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VOLUME 108, ISSUE 9

THE GREATER KATY AREA'S NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1912 ■ katytimes.com

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2020

Simmons drops out citing racism

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

R.C. Simmons, a candidate for the Katy Independent School District Board of Trustees Position 3 seat, dropped out of the election Feb. 19, citing harassment of his children and a racist email. As a result, the current office holder, Ashley Vann, will be re-elected to the position by default with no other competitors in the race.



R.C. SIMMONS

"With that, to protect my children – and my sanity – I am withdrawing from the race and will continue to my fight for the students in our district through trades programs, apprenticeships, learning and enrichment programs, and much, much more," Simmons said in a Feb. 19 Facebook post to his campaign's page.

Simmons was not immediately available to respond to questions regarding the incident due to his grandmother's death.

Simmons said in the post he received an e-mail sent from an untraceable account that mimicked a banner for Simmons' social media campaign page, featuring a cartoon caricature of an African American and using the "N-word". Earlier the same day, Simmons said, his daughter was harassed by a member of a local Facebook group, A Better Legacy for Katy ISD #1065.

Simmons denied the fraud allegations.

"Today my 17-year-old daughter was harassed on Katy ISD property by an adult in response to a false claim by the cronies that administer A Better Legacy for Katy ISD #1065, that I defrauded the United States Government," Simmons said in another post to his campaign's online page.

Simmons said the daughter was verbally harassed by the person on school property regarding the alleged government fraud.

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KISD announces Rushing to head bond committee

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy ISD has announced that Heath Rushing, senior vice president and chief executive officer at Memorial Hermann Hospitals' Cypress and Katy locations, will chair the KISD Community Bond Advisory Committee to determine if district staff will recommend a bond proposal to the KISD Board of Trustees. Meetings regarding the bond are expected to begin Apr. 7 and the last day the board may propose a bond for the November election is Aug. 17.

"Everyone in this district has a vested interest in what our school district is doing to help provide the necessary education for our community," Rushing said. "And what better way to assist in that – to provide some insight, some perspective into service by participating and helping lead this bond process."

Katy ISD approved the bond committee's formation at its Jan. 21 meeting. At the time, Assistant Superintendent Ted Vierling cited rapid growth in the district as reason to consider a bond in order to fund expansion of services to support a larger student population.

KISD's student population is expected to hit the 100,000 mark in 2027, if not before, Superintendent Ken Gregorski said.

"Anyone who looks at what's happening in Katy right now, sees the growth all around us. Bonds are how we keep up with that growth," Gregorski said.

Bond History

KISD has been issuing bonds about once every 3-4 years according to the district's bonds website (<http://www.katyisd.org/sites/bonds/Pages/default.aspx>). According to district records, the bonds have been used to create and improve multiple campuses from 1994 to the present. The most recent bond was approved by voters in 2017 for \$609 million and was used to fund Amy Campbell Elementary, Olga Leonard Elementary, Joe M. Adams Junior High and three new schools – one each at the elementary, junior high and high school levels – that are currently being planned.

"I think we're lucky in KISD in that the last few bonds have been tailored in order to ensure no tax increase for the community," Rushing said.

The district's current debt service property tax rate is set at \$0.39 per \$100 valuation after the 2017 bond package was approved by voters. The rate had been \$0.40 per \$100 valuation dating back to 2002. The district's total property tax rate is \$1.4431 per \$100 which is a reduction of \$0.0735 per \$100 valuation compared to last year's rate. Previously, the total property tax rate had been \$1.5166 steadily since the 2015-16 tax year.

Rushing said he was honored to be asked to bring his administrative expertise to the table to help lead the committee. The bond process will support the district's continued excellence as one of the top-rated schools in the state, he said.

"To me that's why this process is very important is that as a

See **RUSHING**, page A3



Harvey continues to leave behind trauma

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

A newly-released study from Northwell Health shows what Katy residents may already know – the mental health effects of Hurricane Harvey are significant and ongoing. Mental health issues for those who experienced the storm and its aftermath are statistically more prevalent said Dr. Rebecca Schwartz, a psychologist who was one of the lead researchers in the study.

"The end result is that having a lot of negative impacts of a hurricane has a real impact on mental health and the particular mental health symptoms that we looked at were PTSD – posttraumatic stress disorder – depression and anxiety. We also looked at the general stress which was also something that was significant," Schwartz said.



DR. REBECCA
SCHWARTZ

Participants in the study were identified and approached about five months after Harvey plowed its way through the gulf coast region surrounding Houston, Schwartz said. It examined 161 adults and their respective mental health at that time. Results varied by individual, she said, but certain factors for mental health issues were increased for all participants. General stress and the participants' personal situation during Harvey affected their mental health outcomes, she said.

According to the study's report, women and girls are more likely to experience mental health difficulties post-disaster. Additionally, those already under care for mental health concerns were also at increased risk of seeing worsened mental health symptoms after experiencing Harvey or a similar disaster.

Schwartz also identified another source of concern – living situations during Harvey and how flooding impacted the participants' living situations.

"Another thing to think about is – in Houston during Harvey – there wasn't mandatory evacuation... So, that has different, depending

HARVEY STATS

- Category 4 hurricane
- 40,000 displaced residents
- 68 people killed in U.S. alone
- 27 trillion gallons of rainwater
- 51 inches of rain in some places
- 56,000 calls to Houston 911 in 15 hours
- 500-year flood

on whether you were forced into shelters or not, it has different [effects] and I think we learned at least in [Hurricane] Sandy – shelters, although absolutely necessary, can sometimes be retraumatizing."

Having options other than shelters to turn to during a natural disaster can be helpful, Schwartz said. Compared with those who went to shelters, participants whose homes

See **HARVEY**, page A3



City OKs cell tower at Katy JHS

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy City Council approved a special use permit that will allow Ecosite II, LLC and T-Mobile to install a 140-foot tall cell tower at the Katy Junior High School campus at their Feb. 24 meeting. The tower is expected to provide relief for overtaxed towers to the east of town and improve cell coverage in downtown Katy, T-Mobile Radio Frequency Engineer Craig Donaldson said.

“We believe we’ve shown that without this approval there will be a significant delay,” said Bebb Francis, an attorney representing the project.

The tower, which was approved due to legal concerns based upon updates to the federal Telecommunications Act which are worded to prevent such delays, is expected to provide about a 1-mile coverage area that will relieve congestion of the towers to the east of town which are run by AT&T and Verizon, Donaldson said. The tower was originally brought before council at their Jan. 13 meeting. However, a decision was bumped to the Feb. 24 meeting after council members requested Ecosite II and T-Mobile provide more information about the project. Primary concerns at the time included creating an eyesore near residential zones and some inconsistencies in the group’s presentation regarding the project.

At the time, Council Member Janet Corte said she was unsure if the cellular provider and its consultants had really thought through the location, based upon the information provided. However, consultants for the project indicated that about two years of development and planning had gone into the project and a denial would have reset that clock, lengthening the time it would take to improve coverage for city residents.

“A denial tonight will result in a minimum two-year delay to address and find a solution to this gap [in cellular service],” said Bebb Francis.

However, at Monday’s city council meeting it was apparent that council members had done more research and the consultants had pulled together better data to present.

While the council’s vote showed unanimous approval of council members present – Council Member Frank Carroll III was absent – of the tower, which will reach a total height of 150 feet once a 10-foot lightning rod is added to it, council members expressed frustration that they felt they’d been forced to approve the tower after consulting with City Attorney Art Pertile III. Pertile explained to the council that, under the Federal Telecommunications Act,



Bebb Francis, and attorney with the Francis Law Firm, speaks at the Feb. 24 Katy City Council meeting where a new cell phone tower to be located at Katy Junior High School was approved by city council based on City Attorney Art Pertile III’s advice that Francis’ clients – T-Mobile and Ecosite II, LLC – had met the legal requirements of the federal Telecommunications Act.

the city essentially had to either approve the tower or could result in a costly and near-certain courtroom loss which would still result in the tower’s construction because T-Mobile and Ecosite II had met the requirements under that federal law which supersedes local authority such as the city council’s.

“What their burden is to show exactly what it is they’re saying, is that if they can show that they’ve exhausted looking at [locations] and if they were to have to choose another site it would cause an extensive delay and they would have the right to put the tower [at the proposed site],” Pertile said.

Pertile added that, if T-Mobile and Ecosite II agreed to the shorter tower presented at the meeting they would be unable to fight it in court to try to put up the taller tower which was originally planned because they had agreed to the smaller tower by presenting it at the meeting.

Council Member Janet Corte and Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris said they had met with project stakeholders to find out more information prior to the council meeting and had asked if moving the tower to the city’s public works facility would serve as well as the new location. However, Donaldson said the public works site was too far to the west and would not relieve congestion on the eastern towers which is one of the main purposes of the project.

Facing such issues, council members tried to make the best of the situation they said they felt forced into. Harris indicated that he felt that not placing the tower at the public works area would save trees and park space, while Mayor Bill Hastings confirmed with police chief Noe Diaz that police had recently experienced poor cell reception while conducting a training exercise at Katy Junior High School – where the tower will be constructed behind some



The newly approved 140-foot cellular tower is expected to reduce congestion on towers to the east of town, like this one just east of Katy Hockley Cut Off Road/ Katy Fort Bend Road.

outbuildings away from the main school building.

Francis said a possible location near Brookshire Bros. on Franz Road was rejected because it would have put the tower within 150 feet of homes.

Donaldson said other nearby locations, such as near Legacy Stadium, were rejected for a variety of reasons including proximity to homes, nearby utility and gas infrastructure and proximity to a playground for young children.

Corte expressed disappointment that the project

stakeholders had not approached city council earlier in the planning process and Francis indicated that he would suggest his clients approach the city earlier to avoid future controversy moving forward.

While federal law forced the council’s hand to an extent, council members still expressed frustration over the need to approve the tower under federal law.

“I’m still not sold that we’ve done the due diligence for our citizens in this process,” Council Member Durran Dowdle said.

PET OF THE WEEK

MEET ALBUS

Albus is an 18-month old black cat with loads of curiosity. He loves to play and explore wherever he goes and is looking for a forever home.

Albus is available for adoption at Special Pals Shelter. The shelter is located at 3830 Greenhouse Road in Houston, north of I-10 near the intersection with Clay Road. Special Pals Shelter can be reached at 281-579-7387. The shelter is open from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays as well as Sundays from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

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This equipment worth about \$30,000 was reclaimed for the owner through cooperative efforts between the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office and the Rosenberg Police Department. It only took about 12 minutes for authorities to locate the equipment once it was reported.

2 arrested in Fort Bend for tractor theft

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office deputies arrested Montego Anderson, 27, of Houston and Sam Newell, 26, of Houston for the theft of a trailer and tractor from a Needville home Feb. 24. The theft occurred at about 10:48 p.m. and Rosenberg Police Department officers located the stolen equipment at

a Shell station near the intersection of FM 2218 and Hwy. 59 at about 11 p.m.

“You can’t come to Fort Bend County, commit these kinds of crimes and expect to get away with it,” said Forty Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls.

The arrests and Nehls’ comments were provided via a press release from FBCSO which also indicated that the farm equipment with a worth of about \$30,000 had been returned to its owner.



SAM NEWELL

MONTEGO ANDERSON

RUSHING

from page A1

community we have a responsibility to help this community sustain that excellence into the future,” Rushing said.

Rushing in

Gregorski said he felt confident that the district had identified the right person to head the bond committee based on Rushing’s education, professional and school board experience.

“It’s always helpful when a board and a superintendent know who our leaders are in the community – those folks who are a part of our community and those folks who get involved in our schools and our district,” Gregorski said. “[Rushing] is one of those types of people.”

Gregorski said Rushing hits the “trifecta” of wants the district had for the Community Bond Advisory Committee with corporate leadership skills, his school board experience and understanding of schools and his active presence in the community.

“His goal is what our goal is – providing good schools with great teachers and good learning experiences for all of our children and to do so sometimes we’ve got to go out and we’ve got to do bonds to be able to get the things that are necessary for our kids to have what we call unparalleled learning experiences, and [Rushing] is part of that,” Gregorski said.

Rushing said his previous experience on the Humble ISD Board of Trustees from 2013-17 would help him in his effort to make sure the committee examined the bonds carefully and with full understanding.

“I do have some perspective on bonds. I formerly served as a school board member for Humble ISD from 2013 to 2017. I think, if anything, that offers a perspective of how important this process is for a school district to be able to sustain itself long-term,” Rushing said.

Rushing said his time on the Humble ISD board gave him an understanding of how budgeting and bonding work for a school district. General revenue and the operating budget pay for items such as salaries, day-to-day maintenance and other general operating expenses, he said. Meanwhile, bond funding helps school districts upgrade facilities or increase the number of campuses offered to the community. Rushing said he feels that his experience with schools will help to ensure that other bond advisory committee members understand those aspects.

“I think there’s an important part of education that goes along with this process that you have to start with,” Rushing said.

Rushing said he also is motivated with an interest to ensure the district succeeds for his three children who attend Katy ISD schools in grades 6, 5 and 2 and that such successes may need funding through bond funding.

“It helps supply much-needed dollars to help accommodate for future growth that’s expected in the district as well as to address aging facilities through renovation work,” Rushing said. “Those are generally significant projects that a general operating fund could not help solve for on its own.”

Bounding bonds

The next step in the bonds process is for the committee to begin meeting and evaluating the district’s needs, Gregorski said.

Meetings are expected to begin Apr. 7 said Maria DiPetta, Katy ISD media relations manager.

Membership in the committee is currently being determined, Gregorski said. A request for applications was sent out earlier in the year and that process closed Feb. 17 and notifications to those selected for the committee will occur soon, he said.

The overall committee process is expected to last 3-5 months, Gregorski said. Meetings will be held regularly and Gregorski said the general public is welcome to attend the meetings and observe in order to stay informed.

Rushing said the committee will examine a variety of issues that include examining the needs for new infrastructure and technology to keep up with the population growth in the district and other factors like needs for campus improvements.

“Once the committee feels like they’ve put something together in terms of a bond package that meets the future needs of the district, they bring that forward to the board of trustees in a presentation – which will happen in a board meeting,” Gregorski said.

Gregorski said he appreciates the community members who have stepped forward to help the district develop bond packages in the past and looks forward to working with Rushing and his group. The district is working to ensure transparency in the process by offering the space for observers at the committee meeting and residents are also welcome to continue watching the KISD board meetings in-person or online, he said.

Rushing said he is glad to be able to be a part of helping the district move forward with establishing the necessary funding to grow productively.

“I sort of look at this process as positive reinforcement that the district does take its role very seriously in providing the highest education through the district,” Rushing said.

cause their parent wants to run for a volunteer school board position.”

Pruitt added that she hoped Simmons had filed a formal complaint and that too many instances of similar intimidation were happening in the community. She also said she will be meeting with Simmons to discuss the situation and find a resolution when Simmons returns from California, where he had gone to attend his grandmother’s funeral.

Posts on A Better Legacy #1065 imply that Sean Dolan, former Katy ISD Board of Trustees candidate and administrator of another Facebook page – A Better Legacy for Katy ISD – or one of his supporters may have sent the racist email to Simmons. However, Dolan denies the accu-

Governor establishes clemency application

By ED STERLING
CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

Gov. Greg Abbott on Feb. 20 established a clemency application specifically for survivors of human trafficking or domestic violence.

The application, crafted in coordination with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, includes a section that affords the applicant an opportunity to provide a statement to the board regarding their human trafficking or domestic violence victimization.

Human trafficking and domestic violence, according to the governor’s office, often lead victims down a path of offenses that entraps them in a vicious cycle of abuse and associated crime. Abbott’s announcement coincides with the launch of a new public awareness campaign informing survivors that they can submit an application for Board of Pardons and Paroles to review and consider recommending that the governor grant a full pardon for crimes committed while under the grips of a trafficker or an abusive partner.

“Texas is committed to empowering the survivors of domestic abuse and human trafficking, and one of the surest signals of that goal is laying out a true path to redemption and restoration,” Abbott said.

“The gubernatorial pardon plays an important role in this redemption process, because it offers a second chance to survivors with criminal convictions resulting from their abuse or exploitation. I am grateful for our ongoing partnership with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles as we work together to develop a stronger justice system that promotes redemption, restoration and transformation,” Abbott added.

In his recent announcement proclaiming January as Human Trafficking Prevention Month, Abbott applauded state lawmakers for passing legislation to provide survivors with “streamlined access to a clean criminal record and a fresh start.”

AG leads in support of act

Some 42 state attorneys general joined Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton in a Feb. 20 letter expressing support of the Bankruptcy Venue Reform Act of 2019.

If passed by Congress and signed into law by the president, the federal legislation would prevent forum shopping during bankruptcy litigation. Paxton

“Texas is committed to empowering the survivors of domestic abuse and human trafficking, and one of the surest signals of that goal is laying out a true path to redemption and restoration.”

— GOV. GREG ABBOTT

said such a law would provide protection to consumers, workers, retirees, shareholders and small business vendors “who are currently harmed by the one-sided right for corporate debtors to choose whichever court they prefer.”

Currently, Paxton said, individuals can only file bankruptcy in their district of residence. Corporations, on the other hand, have a wide choice of possible venues, which can be manipulated to their own advantage, he added.

Update: Coronavirus

The Texas Department of State Health Services on Feb. 21 announced the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had confirmed three cases of novel coronavirus 2019 in people under federal quarantine at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

The first was a traveler who returned on a U.S. State Department-chartered flight from Wuhan City, China. The others returned on a State Department flight for passengers from the Diamond Princess cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, Japan. The individuals are currently isolated and receiving appropriate care at medical facilities.

There were no other reported cases in Texas and officials said the risk of contracting the virus for all Texans remains low. The Department of State Health Services offers information on “COVID-19” for the public, health care professionals, health departments and labs at dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus.

In other news, the DSHS on Feb. 21 reported there have been 15 pediatric flu-related deaths reported this season in Texas.

The agency urged Texans who have not taken this season’s influenza vaccine to get vaccinated

ed without further delay. More information can be found online at www.texasflu.org.

AG sues over explosion

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on Feb. 21 announced that Texas Attorney General Paxton had filed a lawsuit against TPC Group Inc. and TPC Group LLC for violations of the Texas Clean Air Act and the Texas Water Code pertaining to the Nov. 27, 2019, explosion at its Port Neches plant.

The lawsuit requests that the court grant injunctive relief, civil penalties, reasonable attorney fees, court costs and investigative costs to the state.

The lawsuit also includes claims that TPC Group caused numerous violations of TCEQ’s air quality program from January 2018 through September 2019.

TCEQ Executive Director Toby Baker and House State Affairs Committee Chairman Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, applauded Paxton for taking legal action.

“Through this suit, the state can learn what caused the incident, how to prevent such occurrences in the future and adequately penalize all violations,” Phelan said.

Early voting to end soon

The Texas Secretary of State’s Elections Division has posted answers to common questions relating to voting in the March 3 Super Tuesday party primary elections.

The answers are:
Any registered voter may vote early by personal appearance (in person);

Early voting by personal appearance began on Feb. 18 and will end on Feb. 28; and

Voters may vote at any early voting location in their county of registration.

SIMMONS

from page A1

Simmons said he would be filing reports with appropriate authorities.

Jill Pruitt Allred, administrator for A Better Legacy for Katy ISD #1065, denied that she or any member of her online group had harassed Simmons’ daughter at school or otherwise.

“No one I know would attack someone’s child, that’s not who we are,” Pruitt Allred said. “I spend my time advocating for children and finding missing and sex trafficked children, not attacking them be-

sation and said he has offered his assistance in resolving the issue.

“Absolutely no, [I did not send the email],” Dolan said. “My response when R.C. [Simmons] sent me the email was to [offer] a \$2,000 reward with any information regarding the source of the email.”

Dolan added that he has received similar, harassing emails due to his interactions with KISD, including running for the KISD Board of Trustees and being a figure associated with the controversial ending to former KISD Superintendent Lance Hindt’s tenure with the district.

Cortney Doyle, Allen Wortham Jr. and Brandy Snyder have all also dropped out of their respective school board position races. Doyle is

the incumbent for the KISD Board of Trustees position four.

Wortham said he’d dropped out of the campaign because of harassment as well, citing messages on social media channels that badgered him regarding whether or not he knew Dolan. Wortham said he did not know Dolan and only met him at a meet and greet with Governor Gregg Abbott after he’d withdrawn from the race.

Doyle and Snyder did not respond to requests for comment in time for publication of this article.

Vann offered her apologies to Simmons on behalf of the KISD community in a social media post.

“Although I have yet to have the opportunity to personally meet Mr.

Simmons, I wish him well and extend my apologies for the treatment he and his family received from some in our community,” Vann said via Facebook.

KISD released a brief comment regarding Simmons’ withdrawal from the race:

“The concerns that Mr. Simmons has reported are unacceptable, and as a school district we do not condone the type of behavior described. The District is working closely with local, state, and federal law enforcement to investigate the incidents cited by Mr. Simmons. Likewise, Katy ISD is urging anyone with information regarding the matter to contact the Katy ISD Police Department at 281-237-4000.”

HARVEY

from page A1

became dangerous or unlivable and were able to stay with friends or family experienced lessened mental health impacts in comparison with those who were forced by their situations to go to a shelter, she said.

“If somebody was fortunate enough to be able to go to a friend or family, they were at 50% decreased odds of developing PTSD as opposed to somebody who was forced to go to a shelter,” Schwartz said.

Other situations examined by the study included transportation issues associated with fuel shortages or loss of a vehicle, assisting neighbors through rescue or other issues, availability of food during the disaster and unemployment resulting from Harvey, according to the report.

Additional factors such as level of income and education contributed to whether participants were able to work around the situations posed to them by the natural disaster, Schwartz said. Those with lower incomes and lower education often did not have the resources to address the challenges posed by a natural disaster, she said.

To better prepare themselves for natural disasters, Schwartz and her research team – who are also working with the Houston Department of Public Health – recommended that municipalities in disaster-prone areas

like the gulf coast, including Katy, Fulshear, Brookshire and Pattison, focus on having mental health care available as part of their planning for crises. Doing so can help residents recover more quickly and minimize the impact of mental health concerns for residents.

The report also recommends that public health officials in affected municipalities plan for long-term mental health care as part of their disaster preparedness plans.

Schwartz said she also recommends residents prepare more for the mental health impact of a hurricane as part of their general preparation. This can include talking to mental health professionals to have a plan of action in place for ongoing care if the person is already being treated for a mental health condition, but also includes simple things like ensuring extra medication is available, identifying a friend or relative ahead of time to stay with in the event of an emergency and having a plan to manage transportation during and after a natural disaster, she said.

Schwartz encouraged area residents to seek mental health without being ashamed to do so, whether a natural disaster is happening or not. She also said to keep an eye out for mental health issues that may still continue to crop up even years after Harvey.

“It is not atypical of starting to see symptoms of PTSD weeks, months and even years after a hurricane. It’s not uncommon and you should attend to those,” Schwartz said.



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An awful lot of cheese

My husband, Peter, likes buying in bulk. Peter hates paying shipping fees. He never wants to run out of anything and he loves a bargain. This is why we buy coffee in enormous bags, crackers by the case, nuts and raisins ten pounds at a time, rice in 20-pound bags, and beans in 50-pound bags. It is sometimes a little alarming when the boxes arrive.



CARRIE CLASSON

THE POSTSCRIPT

I'm not quite sure how he got this way. Peter was the youngest child of six, but I don't think his family went through any extraordinary hardship. My mother is the ninth of eleven children raised during the depression and she buys in modest quantities that last for no more than a week or fit in a small canvas bag—whichever is less.

Most recently, Peter decided to start ordering cheese direct from his favorite cheesemaker, but when he learned what he was going to be charged for shipping he began to fume.

"Ha! If I buy \$100 at a time, I don't pay shipping!" Peter announced, looking over the fine print on the cheesemaker's website. He spoke with Ricky at the cheese shop and Ricky confirmed there would be no shipping charge if Peter just ordered enough cheese. Ricky recommended a nice gouda in addition to the lacy baby swiss Peter is fond of. Peter was delighted.

"Doesn't \$100 buy an awful lot of cheese?" I asked. Our house is small and our refrigerator generally filled to capacity.

"Oh, it's not that much..." Peter did the calculations. "It's only about twenty pounds!"

I couldn't deny that was a good price per pound, but twenty pounds still sounded like an awful lot of cheese.

Then things were further complicated. I had used this cheese company to buy birthday presents for my dad and they still had that address on file. Even though Peter made it quite clear this cheese was for us—not my father—we got a phone call from my dad about the time Peter was expecting his big cheese delivery.

"Hey, Peter!" my dad said, "Did you order us a big box of cheese?"

"Oh no!" Peter said. My parents, who buy little tiny blocks of cheese which they cut into little tiny slices and serve on little tiny crackers at precisely five o'clock every evening with a small glass of white wine, were understandably taken aback by the arrival of twenty pounds of cheese.

"That's a heck of a lot of cheese! Should we mail it to you?" my dad asked.

Peter said they should just eat it and my mother expressed doubt that they would ever eat so much cheese in their lifetime.

"Oh! You'll eat it!" Peter insisted. "That's an awful lot of cheese!" my mother protested.

"We can pick up what you don't eat next time we see you!" Peter told her, and promptly ordered more cheese.

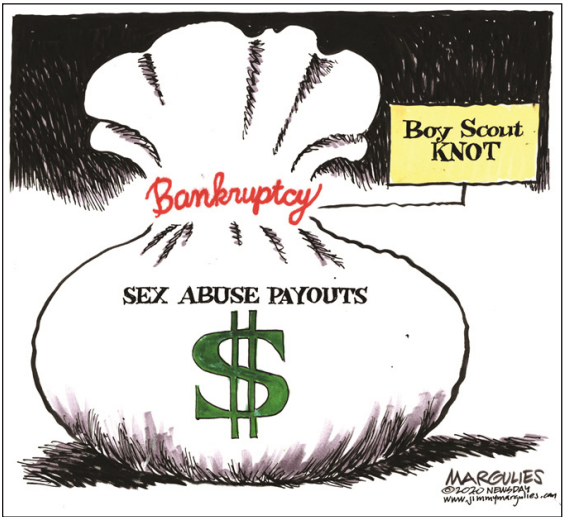
Ricky at the cheese company was appropriately contrite and gave Peter a generous discount on his new order so now we have forty pounds of cheese—twenty here and twenty in storage with my parents. I suspect this situation gives Peter a further feeling of security.

And, while I do shake my head from time to time, I also note that I have never once run out of coffee since I married Peter. We always have plenty of beans and rice to eat and now, I am quite certain, we will never run short of cheese.

In a chaotic world filled with unknowns, uncertainties, and nearly constant change, it's good to know we've got the essentials covered.

Till next time,
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir is called, "Blue Yarn." Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.



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The Katy Times (ISSN 067-180) is published on Thursday for \$35 per year in Harris, Waller and Fort Bend Counties and \$45 elsewhere by The Katy Times, 5319 E. Fifth St., Katy, Texas 77493. Periodical-rate postage paid at Katy, Texas 77494.

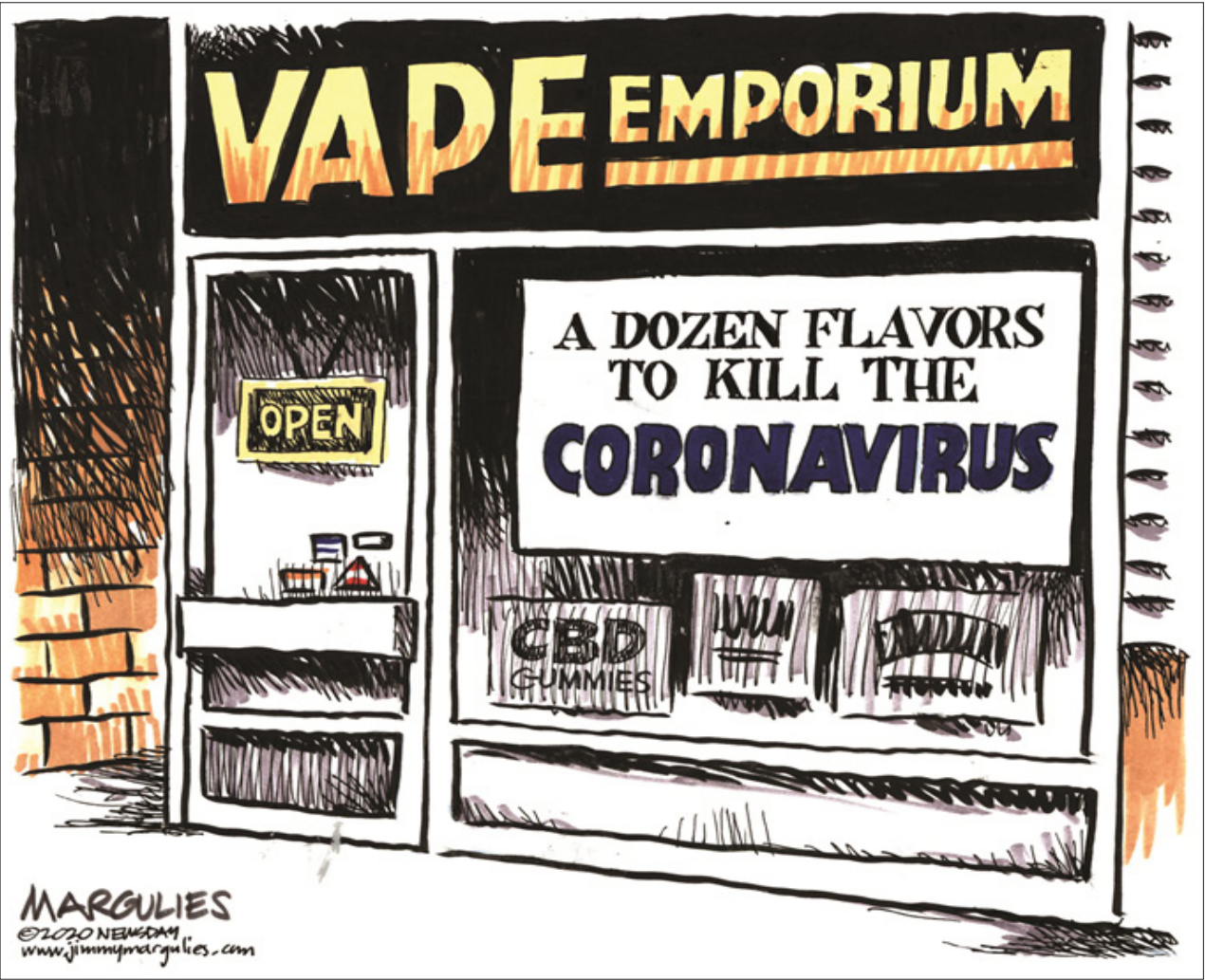
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ABOUT OUR NEWSPAPER:
The Katy Times is a member of the Texas Press Association. The weekly newspaper is published every Thursday. Visit our Web site 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.katytimes.com for more news and information.



Eating chili while dreaming of Chile

I had a reader ask me the difference between "chilly" and "chili" the other day. For the purposes of giving you your money's worth, I'm going to go above and beyond here by exhausting all possible sources of confusion. Buckle up, buttercup.

To clear up the most obvious one first, "Chilli" (uppercase "C" with two l's) is the professional name for Rozanda Thomas, a singer from the 90's girl group TLC. If I learned one thing from 90's pop music, it's this: don't go chasing waterfalls.

"Chilly" is an adjective that means "cold." It's a mild form of cold. You might say, "It's chilly this morning; grab your heavy jacket." If someone describes another person as "chilly," that would mean that person is not very friendly. The character Angela Martin from "The Office" has a chilly disposition.

A chili is a type of spicy pepper. In American English, we spell it with one "l," while in British English the word gets two l's. Originating in Mexico, chilis are used to add spice to food. If someone refers to "chili" as a food, they're probably talking about "chili con carne." In Cincinnati, people put their chili on top of spaghetti.

Chile is a skinny, squiggly country in South America. One awesome thing about Chile is that you get the best of most people's dream



CURTIS HONEYCUTT
GRAMMAR GUY

vacations: mountains and beaches. Chile runs along the western edge of the Pacific Ocean on the west while also bordering the Andes mountains on the east. If you have a week to kill, go chill in Chile.

If someone asks you to "take a chill pill," they're probably stuck in the '80s. In addition, they're suggesting that you calm down! "Chill" is technically a verb that means something like to put an object in the refrigerator. "Chill" as slang gets used as an adjective and a verb, meaning to do something in an incredibly laid back fashion.

Last but not least, Chili's is a popular casual restaurant where some of the best episodes of "The Office" take place. One thing I appreciate most about the Chili's logo is that its apostrophe is formed by a chili pepper. I find that apostrophes spice up any good alphabet soup.

To wrap it up, chili is an excellent food to eat on a chilly day while you dream of being on the beach in Chile (or at the bar at your local Chili's). Good grammar is about knowing the difference between know-

ing your junk and knowing you're junk.

Curtis Honeycutt is an award-winning syndicated

humor columnist. Connect with him on Twitter (@curtishoneycutt) or at curtishoneycutt.com.

PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE A5

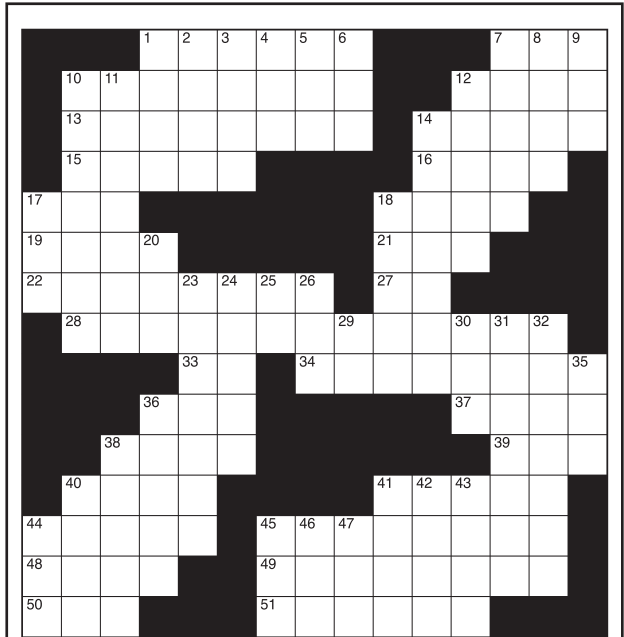
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CLUES ACROSS

- Stain one's hands
- Subdivision
- A passage to be performed slow
- Invests in little enterprises
- Medians
- Member of the giraffe family
- Makes official
- Choose in an election
- Hill or rocky peak
- Member of an ancient Iranian people
- Crest of a hill
- Small, faint constellation
- Cultivated from crops that yield oil
- The ancient Egyptian sun god
- Hollywood tough guy
- Chinese drums
- Merits
- Indicates center
- Increases motor speed
- Mentally fit
- BBQ favorite
- Wings
- Female parents
- Marks left from wounds
- Soften by soaking in liquid
- They resist authority (slang)
- Formats
- Many subconsciousnesses
- Vogues

CLUES DOWN

- Mental object
- Blackbird

- Undergarments
- Old cloth
- One from Utah
- Greek goddess of the dawn
- Become less intense
- Developed to readiness
- Defunct phone company
- About Freemason
- Taking everything into account
- Famed Czech engineer
- Impress into silence
- Boxing term
- Marketplaces
- Pounds per square inch
- Locomotives
- Short musical composition
- Football position (abbr.)
- Heavyhearted
- Denotes particular region
- Famed NHLer
- Ingested too much
- Formulates
- Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- Broad, shallow craters
- Thick cuts
- Breezed through
- Breakfast is one
- "Rule, Britannia" composer
- Periodicals (slang)
- Indian title of respect
- More (Spanish)
- Creation
- A loud utterance

Katy Times

KATYTIMES.COM

Texas sues TPC Group over explosion

By KIAH COLLIER
TEXAS TRIBUNE

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has sued TPC Group over environmental violations associated with the Nov. 27 explosion at the company's Port Neches chemical plant, a blast that prompted widespread mandatory evacuations during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

The suit, filed on Friday on behalf of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in Travis County District Court, also alleges the Houston-based company violated clean air laws multiple times from January 2018 to September 2019. The suit seeks injunctive relief and civil penalties, as well as for TPC Group to cover its attorneys fees, court costs and investigative costs.

"I appreciate the Attorney General's action today," TCEQ Executive Director Toby Baker said in a prepared statement released Friday. "It is absolutely crucial that entities like TPC Group are held responsible not only for the destructive environmental pollution they cause, but also for their impact on human health."

The suit, which also covers water violations, had been expected. TCEQ referred the case to the attorney general in late December after the agency's three appointed commissioners rejected staff-recommended penalties for TPC for eight pollution violations from 2018. They said the recommended penalties weren't strong enough for incidents that investigators had found to be preventable. The decision was notable as the agency's stated strategy has been to bring companies into compliance in-house rather than slap them with large fines — a strategy environmental and watchdog groups say does not work because there are so many repeat environmental offenders, including TPC Group. The agency also doesn't refer that many cases to the attorney general's office, which has the authority to pursue criminal investigations and higher penalties.



MICHAEL STRAVATO FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Damaged towers and tanks are shown after an explosion at TPC Group's Port Neches plant in late 2019.

TPC Group spokeswoman Sara Cronin said in a prepared statement that the company had seen that the attorney general had filed a petition.

"We remain focused on safely bringing this event to an end, minimizing impact to the environment while preserving the safety of the community," she said. "We have been working in cooperation with the relevant agencies and will continue to do so."

Response to the incident has been ongoing. The "unified command" that was formed to respond to the incident, consisting

of local, state and federal environmental and emergency response agencies, disbanded on Jan. 30. However, TPC Group has said it's still working to move sensitive chemicals offsite, re-establish power and evaluate tanks, piping and equipment in the impacted area of the plant.

The incident was the latest in a string of high-profile incidents at industrial facilities on the upper Texas Gulf Coast. And Paxton's legal challenge is the latest in a string of lawsuits he has filed against the companies tied to them.

That approach, too, has been a departure from past procedure — a change that has brought both joy and suspicion to critics who applaud the swift legal action but also say it must result in appropriate penalties.

"While we're encouraged by today's announcement, filing suit is only the first step," said Adrian Shelley, who leads the Texas office of Public Citizen, in a prepared statement released Friday. "The attorney general must see this through with a penalty that is sufficient to deter polluters who threaten our health and safety. A

"I appreciate the Attorney General's action today. It is absolutely crucial that entities like TPC Group are held responsible not only for the destructive environmental pollution they cause, but also for their impact on human health."

— TCEQ EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR TOBY BAKER

stiff penalty would show that Texas will no longer tolerate threats to public health and safety from the petrochemical industry.

Some state lawmakers from the impacted areas, including Republican state Rep. Dade Phelan of Beaumont, have called for strong action though the Legislature didn't pass many of the potential reforms it discussed in emergency hearings last year.

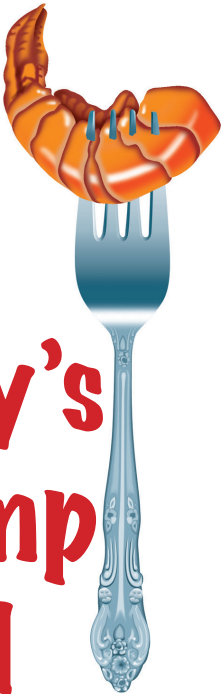
"I want to thank the TCEQ and the Attorney General for acting in the best interest of all Southeast Texans impacted by the Port Neches explosion," Phelan said in a statement sent out by TCEQ. "Through this suit, the state can learn what caused the incident, how to prevent such occurrences in the future and adequately penalize all violations."

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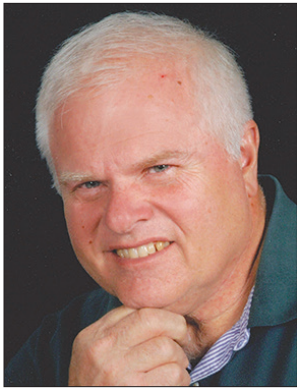
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Stanley R. Oldham passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 23, 2020 in Katy, Texas. Stanley was born on October 2, 1949 and raised in Samnorwood Texas by mother Helen Oldam Parker, and Albert Oldham, and younger brother Gary Oldham. Stanley was a jack-of-all-trades. He grew up a west Texas cowboy and farmer before attending and graduating with an associate's degree in auto mechanics. In his youth, he spent many years involved in sports, FFA, water skiing, drag racing and motorcycles. Stanley met his wife, Julia, in Waco, Texas and they married on August 5, 1972. They started their family and moved to Amarillo, Texas, where he worked as an auto mechanic. In 1986, they moved to Katy, Texas where they built the home they lived in for 35 years. Stanley continued a successful automotive career in Waller and Katy Texas. Stanley was a hardworking and talented mechanic that many came to trust and rely on. Stanley always believe it was most important what was "under the hood" and his character reflected that as he served his customers. Stanley had many partners and friends in his racing and automotive career. Stanley was known in the community for sharing his skills including house construction service projects, he could build or repair just about anything, and would go out of his way to help those in need.

Stanley was also very creative and liked working with stained glass, making furniture, and creating useful time saving inventions. Other than work, Stanley loved to share his talents in



STANLEY R. OLDHAM
1949-2020

the kitchen. Stanley was known for his Texas sized delicious cookies, cobblers, and butter-milk biscuits! He loved nothing more than to share his culinary talents with his great church community at Holy Covenant United Methodist church of Katy where he was a member for 39 years. He was known for greeting, cooking, service, teaching, fixing, and who can forget he enjoyed a good prank now and again! At the age of 66, Stanley retired and enjoyed many wonderful retirement trips with Julia and friends and could be found tinkering around the garage, helping at the church, or fishing with the guys! Stanley is survived by his wife, Julia Oldham of Katy, Texas; mother, Helen Oldam Parker of Hollis, Oklahoma; brother, Gary Oldham of Samnorwood, Texas; children, Marshall Oldham of Niagara Falls, New York and Ashley Niemi of Katy, Texas; and grandchildren, Austin Oldham and Brayden Niemi. Stanley is also survived by step siblings, Delores Parker Burch, Miral Parker, and Doug Parker.

The family will receive friends at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at Holy Covenant United Methodist Church, in Katy, where a celebration of Stanley's life will be held at 2 p.m., with Rev. Fred Willis officiating. Refreshments and shared memory time will follow in the fellowship hall afterward.

Funeral services held under the direction of Schmidt Funeral Home 1508 East Avenue — Katy, Texas 77493 — (281) 391-2424

The purpose of leap year

February is known for many things, one of which is being the shortest month of the year.

Many people do not give much thought to whether or not February has 28 or 29 days. But February bears the unique distinction of being the only month on the calendar that does not always have the same number of days.

Known as a "leap day," the 29th day of February helps to synchronize the calendar to Earth's orbit.

According to EarthSky, which reports on astronomy and other cosmos-related information, Earth's orbit around the sun takes approximately 365.25 days. That extra .25 creates a need for a leap year every four years; otherwise, the calendar, which is faster than the actual solar year), would drift from what is actually occurring with the orbit. After four years, it would be off by one day, or 25 days after 100 years. If no corrections were made to the calendar, the seasons might become misaligned. After 300 years, January 1 would arrive in autumn.

Julius Caesar, at the advice of Sosthenes, an Alexandrian astronomer, was responsible for adding a leap day to February to compensate for Earth's rotation after the original Roman calendar kept slipping out of alignment. During his reign, Caesar first implemented a 445-day calendar year in 46 BCE to bring the calendar back into alignment. Roman officials called it annus confu-

sionis. To limit future headaches, the work-around was to simply add a leap day to February once every four years. The Julian calendar wasn't exact to the solar year, but it was much closer than the previous Roman calendar.

The Gregorian calendar, revised by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, further adapted the calendar and the leap days. All leap years are divisible by four. That is why 2020 will include a leap day on February 29.

People can utilize the extra day in 2020 (yes, 2020 is a leap year) in various fun ways:

- Take a day off of work and spend it relaxing or engaging in a favorite hobby.
- Be reminded that leap years also coincide with U.S. Presidential elections, and it will soon be time to vote.
- Check out the celebrities who were born on February 29 and only get a true birthday every four years. Rapper Ja Rule, motivational speaker Tony Robbins, actor Antonio Sabato, Jr., swimmer Jessica Long and football player Eric Kendricks are some of the notable people born on February 29.

- Buy a gift for yourself or others on leap day and make it a tradition of going the extra mile to love and pamper.
- Realign your life like the calendar is being realigned by focusing on organization or personal finances.
- Leap year has arrived, and that extra day can be put to good use in various ways.

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When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.
Psalms 94:19

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they shall mount up
with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not
be weary, they shall
walk and not faint."

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3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

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When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.
Psalms 94:19

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**FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 21****GIRLS BASKETBALL**

- Class 6A Area Playoffs
- Cy-Fair 55, Tompkins 53 (OT)

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Mayde Creek 45, Cinco Ranch 43

BOYS SOCCER

- Cinco Ranch 4, Mayde Creek 3
- Morton Ranch 2, Taylor 0
- Seven Lakes 1, Tompkins 0

GIRLS SOCCER

- Tompkins 1, Seven Lakes 1
- Cinco Ranch 2, Mayde Creek 0
- Morton Ranch 1, Taylor 0

**MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 24****BOYS BASKETBALL**

- Class 6A Bi-District Playoffs
- Morton Ranch 63, Fort Bend Elkins 56
- Tompkins 57, Ridge Point 53
- Class 5A Bi-District Playoffs
- Paetow 51, Willis High 48

**TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 25****BOYS BASKETBALL**

- Class 6A Bi-District Playoffs
- Fort Bend Travis 76, Mayde Creek 55
- Fort Bend Bush 65, Katy 57

BOYS SOCCER

- Cinco Ranch 1, Seven Lakes 0
- Taylor 3, Katy 0
- Mayde Creek 4, Morton Ranch 1
- Paetow 3, Magnolia 0

GIRLS SOCCER

- Katy 4, Taylor 1
- Morton Ranch 2, Mayde Creek 1
- Seven Lakes 1, Cinco Ranch 1
- Magnolia 3, Paetow 0

THURSDAY, FEB. 27**SOFTBALL**

- Katy at Pearland Haynie Spirit Tournament
- Cinco Ranch at The Woodlands Tournament
- Morton Ranch vs. Sealy, at North Brook High, 1:45 p.m.; Morton Ranch vs. Sam Rayburn, at North Brook High, 3:30 p.m.
- Taylor vs. Montgomery, at Stratford High, TBD; Taylor at Stratford, at Stratford High, TBD

**FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 28****BOYS SOCCER**

- Tompkins at Cinco Ranch, at Legacy Stadium, 7:30 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Katy, 7:30 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Morton Ranch, 7:30 p.m.
- Paetow at Brenham, 7 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

- Katy at Mayde Creek, 7:30 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Seven Lakes, 7:30 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch at Tompkins, 7:30 p.m.
- Brenham at Paetow, 7 p.m.

SOFTBALL

- Dulles at Morton Ranch, 6 p.m.
- Clements at Seven Lakes, 6:15 p.m.
- Paetow at Klein Cain, 6:15 p.m.
- Katy at Pearland Haynie Spirit Tournament
- Cinco Ranch at The Woodlands Tournament

See **SCHEDULE**, page B6

Bryant, Higgins, Suarez take state

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Katy ISD crowned three champions at the UIL Class 6A state wrestling tournament on Feb. 22 at the Berry Center in Cypress.

Katy High senior Kishawn Higgins repeated as champion in his 170-pound class and closed his brilliant season with a 54-1 overall record. Higgins took down Plano West sophomore Faidr Mobarak in the final, 17-7.

Morton Ranch senior Jordan Suarez and Tompkins junior Kaitlyn Bryant earned gold in their respective weight classes, capitalizing on outstanding campaigns by winning their first state titles.

Suarez won the 138-pound class after finishing as regional champ each of the last two seasons. Suarez outlasted Seven Lakes senior Krista Garcia in the final and finished her final season in purple with an overall record of 44-1.

Suarez was named the Female Wrestler of the Meet. She is the Mavericks' seventh girls wrestling state champion.

Bryant, a catalyst in helping the Falcons to district and regional team championships this year, won her 165-pound class and wrapped up her season with a flawless 44-0 overall record. Bryant took down Cypress Park junior Fahydat Bello in the final.

See **STATE**, page B3



COURTESY UIL ATHLETICS

Morton Ranch senior Jordan Suarez, middle, won the 138-pound state championship and was named the state tournament's Female Wrestler of the Meet at the UIL Class 6A wrestling tournament on Feb. 22 at the Berry Center in Cypress.

ONE OF A KIND

Morton Ranch's Cryer one of the best ever

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

The tweet popped up on more than 8,700 timelines at 3:25 p.m. on Feb. 19. Authored by Houston Rockets legend and three-time NBA champion Mario Elie, it stated what has become more and more obvious during the 2019-20 high school basketball season.

"Lj Cryer is the best HS player in the city of Houston. That young man was (eating) this season. Good luck at Baylor."

Yes, it can certainly be claimed that Cryer, the Morton Ranch High senior guard who leads the city of Houston in scoring, is the best in Houston. But it can also be said that the Baylor signee is one of the top players in Texas high school basketball ever. Period.

As the playoffs started up Monday, with the No. 14 state-ranked Mavericks beating Fort Bend Elkins 63-56 to advance to the area round, Cryer is a headliner. With 3,415 points this season, an average of 35.2 per game, he ranks fifth all-time in career points in Texas high school boys basketball history. He is the top scorer all-time in the Greater Houston area, eclipsing former Houston Jones star and NBA player Daniel Gibson (2000-2004) earlier this season.

The 6-foot-1, 181-pound Cryer has 11 40-point games this season and a spectacular 50-point, 10-assist game against Mayde Creek in the Mavs' regular season finale on Feb. 18. The win capped a second straight undefeated district championship for Morton Ranch and extended the Mavs' district winning streak to 30 games, the best mark in Katy ISD in three decades.

"I've been a scorer all my life," Cryer said. "I didn't know I'd be able to score the way I do now, but I put in the work. I feel it's expected out of me."

When told he is the best scorer ever in Greater Houston area hoops, Cryer said, "It's crazy." He was unaware. But he is also cautious to not get ahead of himself.

"You can't really be satisfied with all that right now," Cryer said. "My mindset is to want more. When I'm working out, I just think there's always more I can do."

Cryer's scoring numbers are astronomical. He is also doing it at an impressively efficient rate.

Cryer averages 1.6 points per shot (1.0 point per shot is considered good). He is shooting 55.6 percent overall. On almost 10 3-point attempts per game, he is connecting on 43.9 percent; 10 times, he has made six or more 3-pointers in a game. He plays almost the entirety of games, which last 32 minutes in regulation, and only averages 22.6 shot attempts per game.

When he scored 50, Cryer did so on 25 field goal attempts. And he is far from a one-

**MAVS LEAN
ON LAMPKIN,
RESERVES
IN PLAYOFF
OPENER,**
see page B6



MARK GOODMAN

With 3,415 points this season, an average of 35.2 per game, Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer ranks fifth all-time in career points in Texas high school boys basketball history. He is the top scorer all-time in the Greater Houston area, eclipsing Daniel Gibson earlier this season.

TEXAS H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL CAREER SCORING LEADERS

NAME	SCHOOL	POINTS	YEARS PLAYED
1. Troy House	Ingram/Leakey/Blanco	4,518	1987-1990
2. Gelvin Gerke	Snook	4,018	1963-1966
3. Greg Powell	Shelbyville	3,637	1965-1968
4. Chuck Hall	Krum	3,550	1976-1979
5. L.J. Cryer	Morton Ranch	3,415	2017-2020
6. Max Williams	Avoca	3,360	1953-1956
7. Rodney Beasley	Eustace	3,356	1994-1997
8. Ricky Capello	Edcouch-Elsa	3,325	1980-1983
9. Vance Millican	Water Valley	3,303	1990-1993
10. Reggie Childress	Coleman	3,246	1978-1981

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KATY ISD BASEBALL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

- THURSDAY, FEB. 27**
CINCO RANCH
• vs. Cy-Ridge, at Cinco Ranch High, 2 p.m.
• vs. Dulles, at Cinco Ranch High, 5 p.m.
KATY HIGH
• vs. Channelview, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 9 a.m.
• vs. Fort Bend Travis, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 3 p.m.
MAYDE CREEK
• vs. Cy-Springs, at Mayde Creek High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Ridge Point, at Mayde Creek High, 5 p.m.
MORTON RANCH
• vs. Langham Creek, at Morton Ranch High, 2 p.m.
PAETOW
• vs. Cy-Ridge, at Paetow High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Dulles, at Paetow High, 2 p.m.
SEVEN LAKES
• vs. Cy-Woods, at Seven Lakes High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Fort Bend Austin, at Seven Lakes High, 5 p.m.
TAYLOR
• vs. Langham Creek, at Taylor High, 5 p.m.



- TOMPKINS**
• vs. Lamar, at Tompkins High, 11 a.m.
• vs. San Antonio Reagan, at Tompkins High, 5 p.m.
- FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28**
CINCO RANCH
• vs. Cy-Woods, at Cinco Ranch High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Lamar, at Cinco Ranch High, 5 p.m.
KATY HIGH
• vs. Dulles, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 11 a.m.
• vs. San Antonio Reagan, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 5 p.m.
MORTON RANCH
• vs. Cy-Springs, at Morton Ranch High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Cy-Ridge at Morton Ranch High, 2 p.m.
PAETOW
• vs. Channelview, at Paetow High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Ridge Point, at Paetow High, 5 p.m.
SEVEN LAKES
• vs. Cy-Springs, at Seven Lakes, 2 p.m.
TAYLOR
• vs. Fort Bend Austin, at Taylor High, 2 p.m.

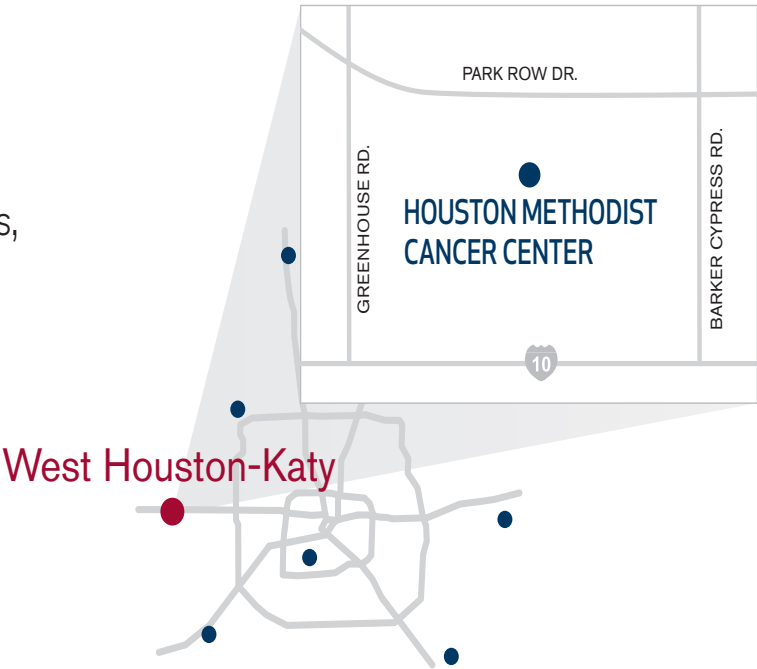
- TOMPKINS**
• vs. Langham Creek, at Tompkins High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Fort Bend Travis, at Tompkins High, 5 p.m.
- SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29**
CINCO RANCH
• vs. Langham Creek, at Cinco Ranch High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Fort Bend Travis, at Cinco Ranch High, 2 p.m.
KATY HIGH
• vs. Cy-Ridge, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 11 a.m.
• vs. Ridge Point, at Cotton Sports Ranch, 2 p.m.
MAYDE CREEK
• vs. Paetow, at Mayde Creek High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Channelview, at Mayde Creek High, 2 p.m.
MORTON RANCH
• vs. Fort Bend Austin, at Morton Ranch High, 2 p.m.
PAETOW
• vs. Mayde Creek, at Mayde Creek High, 11 a.m.
SEVEN LAKES
• vs. Lamar, at Seven Lakes High, 11 a.m.
• vs. San Antonio Reagan, at Seven Lakes High, 2 p.m.
TAYLOR
• vs. Cy-Springs, at Taylor High, 11 a.m.
• vs. Dulles, at Taylor High, 2 p.m.
TOMPKINS
• vs. Cy-Woods, at Tompkins High, 11 a.m.



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SPORTS



COURTESY MORTON RANCH WRESTLING

Morton Ranch senior Jordan Suarez pins Seven Lakes senior Krista Garcia to win the 138-pound state championship at the UIL Class 6A wrestling tournament on Feb. 22 at the Berry Center in Cypress.



COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Tompkins' girls wrestling team placed second overall at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22, capping off a program-best year.



COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Katy High's boys wrestling team placed third overall at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22.



COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Katy High senior Kishawn Higgins repeated as champion in his 170-pound class at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22 and closed his brilliant season with a 54-1 overall record.



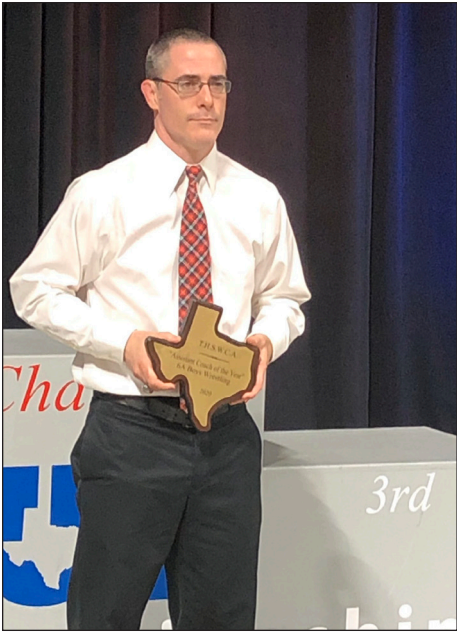
COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Tompkins senior Kaitlyn Bryant won her 165-pound class at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22 and wrapped up her season with a flawless 44-0 overall record. She is the Falcons' first wrestling state champion.



COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Tompkins assistant coach Alyssa Batiste was named Girls Assistant Coach of the Year at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22.



COURTESY KATY ISD ATHLETICS

Katy High assistant coach Bill Durnin was named Boys Assistant Coach of the Year at the UIL Class 6A state tournament on Feb. 22.

STATE

from page B1

She is the Falcons' first wrestling state champion.

Tompkins' girls finished second overall as a team behind state champ Eules Trinity. The Falcons scored 75 points, 13 behind Eules Trinity. Katy High's boys finished third overall, scoring 94 points. Allen High took first with 203.5 points for its 11th straight state title, followed by Arlington Martin in second with 100.

Following is the district champion in each 6A weight division, along with their class, school and season record. Katy ISD placers are also listed and are in bold text.

Boys

- 285: 1. George Marsh, sr., New Braunfels, 37-0; **3. Curshawn Wilkins, sr., Taylor, 45-4.**
- 220: 1. Rylan Bonds, sr., Prosper, 14-3.
- 195: 1. Zane Davis, sr., Allen, 38-7.
- 182: 1. Eli Sheeren, jr., Klein, 54-3.
- Katy, 54-1.**
- 160: 1. Elise Brown Ton, sr., Allen, 42-2.
- 152: 1. Aaron Lofton, jr., Cedar Park Vista Ridge, 49-0.
- 145: 1. Mario Danzi, so., Allen,

43-7; **5. Truman Timmons, jr., Katy, 42-10.**

- 138: 1. Luke Sloan, sr., Austin Vandegrift, 62-1.
- 132: 1. Parker Decker, sr., Keller, 42-0; **3. Luke Holland, jr., Katy, 47-10;**
- 6. Michael Bone, so., Taylor, 42-11.**
- 126: 1. Donovan Whitted, jr., Arlington Martin, 42-4.
- 120: 1. Dominic Chavez, sr., Arlington Martin, 50-3; **4. Jackson Crandall, jr., Katy, 45-6.**
- 113: 1. Braxton Brown, jr., Allen, 45-2; **5. Jeremy Manibog, fr., Katy, 41-10.**
- 106: 1. Eamonn Jimenez, so., Killeen Ellison, 36-0.

Girls

- 215: 1. Traeh Haynes, jr., Cibolo Steele, 41-0.
- 185: 1. Brittyn Corbishley, jr., Conroe Woodlands College Park, 42-0; **2. Nicole Blinn, jr., Tompkins, 38-6; 6. Nesmah Zahran, so., Taylor, 26-12.**
- 165: **1. Kaitlyn Bryant, jr., Tompkins, 44-0.**
- 148: 1. Leilani Hernandez, jr., Plano West, 37-4.
- 138: **1. Jordan Suarez, sr., Morton Ranch, 44-1; 2. Krista Garcia, sr., Seven Lakes, 44-10.**
- 128: 1. Devin Patton, jr., Plano West, 41-0; **2. Illyauna Martinez, sr., Mayde Creek, 41-7.**

- 119: 1. Camille Fournier, sr., Weatherford, 41-0; **3. Lilly Broadrick, jr., Tompkins, 36-4.**
- 110: 1. Samara Chavez, jr., Arlington Martin, 24-0.
- 102: 1. Amanda McAlevey, sr., Cypress Creek, 38-0.
- 95: 1. Olivia Degeorgio, sr., Conroe Woodlands College Park, 35-1; **4. Isabella Walsh, jr., Cinco Ranch, 33-13.**

In all, Katy ISD had nine top-three finishers at the state tournament. Junior Josiah Bernhardt was the Panthers' best finisher, placing sixth in his 152-pound class in the consolation semifinals. Bernhardt fell in a fifth-place match to El Paso Bel Air's Xavier Martin, who won in sudden victory. Bernhardt was 36-8 this season.

Junior John Abney fell in the consolation round of the 126-pound class and was 25-11 this season. Junior Jeremiah Marquez lost both of his matches in the 195-pound class and finished his season 23-10.

Junior Brittney Galindo won two of four matches in her 102-pound class and finished 34-8 overall this season. Galindo went 2-1 in the consolation round.

In all, Katy ISD had nine top-three finishers at the state tournament. Katy High assistant coach Bill Durnin was named Boys Assistant Coach of the Year and Tompkins assistant coach Alyssa Batiste was named Girls Assistant Coach of the Year.

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Cinco Ranch’s Torrence takes 2nd in contest

STAFF REPORTS

Cinco Ranch Junior High student Camille Torrence won second place in the 2020 Texas Elks State Association Hoop Shoot free throw contest held in Carrollton on Feb. 22.

Torrence, 13, placed second in the 12-13-year-old girls division, sinking 21 out of 25 attempts and missing first place in a shootout to break a tie. She competed against eight other district champions from around the state.

To earn a spot in the state competition, Torrence won her local contest, sponsored by Katy Elks Lodge, and then the Gulf Coast district shoot-off. In preparation, Torrence practiced tirelessly, taking hundreds of shots each day.

Torrence will be a stand-by for the

four-state regional contest held in Carrollton on March 22, with the national finals in Chicago, Illinois, on April 18.

Torrence is a seventh-grade student who played on the school’s undefeated district champion ‘A’ team this season. At 5-foot-11, she primarily plays the wing and post on her AAU basketball team but is versatile enough to play all five positions.

Torrence wears No. 34 in honor of one of her all-time favorite players, Houston Rockets legend Hakeem Olajuwon. Her favorite current player is the Los Angeles Lakers’ LeBron James. Her favorite team is the Rockets.

This year, more than 220,000 kids in Texas are expected to have competed in the contest, according to Kelly McDermott, TESA Hoop Shoot director.

Nationwide, more than 1.5 million boys and girls will compete in three different age groups.

“Texas Elks realizes that our children are our future, and it is important for them to learn the necessary steps to achieving goals in order to grow into successful productive adults,” TESA President Andy Mishaga said. “This is an experience they will remember and benefit from their entire lives. It is a great honor for us to be able to provide this friendly competition as a tool for our future leaders.”

The Order of Elks is a fraternal organization with nearly one million members nationwide and distributes more than \$36 million annually for scholarship, community and other charitable programs.



Cinco Ranch Junior High seventh-grader Camille Torrence won second place in the 2020 Texas Elks State Association Hoop Shoot free throw contest held in Carrollton on Feb. 22.

CRYER
from page B1

trick pony—Cryer averages 5.3 assists, 2.6 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game.

Still, he has his share of critics, especially on social media. Some say he is too point-happy. Others say he is overrated. Some simply post negative comments because agreeing that Cryer is talented and gifted would be too easy, too ... honest?

“None of it really bothers me,” Cryer said. “I laugh at a lot of it. At the end of the day, I know I play well. A lot of the negative stuff, I just use it as fuel. That’s all I can do. I can’t really change their opinion. A lot of people are happy with the way I perform, and some people just hate on it. It is what it is.”

One person who is a bit perturbed by the constant harping is Mavs coach Khris Turner. Turner hears how Cryer perhaps should not be playing as many minutes as he does, particularly considering Morton Ranch is up big the majority of games. He hears about how Cryer shoots too much.

“It all bothers me, to be honest,” Turner said. “He’s chasing a scoring record for the state of Texas, and any coach in my shoes would allow that kid the opportunity. He’s a senior. If he was a sophomore or junior, it’d be different. But this is his last year, and he’s worked for it.”

There is perhaps an underlying sentiment to the criticism. People—be it former or present coaches and players, or fans in the stands—perhaps have an issue with how much freedom Cryer is awarded. The ball is almost always in his hands; the offense dictated almost entirely upon his will.

Turner doesn’t even think twice about it.

“Somebody has something to say about everything he does. But his work ethic and his tenacity on the court has led to this,” Turner said. “If L.J. didn’t work the way he works, it’d be different. But he works. And if you criticize him, then you really don’t know his work ethic. It’s frustrating when critics make light of the hard work a kid puts in. He’s the hardest-working kid I’ve ever seen.”

Cryer’s dad, Lionel, put a basketball in his son’s hands when Cryer was 2 years old. Lionel traced Cryer’s hands on the basketball so he would have proper hand placement.

“Making sure his hand was in the middle of the ball was the main thing,” Lionel said. “Most kids at that age shot the ball with their hands on the side. Got to have your hands in the middle of the ball and follow through on every shot.”

Since then, Cryer has been shooting and dribbling, shooting and dribbling, shooting and dribbling. School and basketball have dominated his childhood.

Some summers, Cryer made 1,000 shots per day. On Sundays during the season, when the Mavs



Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer is shooting 55.6 percent overall. On almost 10 3-point attempts per game, he is connecting on 43.9 percent.

H-TOWN'S FINEST

Morton Ranch guard L.J. Cryer is leaving his mark as one of Houston's all-time great scorers thanks to a dynamic senior campaign.

GAMES PLAYED:	31
POINTS SCORED:	1,091
POINTS PER GAME:	35.2
FIELD GOALS:	391-703
FIELD GOAL PERCENTAGE:	55.6
3-POINTERS:	133-303
3-POINT PERCENTAGE:	43.9
FREE THROWS:	176-201
FREE THROW PERCENTAGE:	87.6
ASSISTS PER GAME:	5.3
REBOUNDS PER GAME:	2.6
STEALS PER GAME:	2.5

don’t have a practice or a game, he will find a gym and get up shots and do ballhandling drills late into the evenings.

During a recent late morning athletic period at school, Cryer shot 100 3-point shots from five different areas of the court.

Cryer’s passion for the game

started at an early age, and his parents, Lionel and Mica, heeded that. They fed that desire.

“I’d lay in bed and shoot the ball up and down, working on form,” Cryer said. “It’s helped. When I shoot, it comes from reps. I don’t even think about it. When I think, I tend to miss more.”

“When I’m shooting, I feel unconscious.”

Lionel is not surprised at his son’s scoring accolades. He did not raise an eyebrow watching his son score 50. The only time he or Mica have been surprised by anything Cryer has done on the court was when he scored 47 points in a game for his AAU team, Basketball University, on the Adidas circuit in Las Vegas the summer before his sophomore year.

Cryer was playing against older kids. In fact, the only time he did not play summer AAU ball against older competition was last summer.

And now?

“Now he has that attitude that he’s THAT guy,” said senior guard Westley Sellers, who has played on the same team as Cryer since they were 12 years old. “That’s where his confidence level is.”

Cryer’s status has blossomed so much that, nowadays, a 30-point



Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer has 11 40-point games this season and a spectacular 50-point, 10-assist game against Mayde Creek in the Mavs’ regular season finale on Feb. 18.

game is met with scoffs and rolled eyes. Last season, a 30-point game would have drawn high-fives and praise.

“Now, it’s like, ‘Oh, he had 30? Is he OK?’” Cryer said, holding back a laugh. “I can score more than 30 any time. But if I can get 30 and 10 assists and make the game easy, that’s what I’m going to do.”

The game comes naturally to Cryer. Scoring is breathing.

Most of the time, he uses the first halves of games to feel out defenses and get his teammates going. At halftime, it can appear he’s having a subpar game, by his standards, most of the time.

But Cryer has the innate ability to flip a proverbial switch. He did so against Mayde Creek, when he broke open a one-point game at the half and single-handedly helped lead the Mavs to a 23-point win. He did so again earlier this year at Seven Lakes, when he scored 33 of his 43 points in the second half.

That’s not a coincidence. It’s purposeful. It’s his mindset.

“I like to see how the defense is going to play me,” Cryer said. “I use a lot of ball-screens, so if they hedge it, I’ll just hit the open guy. If they don’t hedge, I just know I can start scoring. I try and get a feel for those things early. And as the game goes on, it’s a mindset that it doesn’t matter what you’re doing defensively, I have to go out and finish the game.”

Lionel has always emphasized to his son that there are times during a game when to get others

involved and times when it’s his turn to take over.

“He’s always played point guard, and he’s always wanted the game to be fun,” Lionel said. “I used to always tell him, though, ‘Look, we can’t ever let the game get out of hand. So, if you need to score, you need to score. You control all that.’ He’s always passing the ball, but when he gets down by five, gets down by 10, he’s been taught to make sure he stops the bleeding. Keep other people involved, but when it’s time to go get a bucket, go get a bucket.”

The playoffs are here, and those buckets will mean more.

Cryer said it is important to him that he plays well on such a stage. The Mavs were regional quarterfinalists last season, and, though it was the furthest the program has ever been in the postseason, it was a heartbreakingly frustrating end. But deep down, they knew they had one last run waiting with Cryer, TCU signee Eddie Lampkin and versatile stat-stuffer Sellers.

That run is now. One loss, and the legacy of the trio is done. It’s why Cryer could not care less about being fifth all-time on the state scoring list. Or No. 1 in the Greater Houston area. Or 50-point games. Or 30-game district winning streaks.

A time will come to celebrate all that. It’s just not now.

“I’ll probably soak it all in at the end of the season,” Cryer said. “Hopefully, I’m soaking it in with a state championship.”

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

WALLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT
MARCH 11, 2020 9:00 A.M.
COMMISSIONERS' COURTROOM,
WALLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Waller County Commissioners' Court will conduct a Public Hearing under the authority of Transportation Code Chapter 251, Subchapter E to consider the installation of No Parking Signs at the following location:

Willowmoor Lane (South of Kingsland Blvd) – No Parking between 7:30 – 8:30 am and 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Ashcreek Court – No Parking Resident Only

All interested persons are encouraged to attend and participate in the Public Hearing.

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APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A BEER RETAIL DEALER'S OFF-PREMISE LICENSE, A WINE ONLY PACKAGE STORE PERMIT AND A PACKAGE STORE TASTING PERMIT BY QUALITY LICENSING CORP. D/B/A QUALITY LICENSING CORP. (STORE #546) LOCATED AT 5330 FM1640, RICHMOND, FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS 77469. OFFICERS OF SAID COMPANY ARE JOHN SCUDDER, PRESIDENT/CEO; MATTHEW W. ALLEN, VP; WAYNE HAMILTON, VP; ANDREA M. LAZENBY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY; DANIEL JOHN RICE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

NOTICE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-DISTRICT MEETING PLACE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FORT BEND COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 174

To the residents and taxpayers of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 174 (the "District"), and to all the persons interested in the meetings of the Board of Directors of such District:

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the District, at a meeting held February 20, 2020, established an additional meeting place outside the boundaries of the District at Pier 36, 8502 Farm to Market 359, Fulshear, Texas, 77441.

Said meeting place is hereby declared to be a public place and open to the public. All residents and taxpayers of the District and all other interested persons are hereby invited to attend any meetings of the Board of Directors at such location and other locations previously established by the Board of Directors as meeting places of the District.

/s/ Paula Rucky
Secretary, Board of Directors

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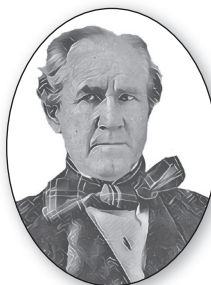
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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to **Board of Directors, Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 171**, will be received at the office of SWA Group Landscape Architects, 712 Main Street, 6th Floor Houston, Texas 77002, until **2 p.m. Local Time, Thursday, March 19th, 2020**, at which time all bids will be opened and publicly read for the furnishing of all material, equipment, labor and supervision necessary or incidental for Construction of **"Elyson Basin C Landscape"**, Harris County, Texas.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes, but is not limited to, the construction of concrete trails, sprinkler irrigation, grading, grassing, planting, and landscape maintenance.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A **MANDATORY** pre-bid conference will be held on **Thursday, March 12th, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.** Local Time, at the office of SWA Group Landscape Architects, 712 Main Street, 6th Floor Houston, Texas 77002. Bid will not be opened unless the bidder or a representative was present at the pre-bid conference.

A bid bond or cashier's check in an amount not less than 5 percent of the total amount bid must accompany each bid. The successful bidder will be required to provide the required bonds and insurance certificates as outlined in the bid documents.

Bid documents may be downloaded at www.civcastusa.com. Addenda will be posted there, as required. **Documents will be available for download on Tuesday, March 10th, 2020.**

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The Successful Bidder, if any, will be the responsible Bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, will be received at the office of LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042, until 10:00 a.m., Local Time, Thursday, February 27, 2020, and then publicly opened and read for "Construction of the Water, Sanitary Sewer and Drainage Facilities to serve Bergamo Vista Section 1 for Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, Harris County, Texas".

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: water, sanitary sewer and drainage facilities.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on Thursday, February 20, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. Local Time, at the office of LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Bonds on the forms provided, and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor.

Bidding documents may be examined at LJA Engineering, Inc., AGC of Texas, Construct Connect, and Amtek or may be obtained by prospective bidders or suppliers upon payment of one hundred dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents at LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042 or at <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidders must register on this website to download bidding documents.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The Successful Bidder, if any, will be the responsible Bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and/or Contract and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495

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EVENTS

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MARK GOODMAN

Morton Ranch senior center Eddie Lampkin attempts a shot during the Mavericks' Class 6A bi-district playoff game against Fort Bend Elkins on Feb. 24 at the Merrell Center.

Lampkin, reserves step up for Mavs

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Eddie Lampkin struggled watching his team from the sidelines as he missed half of the regular season with a right knee injury. Feeling frustrated and help-less, the Morton Ranch senior center and TCU signee sought solace anywhere and everywhere through 16 games of absence.

"I tried to stay strong, especially mentally," Lampkin said. "It was tough. I leaned on my people, my team, God. I got to the gym to shoot set shots. But now I'm here, and that's all I care about. I feel refreshed."

Perfect timing. With senior star guard and Baylor signee L.J. Cryer having a self-admitted off game, Lampkin and the Mavs' reserves paved way for a dramatic 63-56 win over Fort Bend Elkins in the Class 6A bi-district round of the playoffs on Feb. 24 at the Merrell Center.

Morton Ranch improved to 25-8 overall and stretched its winning streak to 13 games. The Mavs play Sam Houston (24-8) in the area round.

The 6-foot-10, 291-pound Lampkin totaled 13 points and 20 rebounds, the latter number a sea-son-best. Six of those points were critical, coming late during the fourth quarter when Elkins (20-14) led 54-51 with 4:32 left.

"I was exhausted, but there was no way I was trying to go home early," Lampkin said. "We want to make it to state, get to San Antonio. I played bad at the beginning of the game, so I wanted to finish strong. Get this win for my team. This made me feel great."

As Lampkin starred late, the Mavs' reserves of junior guard Dylan Syas, junior guard Kuot Wei and senior guard Ernest Ellis were impactful early.

Morton Ranch, which has had a tough time establishing consistent depth this season, got 16 points off the bench in the first half, spurred by Syas' 10. Syas, who added four rebounds and four assists, has scored in double figures in three of the last five games.

"This team is real scary when you get role players and energy guys coming off the bench to produce," said Syas, who credited his recent surge to getting up extra shots after practice. "If everybody on our team is hooping, there's nobody that can beat us."

Nobody was prouder, or more relieved, than Cryer, who scored a game-high 22 points to go with five assists, but finished 13 points below his season average.

"When they play like that, we're hard to beat," Cryer said of the bench. "I wasn't really on, and they picked up the slack for me. It's good to have them to rely on."

Lampkin was out from Dec. 10 to Feb. 14. Prior to Monday's game, he had averaged 8.5 points and 7.5 rebounds while shooting a bit under 50 percent in two games since returning to the court.

He had difficulty finding the basket early against Elkins, missing a slew of easy shots around the rim, but his rebounding was dominant from start to finish.

"Now I try to go for 20 rebounds every game," said Lampkin, who had 11 offensive rebounds and nine defensive. "Even when I miss, I want that ball back. I don't care about points. Get rebounds, block some shots."

And Lampkin closed the halves strong, a testa-ment to improved conditioning. There was a minor scare with 1:06 left in the third quarter when he hobbled back to the bench following a congested scrum underneath the basket, but he returned soon thereafter.

"I feel 100 percent," Lampkin said. "I just have to get my rhythm back, as far as getting the ball up and my touch around the rim ... everything. I feel more comfortable moving around and getting up off more on my right leg."

In the fourth quarter, trailing, Morton Ranch ran offense through Lampkin. He scored three inspired buckets, including a nice basket when he caught the ball at the top of the key, drove hard to his right and put in a layup.

"It shows him anything more than what it shows us," coach Khris Turner said. "In the beginning, I think he was trying to figure himself out and get his confidence back. After tonight, and that second half, he's getting there. This game is a start. Every game he's played, he's worked on something he needed to fix."

It was very much a welcomed sight, in the direst of situations.

"We need him to play big," Cryer said. "By him taking over at the end, I hope that gives him the con-fidence-boost. He seems hungry to me. He's going to be big for us down the stretch."



MARK GOODMAN

Mayde Creek senior guard Rommell Williams (4) scored a game-high 24 points for the Rams in a 45-43 win over Cinco Ranch on Feb. 21 that put Mayde Creek in the playoffs for the second straight season.

Rams go back-to-back in playoffs

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Of the six playoff appearances in the more than 30 years of Mayde Creek boys basketball, two have come the last two seasons.

A huge reason is Rommell Williams.

After emerging as one of the top players in the city of Houston last season in returning Mayde Creek to the playoffs, Williams once again show-cased his talent on a premier stage, put-ting the Rams on his back and willing Mayde Creek to an intense 45-43 win over Cinco Ranch on Friday, Feb. 21, to award the Rams the fourth and final playoff spot in District 19-6A.

Williams, a senior guard averaging 20 points, 5.8 rebounds and 2.4 assists entering the play-in game at Taylor High, scored a game-high 24 points against Cinco Ranch, including 10 of his team's 14 points in a defensive-minded second half.

"I've got to put the ball in my best player's hands," Mayde Creek sec-ond-year coach Anthony Fobb said after the win. "That's Rommell Williams. He's one of the most unselfish players I've ever coached. He doesn't like shoot-ing all the shots. He loves distributing. But I have to make him be aggressive. He's got to want the ball. He wanted it tonight."

The 6-foot-1, 164-pound Williams, who has signed to play with NCAA Divi-sion II power Midwestern State, added six rebounds, four steals and three

assists. He scored all of the Rams' five points in the fourth quarter as they held off a gutsy Cougars team.

"I just wanted to play hard," Williams said. "I wanted to be a leader. This feels good. I remember last year when we played Tompkins to get in, our seniors didn't want it to be their last game. I remember how they felt. I felt the same way."

Williams got things going early, scor-ing nine first-quarter points as the Rams jumped out to a 17-11 lead. But Cinco Ranch, playing without its top scorer in senior wing Jayden Collymore because of injury, was no easy out, thanks to the inspired play of 6-6 senior forward Jona-than Joseph (16 points, eight rebounds).

But defense spurred the Rams.

Williams picked up a pair of key steals in the fourth quarter that led to free throws at the other end. He was also the primary defender on Cinco Ranch's 6-5 senior forward Derek Dicken-scheidt, a talented shooter and scorer who was held to six points on 0-for-2 from 3-point range.

It was another overall strong per-formance for the Rams star, who had, al-most singlehandedly, revived his team's season.

In the first half of district play, when Mayde Creek lost five of six games, Williams averaged 16.9 points. In the second half, when the Rams surged to four wins in six games to force a play-in game, Williams averaged 30.6 points.

"When he doesn't score 20 points or more, we lost," Fobb said. "So, he's got to

be aggressive. Do what your coach asks you to do—I'm asking him to score. I'll worry about his teammates and every-thing else."

Score, he did. Williams, who has a little less than 1,300 points over the last two seasons, attacked, attacked and attacked Cinco Ranch early and often, often catching the defense on its heels as he had his way getting to the basket. He made two of three 3-point attempts and four of six free throws.

When he wasn't scoring, Willians was either dishing off against a dou-ble-team or face-guard to open team-mates, or setting tough screens to free up teammates in halfcourt sets.

"It's about the best shot for the team, and if that means me taking five shots in a row and then passing off to some-body else ... just making the right play," Williams said. "I feel lately I needed to step up, but because of my seniors and juniors."

His teammates are grateful for it.

"He's been playing great," senior guard David Chavez said. "Rommell is our leader and we count on him for the big plays. When he's aggressive, it opens up so much more. Him just being on the court is an assist because of all the attention he gets defensively."

The Rams finished the season 19-18 overall after falling to District 20-6A champion Fort Bend Travis in the bi-district round of the playoffs on Tuesday, capping a stellar career for Williams as he left an indelible mark on an upstart program on the rise.

SCHEDULE

from page B1

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29

SOFTBALL

- Katy at Pearland Haynie Spirit Tournament
- Cinco Ranch at The Woodlands Tournament
- Morton Ranch vs. Langham Creek, at Stratford High, 10:45 a.m.; Morton Ranch vs. Fort Bend Austin, at Stratford High, 12:30 p.m.
- Taylor at Memorial, at Memorial High, 9 a.m.; Taylor vs. Dulles, at Memorial High, 10:45 a.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 2

BASEBALL

- Magnolia West at Katy, 6 p.m.
- Foster at Taylor, 6 p.m.
- Paetow at Kempner, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

BOYS SOCCER

- Katy at Seven Lakes, 7:30 p.m.
- Taylor at Mayde Creek, at Legacy Stadium, 7:30 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Tompkins, 7:30 p.m.
- Waller at Paetow, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

- Seven Lakes at Katy, 7:30 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Taylor, 7:30 p.m.
- Tompkins at Morton Ranch, 7:30 p.m.
- Paetow at Waller, 7 p.m.

SOFTBALL

- Mayde Creek at Cinco Ranch, 6:15 p.m.
- Taylor at Morton Ranch, 6:15 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Tompkins, 6:15 p.m.
- Bellaire at Katy, 6:30 p.m.
- Paetow at College Station, 6:30 p.m.

BASEBALL

- Cinco Ranch at Aldine MacArthur, at Aldine Lansford Field, 7 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Fulshear, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

SOFTBALL

- Manvel at Katy, 9 a.m.; Brazoswood at Katy, 1 p.m.
- Seven Lakes vs. Channelview, at Brenham High, 11 a.m.; Seven Lakes vs. Midland Lee, at Brenham High, 3 p.m.

BASEBALL

- Cy-Springs at Katy, 11 a.m.; Huntsville at Katy, 5 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch vs. Cy-Ridge, at Lamar Consolidated High, Noon; Cinco Ranch at. Lamar Consolidated High, 5 p.m.
- Mayde Creek vs. Alief Taylor, at Pasadena Dobie High, 10 a.m.; Mayde Creek at Pasadena Dobie High, 12:15 p.m.
- Cy-Ranch at Morton Ranch, 11 a.m.; Fort Bend Austin at Morton Ranch, 5 p.m.
- Paetow vs. Bellville, at Fulshear High, Noon
- Seven Lakes at Clear Creek, 12:30 p.m.; Seven Lakes vs. La Porte, at Clear Creek High, 3 p.m.
- Taylor vs. St. John's, at George Ranch High, Noon; Taylor at George Ranch, 5 p.m.
- Tompkins vs. Leander Rouse, at Smithson

Valley High, 12:30 p.m.; Tompkins at New Braunfels Canyon, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

BOYS SOCCER

- Cinco Ranch at Morton Ranch, at Legacy Stadium, 7:30 p.m.
- Tompkins at Katy, 7:30 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Taylor, 7:30 p.m.
- Paetow at College Station, 7 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

- Katy at Tompkins, 7:30 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.
- Taylor at Seven Lakes, 7:30 p.m.
- College Station at Paetow, 7 p.m.

SOFTBALL

- Katy at Taylor, 6:15 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch at Seven Lakes, 6:15 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Mayde Creek, 6:15 p.m.
- Cy-Springs at Paetow, 6 p.m.

BASEBALL

- Cy-Ranch at Katy, 11 a.m.; Fort Bend Austin at Katy, 5 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch vs. Dulles, at Lamar Consolidated High, Noon
- Mayde Creek vs. Westbury, at Pasadena Dobie High, 10 a.m.
- Cy-Springs at Morton Ranch, 11 a.m.; Huntsville at Morton Ranch, 5 p.m.
- Paetow vs. Kinkaid, at Fulshear High, 2:30 p.m.; Paetow at Fulshear High, 5 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Clear Falls, 12:30 p.m.; Seven Lakes vs. North Shore, at Clear Falls High, 3 p.m.
- Taylor vs. Ridge Point, at George Ranch High, Noon
- Tompkins vs. Boerne, at New Braunfels High, 10 a.m.; Tompkins vs. St. Michaels, at New Braunfels Canyon High, 3 p.m.

DISTRICT 19-6A SOCCER STANDINGS AS OF THURSDAY, FEB. 27

BOYS

	DISTRICT			
	W	L	TIE	POINTS
Seven Lakes	6	1	1	19
Cinco Ranch	6	1	1	19
Tompkins	5	2	0	15
Taylor	3	4	1	10
Morton Ranch	3	5	0	9
Mayde Creek	1	5	2	5
Katy	0	6	1	1
x-clinched playoff berth				
y-clinched district title				

GIRLS

	DISTRICT			
	W	L	TIE	POINTS
Tompkins	6	0	1	19
Seven Lakes	5	1	2	17
Cinco Ranch	3	2	3	12
Morton Ranch	3	4	1	10
Katy	2	2	3	9
Taylor	2	4	2	8
Mayde Creek	0	8	0	0
x-clinched playoff berth				
y-clinched district title				