



South Belt-Ellington Leader

Honoring South Belt Harvey Heroes

Thursday, July 19, 2018

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

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Chamber to hold banquet

The South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce's 34th annual banquet will take place Thursday, July 19, at the Lone Star Flight Museum at Ellington Airport. The theme for this year's event will be *A Salute to the Heroes of Harvey*. See related hero stories in this issue. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott will be the featured guest at the banquet. For more information, contact chamber president Kay Barbour at 281-481-5516 or info@southbeltchamber.com.

Photo contest underway

The *Leader* is seeking 2018 vacation photos for possible publication. A first- and second-place prize of Schlitterbahn tickets will be awarded for July and August to the best submissions. Monthly first-place winner will be awarded eight tickets, while each month's second-place winner will be awarded six.

All submissions should include where and when the photo was taken, as well as identify each person in the picture and tell the story about the trip. All photos must be high resolution. Email photos to mynews@southbeltleader.com.

Beltway closures planned

At least two eastbound and two westbound inside frontage road lanes on Beltway 8 at Genoa Red Bluff will be closed daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday, Aug. 3.

The eastbound entrance ramp to Beltway 8 between Beamer and Sabo is closed until further notice.

At least two eastbound and two westbound inside frontage road lanes on Beltway 8 at Crenshaw will be closed daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday, Aug. 3.

The eastbound U-turn lane at Beltway 8 and Beamer will be closed continuously through 9 p.m. Saturday, July 28.

HCMGA to host lecture

On Thursday, July 19, Harris County Master Gardeners will present *Raised Beds, Low Volume Drip Irrigation and Rain Barrels* — part of the *Green Thumb Lecture Series* — from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubGreenThumb.aspx> or call 713-274-0950.

Gulf Freeway closures set

At least one northbound and one southbound main lane and frontage road lane on the Gulf Freeway from NASA Bypass/NASA Road 1 to SH 96/League City Parkway will be closed daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and nightly from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. through Monday, Dec. 31. Alternate entrance and exit ramps will be closed.

The northbound frontage road of the I-45 Freeway from FM 518 to NASA Bypass/NASA Road 1 will be continuously closed through 5 a.m. Friday, Aug. 31.

Traffic traveling north on the frontage road will take I-45 north main lanes from the FM 518 entrance to the NASA Road 1 exit.

Bible Way holds health fair

Bible Way Fellowship Baptist Church, 10120 Hartsook, will hold its annual community health fair Saturday, July 21, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Services available include health screenings, health displays, vendors, health professionals to address health concerns, prize drawings and much more.

JFD orchestra car wash set

The J. Frank Dobie High School Orchestra will hold a fundraising car wash Saturday, July 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of Food Town on the corner of Scarsdale and Beamer. Cost will be \$5 per car. Donations will also be accepted.

Purple Heart luncheon set

The American Legion Auxiliary Post 490 invites all veterans to the Purple Heart luncheon Sunday, Aug. 5, from noon to 2 p.m. at 11702 Old Galveston Road. The meal will include spaghetti, meatballs, salad, bread and a variety of desserts. There will be no cost for Purple Heart recipients, and the cost for all other veterans and family members will be \$5. To RSVP, email President@ALAU490.org or call 281-414-0943.

Astros trophy to be displayed

The Lone Star Flight Museum, located at Ellington Airport, will host a viewing of the Houston Astros World Series championship trophy Saturday, July 21, from 10 a.m. to noon. Museum members are invited to an exclusive viewing from 9:30 to 10 a.m. For more information, visit <https://www.lonestarflight.org/news/houston-astros-world-series-trophy-viewing>.

Prayer walk set for July 21

School Prayer Walks USA will host its fifth prayer walk Saturday, July 21, from 9 to 10 a.m. The walk will begin at Meador Elementary, then travel across the street to Morris Middle School. All are welcome to the nondenominational prayer walk, organized to pray for the protection of students and staff at local schools. For more information, call 281-484-0901.

Local drug raid scares innocent resident

Local electrician Johnny Gibbs of Lighthouse Electric found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time Tuesday, July 17, as he was swept up in a drug raid at a customer's house in the 9900 block of Logans Way in the Ashley Pointe subdivision.

Gibbs said he had just left the residence around 6 p.m. after doing an inspection and was sending a text from his truck in front of the house when

multiple police agencies — including the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the Harris County Precinct 2 Constable's office and a K-9 unit from the Pearland Police Department — swarmed the house. An armored SWAT vehicle was also used in the raid, Gibbs said, but it was unclear at press time what law enforcement agency had provided it.

"A truck blocked me in, and the next thing

I knew, guys with machine guns were running across the yard," Gibbs said. "I felt like I was in the Twilight Zone."

During the confusion, Gibbs was detained and placed in handcuffs.

Gibbs explained that he was merely there to give the resident an estimate for electrical work. The officers told Gibbs they already knew this but that he was taking too long to leave the home.

Recounting the story to the *Leader* the following day, Gibbs still seemed shaken up.

"I was traumatized," Gibbs said.

Gibbs said he was told by one of the officers at the scene that the male suspect was wanted on a warrant from upstate New York.

Gibbs further said he wouldn't have expected such a thing from the residents whom he'd just met.

"They seemed like real nice people," Gibbs said. "They offered to pay me in advance (more than \$700), but I told them to just hold off until later. I should have taken the money."

According to Precinct 2 Lt. Mike Kritzler, the department's Special Operations Unit assisted the DEA in the raid.

One male was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to distribute cocaine. At press time, his identity had not been released, as it is part of an ongoing investigation.

More information to follow.

Lewallen, Griffin named principals



At a recent special meeting, the Pasadena Independent School District Board of Trustees named Allison Lewallen (left) the new principal of Morris Middle School and Tanis Griffin (right) the new principal of Thompson Intermediate. Both educators had previously served with the school district in other capacities. See related story on Page 3A.

Photo submitted

Flood improvement projects planned

Multiple flood improvement projects are being planned for the South Belt community.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and U.S. Sen. John Cornyn will visit the area on Thursday, July 19, to make an announcement regarding the long-awaited Clear Creek drainage project.

While the endeavor has been in the works for more than 50 years, it lacked the proper funding to move forward. Last week, however, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it would allocate \$295.2 million of disaster supplemental funding to provide for the project.

At a public hearing Tuesday, July 17, officials from the Harris County Flood Control District discussed several proposed projects associated with the county's upcoming \$2.5 billion bond election. If approved by voters, the issuance of bonds would be spread out over 15 years, and the expected tax increase for most homeowners would be 1.4 percent or less.

The bond election will take place Saturday, Aug. 25 — the one year anniversary of Hurricane Harvey's landfall in Houston.

See next week's *Leader* for more information.

Clark, Towey try out new slide



The Clear Brook City MUD recently installed new playground equipment at Bishop Park on Blackhawk. The previous equipment was beyond repair due to its age. Clear Brook City MUD board members Chris Clark (top) and Jim Towey are shown above trying out the new slide at the park.

Photo by Marie Flickinger

Leader recognizes Hurricane Harvey heroes

With the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce's long-awaited salute to Harvey heroes finally here, the *Leader* would like to recognize those being honored. Hurricane Harvey wreaked havoc in the area from Friday, Aug. 25, through Tuesday, Aug. 29, causing unprecedented flooding and the displacement of hundreds of residents. Despite the hurdles, residents came to-

gether to help one another in their time of need.

The heroes featured in this week's edition are by no means a comprehensive list but rather a small sampling of people whom event organizers see as being representative of the entire South Belt community's efforts. (The entries were written by James Bolen, Jay Do, Laura Benavides Scallan and Mary Doan.)

Southeast Volunteer Fire Department

When it came to rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey, no one kept South Belt residents as safe as the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department.

As the storm began to strike the area, rescue crews originally took evacuees to the department's fire station to seek refuge. When it became clear a larger space would be necessary, workers then began to transport affected residents to CrossRoads United Methodist Church on Scarsdale.

That space, too, was soon determined to be insufficient.

"It soon became obvious they couldn't handle the volume," said SVFD firefighter Dean Baier.

After attempts to secure Sagemont Church as a temporary shelter were unsuccessful, SVFD Chief Chuck Tylka reached out to *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger about possibly using Dobie High School as such a spot. Flickinger then reached out to Pasadena Independent School District Superintendent Dr. DeeAnn Powell, who was receptive to the idea and was able to unlock the school remotely.

"It's one thing to rescue them, but where do you take them?" Baier said.

SVFD crews, along with help from the Precinct 2 Constable's office, worked around the clock to provide assistance, despite five of the firefighters having their own homes flood.

Baier attributes much of the department's success during the storm to its fleet of emergency rescue vehicles, which included three five-ton trucks and three Humvees. The department also utilized a five-ton truck from the Clear Brook City Municipal Utility District (where Baier also serves as general manager of operations) and an airboat from the Harris County Sheriff's Office. Civilians also contributed to rescue efforts by offering the use of their own boats, totaling around six, according to Baier.

"The fire department deserves credit for pre-planning," Baier said. "We had the vehicles that allowed us to do what we did."

After gaining access to Dobie, rescue crews were initially taking evacuees straight to the high school. Baier said, however, that this was taking up too much precious time that could have been spent on emergency calls. Crews then set up a shuttle relay where they would use the larger deep-water rescue vehicles to retrieve the affected residents, then transfer them to the Food

Town at Scarsdale and Beamer, where a smaller rescue vehicle would then transport them the remainder of the way to Dobie.

At the height of the storm, some streets in the Woodmeadow subdivision were accessible only by airboat.

"Not even our five-ton trucks could make it there," Baier said.

Baier recalled one rescue on Corkwood Drive, where crews had to save a family from their attic. The residents had cut holes in the roof in order to survive.

The firefighters recalled another rescue in which crews had to lift a man in a wheelchair above their heads in order to place him in the bed of a rescue truck.

Baier said the most common obstacles encountered during rescue efforts were people wanting to bring their animals with them, as well as excessive belongings.

"We tried to accommodate them the best we could," Baier said.

Another common problem encountered by rescuers involved people wanting to go back into their homes to retrieve items.

Following the storm, the fire department's work turned from rescue to recovery efforts. Crews went door-to-door searching for deceased residents. None were found. Further, the department was not involved in any swift-water rescues, and no drownings were reported.

After the floodwaters receded, the department began to respond to several medical calls, particularly from dialysis patients and residents on oxygen machines. These residents were transported by ambulance to Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, which stayed open through the duration of the storm, unlike during Hurricane Ike when the facility opted to close its doors.

"The hospital was closed during Ike," Baier said. "This was 100 percent better. It gave us a place to take patients. During Ike, we took patients to the Medical Center. We couldn't have done that this time. The flooding was too bad."

Baier feels that multiple factors contributed to the success of the department's rescue work.

"The community had a blessing with both Dobie being open and the hospital staying open," Baier said.

In all, the department rescued more than 700 people.

What a difference AstroTurf makes



Shown above is a view of the Freeman Elementary playground before the AstroTurf was installed. Shown below is a different view of the same trees in the playground with the AstroTurf installed. The AstroTurf had been stored inside the Astrodome for high school and college football games. (See story Page 3A.)



In My Opinion

Lan Bui shares Harvey story, heroes

My parents, siblings and I have been long time residents of this area for more than 35 yrs. I moved away to live in New York City for a while, but found my way back a few years ago when my father became ill. This was where I grew up and I love this community. The strength, pride, joy, and loyalty of those who reside here is what makes it so great and that was proven during Hurricane Harvey.

Never could I imagine that I would live to see such devastation, like the one we experienced. As long as we have lived in this area, we have never flooded. This time, we had over 3'2" of water inside of our home. We lost everything- the entire house, contents, and car. It was all so surreal watching friends, family, and strangers come into our home and completely gutting it out. It was heartbreaking to see our entire life sitting out on the front lawn. I sat outside, with a mask and gloves on, and broke down in tears. We didn't have any flood insurance, so we literally had to start all over. It's been a long and grueling process, but we are in the last phase of rebuilding and hopefully we will be back in our home soon. I cannot thank everyone enough for their kindness, love, and support. But there's two people who have undoubtedly been wonderfully supportive throughout this entire ordeal- Wendy Wiseburn and Susan Blue. I would like to nominate them as local Harvey Heroes.

I have always been prideful and never been one to want or ask for help from anyone. When my kids lost all their clothes and was left with whatever we had evacuated with, I was torn. I couldn't bring myself to take or receive the help. I wasn't used to being on the receiving end. Mrs. Wendy Wiseburn pulled me aside and said, "Stop it! You're always helping others, so let us help you for a change and you can always pay it forward. You need to think about your family!" And with that, I was humbled. Sometimes it's not always about me. Mrs. Wiseburn and Mrs. Blue gathered clothes, food, and supplies for my family. Not only did they help us, but they opened a pantry at Frazier Elementary and welcome everyone to come. People were able to come grab food, water, clothes, and cleaning supplies weekly. During Christmas, parents were able to choose 2 gifts for each child from a make-shift Christmas store inside of the school. Along with their respective duties as principal/counselor, They graciously helped the entire community, not just those who attended the school.

Also, I would like to thank Mrs. Marie Flickinger and the *South Belt Leader* for giving the community strength and support by always providing updated information on local aide or assistance. But most of all, for their pantry and turning their office into a makeshift Christmas store too and gifting the kids 3 toys each and stocking stuffers!!

And last, but not least, I want to thank everyone (listed below and in no particular order) for helping us throughout this whole ordeal. I cannot express how much love and gratitude we feel for everyone's help. We could not have done it without you!

Sagamont Church and Helping Hands, Wendy Wiseburn, Susan Blue, Kristina Ponce, Paula Golden, Quynh Nguyen, Mike Flaherty, Ryan Flaherty, Susie and Andrew Dailey, Thy Flaherty, Big and Little Quan Nguyen, Ann Nguyen, Phong Nguyen and Jacob, Cao Dang, Ken Nguyen, Jared Lopez, *South-Belt Leader*, Marie Flickinger, Alex Tuan Trinh and Trinh Dang, Thuy and Viet Mai, Rick Nguyen, Mylinh Bui, Tiffany and Tu Nguyen, Michael Salazar, Ali Rizvi, Carol Yuan, My Lam Ly, Emily Brillo, Christina Pham, Lang Tran, Michael Hai Tran, Amy Quintero, Lylyan Tran, Rebecca Greenland, Tina Nguyen, Chip Reeder, Quang Ngo, Melynda Le, Trang Ngo, Paul Lim, Tuyen Ho, Tracy Tran, Isabella To, Jodi Hockenberry, Jano Maldonick, Nhuyn Ho, K. Smith, Reyna Oliva, Tifanie Nguyen, Ellen Lin, Jade Szu, Adam Rainier, Patterson Nguyen, Di Ung, Quyen Trang, Jessie Grizzle, Christine To, Mylinh Pham, Tina Trang Nguyen, Angel Le, Tony Tran, Lien Nguyen, Bao Mann, Vi Nguyen, Alan Regala, Hoa Than, Vanessa Flores, Kieu Nguyen Tran, Benny Ngai, Lisa Le, Jennifer Nguyen, Jana and Linh "Leonard" Nguyen, Men Tran, Fawn & Tony Tran, Steve Tran, Julie and John Le, Christina Le and Peter Tran. Joey Victorian, Tuan Lam, Kaire and Richard nguyen, Nancy and Charlie Wu, Cindy Bui, Jennifer Nguyen, An Nguyen, Travis Nguyen, Victor Nguyen, Steven Nguyen, Nhhien Ngo, My Van Duong, Cindy and Brian Tran, Kathy and Denver Le, Viet q Tran, Jimmy Tran, Cuong Tran, Joanna Tran, Mary Tran, and Linda Tran, Maly Jan, Thao Doan, Juliette Phan, Amanda Nguyen, Nykki Tang, Thien An Sandwiches, Tina La, Linda Au, Clemente Le, Ann Nguyen, Red Cross, Cong Dong Viet Houston, SCI, Hoang Hung Tran, Ngoc Tran, Men Tran, Vietnamese Martyrs Church, Mai-Lynn Nguyen, PISD, Kelly Lan Tran, Diane Wheeler, Elizabeth Soto.

Thank you,
Lan Bui

Heroes remember Harvey

By Jay Do

Nearly one year after Hurricane Harvey ravaged the Texas coast, the lingering devastation brought forth by the historical storm is still being felt by many South Belt residents. For many, the memories of destruction and havoc remain as vividly daunting as though it were yesterday. Alongside those memories, however, are also tales of heroism, bravery, and selflessness. The South Belt's most dire hour of need saw many rise to give back to their community.

These individuals are now being recognized as "Heroes of Harvey." These are their stories.

Dr. DeeAnn Powell

Among those leading the recovery effort was Dr. DeeAnn Powell, superintendent of schools of the Pasadena Independent School District.

A lifetime native of the area, Powell attended L.F. Smith and Williams Elementary Schools and Queens Intermediate. She went on to graduate from Pasadena High School in 1987 and Sam Houston State University in 1991. Powell's long and decorated career with PISD began at Jackson Intermediate, where she taught seventh- and eighth-grade history. She would take on the roles of a peer facilitator, an assistant principal, and eventually principal at Jackson before joining the district's administration in 2005 as an associate superintendent. Powell was soon promoted to deputy superintendent by then superintendent, Dr. Kirk Lewis, and assumed the superintendent position after he retired in late 2015.

As Harvey made landfall and the South Belt became besieged with rainfall on the evening of Aug. 25, Powell and her husband were sheltered in their Riverstone Ranch home, poised to wait out the storm.

"Personally, we were very blessed," recalled Powell. "We were in a newer subdivision in Riverstone Ranch. Even though the streets were flooded, the homes were not so much impacted."

Reminiscing about that evening, Powell even joked about how otherwise ordinary it was. "I was home the first night that we got the heavy rains," said Powell. "My husband was watching some silly fight that we had to pay money to watch, and I was a little frustrated by that."

Unbeknown to her at the time, Powell would soon be at the center for the fight for safety of the entire South Belt community.

At around midnight on the morning of Aug. 26, Marie Flickinger, owner and publisher of the *Leader*, called Powell, notifying her that J. Frank Dobbie High School may need to be opened and used as a temporary shelter for impacted individuals who had been forced out of their homes by rapid flooding. At the time, Flickinger was heading guidance from the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department. Collaboratively, they determined several potential sites that would be able to serve as a makeshift shelter, among which included Sagamont Church.

It soon became clear that the rising waters throughout the area's inner streets would not allow any other site to be used as a shelter. Dobbie quickly became the only viable option. Flickinger, battling time, called Powell again with the news.

"Marie called back a little bit later and said there was no way that people could get to the church, they were going to need to get into the school," said Powell. "Several of us, including my husband and I, some of our associate superintendents, and our chief of police, tried to get to the school that night, but none of us were able to make it."

Trapped within her home with no way to get to the Dobbie campus, Powell remotely granted access to Flickinger, who was able to get to the campus. "Marie was the only one that was able to get to the campus on a high water rescue vehicle," said Powell. "I remotely unlocked a couple of doors and guided Marie into the building through the phone. At that point, they were able to start letting people in who had received several feet of water in their homes. It was getting very scary at that point."

Powell's decision to authorize Dobbie to be used as a temporary shelter was one that she made without hesitation, despite the potential ramifications that could have arisen.

"I have seven bosses that are my board members, so I was taking a chance on whether they would think I was crazy and had lost my mind," said Powell. "We didn't know what kind of damage could come to the school, and I didn't know if they would have supported that decision, but they 100 percent supported it and thought it was a great decision. I rolled the dice, because I could not have gotten abhold of them at that

time. We didn't know what would happen, but when Marie said, 'We can either open the school or let people drown,' it was a no-brainer. I wanted to open the school, and figure everything out later."

It was not until early the next morning that a district school bus was able to make it through the high waters to Powell's residence and take her and her husband to Dobbie. Powell arrived at what was to become the first organized Harvey shelter in the greater Houston area.

"By the time we got there, there were already hundreds and hundreds of people there," said Powell. "They came from all over the area in rescue vehicles and dump trucks, because we were the first shelter in the area that was open. Some even walked with water up to their chests. There were hundreds of people, along with their dogs and cats. The firefighters had to chop some of the doors to the bathrooms down because they were locked by the custodial staff."

Immediately upon their arrival, Powell and her husband began spearheading the relief effort, organizing families, the elderly, and the disabled into certain areas of the Dobbie campus, and securing their pets in the campus's greenhouse to maintain sanitary standards within the shelter.

While at the shelter, Powell experienced first-hand the spirit of the South Belt community, as neighbors and strangers rallied behind one another in their time of need.

"We were able to get custodians to come over, some of whom even had their own homes flooded and still volunteered to come and work," said Powell. "All of our employees were off, but many of them still volunteered to come and help. It was amazing, with the community coming together and bringing all the clothing, bedding, and food. One of our principals owns a dump truck, so she and her husband were going around to different restaurants that were throwing out food and got them to feed the families in the shelter. When we disbanded the shelter, we were able to get so many donations that we passed them on to the community center to continue serving those who had lost their homes. We were very fortunate to be part of a community that takes care of our own."

Furthermore, lessons that Powell learned from the Harvey experience have already proven to be immensely invaluable in moments of crisis. "It depends on what kind of crisis we're facing, but we always have to communicate and be able to work together as a team," said Powell. "The Memorial graduation accident was just another example of communicating clearly, keeping people calm, and working together as a team. When you're in that situation, you can't think of every single detail, but making sure every member of the team knows what their role is goes a long way. After Harvey, we reviewed all of our practice plans and what everyone is responsible for in those situations. I feel like we have a good handle on what we have to do, but until you get into it, there's really no way to prepare for everything. It's just a matter of how we'll get started on addressing it."

Although she is extremely saddened by the loss of 1,700 students in enrollment as a direct result of Harvey, Powell's experience through the relief effort revitalized her faith in the human spirit. "The human spirit of our staff was absolutely remarkable," said Powell. "I can name staff from all of our 68 campuses who either volunteered to go help other staff members or volunteered to help families of their students. They went door to door in their neighborhoods giving out food and water. A lot of them were impacted themselves, and they were still volunteering to do that. Just to see our staff all come together and volunteer their time to take care of their community, that's pretty awesome. It comes to show just how much they care about these children. It's hard to see families go through that devastation, but it was amazing to see the community rally around that."

The Rev. Don Nordin
Among the heartwarming stories of selflessness shines amidst those of devastation and havoc brought forth by Hurricane Harvey includes that of CT Church's lead pastor, the Rev. Don Nordin.

A native of northern California, Nordin earned his bachelor of ministry degree from Central Christian University in Lexington, N.C., and began his long career in Arkansas, where he pastored for 20 years, before joining CT Church in 2001. Nordin and his wife, Susan Nordin, are now lead pastors of CT, which has grown to encompass four campuses throughout Houston under their leadership. Nordin's devotion to his faith has led many of his denominational peers to elect him to a host of leadership roles throughout his pastoral ministry, including various executive level positions and committee chairmanships. An entrepreneurial leader, donors have pledged tens of millions of dollars to kingdom projects overseen by Nordin.

As Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast on the evening of Aug. 25, Nordin and his wife were both away from the community, preaching in Knoxville. As he heard the news, Nordin immediately attempted to return home.

"I tried to fly back into Houston, but I couldn't get flown in through the storm," said Nordin. Desperate to return home, Nordin and his wife flew to Little Rock where they rented a car and braved the storms for the long drive back to Houston. In hindsight, Nordin found it ironic that the rental company actually rented him a vehicle. "I was really surprised that they would even rent me a car, but I was going to get to Houston one way or the other," said Nordin. "We both wanted to be here with our people."

Miraculously, the Nordins were able to arrive home safely, before the streets became impassable with floodwater. As they sheltered at their home for the night, the steady downpour trapped them inside their home. Concerned with the safety and well-being of their congregation, the Nordins were anxious to get to their church. "No water was able to get in the house, but it was high enough on the streets to where we were stranded," said Nordin. "As soon as we were able to get to the church, we did so immediately."

Nordin's leadership at CT has earned the church the reputation of being one of the community's most invaluable outreach organizations. Almost immediately, Nordin became flooded with requests for aid from the church. "As soon as I got to the church, people were calling us and asking us what we were going to do, because that's what we do," said Nordin. "That's just a part of who we are. I got my staff here and we just started organizing and doing whatever we could find to do."

Nordin immediately mobilized the CT staff to establish a point of distribution site in the parking lot of the church, distributing essential supplies to impacted individuals and families.

"We've got contacts with some national organizations, so we started making those calls and they sent over 18-wheelers full of food, water, ice, diapers and all kinds of other stuff," said Nordin.

As the relief effort grew larger and with the neighboring charter school set to soon resume operations, Nordin was forced to relocate the point of distribution site to a parking lot of the nearby Alameda Mall.

"We rented an enormous tent and for a number of days, we delivered thousands and thousands of pounds of anything that you can imagine that it takes to sustain life," said Nordin.

Nordin estimates that there were more than 150 tractor-trailer truckloads that were delivered to and distributed by the CT effort.

With essential supplies distributed, Nordin transitioned to

Continued on Page 3A

Deaths

Thomas F. Kasper



Thomas F. Kasper, 69, died peacefully on Wednesday, July 11. He was born on June 19, 1949, in Buffalo, N.Y., to Thaddeus and Virginia Kasper.

While attending school at Canisius College, he met the love of his life, Susan Gleason. The Kaspers have been longtime South Belt area residents and have been attending St. Luke's Catholic Church.

The couple married on Dec. 29, 1970, and began a 47-year relationship filled with devotion and joy. Tom and Susan moved to a few different cities, making their final home in Houston where they would spend the next 40 years.

The couple had two sons, Chris and Ben Kasper, who make their home in Houston today. Chris and Ben married Annell and Jamie, respectively, whom Tom adored.

The only ones to put a smile on his face more than they were his grandchildren Brandon, Jackson, Olivia, Griffin and Stella Kasper.

Above all else, Tom's main hobby the last few years was giving his grandchildren as much love and gifts that was humanly possible.

Tom worked at Texaco for 30 years where he played a major role in corporate marketing campaigns. He enjoyed being creative and seeing his vision play out in real life. When not working, he truly loved the game of golf, and it was not uncommon to see him on the golf course every weekend. Some who knew him note that he seemed to derive happiness from playing, watching, or just talking golf.

While his work and golf were major parts of his life, most of his time was spent being a dedicated father and husband and being charitable to those around him. Tom was generous with his time, labor, advice and money to those he knew and strangers alike. He always seemed to be one that felt if he could help another he would do so and not ask for anything in return.

In addition to his love and passion for life, Tom's lasting legacy will be the kindness and compassion he showed for others.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents; and his sister Micheline and her husband Floyd Fried.

Tom's survivors include his wife; two sons and their wives; siblings Margaret and husband Joseph Sliman; Carol Kasper, Gail Flynn, David and wife Cathy Kasper, Mary Davis, Peter Kasper, Christine and husband Alan Birsinger and Matt Kasper.

The funeral service was held Tuesday, July 17, at Niday Funeral Home.

George Louis Simecek



George Louis Simecek, 77, of Moulton, Texas, died Tuesday, July 10, 2018.

A former longtime South Belt resident, Simecek was born on June 10, 1941, in Moulton to Louis and Millie Rehak Simecek.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army on Dec. 12, 1963, and his military occupational specialty was 11B10 Infantry. During his short service, he acquired the rank of Specialist E4 and was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Medal. He also made marksman in rifle and expert rifle with M-14. Simecek was honorably discharged from the Army on Dec. 11, 1965, and afterward, received the Purple Heart.

Simecek then continued his life's journey in Houston where he worked for more than 20 years in the drywall business. He moved back to Moulton in the early 1990s and enjoyed the small-town life. He loved going to picnics, the Moulton Jamboree, and dance halls and he had a passion for all types of music and operated his own DJ business, Dance Hall Sound, for several years.

An avid sports fan, Simecek could talk for hours about almost any sport but really loved the Houston Rockets, Astros and Texans.

Simecek was a loyal member in many local organizations including the Moulton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 6971, Moulton American Legion Post #392, Moulton Lions Club, and the Polka music club Po.L.K. of A. He was also a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Moulton.

Simecek was preceded in death by his father, mother, and brother Marvin Simecek.

He is survived by his children Shannon Simecek and Candi Simecek of Houston, Cole Simecek of Austin and Macie Simecek of Moulton; and grandchildren McKenna Simecek and Austin Goodwin of Houston.

Simecek also survived by sisters Margie Muenster of Ganado, Helen Killen of Pearland, Rita and husband Ron Freytag of Tomball and Gladys Criste of Pearland; and several nieces and nephews.

He also leaves behind a special friend and former wife, Connie Cheney, who dedicated much of her life including the last four years taking care of Simecek and his home after he suffered a stroke.

A memorial service for Simecek was held at the Smith Funeral Home in Moulton on Friday, July 13.

Gilbert "Sonny" Ramirez



Gilbert "Sonny" Ramirez, 70, died on July 16. Gilbert was a longtime South Belt resident.

Gilbert was born on July 6, 1948, in San Antonio to Gilbert Flores Ramirez and Delia Barrera.

He is survived by his former wife of 32 years Frances Ramirez; his children Yvonne Ramirez, Gerardo and Kristy Guzman and Cindy Ortiz; grandchildren Carlos and Ashley Lopez, Amber Barbosa, Raven Jacobs, Kaly Trujillo, Brandon Guzman and Ryan Saucedo; great-grandchildren Jordan, Jeremiah and Arianna Lopez, Isaih and Alynna Valdivia and Adelyn Murillo. Gilbert is also survived by his sisters Maria Louisa Rodriguez, Juanita Georges, Gina Delafuentes; as well as by nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends.

Gilbert is preceded in death by his parents; grandmother Maria Marin; sister and brother-in-law Minerva and Fred Garcia; and nephew Leroy Rodriguez.

Gilbert retired as an electrical engineer after serving 32 years with CenterPoint Energy. He was known as a devoted father, husband, popo and great-popo.

He had a joy for life and most of all for God. Gilbert enjoyed hunting, fishing, trailriding, coaching his daughter's soccer and softball teams, but most of all spending time with his family and friends.

He had a passion for education and volunteered many hours raising money for the Houston and Pasadena Livestock Show and Rodeo. He also loved the Texans and Astros.

Visitation will be held Thursday, July 19, at South-Park Funeral Home from 5 to 8 p.m. with the recitation of the rosary starting at 7 p.m. Mass will be celebrated Friday, July 20, at 11 a.m. at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church, 11011 Hall Road. Burial will follow at SouthPark Cemetery, 1310 N. Main St. in Pearland.

Leader obituary policy

Obituaries submitted to the *Leader* are published free of charge. There must be a South Belt connection. Obituaries are edited to conform to the *Leader* style.

Business Review

Island Breeze celebrates opening



Island Breeze, the car wash at Kwik Kar on Scarsdale, held a ribbon-cutting on Saturday, June 9, to celebrate its opening. The new co-owners are Karlene Rivers (front row, third from left) and her nephew Tristan Williams (front row, fourth from left). Rivers has lived in the South Belt area for more than 12 years and she has more than 20 years of experience in accounting. Rivers also holds a CPA. Williams is a 2004 Dobbie graduate and held the position of class president. Williams played multiple sports and lettered in track and field. Williams has more than 10 years of accounting and finance experience. The family comes from the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, for which

they named their business Island Breeze. Shown are, left to right, (front row) Kay Barbour, South Belt Chamber president; Adrienne Williams, Tristan's wife; Karlene Rivers; Tristan Williams, co-owner; Charmaine Rivers-Williams, Tristan's mother and board member; Fredrick Williams, Tristan's father and board member; Charlene O'Brien, family member; (back row) Alexis Lochner; Nigel Pierre, family member; Jose Cruz, operations manager; Nigel Rivers, family member and board member; Erinn O'Brien, family member; and Jalyesa Boutte, family member.

Photo by Marie Flickinger

South Belt-Ellington Leader

The Voice of Community-Minded People

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Davy & Marie Flickinger, owners

Chamber honors local Harvey heroes

Continued from Page 2A providing hot meals.

"We started serving hot meals to the community, because we recognized that there were a lot of people who had to leave their homes and go to hotels," said Nordin. "They weren't prepared to be going out, so we took meals out to them and delivered them to hotels, nursing homes, neighborhoods and other churches."

More than 120,000 hot meals were delivered by the CT relief effort.

Having secured basic living conditions, Nordin then shifted his focus to the daunting endeavor that was the recovery process of his community. Utilizing the extensive relationships that he has maintained throughout his preaching career, Nordin called upon church relief teams from around the nation to send aid.

More than 50 teams from around the nation answered Nordin's request for help, providing more than 13,000 man-hours of relief to a battered community. CT Church opened a 60-bed camp to host these teams as they traveled across the nation to help with neighborhood repairs. Nearly a year after their initial arrival, some of these teams are still at CT, continuing the extensive repair efforts for individuals who otherwise may not have the means of doing so. For Nordin, the historic hurricane was a humbling and eye-opening experience. "My takeaway from it was that we're all on different socioeconomic rungs of the ladder, but a storm like this puts us all on level ground," said Nordin. "People who have quite a bit of resources were as desperate as those who have no resources. It has a way of leveling the playing field."

Nordin remains saddened by the loss of some members of his congregation. "Some people who have lived out here for a number of years and had been flooded out a few times just decided to pack up and leave the area," said Nordin. "There were some people who financially couldn't afford to rebuild and were forced to leave the area." Still, the entire experience has reaffirmed his faith in the spirit of Southeast Houston. "The community pulled together, and there were a lot of people that are in better homes with better living conditions now than they were before the storm, even if they lost some things that they can't replace," said Nordin.

"There was an exclamation point put at the end of the sentence, 'Southeast Houston is a great place to live!' because the community really pulled together. Churches, businesses, government organizations, everyone just blurred the lines during that whole process and tried to do whatever they can to help. It was really encouraging to see the big hearts in the people of Southeast Houston," Nordin said.

It is in instances such as these, Nordin believes, where the Christian faith shines brightest. "When something like this happens, churches are what mobilize the volunteers," said Nordin. "People drive by churches all the time and they go to churches every week, but Harvey provided us with the opportunity to be the church and to let our light shine in a very dark time."

Looking back, Nordin jokes that he violated the Ten Commandments for a number of weeks, having labored on the day of the Sabbath.

"We didn't even have church for a couple of weeks," said Nordin. "We just had people go out in the community and help, seven days a week. We weren't just going to church, we were being the church."

David "D.D." Matthews
Battling high floodwaters from Beamer Road to Scarsdale Boulevard, David "D.D." Matthews Jr. rescued dozens of impacted individuals from their flooded homes.

A lifelong resident of the community, Matthews Jr. was born and raised in the South Belt area, attending Moore Elementary, Beverly Hills Intermediate and Dobie High School. A natural athlete, Matthews played football for the South Belt Dolphins, before lettering in varsity football with the Dobie football team. Matthews married his high school sweetheart, Brianna Blakeley, and the couple now raise their 2-year-old daughter, Aubrey Blakely Matthews, in their Deer Park home, while expecting the birth of a son in September 2018. Matthews now works as a crew leader on inland oil and natural gas drill platforms with Horizontal Wireline.

Matthews' contributions to the Harvey relief effort were noted by his father, David Matthews Sr., program director of the Harris County Precinct One Challenger Seven Park Learning Center.

As Harvey made landfall on the evening of Aug. 25, Matthews Jr. was sheltering in place at his father's residence in the Kirkwood South subdivision. The family was able to avoid flooding by mere inches.

"We were extremely fortunate, as our home came within an inch of the water coming inside," recalled Matthews Sr.

While they themselves were dry and safe from any imminent danger, the Matthews soon realized that the situation was rapidly deteriorating for many of their neighbors.

"We were all glued to the television listening to Mayor Sylvester Turner and County Judge Ed Emmett talk about the magnitude of the flooding situation, as scenes of the surrounding areas came across the screen," said Matthews Sr.

As Emmett made it clear that the county's resources were exhausted and pleaded for help from the general public in the rescue effort for flooded individuals, Matthews Jr. wasted no time in determining that it was time to take action.

"I walked outside and was standing in the driveway when I heard my son opening the double gates to our backyard off the driveway," said Matthews Sr. "I asked him what he was doing, and he stated, 'You heard the judge. Our neighbors need help. Isn't this what you have done your whole life, Dad? Help people?'"

Without hesitation in spite of the rising floodwaters, Matthews Jr. launched his 20 feet jon boat at Beamer Road near Beltway 8 and set course for Scarsdale Boulevard, determined to rescue any that needed his help along the way.

Concerned for his son's safety, Matthews Sr. asked his son when he would return home.

"When no one else needs my help or when it gets too dark to keep going," Matthews Jr. responded simply. "Then, I will get up tomorrow and do it again, until

there is no one left that needs my help."

True to his heroic pledge, Matthews Jr. did exactly that. Over the course of the next two days, Matthews Jr., along with childhood friends Tommy Ford, Jason Thornhill, Isaac Jackson and Julia Fleming, scoured the Highland Meadows and Scarsdale subdivisions, rescuing more than 65 stranded individuals and delivering them safely to the Dobie shelter. Matthews Jr. even went so far as to ferry residents to and from their flooded homes to retrieve vital medications and other critical medical equipment.

From senior citizens who had been soaked in waist deep water and had to be carried to the boat because they were too stiff to move, to another individual recovering from a triple bypass heart surgery and required a heart monitor to be with him at all time, it quickly became evident that Matthews Jr. was single-handedly responsible for saving dozens of lives.

Having been raised by a community-oriented leader, the values of giving back to one's community was instilled in Matthews Jr. from an early age. "I was over the South Region Parks Department for Precinct One for 28 years, and my children had to go to every community event we hosted at EFL Park growing up," said Matthews Sr. "They learned, through watching me, the importance of helping your community. It was second nature to him, that when his community was in its darkest hours, it was time to reach out and help."

Matthews Jr.'s rescue efforts reiterated the importance of being prepared for natural disasters and moments of crises.

"Try to be prepared to move to higher ground before it gets too late," said Matthews Jr. "Do not wait to have to be rescued. Have your medications in a bag to take with you at times like this. So many were unprepared to leave their homes, especially the elderly."

Of all the recognition that Matthews Jr. has received for his efforts, he cherishes nothing more than the gratitude that he received from those that he rescued.

"The feeling he had been able to give back to the community that had meant so much to him growing up was priceless for my son," said Matthews Sr. "The gratitude on the faces and the look in their eyes of those he rescued meant more to him than any recognition he could possibly receive, even though they were too exhausted to say a single word."

Despite being hailed as a hero by many, Matthews Jr. remains extremely humbled by the experience, crediting recognition to others who he feels are worthy of such praise.

"I would just like to thank all the other people, first responders and private citizens, who were out there assisting in boats and high water rescue vehicles," said Matthews Sr. "They did so much in those two days, with rescues in the areas that were hit the hardest. They are all heroes in my book, and deserve just as much recognition. We all did our part for our community."

Jessica Cordero
Playing an integral role in the volunteer efforts at the Dobie temporary shelter and at the Sagemont food pantry was area resident Jessica Cordero.

A longtime resident of the South Belt community, Cordero graduated from J.

Frank Dobie High School in 1991, and has spent the last 20 years of her life in the Sagemont subdivision. She now works as the manager of NASA's High School Aerospace Scholars program.

As Harvey made landfall on the evening of Aug. 25, Cordero and her husband found themselves anxiously looking out their back windows, fearful that the rising water would soon find its way inside their home off Blackhawk Boulevard.

Although water never penetrated their home and they were spared from the flooding, the couple found themselves trapped inside their home, isolated by the high floodwaters around their neighborhood.

"The next day, we were glued to the television, because we couldn't leave our house," said Cordero. "We were just in disbelief that this was happening in our city and in our community."

Cordero soon got a call from an old friend, pleading for her help. Cordero and her husband answered the call for help, traversing through the high waters to get to a friend that she had not seen in years.

"We brought her back to our home, and some of her family came to pick her up that night," said Cordero. "That's when I heard that Dobie was taking people in who had been flooded."

Without a moment's hesitation, Cordero packed her bags with necessary supplies and headed to the temporary shelter, determined to help in whatever way she could.

"I couldn't sit by knowing that people in my community were hurting," said Cordero. "I had to do all that I could to help. I have a service heart, and I wanted to just help in any capacity."

At Dobie, Cordero met with Jason and Rebecca Carter, who were leading the efforts at the school. Cordero quickly used the skills she had gained through her career with NASA to establish a registration system, cataloging first the impacted individuals, and then the volunteers.

"I got a couple of young students, and the three of us went around to the different parts of Dobie checking everyone in," said Cordero.

As the shelter grew larger in number, Cordero became charged with organizing the impacted individuals and delegating tasks for the volunteers.

"As it became larger and larger, we had to find people stations to go to and determine whether they would be applying for shifts in the morning or in the afternoon," said Cordero. "Everyone else was busy making instant decisions about more higher priority stuff, so I took over determining where people would go."

Once it became clear that volunteers would be unable to navigate to Dobie to help due to the rising floodwaters, impacted individuals at the shelter took matters into their own hands.

"The one thing that I found to be so beautiful was when the displaced individuals actually became the volunteers themselves," said Cordero. "These are people who have possibly lost their homes, and they're standing up and becoming volunteers to help their neighbors."

As the steady downpour of rain made it difficult for volunteers to gather food for the shelter, Cordero took to social media to ask her neighbors for help. The community responded, delivering more than enough food.

"The food did not stop coming the whole time we were there, and the people there never had a meal that was not hot," said Cordero. "Everything was hot, fresh, homemade. It was amazing and beautiful. We had more than enough. It was similar to the miracle of the five loaves and two fish."

Residents and local businesses, including Texas Roadhouse and H-E-B, provided so much food, that there was enough to send to three more shelters after the Dobie shelter was disbanded. Hilton Koch of Hilton Furniture, graciously sent three trucks to deliver the food, and all three left the Dobie shelter filled to the brim.

More important than her delegation skills, Cordero offered her community her time and empathy, something it desperately needed.

"People were uncertain about what was outside the doors, but they were confident about what was inside: safety, security and food," said Cordero. "There were so many people that just wanted to sit and talk. People would just start crying, knowing that their home was flooded, so we just tried to be a comforting ear and a helpful hug, if they needed one. That's all you could do at a time like that."

Cordero cared for the displaced individuals so much so that she found it difficult to bid them farewell once the Dobie shelter had to be disbanded.

"It was hard when decisions were made to send people to the next place that they had to go to because Dobie had to plan to let the students back in," said Cordero. "That was a difficult process, because it happened very fast, even though everyone knew that it had to happen eventually."

Even as the Dobie shelter disbanded, Cordero was far from finished. Immediately after Dobie shut its doors, Cordero moved to Sagemont Church, where she established a similar registration process, processing more than 1,200 volunteers and delegating them to various tasks over the course of two weeks.

"Wherever I needed to be, I was," said Cordero. "What I really loved seeing was how much people were willing to rise up to whatever challenge was given to them."

Having witnessed the devastation and havoc of Harvey, Cordero is reminded of the importance of natural disaster preparedness.

"It's very easy to dismiss being prepared for a hurricane," said Cordero. "I think people really do need to plan better, myself included. We lack preparation as a community, and I think it's really important to be prepared for a situation like this."

With a heart guided by the need to help others, Cordero found it incredibly moving to see so many others like herself, gathered together to pursue a common good. "In that time, seeing people loving each other was amazing," said Cordero.

"There were no fights about race, age, or gender. We were all one. Society now is so chaotic, it's like you always have to choose a side. Our side was recovery at that time, and everyone was on it. Our community was here for each other, and that was the most beautiful thing. We didn't have time for the silliness of the world and the petty fights. We just wanted to be there for each other and help our community," said Cordero.

Monica Hernandez (right), one of Lewis Career and Technical High School's Shining Stars, is shown with distinguished educator Desiree Gomez, 12th-grade pharmacy teacher at Lewis Career and Technical High School.

Hernandez has volunteered with several organizations that include Mae Smythe Elementary ACE Program, the City of Pasadena, the Pasadena Public Library and the Pasadena Animal Shelter. She has also volunteered in her religious community at Our Lady of Guadalupe and San Juan Diego Catholic churches.

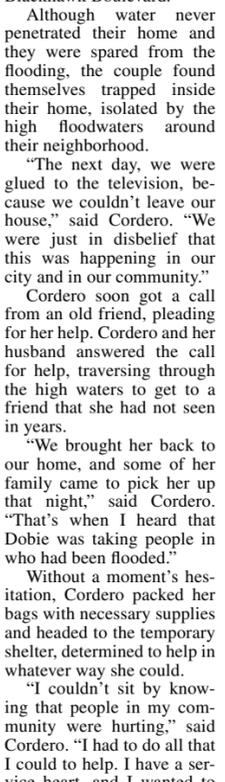
Hernandez plans to attend Baylor University and hopes to receive a bachelor's degree in biochemistry. Overall, her ultimate goal is to attain a doctorate in the field of anesthesiology.

In regard to Gomez, Hernandez said, "To a woman that has an incredible gift of teaching. Mrs. Gomez is a person

I would describe as lively and free-spirited. She radiates a positive attitude toward her students. It is a great honor to have Mrs. Gomez as my pharmacy tech instructor. There is no doubt Mrs. Gomez was born to be a teacher, nonetheless, and, better still, a mentor in my medical career. Since day one, she placed her focus in giving not only me, but also all her students the best education she can. There has never been a dull moment in her class because of her genuine love of teaching."

The South Belt Shining Stars will be presented in a series of students being honored along with their favorite mentor. The Shining Stars represent the top Lewis Career and Technical High School students. The information and photos were submitted by Pasadena Independent School District.

The Leader is also running the Shining Stars from Dobie, Pasadena Memorial, and South Houston high schools.



Hernandez describes Gomez as incredible

Phong K. Hong (right), one of Pasadena Memorial High School's Shining Stars, is shown with distinguished educator Victoria Ellis, 10th-grade advanced placement history teacher at Pasadena Memorial High School.

In regard to volunteer work, Hong has volunteered at the Houston Food Bank, the Vietnamese Martyrs Crawfish Festival, the Asbury Winter Festival, at Hurricane Harvey shelters, the Rugged Race and Color Run. He has also helped build a playground at Gardens Elementary, and helped at a UIL drumline competition and at the Crenshaw Park Cleanup.

As for the future, Hong plans to pursue a career in engineering while studying at the University of Houston. He hopes to one day use his education to travel to developing countries and help those in need.

Hong said the following about Ellis, "Mrs. Ellis was one of the first teachers that I have met who truly loved the

subject she taught. She actually managed to make world history seem interesting even though I slept occasionally in her class throughout the year. Mrs. Ellis pushed me to do my best in a college level class that was filled with endless amounts of homework and notes. Thanks to her, I now know men have 'that y chromosome' causing them to do dumb things. Looking back, I see that Mrs. Ellis had instilled significant qualities in myself that will surely benefit me in the future."

The South Belt Shining Stars will be presented in a series of students being honored along with their favorite mentor. The Shining Stars represent the top Pasadena Memorial High School students. The information and photos were submitted by Pasadena Independent School District.

The Leader is also running the Shining Stars from Dobie, South Houston and Lewis Technical high schools.



Ellis pushes Hong to do his best

Freeman Elementary playground area around the AstroTurf area after being used at NRG Stadium for college and high school football games.

Two rolls of AstroTurf, weighing more than six tons, were recently delivered directly from NRG Park and installed as part of a beautification project at Freeman.

According to Mike Van Loenen, Freeman Elementary principal the area around the playground was just dirt and tree roots due to the established trees not letting grass grow. He researched ways to beautify and improve the playground when he had an idea while watching the news one night. "I saw rolls of AstroTurf being stored at the AstroTurf on the news and I thought, what are they

going to do with all the turf?" said Van Loenen.

Van Loenen then reached out to Judge Ed Emmett and Commissioner Jack Morman via email, who facilitated the delivery of 6,000 square feet of artificial turf.

He worked with the PISD Maintenance Department and a group of youth volunteers from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ECLA) Youth Gathering to

install the turf at the playground.

"This project would have never been possible without the generosity from Commissioner Morman and Judge Emmet and all the hard work by the PISD Maintenance crew," said Van Loenen. "We are so thankful to all of them for blessing our community and our students with this donation. (See related photos Page 1A.)"

Tanis Griffin and Allison Lewallen were recently named principals of Thompson Intermediate and Morris Middle School, respectively, during a special called meeting of the Pasadena Independent School District Board of Trustees.

Griffin will assume the position as principal at Thompson Intermediate, following

the promotion of former principal Melissa McCalla to executive director for the Curriculum and Instruction Connect Program.

A longtime educator at Pasadena ISD, Griffin taught U.S. history at South Houston Intermediate and Bondy Intermediate, where she also served as assistant principal.

"I'm very thankful to Pasadena ISD for all the opportunities they've provided me throughout my career," said Griffin. "I look forward to working with the South Belt community and providing a wonderful environment for all our students at Thompson."

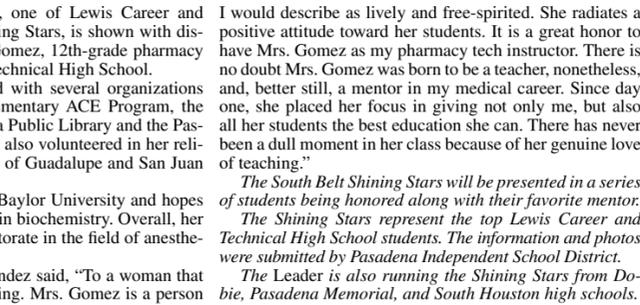
Lewallen is replacing Daniel Hoppie as principal at Morris Middle School. Hoppie was recently promoted to executive director for curriculum and instruction.

Having spent the last six years as an assistant principal at Sam Rayburn High School, Lewallen says she looks forward to continuing her career at Morris.

"I'm very appreciative for the opportunity to serve the students and staff at Morris," said Lewallen. "This is going to be a great year, and I'm proud to be a Trailblazer."

Prior to her time at Rayburn, Lewallen was an instructional specialist at Dickinson High School and an AVID campus coordinator at Flour Bluff High School.

Both principals will assume their duties at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. (See related photo Page 1A.)



Freeman playground gets AstroTurf

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Harvey evacuees arrive at Dobie in any available vehicle



Individuals and families affected by the rising water that Hurricane Harvey unleashed made their way any way they could to the shelter that had been opened at J. Frank Dobie High School. People made their way by City of Houston Public Works trucks, flat bed tow trucks, Metro buses, garbage trucks, furniture moving trucks and more. Photo by Marie Flickinger

Heroes recognized

Continued from Page 1A
Jason and Rebecca Carter and Charles Smith

During Hurricane Harvey, few did more to help the South Belt community than local couple Jason and Rebecca Carter and their good friend Charles Smith who each tirelessly volunteered throughout the duration of the storm.

Jason Carter, who serves as a coach for the Sagemont Cowboys, was responsible for rescuing numerous residents – first by truck, then by kayak – before taking on a lead role at the temporary shelter erected at Dobie High School, while his wife assumed kitchen duties at the makeshift facility.

The parents of a Dobie FFA student, the Carters' volunteer work started somewhat accidentally when Jason encountered displaced residents walking toward the school to take shelter, as he was checking on livestock at the campus's adjacent agricultural facility.

"I didn't get it at first," Carter said. "I saw all these people walking down Blackhawk. There were droves. I was like 'what in the world? It's just raining.'"

Once he realized the severity of the storm, however, Carter, who owns an elevated truck – a Ford Excursion with 18 inches of lift and 37-inch tires – went into rescue mode.

"I called (Rebecca) and said 'I've got to help.'"

After picking up Smith to help, Carter began going up and down area streets searching for others who needed assistance. Carter focused his attention on areas along Hall Road and Kirkfair because even his large truck was incapable of crossing Beamer. A kayak fisherman by hobby, Carter later used a boat to rescue victims in floodwaters so high that even fire department vehicles couldn't maneuver through them.

For her part, Rebecca Carter collected dry clothes, blankets and food and headed to Dobie to volunteer.

"That first morning, it was all our comforters, all our clothes," Rebecca Carter said. "As soon as supplies walked through those doors, you were handing them to someone who was putting them on. So instantly, I was seeing children wearing my children's clothes and women wearing my clothes."

Additional donations, however, soon began to flow in.

"There was an outpouring of support from the community," said Jason Carter.

The couple attributes social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter for helping spread the word.

"Social media played a big part in getting supplies," Rebecca Carter said. "It just grew. People who could send it in, sent it in, and if people couldn't get there, we'd pick it up."

A devout Christian and member of South Belt Church, Jason believes divine intervention provided for some of the necessary supplies.

He recalled a story of doing rescue work in the middle of the night when he came upon a woman walking on Hall Road near St. Luke's Church, later identified as Jessica Rowland. (See Rowland entry on Page 6A.) When Carter asked if the lady needed assistance, she responded that she was going to work at the church's Gabriel Project – a program designed to help women during crisis pregnancies. Knowing there was a huge need for diapers at Dobie – one of the few supplies lacking at the time – Carter asked the woman if she had any to donate. To Carter's amazement, not only did the woman have extra diapers, but she had enough to fill his entire SUV.

"At that time, Charles said 'you have to mark that one up for God,'" Jason said. "Because that's too much for coincidence, if all these other things hadn't have happened, there's no way I would have randomly ran into this lady walking down the side of Hall Road. It was definitely put in place before we ever got over there. That was the plan, to get diapers, whether we knew it or not."

As the population and amount of donations and supplies increased at Dobie, Jason Carter transitioned from his role as a rescuer to an organizer at the shelter.

"I was relegated to chief and threw my keys to someone else," Carter said. "My profession is, I'm a yardmaster at Union Pacific, so I keep a lot of stuff moving at one time. It was kind of natural for me to keep all the pieces moving inside the building and make sure everything was going where it was supposed to go. I went into work mode. My wheels were turning."

Jason Carter made it a

point to visit with each individual seeking shelter at the temporary refuge.

"I personally made an attempt to talk to everybody who came through those doors, to see if they needed help, to see what they needed, if they wanted to pray, and just let them know we were going to make it through this together as a community," he said.

A former daycare employee and mother of six, Rebecca also felt at home while volunteering at the high school.

"I know how to cook for a lot of people," she said. "This is what I do more people. It was just for more people."

On the first morning Dobie served as a shelter, it is estimated that Carter cooked around 600 pancakes, initially using only products she had brought from her own home.

The Carters, who also took flood victims into their own home, were touched by how upbeat the evacuees were, given their bleak circumstances.

"There was nothing but love in that building," said Jason Carter. "Everyone there was happy. These are people who just lost their whole house in a flood, and they were still happy, or at least content. We were brothers and sisters of Sagemont taking care of brothers and sisters of Sagemont. It was one, big happy family."

Carter further extended his appreciation to the others who helped pitch in at the shelter.

"Every single person there – every single volunteer, to the powers that be like Marie (Flickinger), the PISD police, the teachers – everyone showed how much they cared and how much they love our community," he said. "We were all there together to take care of the community."

While members of the American Red Cross and National Guard eventually arrived at Dobie to provide assistance, the Carters stressed the importance of local community members taking a proactive approach.

"A lot of times in a situation like this, people sit back and think 'oh, there's people who do this, they'll take care of us,'" said Rebecca Carter. "If people in Sagemont had done that, it would have been a disaster. Everybody who could do something, they did something. And that, for me, was the important part. And for anything else that comes up, if you can do something, do it. There's no going to be people coming in at 6 a.m. with food."

Jason Carter contends the outside help wasn't even necessary.

"We had such an outpouring from the community, we didn't really need anybody else," he said.

Kat Kiel

While most Hurricane Harvey stories involve human lives and property, the story of Kat Kiel is different, as it focuses on the lives of four-legged friends in the community.

When a temporary shelter to house the evacuees who were rescued from flooding homes was set up early Saturday, Aug. 26, at Dobie High School, it quickly became apparent that the shelter was a refuge for many South Belters who were also bringing their pets. The logistical challenges of having both people and pets together under one roof became clear almost immediately. Often, pets who are around unfamiliar people become stressed, agitated and even aggressive. So when the human and pet populations of the Dobie temporary shelter began to rise, the need to find solutions for everyone's safety took on an urgency of its own.

When persons displaced from their homes began to arrive at Dobie's temporary shelter late Friday night, South Belt-Ellington Leader publisher Marie Flickinger insisted that pet owners needed to have their pets in a sheltered area on the outside of Dobie, where there was shelter from the rain, and the animals were able to move more freely with less agitation from the close proximity of strangers. However, a decision was made the following day to move the pets inside the school and put them in a designated area, since Harvey was still wreaking havoc, and the rain had not stopped.

Problems also began to arise since many of the pets did not have kennels. To avert potential crises, at Kenny Fernandez's suggestion, Rebecca Carter called Kiel, a South Belter who is known in the community to have a big heart for pets as well as strong organizational skills.

On Monday, Aug. 28, at

Over The Back Fence by Alexis

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JOSE!
 Greetings for a happy birthday on July 25 are sent to **Jose Abarca** from his wife **Natalie**; children **Kelvin Lopez, Noah, Elliana and Isabella Abarca**; mother-in-law **Ellie Flickinger** and her husband, **Davy Flickinger** (Leader president); grandparents **Marie and David Flickinger**; and friends and staff at the **Leader**.

SCHOOL DAZE
 The following personnel of the Pasadena Independent School District celebrate birthdays July 19 through July 25.

Burnett Elementary
 Blow out the birthday candles for **Sandra Trojan** July 19.

Bush Elementary
 Celebrate with a double-layer cake for **Vanessa Gil and Erin Hubert** on July 20. Sing a double chorus of a birthday song with **Rubi Contreras and Tonya Goan** on July 25.

Frazier Elementary
Eryqa Glenn and Elizandra Lopez enjoy a birthday July 23. Light the birthday candles July 25 for **Virginia Light**.

Meador Elementary
 Marking a birthday July 25 is **Maria**

Gonzalez.
South Belt Elementary
 Send a birthday greeting July 19 to **Norma Castro**. July 22 is the day for some birthday fun for **Maria Martinez**.

Melillo Middle School
 Celebrating a birthday July 23 is **Amee Stoneman**.

Roberts Middle School
 Sing a double chorus of a happy birthday song July 19 to **Mekali Ball and Sandra Palma**.

Beverly Hills Intermediate
 Light the birthday candles July 21 for **Yara Quintanilla**.

Thompson Intermediate
 Sing a chorus of a birthday song July 20 for **Rosaiba Lopez**.

Dobie High
 A four-star birthday celebration is in order for **Saiyeda Blanco, Halee Edwards, Kevin Erickson and Norma Garces** on July 22. **Dawn Sexton** marks a birthday July 23. A triple-layer cake is in order for the July 24 birthday celebration of **Rebekka Gabino, Cam Luong and Abifoluwa Shitta-Bey**. Birthday greetings are sent to **Rowena Hickman** July

25.
FRIENDS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS
 The **Leader** sends happy birthday wishes to friends who celebrate a birthday this week: Thursday, July 19: **Fred Alvarez, Terrell Session, Gary Hilliard and Anne Tyson**; Friday, July 20: **Junior Lynn, Curtis Eads, Mary Johnson, Chris Cole and Joey Cowdy**; Saturday, July 21: **Natalie Sweet, Denise McMurrugh, Vanessa Veltman and Danielle Clay**; Sunday, July 22: **Judith Kemie and Hey-Zues Lara**; Monday, July 23: **Mario Salazar, Angeles Gomez, Melinda Evans and Amanda Karsten**; Tuesday, July 24: **Richard Schreier, Montoya Wiltner, Connie Alberti, Richard Golenko and Pete Ortiz**; and Wednesday, July 25: **Kelly Jones, Jose Abarca, Larry Bennett, Kathy Taylor, Steven Thiele, Stephanie Gutierrez, Cherie Cundiff, Mario Rodriguez and Brodie Riner Jr.**

LEADER WANTS YOU IN THE NEWS
 Email birthday, anniversary, vacation, congratulations, etc., to mynews@southbeltleader.com with OTBF in the subject line. Items must be submitted by Friday noon for the next week's publication.

J. Frank Dobie HS names junior varsity cheerleaders



J. Frank Dobie High School has named its junior varsity cheerleader squad for the 2018-2019 school year. Enjoying a pose together are, left to right, (front row) **Emilly Guzman, Madisynne Reed, De-**

maris O'Der, Amy Guzman, (back row) Gabbi Lozano, Brianna Almaguer, Yennie Tran and Alyssa Cooper.

Photo by Amy Otwell

Remember When

40 years ago (1978)

Two mailboxes, one off Blackhawk, and the other off Sageplum, were blown up by some type of homemade explosive using a soft drink bottle.

Ralph Edwards became the minister of education for Sagemont Baptist Church.

35 years ago (1983)

The Pasadena Independent School District board of trustees was to make a decision that could make the district landlord of a garbage dump on Genoa Red Bluff Road.

Employee health insurance premiums for PISD were to increase 13 percent during the next school year.

30 years ago (1988)

William A. Hyslop was appointed to replace the chief executive officer of Memorial Southeast Hospital, Steve Sanders, who left his post to participate in a new presidential development program.

South Belt resident Chris Clark, Democratic candidate for state Rep. Randy Pennington's District 130 position, agreed to serve on a bipartisan municipal waste task force co-sponsored by Pennington.

25 years ago (1993)

The PISD Board of Trustees approved a proposal to enter into a cooperative program with the "rich" Deer Park school district. Details of the program were still to be worked out and needed approval by Deer Park voters and the education commissioner. In the program, Deer Park would share some of its wealth with Pasadena.

Robert Ingram was appointed assistant principal at Clear Brook High School at a Clear Creek school district board meeting. Just one year before, Ingram, who resided in CCISD, was named to the same position at Dobie High School.

Asian gang-type crime activity in the South Belt area had come to a halt fol-

lowing arrests of eight teens in two separate incidents during the previous week.

Environmental Protection Agency officials announced immediate action be taken to learn why Brio toxic chemicals were reaching Mud Gully and Clear Creek. After testing samples in the waterways during April and May, EPA officials became convinced the toxics were from the Brio Superfund site.

20 years ago (1998)

The Sagemont-Beverly Hills major all-star team won the District 15 tournament.

Commissioner El Franco Lee announced a major development of South Belt's county annex facility. This included the justice of the peace office; relocation, enlarging and moving the constable's facility; and establishing a tax office, a county clerk's office and an office for Lee.

15 years ago (2003)

Dr. M. Derek Caraway, a 1988 J. Frank Dobie graduate, became the new medical director of the emergency room at Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital.

10 years ago (2008)

A 1986 Dobie graduate and his former father-in-law were indicted Thursday, July 17, on charges that they stole money from the Houston Police Officers' Union. Jeff Larson, 39, and Ronald Martin, 51, are accused of bilking more than \$100,000 from the union, where they formerly served on the board as treasurer and secretary, respectively. The two men allegedly stole cash, cashed checks, used credit cards and kept money from vehicle sales.

The crimes reportedly took place from December 2004 to January 2008, when the two men were relieved of duty following an internal investigation that began last November. Martin, who had been with the department 31 years, retired from the force.

Larson, a 16-year veteran of the department, was off-duty with pay pending the outcome of the investigation. The pair were charged with misapplication of fiduciary property. Martin was also indicted on charges of theft by a public servant.

A man was fatally shot by a bouncer at a local strip club on Sunday, July 20. According to police, Jose Rogelio Alanis, 38, of McAllen, was asked to leave Sugar's Gentlemen's Club at Gulf Freeway and Dixie Farm Road due to disorderly behavior. Shortly thereafter, employees at the club were told that Alanis was slashing car tires in the parking lot with a knife. The club's bouncer, Travis Bohannon, along with another employee, went outside to investigate the matter. As Bohannon, 27, approached Alanis, the man raised the knife and moved toward the bouncer. Bohannon, who has a license to carry a concealed handgun, pulled out a pistol and fired a single shot at Alanis. Alanis was transported to Ben Taub General Hospital, where he later died. No charges were filed.

5 years ago (2013)

The Pasadena Independent School District board of trustees named Stacy Barber the new principal of Beverly Hills Intermediate School. Barber, who had served as an assistant principal at Beverly Hills since 2009, replaced Alyta Harrell, who was promoted earlier in the month to assistant superintendent for campus development.

1 year ago (2017)

A call about a suspicious person at an apartment complex on Algonquin at Scarsdale led to a bizarre drug bust early Monday, July 17. Deputies from the Harris County Precinct 2 Constable's office responded to the call around 3:45 a.m. Meadows home Monday, July 21, and arrested a man following a federal investigation into child pornography. Suspect Joseph Montross was nabbed in a joint effort by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations, the Pasadena Independent School District Police Department Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) unit and

the Harris County Precinct 2 Constable's Office. Montross, 28, was charged with possession and distribution of child pornography, indecency with a child and aggravated sexual assault of a child.

An individual was carjacked Monday, July 21, around 11 a.m. at a carwash in the 11400 block of Hall Road near Beamer. The driver of a late-model Lexus 300 was at the establishment when he was approached by a man who brandished a handgun and told him to walk away from the vehicle. The victim followed the man's instructions and walked away from the car wash, as the suspect jumped in the Lexus and sped away from the scene. No immediate arrests were made.

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the trunk of a second nearby car, a white Cadillac, unexpectedly opened. The suspect told deputies the white Cadillac was also his vehicle. A search of the gray Cadillac yielded Ecstasy pills, methamphetamine and marijuana. The suspect was detained, while the deputies called a K-9 unit from the Houston Police Department. When the police dog arrived, it hit on the white Cadillac, where officers found more Ecstasy pills and marijuana, as well as cocaine. The suspect was also found to have \$1,300 in cash on his person. Mark Frausto, 22, was arrested and charged with three counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver. Both of the suspect's vehicles were seized by police.

After he had finished some rescues, Gibson realized that the people in the boat with him were members of the media from ABC News. The news crew started filming the rescues Gibson was making and even posted them to social media.

To see the rescues, visit the website https://www.facebook.com/ABCNews/videos/10156243799063812/UzpfSTUxNz3MDQzO DoZMDYwNjExMjk0OT kOMTQ6MTA6MTQ4Mz 11NzYwMDoxNTE0Nz kzNTk5OjcxNzgyOTcxND QINTQzOTQ5MTc/.

"One of the coolest things was that it wasn't just me out there," said Gibson. "There was a bunch of Houston Fire Department guys out there helping out."

In total, Gibson volunteered for two days helping people get out of their houses, but didn't make it home until five days later. Even after he was done rescuing people from their flooded homes, Gibson said the hard work had just begun. He also helped his family and friends clear out and clean their homes.

Matthew Vela

Matthew Vela, an upcoming seventh-grader, will be

Harvey heroes share stories

By **Laura Benavides Scallan**

Michael Gibson
 Michael Gibson, fireman and first responder for the last 24 years, will be honored as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

Throughout Gibson's career, he has been dedicated to the citizens of Houston and recognized twice as Fire-fighter of the Year. Last August when Hurricane Harvey struck Houston, his life-saving efforts struck very close to home.

After working four 24-hour shifts with the Houston Fire Department, he received a call in the early morning hours of Aug. 26, that his parents were trapped in their home with floodwaters still rising. Gulf Meadows was the neighborhood that Gibson grew up in, and he knew he had to get to his parents and nieces. He drove as far as he could, then realized he would not be able to get into the neighborhood with his truck because the water was too high. He was about to start walking when he noticed volunteers were launching two air-boats into the water near the neighborhood.

Gibson asked for their help, and together made their way into the neighborhood to make the rescue. The group made their way to Michael's parents' home. Once inside the neighborhood, the devastation was greater than anticipated. In some areas, only car roofs were visible. As they navigated through, it was soon realized that it was more than just his parents that needed help. This was the first time in 40 years that his parents' home had ever flooded. He started to receive calls from childhood friends whose parents still lived in the same neighborhood and needed help. Once Gibson got his family out, he knew he could not go home and had to continue helping.

When night came, he soon found out that he would not be able to make it to his own home for the next few days due to high floodwaters. Michael then returned to the fire station to help where needed.

Michael's giving heart didn't stop when the waters receded. He returned to his parents' neighborhood and other neighborhoods to help with the recovery efforts for the next several months.

"Alicia was bad," said Gibson. "But I had never seen anything like this hit so close to home."

After he had finished some rescues, Gibson realized that the people in the boat with him were members of the media from ABC News. The news crew started filming the rescues Gibson was making and even posted them to social media.

To see the rescues, visit the website https://www.facebook.com/ABCNews/videos/10156243799063812/UzpfSTUxNz3MDQzO DoZMDYwNjExMjk0OT kOMTQ6MTA6MTQ4Mz 11NzYwMDoxNTE0Nz kzNTk5OjcxNzgyOTcxND QINTQzOTQ5MTc/.

"One of the coolest things was that it wasn't just me out there," said Gibson. "There was a bunch of Houston Fire Department guys out there helping out."

In total, Gibson volunteered for two days helping people get out of their houses, but didn't make it home until five days later. Even after he was done rescuing people from their flooded homes, Gibson said the hard work had just begun. He also helped his family and friends clear out and clean their homes.

Matthew Vela

Matthew Vela, an upcoming seventh-grader, will be

honed as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

During Harvey, Matthew; his parents, Monica and Robert Vela; and his sisters Zoe and Mady Vela gathered together shoes, clothes, food and toilet paper to take to the shelter at J. Frank Dobie High School.

Matthew's sisters both attend Dobie High School. Zoe will be a senior and Mady a sophomore this coming school year.

"It felt good knowing that I contributed to help people recover from Harvey," said Matthew. "I felt bad for the people and wished that they could get back on their feet."

Matthew mentioned that if his family was in need and had been affected by Harvey, he would have wanted people to help, too.

That is why he and his family decided to step up and give back to the community in its most desperate time of need.

Not only did they donate items that were needed, the family had the opportunity to pass the items out to the evacuees who needed them.

This is a representation of just one of the many families who went above and beyond to help those in need.

Kenzie Fernandez
 Kenzie Fernandez, 10, daughter of Pasadena Independent School District Board Member Kenny Fernandez and wife Kasie, will be honored as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

Kenzie volunteered at the shelter held at J. Frank Dobie High School for several days. From morning until night, Kenzie made and served hot soup and drinks to individuals at the shelter. She also helped her dad carry and distribute other types of food to individuals.

"I had never done stuff like that," said Kenzie. "But it was a good experience. I was feeling good about myself."

When asked what drove her to help volunteer, Kenzie stated that she had seen her dad help with the district, and she wanted to help with him.

Travis Teichelman

Travis Teichelman, assistant principal at Thompson Intermediate, sprang into action once he received a call on Sunday, Aug. 26 from his friend, Jerry Yerna, to help rescue a family who was stuck near Thompson. Teichelman, who owns a canoe, was able to navigate the flooded waters to reach individuals and families impacted by the storm who could not be reached by other boats.

Yerna's wife was monitoring people's statuses on social media and was their guide to help those in most need. They helped a woman who needed her prescription for insulin filled, but could not get out in the water. With their handy canoe, Teichelman and Yerna made their way to the woman's house to help. They had to cross part of Highway 35 carrying the canoe, and would paddle through water as they could. They found the woman's home and went to fill the prescription, and made the journey back to deliver it to her. Teichelman mentioned he was able to rescue one of his own students at Thompson from the water.

"Emotions came later because all you were worried about was wanting to help," said Teichelman.

On top of rescuing individuals and families, Teichelman and Yerna also delivered essential supplies to those who decided to stay in their home. Teichelman explained there were several individuals who were marooned in the center of a neighborhood and just needed gas for their gen-

Continued on Page 6A

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South Belt Harvey heroes recount rescue stories during crisis

Continued from Page 4A

Kiel became emotional in remembering the cooperation of those helping with the evacuees and their pets.

"I'm telling you when I think about it, it brings me to tears. It was amazing," she said. "What I saw in that place, with the evacuees truly helping sort clothes, doing things, asking how they could help, whatever they could do to get the job done. I was just in awe. When I think about those young kids, the young people not complaining, getting the job done, staying on task, I was just blown away; how this community came together without any professional training and made it run like a well-oiled machine. It was amazing!"

Before being asked to help at the Dobie shelter, Kiel said she felt helpless not being able to assist others from her home.

"I was sitting here (at home during the storm), feeling so helpless because I couldn't go anywhere or do anything to help anyone. So I was just trying to provide information on social media pages, trying to ask if pets were left behind, trying to ascertain addresses, trying to get help to rescue my friend on Wessex in the attic with the 18 dogs. I was feeling so helpless and I am so glad that I could contribute in whatever manner to be able to help our community members."

Kiel related another story of a friend of hers who was an independent rescue who was trapped in her attic with 18 dogs during Harvey. Attempts were made for two days to get someone to her home to rescue her and the dogs. In total, 21 dogs were rescued at that time in a boat and taken to safety.

The earliest that Kiel remembers having a love for pets was very early in her childhood. "I developed a love for animals about when I first began to walk. I had a German shepherd puppy who was always under my crib," said Kiel, who said that her parents named the puppy Shadow because the dog was always near her crib and always followed her around, like a shadow. Throughout her young years, Kiel maintained a strong love and appreciation for animals, taking care of many animals in her life. Kiel is no stranger to wandering pets. During the Fourth of July weekend she cared for 10 dogs from the community. Currently she is fostering four dogs.

"I have a personal rescue, a husky, that was living on the beltway at the wayside toll that the employees were feeding and it would go over and just run the fields during the day and come back to get food. But no one could get their hands on her, she was nipping, she kept her distance and I was alerted to her. I worked with her for four nights and 16 cheeseburgers later I was able to finally get a leash on her. Texas Lead Dog Rescue took her into the program, vetted her, did her heart worm treatment, while I fostered her, and I've had her a little over a year. She is still very human stranger aggressive so I don't know that she'll ever go anywhere. She may be part of my permanent crew. We've done all kinds of things from socializing different tactics, taking her to the dog park, muzzle, for her to get experience around other humans."

Kiel came to Houston in 1982 and had been active as a volunteer with the Houston Humane Society. A few years ago, local resident Joe Buchanan started a Facebook page called *Pets of Southbelt*.

Kiel was active on the page, coordinating and giving advice, and, upon Buchanan's request, assumed some administrative responsibilities with the Facebook page. The group now has more than 5,700 members.

Thi Nguyen

A few months after Hurricane Harvey left much of the area around Burnett Elementary damaged, former student Thi Nguyen gave back to the school in a big way by hosting a Christmas festival at the campus on Saturday, Dec. 2.

Nguyen - who later attended Thompson Intermediate and Dobie High School, graduating in 2007 - said she was inspired to organize the event after receiving an outpouring of support from the community following the death of her sister Jennie Nguyen (also a former Burnett student), who drowned near Galveston in May 2000 at the age of 7.

"I'm just giving back to the community for what they gave her," Nguyen said. "It's a cycle of giving back. What they did for me 17 years ago really stuck with me."

Nguyen, who had been collecting toys to donate since the previous January, recalled approaching Burnett Principal Jae Lee with her idea of putting on a winter festival.

"I called and said 'Hey, you don't know me, but I have about 4,000 toys to donate,'" Nguyen said.

In addition to the large selection of toys, Nguyen also provided synthetic snow, a bounce house, a human-sized snow globe, a photo booth and an appearance by Santa Claus. Pasadena Mayor Jim Wagner was also in attendance to assist in the gift giving.

Burnett students were each given two presents the previous day on Friday, Dec. 1. A raffle was held to award a bicycle to two students, a boy and a girl, in each grade level. The school's two selected pre-K students received a Power Wheel vehicle instead of a bike.

Nguyen also provided prizes for an art contest and multiple raffles.

On Saturday, each child (regardless of what school they attended) was given an additional gift. Multiple raffles were also again held.

School volunteers helped wrap each of the gifts, which were then sorted by age and gender.

In all, roughly 1,200 people attended the festival.

While all area schools were impacted by Hurricane Harvey, students at Burnett were the most affected. Nguyen credits Lee for his efforts during and after the storm.

"He's an amazing guy," Nguyen said. "During Harvey, he was out in his boat saving people. That's going above and beyond."

Nguyen said she plans to organize another festival at Burnett next Christmas called *Candyland*.

U.S. Coast Guard

At the helm of the U.S. Coast Guard's rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey was Capt. Kevin Oditt, sector commander of the Coast Guard's Sector Houston-Galveston.

The son of an Air Force veteran, Oditt's military career began in 1992, when he graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. Oditt went on to earn advanced degrees in naval architecture and marine engineering, and manufacturing engineering from the University of Mich-

igan in 1999. Oditt served as the Chief of Prevention at the Eighth Coast Guard District, before assuming command of Sector Houston-Galveston in April of 2017. A highly decorated officer, Oditt's career has been marked with honors and awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal.

One of the Coast Guard's largest sectors, Sector Houston-Galveston is comprised of 17 subunits, 850 active duty personnel, 100 civilian personnel, and 200 reserves. Together, the sector covers much of the Texas coast, from Freeport through Lake Charles. Daily operations of the sector include everything from search and rescue operations to managing the commerce ports.

In preparation for the Hurricane, Oditt requested additional Coast Guard forces from across the nation, including Paducah, Louisville and St. Louis, prepositioning them along locations on the coast that he predicted would be the most heavily battered. Likewise, Coast Guard helicopters were stationed in nearby predetermined cities. In the hours leading up to the storm, Sector Houston-Galveston's parking lot was filled with two flood response teams.

Unlike many other federal agencies, the Coast Guard authorizes Oditt to act at his own discretion without requiring the approval of his superiors. This factor, combined with Oditt's decisive action, enabled the Coast Guard to save the lives that it did.

"We are a pretty centralized agency," said Oditt. "I have the authority to act, but we have support from the entire Coast Guard. I put in a request for additional forces, and the Coast Guard provides them. We saw that it was likely to be a rain event, so we started asking for flood response forces, and then I got that support from my chain of command. The Coast Guard is unique in that I have the authority already to act. I don't have to wait for a declaration of emergency or anything."

As the rainwaters began to fall on the evening of Aug. 25, Oditt sheltered in place with his family. Although Oditt and his family did not face any damage to their property, many of his closest friends and colleagues did not fare as well.

"We were very fortunate," said Oditt. "We had about 100 Coast Guard families that were impacted with more than four inches of water in their house."

With a command sector to lead, Oditt was determined to get to work, in spite of the flooded streets. Treading through three feet of water, Oditt began the four-mile walk from his home to the command center before being picked up by a high water rescue vehicle 1.5 miles into his commute.

Much of the Coast Guard's essential personnel and other first responders found themselves in a similar situation to Oditt, requiring helicopters to retrieve them.

"All the first responders had to get to work, so we had our helicopters fly and pick up additional air crews that were held at prepositioned hotels," said Oditt.

As the steady downpour continued through the night of Aug. 26, homes began flooding at an alarming rate throughout the Texas coast. With the primary 911 call center flooded, all calls began coming into the Coast Guard command sector. At its peak, nearly 1,000 calls were coming into the sector every hour,

much more than it or its staff could handle.

"Our Coast Guard night watch all came up and began to take those calls," said Oditt. "It was like one of those old phone-a-thons. As soon as someone put the phone down, it would ring immediately."

Overwhelmed with calls, the sector began rolling the distress calls to its district office in New Orleans and its area office in Virginia. Eventually, calls made in the Texas coast would be transferred all the way to the Coast Guard's national office in Washington D.C.

Oditt and his sector now faced the issue of getting calls back from the higher offices and determining how best to handle them.

"As they were getting these phone calls, they would prioritize them according to those with special needs," said Oditt. "We began launching the Coast Guard helicopters to get those high priority individuals until we could get our flood response teams in the area to start coordinating with the local first responders. The first calls were going out to Dickinson, and it started spreading out from there." The weather proved to be detrimental to the Coast Guard's communications.

"We lost our entire computer network," said Oditt. "It turns out that our redundant line went down to a single Verizon building in downtown, so we lost all of our Coast Guard communications. We had to do it the old-fashioned way with pen and paper. We had to improvise and find different ways to get the tasking out from the command center to our response teams."

Battling the harsh weather elements proved to be especially challenging for the Coast Guard's rescue efforts. Early inundation flooded some of Oditt's prepositioned shelters, forcing the Coast Guard to bring more than 200 survivors back to its command sector.

"Typically, we drop them off at the shelter and then go on with other rescues," said Oditt. "On the fly, we had to now suddenly take care of over 200 survivors, while coordinating with county personnel to come pick them up. A woman even gave birth in the air station."

Coast Guard helicopter pilots and air traffic controllers demonstrated extreme versatility and innovation, operating 30-year-old aircrafts in conditions beyond those for which they were originally designed.

"Some of our pilots were using duct tape to keep water from getting in their aircrafts," said Oditt. "At night, they would take off some of the helicopter parts to let them dry. Our air traffic controllers are actually getting an award for coordinating pilots from all over the country and getting them into specific locations in low visibility."

As the storm eased up over the South Belt community and shifted its heading for Beaumont, so, too, did Oditt and his Coast Guard sector. Immediately after the storm passed, Oditt moved the entirety of the Houston-Galveston flood response forces to the Beaumont sector and established an incident command post, tasked with mobilizing his finite resources to coordinate efforts with local first responders.

An arduous endeavor, Oditt credits the success of the entire Harvey operations to the close partnerships with local agencies and government entities. Unlike other

Coast Guard sectors, Sector Houston-Galveston is unique in that it has an inner agency command center, with agents from the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the Houston Police Department and the Customs Borders and Protection.

The close partnerships with these agencies played a crucial role in the rescue operations. Customs Borders and Protection, for example, was able to reach out to the Sector Houston-Galveston directly, by contacting the agent at the sector command. This allowed them to send their boats from the Rio Grande Valley to be used in the Harvey relief efforts.

"The coordination with these other agencies made the whole process much more feasible," said Oditt. "This is a one-of-a-kind Coast Guard facility, because we have liaisons officers at every single emergency operation center. Having those other first

Continued on Page 6A

Phan thankful for Peabody's inspiration

Noelle Ngoc Phan (right), one of J. Frank Dobie High School's Shining Stars, is shown with distinguished educator Loan Peabody, ninth-grade Latin teacher at Dobie High School.

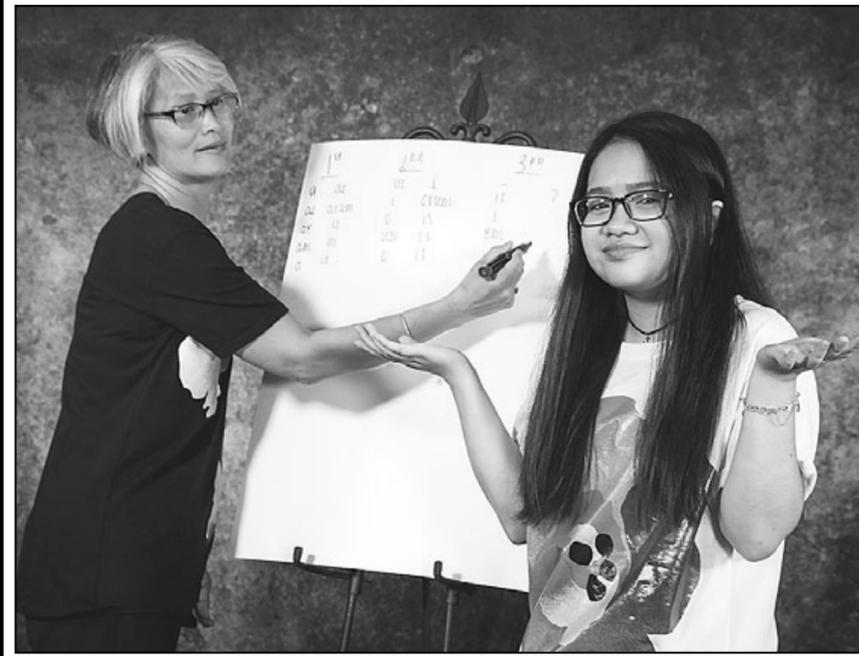
Phan volunteered for the Bracewell Library and at various events for Key Club. She was also captain of the Academic Decathlon team, Latin study captain for ancient geography and co-captain for Envirothon.

As for the future, Phan plans to major in environmental science, specializing in the field of nuclear physics. She also wants to pursue a minor in economics. Phan commented on Peabody, "Although I only had Mrs. Peabody for one semester, she continued to be my teacher of a lifetime. Her classroom was filled with interesting lessons and sarcastic jokes that never failed to make me laugh. However, she taught

me more than the facts and figures of the world; she taught me to become a better person. From life advices to motivating stories, I seek comfort in her wise words and witty responses. "Thank you for always feeding me yummy treats; for listening to my overly dramatic life problems, and most importantly, for being such an inspirational educator."

The South Belt Shining Stars will be presented in a series of students being honored along with their favorite mentor. The Shining Stars represent the top Dobie High School students. The information and photos were submitted by Pasadena Independent School District.

The Leader is also running the Shining Stars from Pasadena Memorial, South Houston and Lewis Technical high schools.



Oseguera helps guide Lopez's future

Ricardo Lopez (left), one of South Houston High School's Shining Stars, is shown with distinguished educator Michael Oseguera, 12th-grade BC calculus instructor at South Houston High School.

Lopez has volunteered for various events with Key Club and National Honor Society.

Now that he has graduated from high school, Lopez plans to either attend Texas A&M University in College Station or the University of Texas in Austin to obtain a bachelor's degree in computing engineering.

In regard to Oseguera, Lopez said, "Since the first day I had Mr. Oseguera for a class, I realized he was no ordinary teacher. His passion for math makes his teaching enjoyable as he always lightens up the mood with his humor and ener-

gy. Mr. Oseguera believes in all his students, mentoring us through his experience and helping us make decisions for after we graduate. All teachers should be like him. Well fortunately, I was given the privilege of having Mr. Oseguera for two years; he has not only taught me calculus, but also increased my passion for math as well as help guide my future."

The South Belt Shining Stars will be presented in a series of students being honored along with their favorite mentor. The Shining Stars represent the top South Houston High School students. The information and photos were submitted by Pasadena Independent School District.

The Leader is also running the Shining Stars from Dobie, Pasadena Memorial and Lewis Technical high schools.



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Worship Service • 10:45 a.m.	

Nursery Available at all Services

Leader remembers local heroes from historic Hurricane Harvey

Continued from Page 5A
responders and those other partners here was a huge force multiplier. Selfless volunteers, many

of whom were impacted individuals themselves, vitally supplemented the first responders' efforts, largely contributing to the success

of the Coast Guard's efforts. "The volunteers were a huge good news story," said Oditt. "When our crews were out there, they would always be assisted by those volunteers."

In the year since, Oditt has worked extensively with impacted individuals, many of whom were Coast Guard personnel themselves.

"About 10 percent of our Coast Guard family was impacted, because we live in the community that we serve," said Oditt. "I have had the chance to go out and talk at commerce clubs and other events, and everybody that I've talked to has just been so appreciative of all the efforts of all the first responders. Being able to see all the people that we were helping makes us feel great about the job that we're doing."

Throughout his long career, Oditt has recognized

that no two crisis situations are identical. Valuable lessons have been taken from the Harvey rescue effort to be used in future hurricanes.

"We learned a lot about search and rescue and the role that we play in urban flooding situations," said Oditt. "We've had flood response teams, but we learned a lot about how we could integrate more seamlessly with other first responders. We're also evaluating how we could better make sure that people are trained for specific tasks."

Within days following Harvey, the Sector Houston-Galveston did a complete overhaul of their 911 call center, replacing it with a new geospatial system, in an effort to avoid some of the difficulties that were caused by the aging system during Harvey. The new system has since been implemented in hurricanes Irma and Maria with great success.

"It was pretty impressive that we were able to transition as fast as we did," said Oditt. "We're looking for longer term situations where we could use that as part of our toolkit. When you have the fourth largest metropolis and there are thousands and thousands of homes being flooded, we needed to be prepared for anything that could happen."

For Oditt, the spirit of camaraderie that he witnessed in Harvey's wake outshines all of its devastation and havoc. Whereas damaged property can be easily replaced, the authentic and genuine human spirit that was evident in the hurricane's aftermath is not so simply replicated.

"It was amazing to be a part of the response effort," said Oditt. "It was really our people that made this

happen. They're innovative and they're eager for action. They're constantly looking forward to going out there and finding different ways to help people. Even if we weren't telling them to do it, they would have been out there doing it anyway. We could not have been successful without our people."

Dr. Mary Campbell-Fox
During Hurricane Harvey, local physician Dr. Mary Campbell-Fox did her part to ensure that affected residents received their necessary medications after being displaced by the storm.

Now a resident of Manvel, Campbell-Fox was originally stuck in her home during the storm due to flooding.

"I was trapped," Campbell-Fox said. "I was on an island, and I couldn't get out." Still wanting to help, however, the doctor reached out to *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger.

"I called Marie and told her I couldn't get to Dobie, but do you need anything?" Flickinger responded that there was a need for insulin at the makeshift shelter that had been erected at the area high school.

Campbell-Fox had insulin at her office near Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital but was unable to get there. Flickinger then arranged for the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department to pick up one of Campbell-Fox's nurses to retrieve the medicine from the doctor's office, then to deliver it back to Dobie, where it could be administered to evacuees.

When floodwaters began to recede, Campbell-Fox was also instrumental in obtaining additional medicines through the H-E-B and Kroger pharmacies.

"We worked with them a lot," Campbell-Fox said. "Their pharmacists were so good about helping us. I'd call in the medicine, then my husband would pick it up and take it over to Dobie. They would give it to us at no charge."

Campbell-Fox also volunteered, herself, at a shelter in Manvel that had been set up at The Church On Masters Road.

The doctor said several other people who were medically trained also pitched in to help.

"We had so much help," Campbell-Fox said. "Everyone who was a nurse, an EMT, med-school students, pharmacists — they were all so helpful. Every medical person called and asked 'What can I do to help?'"

Campbell-Fox said she saw several of her own patients at the Manvel shelter. While they reside in the South Belt area, they were unable to make it to closer shelters due to high water.

Campbell-Fox's business partner, Dr. Amir Ghebrani, also volunteered his time, serving at a shelter set up in Friendswood. A Friendswood resident, Ghebrani was also trapped at his home due to flooding. Police were able to pick him up by boat and transport him to the shelter. They later then also transported him to his office to grab necessary supplies.

Following the storm, Campbell-Fox treated several patients for injuries and ailments related to the storm, several free of charge.

Despite the many challenges of Hurricane Harvey, Campbell-Fox was inspired by the actions of the community.

"You see how hardy peo-

ple can be," Campbell-Fox said. "Patients were put in very dire situations, but everyone came together to help each other out. It's very refreshing to see that."

Pct. 2 Constable officers
Officers from the local patrol contract for Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Chris Diaz's office worked tirelessly during and after Hurricane Harvey battling crime, conducting rescue missions and doing recovery work.

On the initial night of the storm, Precinct 2 personnel were brought in early and began staying at the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department Station 1 on Hughes Road near Blackhawk. This was only done through the assistance of SVFD Chief Chuck Tylka.

"I would like to thank Chief Chuck Tylka for generously allowing Precinct 2 to shelter at Fire Station 1 and for being so accommodating," said Precinct 2 Lt. Mike Kritzer. "I'd also like to thank the entire Southeast VFD for everything they provided during the rescues, from manpower to vehicles. Working with them and their guys and gals was an honor."

As the storm began, deputies conducted proactive patrols and answered any calls coming in. As the night fell, the water began to rise, and the department's patrol efforts shifted into rescue operations. Deputies teamed up with Southeast VFD personnel and began answering calls for assistance, as well as patrolling the neighborhoods for persons trapped in their households.

This was done in the SVFD's high-water vehicles, as well as the Clear Brook City MUD's high-water rescue vehicle, obtained through the assistance of Dean Baier, who also serves with the SVFD in addition to the MUD.

"I would like to thank Clear Brook City MUD's Dean Baier," said Kritzer. "I personally rode with Dean for several days during the storm conducting rescues. Dean never once asked to take a break and was right there with Precinct 2 deputies the entire time. It should be noted that his staff was out there as well with us."

For the next two days, deputies conducted rescue operations 24 hours a day. Deputies were assigned to work 12-hour shifts, but many of them stayed on and worked 24 hours at a time.

With the flooding came hundreds of rescue calls, and deputies attempted to answer as many as possible. By this time, the water in certain areas, including Kirkwood and Highland Meadow, had risen so much that boats had to be utilized. Harris County Pollution Control was able to lend Precinct 2 a large boat, and deputies continued to perform rescues throughout the day and most of the night.

Deputies also teamed up with numerous volunteers coming from all over with boats and rode along while continuing to answer calls. While deputies were unable to answer every call, they tried their best to do so and took part in rescuing several hundred families and pets.

As the rescue calls began to slow down, deputies with Precinct 2's Special Operations Division turned their focus to recovery missions.

"This is probably the worst job one could perform after a natural disaster such as this," said Kritzer. "I can proudly say that deputies did not locate one diseased person during these home-to-home searches. This speaks volumes to the rescue efforts performed by this community as a whole, as the water was well up to the roofs of several hundred homes."

As the water receded, deputies turned their attention back to proactive patrols and began trying to curb any looting.

"I can honestly say looting was kept to a very minimum in the South Belt area on the days following the storm," Kritzer said. "I credit this to the guys and gals and their very proactive patrols."

Kritzer is grateful for the efforts of *Leader* publisher Marie Flickinger.

"I'd like to give a huge thank you to Marie Flickinger," Kritzer said. "When I was unable to find a close location to take rescued families, Marie had already begun working on this and had reached out to Dobie High School. I don't think anybody else in the state could have made some of the things happen as fast as she did."

The lieutenant is also grateful for the help of the local Precinct 2 deputies, who went above and beyond the call of duty.

"They all worked tirelessly and never once com-

plained," Kritzer said. "It was again a privilege working side by side with these folks. And a special thank you to Constable Chris Diaz. He gave myself and deputies everything he possibly could have to assist us with our operations."

Despite the hardships related to Hurricane Harvey, Kritzer feels the devastating storm also brought out the best in people.

"Hurricane Harvey showed the South Belt area many horrible and horrific things. Through this, I got to see this community come together firsthand and work together," Kritzer said. "There are hundreds and thousands of people who helped, a lot from this community. I wish I could name and personally thank them all."

Sagamont Church
Sagamont Church has a long history of helping the less fortunate in the South Belt community, and their response to Hurricane Harvey was no exception.

Immediately following the storm, the church began helping South Belt residents recover from Harvey by providing meals and cleanup assistance.

Acting under the title Everyone Matters: Sagamont Serves, volunteers set up a base camp at the Sagamont Church Annex, located across the street from the church on Hughes Road near Beltway 8.

The church annex served as a food bank for approximately a week for hungry residents who were affected by the storm. Being one of the only churches in the area to have a full docking station for 18-wheelers, the base camp then transitioned into a distribution center. In all, 21 tractor trailers utilized the facility to drop off goods, according to Dr. Jim Hastings, minister of Sagamont's Helping Hands program.

The annex also served as a home base for cleanup crews, which the church referred to as "mudout teams." The teams, which consisted of eight to 10 volunteers, went through the community and removed carpet, Sheetrock and other items from damaged homes.

While assistance was offered to all, including members and nonmembers alike, church officials prioritized cleanup efforts based on need, with widows, the elderly and disabled people being helped first.

A total of 619 area homes received mudout assistance. The church also provided financial advice to affected residents as how to best use available funds from FEMA and other government agencies.

"I talked to at least 500 families personally," said Hastings. Additionally, the church allowed Lutheran South Academy to temporarily relocate to its facility, as the school's own campus suffered extensive damage during the storm.

Later in March, the church teamed up with the organizations 4B Disaster Response Network and Eight Days of Hope to make extensive home repairs throughout the area, including Sheetrock work, flooring and cabinets. The primary recipients were people who had not already received assistance from other sources, such as FEMA or insurance.

Nearly 5,000 volunteers from 47 states and multiple other countries, mostly skilled laborers, participated in the effort. More than 20 churches took part in the endeavor.

While male volunteers were housed at the Mall of the Mainland in Texas City, female volunteers and approximately 40 families were housed at Sagamont.

The church also provided volunteers three meals per day.

According to Hastings, 748 homes were rebuilt.

The church's recovery efforts have continued to date.

In early June, the church provided meals for a group of 250 volunteers from World Changers International Church, as they worked to make home repairs.

For the entire month of June, children in the Dickinson area whose homes were destroyed and were still living in hotels were invited to a month long evangelistic Bible school, which Sagamont provided at no cost.

At the end of June, a group came from Virginia to make home repairs in Pasadena. A few days before they were to arrive, the bus they were to use while here broke down, and they were without transportation. Church officials responded by providing free transportation to the group.

In October, the church again plans to team up with

4B Disaster Response Network and Eight Days of Hope to make additional home repairs in the community. More than 2,500 volunteers are expected to participate.

"We hope to do around 400 homes in one week," Hastings said. "We're now looking for those who fell through the cracks. Some homes have been gutted but not rebuilt." Hastings said recovery work will continue for the foreseeable future.

"We're going to be doing this for at least another two years," Hastings said. "We're not stopping anytime in the near future."

Memorial Hospital Southeast

Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital was a beacon of hope for many of the South Belt area's sick and injured during Hurricane Harvey. The hospital stayed open through the duration of the storm, unlike during Hurricane Ike, when the facility opted to close.

Southeast Volunteer Fire Department firefighter Dean Baier praised this decision.

"This was 100 percent better," Baier said, calling the move as a "blessing" for area residents. See related SVFD entry on Page 1A.

While the hospital stayed dry, the surrounding area was underwater, and many MHS staff members had difficulties getting to work. The dedicated staff, however, found creative ways to get to the hospital by any means necessary. Some used a kayak, some took military trucks, some took a boat, some waded through waist-high water, some rode bikes and some braved driving.

Hospital administrators made a short video thanking the staff for their heroic efforts.

"All of the nurses are amazing, and I am so thankful for every single one of them," said a patient in the video who was treated at the hospital during the storm. "I know that they're so tired. They've been here the same number of days that I have. So, I'm very, very grateful."

The video goes on to deliver a heartfelt message praising the MHS staff members for their dedication to helping others in their time of need.

"Your dedication to our patients and to each other is amazing," the message read. "You go above and beyond the call of duty. You were here to serve our patients and our community when it counted most. We appreciate you for working together, rolling up your sleeves, uniting in prayer and finding the strength to continue serving, caring and providing outstanding medical care and helping out wherever needed. We are so proud of your resilience, acts of kindness and selfless leadership. You are our Harvey heroes."

Texas Air National Guard

The Texas Air National Guard played a crucial role in organizing municipal relief efforts both during and after Hurricane Harvey.

As the storm intensified, the TANG's responsibilities did too, especially after it was determined that Ellington was the only major operational airport in the Greater Houston area.

"Initially, our primary concern was just keeping the lights on at Ellington — ensuring our airfield and supporting infrastructure was ready to receive follow-on forces and support our tenant units," said Col Matthew A. Barker, vice commander of TANG's 147th Attack Wing.

"The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Houston (also located at the Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base) started flying at first light, making the first saves of the disaster. Our security forces, fire/rescue service and civil engineers are responsible for the smooth operation of the base during normal operations and also during a crisis like Harvey. A couple hours after landfill, it was clear that Ellington was the only major operational airfield in the Houston area, so we worked with the Houston Airport System and our airfield managers to ensure we were ready to serve as a hub for airlift, search and rescue, and any other missions the governor tasked us with."

Once the worst of Harvey had passed, TANG's played a supportive role for multiple other state and federal entities that were coming to assist, in addition to its own rescue efforts.

"I was part of the 'ride-out' team, a cross-functional cell that hunkers down on base and starts executing missions as soon as it is safe to do so," said Barker. "As the vice wing commander, I'm also

Continued on Page 6B

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Harvey heroes recount tales

Continued from Page 4A

erators.

In between rescues, Te-

ichelman was able to make his way into Thompson to check on the school. Once he entered the school, he took pictures and notified the principal that Thompson had taken on water. He described what he discovered as a surreal moment.

"I was in shock," explained Teichelman. "Like, holy cow. It took a while to process it all."

When asked about Beverly Hill Intermediate opening its doors to Thompson, Teichelman said he was not surprised that they did that.

"I worked for Beverly Hills for 14 years and I know the type of people that work there," said Teichelman. "I knew there wouldn't be any friction. It was sort of like you were going to go stay with family for a little while. It's obvious that they are going to take you in to help. It was nice to know we would have a temporary home so we wouldn't have to be split up."

After the water receded, Teichelman received donations from family and friends located in central Texas and near Bryan, Tx, to distribute to people still in need. The items were loaded up and distributed through out the community. Teichelman noticed that when they came across a family rebuilding their home who had some extra supplies, the families would give those items to Teichelman to give to another family in need.

Teichelman will be honored as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

"I didn't organize any of these efforts," said Teichelman. "We just received the call to help and went out to help."

Jessica Rowland
Jessica Rowland, coordinator of the Gabriel Project Ministry at St. Luke's Catholic Church, helped out those in most need by making a great donation of essential baby supplies to evacuees being held at the shelter in Dobie High School. She had heard at her church, St. Luke's, that there was a shelter operating at Dobie. At the time, the shelter was in dire need of diapers, baby wipes, blankets and other essential baby supplies.

"When I got home, I just had to do something," said Rowland. "I didn't know what so I talked to my husband. I told him I would go up to the Gabriel Ministry building to get supplies to take to Dobie."

Once Rowland made it to Gabriel Ministries, she packed her car full of diapers, baby wipes and blankets, and made her way toward Dobie. The water was too high off of Blackhawk for her car to pass, and she parked her car near the school and got out of her car. She could see large vehicles making their way through

the high water and hoped that one would stop to help.

Sure enough, someone stopped and asked her if she needed any help. She explained where she worked and that topic led to the donations that were in her vehicle. She loaded up their truck with all the essential supplies and then made her way home.

"To me it wasn't a big deal," said Rowland. "I was just doing such a small thing to help. What I was able to do was so small in the big picture that I didn't feel I had done enough, but at the same time I knew my abilities were limited. It wasn't important to me that someone knew I did it, it was just important to do it."

Rowland will be honored as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

Hilton Koch
Hilton Koch, founder of Hilton Furniture and Mattress, knew he had to help during the devastation Hurricane Harvey unleashed. He used his furniture delivery trucks and a few pick-ups, in total seven vehicles, to help rescue people out of high water and transport much needed donations and supplies.

"As a leader in the community you don't have any options but to get involved," said Koch. "That's part of who we are. Don't ask if you need help, just jump in and start helping. The question went from 'what can we do' to 'how much can we do.'"

In each furniture moving truck, about 30 people could fit to be transported and the team of trucks made over 100 trips to different locations to drop off evacuees. It is estimated that Koch and his team were able to help between two and three thousand people out of floodwaters.

Luckily, none of the vehicles used in the rescues were damaged, but Koch explained that he was not even concerned about vehicles being damaged.

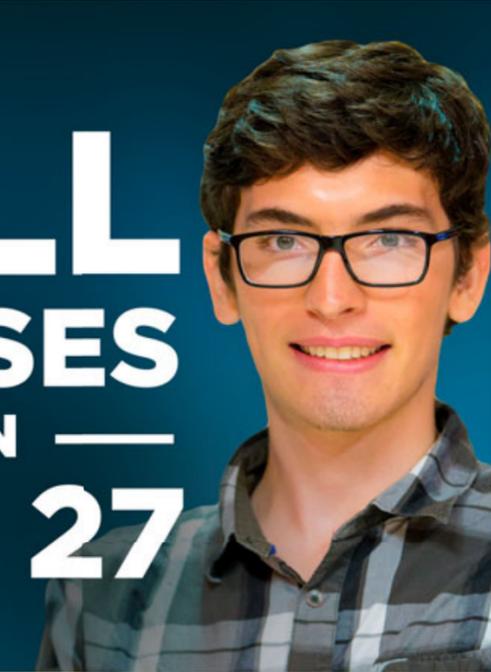
"It was a very close call with what we pushed some of the vehicles through," Koch said. "But it's one of those things you don't even think about when people are in need."

Koch stated that the team of trucks was in rescue mode for two days. After that, the team of trucks went into transport mode and helped with the moving of essential donations and supplies to shelters. He mentioned that he just wished that they could have done more.

Koch will be honored as a Harvey hero at the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce 34th annual banquet on July 19.

"I'm glad we were in a position to get the help we were able to give, said Koch. "And everybody is still in our thoughts and prayers."

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SECTION B SPORTS & CLASSIFIED

Dave Campbell's Texas Football picks Atascocita

**Dave Campbell's
22-6A Projected Finish**

1. Atascocita
2. Kingwood
3. Summer Creek
4. South Houston
5. Memorial
6. Dobie
7. Humble
8. Pasadena
9. Sam Rayburn

The bulletin board motivational material has arrived at Dobie, courtesy of Dave Campbell's Texas Football annual released earlier this month.

If preseason predictions mean anything in the world of high school sports, it's Campbell's longstanding magazine that tries to get it right.

So here we go. In the upcoming District 22-6A varsity football alignment, Class 6A power Atascocita is the big favorite to claim the district championship. Next up is Kingwood,

with Summer Creek third and South Houston fourth. If this pattern holds true in any form, that will leave Memorial, Dobie, Pasadena and Rayburn fighting

from the bottom up. Many times, a new year of predictions is largely based on results of the previous season. In this case, Atascocita is coming off

an undefeated run in District 21-6A and an appearance in the third round of the playoffs. Similarly, Kingwood defeated South Houston

a season ago in the first round and went on to play in the third round. Summer Creek went two rounds deep, but will need to replace starting

quarterback John Holcombe. South Houston, meanwhile, has defeated Dobie two straight seasons en route to back-to-back playoff berths.

Expectations are high at Dobie, that much is clear. Yet there are just four starters returning on both offense and defense.

Continued on Page 3B



At right, Dobie's Kali Marquez (64) was an all-district selection as a junior and is expected to anchor the Longhorns' offensive front this season as the team looks to end a two-year playoff drought.

At far right, Kris Morris (20) took over as the Longhorns' starting tailback midway through his freshman season in 2015 and has been solid since. Now, as a featured weapon in new head coach Kevin Berneathy's offensive, Morris very well could be saving his best season for last.

If Campbell's is right, Wolverines are in

It may well be a tall task to make a serious challenge for the District 24-6A football championship, but if Dave Campbell's Texas Football magazine is correct, Clear Brook will take its act to the postseason in 2018.

Defending District 24-6A champion Clear Springs is Campbell's choice to repeat as the overall No. 1 playoff seed, while Clear Lake has edged out Dickinson for second place.

Meanwhile, Clear Brook has garnered support as the fourth and final playoff seed in District 24-6A, holding off Clear Creek, Clear Falls and Alvin.

Friendswood, a playoff representative of 24-6A last season, will drop down to Class 5A for the next two school years.

It's easy to see why the Chargers of Clear Springs are the chosen team to beat. In 2017, the Chargers went undefeated in league play and won a playoff game before North Shore ended the team's season in the area playoff round.

Clear Lake, which came out of nowhere a season ago to reach the playoffs, is back in the running with preseason Most Valuable Player Shae Suiaunna leading the way from his quarterback position.

Dickinson, which won its final five games of last season to reach the postseason, is looking forward to another great season with preseason Defensive Most Valuable Player Colby Mouton back at linebacker.

Clear Brook, projected fourth despite the need to replace a bevy of offensive

players for 2018, could very well have enough to get past the rest of the field.

Clear Creek, now led by former South Houston head coach Dwayne Lane, must also replace its starting quarterback.

Clear Falls and Alvin simply have not had much luck reaching the postseason in recent seasons.

Clear Brook enters the 2018 season with Lupe Florez, formerly of Bay City, now in charge.

Despite starters at quarterback, running back, receiver and defensive back to the collegiate ranks, Clear Brook appears to have retained some of its trademark speed and quickness, having advanced to the state 7-on-7 championships for the third consecutive summer last month.

**Dave Campbell's
24-6A Projected Finish**

1. Clear Springs
2. Clear Lake
3. Dickinson
4. Clear Brook
5. Clear Creek
6. Clear Falls
7. Alvin

Robinson Fastpitch Camp set for Aug. 10

The Robinson Fastpitch Camp for youth softball players is coming to the South Belt Girls Softball Association's facility at El Franco Lee Park next month.

The camp will be held Friday, Aug. 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cost of the camp is \$140 per participant and will include instruction from coaches from such collegiate programs as UH-Victoria, Louisiana State, Centenary College of Louisiana, Sam Houston, Hardin-Simmons and more.

Players entering the seventh through 12th grades as of the 2018-2019 school year may attend the exciting camp.

To register for the camp, visit www.mcdonaldclinics.com. For more information, direct email to camp director and Dobie High School graduate Iver McDonald Robinson at ivermac18@gmail.com.

McDonald Robinson, a four-year starter at Dobie, played collegiately at the University of Oklahoma.

She is the youngest of three McDonald siblings to play at Dobie and then compete collegiately and/or professionally.

Krystal McDonald played at San Jacinto College and TSU, while Sharronda McDonald played at Texas A&M. She is currently the head coach at Campbell University.

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JFD football offers youth camp July 30

Dobie varsity football head coach Kevin Berneathy and his staff are ready to host the 2018 Longhorn Youth Camp July 30 through Aug. 1 at the school.

The youth camp is open to those entering the third through eighth grades as of the 2018-2019 school year.

Participants will receive instruction in all phases of the game, including passing, receiving, running the football, blocking, tackling, pass defense, the kicking game, special teams responsibilities and more.

The camp also represents a great time for those in attendance to learn the "way of doing

things" within the Dobie football program.

Cost of the camp is \$40 per student and includes a camp T-shirt, certificate of participation and possible camp awards.

Participants should wear proper attire, including shoes (cleats if possible), shorts, T-shirt, etc.

Water will be provided, but participants may also bring their own.

Parents must provide medical insurance for their children as the Pasadena ISD does not provide such coverage for events of this type.

For additional information about the camp or the Dobie football program, call Berneathy at 713-740-0370, ext. 04165.

South Belt softball sets fall ball sign-up

The South Belt Girls Softball Association is now offering online registration for its fall ball season.

Players age 4 through 16 as of Aug. 1, 2018, are eligible to compete in the league. Early registration is going on now through July 31, at \$70 per player. Regular registration is Aug. 1 through Aug. 15, at \$75 per player. There will also be late registration opportunities, but getting this handled as soon as

possible is preferable.

There are no fundraiser fees, and additional sibling discounts are available. Visit www.southbeltsoftball.com for registration details.

For questions about the registration process or about the league, leave questions on the league's Facebook page at South Belt Girls Softball Association. League officials regularly monitor the Facebook page and will answer quickly.

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Dobie bowling teams complete standout season at state, nationals

By John Bechtle
Sports Editor

The Dobie boys' and girls' bowling teams deserve all the credit they get for the memorable season turned in during the 2017-2018 school year.

Rightfully so, and in the end it's important to point out that it's been a team effort.

And what a season it was. The Dobie boys' team finished second at the state competition this season, while the girls wound up 11th.

The girls' team went on to make the first cut at nationals in Illinois, concluding the best season in program history with a 16th-place ending.

Individually, freshman Victoria Lazo placed 37th in singles at nationals, coming up with the best finish of any Texas female player at the competition. Lazo averaged a 194 scoring figure at nationals.

On the boys' side of things, Dobie made the first round of cuts also as senior Brandon Harder

and freshman Rudy Luna were named first-team singles players.

Coach Steven Mullins traveled with the team to state a season ago and became the group's leader this season.

A former varsity tennis player at Dobie and currently a faculty member there, said the players deserve every bit of recognition they get.

"They put in the work all year-round," Mullins said. "Every sport is about consistency, but it's espe-

cially true with bowling.

"The kids are playing in city and state leagues on Saturdays and Sundays, and also spend plenty of time at local alleys like Armadilla I and Armadilla II.

"On top of that, it's important to point out the commitment and support from the parents. They all play a big role in this with the travel, the expenses and so forth.

"These parents make big sacrifices for their children, and it has paid off. We have had a really

good run of success not just this year but the past several."

The University Interscholastic League, the official governing body of extracurricular activities in Texas public schools, does not recognize bowling as an official sport at this point.

But most school districts who promote the sport — obviously the Pasadena ISD included — make it a point that participants adhere to the same rules, guidelines and qualifica-

tions. The most important are, then, that students maintain academic eligibility and represent their programs with good sportsmanship and fairness.

"Our school has pushed us to treat our program as if we were under UIL policies, and of course we think that's great. The district has really gotten behind our efforts in a big way, and we've had terrific support from our principal, Franklin Moses.

"All of our schools in

Pasadena ISD have boys' and girls' teams, and our athletic department has been behind us all the way.

"As I said, it's really been a collective effort from a lot of people to help our program get where it has. The level of commitment from everybody involved has simply been great."

Mullins cited the cooperation and generosity of the folks at the Armadilla bowling lanes, noting that PISD teams both practice

and compete at the Pasadena location.

District bowling organizers Kada Lamas of Pasadena Memorial High School and Pasadena High School's Nora Solis also deserve mention, Mullins said, as they handle match scheduling and so much more.

Plenty of parents have been giving of their time in volunteer fashion. Dobie's program is gaining its footing across the state, and Mullins expects the popularity of the sport

to only grow as the years go by. Collegiate scholarships are becoming more and more common for Texas bowlers.

The sport has gained a boost from the likes of ESPN, which has for several years broadcast the NCAA championships.

"It's growing, and we have seen a boost in popularity in our district. More and more districts are supporting the sport. I'm excited about the future of the sport at the high school level."



At left, Dobie was among the list of Texas-based teams competing at the National High School Bowling Championship June 23-25, in Fairview Heights, Ill. Dobie made the first cut and placed 16th in the end, with freshman Victoria Lazo taking 37th place in singles, the best finish for any Texas player with an average game score of 194. Those representing the Lady Longhorns at state and nationals included, left to right, (front row) Lazo, Ellysa Manriquez, (back row) Chelsey Keener, Monica Zabala and Sydney Mejia. Not pictured is Jade Jacobo.
Submitted photos



At right, members of the Dobie boys' bowling team that competed at nationals included, left to right, (front row) Rudy Luna, Francisco Camargo, Raphael Escalona, (back row) Brandon Harder, Nicolas Luna, Nicolas Guerra and Joseph Castillo. The Longhorns made the first cut at nationals and wound up 19th overall as a team. Luna, a freshman, and Harder, a senior, made the boys' first team at the conclusion of play. At the state competition in May, the Longhorns were second as a team.

Practices begin Aug. 1

Longhorn netters set to start long team tennis run Aug. 9 at DHS

Dobie Longhorns

2018 Varsity Team Tennis Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time
Aug. 1	Team practice	6 to 8 p.m.
Aug. 6-7	Team practice	6 to 8 p.m.
Aug. 8	Team practice	8 to 11 a.m.
Aug. 9	at Dawson	9 a.m.
Aug. 10	at Friendswood	6 p.m.
Aug. 11	Dobie exes matches	9 a.m.
Aug. 14	at Katy	3 p.m.
Aug. 15	Clear Brook	3:30 p.m.
Aug. 16	Clear Falls	9 a.m.
Aug. 16	George Ranch	3:30 p.m.
Aug. 17	Clear Creek	9 a.m.
Aug. 21	at Alvin	3 p.m.
Aug. 24	Pearland	3 p.m.
Aug. 28	Clear Springs	2:30 p.m.
Aug. 31	La Porte	3 p.m.
Sept. 5	at Dickinson	3 p.m.
Sept. 7	*Summer Creek	3 p.m.
Sept. 11	*at Pasadena	3 p.m.
Sept. 14	*at Clear Springs	4 p.m.
Sept. 14-15	at Remembering Ike tourn.	TBA
Sept. 18	*Humble	3 p.m.
Sept. 21	Morton Ranch	3 p.m.
Sept. 25	*at Kingwood	3 p.m.
Sept. 28	*Atascocita	3 p.m.
Oct. 2	*at Rayburn (Taylor TC).	3 p.m.
Oct. 5	*South Houston	3 p.m.
Oct. 9	*at Memorial	3 p.m.
Oct. 15-20	Bidistrict playoff round	TBA
* - District 22-6A matches		

Talk about a long season.

Beginning Wednesday, Aug. 1, the Dobie tennis program will open workouts as the team tennis portion of the schedule nears.

Technically, high school tennis delivers the longest stretch of competition of any available. Workouts begin Aug. 1, with the team tennis season running through at least the third week of October.

Following a break for the holidays, Dobie typically serves up the spring tournament portion of its schedule in the latter portion of January, with play running through late April.

For Dobie head coach Manuel Moreno Jr., it's all

about the love of the game. A former high school standout at Galveston's O'Connell High School, Moreno has now coached at the high school level for 35 years. He will enter his 20th season at Dobie Aug. 1.

No matter the season, Moreno and the Longhorns strive for excellence. What's in store for 2018? It's a bit more complicated to determine that this season.

While repeat District 22-6A champion Deer Park has moved on along with La Porte, things may have even gotten a bit tougher to navigate in the newly-aligned league.

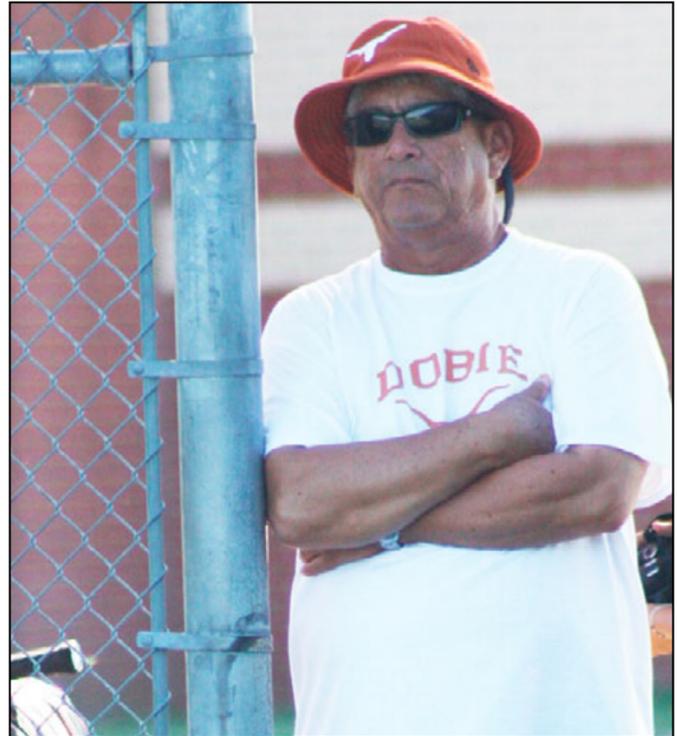
Kingwood, one of four newcomers along with Atascocita, Humble and

Summer Creek, has been a regional power for several seasons.

Kingwood figures to be the 22-6A favorite entering play, and Atascocita defeated Dobie in the bidistrict round of play a season ago. Humble and Summer Creek may be wild cards in the mix, but still require close attention.

The biggest issue facing Dobie, at least early on, will be experience. Four players who advanced to regionals during the spring season all graduated, and other top players have moved on as well.

Dobie could endure less-than-desirable results early on, but the goal is to be ready for district play Sept. 7.



Manuel Moreno Jr., in his 35th overall season as a high school tennis coach, is set to start his 20th campaign at Dobie as he leads the Longhorns into what promises to be a challenging run in the new-look District 22-6A, headed by Region III power Kingwood. Dobie begins the regular season Aug. 9, at Dawson.



A fun start to Dobie's team tennis season is in the exes matches series, when all former Longhorn players are invited to compete in doubles matches against twosomes featuring 2018-2019 players. Above, former top-ranked Dobie boys' singles player Ruben Vargas is expected to return Aug. 11 to compete.

Sports camps, clinics, misc.

Clear Brook, Dobie youth VB camps

Clear Brook High School varsity volleyball head coach Meredith Thompson and Dobie varsity volleyball head coach Dawn Sexton are hosting youth camps just ahead of the start of the preseason.

At Clear Brook, Thompson and her staff will host incoming third-through ninth-grade students (as of the 2018-2019 school year) July 23 through July 26, at Lady Wolverines' gym.

Participants will gain instruction in all phases of the game, including serving, setting, passing, digging, hitting and offensive and defensive strategies.

Those entering the third through the fifth grades will attend the first session from 8 to 9:30 a.m., and sixth- through eighth-grade beginner-level players will attend from 8 to 10:30 a.m.

Eighth- and ninth-grade advanced-level players will attend the camp from 10:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Preregistration cost for third- through fifth-grade students is \$100.

The cost for the other two sessions is \$120. Payment must be made by cash, cashier's check or money order. No personal checks will be accepted.

For any camp information, direct email to Thompson at mthomp1@ccisd.net.

Sexton and her staff will host the Lady Longhorns' 2018 volleyball camps for incoming freshmen through 12th-graders as of the 2018-2019 school year.

Sexton will welcome participants July 24-26, from 9 a.m. to noon. Cost is \$45, cash only. Incoming freshmen will attend from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$40, cash only.

Families are also required to provide participants' medical insurance as the Pasadena ISD nor the Clear Creek ISD provide such coverage.

Thompson sets summer camp series

The Thompson Intermediate coaching staff has scheduled a variety of camps and fitness activities aimed at keeping first-year and returning Lion athletes active this summer. Parents must provide medical insurance coverage as the Pasadena ISD does not do so for these types of events.

Volleyball Camp – The Lady Lions' July 31-Aug. 3 volleyball camp for girls will include training in all phases of the game, including offensive and defensive alignments, conditioning, passing, hitting, serving, blocking, etc. Registration is \$25 cash only per student. Camp hours are 9 to 11 a.m.

Strength/Conditioning Camp – The Lions' July 23-26 strength and conditioning camp for boys and girls will include strength training, agility drills, tire work, stair climbing, ladder work, weight training, conditioning and more. Registration is \$25 cash only per student. Camp hours are 9 to 11 a.m.

Football Camp – The Lions' July 30-Aug. 2 football camp will include strength training as well as drills in all phases of the game, including passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling, defensive secondary work and more. Registration is \$25 cash only per student. Camp hours are 9 to 11 a.m.

Aug. 10 – All football players, including incoming seventh-grade students, will pick up their football practice gear and pay a one-time \$65 participation fee. All volleyball players, including incoming seventh-grade students, will pick up their practice gear and pay a one-time \$45 participation fee. Eighth-grade pickup time is 10 a.m. to noon, with seventh-grade pickup time to follow from 1 to 3 p.m.

Pasadena ISD offers football season tickets

Pasadena ISD athletic department officials are now selling varsity football season ticket packages at a discounted rate now through August 24, at the district's athletic office, located at 2906 Dabney in Pasadena.

Dobie fans may purchase a 7-game package for \$42, or \$6 per ticket. All tickets at the gate the evening of a game are \$7 each.

Beginning Aug. 25, officials will also be selling individual pre-sale game tickets at \$6 each for adults and \$3 for students.

The Dobie ticket packages may also be purchased online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dobie-varsity-football-season-ticket-2018-tickets-47952900416>. The district office also has season ticket packages available for its other four high school programs.



Dobie senior tackling machine Cervantis Pounds (42) will be a key cog in the Longhorns' defense this season as the group tries to slow some explosive offensive units. In the 2018 season opener Aug. 31 at Santa Fe, Pounds and his teammates will be keeping a close eye on Indians' standout quarterback Nathan Kruger, who passed for nearly 1,900 yards and 20 touchdowns in eight games.



South Houston quarterback Torrence Stevens, a three-year starter, garnered enough attention in the offseason to be named the preseason Offensive Most Valuable Player in District 22-6A. Having already led the Trojans to consecutive playoff berths in 2016 and 2017, Stevens clearly is focused on getting his team a win after back-to-back bidistrict losses.

JFD will battle PISD foes as playoff berth dangles in 2018

Continued from Page 1B

Kris Morris, the team's primary starting tailback since midway through his freshman year, could be poised for a breakout season in Berneathy's offense.

There is also depth at receiver, where Jeremiah Ballard, Cameron Guy and Johnathan Baldwin

return. Kali Marquez, an all-district selection in 2017, is the team's top returning offensive lineman.

Defensively, hybrid linebacker Cervantis Pounds and Michael Onzie, a defensive back, are the key players back.

Of note, South Houston's Torrence Stevens, a third-year starter at quar-

terback, has been chosen as the preseason Offensive Most Valuable Player in the 22-6A ranks.

Stevens is certainly the straw that stirs the soda at South Houston, but he has others to assist him offensively.

While 1,100-yard rusher Davion Williams has graduated, his younger

brother, Broderick Williams, is back at tailback along with three-year starter Ethan Ponce.

Like Dobie, the Trojans also have a trio of solid receivers, including Ian Butler, De'andre George and Devanijie Foster.

Defensively, all-district choice Samuel Webb will return as a disruptive force

up front. As for the rest of the Pasadena ISD ranks, Memorial has the best chance to get past any of the other front-runners and reach the postseason.

However, the Mavericks will have to do without 2017 District 22-6A Most Valuable Player Alex Williams, the lead-

ing rusher in the district during both his junior and senior seasons. Kicker Bubba Baxa, one of the Houston area's best, has also moved on to college, where he will play at the University of Miami.

As for Pasadena and Rayburn, those programs are always looking to spin the standings.

Dobie graduate Williams Yates makes National Softball Hall

Christa Williams Yates, a 1996 Dobie High School graduate and one of the most decorated softball pitchers in the history of the sport, will add to her list of achievements later this year.

Williams Yates, currently the varsity girls' softball head coach at Friendswood High School, has been voted into the National Softball Hall of Fame by USA Softball and will be officially inducted in October.

Growing up in Sagemont, Williams Yates helped lead Dobie to the Class 5A state championship in 1993 and 1995, then missed out on her senior season after being chosen as a member of Team USA for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

After high school graduation, Williams Yates played one season at UCLA and then transferred to the University of

Texas, where she helped the Longhorns reach the Women's College World Series.

The University of Texas began its softball program in 1997 under the direction of head coach Connie Clark. After a solid first season, Texas welcomed the transfer of Williams Yates from UCLA.

As a sophomore in 1998, Williams Yates went 28-6 with a 0.46 earned run average to help Texas to the WCWS.

A season later, Williams Yates went 23-9 at Texas. Over three collegiate seasons, Williams Yates was 72-23. She went 51-15 at Texas.

Williams Yates was inducted into the UT Athletics Women's Hall of Honor in 2007.

The star pitcher won her second Olympic gold medal in 2000 as a member of Team USA in Sydney, Australia. Over two Olympic appearances,

Williams Yates was 4-0 with an ERA of 0.51.

After college and the Olympics, she went on to play professionally for several seasons.

Before moving to Friendswood High School, Williams Yates was the head coach at Manvel High School. She was a member of the inaugural class of inductees into the Pasadena ISD Athletics Hall of Fame.

Earlier this year, Williams Yates was nominated for the Texas Sports Hall of Fame but was not chosen for induction.

However, it seems only a matter of time before one of the sport's all-time greatest pitchers receives that invitation as well.

As for Dobie, the program is tied for the lead in all-time Texas state championships, having won it all in 1993, 1995 and 1997. Current Dobie head coach Robin Rackley was on the 1993 squad.



Christa Williams Yates, a 1996 Dobie High School graduate and two-time Olympic gold-medal winning softball player, is widely considered as one of the greatest pitchers in the history of the sport at all levels. She'll be inducted into the National Softball Hall of Fame in October.

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JULY 19

AA Meeting – "Breakfast With Bill" Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call 281-487-8787 for details, or drop in.

Clear Lake Bridge Club – 299er games Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochsner@aol.com for details.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – Imperfect Nooners Group, noon, 2245 N. Main, Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Texas German Society, South Belt (SE) Chapter – A social group focused on the culture, music, heritage and language of Texas German immigrants. Meets the third Thursday, monthly, 6 p.m., Fellowship Hall of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 10310 Scarsdale Blvd. Visitors welcome. Email OpaGivesHugs@gmail.com for details.

Harris County Master Gardeners – presents *Raised Beds* on Thursday, July 19, at 6:30 p.m. in the Freeman Branch Library, 16616 Diana Lane. This is a free Harris County Master Gardener event. For details, visit <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/pubGreenThumb.aspx> or call 713-274-0950.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – Women's Group, open meeting, 7 p.m., 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-856-1611.

The Bay Area Writers' League – Meets the first and third Thursdays monthly to improve writing skills. Barnes and Noble, 1029 W. Bay Area Blvd., 7:30 p.m. Newcomers are welcome.

FRIDAY, JULY 20

AA Meeting – "Breakfast With Bill" Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 281-487-8787 for more information, or drop in.

Clear Lake Bridge Club – Open games Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochsner@aol.com for details.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – West End Group, noon, Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church, 12005 County Rd. 39, Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2245 N. Main St., Pearland. Call 713-856-1611.

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 (AA) – "Breakfast with Bill", Saturdays, 7:30 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, Cornell Conference room. Call 281-487-8787 for more information, or drop in.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 2245 N. Main St., Pearland. For information, call 713-856-1611.

Al-Anon Meeting (Women Only, English) – For women affected by an addict. Saturdays, 11 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, Cornell Conference room #111. Call 281-487-8787, or drop in.

Clear Lake Bridge Club – Open games Saturday and Sunday, 1 p.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochsner@aol.com for details.

Bay Area Singles Club – monthly dance is 7 – 10 p.m. at the VFW Lodge, located at 5204 Highway 3 in Dickinson, 77539, Post 6378. Bring party snacks to share. Cost is \$7 for members and \$9 for nonmembers. For more information, call 832-483-3257 or 832-477-6778.

Bay Area Bluegrass Association – bluegrass music show and jam session on the third Saturday (except December.) Stage show is at 7 p.m. Pickers may bring instruments and come early. Free. Johnny Arolfo Civic Center, 300 Walker, League City. For details, visit <http://www.bayareabluegrass.org>.

Alcoholics Anonymous – meeting at CrossRoads UMC on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For information, call 281-484-9243.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – meeting at CrossRoads UMC on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For information, call 281-484-9243.

Grief Support Group – For adults who have lost a loved one. Meets Sundays, except Mother's Day, Easter

and Christmas, 2 to 3:15 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena. For details, call 281-487-8787.

Celebrate Recovery – A faith-based 12-Step Program, Sundays, 5:30 p.m., in the Chapel at Life Church, 9900 Almeda Genoa. Call 713-419-2635 for details or to RSVP for child care.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) – Vigilance Group of NA meets Sundays, 7 p.m., 2245 N. Main St., Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Alcoholics Anonymous – meeting at CrossRoads UMC on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For information, call 281-484-9243.

Al-Anon Deer Park – Mondays, 10 – 11 a.m. Literature Study. In His Presence Fellowship Church, 1202 East P Street, Deer Park. Enter through back of church. Call 409-454-5720 for details, or drop in.

Clear Lake Bridge Club – Open games Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochsner@aol.com for more information.

Overeaters Anonymous Deer Park – 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Literature Study. In His Presence Fellowship Church, 1202 East P Street, Deer Park. Enter through Fellowship Hall in back of church. Call 409-454-5720 for details, or drop in.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – Imperfect Nooners Group, noon, 2245 N. Main, Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Continued on Page 4B

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CALENDAR

Continued from Page 3B

MONDAY, JULY 23

Houston Area Parkinson Society - Free exercise and speech therapy for adults with Parkinson's, 3:15 - 4:45 p.m., Clear Lake Rehabilitation Hospital, 655 E. Medical Center Blvd., Webster. Visit www.hapsonline.org for details.

CrossRoads UMC - Mercy Hearts meets on the second and fourth Mondays, 6 to 8 p.m., at CrossRoads UMC located at 10030 Scarsdale. The focus of the new Mercy Hearts is support for families of inmates and ex-offenders. The program will provide a complimentary meal, group Bible study and discussion. Child care is provided. This is a confidential ministry and information will be treated accordingly. For details, contact C. Talbot at 281-245-7072 or Chucktal@msn.com.

Scrabble Club #511 - Meets Monday at IHOP, 11222 Fuqua. Come, improve crossword playing skills. Call 281-488-2923 for details. No meetings on holidays.

Pearland Overeaters Anonymous HOW Meeting - Mondays at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2535 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland. Enter door next to recycling bins. For details, call 713-865-3668 or visit www.oahouston.org.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 7 p.m., 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church-youth bldg. For information, call 713-856-1611.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Saint Luke's Group, 12 Step Recovery, open meeting Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. in the Education Bldg., 11011 Hall Rd., 77089. For details, call Russell at 832-483-6715.

Congregation Shaar Hashalom - Israeli Folk Dancing on Monday, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., 16020 El Camino Real, 77062. \$4/session or \$35/10 sessions for CSH members and \$5/session or \$45/10 sessions for nonmembers. Everyone is welcome. For information, contact 281-488-5861 or csh@shaarhashalom.org.

TUESDAY, JULY 24

AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill" Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 281-487-8787 for details, or drop in.

Pasadena Heritage Park and Museum - Exhibits include dioramas, a turn-of-the-century doctor's office and an old-time kitchen. Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 204 S. Main, Pasadena. For details, call 713-472-0565.

American Begonia Society - Houston Satellite meets on the fourth Tuesday, Clear Lake Park, 5001 NASA Pkwy. (on the lake side), Seabrook. For information, call Joe at 281-481-2458.

Clear Lake Bridge Club - 299'er games Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochnsner@aol.com for details.

Free dance lessons - taught by Lewis and Betty Whistler (35 years experience teaching dance) at Hometown Heroes Park, 1001 E League City Parkway, on Tuesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. Bringing a partner is helpful but is not required. All ages are welcome. Each month, features a different focus. In July, basic Cha-Cha lessons are taught. For questions about this class or other lessons they teach, call Betty at 832-517-5833. For questions about League City's activity card requirements, call the park office at 281-554-1180. League City Parks Dept. requires an activity card for all participation of activities. Seniors (age 55 and older) get a free "full activity card." Nonresident seniors pay \$25 a year for this full activity card. If under age 55, there is a "special limited to ballroom activity card" (residents pay \$25/year, nonresidents pay \$37.50) to enjoy "daytime" ballroom activities.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners Group, noon, 2245 N. Main, Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Rotary Club of Pearland - Meets Tuesdays, noon to 1 p.m., Golfcrest Country Club, 2509 Country Club Dr., Pearland. Lunch is \$15. Variety of interesting speakers. For information, call 281-900-7257 or visit nalix@texascitizensbank.com.

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) - #1530 meets at the Sagemont Park Community Center, 11507 Hughes Rd., 1:30 p.m. For information, call Jeanette Sumrall at 713-946-3713.

Clear Lake Bridge Club Lab Class - Tuesday, 2 p.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. For details or classes, contact Dr. Glandorf at drglanford@sbcglobal.net or call 281-488-6318.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 7 p.m., 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church-youth bldg. For information, call 713-856-1611.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

AAA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill" Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 281-487-8787 for details, or drop in.

Young at Heart Senior Club - Meets the second and fourth week monthly (Nov./Dec. meet second week only) at Covenant United Methodist Church, 7900 Fuqua. Lots of activities, trips, etc. Call Jan Okumura at 832-298-9480 for details.

Clear Lake Bridge Club - Open games Monday, Wednesday and

Friday, 10 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochnsner@aol.com for details.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners Group, noon, 2245 N. Main, Pearland. For details, call 713-856-1611.

Hometown Heroes Park - has free Hump Day Dance to practice ballroom dance. These sessions are not lessons. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 1001 E. League City Pkwy. League City nonresidents must purchase activity card (see Tuesday 12:30 p.m. dance for details). Help is available to assist learning dance moves. For details, call Neva Schroder at 417-838-2204.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Vigilance Group of NA, open meeting, 7 p.m., 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church-youth bldg. For information, call 713-856-1611.

Bay Area Turning Point Crisis Intervention - Call 281-286-2525 (24-hour crisis hotline) for confidential domestic violence/sexual abuse support group for women. Visit www.bayareaturningpoint.org for information.

Alcoholics Anonymous - meeting at CrossRoads UMC on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 8 p.m., 10030 Scarsdale Blvd. For information, call 281-484-9243.

THURSDAY, JULY 26

AA Meeting - "Breakfast With Bill" Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 1062 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, in Cornell Conference room. Call 281-487-8787 for more information, or drop in.

Clear Lake Bridge Club - 299'er games Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m., 16614 Sea Lark, 77062. Call the club at 281-480-1911 or email the director at jpochnsner@aol.com for details.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Imperfect Nooners Group meets at noon, 2245 N. Main, Pearland. For more information, call 713-856-1611.

Kirkwood Civic Association meets at the Sagemont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Rd. For details, call Ericka McCrutchon at 281-989-9990.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Women's Group, open meeting, 7 p.m., 2930 E. Broadway (FM 518), Pearland, First Presbyterian Church (youth building). For details, call 713-856-1611.

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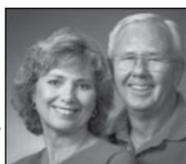
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South Belt community gives generously during Hurricane Harvey



Volunteers are shown above serving food at the makeshift shelter erected at Dobie High School during Hurricane Harvey. Photo by Marie Flickinger



A team of volunteers is pictured above sorting through toys that were donated to the temporary shelter at Dobie. Photo by Marie Flickinger



A crew of volunteers is shown above at the Dobie shelter, as they organize dry clothes that were donated to those in need. Photo by Marie Flickinger

As chamber banquet approaches, Leader recognizes Harvey heroes

Continued from Page 6A
 deputy director of the 147th Attack Wing's Crisis Action Team (CAT) that convenes to provide command and control for natural or man-made crises. We began coordinating support requests with municipal authorities, positioning equipment and supplies around the installation, and tracking the storm's progress. So basically we slept in our offices for a week, and as assistance began to flow from outside Houston, our job was to link them up with the resources we could provide. We began flying our RC-26B reconnaissance aircraft to survey damage and give civil authorities an idea of how to best prioritize repair efforts. We sent our Joint Terminal Attack Controllers out in heavy duty vehicles to rescue stranded citizens. Their wartime mission is coordinating airpower for Army maneuver units. During the storm, they set up helicopter landing zones near shelters and controlled the arriving aircraft to ensure safe and efficient movement in and out of congested airspace. Our fellow Texas Airmen from the 136th Airlift Wing in Dallas flew a C-130 in with personnel and equipment to help augment our staff here at Ellington. By the time we resumed normal operations, we'd hosted nearly 3,000 additional state and federal personnel pitching in to help the citizens of Houston."

save lives and property," said Barker. "This was a baptism by fire for many folks in my unit, and it was inspiring to see how our airmen rose to the challenge. They'll be that much more prepared for the next crisis, and be able to pass their knowledge to younger airmen."

"I was impressed and humbled by the resilience and fortitude of our greater Houston community. I had the privilege of meeting the governor's airplane when he arrived to visit and observe the relief effort's progress - I told him Harvey made a big mistake coming here."

Reena Benitez
 Dobie student Reena Benitez walked through waist-high floodwaters to volunteer her time to the families in need at the shelter opened at her high school during Hurricane Harvey.

shelter to volunteer. Because the water on the roads on the second day had blocked off the routes to get to Dobie, Benitez's mother refused to let her go back to the shelter to volunteer. Feeling useless at home while others were at the shelter, Benitez then told her mother a white lie that she wouldn't be walking through waters on her way to volunteer. Benitez, however, walked from her home in the Clearwood Crossing subdivision to the Beltway and caught a ride from one of the trucks passing by.

The truck took Benitez as far as they could and from there, she walked. As a result from walking through the waters for more than an hour to volunteer, Benitez pulled a muscle in her leg.

"I was really worried that I wasn't going to be able to make it home because my mom couldn't find a path to come pick me up because the water was so high," Benitez said.

A 16-year old senior at the time, Benitez, a South Belt resident for 12 years, walked 2.2 miles through waist-high floodwaters from the Clearwood Crossing subdivision to Dobie High School to give her time to those in need.

"I wanted to help people, and it was sad knowing my house was OK and other people were at Dobie because their home was flooded," Benitez said.

The first night of the storm, Benitez awoke from her sleep worrying about whether or not the big willow tree in front of her window would fall down as the storm grew stronger.

Benitez had gotten up to help her roommate, Rafa Rojas, push his car from the street up to the driveway. Trucks passing by made waves to where the water hit the middle of her front yard. For the rest of the night Benitez helped her mother, Ethel Castillo, 42, change towels soaked from water seeping through their leaking backyard door.

The next day after the storm had hit, Benitez's mother and her mother's fiancé were able to drive through the high waters in their 1999 Ford Expedition to get to the temporary shelter at Dobie High School to volunteer.

After high school, Benitez plans on joining the Marines and then continuing her education to become a veterinarian in hopes of building non-kill shelters around the world, especially in her family's native land, Guatemala.

Houston Fire Department
 Workers from Houston Fire Department Station 70 worked tirelessly both before and after Hurricane Harvey to ensure South Belt residents remained safe from harm.

As streets and homes began to flood during the onset of the storm, HFD crews focused their attention on high-water rescues.

"We all did whatever we could," said HFD District Chief Cletis Tyer.

Using a dump truck and three evacuation boats, emergency personnel transported several affected residents to higher ground for safety.

Workers then utilized a parking lot at the corner of the Gulf Freeway and Astoria as a staging center, as well as the San Jacinto College South parking lot.

A temporary shelter was also established at the Sagemont Community Center on Hughes Road near Beltway 8. The department was assisted in its rescue work by the Cajun Navy, utilizing nine boats that were brought

in from the Louisiana Game Warden. An anonymous man in a motor home also assisted the department in transporting evacuees.

Stranded residents were transported to the George R. Brown Convention Center when the temporary shelter at Dobie High School became full.

According to HFD Engineer Operator Russell Janacek, the department did more shuttling than actual rescue work, as the Southeast Volunteer Fire Department did.

"We didn't have any fast, fast rising water," Janacek said.

Of the rescues performed, however, two specific incidents stand out to workers.

One such instance involved rescuing children from the attic of a home. The second incident involved saving a man who was floating on Beltway 8 near Mykawa Road. The victim, who was unable to swim, was first pulled up by a water hose to the top of a train for safety. He then climbed an extension ladder to the top of the overpass. Janacek estimated the height to be more than 30 feet.

Paramedics from HFD Station 70 spent much of their time providing medical assistance at the shelter erected at Dobie High School.

Following the storm, firefighters used donated food items to make sandwiches and drove through the community to distribute them to those in need.

Station 70 staff members said they are now better prepared, should a similar storm strike in the future. The department now has four high-water rescue vehicles and 8 to 9 new boats.

Janacek was impressed by the community's response to Harvey.

"It was good," Janacek said. "It showed what the human spirit is all about - going to help the people you know."

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