

**OUR VIEW:** Police unlikely to find better pension deal in Austin » **A4**

G A L V E S T O N  C O U N T Y

# The Daily News.

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**COMING THURSDAY:** Helping aging parents comes with emotional and financial challenges. On Thanksgiving Day, The Daily News explores those issues.



**GOVERNMENT | TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

## Robin Hood, school prayer on minds of lawmakers

By **JOHN WAYNE FERGUSON**  
The Daily News

» **TEXAS CITY**

When the Texas Legislature begins its next session in January, many of the top issues on the state's agenda will have direct connections to people and events in Galveston County. Hurricane Harvey. The May 18 Santa Fe High School shooting. School finance reform. The issues that dominated the two years since the legislature last met will be among the top priorities during the

five-month legislative session, state Sen. Larry Taylor, of Friendswood, said during a luncheon held Monday by the Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce. "This interim has been by far my busiest and most difficult," Taylor said. Taylor is the chairman of the Texas Senate Education Committee, and a member of the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, which has met for months to discuss ways the

See **LAWMAKERS » A3**



**JENNIFER REYNOLDS/**  
The Daily News  
Kevin Murphy, left, laughs with U.S. Rep. Randy Weber, center, and newly elected state Rep. Mayes Middleton before the Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce's annual Legislative Luncheon at the Doyle Convention Center in Texas City on Monday.

**EDUCATION | SCIENCE**

## Synthetic cadaver breathes life into Ball High classes

By **JOHN WAYNE FERGUSON**  
The Daily News

» **GALVESTON**

Lucy lies enclosed in a steel box, soaking in water until the students are ready for her. When they're in the room, she ascends. Her face is flayed, her bones and muscles visible, her organs covered by just a thin flap of skin. It's a gruesome sight, which feels a only a little less creepy when you learn Lucy is made mostly of a substance derived from algae. "She's pretty anatomically correct," said Michelle Puig, a human body systems teacher at Ball High School. Lucy is a synthetic cadaver that has realistic bones and joints, muscles and organs. A few things are missing, like a gland and a brain. Lucy represents a kind of in-between medical teaching tool — a realistic "body" that doesn't bleed or need special preservation methods.

See **CLASS » A3**



**KELSEY WALLING/**  
The Daily News  
**ABOVE:** Sumedha Kota is surprised to discover how far her fingers can reach in the throat of Lucy, a realistic synthetic cadaver, as her classmates Alexandra Tan and John Brown look on at Ball High. **LEFT:** Michelle Puig jokes while students and teachers explore Lucy.

**GOVERNMENT | DEBRIS CLEANUP**

## County seeks partner in Houston on Clear Creek

By **KERI HEATH**  
The Daily News

» **GALVESTON**

Galveston County Commissioners might have found a way to remove plant and tree debris from the Galveston County and Harris County sides of Clear Creek through a city of Houston project. At their regular meeting Monday, commissioners discussed a proposal to partner on a project funded mostly with federal money allocated to the city of Houston to improve drainage along

the Harris County part of Clear Creek. The court recently balked at a plan from Precinct 4 Commissioner Ken Clark to use local money to clear Galveston County's side of the creek. Commissioners were uncertain about what the project would cost and whether clearing one side of the creek would do enough good to justify the expense. Despite those concerns, the court voted unanimously Monday to seek cost estimates for

See **CLEAR CREEK » A5**

**INSIDE**

**SPORTS PLUS:**  
Ball High's Bebe Galloway has monster game in win over Hitchcock. **ALSO:** Fast start helps Hitchcock boys top Brazosport » **B1**



**FINE ART | BRYAN MUSEUM**

## Rare painting exhibit features evidence of art heist

By **BARBARA CANETTI**  
Correspondent

» **GALVESTON**

A series of paintings by American artist Maxfield Parrish went on display this month at The Bryan Museum in an exhibit including four large, colorful paintings, three smaller companion pieces and the tattered remnants of two paintings stolen in 2001 and never recovered. Prominent art patron and socialite Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1914 commissioned the entire set of paint-

ings to hang in her Long Island, N.Y., studio's reception room. Whitney was an artist and collector and later created the Whitney Museum of American Art in Manhattan to house her collection. Retired oilman and historic preservationist J.P. Bryan in the 1990s acquired the murals on display at The Bryan Museum, which he founded. The paintings were on loan when the July 2001 heist occurred in a West Hollywood, California, gallery. Thieves

See **EXHIBIT » A8**



**JENNIFER REYNOLDS/**The Daily News  
Jordan Price, director of marketing and membership at The Bryan Museum in Galveston, talks Monday about three long, narrow Maxfield Parrish paintings that are part of a new exhibit at the museum.

**NOTE TO READERS**

The Daily News will close its offices at noon Wednesday for the Thanksgiving Holiday and reopen on Friday. Circulation calls for missed deliveries on Thanksgiving Day will be answered from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Please call 409-683-5260 for assistance. Thursday's edition will be the largest paper of the year. We'll deliver the paper to about 53,000 homes in Galveston County.



Galveston County | In Brief

COURT

Charge added against woman in ‘Little Jacob’ case

» GALVESTON

A woman arrested in June in connection with the death of a 4-year-old boy whose body was found on a Galveston beach was indicted last week and accused of causing the boy serious bodily injury.

Dania Sarai Amezcuita Gomez, 32, of Houston, was charged with serious bodily injury to a child Nov. 15. The indictment against Amezcuita Gomez states she intentionally or knowingly failed to seek medical care for Jayden Lopez.

Lopez died in October 2017. His body was found on a seawall beach by passersby on a Friday evening. Lopez was not identified for months and was dubbed “Little Jacob” by police investigating his death.

Amezcuita Gomez and Rebecca Suzanne Rivera were arrested in June in connection to Lopez’s death. A tipster alerted authorities to the couple after noticing that Lopez had not been seen for a long time, police said.

Rivera, 34, of Houston, was

POLICE

Texas City man accused of slapping toddler

» LA MARQUE

A 26-year-old man was arrested Friday and accused of slapping a 15-month-old girl across the face, police said.

Anthony Campbell, 26, of Texas City, was charged with injury to a child with intent to cause bodily injury, according to the La Marque Police Department.

The charges stemmed from a Child Protective Services investigation that began Nov. 7 after someone at a Hitchcock fast food restaurant reported seeing a

small child with bruises on her face, according to a police complaint.

Police tracked the child and her mother to an RV park in La Marque, according to the complaint. They lived there in an RV along with Campbell, who the mother described as a coworker, according to the complaint.

Initially, the mother and Campbell told police a box had fallen on the girl when she was playing in her room alone, according to the complaint.

After a nurse examined the child and said the injuries were not consistent with that excuse, Campbell admitted to hitting the child, investigators allege in the complaint.

Campbell told police he hit the girl because she was playing with the electrical plug on a heater while he was playing video games, according to the complaint. He told investigators he had hit the child in the mouth at least one other time, police allege in the complaint.

Campbell was arrested Friday in La Marque, according to police records. He was held on \$25,000 bond, and was still in custody Monday afternoon at the Galveston County Jail, according to jail records.

— John Wayne Ferguson

Lawmakers

Continued » A1

state might reform education funding.

Taylor spent hundreds of hours in committee meetings about school finance issues, he said. A report on the proposed reforms is due to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott next month, Taylor said.

“We’ve come up with some very good consensus things,” Taylor said. “We have a large number of school districts, so we have a lot of challenges.”

The legislature will work to “refocus” Texas education initiatives on achieving better outcomes, Taylor said. He also would support a program that would pay good teachers



JENNIFER REYNOLDS/The Daily News  
State Sen. Larry Taylor, right, talks with Tom Munoz, emergency manager for Texas City, before the Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce’s annual Legislative Luncheon at the Doyle Convention Center in Texas City on Monday.

and administrators more to work at underperforming schools, he said.

State Rep. Greg Bonnen, of Friendswood, said the

state’s budget will be tested by several priorities considered top issues during the session. He said he believed legislators would

From the Front

find a way to send money to communities hit hard by Hurricane Harvey, either by tapping the state’s emergency economic development fund or using other means.

“There will be roughly a billion dollars for Harvey relief, much of which will go to education,” Bonnen said. Some school districts faced massive repair costs, and smaller enrollments after the storm, limiting their ability to pay for recovery, Bonnen said.

“We will be seeking to make them whole,” he said.

Both Bonnen and Taylor spoke about the Santa Fe shooting, but didn’t name any legislation they were considering supporting related to it in the coming session.

A Texas Senate commit-

tee formed after the shooting, which left 10 dead and another 14 injured, recommended the state increase funding for mental health resources in schools, to train more teachers and school staff to carry weapons in schools, and to install more forms of security, such as metal detectors, in school buildings.

Newly elected state Rep. Mayes Middleton, of Wallisville, said he would support proposals to do away with the current method of school finance, which requires that certain “property rich” districts send some property tax revenues to other, less affluent districts.

“We’ve got to get rid of Robin Hood,” Middleton said. “That’s just a socialist redistribution of wealth program. It was a bad idea

when it was passed and it’s a worse idea today.”

Middleton would also support more conservative legislation, including a state budget cap, a property tax cap and, possibly, an attempt to change rules about prayer in Texas schools, he said.

“We’ve got a new Supreme Court of the United States,” Middleton said. “We have conservative justices there that make up a majority. We need to test prayer in public schools again. We need to get prayer back in our public schools.”

The legislative session begins Jan. 8.

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Class

Continued » A1

Students at Ball High School are among a select group in the state with access to advanced learning tools such as Lucy, school officials said.

The pricey new tool pushes Galveston’s science program ahead of other Texas school districts, officials said.

“This is a 10-year dream come true,” Puig said. She has long wanted a better anatomic model for her students, going so far to research whether she could get a real cadaver for her classes.

“I didn’t even have a skeleton on a hook,” she said.

The high school bought Lucy for this school year, and about 120 students use her in their various classes, Puig said. Those include anatomy and biology, forensic sciences, even possibly art classes.

The school bought Lucy from SynDaver Labs, a Florida company that sells medical models and simulators. The company, and models like Lucy, rose to national attention in 2015



KELSEY WALLING/The Daily News  
Madalyn Moriarty, right, watches as Michelle Puig arranges the tendons, muscles and bones on the realistic synthetic cadaver’s shoulder at Ball High on Thursday. Moriarty and Puig’s students have been able to explore the cadaver during their Principles of Biomed and Human Body Systems classes.

when the company appeared on the ABC show “Shark Tank.”

The model costs about \$75,000, with a five-year, \$30,000 warranty. The hefty price tag was covered by grants from The Moody Permanent Endowment Fund, the Galveston Education Foundation and the Advisory Board for Ball High School’s biomedicine program.

For Ball High students, the model is a step up above the old plastic models or slides the school was

using in its anatomy classes, Puig said.

“Most of the time it’s just 2-D, like whatever is on a PowerPoint or a piece of paper,” Puig said.

Lucy’s liver weighs as much as human liver. Her throat is designed in a way that students can practice inserting a breathing tube. Her small intestines feel like a human’s small intestines would if you could reach into a person and grab them.

She can be sliced open and stitched up.

“This is a 10-year dream come true.”

Michelle Puig

“It’s a big change,” student Sumedha Kota said. “You hear about all these things, like problems with the liver or the heart, or you learn about the functions of it, but you never get to really see it full scale.”

For some students, there is a creep factor to get over, but most are more intrigued than terrified.

“I brought my freshman class in here, and they ranged from being scared of it to ‘When can we get our hands in it,’” said Madelyn Moriarty, who teaches Principles of Biomedicine.

There are some tricks when it comes to taking care of a fake body. The teachers sometimes need to change Lucy’s bath, because if she becomes dehydrated she’ll shrink from about 130 pounds to about 30 pounds, Puig said.

After the year is done, the school will send the cadaver back to Florida, where it will be repaired before the next school year.

Lucy is the only teaching tool of its kind in Galveston County. The next closest school district with such a tool is in Dallas, school officials said.

Ball High School asks students to choose a focus — such as biomedicine or media arts — early in their high school years. A student’s choice shapes the courses they take during high school.

With Lucy added to the classroom, school officials hope more students will be drawn to science programs, and more of them will be exposed to experiences students elsewhere might not get until college.

“It’s more than piquing

interest,” Ball High School Principal Joseph Pillar said. “It’s to assure that that’s the path that they want to go onto. We want kids to know exactly what they’re getting into.”

That’s what Ball High students say they’re getting out of it.

“The fact that they brought it in only increases the thought of maybe pursuing a career in medicine,” student John Brown said. “It’ll help a lot in the choice on where I want to go when I graduate.”

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THANKSGIVING DAY ADVERTISING DEADLINES

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, our offices will close at noon on Wednesday, November 21, 2018 and remain closed through Thursday, November 22, 2018. We will reopen for business on Friday, November 23, 2018 at 8 a.m.

RETAIL & CLASSIFIED DISPLAY

Publication Day

Wednesday, Nov. 21 (reg.)

Thursday, Nov. 22

Friday, Nov. 23

Saturday, Nov. 24

Sunday, Nov. 25

Monday, Nov. 26

Tuesday, Nov. 27 (reg.)

Space Deadline

Monday, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.

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Monday, Nov. 19, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 20, 10 a.m.

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Wednesday, Nov. 21, 10 a.m.

Friday, Nov. 23, 10 a.m.

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