

The Facts

COVERING BRAZORIA COUNTY ★ WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

\$2

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Rhyne first officer on revived Danbury force

Former deputy, Angleton mayor takes over as chief

By RAVEN WUEBKER
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DANBURY — Randy Rhyne, a longtime Brazoria County sheriff's deputy and former mayor of Angleton, has been sworn in as Danbury's new police chief. Rhyne's hiring revives what

had been a dormant department after Todd Burson left as chief in mid-January. The departure left Danbury without any paid police officers or a chief, forcing the small city to rely on the sheriff's office to police it.

Rhyne agreed to become chief last month and took his oath during Thursday's City Council meeting.

"I am excited; I will be one of the first police administrators that came in and started

from ground zero because I have no officers yet," Rhyne said. "It's just one of those things while I'm looking for knowledgeable officers that I can restructure the department and things as I see fit."

Council hired him because of his wealth of experience, Mayor



RHYNE

Melinda Strong said. Rhyne has worked for the sheriff's department, Angleton Police Department and district attorney's office.

"His experience put him over the top," Strong said. "He doesn't live very far from the city, so he would be available. We're glad to have someone come aboard."

There were about eight people

■ See RHYNE, Page 2A

Collard leaving Brazoria

Ex-city manager resigns 2 months after reassignment

By RAVEN WUEBKER
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BRAZORIA — Two months after City Council reassigned Mike Collard from city manager, he is reassigning himself out of Brazoria city government.

Council voted to shift Collard to engineering services director in early February, citing his expertise in that area and the value it would bring as Brazoria embarked on rebuilding its wastewater treatment plant and other major infrastructure projects. At the time, they also promoted longtime city secretary Sheila Williams to take over as city manager.

City leaders emphasized the change did not amount to a demotion but a reorganization to take advantage of employees' strengths.

Collard could not be reached Monday for comment. Council will take up his letter of resignation when it meets at 6 p.m. today at City Hall, 201 S. Main St.

"He gave us the letter that he was resigning and it will be presented to the council to see if it will be accepted or not,"

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DREAM NIGHT

After Covid hiatus, Night in the Spotlight prom returns for special needs students

By KENT HOLLE
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FREERPORT — The music was bumping and the dance floor was jumping as the Night in the Spotlight prom brought many of the county's special needs students under one roof in their finest finery.

Sponsors and volunteers put their best effort into making sure the students would have an evening to remember, and included all the trappings, for Saturday's event at Freeport Riverplace. There were gift bags, a buffet and a long desert table with fancy cakes, Fruity Pebbles-encrusted donuts and other sweets.

To escort the kids, members of multiple law enforcement agencies and first responders made an appearance, and in many cases, stuck around to party.

"This is one of the most enjoyable nights I've ever had in my career," said Kris Vierra, a member of the Freeport Fire and EMS since 2017. "This is the fun part of our job."

"I can shake and shimmy with some of the best of them," said Husain Jones, a 13-year veteran of the Freeport Police Department, wearing both a corsage and a wide grin across his face. "The moment I heard that they were having this, I said, 'Sign me up.'"

This year's event was organized by the dance's founder, Kay Millsap, who was in attendance, telling the volunteers where they were needed and letting the guests know



JESSE MILLER JR./The Facts

Proud grandfather Larry Blankenship and Rebecca wait for the limo at the First United Methodist Church of Freeport to go to A Night in the Spotlight prom.



JESSE MILLER JR./The Facts

Ryan and mom Chele Robinette enjoy the festivities Saturday at A Night in the Spotlight prom.

how dashing they looked. "I have great volunteers, and of course, all of the first responders have been wonderful," Millsap said. "I just really couldn't ask for a better group of people. These guys are here because they want to be."

They've also had to wait a while for what was intended

to be an annual event. "I haven't been able to do it for the last couple of years because of, you know, the COVID," Millsap said. "In 2021, we kind of thought we were going to be able to pull it off, but then we pulled the plug on it at the last minute, and it was better that we did."



JESSE MILLER JR./The Facts

Kim Regian fits daughter Baiye with her tiara for A Night in the Spotlight prom.

That time didn't go to waste, however, as she sought to make the second Night in the Spotlight even more special.

"I've had a lot more time to plan and get a little bit more organized," she said.

Chele Robinette, Millsap's

■ See NIGHT, Page 2A



JEREMY HILL/The Facts

Benjamin Correa inches under the limbo pole during the limbo competition Saturday during the 70th anniversary celebration of the Dairy Bar in Lake Jackson.

Dairy Bar celebrates 70 years

Restaurant as much about family as food

By AVERY WHITE
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Editor's note: This story first appeared at thefacts.com.

LAKE JACKSON — Dairy Bar has more than a restaurant in Lake Jackson. It has a place in Lake Jackson history.

Mayor Gerald Roznovsky presented a proclamation Saturday making April 9 officially Dairy Bar Day in the city. He made the presentation Saturday during the restaurant's 70th anniversary event at the Lake Jackson

■ See DAIRY, Page 2A

Trucker protest of Abbott orders shuts border trade



JASON GARZA/The Texas Tribune

A commercial truck drives by the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on Monday in Pharr.

By MITCHELL FERMAN, JAMES BARRAGÁN AND URIEL J. GARCÍA
The Texas Tribune

Commercial traffic at a key South Texas border crossing has stopped after Mexican truckers Monday blocked north- and southbound lanes on the Mexico side of the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge in protest of Gov. Greg Abbott's decision to have state troopers inspect northbound commercial vehicles — historically a job done by the federal government.

The bridge connecting Pharr and Reynosa is the busiest trade crossing in the Rio Grande Valley

and handles the majority of the produce that crosses into the U.S. from Mexico, including avocados, broccoli, peppers, strawberries and tomatoes. On Monday, with trucks backed up for miles in Reynosa for the fifth day in a row, some produce importers in Texas said they have waited days for their goods to arrive.

"One of our customers canceled the order because we didn't deliver on time," said Modesto Guerra, sales manager for Sterling Fresh Inc., which imports broccoli from Central Mexico via the Pharr bridge before shipping it to the Midwest and East Coast. "It's something

■ See PROTEST, Page 2A

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Jolly Roger Hudgeons

September 17, 1940 –
April 8, 2022

Jolly Roger Hudgeons, 81, of Brazoria, Texas, passed away peacefully in his sleep at home on Friday, April 8, 2022, after a long battle with Parkinson's. He was a resident of Brazoria County his whole life. He was born September 17, 1940, in Albany, and grew up in Damon. Once married, Jolly and Gloria moved to Angleton, and then Brazoria, where they lived and raised their family.

Jolly is survived by his three children, Donette, Randy (Deanna), and Jolene (Lucas); grand-children, Nathan, Shelby (Christian), Hannah (Thomas), Logan and Jordan; his mother-in-law, Bertha Hruby; four siblings, Larry, Michael, Dorothy, and Laura; as well as numerous family and friends.

Jolly was preceded in death by his loving wife, Gloria, of 55 years; parents, Sam and Sophie Hudgeons; fathers-in-law, Alphonse Vacek and Edmund Hruby; and his beloved siblings, Lester, Joyce, Donald, Sandra, and Jerry (Stormy).

Jolly was a very talented carpenter and used his skills professionally as well as personally. He retired from Dow Chemical Company, in Freeport, after 27 and a half years working in the Carpenter's



Shop. He also built homes through Cut-Rate Builders and cabinetry work with Ballard. His specialty was framing houses and building custom cabinets for our family and friends.

His true passions in life were taking care of his family, hunting and fishing, gardening, and pickling, and always joking around. He loved to dance with Gloria, leading Wedding Grand Marches, square dancing and never missing a Saturday night at the dance hall. After retirement, Jolly enjoyed spending time at "The Jolly Ranch", which he referred to as "God's Country".

Jolly was a life-long member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and was a 3rd Degree Knight with the Knights of Columbus Council 8548. He was active in helping any way he could at the Church, including the bazaars late night barbecue, and building the beautiful altar cross.

The family will welcome

friends and loved ones on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at C.T. Baker & Sons Funeral Home in West Columbia, with a Rosary to be Recited at 6:30 p.m. Funeral Services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 14, 2022, at C.T. Baker & Sons Funeral Home in West Columbia. Interment will follow in Brazoria Cemetery.

Serving as pallbearers will be Jolly's nephews: Clint Hudgeons, Travis Hudgeons, Cody Hudgeons, Kurt Lee Hudgeons, Mike Hudgeons, Ray Charles Winkelman, Brandon Winkelman, and Duane Wagner.

A special Thank You to Right at Home and his caregiver, Stephanie Swinney (sister), for providing excellent care for the past four and a half years. In addition, we appreciate the support provided by Liz Martinez, Hospice Nurse with A-Med, during the last couple of weeks. We have truly been blessed with two Angels on Earth.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Parkinson's Foundation in memory of Jolly Hudgeons.



Night

CONTINUED FROM COVER

daughter, said the parents feeling more comfortable about the COVID situation was important for the event to take place this year.

"Just having special needs kids in a big room, a lot of them immunocompromised — parents were scared," Robinette said. "A lot of people were scared to put it on." The parents in attendance might have been as excited as their children for the event.

"They love it, because they feel like their kids need some special attention, too," Millsap said. "So they were delighted. They don't really have anything like this for the south part of

Brazoria County.

"The bulk of them have just said, 'Oh, just go for it. These kids need an outing. They need some fun. They've been boxed up too long.'" Sharon Martinez, a security officer at Freeport High School and parent of special needs children, said events like A Night in the Spotlight have been important for her sons' development.

"He started planning as soon as they came out with the announcement," she said. "He wouldn't let me go pick his tux out with him. He wanted to do it all by himself." Her sons also took another big step toward independence recently.

"This has allowed them to grow so much. They went on their first vaca-

tion by themselves last month," Martinez said.

The prom is special for the guests because it is especially for them, Robinette said.

"Most of these kids have the opportunity to go to prom in high school, but it's just not the same," Robinette said. Here, she says, "there's no judgement and they can let loose."

The kids certainly did let loose, with the crowd singing along to One Direction and The Black-Eyed Peas as they cut a rug, dancing with uniformed officers and community members who came out to support them.

"After this happened once, people talked about it and wanted to be a part of it," Robinette said. "It's amazing!"

Protest

CONTINUED FROM COVER

beyond our control."

While many companies cross perishable foods in refrigerated trucks, Guerra said the bottlenecks could lead to equipment failures that cause produce and other products to spoil in the heat.

"Those refrigerated units are powered by diesel," Guerra said. "These trucks are in line and when the diesel runs out they have no way of refueling."

International bridges elsewhere in the Valley, as well as in Eagle Pass, El Paso and Laredo, have also seen delays, with many commercial products produced in Mexico — like electronics, vehicle parts and medical instruments — also held up.

In response to the Biden administration's recent announcement that it

plans to end Title 42 — a pandemic-era emergency health order that lets federal officials turn away migrants at the border without the chance to request asylum — Abbott on Wednesday ordered the Texas Department of Public Safety to increase its inspections of commercial vehicles, which he said drug cartels use to smuggle humans and drugs into the United States.

At times, DPS troopers appear to be checking every commercial vehicle that crosses select international bridges, with each inspection taking between 45 minutes and an hour.

Mexican news outlets reported about 500 truckers are blocking southbound traffic into Mexico to prevent the entrance of U.S. trucks. Truckers told El Mañana in Reynosa they had waited three to four days at the international bridge and were

running out of fuel while they waited.

One trucker told the news outlet that prior to Abbott's order, he made two crossings into the U.S. a day. Now, he'd be lucky to have one or two a week given the long delays at the bridges.

"We are losing just as much as them," he said. "When they start needing more produce, the prices are going to go up."

"No one has told us what the reason for this is or asked what solutions we can come up with together," he added, saying the blockade will continue until their issues are resolved. "All we know is that it's an order from the governor of Texas."

Abbott's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

This story has been edited for space. Read the full version at texastribune.com.

Rhyme

CONTINUED FROM COVER

who put in their resumes and the council interviewed two, she said.

"I was born and raised in Angleton and was the mayor at one point," Rhyme said. "I have knowledge on both sides of the fence, so there shouldn't be any surprises coming toward me from the council in regards to the stuff they require or want to be done. Danbury is a small community and so is Angleton, and I like the small community feel."

Rhyme expressed a basic goal for his department.

"We're not here to run the city off of any revenue," Rhyme said. "We're here to gain compliance with the laws."

Rhyme will report for duty at 5 a.m. today. Because he is a one-man show, deputies from the Brazoria County Sheriff's and Precinct 2 Constable offices will still be taking calls for the town,

he said.

Strong is hopeful Rhyme sticks around, but given the turnover among chiefs in recent years, there's no guarantee, she said.

"All the other people left because they wanted to leave because they had something else to go to," she said. "They had an advancement they wanted to go to."

The Brazoria County Sheriff's Office, which dispatches for the city, will support Danbury during its transition of police chiefs, Pct. 2 County Commissioner Ryan Cade said.

"As far as personnel matters involving the city of Danbury, the county has no involvement in that," Cade said. "However, the county will support the city of Danbury in any way we can during their transition."

Danbury has had a revolving door of police chiefs in recent years, none lasting longer than a few

months. Prior to Burson's hiring, former Holiday Lakes police chief Robert Mancillas had his job offer withdrawn after issues arose in his background check, city officials said in March 2021. His hiring had been announced on Jan. 21, 2021, but he had not started in the role.

Prior to Mancillas, Mark Pritchard served as chief from Jan. 6 through March 13, 2020, citing personal reasons and an "unstable" political realm in the city as his reasons for leaving. His replacement, Rick White, resigned in September 2020 after being sworn in two months earlier.

The last long-term chief was Derek Dyson, who served five years before leaving for a position with Brazosport ISD in June 2019.

"I don't plan on going anywhere," Rhyme said. "I spent 40 years in this business less than 6 miles away, so nothing in Danbury is new to me."

Dairy

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Historical Museum.

"The Dairy Bar has served this community for 70 years, and it's just been nice to be able to talk more about their history, have people come in and talk about their memories. There's so many memories tied up in a great historic business like the Dairy Bar," said Lindsay Scovil, Lake Jackson Historical Association executive director. "I think that says a lot about Lake Jackson. There's such a sense of community here. It's important that it has stayed in the family and it's continued to be successful and to be celebrated."

This event celebrated the history behind the Dairy Bar with the food and the people. Inside were information boards about the restaurant with a slideshow featuring pictures of the family and the original owners, Ernest "Slim" and Dorothy Lee Harnden. Outside were games of hopscotch, Hula Hooping, a classic car show and free Dairy Bar hot dogs and lemonade. Everywhere in between community members mingled and reminisced.

"It's just great that we have people recognizing the history we have in the community and to have a business that's been in business for this long. And it's been such a part of everybody's lives down here," Roznovsky said. "It's just great that the histori-



JEREMY HILL/The Facts

Classic cars line the area around the Lake Jackson Historical Museum as games, food, drinks and history help celebrate 70 years of the Dairy Bar restaurant Saturday in Lake Jackson.

cal museum is recognized. I think it's really special. It's a great day, and you see by the people that are here, there's a lot of people interested in it, a lot are visiting with other people they haven't seen in years."

Many attending were friends of the family coming to celebrate what they've watched become an influence on the community, as well as share the memories they have of the Harndens, who were also commemorated at the event.

"We came out to celebrate with the Harndens. We've known them for a long time, forever really, since the 60s. He used to go to the Legion Hall and dance in Angleton and so would we," Elaine Najvar said. "This celebration is just wonderful ... they've been here a long time, they support the local people, it's a good thing."

Now co-owned by the founders' daughter, Mary Harnden and Sherlyn

Beauchamp, the pair have been running Dairy Bar in Lake Jackson since early 2000. It is in the same spot along Plantation Drive her father discovered in 1952 while on a fishing trip to Freeport.

The Dairy Bar is centered around family and its values. Many community members grew up there — stopping in after church on Wednesdays, hanging out after school or taking their first job as the Harndens were known to hire teenagers who would grow up working in its walls.

"The Dairy Bar worked a lot of teenagers. A lot of people that are coming in here now worked for the Dairy Bar," former Harnden neighbor Rusty Spencer said. "Slim would hire the teenagers and they would grow up and he'd hire another and they were the brothers or sisters. It's a big event because people grew up working there and knowing him."

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BRAZORIA COUNTY WEATHER

TODAY: 79
40% chance of showers and storms. Wind gusts up to 30 mph.

TONIGHT: 71
Mostly cloudy, breezy. Wind gusts could be up to 30 mph.

WEDNESDAY: 81/62
20% chance of showers and storms before 1 p.m. Gusty winds.

THURSDAY: 79/65
Mostly sunny and breezy.

HIGH/LOW Yesterday: 85/70 Averages: 76/61 Records: 90 (1936)/37 (1932) RAINFALL Yesterday: 0.00 Month: 0.00 Year: 5.32

MOON
Moonrise: 3:53 p.m.
Moonset: 4:44 a.m.

Phases
Full: Apr 13
Last: Apr 26
New: Apr 30
First: May 8

TIDES AT FREEPORT
High: 2:43 p.m. (1.6 feet)
Low: 6:58 a.m. (0.3 feet)
9:20 p.m. (1.0 feet)

TEXAS FORECASTS FOR WEDNESDAY						
City/Town	Outlook	Hi	Lo	Wind/mph	Humid	Rain UV
Abilene	Breezy and hot	93	60	S 18	33%	30% 9
Amarillo	Sunny, windy	82	40	W 25	17%	14% 9
Austin	A p.m. t-storm	88	69	S 11	65%	87% 5
Beaumont	A shower or two	81	72	SSE 12	78%	100% 2
Brownsville	Breezy	89	74	SSE 17	69%	30% 5
College Stn	Severe storms	85	71	SSE 18	70%	100% 3
Corpus Chr	Increasing winds	86	72	SSE 21	74%	18% 5
Dallas/Ft W	Severe storms	86	68	SSE 20	66%	98% 3
El Paso	Sunny and windy	79	49	W 20	18%	1% 10
Galveston	A shower or two	80	72	S 16	76%	95% 3
Huntsville	Severe storms	84	73	SSE 10	72%	100% 2
La Grange	A shower or two	84	72	SSE 10	72%	87% 3

Laredo	Very hot	105	73	SSE 10	43%	8% 10
Longview	A severe t-storm	81	70	SSE 8	74%	100% 2
Lubbock	Increasing winds	86	52	WSW 21	15%	12% 9
Lufkin	A shower or two	82	70	S 15	73%	95% 2
Mcallen	Stray p.m. t-storm	95	74	SE 15	64%	46% 8
Midland	Mostly sunny	89	59	WSW 17	15%	9% 10
Palacios	Increasing wind	80	73	SSE 19	77%	35% 2
Port Lavaca	Breezy	80	74	SSE 15	73%	44% 3
San Angelo	Very warm	95	61	SSW 13	33%	30% 9
San Antonio	A strong t-storm	90	72	SE 11	64%	58% 8
San Marcos	A strong t-storm	87	70	SSE 13	72%	74% 8
Tyler	Severe storms	81	70	SSE 12	74%	100% 2
Victoria	Breezy	83	73	SSE 15	74%	44% 3
Waco	Severe storms	87	68	SSE 19	67%	98% 3

Very hot	105	73	SSE 10	43%	8% 10
A severe t-storm	81	70	SSE 8	74%	100% 2
Increasing winds	86	52	WSW 21	15%	12% 9
A shower or two	82	70	S 15	73%	95% 2
Stray p.m. t-storm	95	74	SE 15	64%	46% 8
Mostly sunny	89	59	WSW 17	15%	9% 10
Increasing wind	80	73	SSE 19	77%	35% 2
Breezy	80	74	SSE 15	73%	44% 3
Very warm	95	61	SSW 13	33%	30% 9
A strong t-storm	90	72	SE 11	64%	58% 8
A strong t-storm	87	70	SSE 13	72%	74% 8
Severe storms	81	70	SSE 12	74%	100% 2
Breezy	83	73	SSE 15	74%	44% 3
Severe storms	87	68	SSE 19	67%	98% 3