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SPORTS



Football
Longhorns blasted by Mustangs
Page 4



Water Polo
Lady Falcons cruise in bi-district win
Page 5

COMMUNITY



Needville benefit raises more than $5,000 for Jenkins brothers
Page 2



Ridin' n' ropin'
Page 9

CLASSIFIEDS
Pages 13-15

Today's Scripture

And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Luke 6:31

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FBC libraries continues 'Community Reads'

Six chances remain to read about "The King of Diamonds" during 2026 Community Reads

Fort Bend County Libraries' Community Reads initiative returned this fall, this time with a story about a mid-20th-century Texas jewel thief who eluded the FBI and police for more than a decade.

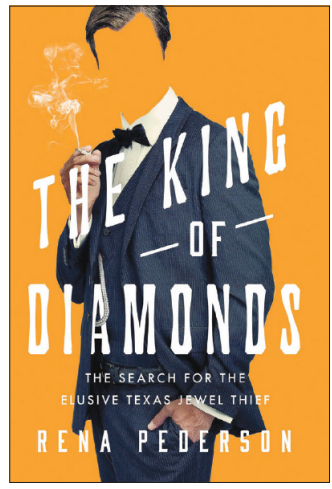
The press at that time dubbed the thief "the King of Diamonds," and in 2024 author Rena Perderson released a thrilling story about the brazen, uncatchable jewel thief who roamed the homes of Dallas high society, which also gave readers a look through the window into the dark secrets lurking beneath the surface of the Swinging Sixties.

"I could make a good case that he was one of the most successful jewel thieves in the country. He stole the equivalent of $6 million in jewels

SEE **LIBRARIES**, PAGE 6



RENA PERDERSON





Betty and Ronnie still offer service with a smile.

Jaime's Dairy Treat: Still get service with a smile

BY SCOTT REESE WILLEY
swilley@texaslocalmedia.com

It's 3:30 p.m. on a hot Friday afternoon and Betty is filling a fountain drink for a customer at Jaime's Dairy Treat in Richmond.

Betty is 93, but it doesn't prevent her from lending a hand at the roadside hamburger stand she and husband Mike bought in 1979 when she was only 40.

The restaurant is located on US 90 in Richmond — Jackson Street to locals — and its charming red and white striped awning is hard to miss.

The building has been around since the 60s when carhops on roller skates were the in-thing. But the restaurant had been abandoned for some time in the 70s when Betty and husband Mike Veja

SEE **TREAT**, PAGE 6



Jaime's Dairy Treat in Richmond has been whipping up tasty malts, shakes, burgers and fries for almost 50 years.

Know your Fort Bend Mental Health

Fort Bend Mental Health is offering to the public a series on suicide and mental health awareness. This is Part Four and the final article in this series.

BY DANA WILLIAMS CYNTHIA KLOPSTECK

Mission: "To empower Fort Bend County neighbors to care for one another's mental wellbeing."

Vision: A Fort Bend County with fewer bad mental health days and fewer suicides because:

- Neighbors can easily find needed resources
- Neighbors talk about mental health openly and thoughtfully
- Neighbors know how to care for each other
- Neighbors work together to ensure no one faces their hard days alone

Strategy: Fort Bend County will see fewer bad mental health days and fewer suicides by:

- EDUCATING people about mental wellness
- CONNECTING people to care for one another
- PROMOTING awareness and systems so that everyone has support when they need it

Fort Bend Mental

SEE **HEALTH**, PAGE 11

OLD 300 EST FULSHEAR 1824

Fulshear, North Fort Bend Water Authority reach water supply agreement

Over the past several years, the city of Fulshear and the North Fort Bend Water Authority have been involved in a rate dispute.

The city and the Authority have reached an agreement that secures a long-term surface water supply commitment to help meet the needs of Fulshear's growing community, as

SEE **FULSHEAR**, PAGE 11



Wharton County Junior College Instructor of Geology Peter Anderson was recently awarded the "Stars in Our Parks" award.

WCJC geology instructor recognized by state park service

For the past several years, Wharton County Junior College Instructor of Geology Peter Anderson has worked alongside the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Inks Lake State Park and Enchanted Rock State Natural Area to develop volunteer activities and programs. TPWD recently recognized Anderson for his efforts with a "Stars in Our Parks" award, an honor reserved for individuals who support the state's parks through volunteerism, educational programs and visitor engagement.

Kayaking Inks Lake and trekking through Enchanted Rock's summit trail to learn and understand the geology of each place are just two of the activities Anderson has organized. He has also aided in the annual astronomy park event at Enchanted Rock, and is on schedule this December to speak on lunar geology. Anderson has worked closely with two TPWD rangers in particular: Andrew Berezin and Hannah Pickens.

Berezin recommended Anderson for the "Stars in Our Parks" award, noting that the WCJC instructor is "an outstanding volunteer" who has provided invaluable service to the state parks system. ■

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LIBRARIES FROM PG. 1

today. And he endured for so many years. I mean, he had a longer career than the Beatles," said Pederson in a 2024 interview with Texas Standard following the release of her book, The King of Diamonds: The Search for the Elusive Texas Jewel Thief.

"He preyed on this very small area of Dallas, mostly the suburb of Highland Park in the area known as Preston Hollow. There's never been another American jewel thief who worked such a compressed area for so long and was never caught."

The King of Diamonds is the chosen book for the library system's 2026 Community Reads initiative.

For those unfamiliar with the initiative, think of Community Reads as a free and open county-wide book club.

Indicative of Fort Bend County Libraries' advocacy for literacy, this initiative is a reading program that encourages entire communities to read and discuss a chosen book together, from September through November, with locations in the library system hosting book discussions at varying dates and times in an effort to accommodate people's schedules.

With the September discussions complete, the public has six more chances to participate in Community Reads – and learn about this infamous jewel thief—at the following branch book clubs: In October:

Cinco Ranch Branch Library's Literary Lunch League on Oct. 7 from noon – 1 p.m. (2620 Commercial Center Boulevard in Katy); Sugar Land Branch Library's Sugar Land Book Break on Oct. 8 from 1-2 p.m. (550 Eldridge Road); Mission Bend Branch Library's Mission Bend Book Club on Oct. 14 from 7 – 8 p.m. (8421 Addicks Clodine Road in Houston); University Branch Library's University Branch Book Club on Oct. 14 from 6 -7 p.m. (14010 University

Boulevard in Sugar Land); and the Sienna Branch Library's Booked On Crime Mystery Book Club on Oct. 26 from 3 – 4 p.m. (8411 Sienna Springs Blvd in Missouri City). In November:

Fulshear Branch Library's Mysterious Readers Book Club on Nov. 13 from 11 a.m. – noon (6350 GM Library Rd)

The King of Diamonds: The Search for the Elusive Texas Jewel Thief is available at the libraries in print and digitally as an ebook and e-audiobook on OverDrive/Libby and as an e-audiobook on hoopla. Readers are encouraged to call the libraries to check the availability of additional print copies for the book clubs.

MEET THE AUTHOR, AND MORE, AT THE UPCOMING BOOK FEST

Community Reads will segue into FBCL's annual Book Fest, which, among other activities, will feature the author of the chosen Community Reads work, this year being Rena Pederson.

Pederson is an award-winning journalist, accomplished TED speaker, and author of five books. During her career, she has interviewed newsmakers ranging from Margaret Thatcher to Fidel Castro and Jane Goodall, as well as five US Presidents.

She served on the Pulitzer Prize Board for nine years. As Vice President and Editorial Page Editor at The Dallas Morning News, she received national recognition. During that time, Texas Monthly described Pederson as one of the most powerful women in Texas.

Pederson also served as a Senior Speechwriter and Advisor for Strategic Communications at the U.S. Department of State. Her first book, What's Next?, was featured on the Oprah Winfrey television show, and her book, The Burma Spring, was featured in the Los Angeles Book Festival and the Texas Book Festival.

At the Book Fest, Pederson will describe in colorful detail her search for the jewel thief who stole millions in jewels from the wealthiest people in Dallas but was never caught — and the jewels were never recovered.

Pederson interviewed more than 200 people for her search, from debutantes to oilmen to retired policemen. After six years of pursuit, she said she cracked the case and figured out the identity of the mysterious jewel thief, although she hasn't publicly confirmed the thief's identity.

This year's Fort Bend County Libraries' Book Fest will take place on Nov. 14 at the George Memorial Library in Richmond. For more information, visit the Fort Bend County Libraries website at fortbendlibraries.gov. ■



Betty Veja helps customer Melisa Morin with her order. "They are the nicest people," Morin said.

TREAT FROM PG. 1

bought it.

They slapped new paint on it, put some picnic tables beneath the huge awning and added more items to the menu.

It's been a local legend ever since.

"We get a lot of return customers," said Betty's son, Ronnie, who runs the business these days. "We see a lot of the same faces every week."

Jamie's Dairy Treat makes a mouth-watering cheeseburger, visitors say.

And the onion rings are to die for.

But it's the friendly attitude of the staff that captures customers' attention.

"They are the nicest people," said Melisa Morin, who stopped by to pick up a to-go order. "Every time I come here, they tell me how thankful they are for my business and tell me they hope I come back. 'Come back and visit us,' they say. And I can tell they really mean it. They're not just saying it because they have to."

Betty's real name is Petra Veja, but everyone just calls her Betty.

She's been called Betty since her school days because her teacher thought Petra was too hard to pronounce, she recalls with a chuckle.

Her parents moved to Richmond from Mexico. Betty was born in Richmond and never left.

She and Mike named the restaurant after their youngest son, Jaime.

Besides Ronnie and Jaime, Betty has a daughter, Gina.

Betty said she and Mike decided to buy the abandoned property because they figured they could make a good living at it.

"I liked to cook and everyone was always telling me how good my food is, and Mike worked at a restaurant, so we figured why not give it a try," she recalled.

Betty and Mike found they could make a living selling burgers, fries, shakes and malts.

"Everyone liked our food," she said.

They added more items to their menu to increase business.

While the burger, fries and drink combo remains their best seller, Jaime's Dairy Treat also serves up some tasty tacos, enchiladas and even seafood.

"People love our shrimp and fish," Betty said. "The really like our homemade shakes and malts."

Many of their menu items are homemade, she said.

Betty is deeply religious and attributes her success to the Lord above.

Although Ronnie runs the place these days, Betty still shows up daily to help out — even if she has to walk the seven blocks from her home in historic downtown Richmond.

"Sometimes Ronnie gets so busy he forgets to come get me, but it's OK cause I can walk," she said, adding that many times a neighbor or friend will spot her walking and give her a ride.

When she was younger, she would ride a bike to work, she recalled.

On most days, Betty can be spotted at Jaime's Dairy Treat cutting up lettuce, slicing onions and tomatoes, filling drinks, taking orders or even helping clean up.

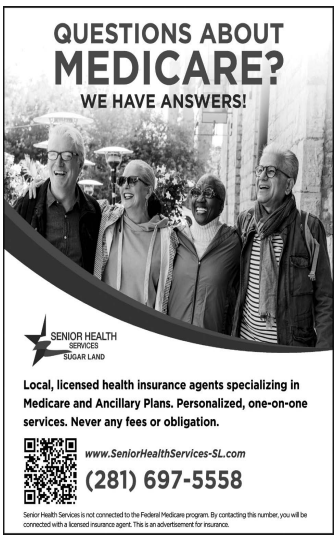
She'll even head outside to pick up trash, clean the picnic benches and water the plants.

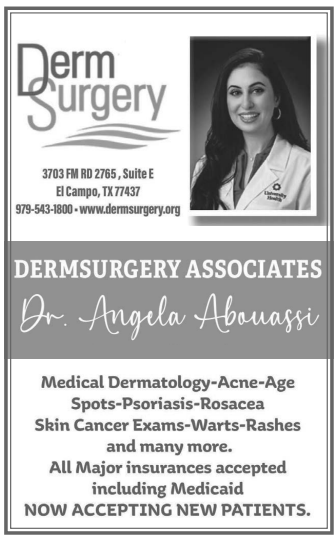
"When it is your business, you really want to take care of it, you want to do whatever you can to make it successful," she explained.

Ronnie said Jaime's Dairy Treat's food is good and affordable, which brings customers back time and again.

To All Interested Persons And Parties:

Amrize South Central Inc., has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for an Air Quality Standard Permit, Registration No. 185370L001, which would authorize construction of three temporary concrete batch plants located using the following driving directions: from the intersection of US Highway 69 and Farm-to-Market 762 Road, travel east on Farm-to-Market 762 Road for approximately 10.8 miles to find the site entrance on the right, Richmond, Fort Bend County, Texas 77469. This application is being processed in an expedited manner, as allowed by the commission's rules in 30 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Subchapter J. Additional information concerning this application is contained in the public notice section of this newspaper.











Fort Bend County Water Control Improvement District No. 8
Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The **Fort Bend County Water Control Improvement District No. 8** will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2026 on **October 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** at 1836 FM 359, Richmond, TX 77406. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Julio Acosta, Matthew Lee Jeter & James Laube
AGAINST the proposal: None
PRESENT and not voting: None
ABSENT: Brett Kasuls & Garrett Speed

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

	2025 Last Year		2026 This Year
Total tax rate (per $100 of value)	$0.90/$100 Adopted		$0.90/$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per $100 of value		$0.00/$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.00%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	$ 813,598		$ 761,101
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	$ -		$ -
Average residence homestead taxable value	$ 813,598		$ 761,101
Tax on average residence homestead	$ 7,322.38		$ 6,849.91
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		($472.47) -6.45%	

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted tax rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearing of each entity that taxes your property.

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

Utility Tax Service, LLC
(877) 688-3855

TREAT FROM PG. 6

"We can't be like the big fast-food chains and charge $13-$14 for a burger, fries and soft drink. If we do that, our customers would stop coming," said Ronnie, 66. "We have to make it affordable for them to eat here."

Ronnie helped Betty and Mike when they first opened Jaime's Dairy Treat in 1979. But after a few years, he left to make his own way in the world. He came back about five years ago to help Mike and Betty, who were in their late eighties and early nineties.

Mike passed several years ago, and about two years ago Betty stopped working full-time.

Ronnie said he arrives about an hour before the 10 a.m. opening each day and doesn't leave until about an hour after it closes at 8 p.m.

Betty and Ronnie have other employees who do most of the cooking.

"They work very hard," she said. "We couldn't do it without them."

After 47 years in business, Betty understands she has built a following.

"A lot of people come up to the window and want to talk to me, or they say 'do you remember me?' or tell me how much they like our food," she said. "They tell me they have been coming here since they were children. But I have to work. I can't take time out to talk to everyone or I would never get my work done. Everyone wants to say hi and talk but I have tomatoes to slice and lettuce to cut up."

She figures Jaime's Dairy Treat still has several more generations of people to feed.

And another decade or two of putting smiles on people's faces. ■

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WATER DISTRICT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The WEST HARRIS COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT #4 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2026 on October 26, 2026, at 5:00 P.M. at 303 Bridge Crest Blvd., Houston, Texas (Gate Code 032). Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

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

FOR the proposal: Mary Gomez, Hannah Affram, Anthony Rodriguez, Michael Cummings, Jack Patel
AGAINST the proposal: None
PRESENT and not voting: None
ABSENT: None

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

	Last Year		This Year
Total tax rate (per $100 of value)	$ 0.74400/$100 Adopted		$ 0.73400/$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per $100 of value		$ -0.01000/$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		-1.34%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	$ 309,709		$ 324,610
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	$ 61,942		$ 64,922
Average residence homestead taxable value	$ 247,767		$ 259,688
Tax on average residence homestead	$ 1,843.38		$ 1,906.10
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		$ 62.72 3.40%	

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted tax rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

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

WATER DISTRICT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The FORT BEND COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT #94 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2026 on October 29, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at The Rosenberg Civic Center, 3825 Highway 36 South, Rosenberg, TX 77471. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

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

FOR the proposal: Cleo Holguin, JoAnn Hartfiel, Ken Bartling and Fred Maynard
AGAINST the proposal: None
PRESENT and not voting: None
ABSENT: Sean Gutierrez

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

	Last Year		This Year
Total tax rate (per $100 of value)	$ 0.27000/$100 Adopted		$ 0.27000/$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per $100 of value		$ 0.00000/$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		.00%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	$ 275,018		$ 266,445
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	$ 0		$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	$ 275,018		$ 266,445
Tax on average residence homestead	$ 742.54		$ 719.40
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		$ -23.14 -3.11%	

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted tax rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

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