

County Record

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Week of Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Some 80 Bridge City buildings got water in T-storm

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

At least 80 buildings in Bridge City had water inside during the Saturday, June 1, deluge, Commissioner Kirk Roccaforte said Tuesday during Orange County Commissioners Court.

Roccaforte's Precinct 3 includes the Bridge City area and the Tuesday meeting was the first since the storm. Parts of the Bridge City area six to seven inches of water within a short time.

The thunderstorm system that day was another example of only a small part of the county experiencing flooding rains while other areas do not get the heavy amount.

Roccaforte said the water that day came up within a quarter of an inch from getting inside his house.

He said the drainage system was working because the water went down quickly after the rain let up. "There's no drainage system that is going to handle five inches of rain in an hour and a half, he said. The neighborhoods with six to seven inches of rain had the precipitation for about two hours.

The city of Bridge City is responsible for drainage within the city limits, while the county handles other drainage. The Texas Department of Transportation has drainage for



Orange County Pct. 3 Commissioner Kirk Roccaforte

state highways and farm roads.

Roccaforte said people can help improve drainage by keeping their ditches clean and clearing out their culverts.

The issue is only one local government is dealing with as weather patterns change. Tuesday, the court approved a request by Mosquito Control Director Patrick Beebe to change his budget to move an extra \$10,000 for overtime pay for his department. The current budget year will end September 30.

In May, the court gave Beebe permission to spend an additional \$100,000 in pesticides to be sprayed from the mosquito control plane. Beebe then explained how mosquitoes plagued the county during winter months, causing the county to spray more than normal.

Tuesday, commissioners thanked Beebe and his de-

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Gift of Life screenings set for Orange this summer

Norma Sampson, front row center, director of the Julie Rogers Gift of Life program, talked with Orange County Commissioners Court Tuesday about free men's health screenings in Orange in July. Members of the court, from left to right, are Johnny Trahan, Chris Sowell, John Gothia, Kirk Roccaforte, and Robert Viator.

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Local paratrooper jumps for D-Day

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

On June 6, 20-year-old Cody Strause made his first parachute jump over a foreign country as he landed in Normandy, France.

But Strause wasn't one of the veterans. The Orangefield High graduate is in the 82nd Airborne of the U.S. Army and was part of a military tribute during the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

The same airborne dropped troops over Normandy during the 1944 Allied D-Day invasion to free Europe from Nazi Germany. The 82nd had 156 men killed, 347 wounded, and 756 missing during the drop in 1944.

Janois Strause Grizzaffi is Strause's mother and she is talkative about her son, his talents and work, along with his participa-



Cody Strause, an Orangefield High graduate, is a member of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division and traveled to France last week to make a commemorative jump for the 80th anniversary of the Allied D-Day invasion of Normandy during World War II. The 82nd Airborne sent paratroopers as part of the historic invasion.

tion in a history-making event that drew current world leaders.

Not only is Strause paratrooper, he also sings in the 82nd Airborne Division All-American Chorus. The group travels to various concerts. Grizzaffi said Strause told her he and some of the other singers sang the division's song to some D-Day veterans. Most of those few remaining veterans are in their late 90s or past 100 years of age.

Janois Grizzaffi said Monday evening she had phone calls with her son while in was overseas. One call was when he was in Sainte- Mere-Eglise, the first town in Normandy to be freed from Nazi occupiers. At a point in the conversation, her son handed his phone to another man so he could talk to her.

She said the man told

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Orange's Kovatch gets Lions International President's Medal

Longtime Orange Lions Club member Chris Kovatch was presented Monday night, June 10, with the Lions International President's Medal, the second highest honor the service group gives. Lion Chris Gunstream, a former local member, who now serves as an officer for Lions clubs in East Texas, came to give the award while giving the oath to new Orange Lions officers. Kovatch has served in numerous Lions Club offices and positions through the years. He is a local banker who also serves on the Orangefield ISD Board of Trustees. He and his wife, Christi Thayer Kovatch, have six children. She owns and operates local dance studios.

Juneteenth fest set for Riverfront

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Once again, Krewe de Onyx is holding its annual Juneteenth celebration with festivities at the Orange Riverfront on Saturday, June 15, and Sunday, June 16. Gates will be open from 4 p.m. until 10 p.m. both days and admission is free.

Live music will be provided by Perry Richard, Jeremy Fruge, Lil Nate, and Roi Anthony. Local DJ Shocker Shawn will provide music during the interludes.

Juneteenth is officially June 19, the festival is being held on the weekend before as a way for families, friends, and the community to come together to visit, eat, and dance.

The special date began in Texas and is now a national holiday celebrating the end of slavery in the

United States of America.

The National Museum of African American Culture, operated by the Smithsonian, reports that President Abraham Lincoln had signed a presidential decree to free all the slaves in the Confederate States that were involved in rebellion against the U.S. That decree went into effect on January 1, 1863. However, the U.S. did not have control over the Confederate States at the time.

When the Civil War ended in April 1865 with the Confederate States surrendering to the U.S., Union troops issued the freedom decrees. Texas was the most western of the Confederate States. Union troops numbering 2,000 landed at Galveston Island on June 19, 1865. The read the decree to free an estimated 250,000 enslaved people in Texas,



according to the National Museum of African American Culture.

The Orange Juneteenth will be at the Riverfront Pavilion along the Sabine River off Simmons Drive. People are invited to bring lawn chairs and blankets

to relax and enjoy the events. No alcohol will be allowed, along with no pets and no coolers.

Food trucks will be selling a variety of food, drinks, and snacks, plus

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★ TEXAS STATE NEWS

Abbott appoints first judges to new appeals court

KAYLA GUO
The Texas Tribune

Gov. Greg Abbott on Tuesday appointed three conservative justices to the new 15th Court of Appeals, which lawmakers created last year to oversee appeals involving the state, challenges to the constitutionality of state laws and cases from business courts.

Proponents say the new appeals court will improve judicial efficiency, place people with business expertise on the bench and allow issues with implications statewide be heard by judges elected statewide. Critics say Republicans created the new courts so businesses and the state could avoid having their cases heard by judges in urban counties where Democrats dominate local judicial races.

Former Texas Supreme Court Justice Scott Brister will serve as chief justice alongside Justices Scott Field and April Farris. They will each serve two-year terms from Sept. 1 through 2026.

"These highly experienced individuals will serve a vital role in our state's effort to ensure that the Texas Constitution and state statutes are applied uniformly throughout Texas and that businesses have a sophisticated and efficient process to resolve their disputes," Abbott said in a news release.

The Legislature created the new statewide appeals



Gov. Greg Abbott speaks at the Texas Public Policy Foundation policy summit in Austin on March 20, 2024.
Credit: Maria Crane/The Texas Tribune

court last year, granting it jurisdiction to hear cases brought by or against the state of Texas; agencies, departments or boards of the executive branch; or state universities, including any of these entities' officers. It will also hear appeals out of a new state district court that was created by lawmakers last year to consider cases involving businesses across Texas with disputes valued at more than \$10 million. The appeals court will ultimately have five judges, each elected statewide. For its first three years, it will be made up of Abbott's three appointees.

The bills' backers — mostly Republicans in the Legislature, in addition to some corporate attorneys

who testified in support of the measures — said that the new courts would help reduce case backlogs and ensure that judges hearing complex business cases would have specific expertise in business law. Supporters similarly made arguments for having appellate judges who are familiar with the nuance and complexity of matters that impact state government and all Texans.

But the bills' opponents argued that Republicans, who control the Legislature, passed the legislation as a way to circumvent Democrat-dominated

courts in big cities. Opponents also said that the new business court also created last year and whose appeals the 15th Circuit will hear, would actually bog cases down as parties fight over which court a case should belong in. And some warned that having the governor appoint judges every two years to the business court would leave the system vulnerable to political pressure from parties with cases before the court, who might look to influence the governor's selections.

Twenty-six other states have some form of a business court. The Legislature last created a new appeals court in 1967 to help manage caseloads in the Houston area.

Brister previously served on the Texas Supreme Court from 2003 to 2009. He was first appointed to the Texas Supreme Court by then-Gov. Rick Perry to serve out the remainder of departing Justice Craig Enoch's term. Brister was then elected to a six-year term in 2004. He also sat on the First and Fourteenth Courts of Appeals, both in Houston, and the Harris County 234th district court.

Field was appointed by Abbott to Williamson County's 480th District Court in 2022. He was a partner at Butler Snow LLP, a firm in Austin, where he

practiced in the appellate advocacy and commercial litigation divisions. He previously sat on the 3rd Court of Appeals in Austin. Field is a member of the Federalist Society, a conservative legal network, and the Williamson County Christian Legal Society.

Farris has served on the 1st Court of Appeals in

Houston since January 2021. She was previously an appellate litigation partner at Yetter Coleman LLP, a Houston-based firm, and an assistant solicitor general at the Texas Solicitor General's office. She is an honorary board member for Houston's Christian Legal Society.

The Record Newspapers of Orange County, Texas

The Record Newspapers - The County Record and the Penny Record - are published on Wednesday of each week and distributed free throughout greater Orange County, Texas. The publications feature community news, local sports, commentary and much more. Readers may also read each issue of our papers from our web site TheRecordLive.Com.

Roy Dunn - Publisher
Margaret Toal - News Director
Dan Perrine - Sports Editor
Janelle Sehon - Business Manager
Mark Dunn - Production
Brenda - Distribution Manager

409-886-7183

E-mail: news@therecordlive.com

333 W. Roundbunch, Bridge City, Texas 77611

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Round The Clock Hometown News

Gift of Life screenings set for Orange this summer

Margaret Toal
For The Record

Men in Orange County will get a chance for free medical screenings on Saturday, July 13, with the Julie Rogers Gift of Life program. Plus, women have a chance for free mammograms during special days of the summer.

Norma Sampson, executive director of the Southeast Texas charity, went before Orange County Commissioners Court Tuesday to talk about the group's medical programs because June is National Men's Health Month.

The Gift of Life program provides free screenings, referrals, and help with cancer screenings for people with no health insurance or assistance that provides the screenings.

Sampson the men may also use the screening program if they have insurance, but it does not cover the costs of the screenings.

The July 13 screenings for men will start at 9 a.m. in the lobby of the former hospital on Strickland Drive. She said the tests are non-invasive, with the prostate screening test being able to show whether the man needs more intense testing.

The tests will also include a cholesterol panel, plus checks for infectious disease, blood pressure, and blood glucose. A physician will be on site for consultations, if needed.

Appointments may be made through the website giftoflifebmt.org, or by calling 409-833-3663. Walk-ins will also be welcomed.

Sampson said that not only will the men get free screenings, but they will also get a free lunch along with a \$25 HEB gift card.

The Gift of Life also offers free mammograms for people who live in South-

east Texas, have limited income, and do not have private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare. The mammograms are usually for those age 40 or older, but exceptions may be made.

The mammograms will be offered on Wednesdays June 12, July 10, August 14, and September 11. The hours are 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and will be at 610 Strickland Drive, Suite 184, in Orange. More information is available through 409-833-3663, or the website giftoflifebmt.org.

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Lamar State College
Orange



County business From Page 1

partment for their recent efforts. "Almost daily, I'm getting calls about how good you are doing," Precinct 2 Commissioner Chris Sowell told Beebe.

The court also approved payments totaling \$2.52 million for drainage improvement projects by T Construction LLC. The money is coming from federal flood recovery grants issued through the Texas General Land Office. The drainage improvements include improving ditches and culverts at 19 locations along county roads. The streets have include Tulane Road, Granger in Orangefield, Teal Road, and North Bilbo.

Commissioners Court will soon be working with department heads to plan the new budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year that will start October 1. Commissioners got good news from the health insurance representative from the Texas Association of Counties.

The county's health insurance premiums will increase only 2 percent. The average county health insurance increases in the

state will be at a 4.6 percent increase.

County Personnel Director Lori Ardoin said the county's rate increased 9.9 percent in 2020. However, the county started a wellness program for employees and has set up screenings to improve health. Those improvements have brought less need for medical treatments, which has led to the reduction in costs.

"Our employees are healthier and feeling better," County Judge John Gothia said.

The county will be paying \$1,019 per month for each employee, up from \$1,006. The new rate includes a program approved by commissioners Tuesday to remove the \$250 per year deductible for prescription medicines.

Other bills commissioners voted to pay included \$683,020 from the general fund to the Texas Association of Counties to pay for property insurance for July 1, 2024, through July 1, 2025.

Also, a payment of \$281,462 to the Texas As-

sociation of Counties for insurance for auto liability, auto physical damage, general liability, law enforcement liability, and public officials liability. In addition, there was \$49,900 to pay for the Workers Compensation insurance through Texas Association of Counties.

The quarterly payment of \$148,110 to the Orange County Appraisal District was approved, along with \$21,653 to the University of Texas Medical Branch for the June contract payment at the health center, payments of \$1,150 each to Claybar Funeral Home and Memorial Funeral Home for indigent funeral expenses, and \$14,077 to Schaumburg and Polk for engineering services.

The sheriff's office received permission to move \$10,000 from one budget item to repairs to cover lightning strikes to the radio tower and communications equipment.

Also, the parks department was approved to spend \$13,476 for a John Deere Gator to replace the one that broke.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS . . .



The Bridge City/Orangefield Rotary Club recently awarded Camden Kelly as their Student of the Month for Bridge City High School. Camden plans to attend Stephen F. Austin University and pursue a degree in Aviation Science to become a pilot. He will also be throwing the Discus and Javelin as part of the Track team. Pictured are Jerry Jones-Rotary President, Jessica Kelly-Mother, CamdenStudent, Dr Mike Kelly-Father(BCISD Superintendent) and Dr Amanda James-BCHS Principal.

COURTESY PHOTO



The Bridge City/Orangefield Rotary Club recently awarded Camden Kelly as their Student of the Month for Bridge City High School. Camden plans to attend Stephen F. Austin University and pursue a degree in Aviation Science to become a pilot. He will also be throwing the Discus and Javelin as part of the Track team. Pictured are Jerry Jones-Rotary President, Jessica Kelly-Mother, CamdenStudent, Dr Mike Kelly-Father(BCISD Superintendent) and Dr Amanda James-BCHS Principal.

COURTESY PHOTO

Local paratrooper D-Day From Page 1

her she should be proud of her son and his accomplishments. She thanked him and asked him to pass the good word to her son's supervisor.

"I'm the commander general of the 82nd Airborne," the man replied.

Grizzaffi did not realize she was talking to Major General J. Patrick Work. Strause will now have a mother joke.

Strause also got to meet the granddaughter of World War II general George S. Patton, Helen Patton. She started a Patton sports legacy program that includes a D-Day anniversary football game.

Strause and his 82nd Airborne played against the 101st Airborne, the other paratrooper division that participated in D-Day. He was No. 81 in the game and in online video, showed some swift moves, though his team lost.

The story of the football game is that the 101st was going to participate in a Christmas Day celebratory football game in 1944 in France after the Nazis had retreated. Teams had tryouts and a couple of practices and the game was to be called the Champagne Bowl.

But the Battle of the Bulge broke out and the 101st Airborne had to quickly go back to fight-

ing. The football game was never played.

The young paratrooper's other parents are Mark Grizzaffi and Rob Strause. He graduated from Orangefield in 2022 and his mother said he sang in the school choir. He is also plays guitars and writes songs, though his mother said he is busy doing other things now. His original works are on TikTok and other media.

Grizzaffi said her son had not indicated he was interested in the military, but in March of his senior year, he told her he had an appointment with an Army recruiter. She told him she was going with him and promised not to

try to talk him out of joining. She wanted to assure the recruiter kept to the agreements.

Strause went through basic training and testing, and was chosen to go into the elite 82nd Airborne. Grizzaffi said her son turned 20 in March and the D-Day jump was his first on foreign soil.

He was expected to be back in the States by Tuesday after a stop-over in Iceland and Newfoundland.

Grizzaffi said her son hasn't decided on whether to pursue a military career, but with his success so early, she will encourage him.

Juneteenth celebration set for Orange From Page 1

other vendors will be set up. The vendors will include Suga's Sugar; Sweet's, Treats, & More 409 Smart Shoppers Fashions by L&B and Meme; Mina's Menu; Safe T Keys; Tougher Dreamer; and Ken's Treats.

Only vendors will be allowed to have barbecue pits and outdoor cooking, and only registered vendors will be allowed.

Besides Krewe de Onyx, the Orange Juneteenth is also sponsored by the convention and visitors bureaus of the city of Orange and Orange County, along with local businesses and industry.



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From the Creaux's Nest

HUNTER BIDEN FOUND GUILTY

President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was convicted by a jury on Tuesday of lying about his drug use to illegally buy a gun, a verdict Democrats may seize upon to counter Donald Trump's claim of a justice system weaponized against him. A 12-member jury in Wilmington, Delaware, federal court found the defendant guilty on all three counts against him, making Hunter Biden the first child of a sitting U.S. president to be convicted of a crime. The trial followed the May 30 criminal conviction of Trump, the first former U.S. president to be found guilty of a felony and the Republican challenger to Joe Biden, a Democrat. Trump, convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal. Democrats have pointed to cases including the Hunter Biden prosecution as evidence that Joe Biden is not using the justice system for political or personal ends, having said last week he would not pardon his son if convicted. In a statement on Tuesday, Joe Biden said: "I am the President, but I am also a Dad. Jill and I love our son, and we are so proud of the man he is today. So many families who have loved ones battle addiction understand the feeling of pride seeing someone you love come out the other side and be so strong and resilient in recovery. "As I also said last week, I will accept the outcome of this case and will continue to respect the judicial process as Hunter considers an appeal. Jill and I will always be there for Hunter and the rest of our family with our love and support. Nothing will ever change that," the statement said. The Hunter Biden case was brought by U.S. Department of Justice Special Counsel David Weiss, a Trump appointee. Weiss has also charged Hunter Biden with three felony and six misdemeanor tax offenses in California, alleging he failed to pay \$1.4 million in taxes between 2016 and 2019. Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty to those charges. A trial is scheduled for Sept. 5 in Los Angeles.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME 10 Years Ago-2014

The American public has been worked up by opponents of President Obama against his swap of five Taliban prisoners for Afghanistan hostage U.S. soldier Bowe Bergdahl. The Taliban never has targeted U.S. interest. They are tribal and fight each other. They were Charlie Wilson's friends and helped him defeat and run the Russians out of Afghanistan. Remember Charlie Wilson's War? They are not al-Qaeda, which targets Americans.****We are glad to report that Laverne McDonald, wife of Mayor Roy, is doing fine after undergoing heart surgery in Beaumont Monday. Best wishes for a complete recovery and a long life.****I hated to watch Matt Hicks and his Ragin' Cajuns go down in defeat the way they did Monday night in Lafayette. I think Matt was pulled too early. Ole Miss deserved to win. We still have two local boys going to the College World Series in Omaha, Jacob Felts, with Texas and Cameron Dishon, with Ole Miss.****On June 14, 1954, President Ike signed an order adding the words "Under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.****Saturday at the South East Texas Press Club awards banquet The Record Newspapers won several awards. Roy won second and third place for two Life's Highway columns. Second place was for "50 Years Have Gone by Since JFK's Assassination;" Third was for "The Fireman--A Great Guy," a column about the late fire Chief Jerry Wimberly. Awards were also taken home by Debby Schamber and Penny LeLeux.****On June 16, Beverly Perry, a special lady, a cancer survivor, celebrates another year. Also celebrating are Jennifer Harrison, Ruby Bell and Alex Brent.****June 16, would have been the birthday of a special friend, Wilson "King" Dunn, who died April 29, 2012, at age 93. He's gone but not forgotten.****June 17 finds one of our "Bestest" friends, Mary Alice Cole Hartfield, celebrating another year. Day in and day out she'll do to ride the range with.****Sen. Hillary Clinton's new book "Hard Choices" went on sale Tuesday. Diane Sawyer didn't cut her any slack in a tough ABC Monday night interview.

20 Years Ago-2004

Singer Ray Charles died this week. He was blind but played a mean piano and could sing any style of music. ****Congrats to Bridge City High 'All Stater' softball player Jessie Lemoine. She was also named to the 3-A Academic 'All State' honors. She will be playing for the Ragin' Cajuns at Lafayette. Named also to 'All State' was pitcher

Meagan Godwin; Katie Frank was an 'All Academic' selection. Both are B.C. grads. ****Thad Angelle, formerly with Bridge City Bank, is now with Texas State Bank. (Editor's note: Thad went on to be president of Mid-County Teachers Credit Union.****After a week of observing his death, President Ronald Reagan is finally laid to rest at the Reagan Library in California.****On June 9, 1934, 70 years ago, Donald Duck was born.****GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: Marvin Howe, 79, a great American died June 11. He is survived by wife of 56 years, Marjorie, children Alex, Chris, Roberta and their families. (Sadly Marjorie also passed away March 12, 2013.)****The 2004, 9-year old, Bridge City Little League All Stars are: Aaron Lilly, Revel Diabo, Preston Pittman, Hayden Guidry, Colin Smith, Bryce Sampere, Collin Gros, Eric Truncala, Hunter Stout, Reagan Ficken, Tyler and Trevor Gunn and manager Jimmy Smith. **** Shon Landry, of LC-M, is named High School Baseball MVP. The senior led the Bears in batting average, on base percentage, slugging percentage, runs batted in, home runs and triples. His 11 homeruns and 53 RBI's were also the best in the area. He had four triples, one less than the entire team. Last year he was voted MVP as a pitcher.

45 Years Ago-1979

On June 11, John Wayne, age 72 died. He was a great American and movie legend. ****Janice Overman is in St. E. after having foot surgery. ****Bill Lapeyrolerie is 17 years old on June 15.****Ronna Ilene Ramsey, wife of former Bridge City police officer Mike Ramsey, died Sunday morning after an auto accident.****Gene and Flo Edgerly buy a home with a swimming pool. He promised to give pretty Ann Lieby swimming lessons, then teach her to ski. He hasn't kept his word in either case. ****Two Bridge City spring grads at Texas A&M are Mark Hryhorchuck and Joseph Bell. ****Bryan Ward named Athlete of the Year in the Golden Triangle. He's only a sophomore. Pat Meeks was named outstanding baseball player.****Indiana State All American Larry Bird inked a contract with the Boston Celtics making him the highest paid rookie basketball player ever. A five year deal worth \$3.2 million makes him the highest paid rookie in any sport. ****Sophomore Lynn Cooke is Lamar's number one golfer. She could possibly be a national champion within two years. ****Michu is the smallest man in the world. He weighs 25 pounds and stands 33 inches tall, 7 inches shorter than P.T. Barnum's famous Tom Thumb. Born Mihaly, in Hungary, his parents are both 6 inches taller than he is.

50 Years Ago-1974

Bridge City boys, Larry King and Neil Kelly leave next week to join Uncle Sam's Marine Corps. ****Pretty Claudia Conway, daughter of Margaret and Preston Conway, will be competing in the Miss Texas World contest to be held in Houston.****Bill Clark is pushing Sunbeam's Olympic Meal Bread. He says it's sure to improve your sex life. ****Don Jacobs is in New York. He says there are so many people in that city they have to live in shifts. He writes a good piece on his New York adventure.

CELTICS DEFEAT MAVERICKS 107-89

The Boston Celtics defeat Dallas Mavericks 107-89 for second win. Seventy percent of NBA finals have been won by teams that took game 1. Remaining games to be played are: Game 3: Celtics at Mavericks, Wednesday, June 12 (8:30 p.m. ET, ABC) Game 4: Celtics at Mavericks, Friday, June 14 (8:30 p.m. ET, ABC) Game 5: Mavericks at Celtics, Monday, June 17 (8:30 p.m. ET, ABC)* Game 6: Celtics at Mavericks, Thursday, June 20 (8:30 p.m. ET, ABC)* Game 7: Mavericks at Celtics, Sunday, June 23 (8 p.m. ET, ABC)*

A FEW HAPPENINGS

A big thunderstorm couldn't keep the crowd away last week as local bigwigs gathered to celebrate the 90th birthday of Roy Dunn, the owner of The Record Newspapers, the last locally-owned newspapers in Orange County. Carl Thibodeaux even made Roy one of his cookie-cakes for the party. Thibodeaux may hold the local record for public service titles. He spent 20 years as Orange County Judge, he's been a West Orange mayor and councilor, and now, he's serving as municipal judge for West Orange.****The party was held in the big room at Robert's Meat Market with Record employees Janelle Sehon and Brenda Lund organizing and decorating. ****Roy told some stories of when he was back in his 30s and started the Opportunity Valley News, a weekly paper. To help drum up attention to the paper and get advertisers, he started writing a gossip column that included things like "a blue Oldsmobile was spotted late Tuesday night with a woman getting out of it and into a traveling Ford." He threatened to name the people in a future edition of the paper if they didn't bring him a cake. He said he got lots of cake. He threw away only one. It was chocolate and he was afraid it was full of laxative.****The biggest 'gossip' Roy told at his party was about how many boudain balls Dr. Tom Johnson, president of LSCO, can eat. Six? Dr. Johnson is one of Roy's newer admirers, but Roy says they grew up around Robert Arthur and Mawmaw Judice's cooking. Also, Dr. Johnson had worked for the colorful U.S. Representative Charlie Wilson, whose district included Orange.****Roy choked up some when he talked about his longtime friendship with lawyer Sharon Bearden and how 50 years ago Bearden was

district attorney and had to deal with major crimes. Eric Peveto, a law partner with Sharon, accompanied him. County Judge John Gothia sat up front with Roy. County commissioners Chris Sowell and Kirk Roccaforte were there, along with County Treasurer Christy Khoury Roccaforte. Justices of the peace Chad Jenkins and Hershel Stagner came as did retired JP Derry Dunn.****Retired State Judge Pat Clark came by and even Ron Sigler, a former county commissioner, stopped for lunch to pay tribute. He's always on Interstate 10 between Houston and Louisiana. Record Newspaper writers Chuck Uzzle, Dan Perrine, and Margaret Toal also attended.****Roy received his first homegrown tomatoes this year from Judge Derry Dunn. You can't beat red, ripe, off the vine tomatoes. We also enjoyed Windee's homemade white bread and jelly and David Bailey's delicious annual special-made strawberry pie. Capt. Chuck Uzzle took care of the upcoming Father's Day celebration with fresh game and redfish. What great birthday gifts.****We received a note from Attorney Paul Henderson. Glad to hear from him.****Charlotte Chaison, Beverly Perry, Lou Raburn, Judy Domec LeBlanc, Shirley Vicknair were in the group on a day trip to Beaumont to see the city's murals and enjoy a meal downtown.****Brandi Griggs took her kids on a trip to the Hill Country that included river floats in San Marcus and hiking in Wimberly. She'll take Bridge City's alligators over those dry area scorpions.****April and Scott Goodman were enjoying the sights and cool temperatures in Niagara Falls.****Dixie and Gay Richardson had a short vacation. They had planned for a two-week cruise and land tour of Alaska, but a screw from Dixie's previous foot surgery broke in half and she needed medical care.

BREAUX BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

A few folks having birthdays in the next few days. June 12: Lindsay Hallman, Rhonda Dishon, Candice Steele, Frances Ragsdale, Jesse Wallis, Karen Kline.****June 13: John Banken, Sidney White, Ryan Kelly Shawna Gauthier, Desia Davis.****June 14: Zoe Ann Hinds, Bobbie Burgess, Selita Ernest, Carley Swenson, Ben Perry. Donald Trump turns 78 on this day.****June 15: Our own Janelle Sehon celebrates today also our friend Adam Dupuis, Ryan Richard, Alex Eby, Denise Vickers, Sharon Fisher. Waylon Jennings was born 80 years ago in 1944 in Littlefield, Texas.****June 16: Best wishes to Beverly Perry, Charlotte Potter, Christian Louvier, Jennifer Hamson.****June 17: We wish our sweet friend Alice Cole-Hartsfield a big happy birthday hug. Also celebrating are Demi Roy Justin Johnson, Andrew Riedel, Belinda Welch.****June 18: Celebrating today are Brandy Slaughter, Janice Babin, Nancy Haworth, Krystal Leonard, Selby Tuberville, Amber King.****Other birthday greetings this past week to Vivian McMillan, who turned 91. Also celebrating were local legend Dan Harris, Cody Campbell, Matt Huston, Pauline Farris, Enette Howard, Donna Benefield, M.J. Simar, Anna Bonnin, Kate Ernst, Dana McMillan Strokos, Bob Stalnaker, Becky Wilson May, Charlotte Henning, Michele Borel, LaNiya Marks, Tommy Ferguson, Larry Bornholdt, and Captain Tiffany Salgado with the Salvation Army.****Anniversaries celebrated included Johnny and Becky Trahan with 42 years and Wayne and Elaine Reeh with 44 years.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Norris Dartez was traveling da back road and jus out of Abbeville he sees a little boy chillun dragging a big bird wit a wing span bout six feet. Dartez stop his car and he axe, "Son, wats you name?"

Da little boy answer, "I'm Teneg Boudreaux, me."

"Well, wat you dot dere Teneg?"

Da boy answer, "Me, I got a hawk."

Dartez said, "A wat?"

"A chicken hawk, dats wat I got me." answer the boy.

"Wat in da hell you gonna do wit dat hawk, hahh?" Dartez axe.

Teneg look at Dartez and say, "Make gumbo, wat you tink?"

Dartez axe. "Does hawk make pretty good gumbor?"

Teneg answer, "Bout like owl."

C'EST TOUT RUNOFF NUMBERS

According to the Enterprise, now that all ballots are counted, 24.5% of eligible voters, 25,319 out of 103,117, participated in the runoff, including blank ballots. Jefferson County saw the highest turnout with 39% of eligible voters, 9,964 out of 54,096, participating, according to numbers from the county. Jasper and Orange counties saw nearly half the turnout as Jefferson County. Orange County saw a 20% turnout, 4,498 out of 23,547 eligible voters. The makeup of the electorate has changed significantly in recent decades, and independents are now the largest and fastest-growing group of voters in the country. The Legislature would need to change the state election code and set procedure for a closed primary; current state law allows any registered voter to affiliate with a party by voting in its primary.****Well, I've got to get out of here. My time is up; thanks for yours. Please read us cover to cover. Happy Father's Day to all you dads. Take care and God bless.

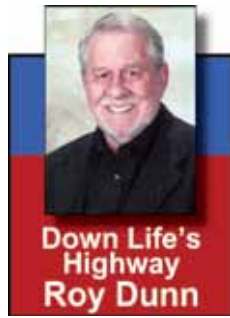
"I SAW IT IN THE RECORD!"

“I Got To 90!”

No Record but a Good Average

Roy Dunn
Down Life's Highway
For The Record

If you live an active, busy life, old age will creep up on you. Life is on a fast track. You are always looking back wondering where the last 10 years went. I've been most fortunate with a good support group and a caring family. As a poor kid during the great depression, I started working the cotton fields with my mother. Those old cotton fields back home is a reference point from those days on. Through the ages, I really never had any down time. I pioneered several businesses. I've done things that were daring, spent many years in publishing. None of that would have been possible without gathering great friends along the way. On the morning of June 5, 2024,



my wife Phyl said, “Happy 90th birthday.” It was like congratulations. She and I will soon be married 70 years. What made this birthday so important was that it had become a goal. Last year some of the greatest people, friends, support group, helped me celebrate age 89. I felt good, it was a great time. Shortly after my health started heading south with three different trips and stays in the hospital. The worse was COVID. For a long time I've had COPD and was very afraid of COVID. My life was hanging by a string and I really felt it slipping away. After coming that close to the gate, spending Christmas, New Year and anniversary in hospital, with the urging of a young nurse, making 90 became my goal. Janelle Sehon made the arrangements and a bunch of great friends helped me celebrate the big one. Most importantly



Roy Dunn, publisher of The Record Newspapers, seen here during his 90th Birthday celebration at Roberts' Restaurant last Wednesday. The “Down Life's Highway” columnist is joined by friends LSCO President Dr. Tom Johnson and Orange County Judge John Gothia.

our family was there at Robert's. Phyl, our three children Mark, Allen and Karen, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were there. Granddaughter Jenna and husband Robby, drove non-stop 1900 miles from New Hampshire with their young ones Delilah, Willow and Chase. Granddaughter Amber, her three boys Luke, Liam and Rowan along with Mark and Ethel Dunn all flew in from Vero Beach, FL. Grandsons Leland Gros and Collin Gros along with Morgan Shaw helped celebrate. The celebration lasted until the last person flew out Sunday. I was disappointed that some friends couldn't make it to the gathering due to rain but special thanks to those who did. A few I recall off hand are an 84 year-old guy I've known since he was six years old, “Jiving Gene”, his nephews the Judice boys, Larry and Al, Judge

John Gothia, Judge Carl and Micaela Thibodeaux, J.W. Dalton, Roy Derry Dunn, Phillip Welch, Sharon Bearden, Eric Peveto, Comm. Chris Sowell, Judge Chad and Windee Jenkins, Dr. Tom Johnson, Comm. Kirk and Christy Roccaforte, Mayor David and Becky Rutledge, Mike Hatton, Capt. Chuck Uzzle, Dan Perrine, George Crawford, David Bailey, Brenda Lund, Judge Hershel Stagner, Ron Sigler, Cole Michalk, Margaret Toal. Alice Cole-Hartsfield and Judge Pat Clark stopped in. I don't have a list to go by so if I missed you I'm truly sorry. (Remember I'm 90 years old.) I'm looking forward to 91. It's a stretch but I still have a few stories to tell and I pray I will get to tell them, even at the expense of my friends. Thanks for your friendship.

Deaths & Memorials

Tom Hardy, 87, Orange

In loving memory of Tom Hardy, 87 of Orange, Texas, who passed away peacefully June 7, 2024, at Jefferson Skilled Nursing Home in Beaumont, Texas.

A visitation will be held Thursday, June 13, 2024, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Claybar Funeral Home in Orange. Tom will be laid to rest at Cushing Cemetery surrounded by his family.

Born in Cushing, Texas on March 4, 1937, Tom was the middle son of Marcus and Juanita Hardy. He was raised in Cushing with his siblings and met his future wife while they were High School sweethearts.

Tom was an extraordinary man who left an indelible mark on the hearts of all who knew him. He left behind a legacy of love, hard work, and generosity.

Tom was more than just an accomplished heavy equipment operator at DuPont during the bulk of his career; he was a devoted family man and provider to his wife and their two children. For over 67 years, he shared a deep and unwavering love with his wife, creating a bond that served as a source of inspiration for those around them.

An avid outdoorsman and skilled hunter, Tom found solace and joy in nature. Whether he was navigating heavy equipment or exploring the outdoors, his adventurous spirit was contagious. His care and compassion extended to his cherished dogs, who were not just family pets but beloved companions.

What set Tom apart was his ability to effortlessly connect with people. Described as someone who never met a stranger, he had a giant personality that made everyone feel welcome in his presence. Tom was known for his kind heart and willingness to



Tom Hardy

lend a helping hand, embodying the true spirit of community.

Throughout his life, Tom demonstrated tremendous resilience, a strong work ethic, and an unwavering commitment to those he cared about. His impact on the lives he touched will be remembered with fondness. His legacy will live on through the memories of his family and the countless individuals he helped along the way.

As we say goodbye to Mr. Tommy Ray Hardy, who was known to everyone as ‘Tom’, let us celebrate the remarkable life he led and the enduring love he shared with his family. May his spirit continue to inspire us to be kind, generous, and compassionate towards one another.

Tom is preceded in death by his parents, Marcus and Juanita Hardy, Cushing, Texas; Brother, Wayne Hardy, Cushing, Texas; Brother, Kenneth Hardy, Tacoma, Washington; Son, Thomas Mark Hardy, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Tom is survived by his loving wife, June Hardy of Orange, Texas; Daughter, Melanie McCoy of Orange, Texas; Brother, John Hardy and Family, Nacogdoches, Texas; Sister, Sandra Whittington and Family, Corrigan, Texas; Sister, Debbie Hardy and Family, Nacogdoches, Texas; Grandson, Tad Hardy and Family, Rock Hill, South Carolina; Granddaughter, Sarah Trotter and Family, Rock Hill, South Carolina; Granddaughter, Kellie Blessing and Family, San Antonio, Texas; Grandson, Matt McCoy, Dallas, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Alzheimer's Association at <https://www.alz.org/>

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Estate Sale this Saturday, 6/15 & Sun., 6/16 from 8 am to 5 pm at 7230 Sandbar Rd., 77630. (In Orangefield) Furniture, kitchen appliances, office equipment, storage cabinets, TV's, record albums, art work, mirrors, jewelry, clothes, kids books, 400 DVD's & 6 DVD cabinets, dishes, etc. Please do not block driveways.

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Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **JEAN D. MCFETRIDGE**, Deceased, were issued on **JUNE 4, 2024, in Cause No. P20008**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **LINDA CARLTON**

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
c/o: **Barron Law Office P.O. Box 279 Orange, TX 77631-0279**

Dated the 4th day of June, 2024.

George B. Barron
George B. Barron
Attorney for Executor
State Bar No.: 01817500
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279
Email: george@barronlawoffice.net

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **JOHN DAVID ZERKO**, Deceased, were issued on the **June 3, 2024, in Cause No. P19990**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **MANDI KAY ZERKO**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **MANDI KAY ZERKO**
3514 Whippoorwill Street
Orange, Texas 77630

Dated the 3rd day of June, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Mandi Kay Zerko
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **CHARLES KENNETH HALL**, Deceased, were issued on the **June 3, 2024, in Cause No. P19991**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **CELIA ANN HALL**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **CELIA ANN HALL**
5105 Lyre Street
Orange, Texas 77630

Dated the 3rd day of June, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Celia Ann Hall
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **OSCAR J. PEET, JR.**, Deceased, were issued on the **June 4, 2024, in Cause No. P20011**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **CAREY L. PEET**

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **CAREY L. PEET**
3264 W Bluff Road
Orange, Texas 77630

Dated the 5th day of June, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Carey L. Peet
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **MARTHA JEAN HALL**, Deceased, were issued on the **June 4, 2024, in Cause No. P20005**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **CHRISTI D'ANN HALL HILLEBRANDT**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **CHRISTI D'ANN HALL HILLEBRANDT**
2305 Leonard Road
Sulphur, Louisiana 70665

Dated the 5th day of June, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Christi D'Ann Hall
Hillebrandt
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

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THE STATE OF TEXAS

To: **Kara Alyce Jones Griffin, Respondent,**

You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgement may be taken against you.

The petition of Amy LaCap, Petitioner, was filed in the 128th District Court of Orange, Texas on 16th day of May, 2024, against Kara Alyce Jones Griffin, numbered **240297-D** and entitled in the interest of Loreli Alyce Lacap, A Child. The suit requests Original Petition to Terminate Parent-Child Relationship and for Adoption of a Child. The date and place of birth of the child/ren who is/are subject of the suit:

Loreli Alyce Lacap 9/2/2021 Beaumont, Texas

The court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the child/ren's interest which will be binding upon you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's adoption.

ISSUED AND GIVEN under my hand and seal of said Court at Orange, Texas, this May 30, 2024.

Anne Reed

Anne Reed, District Clerk
Orange County, Texas
By: */s/* MEGAN MOSES, Deputy

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **IRVING RICHARD SPECTOR**, Deceased, were issued on **MAY 22, 2024, in Cause No. P20003**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **DEBRA SUE SPECTOR JANNISE**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **James R. Dunaway**
Attorney at Law
108 7TH Street
Orange, TX 77630

Dated the 28th day of May, 2024.

James R. Dunaway
James R. Dunaway

Attorney for
Debra Sue Spector Jannise,
Independent Executor for the Estate of Irving Richard Spector

State Bar No.: 06208000
P.O. Box 100
Orange, TX 77631-0100
jdunaway@sbcglobal.net

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **ALTHIE C. LINGO**, Deceased, were issued on **MAY 22, 2024, in Cause No. P20001**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **WESLEY C. LINGO**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **James R. Dunaway**
Attorney at Law
108 7TH Street
Orange, TX 77630

Dated the 28th day of May, 2024.

James R. Dunaway
James R. Dunaway

Attorney for
Wesley C. Lingo,
Executor for the Estate of Althie C. Lingo

State Bar No.: 06208000
P.O. Box 100
Orange, TX 77631-0100
jdunaway@sbcglobal.net

LEGAL NOTICE

The three properties, the first commonly known as 4310 Memorial Drive, Orange, TX 77630, the second commonly known as 200 Shiloh Ridge Road, Vidor, TX 77662, and the third one commonly known as 3047 Jackie Street, Orange, TX 77630 are scheduled to be sold at public foreclosure auction on 07/02/2024 01:00 PM or no later than 3 hours thereafter at the back door of the Courthouse in Orange County, Texas, or if the preceding area is no longer the designated area, at the area most recently designated by the Orange County Commissioner's Court. The Substitute Trustee will be Margie Allen, Angie Brooks, Kyle Barclay, Tommy Jackson, Keata Smith, Stephanie Hernandez, Selim Taherzadeh, or Michael Linke, any to act. The winning bidder buys "as is" and must pay at the auction with certified funds.

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Texans' Calen Bullock - 'Great First Impression'

Great first impressions on coach DeMeco Ryans

Coty M. Davis
Texass Daily

Kamari Lassiter wasn't the only rookie who stood out during the Houston Texans' mandatory minicamp. Calen Bullock made plays on several occasions during OTAs and minicamp. Bullock has spent the bulk of his time receiving snaps with the presumed second team, and his production led to coach DeMeco Ryans being impressed with the former UCLA defensive back.

"He's done a really nice job of the communication piece — we ask a lot of our safeties and communicat-

ing in our defense," Ryans said. "He's picked that up as he's been here the past couple weeks. I know he'll continue to improve upon his communication skills."

During Day 2 of the 2024 NFL draft, the Texans sent a trade package to the Philadelphia Eagles in exchange for the No. 78 overall pick used to select Bullock.

Ryans and general manager Nick Caserio became fond of Bullock due to his versatility, but more importantly, his defensive ball skills. During Bullock's final season at USC, he registered a coverage grade of 82.2 — per Pro Football Focus.



When Calen Bullock first visited NRG Stadium, he had a sense that the Houston Texans would be the team that would select him during the 2024 NFL Draft. The USC First Team All-American safety was selected by the Houston Texans as the 14th pick of the third round (78th overall) of the 2024 NFL Draft.

At the end of last season, Ryans expressed a desire to improve the Texans' ability to create more takeaways. In 2023, they produced 14 turnovers.

However, cornerback Derek Stingley Jr. and Steven Nelson accounted for nine.

The rookie defensive back recorded nine interceptions during his three-year tenure as USC's starting safety. He entered the draft as one of the best defensive ballhawks, adding 15 pass deflections across 38 collegiate games.

Bullock has consistently showcased his talents at the Houston Methodist Training Center, which could lead to vital snaps during the 2024 season.

"[Bullock is] a guy who can roam the backend and go make plays, like he's shown that. The range that he has, he's made a couple nice plays out there for us. We see the coverage ability — it's just him continuing to improve upon his communication."

Coming face-to-face with a Texas alligator

Ariana Garcia
Houston Chronicle

You're about to go for a swim or wade fishing in one of Southeast Texas waterways. Suddenly, you get the overwhelming sense that you're not alone. After taking a quick glance around, your suspicions are confirmed—an alligator is present. The creature is nearby but you still want to go for your swim. Is it still safe?

The question might be on the minds of some Southeast Texans this summer. Since alligators are native to the Lone Star State, it's not the most unusual situation to find oneself in. There are even designated swimming areas in Texas state parks where the fearsome reptiles are known to frequent. The question was recently posed on Reddit after a swimmer found themselves unsure of what to do after encountering a lounging 5-foot-long alligator while paddling the Buffalo Bayou near Houston.

Responses to the post might come as a surprise, with some saying that alligators will leave you alone so long as you keep a safe distance. "I used to kayak Armand Bayou in an inflatable kayak: It's absolutely full of alligators... never had a problem. Just give them space, they're cool," one person responded. Others said it isn't worth the risk. "Remember that if you're in the water, you're in their domain," another wrote. "I'd stay as far away as possible from them."

But what do Texas wildlife officials say? Naturally, alligators have a fear of humans and will typically retreat if approached, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) told Chron. However, like any predator, it is unwise to approach them. What's more, it's also illegal to feed or harass the reptiles. Doing so is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by up to a \$500 fine.

The alligator breeding season is from March to May, meaning encounters with the toothy animals are much more likely. However, the likelihood of them presenting any danger to humans is rare. "It is not common practice to remove or relocate alligators," TPWD said. Usually, doing so is a last resort and typically only done if a nuisance alligator—a gator that is preying on a threat to human health and safety—has been

identified and is an immediate danger to the public. "The majority of alligators are not nuisances," TPWD added.

Last year, visitors to Huntsville State Park—located about 70 miles north of Houston—found themselves at the mercy of alligators on Lake Raven in back-to-back close encounters.

However, TPWD said the incidents were due to visitor behavior, not the alligators themselves. "Our parks strive to educate the public about the damages associated with feeding wild animals, alligators included," TPWD wrote. "Visitors can assist in keeping Lake Raven accessible by heeding warning signs at the park, refraining from feeding alligators (including indirect feeding by improper disposal of fish or other food wastes), main-



Alligators are naturally fearful of humans and its uncommon for them to get near, according to TPWD.

Maintaining a safe distance, any suspicious or concerning behavior exhibited by alligators. In other guidance,

TPWD recommends avoiding going swimming at night or at dusk or dawn when alligators most actively feed and to only swim in designated areas. You should also keep 30 feet away from alligators at all times. Should you get too close, back away slowly as the creatures are extremely quick and agile and will defend themselves when cornered.

The state agency said Huntsville State Park has a long-standing history of managing alligators to ensure the safety of swimmers. "Our management practices involve the removal of alligators that exhibit behaviors indicative of potential nuisance or danger to humans," TPWD wrote. "This proactive approach has been effective in mitigating risks associated with alligator encounters."

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OUTDOORS
Capt. Chuck Uzzle
For The Record



Chuck Uzzle

No matter how hard lure manufacturers try they will never be able to create a lure that works better than real thing, period. The typical profile of the weekend angler is not that of the high end trophy trout hunter who chunks artificial lures for hours on end looking for one big fish, it's the fisherman who takes a quart of live shrimp or a bucket of mud minnows and looks for anything that will bite.

Much has been made of the big trout phenomenon and all the hoopla that surrounds that style of fishing; I personally have devoted plenty of articles to the subject as well as many days on the water. On the other hand I devoted plenty of time on the water fishing with live shad or mullet and I enjoy those trips just as much or maybe even more on occasion. There is something very calm and social about anchoring up in the mouth of a little bayou or in the river and peacefully anticipating the next bite for whatever species shows up next. Some of the best conversations I ever had with my son were on the back of boat as we sat fished live bait. The laid back mood associated with this style of fishing is a welcome change from the hectic world that we live in; it's a shame that more anglers aren't willing to participate for fear of their macho image being tarnished. I feel sorry for those folks because they don't know what they are missing.

Here in the Sabine area we are very fortunate to have such a great supply of free live bait, virtually anyone who can throw a cast net can catch enough bait to fish without spending a dime. Most anglers who live here locally have no idea about how much money weekend anglers on other bay systems spend on live bait, it's crazy. Live shrimp by the quart ranges anywhere from 12 to 20 dollars a quart! Now if you plan on fishing all day you probably will buy at least 3 quarts, that's an extra of 40 to 60 dollars a trip on top of 3-4 dollar, a gallon gas prices.

Anglers who fish with guides on places like Calcasieu or Galveston bay not only pay guide fees but they also are expected to pay for the live bait as well, that price gets steep in a hurry. I don't know how many horror stories I have heard from anglers who went out with a guide and paid for live shrimp only to have the bait die half way through the trip due to a bad live well system or some other problem only to have to go back to the bait stand and by more shrimp. My wallet hurts just thinking about it all.

The other high dollar live bait that we really don't have in this area is croaker, the big trout bait

CAPT. CHUCK Page 3B

Gulf Coast Fishing Reports

This week's Texas Gulf Coast Fishing Reports was compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

• **Sabine Lake**

GOOD. 78 degrees. Sabine Channel rock piles and shell banks holding redfish, drum, sheepshead, and trout on incoming tides with Carolina rigs. Flounder are good with live shrimp along the banks. Speckled trout are showing up on the south revetment wall biting live shrimp under a popping cork. North Levee wall is good for trout live shrimp under a popping cork in the morning. Bank anglers doing well for speckled trout, redfish and a few flounders mixed in. Mid lake limits of nice slot redfish under the birds. Grass points, shell banks and drop-offs are holding nice redfish with live shrimp under a popping cork. Some catches of speckled trout midlake now that the salinity is improving. Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• **Bolivar**

GOOD. 79 degrees. Water levels are fluctuating with tides and wind this week changing back to two tide days. Still lots of fresh water on the bay side but it hasn't affected the bite. The best bite conditions this week will be on edges of the deeper spots holding saltier water. People are catching plenty of redfish of varying sizes everywhere! Small croakers along with sand trout, sheepshead, black drum, speckled trout, and crabs caught along the jetty with plenty of stingrays and sharks. Pompano and jack crevalle are still running. The surf is producing redfish, black drum, gafftop, lots of stingrays, and bigger sharks along the whole peninsula. The sargassum, seaweed, is thick in spots. People were using all kinds of different things for bait this past week with good results. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp.

• **Trinity Bay**

SLOW. 83 degrees. Bay is still hampered by freshwater runoff. Dam release has dropped significantly. Few catches of fish coming from the edges and rocks of the Houston ship channel. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. The water is muddy and fresh. Report of a white bass caught at HL&P spillway. Report of redfish being caught on the East shoreline of Trinity Bay on dead shrimp on the bottom by moving current. When the rains finally subside, we should be in for a fantastic season with less fishing pressure. Watch for a water line creeping up to us within the next few weeks. When the trout return to normal fishing grounds, they should be full of eggs very soon and the bite will be hot. Drum are being caught in the ship channel along with some redfish. Watch the weather, be prepared and wear your kill switch every time. It could save your life. Report by Captain Zackary Scott, Zack Attack Fishing.

• **Galveston Bay**

SLOW. 83 degrees. Water trying to clear on calm days. Trout are starting to show back up from lower Galveston bay towards Moses Lake. Best action on soft plastics and live shrimp or croaker. Report



The Record's outdoor columnist Capt. Chuck Uzzle brings in a nice speckled trout caught in Sabine Lake casting along small isolated pieces of structure using a popping cork.

along with some black drum. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. East Bay and Intracoastal waterway are holding plenty of small speckled trout, black drum, sheepshead, and redfish caught on live shrimp, croakers, and top-water lures. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp

Surface water temps 81 degrees, water clarity stained in most places for East Galveston Bay. Still a large amount of freshwater in the Bay system, however we have been able to locate trout without running too far from the launch spot. Winds have been less than 20 mph for the most part, allowing us to fish pretty much wherever we choose, which has increased our success rates over the past week. We have been able to find a good number of baitfish and shrimp over shell and grass lines, and the predators have been close by. We have been utilizing live shrimp, under a popping cork, as well as paddle tails and ¼ ounce jig heads on our artificial only charters. Report by Captain Jeff Brandon.

• **West Galveston Bay**

GOOD. 85 degrees. Still a good amount of birds working over schools of

SALTWATER Page 4B

by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• **East Galveston Bay**

GOOD. 85 degrees. Fishing open bay reefs has

been tough due to the winds. Those wading are having the best catches of speckled trout and the occasional red. Some anglers fishing tight to bayou drains with live shrimp finding a fair trout bite,

'The Lakes' Fishing

• **Toledo Bend Fishing Report**

GOOD. Water slightly stained; 80 degrees; 0.77 feet above pool. We got another 6-8 inch of rain since last week and the lake level is over full and flood gates are back open. They have five gates open at 1 foot each. It is flooding north of the lake now, so lots of water is still to come. Bass fishing has been fair, lots of fish being caught in the flooded bushes and hay grass from 1-4 feet with topwaters, frogs and spinnerbaits been best. There are still lots of fish out in 10-18 feet, but with water back on rise, they have got harder to catch. Crankbaits and Texas rigs will catch these. We just need some sunshine for a week or so to get it back to normal. Crappie fishing has been hard. Most reports are 12-18 fish per boat. Deeper docks and brush piles are the best with jigs and live bait. Report by Stephen Johnston, Johnston Fishing.

• **Sam Rayburn**

GOOD. Water stained; 78 degrees; 5.56 feet above pool. The water is off-colored with floating debris. Bass are scattered from flooded bushes and grass. Target bass in the flooded bushes and trees with soft plastics. Few bass are on points and creek Carolina rigs and crankbaits. Crappie continue to roam in open water. Crappie are best on brush in 12 feet of water, but while the lake level is high the brush piles are 16-18 feet deep. Catfish are good in 20 feet of water off points and creek channels with minnows and cut baits. White bass on deeper points with slab spoons and little George's. Report by Captain Lynn Atkinson, Reel Um N Guide Service. After the recent rains the water is still on the rise, but we should start to see the lake level off because there is a break in the rainy weather. Bass are shallow in flooded bushes and trees in 4-10 feet of water. Large population of fish off shore on primary and secondary points in 12-18 feet of water in relation to shoreline flooded bushes. Use Texas rigs, spinnerbaits, chatterbaits and topwater frogs shallow. The offshore bite is on deep diving crankbaits, Carolina rigs, and jigs. Report by Captain Hank Harrison, Double H Precision Fishing.

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A 'heat dome' is back over Texas. Here's what that means (and why it's the worst).

Article written by
Andrew Weber
For KUT News

Last year was the second hottest summer in Texas.

Much of that heat is because, well, Texas is hot as all get-out. Not just some get-out. It's hot as all get-out. But last year, we thought, was novel: a pressure system, formally known as a heat ridge, crept up from the South and parked a mass of heat and humidity over much of the state. Non-science folks call the stifflingly cruel phenomenon a heat dome.

Turns out, last year wasn't so novel.

Texas is facing similar conditions now. Some South Texans are already feeling the heat dome's effects. Folks in Central Texas are staring down that oppressive mass as it inches northward East Texas.

You've probably got questions. What is a heat dome? Why is this happening to me? How would a seemingly benevolent Mother Earth allow such a scourge to exist, nay, thrive? We can get to some of those science-based questions. For the others, you're on your own.

What is a heat dome?

A heat dome is a high-pressure system that, because physics, traps heat

and keeps it there. That pressure system's atmospheric energy is hard to bust up: The high pressure above is met with the rising heat below, which makes the system especially stubborn and slow-moving.

Right now, that pressure system is trapped over land, but that mass is also heating the water in the Gulf of Mexico — it's making it hotter. Gulf waters have heated to about the same temperatures as last year. When the air from the Gulf blows to the shore, it compounds that trapped heat, saturating the air and creating the conditions under the dome.

Kim Wood is an atmospheric scientist and professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson — where denizens enjoyed a not-at-all-balmy 108 degrees last week.

"If [the heat is] trapped over land, you're going to see higher temperatures," Wood said, adding that Tucson gets a drier heat. "If that's trapped over water, then those waters are going to warm up. And if the waters are warmer, that's more moisture that can get into the air because there's more energy."

The persistent flow of warm air from the Gulf means things don't really cool down overnight, so heat begets more heat when it's under the dome.



Non-science folks call the stifflingly cruel phenomenon a heat dome.

Is this going to be worse than last year?

In short, time will tell, but the conditions we've seen so far? They're eerily similar to last year, according to Victor Murphy with the National Weather Service.

"What is that ridge of high pressure gonna do this year? Is it gonna stay in place? Or will it build northward into Texas like it did last year? And if it does build northward into Texas like it did last year," he said, "I don't want to think about it"

So far, Murphy said, South Texas has seen record-breaking high temperatures in both Browns-

ville and Del Rio — not by hundredths or tenths of a degree, by a lot more.

"They usually might beat it by half a degree and maybe, at most, 1 degree," he said. "So, to see 120-, 150-year records shatter by 2 to 3 degrees is pretty significant. It shows you the magnitude and the strength of this heat ridge."

He said that heat ridge isn't likely going to break up, and it could creep farther northward. Last week, San Antonio saw a record heat index of 117, a sign that it could be slowly making its way to Central Texas.

Austin is preparing for a hotter-than-normal summer. So far, EMS calls for heat-related illnesses are

up 90%, compared to this time last year. Officials are particularly concerned about people experiencing homelessness.

Still, Murphy said, it's not likely this summer will be as bad as last year, which brought 45 days straight of triple-digit heat.

But given the current conditions and global warming, Murphy said, this summer could be among the top 20 warmest on record.

If that sounds like good news, it speaks to how conditioned we've become to extreme heat over the last few decades.

What does this mean for hurricane season?

Time will tell.

The Gulf of Mexico is exceedingly warm, and yes, water temperature is a key factor in the formation of hurricanes.

But that doesn't guarantee an active hurricane season, Wood stressed.

"There's always the chance for an active hurricane season, but most storms stay out to sea," they said. "So, an active hurricane season does not mean an active landfalling season."

Water temperatures aren't the only factor for hurricane formation — or landfall.

Changes in windspeed and direction, the amount of water in the air, atmospheric conditions, distance from the equator and "seed disturbances" — which can be a thunderstorm or some other pressure system — can all create a tropical cyclone. That tropical cyclone could turn into a hurricane. Or it could break up over open water.

But, Wood said, if a hurricane does find itself in the Gulf, those warm temperatures could strengthen it, while also causing it to stay parked much like the heat dome is now. That's what happened with Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

"As we've seen so many times, it just takes one storm," Wood said. "I'm hoping nobody gets that one storm."

Capt. Chuck Uzzle



The perfect size finger mullet is roughly 3-4 inches. As far as rigging finger mullet on a hook, you want to insert the hook point just below the mullet's bottom lip and feed it up and out the top lip.

of choice on the lower coast. Live croaker cost around 10 dollars a dozen on average and will usually last all day with minimal care. The live croaker as bait industry is a huge money making business, the numbers of live croaker sold on Saturday at the big bait camps are staggering. Many in the fishing

community attribute the decline of the croaker to the emphasis on them as bait instead of a game fish. Live croaker are lethal on trout in the summer, while artificial only guides struggle to put together a decent box of fish many "croaker guides" limit out in 2 or 3 hours and get back to the dock well be-

From Page 1

fore lunch. There have been plenty of cleaning table altercations surrounding this practice but regardless what some may think using croaker for bait is perfectly legal.

While we don't really have a consistent supply of live shrimp or croaker in our area we do have live bait that is every bit as good if not better, live shad. The small pogies

and menhaden that thrive in our waters are great baits for almost any and all species of fish that can be caught in our area either fresh or salt. Besides being readily available for those who can throw a cast net the best thing about them is that they are 100% free. The summer months are tailor made for drifting shad under a cork or fished along the bottom on a Carolina rig; both are popular methods and each works well. If there is a draw back to fishing shad

it's their durability, shad are difficult to keep alive for long periods if you don't pay attention. Most anglers try to put too many shad in their live well; this is a recipe for disaster. All the shad in the same small space produce waste and deplete the oxygen in the water which usually kills all the shad really quick. In order to make the most of your shad don't put too many in your live well, change your live well water frequently, and keep the water in you

live well cool by adding frozen water bottles or some other means. By taking a few extra precautions you can keep your bait fresh and lively for a really long time.

Take a few minutes before you hit the water this month and make sure you have everything you need to be a successful live bait fisherman. The little details can mean the difference between a great day on the water and one that would better forgotten.



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Can you smell how meat tastes?

Meat scientists explore the science behind cooking aromas and share their flavorful secrets

Kay Ledbetter
Texas A&M AgriLife

The aroma of grilled meat wafting across the backyard can make your mouth water as you seem to almost taste the steak from the grill.

But did you know there is an actual science behind why that happens?

Chris Kerth, Ph.D., associate professor of meat science and muscle biology in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Animal Science, has spent more than 12 years researching flavor aromas and how good and bad odors correlate with our perception of flavors.

For example, when you smell a steak cooking, Kerth explains how you are smelling the volatile chemical compounds that it emits in reaction to the heat. It is those chemical compounds he detects and quantitates in his scientific research.

Some of those smells and odors, like grilled flavor, result in positive responses like “I am hungry, and I want to eat this.” There are also odors like soured milk that result in negative responses. If you smell those odors, then you likely will not want to eat the product as they tend to be indicators of poor quality.

The science behind the smell

Kerth’s research interests are primarily animal nutri-

tion, management and genetic factors related to flavor chemistry and the development of aromas that impact the sensory and quality traits in meat, food and beverage products.

By sticking a specialized needle into a container with a food or beverage and allowing it to absorb the aromas before putting it into a gas chromatograph, he can capture the aroma compounds or chemicals from the meat or beverage to be separated, identified and quantified.

When it is done, Kerth knows what chemical is responsible for what aroma.

“Often when we talk about food and how it tastes, we mostly talk about tenderness or texture,” he said. “But about 12 years ago, I became interested in determining how to objectively measure flavor.”

The concept of measuring the flavor of food is extraordinarily more complex than simply measuring tenderness or juiciness and requires very specialized equipment.

Being able to characterize the differences is important, Kerth said. For instance, chemicals containing sulfur compounds can be associated with a bad smell like rotten eggs. But, in really small quantities, sulfur actually has a pleasant odor to it, contributing to the meat flavor.

“Once we were able to identify and quantify the different chemicals, we started working with the



Some of those smells and odors, like grilled flavor, result in positive responses like “I am hungry, and I want to eat this.”

meat itself to find ways to increase the good aromas and decrease the bad aromas,” he said.

Kerth began working with Rhonda Miller, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Research Faculty Fellow and meat science professor in the department, on the sensory side of food tastes. She would conduct expert, trained sensory panels and consumer panels to identify factors that influence their evaluations of taste based on mouth feel.

Then, after evaluating those results, they could both specifically tell the volatile aroma chemicals that consumers did and didn’t like.

A little fat reverse engineering

From a chemistry stand-

point, Kerth said much of the aroma comes from either the breakdown of fat or the surface browning, which requires protein and sugars naturally found in meat. And that is determined by the cooking method and how much heat is involved.

“The more heat we apply, the more those flavors will be generated,” he said. “Bacon out of the package doesn’t smell like much, but once it starts cooking, the whole house smells like bacon. So, cookery is hugely important in generating the aromas and flavors we want.”

Kerth went a step further, concentrating on the grill temperature.

“When you put that piece of meat on the grill, whether it is a gas grill or charcoal

grill or flat top in a commercial kitchen, the temperature of that grill is very important because we want that sear on the outside,” he said. “Imagine the difference in flavor between a pot roast from a Crock-Pot with no browning and a steak

with a nice sear from a hot grill.”

While it is important the meat be cooked to the internal doneness level the consumer is seeking, controlling how much browning is on the outside is also important — and challenging. Getting that nice sear without overcooking is both an art and a science.

“Whenever we’ve done these studies where we’ve changed the grill temperature, the more char we get, the better — up to a certain point,” Kerth said. “If you have really thick steaks, you can actually overdo it and get too much browning, which can turn consumers off. So, there’s a window in there you want to hit.”

In the end, he said, it’s the combination of our senses — taste, texture and aroma — that when brought together in the right combination help you have an even greater eating experience.

Saltwater fishing report From Page 2B

a good amount of birds working over schools of speckled trout, sand trout, and even some ladyfish. Those throwing live bait catching a mixture of trout, redfish, and black drum. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• Freeport

GOOD. 85 degrees. Trout, redfish and flounder are good around the San Luis Pass. Bastrop Bay, Christmas Bay, Chocolate Bay and the west end of Galveston Bay has been producing trout, gafftop and redfish

fishing under the birds using shrimps under a popping cork or gulp shrimp. Wade fishing has been good in the guts at the pass with croaker and shrimp for catches of trout, redfish and a few flounder mixed in.



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Texas droughts are getting much more expensive

Dylan Baddour
Inside Climate News

The financial costs of drought in Texas have risen rapidly over recent decades, according to a new analysis of federal crop insurance data.

The Washington-based nonprofit Environmental Working Group, a longtime critic of the federal crop insurance program, analyzed data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and showed that drought accounts for more crop insurance payouts than any other weather phenomenon and that Texas draws more crop insurance payouts than any other state.

Payouts due to drought in Texas rose from an average \$251 million per year in the 2000s to \$516 million per year in the 2010s, and \$1.1 billion per year in the first four years of the 2020s, the data showed, rising at more than twice the rate of inflation.

Those numbers represent farmers' lost harvests as well as the publicly-funded premium subsidies that keep them in business through disasters. As temperatures rise, so will costs.

"Drought and heat are expected to get worse in Texas," said Anne Schechinger, author of the EWG analysis. "Climate change is going to increase costs for both taxpayers and farmers."

Drivers of the growth in payouts include inflation, expanding insurance coverage and immensely damaging droughts in 2011 and 2022. The federal crop insurance program, which provides highly subsidized coverage to American farmers, is one of several insurance sectors facing financial headwinds from increased exposure to severe weather, driven in part by carbon emissions from fossil fuels.

As costs keep climbing, Schechinger said, the crop insurance program requires reform that encourages adaptation to long-term changes in temperature and rainfall. In 2022, the program's most expensive year on record, it subsidized 62 percent of policyholder premiums at a cost of \$12 billion, according to a review by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

"You don't want crop insurance to insulate farmers from market signals," said Joseph Glauber, a former chairman of the federal crop insurance program and former chief economist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "You don't want to encourage risky behavior. You don't want to encourage growing crops on marginal land by virtue of the fact that you can insure it."

In the last 30 years, crop insurance grew from a minor program to a massive safety net for American farmers and ranchers, Glauber said. That helps explain its rapidly rising costs, he said, driven by surging commodity prices during the Covid-19 pandemic (because crop insurance pays farmers market rates).

The program's costs spike during years of drought, both in Texas and the nation. Drought can affect more farmers simultaneously than almost any other weather phenomenon.

"The problem with crop insurance is the same problem that we're going to be facing with all the hazards that are associated with climate change," said Bruce Babcock, an agricultural economist at the University of California, Riverside, who designed part of the modern crop insurance program. "There's going to be a reckoning. We're facing

it now with the stresses that have been put on the insurance industry."

Rising costs associated with extreme weather have posed challenges to other insurance sectors, too, said Mark Friedlander, a spokesperson for the Insurance Information Institute. The federal flood insurance program and home insurance industry have been particularly affected.

"We're seeing just a lot of different perils and clearly the numbers are adding up," he said. "Inflation and the frequency and severity of natural disasters are key cost drivers."

The National Flood Insurance Program, a government-backed program to cover damage from high water in homes and businesses, is a "fiscal failure," he said, based on an inaccurate assessment of risk. It is \$20.5 billion in debt with \$619 million in annual interest.

Last year the U.S. home insurance sector had its worst year since 2011, paying out \$1.11 for every \$1 it collected, Friedlander said, driven largely by severe thunderstorms. Another loss is projected this year.

"We expect to see rates continue to increase until it gets to the point where there is no more underwriting loss," he said.

Insurance and cotton

In Texas, the EWG analysis found almost 60 percent of crop insurance payouts to date have covered a single crop: cotton, the state's most widely cultivated crop. According to the nonprofit Plains Cotton Growers, 56 percent of the U.S. cotton crop grows in Texas.

Farming is a risky business, said Mike Oldham, a 68-year-old career cotton farmer in the Panhandle of Texas. When farmers plow a field and plant crops, they are gambling that favorable weather conditions allow them to grow the foods and materials that society needs. Bad weather can ruin all of that investment.

"If we don't have [crop insurance], farmers aren't going to stay in business," said Oldham, whose farm has been in his family for four generations. "We're gonna lose these rural communities and schools, banks, and also people lose their jobs. It just takes too many dollars to farm an acre of land without some kind of guarantee at the end."

Oldham, who is also president of the Texas Farmers Union, said most farmers in Texas only insure up to 65 percent of their harvest and are not made whole after an extreme weather event.

Texas cotton farmers took a big hit in 2011, when the state's driest year on record destroyed 62 percent of the state's cotton crop. Brad Rippey, a meteorologist with the USDA's Office of the Chief Economist, said that level of loss was "way off the charts." After that, more farmers joined the insurance program, he said.

When severe drought returned in 2022, it dealt even greater damage—74 percent of the Texas cotton crop was lost. That year, Texas cotton farmers received almost \$3 billion in crop insurance payouts. Without crop insurance, Rippey said, "it would have been an economic disaster."

Even with crop insurance, the Texas Comptroller said the 2022 drought caused almost \$8 billion in direct agricultural losses and nearly \$17 billion in total losses. Cotton farmers lost about \$2.1 billion in to-



Texas leads the nation in crop insurance payouts due to drought, and those costs are expected to increase because of climate change.

tal economic activity, the Comptroller's office reported, not including the losses covered by crop insurance.

"Although crop insurance helps producers recoup revenue losses, it doesn't help businesses and consumers further down the supply chain," the office wrote at the time.

Drought and adaptation

Although 2022 wasn't as dry as 2011 overall, it was

drier early in the year during planting season, said John Nielsen-Gammon, director of the Southern Regional Climate Center at Texas A&M University. By the time rains picked up in May, it was too late for the cotton.

Droughts are part of Texas weather and rising temperatures are making them worse. An assessment by the Climate Center identified no strong trends in Texas' overall annual precipitation but found a

marked upward trend in temperatures. As the summers get hotter, naturally occurring droughts will become more severe.

"Even a very conservative extrapolation," the assessment said, "would make a typical year around 2036 warmer than all but the five warmest years on record so far."

"Higher temperatures will lead to unprecedented severe drought impacts," it said.

Farmers in Texas are

looking for ways to cut their losses during drought, said Brant Wilbourn, associate director of commodity and regulatory activities at the Texas Farm Bureau. Practices to boost soil moisture retention can help crops withstand drought conditions.

The practice of leaving crop debris over winter helps retain soil moisture. Cover crops like wheat and rye are also planted in fall and terminated in spring, retaining moisture and providing cover for young crops as they grow.

Abdul Latif Khan, a biotechnology researcher at the University of Houston, searches for secrets of drought tolerance in the dirt itself. Microscopic microbial communities can make big differences during dry spells, he said. But decades of heavy chemical fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide use have left soils badly damaged, leaving plants more vulnerable to dry spells today.

"Poor soil health correlates to lower drought tolerance for crops that grow in it," Khan said.

Khan's team has recently experimented with algae additives in the soil.

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The Sight That Changes Suffering

Vaneetha Rendall Risner
Regular Contributor
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Suffering changes our vision.

Just as our natural eyes can't see as well in the dark, in suffering we struggle to see beyond our pressing needs. Everything looks hazy — except our problems, which seem disproportionately clear and intense. It takes the eyes of faith to see past our present circumstances to the presence and provision of God.

Seeing with the eyes of faith requires us to be intentional about where we focus. I recently took a picture in portrait mode on my phone, and I noticed that what I focused on was remarkably vivid and sharp, while the surroundings were fuzzy and blurred. I could barely identify what was in the background. The same is true in suffering. Whatever we focus on will capture our attention, and everything else can fade into the background.

When God first brought the Israelites to the edge of the promised land, Moses told them to spy out the country God had given them. The spies returned after forty days, acknowledging that the land was flowing with milk and honey, but focusing their attention on the giants who lived there (Numbers 13:31-33). God's promises and provision faded into the background, and the people succumbed to fear.

Forty years later, Joshua led the Israelites to the border of the promised land with even more obstacles. The same giants inhabited

the territory, but now they needed to cross the overflowing Jordan River and conquer a walled city. But this time, the people didn't hesitate or mention turning back. They focused on God, taking courage that he was with them, and the hurdles disappeared into the back-

ground. Rather than looking through the lens of fear, they looked through the lens of faith, focusing on God's presence, protection, and provision.

ground. Rather than looking through the lens of fear, they looked through the lens of faith, focusing on God's presence, protection, and provision.

Faith allows us to see far beyond our natural vision, assuring us of what we hope for but cannot yet see with our physical eyes (Hebrews 11:1). This spiritual sight is a gift from God, and with it we see our lives through a different lens. But why do we need it? When God opens our eyes, what can we see?

Scripture becomes alive with meaning when God illuminates it for us. The Bible is inspired by God, and we need his Spirit to understand it (1 Corinthians 2:14). We can research and analyze Scripture and even read the original in Hebrew and Greek, but if God

doesn't reveal the truth to us, we cannot see it. One way to get that sight is to pray, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18). Just as the resurrected Jesus opened the disciples' minds on the road to Emmaus to under-

stand Scripture (Luke 24:45), God can do the same for us. The Bible moves from mere typewritten words on a page to Spirit-breathed words that change us — words that give life to our souls, give us wisdom and joy, and help us see the deep things of God. Even when we feel as though we're lying in the dust, God's word can revive us.

• GOD'S PROTECTION

When God revives us, our spiritual eyes can see his protection as we look into the heavenly realms. Even though we may feel alone, outnumbered by our troubles and enemies, we can be certain that, in Christ, heaven's armies are with us. When Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the Syrian army, Elisha prayed that the eyes of

his servant would be opened. And when they were, the servant saw that the hills were filled with horses and chariots of fire. The heavenly realms surrounded them, and they both knew that there were more with them than against them (2 Kings 6:15-17).

• GOD'S PROVISION

In addition to his protection, God opens our eyes to his provision right in front of us. When Hagar was sent away with her son Ishmael, she wept when their water supply ran out and feared Ishmael would die. Then God opened her eyes to see a well of water that would provide for them (Genesis 21:19), most likely reminding her of years earlier when she declared, "You are a God of seeing. . . Truly here I have seen him who looks after me" (Genesis

16:13). Hagar understood that God provides for and looks after us, even when we have no resources. The ability to recognize God's provision is a gift, so those who don't trust in God may not see good even when it comes.

• GOD'S PRESENCE

Perhaps the greatest gift of spiritual sight is to recognize God's presence. Jacob wrestled with God, at first not knowing who he was, but eventually realizing he had seen God face to face (Genesis 32:30). This encounter changed Jacob forever — leaving him with a limp, but more importantly with a faith that never turned back. After seeing God, like Jacob, we will never be the same.

Even though we may intellectually know God is always with us, we need to pay attention to see him and be aware of his presence. Signs of his love are all around, but we need to connect them to him. It may be as simple as noticing the wisdom we have when we ask for it. Or the inexplicable comfort we receive when we cry out. Or the unexpected phone call after we pray.

Connecting those gifts with God's presence in our life can transform our suffering. Both Mary Magdalene at the tomb and the disciples on the road to Emmaus were dejected and discouraged until they recognized Jesus, and then they were filled with joy and peace. So it is with us. Knowing that God is with us, not just intellectually but experientially, can radically alter how we feel in our suffering.

When we turn to God, he

opens our eyes and shows us hidden treasures of darkness that we might know him (Isaiah 45:3). But since our vision is limited in the dark, we need to be purposeful about where we focus. If we view life through the lens of pain and discouragement, we will focus on all that is wrong and difficult. We will see our problems more than God's provision. We will see our loneliness more than God's presence.

What lens are you viewing your life through? Are you asking God for supernatural sight as you focus on him? Are you looking at the obstacles in front of you, or are you beholding the God who can move mountains? Are you trusting in your ability to fix the situation, or are you entrusting yourself to the God who commands the dawn?

If we put God's steadfast love before our eyes (Psalm 26:3), then we will see his presence, protection, and provision more than we see our problems. He will delight us with Scripture even in our deepest affliction. We will rest in his protection, knowing he goes before us and will fight for us. We will see his marvelous provision, sending manna from heaven and water from a rock. We will know that he is with us, as our spiritual eyes will see our Teacher (Isaiah 30:20).

And as we walk by faith and not by sight, relying on what we know to be true rather than what we see, we will not be disappointed. "For we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal"



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Bethel Baptist Church
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Pastor Dr. Hershell Garner
(409 782 5352)
Opportunities for Worship and Fellowship
Sunday School...9:30am Worship 10 :30 am

Starlight Church of God in Christ
2800 Bob Hall Road • Orange • 886-4366
Pastor: Ernest B Lindsey
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study - 6 p.m. Worship 7:30 p.m. VIM Youth 6 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer Daily 9:00 a.m.
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Triangle Baptist Church
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Sunday Evening Service 6 p.m.
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Dr. Rev. Samuel Karunanithi - Pastor
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www.fbcbc.org
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Sunday worship: 10:30 a.m.,
Adult, Youth, Children
Discipleship Classes, Sun. 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday Schedule 6:30 p.m.
Prayer Meeting
Youth & Children's Activities
Pastor: Keith Royal



Winfree Baptist Church
19525 Hwy 62 S • 409-735-7181
office@winfreebaptist.org
Dr. Larry Haynes, Interim Pastor
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Morning Worship - 10:30 am
Wednesday:
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Jeremiah 29:11-13
"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

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