

# South Belt-Ellington Leader

## Serving South Belt since 1976

The Voice of Community-Minded People

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Email: mynews@southbeltleader.com

www.southbeltleader.com

Vol. 50, No. 34

### Leader seeks submissions

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

### Knights hold blood drive

Knights of Columbus Council 9201 will host a blood drive Sunday, Sept. 21, at St. Luke the Evangelist, located at 11011 Hall Road, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Blood is needed every day for medical needs due to health and injuries. Appointments are preferred but not necessary. Donors must bring identification. All are welcome. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, call Val Comeaux 713-582-5358.

### Freeway Manor to meet

Freeway Manor Civic Club will hold a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 25, at Bible Way Church, 10120 Hartscook. Meetings typically take place the fourth Thursday of the month. Residents of Freeway Manor, Sun Valley and Gulfway Terrace are encouraged to attend.

### Mistletoe Market approaches

The 21st annual Mistletoe Market will be held Saturday, Oct. 4, at the BellaVita clubhouse, 1548 N. Riviera Circle in Pearland, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sponsored by the BellaVita Belles, the holiday market will feature more than 70 local vendors selling jewelry, home decor, women's clothing, children's clothing and much more. Food and drink will be available for purchase. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Military Moms and Wives of Brazoria County.

For additional information, call 281-464-3150 or visit club-bellavita.org.

### Kirkwood to meet Sept. 29

The Kirkwood Civic Club's monthly meeting will take place 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 29, at the Sagemont Community Center, 11507 Hughes Road near Beltway 8. Meetings are typically held for the last Monday of the month. For additional information, call Kirkwood Civic Club President Ericka McCutcheon at 281-989-9990.

### Sagemeadow meets Sept. 18

Sagemeadow HOA will hold a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 18, at The Gardens, 12001 Beamer at Hughes. This month's guest speaker will be FBI Agent Connor Hagan, FBI Community Outreach. Meetings are open to the public. All Sagemeadow residents are encouraged to attend. Meetings are typically held the third Thursday of each month. For additional information, visit www.sagemeadow.org.

### Coffee with the Constable

Harris County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Garcia will be at Donut Haven, located at 10802 Hughes Road at Beamer, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. each Thursday morning as part of the weekly Coffee with the Constable series. For additional information, call Sagemont Civic Club President Kay Barbour at 713-419-3545.

### Hughes/Sabo closures set

At least one southbound lane on Hughes/Sabo will be closed continuously at Beltway 8 until further notice due to a city water repair. Westbound Beltway 8 frontage roads may also be intermittently closed at Hughes/Sabo until further notice.

### Gulf Freeway closures set

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

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

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

### New Covenant feeds needy

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

### Beltway closures planned

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

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

## 4 Pasadena ISD high schools nationally recognized

*U.S. News & World Report* recognizes Dobie, Memorial, Pasadena, Lewis CTHS

Four Pasadena ISD high schools recently earned the national distinction of being recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as some of the top-performing campuses in the country.

Dobie High School, Pasadena Memorial High School, Pasadena High School and Lewis Career and Technical High School were among the nation's elite campuses to be highlighted in the 2025-2026 *U.S. News & World Report* Best High Schools Rankings.

The rankings evaluated nearly 24,000 eligible public high schools, with approximately 18,000 making the final list.

The list didn't specifically include each campus's individual ranking.

The methodology emphasizes how well schools serve all students, including those from historically underserved backgrounds and how effectively they prepare learners for postsecondary success through rigorous coursework and

strong outcomes in math, reading and science assessments. Schools were assessed using the following six key indicators:

- Graduation rates.
- College readiness (AP and IB exam participation and performance).
- State assessment proficiency and performance.
- Science, math and reading outcomes.
- Curriculum breadth.
- Performance among underserved student populations.

Pasadena ISD Superintendent Toni Lopez, who was appointed in March 2025, praised the district's achievement.

"This honor reflects the dedication of our educators and the resilience of our students," said Lopez. "We're proud to see our schools recognized for academic excellence and equity on a national scale."

LaMont Jones, managing editor for education at *U.S. News & World Report*, said the list serves as a tool for parents seeking to prepare their children to be college-ready upon graduation.

"Students and families need data to help them make one of the most important decisions of their academic journey," said Jones. "Our Best High Schools rankings provide the insights to help them identify schools that will prepare students for college success."

BASIS Tucson North in Arizona was selected the nation's top high school.

Carnegie Vanguard High School was named the top high school in the Greater Houston area, ranking No. 42 nationwide.

For additional information on the 2025-2026 *U.S. News & World Report* Best High Schools Rankings or to see a complete list of recognized campuses, visit [www.usnews.com/education-best-high-schools/rankings-overview](http://www.usnews.com/education-best-high-schools/rankings-overview).

## Crews respond to Fuqua church fire

*Blaze at Christ Church Apostolic injures 2 firefighters*



Christ Church Apostolic, located in the 12800 block of Fuqua east of the Gulf Freeway, caught fire early Saturday, Sept. 13. More than 100 Houston Fire Department personnel responded to the incident, including firefighters from stations 52, 35, 23, 20, 26, 46, 70, 71, 24, 29, 36, 40, 47, 61, 93, 94, 18, 37, 30, 33, Heavy Rescue 11, Rescue 42 and Rehab 42. Two HFD firefighters were injured in the blaze.

Photo by Natalie Abarca

An early morning fire destroyed the Christ Church Apostolic on Fuqua east of the Gulf Freeway Saturday, Sept. 13, leaving two Houston firefighters injured and the church community grappling with extensive damage to their historic place of worship.

The blaze, which broke out around 6:15 a.m., quickly escalated to a two-alarm fire, prompting a large-scale response from the Houston Fire Department. Around 100 firefighters responded to the incident, according to Houston Fire Department officials.

Two firefighters sustained leg injuries while battling the flames and were transported to a nearby hospital. One firefighter suffered a broken ankle, while the other suffered a fractured femur. According to HFD Deputy Chief Douglas Harrison, the injuries took place when a hose came loose from a hydrant and struck them both. The pair are expected to make a full recovery, officials said.

While the fire was largely tempered by 10:30 a.m., crews stayed at the site throughout the af-

ternoon to prevent the structure from collapsing. Firefighting efforts caused the close of Fuqua, creating extensive traffic delays in the area.

The church, a fixture in the community for more than seven decades, suffered significant structural damage and was declared a total loss by fire officials.

The church had occupied the current building for the past 25 years, and the church had just completely renovated following a tornado that struck just two years earlier.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation. Officials have not yet determined whether it was accidental or the result of foul play. A spokesperson from the Houston Fire Department stated that their records department is actively reviewing the incident.

Because the structure was a place of worship, the incident is being investigated by federal agencies as well as local entities, with the ATF joining the investigation.

Despite the devastation, church leaders are al-

Continued on Page 2

## Dobie teacher fired for online post mocking Kirk death

*Incident part of growing statewide trend of disciplinary actions against educators*

A Dobie teacher was fired following a controversial social media post mocking the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, according to Pasadena ISD sources.

While most public reports have described the incident as being "handled administratively," Pasadena ISD officials privately confirmed the

### Chamber's Evening of Cuisine nears

*This year's event to feature sampling from nearly 30 vendors*

The annual Evening of Cuisine will take place Thursday, Sept. 18, at the Lone Star Flight Museum, located at 11551 Aerospace Ave. near Ellington Airport, from 6 to 8 p.m. VIP ticket holders may enter at 5:15 p.m.

Hosted by the South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce, the event allows attendees to sample

employee "will not work in the school district again."

The post, which circulated widely on social media, was deemed "inappropriate and insensitive" by the district. Pasadena ISD officials would not elaborate on the specifics of the post.

The following is an official statement from Pasadena ISD Superintendent Toni Lopez about the incident:

"Pasadena ISD has been made aware of inappropriate and insensitive comments made by an employee regarding the passing of Charlie Kirk. This situation is being addressed administratively, and we want to assure our community that comments of this nature are taken seriously. These remarks are not aligned with the values, standards, or expectations of our district. We regret that these comments were made. Pasadena ISD is committed to maintaining a respectful and compassionate environment for all. We extend our condolences to Mr. Kirk's family, friends, and all those mourning his passing."

#### A growing trend

The incident at Dobie is part of a growing statewide trend of Texas educators being disciplined for online reactions to Kirk's death.

In nearby Klein ISD, a staff member was terminated for what the district called "senseless and completely unacceptable remarks."

Creek CISD has also announced its intent to terminate a teacher who questioned the motives behind Kirk's assassination in a Facebook post.

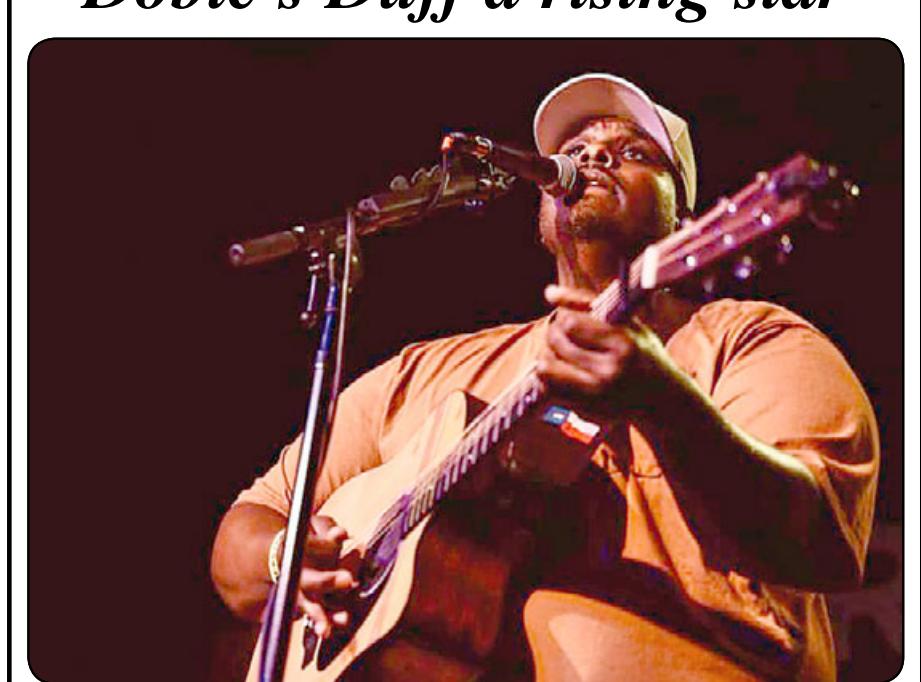
Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath issued a statewide directive urging districts to report any "reprehensible or inappropriate" content related to Kirk's death, warning that such posts may violate the Educators' Code of Ethics.

Gov. Greg Abbott also warned that possible disciplinary steps would be taken against state employees mocking Kirk's death.

"While the exercise of free speech is a fundamental right we are all blessed to share, it does not give carte blanche authority to celebrate or sow violence against those that share differing beliefs and perspectives."

The Texas Education Agency is currently investigating more than 180 complaints related to educator conduct following Kirk's assassination, which occurred during a campus event at Utah Valley University Wednesday, Sept. 10. The suspect, 22-year-old Tyler Robinson, was arrested and charged with aggravated murder.

## Dobie's Duff a rising star



Since graduating from Dobie High School in 2009, local alumnus Rodell Duff has become a rising star in the country and western music scene, touring throughout the world and garnering international acclaim. A life-long South Belt resident, Duff attended Meador and Stuchbury elementary schools and Thompson Intermediate before enrolling at Dobie.

## Q&A with Dobie grad Rodell Duff

### Longtime South Belt resident now an acclaimed country musician

The following story about lifetime South Belt resident Rodell Duff and his successful country music career was originally published by Pasadena ISD as part of the school district's Alumni Spotlight series:

This week, Pasadena Independent School District proudly features Rodell Duff in our Alumni Spotlight. A 2009 graduate of J. Frank Dobie High School, Duff's journey from Pasadena classrooms to international stages is a story of resilience, creativity and heart.

From working in the maritime industry to becoming a traveling musician, Duff continues to inspire through his music and message, reminding us all that hard work and passion can take you anywhere.

**Q: Can you share a bit about your background with Pasadena ISD?**

**A:** I attended Pasadena ISD schools from Pre-K through 12th grade. I started at Meador Pre-K, continued through Stuchbury Elementary and Thompson Intermediate, and graduated from Dobie High School.

**Q: Tell us a little bit about your journey after you graduated from Pasadena ISD.**

**A:** After high school, I went on to junior college and made the decision to turn down a football scholarship. I worked a few jobs before finding my place in the maritime industry, which has taken me all over the world. Along the way, I picked up the guitar, and with that it opened up a whole new journey, allowing me to travel and share my music globally.

**Q: What lessons did Pasadena ISD instill in you, and how have you used that knowledge to get where you are now?**

**A:** Pasadena ISD taught me that there's nothing you can't achieve as long as you work hard. That mindset has been a driving force in everything I do.

**Q: What inspired you to pursue your current career?**

**A:** A heartbreak was simply that powerful motivator that led me to express myself through music.

**Q: What does it mean to you to be able to come back and share your work with the Pasadena ISD community?**

**A:** It means everything. I love the district

Continued on Page 4

# In My Opinion

## Valdez brings awareness to fundraising struggles

For months, the Knights of Columbus Council 9201, in partnership with St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church at 11011 Hall Rd., Houston, TX 77089, have been working to raise \$200,000 to build a metal storage building for their church. They are currently about a quarter of the way to reaching their goal, and this new building will be constructed at the church's future site at 1750 Riverstone Ranch Dr., Pearland, TX 77089.

At the same time, the church is also holding a Capital Campaign with a goal of raising \$3,000,000, and they are about 50% of the way to meeting this goal. The church and the Knights Of Columbus continue to hold fundraisers every month, however as operating costs continue to increase, the net profits are steadily decreasing.

The church has already spent thousands of dollars on plans and permits. However, the City of Pearland recently added a new city water permit requirement costing over \$20,000. This expense was very unexpected, as there is already a building on the property with water service obtained through a municipal utility district. Now, the city requires a new connection directly to its water department. With this extra cost and the resulting construction delays, we may soon need to purchase new building permits as well.

It's hard to believe that so many roadblocks have come up when all we want to do is build a new House of God to help people in the community grow closer to their Lord and Savior. Despite the recent news that the legal defense fund for Luigi Mangione, the man accused of fatally shooting UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, has reached \$1 million in donations, and Pro-Hamas activists are receiving millions in private funding.

Evil people and groups that support evil activities seem to have no problem raising money. Why then, I ask myself, is it that people around our city and the United States do not open their hearts to support good, worthy causes such as ours?

To the readers of this open letter and my fellow Christians, please remember that by our baptism, we as Catholics are called to be stewards of God's gifts, using them in ways that build up our families, our parish, our community, and our world. We are called to give to God from our first fruits. Giving in the offertory is an act of worship that reflects our commitment to the Lord and His church.

"Through the evidence of this service, you are glorifying God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all others." (2 Corinthians 9:13).

Please send your donations to St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church at 11011 Hall Rd., Houston, TX 77089 on the subject line place either Capital Campaign or KC Building fund. With over 1,804,100 Catholics in Houston and roughly 10 million Catholic people in Texas, if every Catholic in Texas gave at most \$5, we would be that much closer to building our church and overcoming these unforeseen obstacles. Please do what you can

Arthur Valdez

## King: United States fatality data update

I have been wanting to update you on the fatality data for the U.S. However, the death certificates come in so slowly, I did not want to share incomplete data. But there has now been more than enough time for the 2024 data to stabilize.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, slightly over 3 million people died in the U.S. in 2024. That is a fatality rate (fatalities/1,000 population) of just under 9.0. For the fifty years prior to COVID, the rate had ranged from 7.9 to 9.5. It hit the low of 7.9 in 2009 but steadily increased thereafter, reaching 8.7 in 2019.

Of course, the rate soared during the pandemic, averaging about 10 for 2020-2022. There were about 1.4 million more deaths in those years than would have been expected by the trends in place before COVID.

Of course, there is a fierce debate (mostly on social media) about whether the excess fatalities were caused by COVID itself or some of the government's reactions to it. Given the age distribution of fatalities during the pandemic, I think most of the excess fatalities were caused by the disease itself. Still, there were significant collateral effects from the containment policies that also contributed to more people dying. The most common of these were people deferring health screenings, especially for cancer and cardiovascular conditions.

The 2023 rate was slightly elevated, about 9.3, which was about 100,000 more deaths than the trendline. The rate of 9.0 in 2024 is almost exactly in line with the trajectory in place before the pandemic. The early data for 2025 also indicates we may see a modest improvement this year.

The largest component of the upward trend since 2010 (other than COVID) has been the opioid epidemic. According to the CDC, deaths from drug overdoses soared from under 40,000 in 2010 to over 100,000 during the pandemic. Fortunately, the preliminary numbers indicate that there was a significant downturn in 2024, as the danger from fentanyl-laced illicit drugs has become more widely understood.

However, the fatality rate will have an underlying upward bias in the future because our country is aging. The Census Bureau projects that by 2050, approximately 82 million Americans will be over 65, which will account for about a quarter of the population at that time.

It is important to keep this larger fatality perspective in mind when you hear the various claims about this or that killing thousands of Americans. For example, I have some friends who have been convinced by social media that thousands of Americans have died from the COVID vaccine. When they tell me this, I have a very simple question for them: Why isn't it showing up in the total fatalities?

The U.S. fatality rate is absolutely higher than it should be. But we do not need to resort to conspiracy theories to explain why. We overeat, drink too much, smoke, do dangerous illicit drugs, don't exercise enough, and too many people don't get routine medical check-ups, so serious diseases are not diagnosed while there is still time to do something. MAHA is not complicated; it just takes some common sense, discipline, and good primary healthcare.

Bill King

## Local library events set

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

### Bracewell Branch Library

Bracewell Library is at 9002 Kingspoint. Customers are encouraged to visit the building to browse, check out and return materials, use the computers and Wi-Fi, and check out holds. For information, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/>. For online learning, visit <https://houstonlibrary.org/online-learning-7554> or call 832-393-2580. Hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, noon - 8 p.m.; Fridays, 1 - 5 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bracewell is closed Sundays.

Thursday, Sept. 18, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Get creative at Craft Lab. Registration required.

Thursday, Sept. 18, 4 - 5:30 p.m. Weekly English language classes. Registration required.

Monday, Sept. 22, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Toddler playtime. Registration required.

Monday, Sept. 22, 11 a.m. - noon. Open lab computer help. Registration required.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 4 - 5 p.m. Board games at the library. Registration required.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 4 - 5 p.m. Get creative at Craft Lab. Registration required.

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 6 - 7 p.m. Pajama storytime. Registration required.

Visit <https://houstonlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/events> for more library events.

### Book drop

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

### Parker Williams Library

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

The book drop is open. Social media links are [Facebook.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary](https://Facebook.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary) and [Instagram.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary](https://Instagram.com/ParkerWilliamsLibrary).

The following events are scheduled for Parker Williams Library, 10851 Scarsdale Blvd.: Thursday, Sept. 18, 10:15 a.m. - 10:45. Toddler time.

Friday, Sept. 19, 1 - 3 p.m. Genealogy.

Friday, Sept. 19, 1 - 2 p.m. Mexican folk mask craft.

Friday, Sept. 19, 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. Lego Club.

Saturday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m. - noon. Tai Chi.

Saturday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Vietnamese classes: topic conversation. Registration required.

Saturday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m. - noon. Hispanic Heritage Month celebration with Mariachi Luna Llena.

Monday, Sept. 22, 1 - 2:30 p.m. ESL conversation club. Registration required.

Monday, Sept. 22, 4 - 5:30 p.m. 3D printer orientation.

Monday, Sept. 22, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Tai Chi.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Babies 'n' books.

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Know your rights workshop with HILSC.

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Community craft: paint-a-pot.

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

- After receiving notification that holds are ready for pickup, call 832-927-7870.

- Have a library card number and PIN handy.

- A pickup time and instructions will be given.

- Upon arriving, park in one of the two parking spots reserved for curbside holds.

- Be prepared to show a library card or other form of ID for verification.

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

### Online services

- Use HCPL Wi-Fi service with HCPL's drive-up Wi-Fi.

- Download e-books and audiobooks, stream movies, research and learn at [www.hcpl.net](https://www.hcpl.net).

- Attend an HCPL program or story time online through Facebook or YouTube.

- Check an account to renew loans or request books, e-books, comics or graphic novels.

- Stream classic films, Indie cinema and award-winning documentaries on Kanopy.

- Listen to audiobooks through RBDigital or OverDrive.

- Read along and play with picture books on TumbleBooks.

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

## Deaths

### Alfonso "Al" Vasquez



Alfonso "Al" Vasquez, 85 years old, gracefully departed to heaven on Aug. 26, 2025, at UTMB Health Clear Lake Campus Hospital in Webster, surrounded by his family. He was born on July 9, 1940, in Edinburg, and graduated from Edinburg High School in 1958. After graduation, Al served as a yeoman in the United States Navy from November 1959 to November 1963.

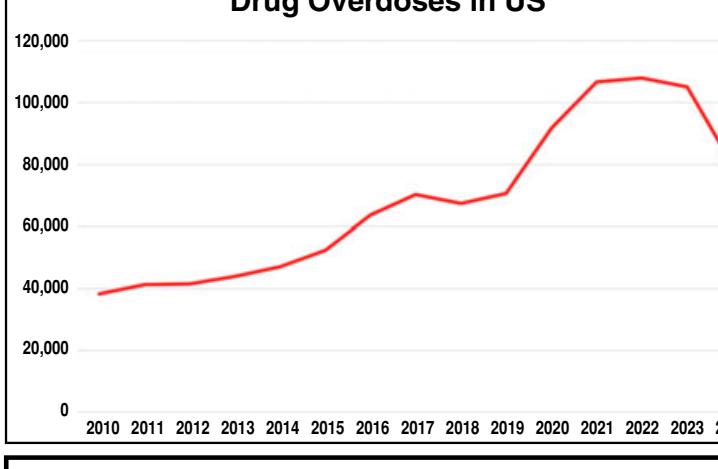
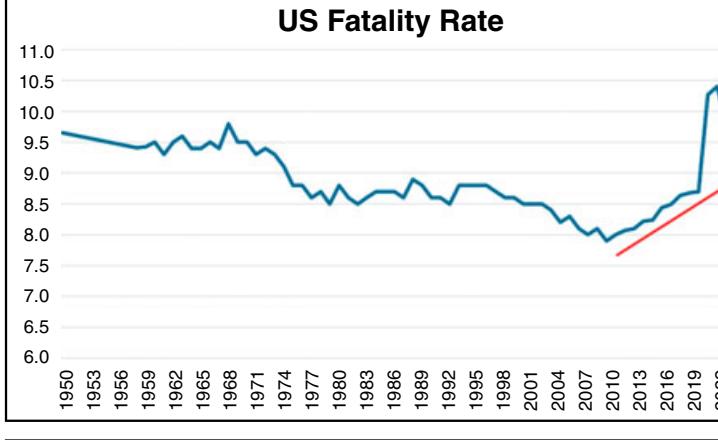
Alfonso returned home and reunited with his high school sweetheart, Barbara Davila. They married on Oct. 14, 1964, and moved to Houston, for a better life and to start their soon-to-be family. Al was a devoted husband

great-grandchildren Devin and Daxton Spears; many cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives; and dozens of adored friends. Alfonso is missed by all.

Honored pallbearers included Albert Vasquez (son), Joseph Ybarra (grandson), Carlos Ybarra (son-in-law), Ryan Cooper (grandson-in-law), Dean Hernandez (nephew) and Tommy Kitchen (lifetime friend and mentor). A funeral service was held on Friday, Sept. 12.

## Leader obituary policy

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



## Dobie Longhorn varsity cheerleaders begin new year



The 2025-2026 Dobie Longhorns varsity cheerleaders are shown above at the squad's first home football game of the season Saturday, Sept. 6, at Pasadena Veterans Stadium, as the area high school played against Klein High School. The Longhorns were defeated in the game 28-61. Cheerleaders shown above at the game are, left

to right, (front row) Lexie Martinez, Linnea Fonseca, Arianna Bermudez, Yasz Brown, Amira Caraway, Zadie Battarbee, Isabella Avila, Natalie Elkins, (back row) Maylene Rodriguez, Aubree Rodriguez, Mya Sanders Cullen Ponder, Kiahna Davis, Alyssa Rodriguez and Vida Sosa.

Photo by David Flickinger

Continued from Page 1

raffle drawings.

Awards will be presented in various categories.

Confirmed vendors include

Avenida Brazil, Bakhus Taverna, BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Chicken Salad Chick Pasadena, Crazy Alan's Swamp Shack, Dave & Buster's, Dobie High School Culinary, Fogo de Chão, Jeremiah's Italian Ice, Las Haciendas, Luna's Mexican Restaurant-Friendwood, MacBaughs' Cafe & Catering, McAlister's Deli, Minuti Coffee, Mixing

House, Mornings Kolaches, P.F. Chang's, Raising Cane's Baybrook, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Ryan's Smokehouse, San Jacinto College Culinary Department, Savanah

Chao, Jeremiah's Italian Ice, Las Haciendas, Luna's Mexican Restaurant-Friendwood, MacBaughs' Cafe & Catering, McAlister's Deli, Minuti Coffee, Mixing

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# Dobie FFA places in Pasadena Livestock Show & Rodeo agriculture mechanic exhibition



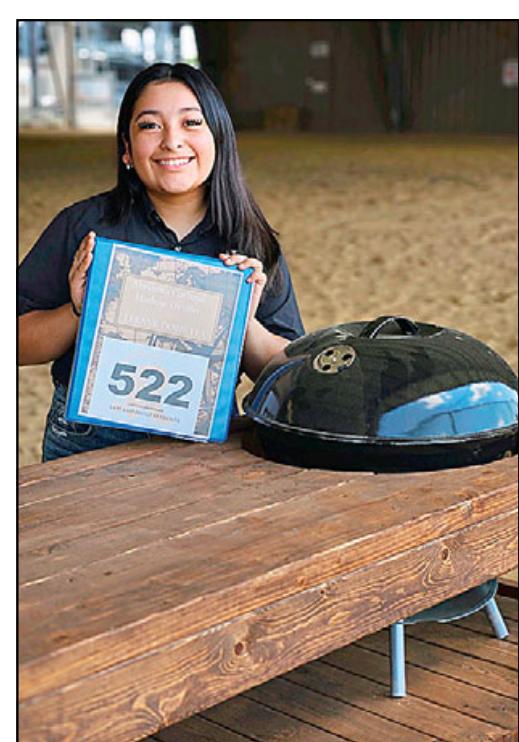
Dobie FFA students recently participated in the PLSR agriculture mechanic exhibition and won many awards. Pictured above with their awards for their entry are Group Reserve Champion Adrianna Carbajal (left) and Mathew Trevino.



Shown is Group Reserve Champion Mathew Trevino with his winning project for the agriculture mechanic exhibition. Trevino also placed third in his division and ninth in his auction spot.



Dobie FFA student Ethan Saldivar is pictured with the project he entered for the agriculture mechanic exhibition.



Dobie FFA student Adrianna Carbajal with her Group Reserve Champion-winning agriculture mechanic project.

## BHI names students of the month



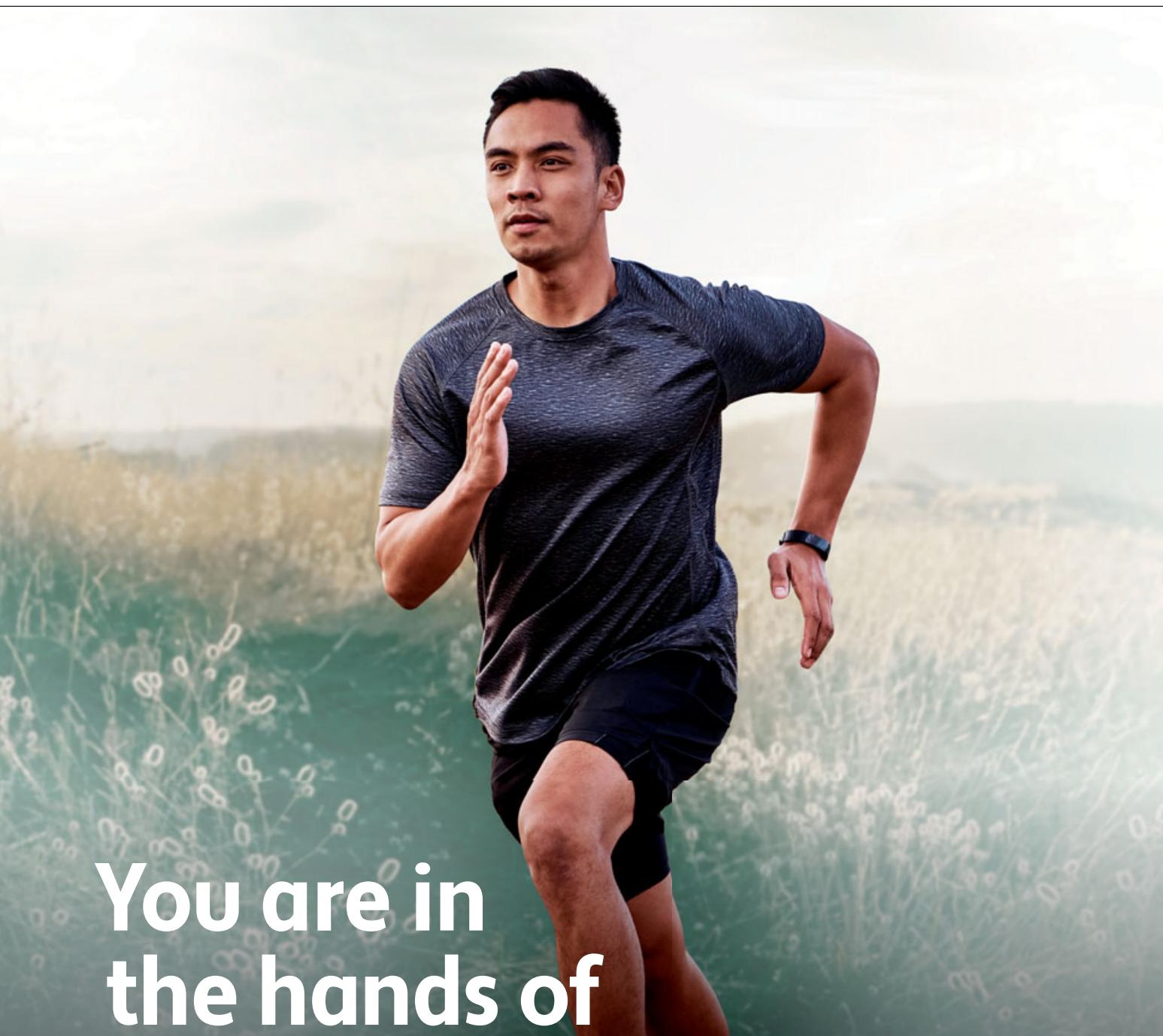
Beverly Hills Intermediate School officials recently announced their students of the month for August. These students were chosen for their outstanding effort, kindness and dedication. Staff members at the school highlighted their hard work and positive attitude. Pictured are, eighth-grader Kayden Milton (left) and seventh-grader Dalilah Rios.

## Truck crashes on beltway



A truck driver is assessing damage done to his trailer after making a sharp turn from Genoa Red Bluff onto Beltway 8 the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 13. There were no known injuries associated with the one-vehicle accident.

Photo by David Flickinger



You are in  
the hands of  
unparalleled  
orthopedic care.

Our care revolves around you, to get you back on your game and keep you there. Whether you need relief from tendinitis or a torn ligament, you'll get the same leading-edge treatments that we provide to the Houston Rockets. To help you come back sooner and stronger. This is orthopedic care designed around you.

[memorialhermann.org/orthopedics](http://memorialhermann.org/orthopedics)

Advancing health. Personalizing care.

**MEMORIAL  
HERMANN** |   
Orthopedics

## AARP foundation recruiting volunteers for upcoming tax season

Tax filing season may still be months away, but local AARP Foundation Tax-Aide sites are already preparing — and seeking volunteers who want to make a difference in their community.

"Tax-Aide volunteers provide free tax preparation and filing services for taxpayers, especially older adults with low to moderate income," said Ed Klein, District Coordinator. "This service not only eases the burden of filing taxes, it also helps clients secure much-needed refunds that can make a real impact in their lives." Tax-Aide is currently recruiting tax

counselors and client facilitators, with a special need for bilingual volunteers. Training is provided — no prior tax experience is required. For many volunteers, the program is as rewarding as it is impactful. A District 5 Tax-Aide volunteer in Alvin, shared: "The biggest reason I return to Tax-Aide year after year is the feeling of truly helping people who need

it most. Getting every last credit or refund for our clients is, for me, like winning the lottery. Our clients are so grateful, and it's incredibly satisfying to provide that kind of support."

The results speak for themselves. During the 2025 tax season, volunteers at the 10 district sites helped 4,830 taxpayers secure more than \$5.1 million in refunds. Volunteers come from all walks of life — retirees, working professionals and college students alike. You don't need to be a tax expert or an AARP member to get involved. All levels of experience are welcome. To learn more about volunteering with AARP Foundation Tax-Aide or to get started, visit [www.tx3d5.com](http://www.tx3d5.com) and click on the volunteer link. Someone will be in touch to answer questions.

## Dobie 9 announces paraprofessional, teacher of the month for August

Officials at the Dobie 9 campus would like to highlight two staff members as their teacher and paraprofessional of the month of August for their commitment and determination toward the school.

Shown at right is Veronica Oyervides who is awarded with Teacher of the Month for meeting new challenges for the 2025-2026 school year with flexibility, commitment and determination.

Pictured below is Nichole Santos who is being recognized as Paraprofessional of the Month for providing individual, personalized support to students as they started the school year.



The J. Frank Dobie Lariaette of the week of Sept. 12 is junior Laila Martin, a second-year line member.

## Q&A with Dobie's Duff

### Local alumnus a rising country star

Continued from Page 1 and everything it stands for. It was my teachers and friends who really pushed me to realize that home is in Pasadena ISD, and I'll always have a place in this district.

**Q: What's your ultimate goal for your career?**

**A:** I want to perform on the Houston Rodeo main stage, win a Grammy, be recognized at the CMAs, and ultimately become a household name.

**Q: What's your favorite part about your job?**

**A:** Everything. From writing

## WATER DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The SAGEMEADOW UTILITY DISTRICT will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2025 on October 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at Sagemeadow Utility District Building, 10755 Hall Road, Houston, TX 77089. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

**FOR** the proposal: Dean Baier, Seth Webb, Edward Figueroa, and David Montgomery

**AGAINST** the proposal: None

**PRESENT** and not voting: Glenn Williams

**ABSENT:** None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$ 0.52000/\$100 Adopted	\$ 0.52000/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$ 0.00000/\$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	.00%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 258,247	\$ 257,081
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 258,247	\$ 257,081
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 1,342.88	\$ 1,336.82
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	\$ -6.06	
and percentage of increase (+/-)	-0.45%	

## NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Bob Leared Interests 713-932-9011

## Melillo hosts award-winning author, Erin Entrada Kelly



Melillo Middle School recently hosted two-time Newbery Medal-winning author, Erin Entrada Kelly (right) who wrote *The Last Resort*. Pictured with Kelly is Melillo school librarian Debra Yocum.

## Remember When

### 45 years ago (1980)

The Sagemont-Beverly Hills Little League held a general membership meeting to determine what method to use to split the league. The local league had been under fire for the past few years for violating the maximum population rule.

The Pasadena Independent School District would continue to use drug detection dogs in all district secondary schools, despite a recent ruling by a Tyler judge the dogs invaded the privacy of a student there.

A Beverly Hills woman was found dead, apparently of a brain tumor. The 36-year-old had been dead for several hours when her maid found her and called emergency personnel at the Sagemont Fire Station.

The driver of a cement truck was transported to Hermann Hospital after the rear end of his truck was hit by a train near Highway 3 and Scarsdale Boulevard. An occupant of the train was taken to a Clear Lake hospital. None of the injured sustained life-threatening injuries.

Numerous yellow ribbons were tied to trees, doors and poles throughout the South Belt area to show support and symbolize prayers for young people involved in the Middle East conflict.

**30 years ago (1995)**

The driver of a cement truck was transported to Hermann Hospital after the rear end of his truck was hit by a train near Highway 3 and Scarsdale Boulevard. An occupant of the train was taken to a Clear Lake hospital. None of the injured sustained life-threatening injuries.

A dedication ceremony was set for the Dr. Parker Williams Library at the center of the San Jacinto College South campus.

Dobie High School orchestra director Bill Porter was selected Orchestra Director of the Year by the Texas Orchestra Directors Association.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held for Beamer Towers located on Beamer Road and South Hill, adjacent to the Beamer Road Medical Building and across from San Jacinto College South and Southeast Memorial Hospital.

Construction on the \$8 million project was set to begin immediately, with occupancy expected in June or July 1986.

**40 years ago (1985)**

A local florist was accepting food and clothing donations from area residents to send to the survivors of the Mexico City earthquakes.

Dobie High School orchestra director Bill Porter was selected Orchestra Director of the Year by the Texas Orchestra Directors Association.

Teachers in the Pasadena and Clear Creek school districts received raises amounting to approximately 3 percent over the previous year's salary.

Four Clear Brook High School seniors, Melissa Johnston, Stephanie Keener, Elizabeth Tsai and Patricia Tsai, were named National Merit Semifinalists.

**25 years ago (2000)**

Brio Superfund Site reme-

Fuqua headed for the contractors' bids.

Harris County Precinct 2 Constable deputies ended a local auto theft ring with the arrest of five suspects and charges filed against one of them.

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**35 years ago (1990)**

Miss South Belt Josie Stein was crowned Miss Junior Pasadena Rodeo Queen. Dobie Lariaette Emily King won Junior Most Photogenic at the pageant. King was the 1989 Junior Miss South Belt.

After years of detouring off eastbound Fuqua trying to find a viable way to State Highway 3 and Pasadena, the final leg of

the highway was completed.

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**25 years ago (2000)**

Brio Superfund Site reme-

dition began.

Dobie graduate Kaycie Swain Czelusta was a contestant on *Wheel of Fortune*.

The South Belt-Ellington Chamber of Commerce raised in excess of \$21,500 at the third annual Night of Cuisine held at Almeda Mall.

**10 years ago (2015)**

After years of delays, the newly reconstructed South Shaver Street was unveiled to the public at a ribbon-cutting

hosted by Houston District E City Council Member Dave Martin on Sept. 22. The endeavor essentially reconstructed the aged street from the Gulf Freeway to State Highway 3/Old Galveston Road.

The project, a joint venture between the Texas Department of Transportation, the City of Houston and the Harris County Flood Control District, included widening the area thoroughfare from a four-lane undivided roadway with open ditches to a six-lane divided roadway with raised median, curb and gutter drainage, sidewalks, street lighting and improved underground utilities.

Approximately 150 of the 400 personnel from the 147th Fighter Wing returned to Ellington Field after a tour of duty. The others were due back within a week.

An airplane crashed just south of Ellington Field. The engine had reportedly quit and the pilot was returning to the airport when it crashed, killing two occupants from the Austin area.

**15 years ago (2010)**

The Clear Creek Independent School District Board of Trustees voted unanimously 6-0 to appoint Donna Page Rander to fill the unexpired term for the District 4 seat through May 2011. Former South Belt resident Stuart Stromeyer resigned from the board in June after moving out of the district. He served six years as a CISD trustee.

The Capital One Bank in the 11400 block of the Gulf Freeway was robbed. According to a spokeswoman for the FBI, the suspect wrote a note at the check writing stand and then approached the teller. He handed the teller a note which demanded money and threatened her.

Fearing for her life, the teller removed cash from her drawer and gave it to the

Washington on Sept. 23, 5 years ago (2020)

Gov. Greg Abbott on Sept. 17 held a press conference outlining new regulations related to the state's efforts to combat the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

During the event, the governor issued executive orders expanding occupancy levels for restaurants, retail stores, office buildings, manufacturing facilities, gyms and exercise facilities and classes, museums and libraries and reauthorizing elective surgeries for a majority of the state of Texas.

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**BAFL Weekly Standings****Peewee Division**

Team	W	L	T
Wildcats	5	0	0
49ers	4	0	0
Cardinals	4	0	0
Pearland Texans	4	1	0
LP Texans	3	1	0
Panthers	3	2	0
Red Raiders	3	2	0
Manvel Texans	3	2	0
Braves	2	3	0
Cowboys	2	3	0
Eagles	2	3	0
Patriots	2	2	0
Buccaneers	1	3	0
Stingrays	1	4	0
Longhorns	0	4	0
Sharks	0	4	0
Gators	0	5	0

**Freshman Division**

Team	W	L	T
Red Raiders	5	0	0
49ers	4	0	0
Panthers	4	1	0
Manvel Texans	4	1	0
Cardinals	3	1	0
Patriots	3	1	0
Cowboys	3	2	0
Wildcats	3	2	0
Buccaneers	2	2	0
Eagles	2	3	0
Pearland Texans	2	3	0
Stingrays	2	3	0
Sharks	1	3	0
LP Texans	1	3	0
Longhorns	0	4	0
Braves	0	5	0
Gators	0	5	0

**Sophomore Division**

Team	W	L	T
Cowboys	5	0	0
Manvel Texans	5	0	0
Buccaneers	4	0	0
Red Raiders	4	1	0
Stingrays	3	2	0
Sharks	2	1	1
49ers	2	2	0
Patriots	2	2	0
Braves	2	3	0
Gators	2	3	0
Wildcats	2	3	0
Cardinals	2	2	0
Pearland Texans	1	3	1
Eagles	1	4	0
Longhorns	1	3	0
Panthers	0	5	0
LP Texas	0	4	0

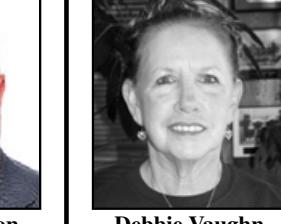
**Junior Division**

Team	W	L	T
Buccaneers	4	0	0
Red Raiders	4	1	0
Manvel Texans	4	1	0
Wildcats	4	1	0
49ers	3	1	0
Sharks	3	1	0
Cowboys	3	2	0
Gators	3	2	0
Panthers	2	3	0
Cardinals	2	2	0
Patriots	2	2	0
LP Texans	2	2	0
Eagles	1	4	0
Stingrays	1	4	0
Pearland Texans	1	4	0
Longhorns	0	4	0
Braves	0	5	0

**Senior Division**

Team	W	L	T
Buccaneers	4	0	0
LP Texans	4	0	0
Gators	4	1	0
Red Raiders	4	1	0
Cowboys	3	2	0
Pearland Texans	3	2	0
Wildcats	3	2	0
Sharks	3	0	0
49ers	2	2	0
Manvel Texans	2	2	0
Cardinals	2	1	0
Eagles	1	4	0
Panthers	1	4	0
Longhorns	1	3	0
Patriots	0	4	0
Stingrays	0	4	0
Braves	0	5	0

<b>BAFL Week 5</b>
Cowboys PW 28
Panthers 7
Cowboys Fr. 36
Panthers 6
Cowboys' Soph. 60
Panthers 0
Cowboys Jrs. 53
Panthers 0
Cowboys Srs. 53
Panthers 0
<b>BAFL Week 7</b>
Sept. 27
Cowboys' Peewee host Hitchcock, 8 a.m.
Cowboys' Freshmen host Hitchcock, 9 a.m.
Cowboys' Sophs. host Hitchcock, 11 a.m.
Cowboys' Juniors host Hitchcock, 1 p.m.
Cowboys' Seniors host Hitchcock, 3 p.m.

**South Belt football predictions**

Shadow Creek at Manvel
Shadow creek
Sam Rayburn vs South Houston
South Houston
Clear Lake at Brazoswood
Brazoswood
Clear Falls at Deer Park
Deer Park
Clear Brook at Clear Springs
Clear Springs
Fort Bend Travis at Hightower
Hightower
Silsbee at Beaumont Westbrook
Westbrook
Galveston Ball at Houston Westside
Galveston Ball
Barbers Hill at Richmond Foster
Barbers Hill
Lutheran South at Anahuac
Lutheran South
Last Week's Results
7-3
Season record
21-9

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# Thompson, Miller 8A squads clash as Pasadena ISD's intermediate action intensifies



With offensive lineman David Gonzales (77) out in front took a hand off from quarterback Aaden Howard (2) and looked for an opening against the Miller Falcons.



Xavier Brown (23) and Tyrell Sinclair (50) discuss the play call early on in the action against the Miller Falcons as the Lions pushed toward another step toward what has been a strong start to the regular season.



Sunia Kefu (80) proved to be more than the Miller Falcons could handle as he helped the Lions to a victory in the Pasadena ISD matchup as the locals continue to show their dominance within the division.

## CCISD Hall of Honor to welcome 2025 inductees Sept. 20

Three legendary Clear Creek Wildcat varsity boys' basketball teams from as far back as 1966 and all the way up to 2008

Clear Brook High School graduate Erica Alexander Guidry will have their special moment Sept. 20 as the Clear Creek ISD Hall

of Honor inducts its 2025 class in Webster.

This year's class once again will recognize a memorable group of in-

dividual athletes, head coaches and full varsity

teams from eight differ-

ent decades. It is just the

third year of eligibility for

athletes, coaches or teams from Clear Brook High School.

Alexander Guidry, owner of the most state track and field gold medals in the history of the district, will be inducted along with Jim Hatfield, who oversaw the greatest era of Wolverine football from 1988 through 2000. Hatfield, who died in 2014, will be represented by his widow Laurie Hatfield as well as other family members.

The Clear Creek ISD athletic Hall of Honor class will be inducted during a Sept. 20 ceremony at the district's Challenger Columbia Stadium Fieldhouse Community Room.

The newest members of

the athletic Hall of Hon-

or include accomplished

coaches, teams and ath-

letes who graduated from either Webster, Clear Creek, Clear Lake, Clear Brook or Clear Springs high schools.

Hatfield, the first-ever football head coach at Clear Brook, had an 85-30-2 overall record over 10 seasons, with the Wolverines winning 10 games or more in a single season four times. Hatfield died in 2014 after a cancer battle.

Alexander Guidry is quite simply the greatest sprinter in Clear Creek ISD history, capturing six gold medals and a silver medal over the three years from 2006 through 2008 at the state championships in

Austin.

As a senior in 2008,

Alexander was the most decorated 5A athlete at the state championships as she earned three gold medals to finalize her stellar career at Clear Brook. Also in 2008, Alexander soared 19 feet, 6 1/2 inches for the gold medal in the long jump.

On the track, she sprinted

to a gold medal in the 100 in a time of 11.48

seconds, then took a third

gold medal with a time of

23.53 in the 200.

As a sophomore in

2006, Alexander won a

state championship in the

100 and was second in the

200. A year later as a ju-

nior, Alexander captured

golds in both the 200 and

400.

Other inductees for 2025 include Clear Lake High School boys' soccer coach Doug Elder as well as Clear Creek stu-

dents Carol Atchison Hollinger, Roger Jordon and Tymecka Charelle Moore.

Beginning a terrific three-year run in 1966, the Clear Creek varsity boys' basketball program was the state runner-up in the class 3A division, followed by third place state finish in 1967. In 1968, Clear Creek was a regional finalist.

For information on how to support the Clear Creek ISD Hall of Honor, direct email to Athletic Hall of Honor Board President Dede MacPherson at dede.macpherson13@comcast.net.

will also enter the Hall of Honor on the special day.

Before Krueger moved on to Clear Lake, he led one of the state's most successful programs at Clear Creek High School.

The team inductees for 2025 include three Clear Creek High School boys' basketball teams.

Head coach Bill Krueger, a member of the Hall of Honor as an individual, now will see three dif-

ferent Wildcat basketball teams from 1966, 1967 and 1968 inducted.

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