



South Belt-Ellington Leader

Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

Vol. 50, No. 6

Leader seeks submissions

The South Belt-Ellington 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.

Chamber to host annual gala

The South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce's annual gala is set to take place from 6 to 11 p.m. Friday, March 7, at the San Jacinto College Center for Petroleum, Engineering and Technology, located at 7901 Fairmont Parkway in Pasadena. Titled *Bollywood Nights*, this year's banquet will feature a blend of traditional Indian cuisine and American food, entertainment and dancing. Indian attire is encouraged.

The gala will feature a tribute to Leader co-founder and chamber co-founder Marie Flickinger, who died this past November. Both a Citizen of the Year and a Chamber Member of the Year will be announced at the event. The event will also feature the swearing in of new chamber officers. For additional information or to purchase tickets, call 281-481-5516 or email info@southbeltchamber.com.

CBMUD to close early

The offices of Clear Brook City MUD will close at 3 p.m. Friday, March 7, to support the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce annual gala. The offices will re-open for regular business hours Monday, March 10 at 8 a.m. Residents needing immediate assistance should call the MUD's after-hours number at 281-484-2893.

Knights sell fish during Lent

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will hold a weekly fish fry at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church, 11011 Hall Road, each Friday during Lent from 4 to 7 p.m. Dinners will include fried fish, fries, hush puppies, coleslaw, corn on the cob and iced tea for \$15. Dine-in or take-out will be available.

Clear Brook Landing to meet

The Clear Brook Landing Homeowners Association will host its annual meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, March 24, at the Harris County Parker Williams Branch Library, located at 10851 Scarsdale at Beamer, Suite 510.

City to collect heavy trash

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

Blood drive set for March 16

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will host a blood drive Sunday, March 16, at St. Luke the Evangelist, located at 11011 Hall Road, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments are preferred but not necessary. Donors must bring identification. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, visit www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/geo.

Sageglen to meet March 17

Sageglen Community Association will hold a homeowner meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, March 17, at the Sageglen Community Building, 11610 Sageglen. Guest speaker to be announced. Refreshments will be served. All Sageglen residents are encouraged to attend. For additional information, call 281-481-2160.

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.

Ellington eRecycling set

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

Items accepted are PCs, servers, keyboards, mice, laptops, game consoles, monitors, small kitchen appliances, memory chips, hubs and routers, printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, projectors, rechargeable batteries, cable boxes, car batteries and phones.

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

Pasadena ISD's CTE program recognized

Career and technical program earns PISD a "District of Distinction" title

Pasadena ISD's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program recently earned a 2025 District of Distinction recognition from the Career and Technical Association of Texas (CTAT).

This esteemed recognition honors districts that excel in providing exceptional, high-quality Career and Technical Education programs designed to meet the diverse needs of students, local communities and employers.

"Join us in honoring the 2025 CTAT Districts of Distinction, recognized for their innovation,

dedication and excellence in advancing career and technical education," a post on CTAT's website read. "These exceptional districts excel in preparing students for future workforce success through impactful programs that align with industry demands, foster achievement and inspire best practices statewide. Their commitment sets a benchmark for others to follow as they shape the future of Texas. Congratulations to this year's recipients."

The CTE District of Distinction program em-

phasizes innovation and workforce readiness, showcasing districts that not only lead in educational offerings but also inspire others through their dedication and achievements. This prestigious designation is awarded to districts that successfully meet the rigorous standards established by the CTAT Board and executive committee.

"The CTE District of Distinction program recognizes districts that go above and beyond to offer robust, high-quality CTE programs that meet the needs of students, local communities and employers," CTAT's website states. "This award spotlights districts that excel in providing innovative programs, prioritizing workforce readiness, and inspiring others through their success and dedication."

Pasadena ISD's commitment to excellence in CTE is a testament to its ongoing efforts to prepare students for successful careers in a rapidly evolving workforce.

CTE programs are available at every high

school campus within Pasadena ISD, supported by a dedicated team of 170 teachers who serve more than 10,000 students.

The following is a list of CTE programs offered by Pasadena ISD:

- Agriculture, food and natural resources.
- Architecture and construction.
- Arts, AV technology and communications.
- Business, marketing and finance.
- Cosmetology.
- Education and training.
- Health science.
- Hospitality and tourism.
- Information technology.
- Law and public service.
- STEM.
- Transportation, distribution and logistics.
- Welding.

To view a list of CTE programs by campus, visit www.pasadenaisd.org/13641_4.

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Pct. 2's Sanchez bids farewell



A going away celebration was recently held at The Gardens for outgoing Harris County Precinct 2 Sgt. Robert Sanchez (second from left), who is leaving the local department after serving 21 years to take a job as administrative sergeant with the Fort Bend County Precinct 3 office. Shown above at the event with Sanchez are Kay Barbour, Linda Webster, Seth Webb, Dawn Salazar and Oscar Salazar.

San Jacinto College launches "competency-based" program

New option allows students to skip courses already familiar to them

By Miranda Dunlap

This article first appeared in the Houston Landing and is republished with permission.

Forget zoning out in class while the professor drones on about a concept you've got down pat. Or racing to catch up on a lesson you missed before the class moves on.

Under a new program at San Jacinto College, the amount of time students spend on a lesson is determined by one thing: whether they've mastered it.

San Jacinto plans in March to launch its first "competency-based" education program, which will allow global logistics and supply chain management students to move through their online coursework at their own pace. San Jacinto leaders aim to attract industry workers who want to advance their careers, without having to spend a predetermined amount of time — such as a semester or year — in classes.

"Our goal is to help these working adult learners be able to accelerate through a program, using their content knowledge," said Shelley Rinehart, San Jacinto's assistant vice chancellor of

instructional and support program efficacy. "It also allows them to spend more time where they really need the content knowledge, and less time where they have mastered that."

While college classes are typically measured by credit hours or how long a student spends in a class, competency-based education "is more about what you know than it is about the time you spent on it," said Amber Garrison Duncan, chief operating officer of the national Competency-Based Education Network, a nonprofit that helped San Jacinto build its program.

San Jacinto will offer four courses in the new model, with students completing various certificates that prove their industry skills and help them get higher-paying jobs. The program will be the first of its kind among large Houston community colleges.

Here's what we know about competency-based education and how the college plans to get the novel program off the ground.

How does it work?

Under the competency-based model, stu-

dents must demonstrate that they've "mastered" class content or skills before they can move on to the next lessons.

San Jacinto is targeting adult learners who already work in the logistics field with its first class, so most students won't be starting fresh. Instead, they'll arrive with varying levels of industry knowledge. As such, San Jacinto advisors must assess what each student knows.

Before starting the program, students will be quizzed on their existing skills and college advisors will look at any certifications they already have. With both in mind, advisors will personalize each student's degree or certification plan, zeroing in on areas where the student needs more practice and allowing them to effectively test out of areas they've already mastered.

"It's not really about you skipping content as much as it is that you may have gaps in your knowledge," Rinehart said. "You may go

taking place at the church, two cars pulled up — one containing Saiz.

Witnesses said Saiz produced a pistol and fired multiple times, striking two students. The crowd then reportedly dispersed quickly.

Responding paramedics transported the two victims to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. One student was shot in the arm and the other in the chest.

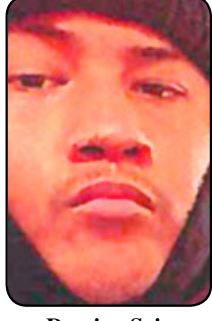
One victim was later released from the hospital, while the second victim remained hospitalized at press time in stable condition.

Pasadena ISD officials said Saiz is a former Memorial student but he hasn't been enrolled since the 2022-2023 school year.

While Saiz has been charged, he remained at large at press time. Police urge the public not to make contact with Saiz if seen, as he is considered armed and dangerous.

Additional counselors and police were at the campus following the incident, Pasadena ISD officials said.

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Damian Saiz

Driver killed in Highway 3 train crash

A driver was killed around 7:50 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26, after colliding with a train in the 11400 block of SH 3/Old Galveston Road near Scarsdale.

According to officials with Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Phil Sandlin's office, the driver of a gray four-door Cadillac drove onto the railroad tracks in an attempt to pull into the 84 Lumber yard, but a Union Pacific train traveling south on the tracks was unable to stop and struck the Cadillac.

Houston Fire Department paramedics trans-

ported the 26-year-old Hispanic male driver to HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake, where he was pronounced dead.

There were no passengers in the Cadillac and no other injuries were reported in this incident.

The northbound lanes of SH 3/Old Galveston Road were partially shut down while Precinct 8 crash investigators, in coordination with Union Pacific officials, processed the scene. All lanes were reopened at around 8:50 a.m.

This case remained under investigation at press time.

Hike and bike renovations complete

Harris County Precinct 2 officials held a ribbon-cutting Wednesday, Feb. 26, to celebrate the completion of renovations being made to the South Belt Hike and Bike Trail.

According to Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia, the improvements were made in response to several requests from local constituents.

Funding for the \$765,000 construction project was provided by Garcia's office, as the trail was recently redistricted from Precinct 1 to Precinct 2.

According to Precinct 2 officials, the aging trail — which runs along Blackhawk from around Hall Road to FM 1959/Dixie Farm Road — was in a state of disrepair, as was the adjacent side-

walk. The project replaced the trail that was in poor condition with a new 8-foot concrete trail, upgraded ramps at street crossings and improved overall conditions.

The new trail will improve conditions for walking, jogging and biking, while making the trail more accessible for everyone, county officials said.

This marked the completion of Phase 2 of the project, as Phase 1, which upgraded the trail at Juneteenth Park, connecting Dixie Farm Road Park to Scarsdale Boulevard. Work on Phase 2 ran from August 2024 to January 2025.

Officials said approximately 700 residents use the hike and bike trail every day.

County finishes trail work



A ribbon-cutting was held by Harris County officials Wednesday, Feb. 26, to celebrate the completion of renovations being made to the South Belt Hike and Bike Trail. Begun in August 2024, this final phase of construction replaced the trail that was in poor condition with a new 8-foot concrete trail, upgraded ramps at street crossings and improved overall conditions. A before photo of the trail is shown above left, while the photo above right shows the trail after improvements.

In My Opinion

King for Harris County toll road reforms

As I have previously shared with you, the Harris County Toll Road system has become a cash cow. Last year, it earned a profit of over \$400 million. In just the first two months of this year, it generated \$94 million in profit.

However, we know very little about how those profits are used, and there have been increasing questions about whether they are being used effectively and appropriately.

Under the law that enabled Harris County to create the toll road authority, the Commissioners Court is established as the governing body and is given broad authority to govern it. That authority includes how to spend any excess funds generated by the toll roads. The only restriction is that the excess must be used for "the study, design, construction, maintenance, repair, or operation of roads, streets, highways, or other related facilities." That last phrase — "other related facilities" — creates broad discretion with the Commissioners Court on how those funds should be utilized. The connection of some of the expenditures of these funds has been quite tangential to mobility.

To make matters worse, the enabling legislation specifically says that the Court may spend those funds "without state approval, supervision, or regulation." The only check on how the Commissioners Court allocates or spends the excess funds is a very cursory review occasionally performed by the County Auditor, a political appointee. The last review was done in 2022.

In recent years, the Commissioners Court has divided most of the money between the four commissioners, allocating some to other departments, including a large dollop for "General Administration." As of November, the mobility fund held \$463 million in unspent mobility funds. Certainly, some of the excess proceeds are being used to fund important infrastructure projects, but there is virtually zero visibility or oversight on how they are being spent.

In addition, there have been some serious questions about the administration of the toll road authority. Long-time investigative reporter, Wayne Dolcefino, uncovered what appears to be very questionable staffing contracts. Also, the executive director was given a 40% raise last year, which even drew the opposition of our spendthrift County Judge.

This suggests that it is time to reform the Authority's governance and how its excess proceeds are being spent. Toll roads in Texas are authorized and regu-

lated by state law. Therefore, the Legislature clearly has the authority, and I would suggest, the responsibility to step in and make some badly needed reforms.

The first step would be to reform the governance. There is no reason the County Commissioners should be the only elected officials with input on how the Authority is run. Metro, for example, has members from the City of Houston, the County, and the other cities participating in the transit agency.

So, we should expand the board to provide broader representation. Perhaps we should add two members appointed by the Houston City Council and two more members from suburban cities. We could also add one representing the vast unincorporated areas of Harris County and municipal utility districts, some of which perform street maintenance.

This expanded Authority board should meet in its own public meetings, separate and apart from Commissioner Court meetings. It should retain an outside auditor and its own counsel. In other words, it should be a truly independent agency and not the political fiefdom of the County Commissioners.

Second, any projects financed using the excess proceeds should be subject to the review of a third party. Houston-Galveston Area Council's (HGAC) Transportation Policy Council must approve most mobility projects in the region, so that would be a possibility. Also, since the toll roads are integral to the State's overall highway system, perhaps the Texas Transportation Commission could be tasked with approving projects.

Third, the excess funds should be more equitably distributed. Even the division of the proceeds evenly between the Commissioners makes no sense. Precinct 3 has nearly 50 percent of the lanes for which the County is responsible for maintaining but only gets 25 percent of the money.

Also, there is no reason that some of the excess proceeds should not be distributed to other entities that maintain roads connecting to the toll system. Mostly, this would be the municipalities in Harris County, but some could also be allocated to municipal utility districts.

I am sure there are other good ideas about reforming HCTRA. However, the status quo, in my opinion, is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. The Authority will probably be producing close to a billion dollars annually in profit for the foreseeable future. Those funds are a great opportunity to improve our mobility infrastructure. But they also represent the opportunity for a lot of mischief and the misuse of public dollars. The Legislature needs to ensure we get the former and not the latter.

Bill King

Shaar Hashalom hosts Purim carnival

Congregation Shaar Hashalom will host a Purim carnival family and attractions for kids of all ages. Everyone is welcome. Carnival attractions include games with prizes, professional face painting, jumping castle, live petting zoo, auction and carnival food. Food choices include a kosher hot dog, veggie burger, cotton candy, popcorn and chips.

Presale tickets which are available for \$10, include unlimited rides, popcorn and cotton candy. Advance tickets can be purchased at www.shaarhashalom.org/event/purim-carnival2025.htm. Day of carnival ticket purchase is \$13 and meal ticket is \$10.

The event will take place Sunday, March 9, from noon to 3 p.m., at 16020 El Camino Real, Houston, TX 77062 located between Bay Area and El Dorado. Congregation Shaar Hashalom is the only Conservative synagogue serving the Clear Lake Bay Area Community since 1967. For information call 281-488-5861.

NASA Aglow Lighthouse meets March 22

NASA Aglow Lighthouse invites all to its meeting on Saturday, March 22, beginning at 10 a.m. at Praise Chapel, 18516 SH 3, Webster.

Yolanda Cruz is a well-known minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She had a Damascus encounter, where she encountered the love of Christ, healing power and deliverance and surrendered her life to Jesus.

Cruz traveled serving at United with Christ Ministries full time for 22 years. Her passion is foremost Jesus and to make him known. Her greatest desire is bringing souls into the Kingdom of God. She served in a jail and prison ministry, the Community Pregnancy Center, led women's bible studies, served in prayer ministry, outreaches in Houston and will be involved in ministering on a Cuban crusade in the earlier weeks of March.

Bring a friend to the meeting as NASA Aglow welcomes Cruz and celebrates the presence of the Lord.

Local library events set

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

Bracewell Branch Library

Bracewell Library is at 9002 Kingspoint. Customers are encouraged to visit the building to browse, check out and return materials, use the computers and Wi-Fi, and check out holds. For information, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/>. For online learning, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/online-learning-7556> or call 832-393-2580. Hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, noon – 8 p.m.; Fridays, 1 – 5 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Bracewell is closed Sundays.

Thursday, March 6, 3 – 4 p.m. Open lab computer help. Registration required.
Thursday, March 6, 4 – 5 p.m. Family Storytime. Registration required.
Monday, March 10, 11 a.m. – noon. Open lab computer help. Registration required.
Wednesday, March 12, 6 – 7 p.m. Living English lessons. Registration required.
Visit <https://houstonlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/events> for more library events.

Book drop

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

Parker Williams Library

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

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

The following events are scheduled for Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.:
Thursday, March 6, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Toddler time.
Friday, March 7, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. AARP free tax services.
Friday, March 7, 1 – 3 p.m. Genealogy.
Friday, March 7, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Lego club.
Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m. – noon. Tai Chi.
Monday, March 10, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. AARP free tax services.
Monday, March 10, 1 – 2:30 p.m. ESL conversation club. Registration required.
Monday, March 10, 4 – 5:30 p.m. 3D printer orientation. Registration required.
Monday, March 10, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Book buddies. Registration required.
Tuesday, March 11, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Babies 'n' books.
Wednesday, March 12, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Tai Chi.
Wednesday, March 12, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Citizenship classes. Registration required.

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

- After receiving notification that holds are ready for pickup, call 832-927-7870.
- Have a library card number and PIN handy.
- A pickup time and instructions will be given.
- Upon arriving, park in one of the two parking spots reserved for curbside holds.
- Be prepared to show a library card or other form of ID for verification.

Hours are Monday, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 – 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Visit <https://www.hcpl.net/branch/parker-williams-branch-library> for details.

Online services

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

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

Gunshots fired near Memorial, striking 2 students

Incident marks 2nd shooting at campus in 1 month; suspect remains at large

Continued from Page 1
The Pasadena Police Department is assisting the Pasadena ISD Police Department with the investigation.

Anyone with information on Saiz's location was asked to call the Pasadena Police Department at 713-477-1221 or speak anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS (8477).

This marked the second

shooting at the area high school in just one month.

On Saturday, Feb. 1, an 83-year-old man was arrested after allegedly firing a gun at a band event being held at Pasadena Memorial High School.

Dennis Erwin Brandl Jr. was arrested and charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

According to police, Brandl had no connection to the school or any

of the students involved in the event that involved schools from multiple districts.

Brandl told police he had been followed from his house in Spring and he was in fear for his life at the time of the shooting.

A 26-year-old male at the band event was shot in the shoulder and had to be airlifted to an area hospital for treatment. He

is expected to make a full recovery.

As Brandl was firing his small-caliber handgun, a group of attendees, parents and students led by Cy-Fair dad Juan Lopez tackled the suspect and was able to subdue the shooter until police arrived.

Before he could be sentenced for his role in the shooting, however, Brandl died from a medical episode Sunday, March 2, according to police.

While being held in Harris County Jail on no bond, Brandl was transported to Ben Taub Hospital Friday, Feb. 28, following a medical emergency.

At this time, court records indicate the Harris County District Attorney's Office requested to dismiss the charges against Brandl due to medical issues.

On Saturday, March 1, Brandl was released from county custody and into the care of a private health-care provider. The following day, he died.

Pasadena ISD officials officially recognized Lopez and the other heroes responsible for bringing down the shooter at the school district's monthly board meeting Tuesday, Feb. 25. See related story on Page 4.

Roberts Middle School names Aviators of the Month



Fred Roberts Middle School announced the Aviators of the month for February. These students are recognized for being engaged collaborators by actively participating in class discussions, asking questions, working well with peers and adults and showing curiosity, passion and interest in their own learning process. Left to right, are counselor Michael Evans, assistant principal Karen Pena, fifth-graders Mariany Delgado, Adam Akuz, sixth-graders Vanessa Gonzales, Braden Miller, assistant principal David Blevins and counselor Crissy Higham.

Photo submitted

Frazier Elementary receives dictionaries



The Pasadena Rotary Club distributed dictionaries to every third-grade student at Frazier. The Rotary Club took time and taught the students how to use the dictionary to find word definitions and all the other features included in a dictionary. Pictured, left to right, are (front row) Kristen Mesa, Ka'Leigha Ramirez, Leyla Leal, Josephine Mata, third-grade teacher Sara Rodriguez, (back row) club members Lee Clark, Dr. Paul Covell and Cecil Ghormly.

SHSU names Fall 2024 dean's list

The students listed on the Dean's List of Academic Honors at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, are undergraduates who have achieved a grade point average of at least 3.5 out of a perfect 4.0 in all work attempted while enrolled in not less than 12 semester hours. The university has recognized the following students for earning the honor for the fall 2024 semester.

Houston
Aric Albers, Payton Barkman, Nancy Bazaldua, Megan Cook, Lillie Crow, Julissa Duarte, Kaden Fernandez, Kaylee Frank, Aracely Garcia, Kyah Griffin, Sonia Lopez, Christian Mariscal, Kyrallynn Mcgee, Bella Perez, Jared Tate and Ariel Zamora.

Pearland
Kiana Rodriguez

CCRW meets March 7

The Clear Creek Republican Women's group (CCRW) is holding their monthly meeting on Friday, March 7, at La Brisa Mexican Bar and Grill at 501 N. Wesley Drive in League City. Doors will open at 11:30 a.m.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Jeffrey Addicot will be the guest speaker. He will discuss The Trump Doctrine and Emerging National Security Threats. Register today at <https://ClearCreekrw.org>.

CCA of Retired Teachers

The Clear Creek Association of Retired Teachers (CCART) will hold its March meeting on Tuesday, March 11. All meetings will be held at the Bay Area Community Center, 5002 NASA Parkway in Seabrook. Murder mystery novelist, Cherry North cutt, will be featured.

The gathering will start at 9:30 a.m. with a social get-together for coffee and cookies. The business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. All Texas retired school employees from the area are invited. Annual dues are \$50.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST
Catholic Church
Rev. Douglas J. Guthrie, Pastor
Rev. Antonio Cisneros, Parochial Vicar
11011 Hall Rd.
(between Beamer & Blackhawk)
www.stlukecatholic.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.

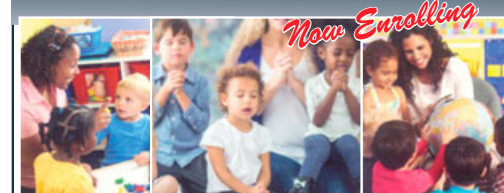
South Belt takes on chess tournament



South Belt Elementary School's chess team participated in Pasadena ISD's winter chess tournament on Feb. 22. Third-grader Max Leal received an award for Best Sportsmanship. Pictured are (left) Kenneth Hernandez who placed sixth in the fourth-grade division and Rhett Sullivan who placed third.

Photos by Anh Ton

New Covenant Christian Church Day 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

“Competency-based” program launched

Continued from Page 1

they must wait until the next eight-week term begins to start their next class.

“We would offer things like additional labs where you might want to meet with the faculty member and say, ‘Concept B, I don’t understand, and I need some additional support on that,’” Rinehart said. “It’s no longer about ... the teacher at the front of the classroom, as much as it is somebody on the side, kind of walking with you on that journey.”

Pros and cons

The largest benefit of competency-based education, proponents and San Jacinto leaders say, is flexibility.

The online format allows students to learn on their own time, meaning they can continue to work their jobs simultaneously. Students spend more time on areas they need more practice in, and less on topics they don’t. Plus, if a student is sick and misses a week, the class doesn’t move on without them.

Overall, students might not have to commit as much time to securing a credential — such as a degree or certificate — from a community college.

“We’ve got a lot of folks in our community that have been working for a really long

time in a certain field, but they don’t have a credential,” Rinehart said. “And so what we’re trying to do is to give them a flexible learning option that allows them to use their content knowledge to accelerate and to be flexible through their learning, because we really want them to get that credential.”

However, some colleges have seen pushback to the competency-based model, which has stemmed from a few concerns: fear that it isn’t the same quality as typical classroom education, worries that students with less self-motivation may stumble, or reluctance to make such a big shift.

Adopting the model requires colleges to get approval from their accreditor, and it can take a while to get off the ground. San Jacinto’s program is four years in the making, college leaders said.

How popular is it?

Competency-based education isn’t widespread, but it’s growing in popularity. Garrison Duncan said it’s grown from a handful of institutions offering the model in 2013 to over 600 colleges now.

“For higher ed, that’s a pretty big change in 10 years,” she said.

The model has increasingly come to life at community

colleges, particularly in Texas, after the COVID-19 pandemic sent many classes into fully online formats, Duncan said.

San Jacinto’s program will start small, with college leaders hoping to enroll 20 to 30 students in the first year.

“It’s awesome to be the first one to do something. It is scary to do it. But, you know, I don’t think we have a choice,” Rinehart said. “I think we have to help meet our community where they’re at and where the needs are.”

Western Governor’s University, a Utah-based online college using the competency-based model, provides some insight into the demand for this kind of learning. Hundreds of Houston-area community college students have transferred to the college in recent years, records obtained by the Landing from each of the colleges show. Western Governor’s ranked as the 12th-most popular transfer destination for San Jacinto students over the last four academic years.

Why global logistics?

San Jacinto has recently focused more on the logistics and distribution industry, a shift born from an advisory committee of industry leaders who help steer the college’s technical programs. In January,

the college’s board of trustees approved a bachelor’s degree in the same subject that will debut in spring 2026.

The logistics industry, which handles the movement of goods from producers to consumers, drives Houston’s economy and is especially prevalent in the south Houston area, where San Jacinto serves roughly 32,000 students. Over 70,000 employees work in the logistics industry in Pasadena, according to the Pasadena Economic Development Council, fueled by the many nearby petrochemical companies and the Port of Houston shipping hub.

“We were just hearing from our industry partners that there was an issue with employees that had content knowledge but didn’t have a credential,” Rinehart said. “There are a lot of companies that are wanting to advance their employees, but they don’t have that credential that goes along with it.”

More to come?

San Jacinto leaders hope to expand the number of programs offering a competency-based format.

In the immediate future, they’re eyeing construction management and child development programs, but don’t yet have solid plans for either.

Stuchbery recognizes students of the month



Stuchbery Elementary School has recognized the students pictured as students of the month for February. Left to right, are (first row) Cesar Rodriguez, Jasper LeBlanc, Marleigh LeBlanc, Victoria Tavira, Mateo Tzintzun, Lydia Teko Agbo, (second row) Alissa Tovar, Jayleen Martinez, William Castro, Ivan Velasquez, Abigail Hale, Maya Solis, Grace Mejia, Skylar Taylor, Lillian Mascorro, (third row) Johnny Knight,

Mateo Llanas, Ronald Alvarez, Daniel Bui, Vianna Rivera, Frida Kahlil, Tiana Thomas, Brantley Lucas, (fourth row) America Paredes, Kayden Spears, Miguel Amaya, Sadie Jones, Aya Ghneim and Alyssa Valdez (school counselor). Not pictured, are Rex Puy, Julissa Melgar, Zoe Jimenez, John Blanco, Jose Mendez, Aaliyah Sampson, Allison Gallegos, Crystalynn Simon and Jace Ramirez.

TWC is now taking applications

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is now accepting applications for a new grant to strengthen the Texas health care workforce. The new dual credit health care grants will provide funding to programs that allow high school students to earn college credits for courses that lead to health care careers.

Grant awards will support dual credit costs to prepare more Texans for the health-care industry’s most in-demand occupations. Applications are open to community, technical, and state colleges in Texas. To be eligible, applicants must partner with at least one Texas independent school district or open enrollment charter school.

Grantees will be eligible for a maximum award amount of \$300,000. Eligible expenses include tuition and fees, curriculum development, and certification costs.

TWC approved \$3 million for this special initiative through the Skills Development Fund to support, create, and expand dual credit career and technical education (CTE) programs that address local employer demand for healthcare occupations. Dual credit programs allow high school students to complete college credit hours while pursuing their long-term career goals.

Applicants can find more information and access application documents on the Dual Credit Homepage. Please submit all application documents and questions to DCHealthcare@twc.texas.gov.

This new grant is launching as Texas celebrates CTE Month, which occurs in February of each year. CTE Month recognizes the vital role these programs play in preparing students for high-skill careers across the state.

Through initiatives like the dual credit healthcare grant, TWC continues to support the expansion of CTE programs to address workforce needs.

Applicants can find more information and access application documents on the Dual Credit Homepage. Please submit all application documents and questions to DCHealthcare@twc.texas.gov.

7MHD searches for volunteers

The 7 Marines Honor Detail (7MHD) is a nonprofit organization of Marines who serve veterans of all branches in the United States military. The group provides casket guard, rifle salute, taps, folding of the flag, color guards, local parades, Houston National Cemetery functions, Honor Flight receptions, VA hospital events and more.

Founded in December 2024 7MHD has completed all 72 assignments which were delegated to them. Based in the Southbelt area, the group serves local funeral homes and cemeteries.

The group is seeking for fellow Marines to join their team in providing final honors salutes for veterans’ families. They outfit any Marine with a uniform and welcome both men and women, as well as associates who wish to help.

For more information about volunteering, call 832-329-7250 or 281-793-9811 and leave your name and return number.

PISD’s CTE program recognized

Continued from Page 1

To see a complete list of the 2025 CTAT Districts of Distinction, visit www.ctat.org/page/districts_of_distinction.

Lewis Career and Technical HS

In addition to programs being available at each of Pasadena ISD’s comprehensive high schools, students may also take CTE courses at the Lewis Career and Technical High School, which offers nearly all of the programs at one location.

Opened in 2014, the Lewis Career and Technical High School houses roughly 1,500 students from all five of Pasadena ISD’s other high schools, helping to alleviate overcrowding at the campuses. Located on a 32-acre plot of land at the corner of Beltway 8 and Genoa Red Bluff, the school is designed to provide students with the skills necessary to enter the workforce immediately following graduation.

Funding for the campus was approved by voters in November 2011 as part of a \$270 million bond. Construction of the 250,000-square-foot campus cost approximately \$37 million.

All PISD students between ninth and 12th grade are eligible to attend the school. The campus provides a full-day learning program, with students returning to their home campus for athletics and fine arts.

A joint venture with San Jacinto College, the campus will allow participating students to graduate with a high school diploma, receive a professional certificate or license and earn college hours by taking dual credit courses, advanced placement courses or by gaining articulated credits.

The campus is divided into six separate academies: business and human services; health services; agriculture; transportation and shipping; manufacturing and construction; and technology and engineering.

– The business and human services academy will offer training in hospitality, culinary arts, cosmetology, child guidance and management and criminal justice.

– The health services academy will offer training to help

students become a certified nursing assistant, dental assistant, emergency medical technician or pharmacy technician.

– The agriculture academy will offer training in floral design and presentation, turf management, horticulture and how to become a veterinary technician.

– The transportation and shipping academy will offer training in automotive technology, transportation/distribution/logistics, automotive collision repair and maritime.

– The manufacturing and construction academy will offer training in engineering, robotics, welding, construction technology, HVAC and electrical.

– The technology and engineering academy will offer training in information technology, computer maintenance, computer networking, audio/video production, arts/audio video technology and animation and graphics.

For additional information about Pasadena ISD’s Lewis Career and Technical High School, visit careerandtechnical.pasadenaisd.org.



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Remember When

45 years ago (1980)

Residents in Gulf Palms were united against allowing a radioactive waste site in their neighborhood.

The second article in a series by the *Leader* revealed that 50 percent of all teenagers have had sexual intercourse and that 30 percent of sexually active girls give birth.

Nine local teens, all employees of Ron's Krispy Fried Chicken on Hughes, raised \$156 for two area victims of spina bifida, making it possible for them to attend the spina bifida camp.

Richard Moore Elementary School on Blackhawk was under construction and was expected to be completed in time for students to attend during the upcoming school year.

40 years ago (1985)

With the win by the Dobie Lariatettes at University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition at the Astro Arena, the Dobie team headed for the state competition March 3.

Members of the National Federation of Decency picketed the 7-11 Store on Hughes Road, claiming the chain of stores is the leading retailer of pornographic magazines.

South Belt Leader publishers Bobby Griffin and Marie Flickinger and editor Cheryl Bolen each received a School Bell Award from the Texas State Teachers association at the group's convention at the Dallas Hyatt Gregory.

35 Years ago (1990)

Pasadena Independent School District administration was awaiting the upcoming election to see if its proposed \$100 million bond election would pass.

An expert familiar with the Brio Superfund site said toxins found in the 50- and 100-foot aquifer were a source of contamination for Southbend drinking water, contrary to Brio Task Force claims.

Several turtles and other amphibians appeared along

Beamer as construction continued on the new waterline. All were relocated.

Dobie High School English teacher Marsha Moncrief died after a long illness.

30 years ago (1995)

Harris County purchased a large portion of the Scarsdale Plaza center on Scarsdale at Beamer for \$1.4 million.

The Clear Creek Independent School District board supported the rebuilding of Weber Elementary School in Seagen.

The occupants of the remaining 15 homes in the Southbend subdivision would have to bear the costs of funding the utility district which would quickly be out of money. Southbend Municipal Utility District officials explained the expenses do not decrease as homeowners move out.

25 years ago (2000)

Dobie's academic death-row team won a second-place state title, 20 individual medals and the highest score in Dobie's history.

Blackhawk opened to Fuqua, providing a shortcut to Hobby Airport.

Melissa Alcalá, 19, died in a motor vehicle accident.

20 years ago (2005)

Councilmember Addie Wiseman met with District E constituents in the South Belt to discuss Capital Improvement Projects. Among the projects discussed was the paving of Hughes Road from Beltway 8 to the city limits, replacement of the Sagemont pool, improvements to Blackhawk Park and the eventual relocation of the Bracewell Library at Alameda Mall.

Snow was brought to Atkinson Elementary to reward students who had met their accelerated reader goals.

KSEV radio talk show host Edd Hendee spoke to a large crowd at Sagemont Church about his recent visit to Iraq and the servicemen with whom he had talked. He also shared a slide presentation of

his visit.

Former South Belt resident Sarah O'Banion, a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, met Good Morning America co-host Diane Sawyer aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Houston police were following up on several leads in the shooting death of Luan Cong Pham, but no arrests had been made yet.

15 years ago (2010)

President Barack Obama's proposed budget called for the phasing out of NASA's space shuttle program, as well as its Constellation project, which was to return man to the moon by 2020. According to Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, this could entail a loss of as many as 11,500 jobs in the area.

The Memorial Hermann Healthcare System announced the appointment of Erin Asprey as CEO of Memorial Hermann Southeast. Asprey was the first female CEO in the hospital's 24-year history.

10 years ago (2015)

A local restaurant's decision to deny service to a man because of his facial tattoos drew national media attention. Would-be customer Erik Leighton said he and a friend were escorted by police out of Bombshells Restaurant and Bar, located on the Gulf Freeway at Fuqua, on March 7, as the establishment does not allow patrons to have tattoos on either their face or neck. Frustrated, Leighton took to social media to air his grievances. Online support for Leighton was overwhelming, with several leaving negative comments on Facebook and Yelp. Within hours, Bombshells' Facebook page had been taken down. A representative from Bombshells replied to Leighton on Facebook, saying the tattoo policy is in place to dissuade gang members from going to the restaurant/bar. Leighton, who has no criminal

record, said he is not a gang member.

5 years ago (2020)

The results from the March 3 primary elections were tallied, with the hotly contested race for the Democratic nomination in the race for the position of Precinct 2 constable headed to a May runoff. Incumbent Chris Diaz received 35 percent of the vote to challenger Jerry Garcia's 39 percent. The race had proven to be controversial, as a second candidate also named Jerry Garcia – the cousin of Diaz's wife, Jacinto City Mayor Ana Diaz – also appeared on the ballot, causing confusion among voters. Despite withdrawing from the race, the second Garcia still received 9 percent of the vote (1,347 votes), roughly on par with legitimate challenger George Coffney Jr. and ahead of Alberto "Bert" Rivera, who received only 7 percent. Even if the scores of both Garcias were combined, however, it would have still been just shy of the 50 percent threshold needed to circumvent a runoff. The winner of May's Democratic runoff election faced Republican Daniel Vela in November's general election.

Dobie High School senior Cameron Tobias excelled at the state Academic Decathlon championship, held in San Antonio Feb. 28 through March 1, taking home gold medals in essay and social sciences and silver medals in economics and literature at the varsity level. This capped a successful competition season for Tobias, who also came in overall first place varsity at the district and region competitions.

1 year ago (2024)

Two local principals were recognized by Pasadena ISD, as Morris Middle School Principal Allison Lewallen was named the school district's Elementary Principal of the Year, and Dobie High School Principal Dr. Jor-

ly Thomas was named the school district's Secondary Principal of the Year. This honor reflects the impact these two leaders have made on their students, staff and community. Their dedication and commitment to maintaining high standards of education has led to strong ratings, state recognition and positive learning outcomes.

With Lewallen's leadership, Morris Middle School became an A-rated school under the state's accountability system, has been named a Schools to Watch campus, won the CREST Award for their superb counseling program and was designated as a Model Professional Learning Community School. Lewallen took a wealth of experience to

her leadership position as she had spent her career working with at-risk students as a teacher, instructional specialist and assistant principal. Lewallen believes in the power of a growth mindset, innovative thinking, and focusing on growth as a measure for success. Throughout her career she has worked on developing this set of beliefs in her school

community. The consistent focus on this vision, along with refinement of systematic processes focused on school growth, strengthened her campus teams, and ensured equitable learner outcomes for all students. During her tenure at Morris Middle School, Lewallen was instrumental in fostering a collaborative environment that strongly

emphasizes every student's holistic development and every staff member's unique value. Under her leadership Morris Middle School was recognized as a Model Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work Campus through innovative scheduling, a focus on professional development and the establishment of a cohesive staff.

Over The Back Fence by Nicole

SIBLINGS CELEBRATE SAME BIRTHDAY

Special birthday hugs are sent to **Robert "Austin" Scarberry** (2007 Dobie grad) Friday, March 7, from his daughters **Jade** and **Lily Scarberry**. Austin served his country in the U.S. Coast Guard. His sister, **Jenny (Hayes) Laney** (1997 Dobie grad), also has a birthday March 7. Hugs and kisses are sent from Jenny's husband **Josh Laney** and children **Brayden, Baylee** and **Olivia**. Best wishes for a great birthday are sent to both from proud parents **Robert and Jannie Scarberry**, former longtime South Belt residents; brother **Joseph Hayes** (2000 Dobie grad); sister **Stacey (Hayes) Flowers** (2005 Dobie grad), husband **Stephen** and children **Kennedy, Owen** and **Evie**; and brother **Tyler Scarberry** (2010 Dobie grad).

ROBERT MARKS A BIRTHDAY

Robert Scarberry, retired longtime Dobie auto collision repair teacher and former longtime South Belt resident, celebrates his birthday Sunday, March 9. Birthday wishes are sent from wife **Jannie**; children **Jenny (Hayes) Laney** and husband **Josh, Joseph Hayes, Stacey (Hayes) Flowers** and husband **Stephen, Austin Scarberry** and **Tyler Scarberry**; and grandchildren **Brayden** and **Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno, Jade and Lily Scarberry, and Kennedy, Owen** and **Evie Flowers**.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DIDDY!

Diddy Clark celebrates a birthday Sunday, March 9. Best wishes are sent for a wonderful

day from her family, friends and co-workers at the *Leader*.

EVIE TURNS ELEVEN!

Stacey (Hayes) and Stephen Flowers of League City celebrate the tenth birthday of their daughter, **Evie "Evie" Faith Flowers**, on Saturday, March 11. Proud grandparents are **Jannie and Robert Scarberry**, former longtime South Belt residents, and **Karen and Mike Flowers** of Dickinson. Sharing in the celebration are big sister **Kennedy**; big brother **Owen**; aunt **Jenny (Hayes) Laney Scarberry**; uncles **Joseph Hayes** and **Austin and Tyler Scarberry**; and cousins **Brayden** and **Baylee Espinosa, Olivia Moreno** and **Jade and Lily Scarberry**. Stacey is a 2005 Dobie High School graduate.

SCHOOL DAZE

The following personnel and staff of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays March 6 through March 12.

Burnett Elementary

Sing a verse of a happy birthday song March 11 to **Tracy Stockton**.

Bush Elementary

The day for a birthday gift for **Pilar Ibarra** is March 7.

Moore Elementary

Send a birthday greeting March 8 to **Taylor Vonnille**. The day for a party for **Guadalupe Hudson** is March 9.

Stuchbery Elementary

Marking a birthday March 6 is **Melissa**

Cardenas.

Melillo Middle School

Break out the cake and ice cream March 6 for **Patricia Rhoads**.

Thompson Intermediate

The day for a birthday celebration for **Caleb Lopez** is March 6.

Dobie High

Celebrating a happy birthday March 10 is **Jennifer Haynes**. Enjoy a triple-layer birthday cake with **Adrian Amador, Angela Cruz** and **Sandra Rodriguez** on March 12.

FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS

Thursday, March 6: **Keith Kirby** and **Cydney McMillian**; Friday, March 7: **Amber McMurryough, Susan Metzger** and **Christopher Kennard**; Saturday, March 8: **Diana Vela, Matt Anderson, Michelle Fuller** and **Mark Solis**; Sunday, March 9: **Cheryl Stell, Rudy Rivera, Leah Lister, Lance Botkin, Susan Zientek, Monte Long** and **Bo Richards**; Monday, March 10: **Jim Daigle** and **Sheila Dill**; Tuesday, March 11: **Raquel Loya, Michael Martinez, Jesus Romero** and **Irma Manriquez**; and Wednesday, March 12: **Debbie Clark, Maria Riojas, Debbie Johnson** and **Heather Murphy Burris**.

LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS

Email anniversaries, vacation, congratulations, etc., to mynews@southbellleader.com with OTBF as the subject by Friday noon for the next week's publication. For birthdays, type "OTBF: Friends Celebrate Birthdays" in the subject line.

Pasadena ISD honors Memorial shooting heroes

83-year-old shooting suspect dies before sentencing

The Pasadena Independent School District and the PISD board of trustees held a special ceremony on Feb. 25, to honor the brave individuals who acted heroically during the shooting at Pasadena Memorial High School Feb. 1.

During the event, the district recognized the courageous actions of several individuals, including Juan Lopez, a Cy-Fair dad and teacher, who initially took down the shooter, and Corey Veazey, an Angleton employee, who assisted in restraining the suspect. Additionally, four dads from Pearland

ISD – **Abram Trevino, Joe Sanchez, Polo Castillo** and **Adam Curow** – raced toward the gunfire to help secure the suspect and weapon until police arrived.

The district also honored three Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) members – **Makayla Talavera, Charles Mitchell** and **Jorge Garza** – all Pasadena ISD students, who provided immediate medical assistance to gunshot victim **Dwight Benjamin**, a percussion consultant with Angleton ISD. Their prompt and skilled response was instrumental in stabilizing

Benjamin until emergency medical services could take over.

The Pasadena ISD Police and Pasadena Police Department were commended for their seamless cooperation and swift response during the incident. Their coordinated efforts were vital in managing the situation and ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

Pasadena ISD Superintendent **Dr. DeeAnn Powell** expressed deep gratitude to all the honorees, stating, "We are immensely proud of the bravery and quick actions of the band parents, students, staff


and law enforcement. Their heroism in the face of danger exemplifies the strength and resilience of our community."

The 83-year-old suspect charged in the Feb. 1 shooting – **Dennis Erwin Brandl Jr.** – died Sunday, March 2, according to police. See related story on Page 1.

McCoy places second in Big Shoot Out



Fourth-grader **Conner McCoy** from South Belt Elementary placed second in the boys' fourth-grade competition in the PISD Big Shoot Out which took place Monday, Feb. 3.



Lopez recognized by PISD board

Cy-Fair parent **Juan Lopez** was honored by the Pasadena ISD Board of Trustees at its monthly board meeting Tuesday, Feb. 25, for his heroic efforts in taking down the 83-year-old shooter Feb. 1 at Pasadena Memorial High School. Lopez along with several others recognized were responsible for tackling and subduing the suspect, **Dennis Erwin Brandl Jr.**, and detaining him until police could arrive and arrest him. Brandl died from medical issues before he could be sentenced. See related story on Page 1.

SJC presents "Our Town"

San Jacinto College South Theatre and Film is proud to present the local premiere of the multi-lingual version of Pulitzer Prize-winning classic "Our Town," written by Thornton Wilder and enhanced with translated passages by Nilo Cruz and Jeff Augustin. Performances will play Thursday, March 6, through Saturday, March 15.

Described by Edward Albee as "the greatest American play ever written," "Our Town" follows the Webb and Gibbs families as their children fall in love, marry and eventually – in one of the most famous scenes in American theatre – die.

Narrated by a stage manager and performed with minimal props and sets, "Our Town" depicts the small town of Grover's Corners, N.H., through three acts: "Daily Life," "Love

and Marriage" and "Death and Eternity."

In the next step for a play that Wilder conceived from the beginning as a play about everywhere, "Our Town" is performed in English and Spanish.

Currently running an acclaimed revival on Broadway, "Our Town" speaks to a desire for stronger community ties and appreciating simple joys in complex times.

The production team includes San Jacinto College alumni **Ty James**, scenic design; **Kyra Nappier**, lighting design; **DeVonte Rogers**, costume design; and San Jacinto College Theatre and Film Professor **Jonelle Walker**, director. The production features original live sound effects designed by Theatre and Film students.

When: Thursday, March 6; 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 8; 2 p.m.

Thursday, March 13, Friday, March 14; 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 15; 2 p.m.

Where: San Jacinto College South, 13735 Beamer Road, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Black Box Theatre (S15.135).

Tickets: Tickets to "Our Town" are available at sjcstheatrefilm.ludus.com. Price is \$3 for San Jacinto College students; \$5 for San Jacinto College faculty and staff; and \$7 for the rest of the community.

"Our Town" runs approximately 2 hours 30 minutes, including two 10-minute intermissions.

For additional information, visit the San Jacinto College South Theatre and Film website or email **Jonelle Walker** at jonelle.walker@sjcd.edu.



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SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

2025 PISD Athletics Hall induction event March 12

The big event is quickly approaching as the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame extravaganza comes to the Pasadena Convention Center March 12.

Matt Musil, former longtime CBS channel 11 sportscaster, will emcee the event.

The 2025 induction class once again includes several individuals who achieved great things for the Dobie Longhorns.

The 1980 Dobie boys' state championship cross-country team will be inducted, as will softball star Sharonda McDonald-Kelley and longtime JFD tennis coach Bobby Kramer.

Others set to become part of the Athletics Hall

of Fame in this class include Sam Rayburn Class of 1985 graduate Bruce Aguilar, a football/baseball star; Pasadena High School graduate Rick Brewer, who starred on both the football and baseball fields for the Eagles prior to graduating in 1963; Kristine Kelly, a class of 2006 Pasadena High School graduate, who was a star swimmer and also competed in track and field for the Eagles; Nancy Cole Bowman is a Pasadena Memorial High School Class of 2009 graduate who starred on the volleyball court; and South Houston Class of 2003 graduate Josh Rodriguez who starred for the Trojans on the baseball di-

amond.

McDonald-Kelley, currently the head softball coach at Michigan State University, is set to speak on behalf of the 2025 class.

Individual tickets remain on sale for the event that begins at 6:00 p.m., with tickets available for \$75 each. Text HOF25 to 41444 in order to get tickets.

Many of Kramer's career highlights are tied to his leadership on the tennis court, but the career educator began his coaching career at Nueces Canyon, where he led girls' athletics programs in the seventh through 12th grade in the beginning.

Continued on Page 8

At right, Dobie senior right-hander Cruz Torres and his teammates will compete in the Gary Harrington Battle by the Bay event March 6 and March 8 hosted by Goose Creek ISD in Baytown. The Longhorns will take on Deer Park March 6 at Deer Park beginning at 5:30 p.m., then will return to 22-6A action March 7, hosting the Dawson Eagles beginning at 4 p.m. at Dobie main. Dobie will face Kingwood March 8 at 10 p.m., then play Texas City at 12:30 p.m., both at Baytown Sterling High School to conclude the Harrington event.



Dobie softball team to take on Pearland

With a key game coming at Pearland March 7, the Dobie varsity softball team will look to stay at the top of the standings in the 22-6A race. The locals were 6-6 overall as of press time March 5 but had scored wins over Dawson and Pasadena Memorial to stay unbeaten.

Hosting Memorial Feb. 28 at Dobie main, the Longhorns walked off with a 1-0 victory in the bottom of the seventh inning as Chloe Nunez came up with a run-scoring single to end the game in celebration for the locals.

Vanessa De La Fuente was the star of the game for Dobie as she tossed a complete-game shutout against the Mavericks, allowing three hits while striking out nine as part of a gem of a performance.

With a bye in the 22-6A schedule March 25, Dobie traveled to Kingwood to take on the defending Region 3 champion Mustangs, losing the game 4-0 as the Mustangs plated three runs in the bottom of the fifth inning and went on to win.

Clear Brook track returns to routine

The Clear Brook varsity track and field teams went separate directions to close out the month, with the boys competing at the Longhorn Relays Feb. 27 at Dobie and the girls showing off their talent at the Ed Taylor Invitational in Beaumont a day later.

CB boys excel

Jalen Erskine of Clear Brook along with teammate Darwin Bolden guided The Wolverines at Dobie.

Erskine grabbed silver medals in the 110 and 300 hurdles, finishing the 110s in a time of 15.92 seconds and the 300s at 40.01.

With a top throw of 145 feet, 4 inches, Bolden was the silver medalist in the discus and also placed third for a bronze medal in the shot with a throw of 48.4.

In the discus, the Wolverines' Camdyn Barnett was sixth with a distance of 131-2. Montez Hadnot was seventh at 130-8.

Continued on Page 8

JFD tracksters enjoy impressive medal haul at relays

The Dobie varsity girls came up with 52 points in the relays and a double-gold medal performance from senior Lauren Garza, while Chris Lopez, Damarcus Hodges and Jaylon Broussard were gold medalist on the varsity boys' side to lead the locals at the Longhorn Relays Feb. 27 at Dobie main.

Like many programs across the Houston area, the Dobie teams returned to competition following a 13-day layoff after rain wiped out much of the previous week's schedule.

JFD girls third

Garza has little left to prove in her distance running career as she has secured a collegiate future

at Southeastern Oklahoma State. Still, she seems intent on finishing her story career at Dobie with a strong final push this spring.

Running on a familiar course, Garza delivered gold medal performances in both the 1,600 and 3,200 events, clocking in at 5 minutes, 32.60 in the 1,600 for the gold and 11:49.22 at the 3,200 distance to double up.

Aniya Menefee was another gold medalist for the Dobie girls in the high jump as she cleared 5 feet, 2 inches in fewest attempts to claim the top spot.

Dobie captured a gold medal in the 4x200 relay with a clocking of 1:45.90, and a time of

50.94 brought a silver medal to the Dobie girls in the 4x100 relay.

At 4:17.26, the Longhorns also won a silver in the 4x400 relay.

Senior Stacie Harris' medal haul included a silver for second place in the 200 with a time of 26.58, with teammate Aniya Menefee capturing fourth place at 28.25.

Harris and former 22-6A rival Ally Marbury of Deer Park went head-to-head in the long jump. Marbury was the gold medalist this time with a best of 17-4, while Harris went 17-4 for second place and a silver medal.

Sophomore Christina Rodriguez came away

with a bronze medal for her clocking of 1:02.58 in the 400, and Daisha Jackson picked up a bronze medal in the 100 with a time of 13.49.

Sophomore Aracely Alvarado, certainly an important player in the future of Dobie's cross-country and track and field distance running plans, was fourth in the 3,200 at 12:28.15, and sixth with a time of 5:50.93 in the 1,600.

While Menefee was the gold medalist in the high jump at 5-2, teammate Kylar Joseph was sixth as she cleared 4-10 in the event.

Joseph wound up with a bronze medal for third place in the triple jump,

making her way to 36-0. Tailin Curtis of Dobie posted a distance of 33-5 for sixth place.

Blessing Okinloye of Dobie tossed the shot 31-7 for fifth place.

JFD boys excel

Senior Jaylon Broussard was one of the gold medalists for the Longhorn varsity boys as he claimed the top spot in the 200 at 23.03.

Senior Chris Lopez, who will continue his collegiate career at St. Thomas University in Houston, was the gold medal winner at the 3200 distance, making his way to the finish line in a time of 10:02.80.

Dobie teammate and freshman Jordan Roman

was third for a bronze medal as he was in at 2:07.12.

Jacob Morris was the gold medalist in the 400 for Friendswood High School as he made his way to the tape in a time of 51.38, and Dobie senior Tariq Riley was the silver medalist as he took second place at 51.71. Dobie's DeShaun Singleton was fourth in the event as he posted a time of 52.36.

Johan Villavicencio came away with a top-three medal as he was third for a bronze at the 800 distance, clocking in at 2:04.33.

In the 1600, Lopez again turned in a top-three time as he was the bronze

medalist with a clocking of 4:44.54.

The Longhorns posted a time of 1:30.37 in the 4x200 relay, then came up with a time of 3:29.32 for the silver medal in the 4x400 relay to wrap up the meet.

Junior Damarcus Hodges led the way for the Dobie boys in the field events as he was a gold medal winner in the triple jump after making his way to the 43-8 mark for the win. Clayton Washington of Dobie was fifth in the same event as he came up with a distance of 39-2.

Senior James Spivey was one of the Longhorns' top contributors in the field events for the Dobie boys as he cleared 5-7 in the high jump for a bronze medal.



Dobie junior distance runner Johan Villavicencio came away with a top-three medal as he was third for a bronze medal at the 800 distance, clocking in at 2 minutes, 4.33 seconds.



Dobie varsity girls' 4x100 relay, including from left, Lillian Herte, Kylar Joseph, Aniya Menefee and Daisha Jackson, placed second at 50.94 seconds at the Longhorn Relays.

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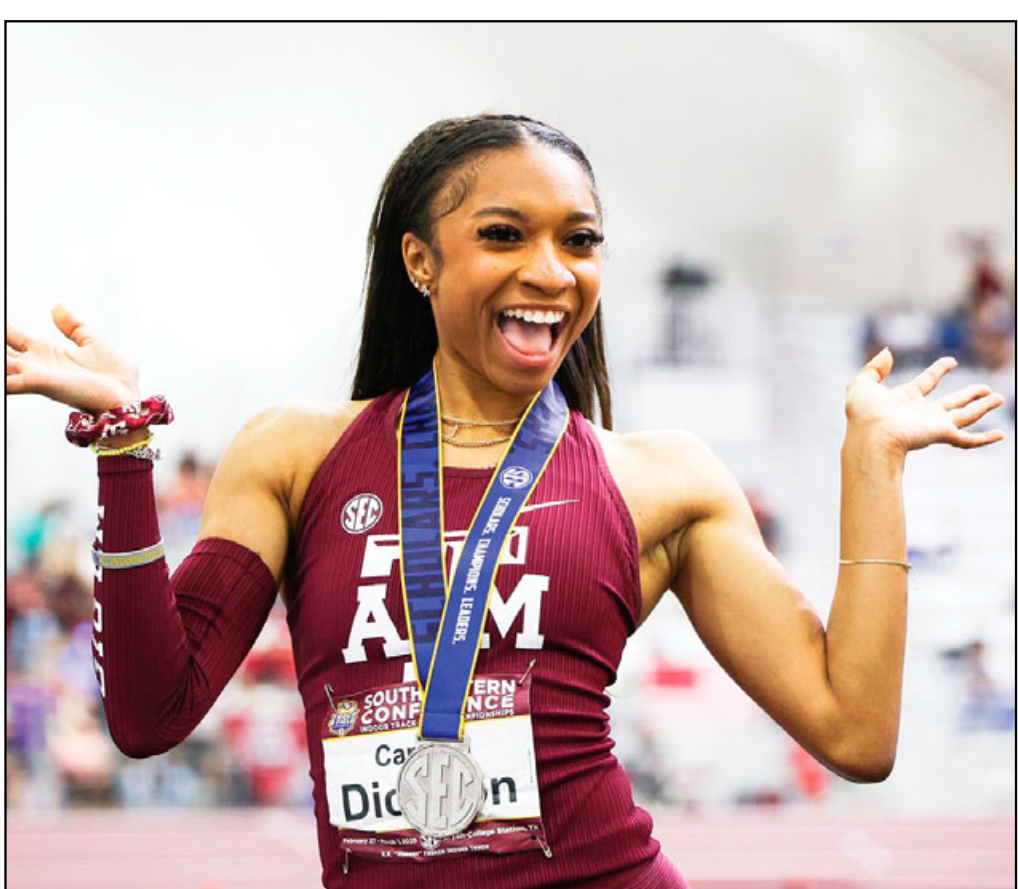
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Texas A&M's Dickson claims 200 silver at SECs

At right, Texas A&M University junior Camryn Dickson dashed to the finish line in a time of 22.86 seconds to claim the silver medal in the 200 final at the Southeastern Conference indoor track and field championships Feb. 1 on her home track at the R.A. "Murray" Fasken '38 Indoor Track & Field facility in College Station. The A&M women ended their championships on the track in fifth place as a team as the 4x400 relay team of Dickson, Jasmine Montgomery, Latasha Smith and Jermaisha Arnold placed fifth with a season-best time of 3 minutes, 28.43 seconds to move into the top-10 nationally in the event. Dickson and the 4x4 relay team have now qualified to compete in the NCAA Indoor Championships at the Virginia Beach Sports Center March 14-15.



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Ferguson delivers record-setting career with LSA swimming team

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

A basic 14 minute, 49 second-phone conversation will not do justice to the lasting legacy and record-setting career that Lutheran South Academy swimming star and Class of 2025 senior Lauren Ferguson has delivered in the pool, yet it was long enough for a sportswriter with 35-plus years in the business to come away with the realization that Ferguson has been and will continue to be a difference maker.

Ferguson completed her dazzling swimming career with the Pioneers at the Texas Association

of Private and Parochial Schools Division II State Championships Feb. 11 at the Josh Davis Natatorium in San Antonio.

She established program records in both the 200 free and 100 back, and helped guide the Pioneers' 200-yard medley relay team to a seventh-place finish.

Already the LSA record holder in the 500 free as a junior, Ferguson this season wound up second for a silver medal and school record at state in the 200-yard free at 2 minutes, 00.31 seconds, trailing only gold medalist Logos Prep freshman Charlee McEvoy's time of

1:58.84.

In the 100 back, Ferguson was the state bronze medalist in a time of 1:01.54. Grapevine Faith Christian senior Vivian Anderson was the gold medalist at 56.80.

In the 200-yard medley relay, Ferguson also joined freshmen Sara McGrady and Hope Gonzalez as well as sophomore Parker McNatt for eighth place at 2:14.51. The same four ladies also took 10th place at state in the 200 freestyle relay.

In addition to her successes in the pool, Ferguson was one of three LSA swimmers to earn TAPPS Academic All-State hon-

ors for the 2024-2025 school year, joining junior teammates Elijah Brown and Luis Ordaz.

Her high school swimming career now complete, Ferguson will turn her attention to the school's senior graduation ceremony May 23 before focusing on a journey to Easton, Pa., where she will join the women's swimming program at NCAA Division I Lafayette College.

There, she won't be far away from her older brother, Chase Ferguson, who is currently a junior at Bucknell University in Union County, Pa. The two collegiate institutions

are roughly 2 hours apart via ground travel, with just 118 miles separating the two.

Chase Ferguson, a 2022 Lutheran South Academy graduate, put together a storied High School career of his own with the Pioneers, named an All-State performer in the 200 back as a senior and having helped guide the program to state team championships in both 2020 and 2022.

At the Patriot League championships late last month on the campus of Bucknell University, Lafayette College senior Maggie Ivey established a school record while swimming in the prelims of the 200 back, finishing at 2:03.07. In 2023, Ivey set the Lafayette program record in the 200 free at 1:52.58. Alex Brannick in 2012 set the school record in the hundred back at 56.61.

Interestingly enough, both Bucknell and Lafayette College are competitors within the Patriot League, meaning the Ferguson siblings are likely to be in the same building for the conference championships in 2026.

It might seem like just yesterday that Ferguson entered the hallways of Lutheran South Academy for the first time. The daughter of Jennifer and Ken Ferguson, Lauren Ferguson said she began attending LSA in the fifth grade.

"I have really come to appreciate the smaller class settings and being able to have a strong teacher-student base in order to help with your studies," Ferguson said, adding that she estimates the Pioneers' 2024-2025 senior class to be fewer than 100 total students.

Ferguson expects to have a similar experience at Lafayette College and looks forward to the smaller, more closely knit learning environment that

lies ahead for her.

As for being one of the all-time greats in the pool for the Pioneers, and quite honestly so was Chase Ferguson, Lauren Ferguson said she is comfortable in knowing that she has given her best effort along the way.

"I think I learned a lot about myself and knowing that no matter how I feel on a daily basis I was able to get up every day, get in the pool for my workouts and give it my all not only for myself but for my teammates," Ferguson said.

"Just like with any oth-

er sport, the daily workouts can be a grind and seem a little bit isolating at times, but you just have to work toward the end goal," Ferguson said.

"In swimming, it has never been about going 100 percent all of the time and giving a max performance every day. It's about knowing what the goal is at, let's say, the championship meets and working toward that goal. You have to taper your workouts toward what is most important.

"As a team, we have accomplished a lot of great things at Lutheran South,

and I am proud to have been a part of that. I don't know if I'm one of the greats or not, I was just giving my best and trying to be proud at the end. I think I did that, and I'm also excited about what the future holds."

Lauren Ferguson said at this point she is not concerned about program or conference records while attending Lafayette.

She merely wants to be the best teammate with the Leopards that she can possibly be while also being at her individual best in the water, including whatever times come with that.

Ferguson will also focus on building toward a career in engineering and hopes to one day travel internationally as part of her professional journey.

Ferguson referred to being interviewed by the local newspaper, the *South Belt-Ellington Leader*, as a true honor and was looking forward to seeing this piece appear in print.

The reality is, it is truly an honor to be able to share some of Ferguson's achievements with the community.

Ferguson truly has been a difference maker at Lutheran South Academy.

At right, Lutheran South Academy senior and star swimmer Lauren Ferguson has excelled both in the classroom and in the pool during her stay with the Pioneers. The owner of program all-time records individually in the 200- and 500-yard freestyles and the 100 back as well as the 200 freestyle relay, Ferguson has earned the honor of valedictorian for her 2025 graduating class and will speak May 23 at graduation. She will swim collegiately beginning this fall at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa. Ferguson will dual major in mechanical engineering and international studies. Her older brother, Chase Ferguson, swims collegially at Bucknell University. The family's youngest daughter, Landry, is a seventh-grade student and also is a competitive swimmer.



holds the Lutheran South Academy all-time record in the 200 freestyle, the 500 freestyle and the 100 backstroke and is also a member of the school's 200 freestyle relay record holding foursome.



A school record holder in three individual swimming events as well as having contributed to another school record in a relay, Lauren Ferguson can be comfortable knowing that she is one of the all-time greats at Lutheran South Academy. She

Jacque Giron upholds family reputation as productive hoops star

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

Continuing what has been a family tradition over the years, Jacque Rose Giron has been nothing short of one of the top performers within the National Junior College Athletic Association JUCO women's basketball ranks over the past two seasons.

The Dobie Class of 2023 graduate and former District 22-6A Most Valuable Player as a high school senior is wrapping up what has been a terrific two-year run at Weather-

ford College, and certainly has done everything within her power to earn a shot at continuing her playing career at a four-year program.

There isn't shame at playing for Weatherford College, where the main campus in Weatherford is roughly 60 miles west of Dallas.

With just a couple of games remaining in the North Texas Junior College Athletic Conference season, Weatherford was 17-10 overall and 8-6 within league play,

good for fifth place in the eight-program conference.

As for Giron, she has been one of the top overall performers within the NTJACAC, leading the league in assists at 6.4 per game and sitting fifth overall in scoring at 15.1 points per game, third in 3-point field goal percentage (35.9), sixth at 44.9 in overall field goal percentage.

On Feb. 15, in an 80-42 victory over Hill College at home, Giron scored a career high 25 points, making good on 5 of 8

from beyond the 3-point line.

Giron, the youngest of the four children of Yvette and Elbert Giron, admits that there wasn't a huge market for 5-foot-6-inch guards as she navigated the recruiting scene during the latter stages of her high school career.

The bottom line is, and this is true at most junior colleges across the country, Weatherford offered Giron the opportunity to have her education paid for nearly 100 percent.

In turn, Giron truly has

given Weatherford head coach Bob McKinley, his coaching staff and the Coyote program a top-end stat sheet stuffer the past two seasons.

"I think I've really learned a lot about being a leader and giving my team whatever it needs in order to reach our goals," Giron said. "During my freshman season, I was really called upon to be more of a distributor with the basketball.

"This year, I've added increased scoring. I'm really just trying to do whatever the team needs.

"We missed the post-season tournament last year, and our goal was to get back to the postseason tournament this year. All of us are just doing whatever it takes to try to help get there."

Roughly a month ago, Giron told the *Leader* that it's a team policy within the Weatherford program to keep recruiting conversations at a minimum.

Therefore, she was unsure at the time as to just what the future may hold on the hardwood.

Again, Giron understands that between the NCAA transfer portal and the annual influx of high school seniors also competing with junior college transfers for opportunities at the four-year program level,

Tyler Giron is the eldest Giron sibling and is a Class of 2016 Dobie graduate, while his sister Jade Giron, who was also a four-year varsity girls' basketball standout at Dobie, graduated in 2017.

Luke Giron was a Class of 2021 senior who was the starting quarterback at Pasadena Memorial in 2020 before transferring back to Dobie in order to graduate on the stage alongside his mother, Yvette Giron, who is a faculty member at Dobie.

Tyler has studied in pre-dental. Jade, as previously stated, is a 2023 Dobie

graduate.

Tyler went on to play both football and basketball in some capacity at three colleges during a successful finish to his athletics career.

Jade began her collegiate career at Lindenwood University and then competed at Lyon College, where she put together, before she put together, to be frank, a star-studded women's basketball ca-

reer. She has focused her studies in the veterinary field.

Luke is currently studying business, leadership and management while playing quarterback at OUAZ-Ottawa University Arizona College while Jacque is rounding out her second season at Weatherford and has plans to become an architect.

Along the way, no mat-

ter the path or the location, the Girons have delivered both on and off the athletic fields and courts. The journey surely continues for Jacque somewhere on the basketball court for the 2025-2026 season, and some fortunate university is going to get a player who will pay it forward both on and off the court.

"I just want an oppor-

tunity to continue my basketball career," Jade Giron said.

"I feel like I have really grown both as a person and as a student athlete these last two years. Just like I did at Dobie, I went from being the freshman newcomer to being a good teammate who, I believe, can be counted on to be at my best and late-game situations.



Dobie Class of 2023 graduate Jacque Giron has put together a standout two-year stay at Weatherford College on the basketball court and is

anticipating the opportunity to find a rotation spot at a four-year institution. She was a four-year varsity performer with the Longhorns.



Jacque Giron has been one of the top overall performers within the NTJACAC, leading the league in assists at 6.4 per game and sitting fifth

overall in scoring at 15.1 points per game, third in 3-point field goal percentage (35.9), sixth at 44.9 in overall field goal percentage.

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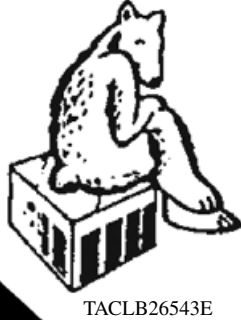
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Eartha N. Brown: power tools, furniture, sinks and wood.

Jacquelyn D. Emmanuel: 1986 Hyundai EXL (VIN: KMHLA11J7GU051016), furniture, toys, bike and misc.

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Roselia Santibanez: furniture, paint sprayer and misc.

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Jazmine Hansley, Dickinson

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Kamryn McLaurin, Clear Brook

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Rezia Castillo, Clear Brook

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Gabrielle Shepherd, Clear Falls

Aniya Brannon, Clear Creek

Kendra Rawls, Clear Creek

Lindsey Scott, Dickinson

Brianna Walston, Dickinson

Morgan Williams, Clear Brook

Katelin Seymore, Clear Brook

Kyla Kimbrough, Clear Springs

Jada McCormick, Deer Park

Audrina Silva, Deer Park

H/F event is March 12

Continued from Page 5

In it all, Kramer is 16 years within the Nueces Canyon Independent School District, where he also had assistant principal duties for a while.

With a new superintendent set to take over within NCISD, Kramer elected to take a buy-out package and stepped away. It wasn't long before one of his former star athletes, Irene Williams White, then an assistant athletic director at Dobie, convinced him to come to Pasadena.

"When Irene said Pasadena, I thought she meant California, Kramer," told the leader. "When I arrived at Dobie in 1977, I actually coached the girls' basketball program for two years. They weren't having a lot of success when I got there, and in no time at all we were defeating everybody."

Having been such a leader on the tennis courts during his time at Nueces County, Kramer fell right in to his comfort zone with the Longhorns netters. "I had tremendous support from Frank Braden, who was principal at Dobie for many years," Kramer said. "The biggest thing was that we had tremendous kids dedicated to the program, and we

had tremendous parents support along the way."

During his 37-year career in coaching, Kramer guided eight state tennis champions, a state qualifier, four state semifinalists, and 10 players who wound up second at state.

Kramer graduated from Knippa high school in 1956 and will forever call Uvalde his true home, but he is ever appreciative of his time at Dobie.

First, it was unbelievable to be inducted into the Adobe all of Honor, he said.

"Now to be inducted into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame is truly remarkable and that there are so many athletes and coaches who are deserving. I'm sure it will be a special night, I am so appreciative to have this recognition."

Kramer was inducted into the Dobie High School Hall of Honor in 2017 and also joined the Texas tennis coaches association Hall of Fame and 2022.

Now 87 and having long since retired to Uvalde, Kramer said the calls from Dobie for the Hall of Honor in 2017, the Texas Tennis Coaches Association in 2022 and now the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame March 12

in Pasadena were each unexpected and therefore appreciated all the more.

"Coming to Dobie High School, working with and alongside wonderful colleagues for so many years and having a chance to work with terrific student athletes and having such great parental support made it all worth it," Kramer said. "Maybe it's true that coaches get most of the credit in the end, but for me it was always about having terrific kids who wanted to work hard and be part of something special on the court."

"I truly appreciate this honor with the Athletics Hall of Fame. There have been so many deserving individuals and teams over the years, so to be part of this prestigious Hall of Fame is a great honor to me."



LeBlanc to play at Hill College



Dobie Class of 2024 senior and standout volleyball player Naima LeBlanc has announced via X that she is transferring to Hill College in Hillsboro, where she will continue her education and collegiate volleyball career. LeBlanc played her freshman season at Lee College in Baytown, where she had 109 kills for the Rebels while playing in each of the team's 30 matches. Hill College competes in the Region V ranks as part of the National Junior College Athletic Association.

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Brook track runs at events

Continued from Page 5

The Brook girls competed at the Ed Taylor Invitational in Beaumont as junior Kyra Freeman was the gold medalist in the triple jump at 33-4 1/2 and Aailslyn Blanks won a gold in the discus (122-11 1/2) and a silver in the shot (33-8).

Patricia Barnes turned in a time of 2:35.98 for a silver medal in the 800. The Wolverines' 4x400 relay team claimed a bronze medal.