, the Position 2 seat currently held by Crystal Davila,

the Position 3 seat currently held by Nelda Sullivan and the Position 4 seat currently held by Casey Phelan.

All incumbents have filed for re-election.

At press time, challengers for Gonzalez's Position 1 seat included Mary Davis and Maria Castillo.

Tammie Nielsen had filed to challenge Crystal Davila for the Position 2 seat.

Fina Govea is challenging Sullivan for her

Continued on Page 2

Longtime resident Joe Bennett dies at 76

Active in youth sports, Bennett also served with Southeast VFD

Longtime South Belt resident and youth sports advocate Joseph "Joe" Bennett died Saturday, Feb. 1, at the age of 76.

Bennett was instrumental in the creation of the South Belt Area Sports Association and served as the organization's president. Bennett further served as president of the South Belt Girls Softball Association. He was responsible for securing the funds and overseeing the construction of the sports complex at El Franco Lee Park, allowing generations of youth to play sports at the facility.

Bennett also worked closely with the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department and served on its board of directors.

In 1967, Bennett graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School, where he met his wife of 54 years, Peggy Quast. The couple had two chil-

dren, son Travis and daughter Mandy.

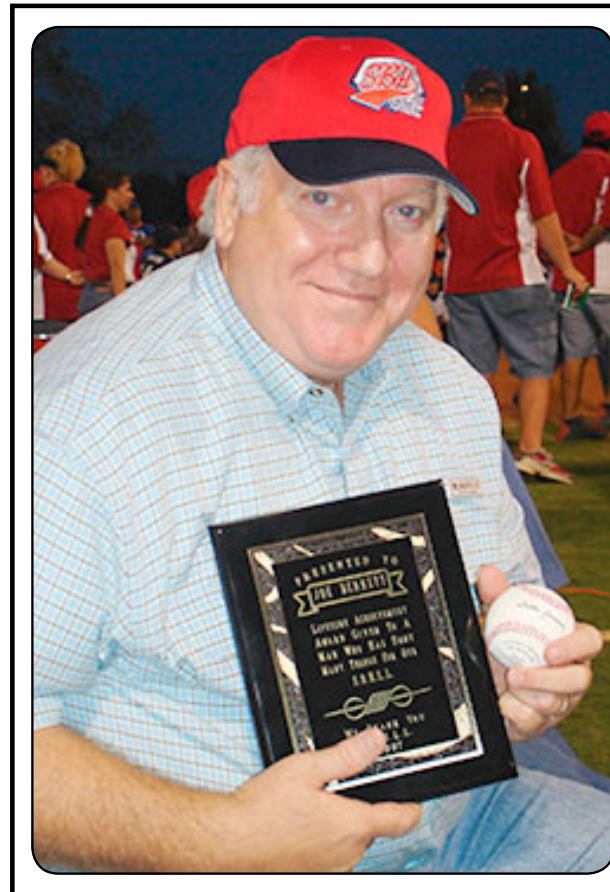
Following graduation, Bennett served in the U.S. Navy, achieving the rank of petty officer second class in Interior Communications.

After his military service, Bennett pursued higher education, enrolling at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, where he earned both an associate degree and a bachelor's degree.

Along with his children and in-laws, Bennett competed in cooking tournaments as part of the Lazy B Cookers, taking home many trophies and winning multiple chili contests.

Bennett and his wife also owned a 70-acre ranch in Hallettsville, where in 2015, Bennett – who worked 30+ years as a general contractor – completed building a house himself.

Memorial plans were not immediately available at press time. See related obituary on Page 2.



Joe Bennett dies at 76

Longtime South Belt resident and youth sports advocate Joseph "Joe" Bennett died Saturday, Feb. 1, at the age of 76. The father of both a son (Travis) and a daughter (Mandy), Bennett was active in both youth baseball and softball in the South Belt community. Bennett was instrumental in founding the South Belt Area Sports Association and served as the group's president. Bennett also served as president of the South Belt Girls Softball Association. Bennett is shown to the left holding a plaque and baseball presented to him by the Sagemont-Beverly Hills Little League for his lifetime achievement.

LEADING EMERGENCY CARE

in Clear Lake

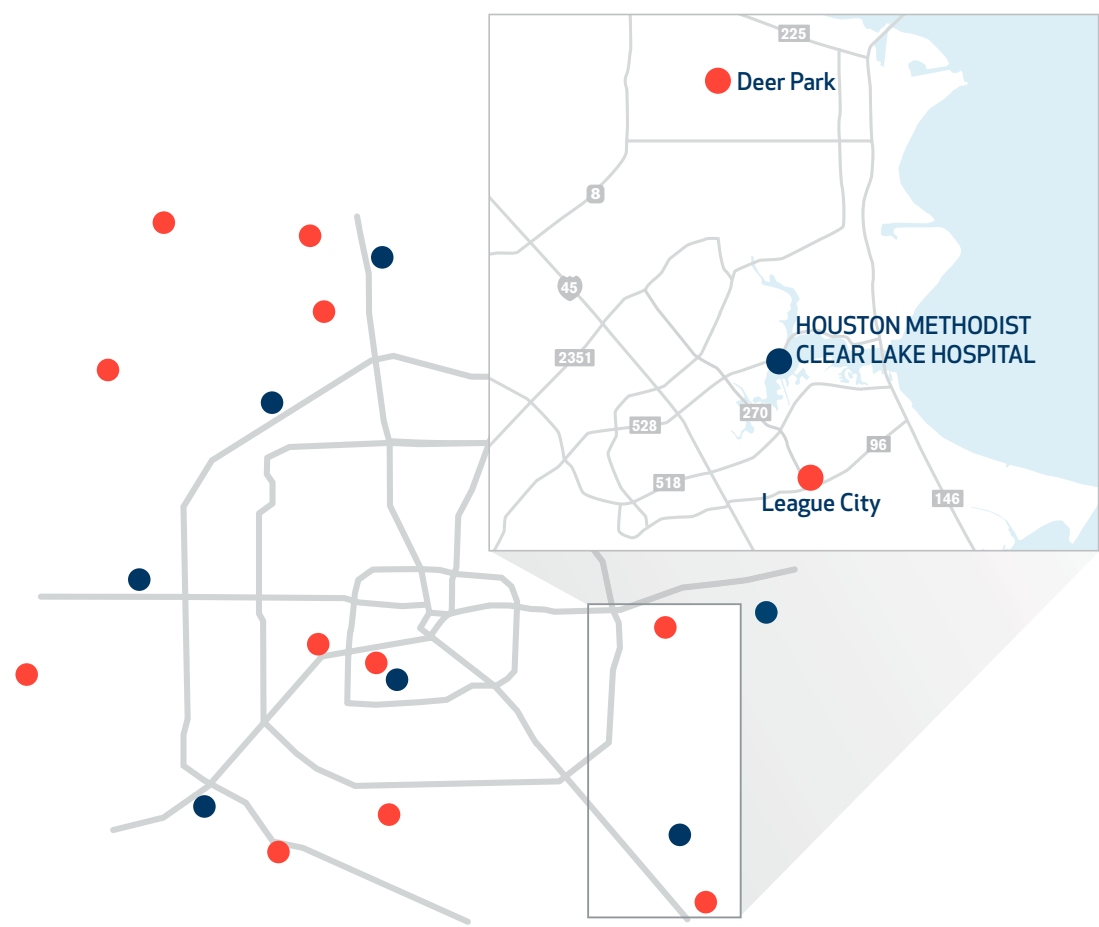


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It's important to know where to go when unexpected injuries or illnesses occur.

Whether you have a minor emergency or a life-threatening one, **Houston Methodist** provides state-of-the-art emergency care 24/7/365 to patients of all ages. We offer:

- Board-certified emergency doctors
- On-site laboratory
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- Private treatment rooms
- Admission to Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital, if needed



● Houston Methodist Emergency Departments
● Houston Methodist Emergency Care Centers

Need emergency care?

Visit houstonmethodist.org/er to find emergency care near you. If you are experiencing a serious or life-threatening medical emergency, please call 911.



Stuchbery Elementary celebrates Lunar New Year



Stuchbery Elementary School celebrated Lunar New Year. Pictured from, left to right, are (front row) Jonathan Nguyen, Kingston Nguyen, Kingsley Wysinger, Brianna Le, Jacyn Pham, Anna Nguyen (middle row) Kristen Nguyen, Andy Le, Rex Puy, Kathy Nguyen (back row) Alex Nguyen, Jaylan Tran, Victoria Vo, Eric Le, Hoang To, Jenny Pham, Vy Le, Helen Tran, Elias Ziad, Bryan Hua and Quyen Nguyen.

Stuchbery recognizes Stallions of the month



Stuchbery Elementary School has recognized the students pictured as their Stallions of the month for January for showing fairness. Pictured, left to right, are (first row) Ian Ondicho, Anna Nguyen, Isabella Hernandez, Zenaida Mejia, Milania Sanchez, Sofia Martinez, Aliyah Rosales, David Borders, Karter Myers, Marco Cervantes, (second row) Izzabella Ross, Micah Samaniego, Valentina Moreno, Aliyah Quintero, Gabriel Garcia, Taliah Kam-

au, Elizabeth Ramirez, Alyssa Valdez (school counselor) (third row) Tamara Kamau, Alexa Silva, Dante Segovia, Daniel Borne, Jordan Brown, Natalia Sorto, (fourth row) Nicole Torres, Adamari Echeverria, Nora McMullin, Nayelie Dotson and Elias Gomez. Not pictured are Renata Nunez, Londyn Lopez, Damien Arizmendez, Carolyn Ponce, Kristin Nguyen, Nicholai Valadez, Cameron Baines, Francisco Amezcua and Khalessi Beltran.

Thompson Lions observe Chinese New Year



Thompson Intermediate School celebrated Chinese New Year. Pictured, left to right, are Jayleen Lam, Chanelle Phan, Alice Lam, Annie Nguyen, Ethan Nguyen, Alexander Buntaer, Simon Nguyen, Jocelynn Thach, Lauren Tran, Kim Tran, Ruby (Ngoc) Huynh and Christina Vu.

South Belt names Super Steers of the month



South Belt Elementary announced their super steers for the month of January. The pictured students were chosen by their teachers, based on their ability to display the character trait of the month: honesty. Left to right, are (first row) Christian Nguyen, Liam Ho, (second row) Adrian Salinas, Aiden Williams, Easton Chacon, Emma Nguyen, Greyson Padilla, Joseph Saldana, Cosette Bekkers, Carter Chitwood, Val-

tina Sanchez, Hidayah Bandeli, (third row) Mjara Domingo, Brooklyn Trinh, Matilda Sok, Evelyn Saldana, Charlotte Bullin, Ryan Musawi, Leo Gonzales, Juliana Gonzales, Analia Posadas, Daniel Castaneda, (fourth row) Rhett Sullivan, Skyla Duncan, Jaxon Miller, Emilio Mata, Landon Cancino, Kaila Espinoza, Devyn Nguyen, Julia Nguyen, Caleb Banda and Khloe Nguyen.

Remember When

45 years ago (1980)
South Belters living in Houston city limits were surprised to learn that they lived in Zone C, the cheapest National Flood Insurance zone.
Pasadena Independent School District board voted to assess property at 100 percent of its value, instead of the previous 80 percent.
40 years ago (1985)
Houston Fire Department Station 70 opened on Beamer, and firefighters moved into the new station.
35 years ago (1990)
The jury in the Slaughter vs. Monsanto case absolved Monsanto of any liability regarding the Brio waste dump. Close to \$350 million in damages was being sought by 222 plaintiffs.
The Committee for Good Schools, made up of community watchdogs, encouraged a "no" vote on the upcoming Pasadena Independent School bond issue.
Thompson Intermediate principal Vicki Thomas promoted a sense of school spirit and self-achievement by starting the "BUG" (Bring Up Grades) Club for her 950 students.

prove an interlocal agreement which would have provided infrastructure to build CCISD's fourth high school.
A previous article in the newspaper office being deluged with telephone calls informing the staff of illegal gaming operations in the South Belt area. One location in a shopping center on Hughes at Beamer removed gaming machines and closed its doors for business.
15 years ago (2010)
Eighth-grade Thompson student Alexander Mays won the Pasadena Independent School District's annual spelling bee, allowing him to advance to the citywide Houston PBS Spelling Bee. Mays won the competition by successfully spelling the word, toucan.
10 years ago (2015)
A homeless man was arrested for starting a Feb. 13 fire that destroyed a storage building at the Quba Islamic Institute on Dixie Farm Road. Darryl Ferguson, 55, was charged with first-degree felony arson. The incident garnered national me-

dia attention, as many suspected it to be a hate crime. Ferguson, however, said the fire was unintentional.
5 years ago (2020)
A softball coach and hitting instructor with ties to the South Belt community was arrested in Brazoria County by Pearland police Feb. 13. Carlos Morgan, 59, was charged with indecent assault after allegedly touching an underage female player in an inappropriate manner. Morgan had reportedly coached and instructed several girls connected with the local softball community and Dobie High School.
1 year ago (2024)
A male suspect was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the 2022 murder of Stephen Johnson, whose body was found wrapped inside the closet of an apartment unit in the 1300 block of Redford near Edgebrook and the Gulf Freeway. Zachary Charles Douglas pleaded guilty to the murder, court records indicate. While Johnson's body was found Oct. 3, 2022, investigators believe he was killed more than

a month earlier on or around Aug. 21. According to Houston Police department officials, employees at the apartment complex at the above address noticed a foul odor and flies near the door of an apartment. Officers were called and gained entry to the apartment. During a search of the apartment, a male's decomposed body was found wrapped in blankets, inside a closet. An autopsy revealed Johnson died due to blunt force trauma. An investigation determined Douglas to be the shooter, and in 2023, he was charged with murder. At the time the charge was filed, Douglas was already in jail on an unrelated charge, having been arrested in January 2023. Douglas' motive for the murder remains unclear. HPD in 2022 deemed The Redford apartment complex a "hot spot" for violent crime, with at least 13 shootings being reported that year - five of which being fatal. The week before Johnson's body was discovered, there was a fire at the apartment complex, with badly burned human remains found inside one unit.

The blaze was part of a lengthy arson investigation.
Dobie High School announced its 2024 Class of Hall of Honor inductees, honoring four alumni and one former faculty member. Now in its 12th year, the Hall of Honor recognizes graduates who have made significant contributions to the community and serve as role models for current and future students. Alumni members to be inducted into the Hall of Honor included Mike Spencer, Class of 1981; Laurie Baker, Class of 1982; Michelle Manzanales, Class of 1993; and Devona Fanfair, Class of 2003. Former Dobie teacher Ann Brannen was the lone faculty member to be selected as a 2024 inductee into the hall. The group was officially inducted at a ceremony held at the school Feb. 23.
A well-rounded student, Spencer played on the basketball team, served on Student Council and worked as a photographer for the school paper. He was also a member of the varsity track team, setting a district high jump record. He

attended San Jac on a track scholarship and was named an All-State Decathlete. Spencer began his career in dance in 1989 at Fred Astaire Dance Studios in Houston. In a very short time, he won Top Teacher awards at local, regional, and national competitions. He began competing professionally in 1992. He and his former partner won many local and regional competitions and three national championships. He retired from dancing in 2002 to focus on teaching, coaching, and judging. He has coached and trained a dozen dancers that became National and World Champions. Spencer came out of retirement in 2017, going on to win the 2018 National Championship and was named World Champion in 2019 and 2023. Spencer was inducted into the American Country Dance Association Hall of Fame. His world travels with dance competitions have given him opportunities outside of dance. Today, he does print modeling and has worked as a stunt man and choreographer in the film industry.

Spencer currently resides in Biloxi, Mississippi with his wife, Celeste, where he volunteers in his community to teach dance to elementary students. He has one son and two grandchildren.
While at Dobie, Baker was a cheerleader in her junior and senior year. She represented GSL for three years and was an active member in the Key Club, JETS and NHS. Baker was a Trailblazer and was selected as a Rotarian. She was a member of Longhorn Council all four years and a member of the volleyball team. Today, Baker is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Camden Property Trust. Baker is responsible for the oversight and strategy of Camden's portfolio operations and investment funds. During her 30 plus years with Camden, Baker has held several positions including senior vice president of Fund and Asset Management. Baker served as the executive sponsor for Camden's technology initiative during the 2000s, which included \$10 million in technology investments and the roll out of Camden's web-based property management software, revenue management and several web-based solutions. Before joining Camden, Baker was vice president at Walden Residential Properties and spent nine years at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Chevy Chase, Md. She holds an MBA in finance from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Sam Houston State University. She serves on the board of directors executive committee for the National Multifamily Housing Council, is vice chair of ULI's Multifamily Council and a frequent speaker in the multifamily industry. Baker was the 2016 president of CREW Network, a past president of CREW Houston and was honored as one of the Top 15 Women in Commercial Real Estate in Houston. She is a licensed real estate broker in the state of Texas and was recognized by Real Estate Forum as a Women of Influence in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2022. She received the 2022 Individual Corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award and received the Texas Executive Women on the Move Award for her efforts to improve leadership success for women and people of color.

During her time at Dobie High School, Manzanales was a cheerleader, lettered track

and field triple jumper, as well as honor student. She is based in New York City, she is a critically acclaimed choreographer, sought after dance educator and a co-founder of the Latinx Dance Educators Alliance. Manzanales graduated from the University of Houston with a BBA in finance and spent more than a decade dancing professionally in Houston and Chicago before moving to New York. She served for seven seasons as the rehearsal director and artistic associate of Ballet Hispanico, a 50+ year institution recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures by the Ford Foundation. In addition to her leadership role at Ballet Hispanico, Manzanales has been named the 2024 Cecil H. and Ida Green Honors chair for the School for Classical and Contemporary Dance at Texas Christian University. She has been an invited panelist for Teacher's College, Columbia University's International Symposium and has presented lectures at the New York State Dance Education Association. Manzanales has served on the faculty and/or been a guest artist at numerous studios, schools, and college dance programs nationwide and internationally. Her choreography has been featured at Lincoln Center and the New York City Center Dance Festival. She has also set choreographies for many programs, including Rice University, Rutgers University, New World School of the Arts, Montclair State University and San Jacinto College South. She has also served multiple terms on the National Association of Schools of Dance's Committee on Ethics, and as a juror for numerous dance programs, notable the Ailey BFA program's Independent Study in Choreography and the American College Dance Association.
Fanfair's journey spans from high school track and field achievements to pioneering success in the startup world. With a high school triple jump best of 50'5", Fanfair held the ninth furthest jump in Texas history for more than a decade and secured state runner-up titles in both 2002 and 2003. His athletic prowess extended to the international stage, representing the United States on the Pan American Team in 2003. Transitioning from a standout athlete to a leader at Rice University, Fanfair captained the team to an

outdoor championship victory in 2004 while consistently achieving top-four finishes at conference championships. Armed with a mechanical engineering degree and recognized as a National Science Foundation Fellow, he embarked on an entrepreneurial path. Currently, as the co-founder of Devland, Fanfair drives a venture studio and fund, catalyzing the success of startups led by women and people of color, with a total value of \$85 million. His commitment extends to running accelerators nationwide and building programs to support minority founders, particularly in Tulsa, Okla., to rejuvenate the city's entrepreneurial spirit. Fanfair has been married to his wife Danielle for 13 years, and the couple have an 8-year-old daughter named Sage.
Brannen was there when Dobie opened its doors and then stayed for 22 years as an English and journalism teacher, as well as adviser for both the Chaparral and Roundup publications. Under her guidance, her journalism students were regular winners of local and state awards, including many all-state and UIL awards. Brannen was serious about making sure they knew the history of Dobie High School. Her "Know Your School" activity required them to go out to explore and learn facts about the high school and its history. While she was teaching the basics of journalism or yearbook layout, she was also teaching business skills as she sent students out to sell ads. She was instilling tenacity when she sent student reporters to interview school or district leaders. She was making sure her students were unafraid to set goals and then work to achieve them. Brannen was unrelenting in her quest to help students reach their full potential. Often, it wasn't restricted to students in her classes. She seemed to know every student in the halls of Dobie and probably their parents as well. Even now, decades later, several of her former students remain in her orbit. She raised two Longhorns of her own - Jeff and Amber (also a Dobie teacher) - and has five grandchildren. Today, Brannen works in the insurance business. She is still an active in the community with the South Belt Chamber of Commerce. She is fondly remembered by many former students as "the teacher who made a difference."

Over The Back Fence by Nicole

DEAN CELEBRATES AN ANNIVERSARY
Congratulations are in order for **Dean Baier** and his wife **Barb** as they celebrate the four years of their marriage. Dean and Barb married Feb. 13, 2021. Here's to many more wonderful years of marriage.
JADE CELEBRATES 17TH BIRTHDAY
Special happy birthday wishes are sent to **Jade Elizabeth Scarberry** who turns 17 years old Tuesday, Feb. 18. Hugs and kisses are sent to her from dad **Austin**, wife **Tiffany** and little sister **Lily Scarberry**; mom **Nicole Scarberry**; grandparents **Jannie** and **Robert Scarberry**; former longtime South Belt residents; aunts **Jenny Hayes** and **Stacey Flowers**; uncles **Stephen Flowers**, **Joey Hayes** and **Tyler Scarberry**; and cousins **Brayden** and **Baylee Espinosa**, **Olivia Moreno** and **Kennedy Owen** and **Evie Flowers**. Jade's parents are both Dobie High School graduates.
SCHOOL DAZE
The following staff of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays Feb. 13 through Feb. 19.
Atkinson Elementary
The day for a party for **Diana Trevino** is Feb. 14. Send a birthday greeting Feb. 17 to **Ludivina Perez**.
Burnett Elementary
Remember to wish **Carla Reyes** a happy birthday Feb. 13.

Bush Elementary
Party with **Aide Buenostro** on her birthday Feb. 18.
Genoa Elementary
The day for a party for **Summer Bradley** is Feb. 18.
Hancock Elementary
Maritza De La Garza enjoys a birthday Feb. 15.
Meador Elementary
Blow out the birthday candles for **Natalie Aviles** Feb. 15. Feb. 16 is the day for a fun celebration for **Tania Castillo**.
Moore Elementary
Join in on the birthday fun Feb. 18 for **Ashley Evans**.
South Belt Elementary
Celebrating a birthday Feb. 19 is **Amber Morris**, school principal.
Melillo Middle School
The day for a birthday cake for **Gabrielle Creagh** is Feb. 14.
Beverly Hills Intermediate
Birthday wishes are in order on Feb. 15 for **Barbara Henderson**.
Thompson Intermediate
Heidi Applegate enjoys a birthday Feb. 13.
Selena Dela Fuente celebrates a birthday Feb. 17.

Dobie High
Holly Peel and **Alexyss Salguero** enjoys

a wonderful birthday on Feb. 13. The day for birthday balloons and party favors for **Willard Joiner** is Feb. 16. The day for a party for **Sebrina Roy** is Feb. 17. Send birthday greetings on Feb. 18 to **Mariah Maya** and **Reema Shaukat**. Light the birthday candles on Feb. 19 for **Kellen Fernandez** and **Jessica Priestley**.
FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS
Thursday, Feb. 13: **Celeste Beaty**, **Trisha Waguespack**, **Cristi Skerrett** and **Randy Harms**; and Friday, Feb. 14: **Cathi Brockman** and **Jon Baker**. Saturday, Feb. 15: **Mark Wilson**, **Laura Allison**, **Gene Cernal** and **Kelley Huebner**; Monday, Feb. 17: **Jeannie Nelson**, **Monica Gonzales**, **Dawn Armstrong**, **Jeri Joslin**, **Donn Reichelt**, **Russell Janacek** and **Susan Slater**. Tuesday, Feb. 18: **Sonja Britt**, **Jason Jaeger**, **Leslie Barr**, **Sterling Washington**, **Rose Pena**, **Tianne Bernal**, **LeRoy Peters**, **Shana Kiser**, **Daer Platt**, **Valerie Chavez** and **Troy Taormina**; and Wednesday, Feb. 19: **Jason Minck**, **Dalaina Rounsavall-Harris**, **Patricia Doran** and **Ryan Mint**.
LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS
Email announcements to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line by Friday noon for the next week's publication. For birthdays, type "OTBF: Friends Celebrate Birthdays" in the subject line.

and field triple jumper, as well as honor student. She is based in New York City, she is a critically acclaimed choreographer, sought after dance educator and a co-founder of the Latinx Dance Educators Alliance. Manzanales graduated from the University of Houston with a BBA in finance and spent more than a decade dancing professionally in Houston and Chicago before moving to New York. She served for seven seasons as the rehearsal director and artistic associate of Ballet Hispanico, a 50+ year institution recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures by the Ford Foundation. In addition to her leadership role at Ballet Hispanico, Manzanales has been named the 2024 Cecil H. and Ida Green Honors chair for the School for Classical and Contemporary Dance at Texas Christian University. She has been an invited panelist for Teacher's College, Columbia University's International Symposium and has presented lectures at the New York State Dance Education Association. Manzanales has served on the faculty and/or been a guest artist at numerous studios, schools, and college dance programs nationwide and internationally. Her choreography has been featured at Lincoln Center and the New York City Center Dance Festival. She has also set choreographies for many programs, including Rice University, Rutgers University, New World School of the Arts, Montclair State University and San Jacinto College South. She has also served multiple terms on the National Association of Schools of Dance's Committee on Ethics, and as a juror for numerous dance programs, notable the Ailey BFA program's Independent Study in Choreography and the American College Dance Association.
Fanfair's journey spans from high school track and field achievements to pioneering success in the startup world. With a high school triple jump best of 50'5", Fanfair held the ninth furthest jump in Texas history for more than a decade and secured state runner-up titles in both 2002 and 2003. His athletic prowess extended to the international stage, representing the United States on the Pan American Team in 2003. Transitioning from a standout athlete to a leader at Rice University, Fanfair captained the team to an

SPORTS NEWS & NOTES



Dobie senior track standout Stacie Harris earned silver medals in the 400 and long jump events and Lauren Garza collected bronze medals in the 800 and 1600 runs. Harris was also part of Dobie's 4x200 relay squad that captured third place and bronze medals in the event.

Longhorns' track programs start fast at Kethan Relays

The Dobie track and field programs will be co-hosts of the Brown Relays Feb. 14 at Auxiliary Stadium in Pasadena as the Pasadena Independent School District presents its longstanding meet involving both varsity boys' and girls' programs from across the Houston area.

The early session at the Brown Relays begins at 11 a.m. with the distance medley relay. The field events will also take center stage, including the pole vault, triple jump, high jump, discus, long jump and shot put.

The running portion of the meet begins at 1 p.m., with the boys' and girls' 3,200 kicking off things and the 4x400 relay wrapping up things.

The Longhorns are encouraged about the possibilities at the Brown

Relays after a solid season-opening performance at the Kethan Relays Feb. 7 in Deer Park.

Seniors Stacie Harris and Lauren Garza led the way for the Dobie varsity girls at Deer Park, with Harris earning silver medals in the 400 and long jump events and Garza collecting bronze medals in the 800 and 1600 runs.

Harris was also part of Dobie's 4x200 relay squad that captured third place and bronze medals in the event.

Overall, it was an outstanding debut for the Longhorns, who finished third in the team standings.

A regional qualifier in the long jump as a junior in 2024, Harris turned in a top effort of 17 feet, 10 inches at the Kethans, picking up the silver med-

Boys' basketball postseason in focus as bidistrict nears

As the *Leader* reported last week, the District 22-6A and District 24-6A varsity boys' basketball play-off seeds were set heading into the final night of the regular season Feb. 11 after press time.

In 22-6A, the undefeated Shadow Creek Sharks were a home game victory away from finishing a perfect 16-0 run to the league championship and will represent the district as the top seed in the Division 2

occupying the second seed out of 22-6A in the Division 2 field.

As for the District 24-6A alignment, league champion Clear Springs will be the top seed in the Division 1 postseason lineup, with second-place Dickinson set to take the No. 2 spot in the Division 1 field.

The respective Division 2 playoff seeds will be Clear Falls and Clear Lake when the postseason gets underway Feb. 17.

At right, Manuel Moreno Jr. shows off his new hardware as the 2025 recipient of the United States Tennis Association's prestigious Texas Lloyd Sessions Educational Merit Award during the USTA's awards luncheon Feb. 8. Established in 1973, the Sessions honor annually recognizes an individual who is committed to the growth of junior tennis in Texas. Moreno also won the award in 2020. Moreno is in his 46th year as a high school tennis instructor, including the past 26 at Dobie.

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Key returnees lead Dobie softball

A trio of proven starting pitchers, two district postseason award winners and a four-year middle infielder combine to lead the way among as many as 13 returnees as the Dobie varsity girls' softball team has started the 2025 regular season.

The Longhorns opened the season Feb. 10 at Clear Brook after press time and will be part of an impressive field at the three-day National Fastpitch Coaches Association Leadoff Classic in Bryan Feb. 13-15 before 22-6A play begins Feb. 18 as part of whirlwind eight-day stretch for the locals.

With a newcomer-to-the-league foursome of programs headed by Pearl and Dawson, the upcoming 22-6A race to the postseason figures to present a challenge on a nightly basis. Yet as veteran head coach Robin Rackley welcomes back a lineup stacked with proven performers, the Longhorns should very much be up to the task.

Jackie Peralta, a Howard Payne University signee, was a second team All-District selection in 2024 and has pitched in a ton of big games for the Longhorns.

Sophomore Khloe Coronado had a solid freshman season as she capitalized on her opportunities in the circle and has proven to be yet another option on the pitching staff.

Senior and four-year starting middle infielder Leslie Sarduy signed with Midland College earlier this month and is set to lead the Longhorns out onto the field.

Persephone Soria put together a tremendous freshman season in 2024 as she was the 22-6A Rookie of the Year after leading Dobie in numerous offensive categories.

Chloe Nunez, now a junior, was the Utility Player of the Year in the 22-6A ranks last season, and junior infielder Natalie De Hoyos is yet another returning first team All-District performer.

Viviana Fernandez is back for her senior season after she was also a 22-6A first team honoree in 2024.

"We really like this group and feel like we can have a lot of success

San Jac baseball wins five of seven

The San Jacinto College baseball team has won five of seven games through the first two weeks of the National Junior College Athletic Association season following a challenging weekend at the Tournament of Champions at Andy Pettitte Park in Houston.

The Ravens opened the season with a three-game sweep of Baton Rouge Community College and then defeated Monroe

University 10-1 Feb. 5 to get to 4-0.

The Ravens opened the Tournament of Champions event Feb. 7 with a 3-1 loss to Seminole State college but then bounced back to shut out Wabash Valley college 8-0. In the tournament finale, the Ravens suffered an 11-2 loss to New Mexico Junior College.

The locals will return to action Feb. 14, hosting Grayson College in a double header beginning at 2 p.m. in Houston.

In the Feb. 5 win over Monroe, second baseman Rafael Furcal Jr. continued his torrid start to the



"We have at least 13 players that we can turn to that we feel like can do a great job out there for us," Rackley said.

"I don't know that we're going to have a ton of power, but I feel like we have a lot of team speed and we are going to be able to get around the bases and hopefully use key hits to score.

"We also have three solid pitching options back who have already shown what they can do at this level, so we're excited to get out there and get started."

Among the pitchers, junior Vanessa De La Fuente earned 22-6A first team All-District honors as she was 7-6 with three saves and a 3.37 earned run average over 24 total appearances in 2024.

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"We really like this group and feel like we can have a lot of success

Dobie at NFCAs Feb. 13-15

Dobie at Manvel Feb. 18

At left, Dobie Varsity softball standout Persephone Soria is shown in 2024 during a terrific debut season at the varsity level that saw her honored as the District 22-6A Freshman of the Year. She and her teammates got off to a rousing start to the 2025 campaign, winning 16-5 in just five frames in the regular season opener at Clear Brook Feb. 10. In the game, Soria went 2 for 3, scoring three runs and driving in three more. Vanessa De La Fuente doubled and knocked in three runs, and Jackie Peralta also doubled while knocking in three runs. Alex Martinez, Amaya Corona and Gabby Ramirez all drove in two runs each.

JFD grad Davis honored at Alvin

Dobie High School Class of 2017 graduate Jeremy Davis, currently in his first season as a tight ends coach on the Alvin High School varsity football coaching staff and also an assistant boys' basketball coach with the Yellowjackets, has been recognized as the Rookie Teacher of the Year at Alvin. Davis was a three-year varsity performer in both sports at Dobie and made collegiate stops at Missouri Southern State and Lamar as a tight end.

LSA's Smith reaches milestone

Lutheran South Academy varsity boys' soccer star Brody Smith scored his 100th career goal Feb. 6 in the Pioneers' game against Second Baptist, with LSA winning 4-3.

CB's McCalister joins TSU FB

Clear Brook High School graduate Cameron McCalister has announced via X that he has signed with Texas Southern University to join the Tigers' football program. McCalister, a former two-year left-handed starting quarterback with the Wolverines, played the 2024 season at Independence Community College, splitting time at quarterback. Overall, McCalister was 24 of 56 through the air with three touchdown tosses and five interceptions. He will have three years of eligibility remaining at TSU.

Brook girls' hoops advances

The Clear Brook varsity girls' basketball team advances within the Class 6A Division 2 playoff bracket, defeating Humble 49-42 Feb. 10 at South Houston High School. The Wolverines, winners of 32 overall games this season, have advanced to the area playoff round to face either Manvel or Fort Bend Austin, now led by former Dobie head coach Jasmine Hartman. Elsewhere in the bidistrict round prior to press time, 24-6A champion Dickinson was eliminated by North Shore, 56-48, in the Division 1 bracket. Pearlard of District 22-6A defeated Ridge Point, 47-32 in a Division I bidistrict game.

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Calhoun vows to soak in final season at UT-Arlington

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

Aaron Calhoun's collegiate baseball career began with such promise at the end of the 2022 season with a trip to the NCAA Division I College World Series in Omaha, Neb. for he and his Oklahoma Sooners teammates.

Fast forward to 2025, and Calhoun, now at UT-Arlington, just may see his career come to a quiet end at the Western Athletic Conference tournament in late May in Mesa, Ariz. And Calhoun would be fine with that.

Despite the ups and downs for Calhoun as a collegiate pitcher, the 2021 District 24-6A Most Valuable Player out of Clear Brook High School promises to cherish his final season at the University of Texas at Arlington as the Mavericks look to put together a special run of their own.

Calhoun was quite simply one of the top collegiate prospects coming out of high school at the end of the 2021 season.

He was ranked by Perfect Game as the No. 11 overall high school hurler in the state, including the No. 5 right-hander. Calhoun was rated by Prep Baseball Report as the No. 24 overall player in Texas, including the No. 10 right-handed pitcher.

During a masterful senior season with the Wolverines, Calhoun was the 24-6A Most Valuable Player after posting a 2.30 earned run average, striking out 70 batters across 50 2/3 innings.

At that point, it was easy to see why national power Oklahoma heavily

recruited Calhoun, then brought him into the program to help compete in the Big 12.

Used sparingly as a freshman at Oklahoma likely due primarily to a plethora of outstanding pitching talent elsewhere on the staff, Calhoun appeared in 12 total games and was in on the fun as the Sooners made their way to Omaha for the College World Series eventually finishing second overall after dropping two games straight in a best-of-three title series against eventual national champion Ole Miss.

During his sophomore season in 2023, Calhoun appeared in 14 total games with the Sooners, registering 14 strikeouts in 14 1/3 total innings. He then made the decision to transfer to UT-Arlington.

A season ago with the Mavericks, Calhoun made 12 starts and a relief appearance, fanning 20 batters over the course of 40 total innings. He unfortunately allowed 37 earned runs over that time frame.

Over the first three years of his career, it's easy to surmise that Calhoun has had few opportunities but has also delivered mixed results on the mound.

Still, Calhoun remains grateful to have been able to pitch at the collegiate level. He has nothing but great memories of his journey to this point. "To be able to attend the College World Series in my freshman year at Oklahoma is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a lot of players in my position, and I don't take that for granted," Calhoun said.

"There have been times when the opportunities have not exactly been there for me. I have had some hit-or-miss outings along the way, but it's been a great ride to this point.

"I had a great first season here at Arlington with the guys last year, and it looks like I very well could be pitching out of the bullpen and possibly in the closer's role for us this season.

"I'm looking forward to it. We have a terrific bunch of guys, we play for one another and really enjoy being out there on the field.

"We realize that perhaps not a lot is expected of us this season, but we really feel like we're going to surprise some people and put together a terrific season."

"My arm feels good," Calhoun said. "I have learned how to take care of my body and feel fresh heading into the season. I'm very much looking forward to getting things going. This is my last year, so I'm going to leave it all hang out there. It's been a blessing to pitch at the college level."

Seemingly regardless of how things play out for Calhoun the player or the Mavericks as a team during the season, he will be fine with the final outcome.

"You have to look at the positives. Not a lot of guys get a chance to pitch in the college game. Even fewer guys get a chance to pitch in the College World Series.

closing it out strong this year with my teammates."

Calhoun told the *Leader* he has two semesters to go as to his degree plan and will graduate with a bachelor's in kinesiology.

He has yet to decide exactly what he wants to do professionally but plans to

soon make a decision.

For now, it's all about going out there and trying to do what he can do both individually and as a teammate to help the Mavericks win ball games and chase a Western Athletic Conference title.

"I really think it's go-

ing to be a big year for us," Calhoun said. "Like I said, I feel like we have a lot of talent on this team and are going to surprise some people along the way. We've had a great offseason of preparation, and I there are great things in store for us ahead."



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Stuchbery Big Shoot Out winners

Four Stuchbery Elementary students were the winners of their school's Big Shoot Out contest and went on to represent the Stallions at the Pasadena ISD districtwide competition on Feb. 3 at San Jacinto Intermediate. The competition is for shooting, passing and dribbling skills for each of the 36 elementary schools in the district.



Third-graders Christopher Cahee (left) and Madelyn Jimenez



Fourth-graders Daliany Rodriguez (left) and Jace Ramirez

Atkinson Eagles compete during PISD's BSO

Atkinson Elementary's Big Shoot Out champions participated in the Pasadena ISD districtwide competition earlier this month at Phillips Field House. As part of the event, students were allowed one minute to shoot a basketball from five designated spots around the goal, with their total baskets made recorded as part of their score. Participants performed a timed dribble and weave around cones, sent five chest passes to a coach, then dribbled back through the cones to the finish line. The students' shooting score and dribble time were combined for their final score. At far right, representing the Eagles, from left, were Adrian Sigaran (third-grade boys' winner), Valentina Tran (third-grade girls' winner), Harmony Galloway (fourth-grade girls' winner) and Isaiah Sanchez (fourth-grade boys' winner). Tran won second place at the district contest for the third-grade girls. At right, Tran (right) celebrated with Atkinson physical education instructor Katy Fielder after placing third at district.



Crawford, a Clear Creek ISD coaching legend, now owns a court at Clear Springs

Bob Cobb Field, Krueger Field House and Lynn McDonald Court at Clear Lake High School. Virginia Butler Gymnasium, Carlisle Field House and (Jim) Mallory Field at Clear Creek High School. Clear Creek ISD's two oldest high schools have long immortalized some of their most prestigious head coaches by naming athletic facilities in their honor. Now, Clear Springs High School is joined in, honoring legendary varsity girls' basketball head coach Pam Crawford. The Knights' varsity boys' basketball team took on Clear Brook in an afternoon contest Feb. 8 at Clear Springs, defeating the Wolverines to officially secure the 24-6A championship. Prior to the game, Clear Creek ISD superin-

tendent Dr. Karen Engle was joined by a host of district dignitaries, former coaches and plenty of fans as the hardwood officially became Pam Crawford Court. Crawford, a high school legend in Louisiana as a player, began her head coaching career with a brief stop at Crosby, taking her final team to the state tournament. Crawford then spent the remainder of her illustrious career at first Clear Brook and then Clear Springs as varsity girls' basketball head coach. She retired after the 2021-2022 season with more than 700 career wins and will be inducted into the Texas High School Basketball Hall of Fame in May.

Springs' court now honors CCISD legend

At far right, Pam Crawford addresses attendees Feb. 8 at Clear Springs High School prior to a varsity boys' basketball game between the Knights and Clear Brook as the hardwood was officially named Pam Crawford Court.

The main basketball court at Clear Springs High School will now forever be known as Pam Crawford Court, honoring the longtime varsity girls' basketball coaching legend who won more than 700 career games, primarily during stops at both Clear Brook and Clear Springs High School.



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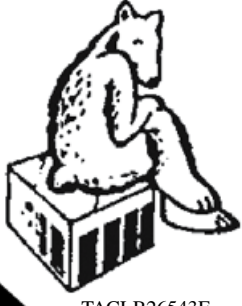
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CALENDAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/.
7:30 a.m. Rotary Club of Pearland - Check website for time and location https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon at 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16
8 a.m./10:15 a.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - has worship Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday at 7 p.m. (Bible study, Book of Revelation, at 6 p.m.) and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., 11456 Space Center Blvd. (in back of a medical/retail community). For details, call 281-479-7285 and leave a message, or stop by.
5:30 p.m. Celebrate Recovery - A faith-based 12-Step program, in the Life Kids Chapel at Life Church, 5125 Preston Ave. Pasadena, TX 77505. Call 713-419-2635 for details.
8 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous - See Friday's notice.

fourth Tuesdays (hybrid meeting) at sehouston.toastmastersclubs.org. In-person address 10500 Scarsdale Blvd. (SB Chamber of Commerce). Visit the website or call Karen Nunn at (832) 722-9061 for information.
7 p.m. Houston Skyscraper Shadows Civic Club - meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7900 Fuqua (inside Covenant of Faith United Methodist Church). No meeting in December. Contact Cathy@cheyder@sbglobal.net or call 346-970-3507 for details.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14
7:30 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum See Thursday's notice.
Noon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners Group, 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300 for more information. Meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or https://nastuff.com/. Meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
8 p.m. Serenity Now Al-Anon Group - meets at CrossRoads UMC Fridays, 8 to 9 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. Family members and friends of problem drinkers/addicts share, learn Al-Anon principles, that they are not alone, and discover choices available. For details, call 281-484-9243.
Alcoholics Anonymous - meets at CrossRoads UMC Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For details, call 281-484-9243.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17
5 p.m. - New Directions Singles Social Group is a singles group for those 55+. Meetings are the first and third Monday held in the community room at Maplewood Crossing, 600 Hobbs Road, League City. There will be a potluck dinner and may include group activities. For further information, call Carol at 281-508-1663. See their Facebook page: New Directions Singles Social Group.
6 p.m. Scramble Club #511 - Meets Monday at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Join the fun and improve crossword skills. COVID-19 vaccination required. Email huff_reunion@juno.com for info.
7 p.m. TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) - #0683 Friendswood chapter meets at Friendswood Methodist Church, 110 N. Friendswood Dr. in the educational bldg., room 201. For information, call Lynette Ringrose at 832-858-4617 or Dorothy Pourteau at 713-875-8820.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group, open meeting, 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-661-4200 or visit www.hascona.com or https://nastuff.com/. Meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - St. Luke's 12-Step Recovery, open meeting Mondays, in the Education Bldg. in room 4, 11011 Hall Rd. For details, call Jesse at 832-725-8479 or Rita at 281-309-2801.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - See Thursday's notice.
Noon Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners. 3525 Broadway, Pearland, or at https://aahouston.org/meetings/imperfect-nooners. Call 713-686-6300 for more information. Meets Mondays - Fridays.
Noon Ballroom Dancing - casual ballroom dance, open to the public, held every Wednesday afternoon is from 12:30 to 3:00 pm at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 East League City Parkway, League City. Everyone is welcome to come with or without a partner. The dance itself is free as music is provided by volunteer, Neva Schroder. The city requires an activity card for participants in all of the city's many activities. Call the park office (281-554-1180) for answers to any questions regarding the activity card. Visitors are welcome to walk in to observe or participate.
7 p.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - See Sunday's notice.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - See Friday's notice.
8 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous - See Friday's notice.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15
7:30 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - See Thursday's notice.
9:30 a.m. Congregation Shaar Hashalom - All services are live and Zoom online. For details on the 7 p.m. Friday night or the 9:30 a.m. Saturday service, Judaism classes, film series, and lunch with the Rabbi, visit https://www.shaarhashalom.org.
1 p.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - offers a knitting class, Saturdays 1 p.m. Call 281-479-7285 prior to coming.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill." See Thursday's notice.
11:30 a.m. St. Paul's Anglican Church - See Sunday's notice.
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Southeast Houston Toastmasters - The Southeast Houston Toastmasters Club #05324194 meets virtually with the exception of the second and

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20
7 a.m. AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill," Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., and Saturday at 7:30 a.m. Hope Community United Methodist Church, 2838 Lily St. Call 713-686-6300 (24/7) or visit https://aahouston.org/meetings/.
7:30 a.m. Rotary Club of Pearland - Check website for time and location https://pearlandrotary.com/events/calendar or call 832-293-9860.
9 a.m. Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Open Tues. - Sat., 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. Call Karen Hollon at 713-472-0565 for appointment. Tours 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Juan Cruz: 1980 Arrowglass Boat 170HP (Serial# ARWZ0023M80F) on single axle trailer, smaller boat on trailer (parts only), and portable generator.
Paul J. Duval: record players, guitars, fishing poles, ladders, tools, machinery, rugs, and misc.
David Brown: extension ladder, 10' Iron Horse utility trailer and John Deere riding lawn mower.
Elpidio M. Inocencio: 1995 F150 (VIN#1FTEX15Y0SKA94149).

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Sharonda McDonald heads 2025 PISD Hall of Famers



A generational star at Texas A&M University from 2004 through 2007, Dobie graduate Sharonda McDonald Kelley was one of the most prolific base stealers in the NCAA ranks and is still among the all-time leaders in

several offensive categories within the Aggies' program. She will be inducted into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame next month in Pasadena as part of a glittering 2025 class.

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

A registration flyer aimed at drawing young players into the South Houston Girls Softball Association started it all for the McDonald trio back in the 1990s and will soon result in the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame induction of the family's middle daughter, Sharonda McDonald-Kelley, as part of the 2025 class.

Just as her eldest sister, Krystal McDonald, had done from 1997 through her high school graduation in 1990, Sharonda starred at Dobie from 1999 through her own graduation in 2003, then put together a star-studded career at Texas A&M University.

Following college, she played professionally for several seasons while also coaching and has subsequently ascended the collegiate ranks for the past 15-plus years.

Earlier this month, McDonald-Kelley began her third season as head coach at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich. but plans to be in attendance when the Pasadena ISD induction class is welcomed March 12 at the Pasadena Convention Center.

McDonald-Kelley is set to be the speaker of the evening on behalf of the 2025 class.

Joining Krystal and Sharonda at Dobie was 2006 graduate Iver McDonald, who played briefly collegiately at Oklahoma. There is little argument that the McDonald trio contributed so much to the success of the Dobie softball program during their collective 12 years of varsity action.

Krystal played first at San Jacinto College and then finished at Texas Southern University while Iver played with the Sooners in Oklahoma.

Of the three, Sharonda enjoyed the most success on the field and has subsequently become a very successful Division I head coach. Even so, she was not expecting the Hall of Fame induction call that

came her way. "I think like most people, I didn't answer the phone at first because I didn't recognize the number," McDonald-Kelley said with a laugh, adding that she eventually connected with Hall of Fame committee member Al Carter.

"It's an absolute honor to be inducted. I'm very proud not only for myself but for my family to receive this honor. I think when you're in the midst of playing, you don't really think about some of the things that you achieve along the way."

"To be joining some of the all-time greats within the school district is truly something I do not take for granted. I'm really looking forward to the evening with my family."

The Dobie softball program should almost qualify for its own wing within the PISD hall. The Longhorns claimed the first-ever state title under the University Interscholastic League's umbrella in 1993 and followed up with state championships in 1995 as well as 1997.

Star pitcher Christa Williams, who led the team to state crowns in 1993 and 1995, was part of the Athletics Hall of Fame inaugural class as an individual in 2012, and the 1993 team also enjoyed induction.

Amanda Nguyen, another former Longhorn softball standout, became the youngest hall inductee last year.

McDonald played for head coach Rhonda Foster, who is also in the Hall of Fame after guiding multiple Longhorn programs to lofty achievements during her stay at Dobie. McDonald-Kelley is set to become just the second individual Dobie softball player inducted.

Being a high school star is one thing, but McDonald-Kelley will also forever be considered one of the greats at Texas A&M University after putting together a tremendous four-year run with the Aggies.

McDonald-Kelley was a four-time All-Big 12 se-

lection as a player at Texas A&M from 2004-2007, capping off her intercollegiate career with Texas A&M's first trip to the Women's College World Series in 20 years.

McDonald-Kelley is the Aggie career record holder with 153 stolen bases, while ranking second all-time in hits (249) and runs scored (195). McDonald-Kelley led the Golden Shoe Award. She compiled a .338 batting average throughout her four-year collegiate career.

Following her career at Texas A&M, McDonald-Kelley played professionally for seven years, spending time with the Philadelphia Force, the Akron Racers and the USSA Pride of the NPF League.

McDonald-Kelley played for Fiorini Softball Club of the Italian Professional League in 2009. A three-time All-NPF selection during her professional career, McDonald garnered the prestigious Diamond Spikes Award in 2012 after hitting .303 with 13 stolen bases for the Racers.

As successful as McDonald-Kelley was as a player, her coaching career has been no doubt as equally rewarding.

Over 10 seasons as an assistant coach, she made stops at TSU, Ohio, LSU, Texas Tech, Florida and Ohio State, then put together an incredible resume as a head coach at Campbell University over four seasons before Michigan State came calling.

"I try to remember the things that were important to me not only as a player but as a person in the sport, and try to impart those things into my role as a leader of these young

San Jacinto starts hot

Continued from Page 5 regular season as he homered among his three hits, scoring twice and driving in three runs.

Will Franklin also homered and drove in three runs in the win. Starting pitcher Mack Mabrey allowed a run over three innings to earn the victory.

In the Tournament of Champions opener two days later, Seminole State's Grason Childers slammed a two-run homer in the third inning as his team went on to win 3-1. San Jacinto College used a six-run, seventh inning to defeat Wabash Valley in the nightcap.

ladies," she said. "Winning softball games is important, but nothing is as important as preparing your players for life after the game and helping them develop into strong young women off the field."

The 2025 induction class will also include former longtime Dobie head tennis coach Bobby Kramer as well as the 1980 Longhorn state champion cross-country team.

Others set to join the prestigious hall include 1985 Sam Rayburn football/baseball star Bruce Aguilar; 1963 Pasadena football/baseball star Rich Brewer; 2009 Pasadena Memorial volleyball standout Nancy Cole Bowman, Kristine Kelly, a Pasadena Class of 2006 graduate who was a swimming/track and field star with the Eagles, and Josh Rodriguez, a 2003 South Houston graduate and baseball star.

Editor's note: PISD Athletics Hall of Fame committee member and media relations director Al Carter contributed biographical details.

Athletes

Rick Brewer, Pasadena High, Class of 1963. Brewer emerged as Pasadena's pitching mainstay as a junior in 1962 when he teamed with catcher and future major-leaguer Paul Ratliff to form one of the most formidable batteries in the Houston area.

The Eagles won district that season and advanced to the second round of the state playoffs. Brewer went on to pitch two years for San Jacinto College's fledgling baseball program and then it was off to UH for a flashy finish to his baseball career.

Over his two seasons, he managed to shut out both the No. 2 team in the country, Oklahoma State in 1966, and the nation's No. 1 team, Arizona State during the 1967 CWS. His four-hit gem against the Sun Devils landed the Cougars in the national title game. Although they lost that contest, UH finished with a No. 2 ranking, still the best showing in school history. Brewer posted a 2.00 career ERA that still ranks third in UH history.

He immediately enlisted in the Air Force and served 26 years, retiring as a full colonel. He was inducted into the UH Athletics Hall of Fame in 2023. Bruce Aguilar, Sam Rayburn, Class of 1985. No Pasadena ISD school has ever won a state baseball title, but none has ever come closer than the Al Campo-coached Texans in 1985. Aguilar led the way that season with a 14-2 record and a .318 batting average.

He pitched Rayburn to victory in the regional title game and then beat

Lubbock Monterrey in the state semifinals with another complete-game effort. Although the Texans lost to Victoria Stroman the next day, it was a late-game single by Aguilar that broke up Stroman's bid for a no-hitter.

Weeks later, Aguilar was named a member of the South squad for the North-South All-Star Game in the Astrodome. With Campo at the South helm, Aguilar combined with two other pitchers on a two-hit victory. Aguilar also singled in the contest.

Aguilar moved on to Baylor, where he lettered four years as one of the Bears' most dependable hurlers. His 21 career victories still ranks eighth in Baylor history.

Josh Rodriguez, South Houston, Class of 2003.

A three-sport standout at South Houston who sparkled at shortstop and on the mound, Rodriguez was drafted out of high school by the Oakland Athletics in the 39th round.

But after three sensational seasons at Rice, Rodriguez shot all the way up to the second round, where the Cleveland Indians nabbed him.

His 20-year sojourn in pro baseball included a brief stretch of big-league action with the Pittsburgh Pirates in 2011. He played on three championship teams in the minors and was named to two all-star teams. He finished his career with seven seasons in the Mexican League.

His legacy at Rice remains linked to legendary Owls coach Wayne Graham, who guided Rice to the national title shortly after Rodriguez's graduation from South Houston. As a Rice junior, Rodriguez helped lead the Owls to another CWS berth.

During his time on the Rice roster, the Owls won 148 of 194 games — a 76.3 percent clip — and made the NCAA playoff each season. As a freshman, he hit .306 and was named Conference Freshman of the Year.

He hit .345 as a sophomore and .344 as a junior. He was selected to play for Team USA, where he hit .326 against international competition.

Kristine Kelly, Pasadena High, Class of 2006.

An academic All-American who graduated sixth in her class, Kelly ranked as the district's queen of the pool during her days at Pasadena. She broke (or established) 71 school swim records. Only one school record on the books escaped her wake. She wiped out a total of 21 district swimming marks.

Kelly wrapped up her competitive career with two years on the University of Houston swim team, where she reached the Conference USA finals five times in three different events: the 100- and 200-yard backstroke and the 1,650-yard freestyle.

A decade's worth of competition in the Texas Amateur Athletics Federation state championships saw her collect 28 medals, 21 of them gold. Twice she competed in the AAU Junior Olympics, winning four national titles in backstroke, butterfly and freestyle events.

In high school, Kelly won four district titles and was a regional finalist each year in the 100-yard backstroke. Three times she was named unanimous all-district, winning most valuable swimmer honors as both a junior and senior.

Nancy Cole Bowman, Pasadena Memorial, Class of 2009.

Although her family roots were rich with basketball talent, Cole Bowman embraced volleyball when she arrived at Memorial. It proved to be a productive choice.

By her sophomore year, she had a scholarship offer from Rice, where she became one of the most acclaimed players in school history.

She was named an All-American three times, starting with her sopho-

more season. As a freshman, Cole led the Owls to an NCAA playoff berth, just the third in school history.

The Owls finished second in Conference USA her junior and senior seasons, the best league showings in Rice history. She put up numbers that still rank on many of the school's top 10 career and single-season lists.

At Memorial, she was first-team all-district from her sophomore year on and was twice named the team's MVP. As both a junior and a senior, she led the Houston area in kills and earned all-state recognition.

Also packed into her volleyball resume were numerous club sport heroics and other highlights, such as the summer after her graduation from Memorial when she led the Absolute Volleyball Club to the gold medal in the national division of the USA Volleyball Junior Olympics. She was named division MVP.

Coach

Bobby Kramer, Dobie, tennis. The South Belt area, a desert of tennis activity when Kramer arrived at Dobie in 1977 and produced a bounty of talent under his tutelage — enough for Kramer's teams to dominate District 23-5A in the mid-1980s and put the school on the state tennis map.

At its peak, Kramer's program earned top-10 state rankings with a run of district championships. Starting in 1983, his girls captured five straight team tennis titles. Starting in 1985, his combined boys and girls teams won three straight district titles.

His 1985 and 1987 squads reached the regional semifinals. In between, in 1986, the Longhorns advanced to the regional finals, falling just one step short of state. That squad won 59 of 63 matches in district play and swept the district field in head-to-head competition, 7-0.

Kramer was named to Dobie's Faculty Hall of Honor in 2017 and selected to the Texas Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2022.

Team

1980 Dobie Boys Cross-country: Coached by John Bryan, the Longhorns easily captured the state championship, the first state title of any kind in Dobie history. And, to date, the only state cross-country title ever won by a Pasadena ISD school.

Bryan's star runner, Gawn Guy, came in a solid 10th.

Still, Bryan, waiting anxiously at the finish line, worried that because several of his runners had started too quickly, they might fade at the finish.

Others arrived, among

them, Phillip Williams, who finished 19th, Greg Johnson, who was 24th, and David Windsor, 29th.

It was the one non-senior who saved the day. Junior Pete Ramos, normally Dobie's fourth or fifth runner, had hustled home in 13th place, just three slots — and four sec-

onds — behind Guy. When the results were tallied, the Longhorns had won with a low score of 56 points. Edinburg was a distant second with 93.

Guy and Johnson would go on to play prominent roles in Dobie's run to the state track championship the following spring.



Sharonda McDonald-Kelley is an all-time great in the NCAA Division I softball ranks and has subsequently ascended the sport's coaching ranks. Now at Michigan State University in East Lansing, she earlier this month began her third season with the Spartans. MSU opened the season with three losses to nationallyranked opponents Arizona and Alabama and is currently 1-4.

Longhorn track and field gets off to fast start at DP Kethan relays

Continued from Page 5 teammate Aracely Alvarado seventh at 5:49.00.

The Deer Park event did not feature a 4x100 relay, but Dobie was led by Harris in the 4x2 for a third-place finish of 1:50.07. Harris was joined by in the event.

The Longhorns were fourth in the 4x400 at 4:17.07.

Dobie junior Kylar Joseph also medaled as she was third in the triple jump with a leap of 34-02. Joseph (4-10, fewer tries) and teammate Menefee (4-10) finished third and fifth respectively in the high jump.

A time of 13.26 earned the Longhorns' Daisha Jackson third place and a bronze medal in the 100, and her time of 27.79 was sixth at the 200 distance.

Mathews, who just days ago announced his intentions to play football

collegiately at Memphis, came up golden in the 200 at Deer Park as he won the event at 22.33.

Teammate Jaylon Broussard was fifth at 22.95, and Maurice Bryant of Dobie was eighth in a time of 23.97.

Mathews was joined by as the Longhorns claimed the gold medal in the 4x1 relay in a time of 1:31.44. Dobie was also sixth at 3:37.01 in the 4x400 relay. Junior Damarcus Hodges was the champion of the triple jump as he made his way to the 42-03 mark for the gold medal. He also went 20-00 mark for third place in the long jump, while Broussard fourth at 19-11.

Senior Tariq Riley, who has announced that he will play football beginning this fall at Mary Hardin-Baylor, finished second at 52.01 in the 400 for a silver medal, with

teammate Deshaun Singleton third at 52.24.

Freshman Jordan Roman and senior Chris Lopez led the way for the Longhorns in the distance events.

Roman delivered a time of 10:11.84 in the 3,200 for second place and a silver medal. In the same event, Lopez was fourth with a time of 10:18.53.

Roman also competed in the 800, where he was seventh at 2:14.79. Lopez, meanwhile, took seventh at the 1,600 distance in a time of 4:51.33.

Dobie's Joseph and James Spivey finished tied for fifth in the high jump at 5-6.

Blinn College football signee Markel Terry was fifth at 43-09 in the shot put, with teammate Cedric Gillespie eighth and 40-05. In the discus event, Gillespie's top throw of 117-08 placed him sixth.

Dobie baseball players earn collegiate scholarships



Dobie Class of 2025 seniors and Longhorn varsity baseball players Will Joiner III (second from left) and Julian Valencia (second from right) were among the academic scholarship recipients during the Dobie High School 2025 Hall of Honor celebration and ceremony Jan. 31 at the school. Joining the players was Joiner's father,

Will Joiner II, and Valencia's mother, Denice Valencia. Along with Joiner III, the other four Hall of Honor scholarship recipients included Kaylie Bui, Jacob Guzman, Rosette Calvillo and Emily Hernandez. Valencia, Joselyn Benitez and Deseree Hernandez were awarded the Cherry Foundation Vocational Scholarship.

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