



# South Belt Ellington Leader

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www.southbeltleader.com

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Voice of Community-Minded People

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## Heavy trash pickup

Heavy trash pickup for city of Houston residents north of the beltway will be Thursday, Jan. 19. For those living south of the beltway, pickup is Thursday, Jan. 26.

## Kirkwood South meets

The Kirkwood South Committee has rescheduled its Thursday, Jan. 26, meeting to Jan. 25 due to a scheduling error. The meeting will be at the Sagemeadow MUD Building at 7:30 p.m.

## Lariaettes meet Jan. 12

The Dobbie Lariaette booster club will meet Thursday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. in the media room.

## Museum AARP topic

Malcolm Browne, chairman of the Veteran's Museum of Texas, will be guest speaker at the South Belt AARP meeting Friday, Jan. 13.

Everyone is invited. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. at Kirkwood South Christian Church, 10811 Kirkfair.

## BHI dance group gathers

Beverly Hills Intermediate's eighth-grade dance committee will meet Thursday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m. in the Kirkmont MUD building. All parents of eighth-graders are invited to attend.

For more information, call Jennifer Chavez at 281-484-1938 or 832-722-1610.

## PW Library events set

The following events are scheduled for the Parker Williams Library: The library will be closed Jan. 16 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Movie madness is Thursday, Jan. 19, at 4 p.m. A game day will be Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 4 p.m. A storytime for preschoolers is every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. Toddler time is every Thursday at 10 and 11:15 a.m.

## Cowboys meet Jan. 17

The next meeting of the Sagemont Cowboys Board of Directors will be Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m. at the Kirkmont MUD building. The public is invited to attend.

## Softball now registering

The South Belt Girls Softball Association is holding its spring 2006 softball registration. Girls between the ages of 4 and 14 as of Jan. 1 are eligible. A birth certificate is required.

Registration will be Jan. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m., Jan. 19 from 6 to 9 p.m. and Jan. 14 and 21 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The fee is \$70. Multiple players from a family get a discount. The fee includes a shirt, shorts, hat and insurance.

For information, call Kevin Waters at 281-481-5267, Ruben Garcia at 281-485-0287 or Kim Villareal at 281-481-6033, or visit the Web site [www.eteamz.com/southbeltgirls/](http://www.eteamz.com/southbeltgirls/).

## Cookoff date set

The 10th annual South Belt Cookoff will be April 20 through April 22. To receive more information or to request a cooker's packet, call Shelley Arnone at 281-756-0566 or Linda Arnone at 281-484-4325.

## Thompson events set

The Thompson Intermediate eighth-grade dance committee will meet Monday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. in the school cafeteria. For information, contact Julie Kutra at [jkutra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jkutra@sbcglobal.net).

The dance committee will host a golf tournament fund-raiser Feb. 11 at Magnolia Creek Golf Course. The format is a four-man scramble with an 8 a.m. shotgun start. Fees are \$75 per person and include green fee, cart, range balls and lunch. Hole sponsors are \$100. For information, call Kevin McDonald, 713-530-4063 or e-mail [golf2006@sbcglobal.net](mailto:golf2006@sbcglobal.net).

## LSA hosting preview

Lutheran South Academy, located off Dixie Farm Road and Interstate-45, will host Preview LSA Jan. 22. The program begins at 2 p.m. in Building B, with a presentation by the headmaster. Those attending will be able to tour the campus, meet the staff and learn more about the school. For information, call Alice Rosenhagen at 281-464-8299.

## KC holds blood drive

The Knights of Columbus will hold its first blood drive of 2006 at the St. Luke's Catholic Church social hall, Sunday, Jan. 22, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For more information, contact John Urdiales at 713-991-1425.

## CCISD meets on TAKS

Clear Creek Independent School District parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss changes in the mathematics TAKS test.

A meeting will be held at Clear Brook High School on Jan. 18 at 2:45 p.m. For more information, call CCISD secondary mathematics coordinator Joyce Collett at 281-284-0092.

## Dolphins set barbecue

The Southbelt Dolphins football league will hold a barbecue fund-raiser Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the former Randalls parking lot on Fuqua at Sabo.

## New park and ride named

According to METRO, some arrival and departure locations for the Fuqua and Monroe Park & Rides have changed locations as an experimental service. The new location, beginning Jan. 22, is Grace Community Church, 14505 Gulf Freeway. For more information, refer to the Web site, [www.ridemetro.org/services/changes/svcchs.asp](http://www.ridemetro.org/services/changes/svcchs.asp).

## Rep. DeLay resigns post as majority leader

By Marie Flickinger

There may be one silver lining in the problems that plague U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay these past few months.

With his recent resignation as majority leader, DeLay will be able to focus more of his time and attention on the 22nd District.

It was impossible to watch any national news program last weekend and not hear a story about the resignation of the local congressman.

If one were to listen to all the political pundits, it would be difficult to imagine that the resignation would affect the local area at all. All discussions centered around the national impact.

Yet, while the local communities have lost the highest political influence it has ever had, DeLay is still without question a very powerful individual.

DeLay believes his voluntary resignation from the position of majority leader has bought him a considerable amount of capital in Washington which may help him in representing his constituents.

According to DeLay, even though he won't be majority leader, he still has enough seniority and prestige to be in the room when decisions are being made.

In an interview with the *South Belt-Ellington Leader*, DeLay talked about his district priorities for the upcoming year.

DeLay says he will be serving on the presti-

gious appropriations committee which will help him better serve his district.

DeLay says he is going to put emphasis on funding for NASA and the new NASA programs. Transportation will also be a major issue as will the 147th Fighter Interceptor Group stationed at Ellington Field.

One project DeLay was working on is the establishment of a Homeland Security regional office based at Ellington.

According to DeLay, this project is still up in the air as no decision has been made as to whether there will even be Homeland Security regional offices.

DeLay expressed extreme frustration over not getting the courts to let him go to trial on a speedy basis.

On Monday the court rejected DeLay's latest attempt at a speedy trial.

According to DeLay, he has spent \$2 million on his personal defense.

"If we can just get to court, I will win this. I have been indicted on accusations that were not even a crime when they occurred," said DeLay.

The South Belt, Pearland, Clear Lake and Pasadena communities were represented by one of the top figures in current U.S. politics.

DeLay faces many challenges in the upcoming year. The Texas indictment case which should go to court in the next few weeks; a contested May primary for his District 22 seat; scrutiny in the high profile case of Jack Abramoff, a former close associate of DeLay; and then, in November, the general election.

If DeLay is successful in the May primary where he faces three candidates, he will face a Democrat and Libertarians in the November general election.



Tom DeLay

## PISD, CCISD seek start date waiver

By Stephanie King

Both the Pasadena and Clear Creek independent school districts are seeking to begin the 2006-2007 school year at an earlier date.

For Pasadena, the first day of school is scheduled for Aug. 10. Either Aug. 10 or 14 is the date sought by CCISD.

According to the guidelines of the Texas Education Agency, a waiver must be sought if a school district desires to begin classes before Aug. 21.

In order to give community members and parents the chance to voice their concerns and opinions about the issue, both districts have

scheduled opportunities for discussion.

Pasadena officials will hold open forums at J. Frank Dobbie High School at 6:30 p.m. on both Jan. 12 and 23.

Clear Creek officials have scheduled a public hearing at the board of trustees meeting on Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at

CCISD's Education Support Center, 2425 East Main Street.

According to Jerry Dennis, PISD associate superintendent of human resources, if the Aug. 10 start date is approved for PISD, the schools would be able to finish the final exams of the first semester before the holiday break.

"This start date enables the best structure for learning and teaching," said Dennis.

Dennis also said this date would allow the best scheduling of the district's Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills testing.

Karen Permetti, director of CCISD's office of public information said for CCISD the start date change enables many goals to be realized.

She said it enables all staff development days and holiday breaks to be met, students to be out by Memorial Day, thus permitting the best schedule for graduating seniors and, like PISD, the fall semester to end before the winter break.

"Instructionally, this calendar is the best for our students," said Permetti. She said CCISD's TAKS testing is more affected by how spring break is scheduled for the district.

In 1991, the Texas Legislature repealed the law requiring that schools begin the year during the week of Sept. 1.

It has been the trend across the state for schools to start the year earlier and earlier. PISD has followed the trend, starting school Aug. 18 for the 2003-04 school year, Aug. 16 for 2004-05 and Aug. 11 for 2005-06.

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## Dobbie students named AP, Merit Scholars

Several Dobbie High School students were recognized by the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) with various academic awards during the 2005-2006 school year.

Jean Liew was honored as a National Merit Semifinalist. Semifinalists are the highest scoring entrants in each state and represent less than 1 percent of high school seniors nationwide. Semifinalists have the opportunity to compete for 8,200 scholarships worth more than \$33 mil-

lion.

Christine Tran of Dobbie received the National Merit Commended Scholar award. Commended students are recognized for their outstanding academic promise, and more than two-thirds of the approximately 50,000 high scorers on the PSAT/NMSQT receive letters of commendation.

Rustam Abedinzadeh of Dobbie was recognized as an AP Scholar with Honor. This award is achieved by students who receive an average

grade of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and grades of three or higher on four or more AP exams.

Dobbie's Quyen Tran, Grace Kim, and Eric Green received the AP Scholar with Distinction award. Students qualify for this award by receiving an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and grades of three or higher on five or more AP exams.

Dobbie also boasted several Advanced Placement Scholars. Chantal Pham, Emeka Nnabuife, Chau Luu, Megan Eitelbach and Henry Dao received grades of three or higher on three or more AP exams.

"The success these students experienced this year in these advanced programs shows the level of achievement our students can attain when parents and teachers hold high expectations for academic success," said PISD's acting superintendent Kirk Lewis. "It is a tribute to their hard work and the excellent teaching taking place in our classrooms."

## Pit bulls attack, kill pets

The morning of Sunday, Jan. 8, Pam Mears found two pit bull dogs attacking her calico cat, Patches, outside her home on Sagemeadow.

In a letter (see letter Page 2A), she told the *Leader* staff that one of the dogs tossed Patches into the air. Her husband chased the dogs away. Around 10 a.m. the next day, Patches died from her wounds.

The Houston Police Department was called, and an injury by animal report was filed. Since the dogs were not found by officers, the owners could not be located, but according to Mears, the responding officer "thought he knew where the dogs were" and would see if he could find them

or the owner.

Later that afternoon, another cat and a chihuahua dog, were attacked and killed by two pit bulls on Sagemeadow in Sagemeadow. Witnesses reported seeing the dogs attack and kill first the cat and then the dog.

Sgt. Zerick Guinn of the Harris County Sheriff's Department responded to a call made by the owner of the chihuahua. The brown and white male pit bull was found in a ditch near the scene. Harris County Animal Control officers captured the animal and took it to the county facilities. Since the dog was wearing tags, the

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## BSTF transfers land easement to be permanently preserved

Papers have now been signed officially completing plans for a 144-acre easement tract to become part of the conservation project mitigation plan for the Brio Superfund Task Force. The action was mandated by the consent decree placed upon the BSTF trustees. Despite the fact this was mandated, it's a positive preservation project, said Legacy Land Trust Chairman Bill Turner. "This permanent land preservation agreement between our organization and BSTF, ensures this property will forever remain in its natural state. Any portion of Clear Creek which can be preserved is a great, green step forward."

Before the agreement could be signed, LLT performed a thorough flora and fauna baseline inventory of the property. Done in May of 2005, the property was found to be host to 29 different tree species, 12 shrub species, 78 different flowering plant species, 25 different bird species and numerous other animals including reptiles and amphibians. Of special note were numerous "ladies-tresses" orchids, (*spiranthes vernalis*) which is a rare orchid species.

Besides maintaining the habitat for these animal and plant species, the property will also be managed for invasives. "Keeping down the numbers of Chinese tallow trees and deep-root-

ed sedge is an important aspect of this agreement," said LLT Executive Director Jennifer Lorenz. "If invasives are allowed to expand, they will take over the native plants and give them no room. Just leaving a property alone is not enough due to invasive plant and animal species. A property has to be managed to maintain its conservation values." While there were cows grazing on the property before, because the property is mostly sensitive forested wetlands, the cattle had to be taken off the property.

The property has a created wetland which will be planted with native wetland tree and plant species next year. It should become habitat for wood ducks. One resident alligator has found a home there already.

The property is located on the south side of Dixie Farm Road, near the Brio South and DOP south superfund sites and Mud Gully.

The conservation easement, a permanent legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust, will preserve the tract. Conservation easements are in perpetuity set aside for preservation. LLT holds 21 conservation easements protecting more than 4,000 acres in the Houston area. For more information on LLT, visit [www.llt.org](http://www.llt.org) or call at 713-524-2100.

## McCarty celebrates 108th



South Belt resident Tammy Burback (right) recently attended the birthday party of her great-grandmother, Gertrude McCarty (left). McCarty, born Jan. 4, 1898, in Capron, Okla., recently celebrated her 108th birthday with her family and friends. She and her late husband of 57 years, John L. McCarty, raised two children Dennis and Catherine. McCarty lives in Pasadena and enjoys visits from her children, her 16 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren and other family and friends. To commemorate her 108th birthday, Houston Mayor Bill White declared Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2006, to be Gertrude McCarty Day. Burback lives in Riverstone Ranch, and teaches at Golden Acres Elementary.

## BSTF signs preserve to LLT



On Friday, 144 acres of property south of Dixie Farm Road near the south side of the Brio Superfund Site was transferred as a Clear Creek Preserve conservation easement. The land is not open for public visitation and is designed to be preserved for natural habitat. The BSTF retains ownership while Legacy Land Trust holds the acreage as an easement. Present at the signing were, from left to right, site manager of Brio John Danna; LLT board member Cliff Meinhardt; Brio former site manager Larry Engle; LLT chairman Bill Turner; LLT board member Tom Roche; publisher and owner of the *South Belt-Ellington Leader* newspaper and chair of the Brio Community Assistance Group Marie Flickinger; and BSTF attorney Brad Raffle. The transaction has been approximately 10 years in the making and is the settlement of a legal agreement between the state of Texas and the BSTF. BSTF was required to donate the land which is near the superfund site but does not include any of the designated superfund project.

Photo by Jennifer Lorenz of Legacy