

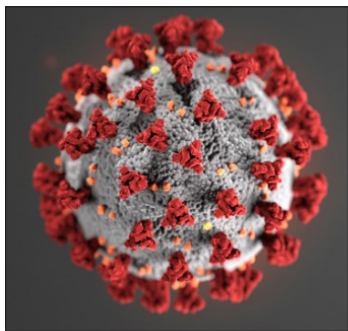
Katy Times



VOLUME 108, ISSUE 17

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020



Counties focus on virus testing

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Harris, Fort Bend and Waller counties are all focusing on testing and obtaining data to make decisions regarding what actions to take regarding COVID-19 and when to take them. They are also looking to Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott's office and local authorities to determine what is best for their respective situations, judges from each county said.

Harris

In an April 21 press conference, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said the data she is using to make decisions for the county comes from the SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council. She said the data from SETRAC indicates that numbers had leveled for a time but in the few days prior to the presser had begun to spike again. As a result, she encouraged people to continue to adhere to her Stay Home, Work Safe order that is in effect through April 30, mirroring Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott's order.

"Right now, we are winning this fight, but we don't want to steal defeat from the jaws of victory," Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo and Harris County Health Authority Dr. Umair Shah said testing to obtain comprehensive data was still key to opening the economy back up. Hidalgo said there were two reasons for that with the first being that keeping the case count low helps to make it easy to identify cases and isolate infected individuals from the general population and secondly - to continue to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed.

Currently, testing is available at

See **TESTING**, page 5

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EDUCATING



COURTESY HARRIS COUNTY CONSTABLE PCT. 5

Constable Ted Heap helps load supplies for COVID-19 prevention kits April 21 as his office distributed masks, hand sanitizer and information to residents at local parks.

Officers educate regarding COVID-19 orders, avoid citations

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy area law enforcement agencies say they have not seen a great deal of activity when it comes to residents and businesses violating the stay home orders in effect in Harris, Fort Bend and Waller Counties, agency representatives said. Most of the violations seen have taken communication and education on the orders so that people understand the orders and their purpose.

"We're just informing people of what they should be doing," said Jeff McShan, public information officer for Harris County Constable for Precinct 5 Ted Heap's office. "We're not issuing citations or anything like that."

McShan said that, while he didn't have a number of calls received regarding stay home order violations, there were not very many in the precinct and all of them could be dealt with through education which leads to compliance with the Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo's order which was initially issued March 24. McShan said helping and educating residents regarding the orders was what the department was focused on.

"Today we were handing out masks," McShan said. "We had lines a quarter-mile long, maybe longer - half a mile - at two locations where we gave out masks, gloves, sanitizer and some (safety) tips, so that was very successful."

McShan said the precinct had distributed more than 3,000 of those kits at Katy Park in downtown Katy and Bear Creek Park near the intersection of Bear Creek Drive and Clay Road.

The Harris County Sheriff's Office responded to a Katy Times inquiry with a brief statement indicating the county's constables' offices were the law enforcement agencies responsible for enforcing the Harris County order.

Waller County Sheriff Glenn Smith said his deputies have only seen between six and ten instances of violations since the Waller County Judge Trey Duhon's order went into effect March 25. In each of those, simple education has fixed the issues, he said.

Smith said his office, which is part of the task force set up to ensure compliance with the Duhon's order, has an officer on each shift armed with copies of the document. When a call comes in, the deputy goes to the scene of

the complaint and educates the resident or business owner regarding why the order was put in place, how the individual is violating the order - if they are - and leaves once compliance with the order has been established.

Smith said he was happy with Waller County residents' and businesses' responses to the COVID-19 orders. Even one mother that had a crawfish boil to celebrate her son's senior year of school shut down the event as soon as the situation was explained to her.

"We've had no pushback of any kind," Smith said.

Fort Bend County Constable for Precinct 3 Wayne Thompson said he has been having his deputies refer all violations of County Judge KP George's order, which also went into effect March 24, to him to handle personally.

"I don't like sending my deputies to do it because these are people that they also shop from and they get food from and I hate to have them shut a business down, you know," Thompson said. "And they probably know the person better than I do. So I generally try to handle those complaints myself and I always give them an opportunity to comply

See **EDUCATING**, page 5

Katy/Royal ISDs to stay closed, offer resources

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

While the rest of the state is on track to open back up over time under recent orders from Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott, both Katy and Royal ISDs announced the closure of all of their campuses in compliance with Abbott's proclamation April. 17. Officials from both ISDs said online instruction would continue to be provided to their respective student bodies.

"Understandably, many of our families and students have questions about what this may mean for graduations, summer programs, items left on campuses, athletics, fine arts and other activities. With the evolving guidance and information surrounding COVID-19 in our area, it is anticipated that established dates and procedures will inevitably be subject to future adjustment," stated Katy ISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski.

Katy ISD

Katy ISD's website (www.katyisd.org) offers resources for students, including those that may have fallen behind. Missed assignments may be made up and report cards were posted online April 9.

Students that do not have a device to access online learning may visit the district's Technology Department website and complete a campus device checkout form for assistance in obtaining a device. Once parents complete the form, an appointment for the following Wednesday will be set up to pick up the device.

The graduating class of 2020 will be able to graduate, but missed assignments must be made up no later than April 24 in order to students' incompletes and for updated GPAs and class rankings to be issued May 4.

See **CLOSED**, page 5

"The safety of our staff and students remains our number one priority, and we are committed to ensuring healthy learning environments across the district."

— RISD SUPERINTENDENT STACY ACKLEY



COLE MCNANNA

Tim Raines, co-founder and master distiller of Shire Distillery, dropped off two boxes of hand sanitizer to the Sealy Police Department and Chief Jay Reeves (center) and Captain Scott Riske (right). The distilling company out of Brookshire recently transitioned from whiskeys and vodkas to hand sanitizer.

Distillery lends a hand (sanitizer)

Shire Distilling Co. transitions from alcohol to hand sanitizer

By COLE MCNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

With an increased demand for hand sanitizer, unconventional methods of making it have come out of the woodworks. Shire Distilling in Brookshire has switched things up from making their usual liquors to making hand sanitizer to meet the need for first responders and residents.

"About three weeks ago, we got an email saying distilleries

See **SANITIZER**, page 5



Houston area's air quality is improving

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

The American Lung Association has released its “State of the Air” report for 2020 and ranks Houston as the fourteenth most polluted city in the United States in regards to ozone pollution, a press release from the organization said. Houston’s ranking has dropped due to fewer days of ozone pollution over the last year.

“This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Clean Air Act, which has been responsible for dramatic improvements in air quality. And Houston residents are seeing these benefits, and breathing less unhealthy air compared to last year’s report, said American Lung Association Advocacy Director Charlie Gagen.

Gagen said Houston still ranks high in both ozone and particle pollution which puts them with about half of Americans that are breathing what the Lung Association considers to be unhealthy air. He said the air quality across the western half of the United States is especially bad with air quality heading in the wrong direction when it comes to protecting public health. However, there is good news for Houstonians and the surrounding suburbs due to reduced ozone emissions, he said.

“Breathing ozone-polluted air can trigger asthma attacks in both adults and children

with asthma, which can land them in the doctor’s office or the emergency room. Ozone can even shorten people’s lives,” Gagen said.

This year’s report also shows a slight decrease in particulates in the air, the press release said. This is due in part to clean up and reduced emissions from coal-fired power plants, reduced diesel emissions, and less use of wood-burning devices to heat homes.

“Year-round particle pollution levels had dropped in recent years thanks to the cleanup of coal-fired power plants and the retirement of old, dirty diesel engines. However, the increase we’ve seen nationally in particle pollution in this year’s report is a troubling reminder that we must increase our efforts to reduce this dangerous pollution,” said Gagen.

This is the twenty-first year the American Lung Association has released its annual report. This report examined data from 2016 to 2018 and looks at trends going back to the first report issued.

“We all have the right to breathe clean, healthy air. The 50th anniversary of the Clean Air Act serves as a critical reminder that Americans breathe healthier air today because of this landmark law,” said Gagen. “At the same time, this year’s report shows that we must stand up for clean air – especially to safeguard our most vulnerable community members.”



NICK BEE

This year’s air report from the American Lung Association shows improvements in ozone and particulate pollution for the Greater Houston area, but ALA representatives say more work is needed to continue improvements.

KATY TIMES PET OF THE WEEK

MEET ECHO



Echo is an 18-month-old female. She was transferred to Special Pals from a kill shelter. She is a bubbly personality that is looking for her person.

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Katy Times

Oil regulators take no action on production

By MITCHELL FERMAN
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The morning after oil prices crashed negative, Texas oil regulators April 21 decided against taking action to impose limits on oil producers, instead creating a task force to gather more information on oil production cuts as the coronavirus has kept much of the world at home, crushing global demand.

The Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates the state’s huge oil and gas industry, agreed to postpone until at least May 5 its vote on the issue, which has been widely discussed across the global oil industry for weeks.

Tuesday’s public virtual meeting of the Texas Railroad Commission came a week after the three commissioners heard more than 10 hours of testimony from dozens of oil executives, analysts and critics. The three commissioners — Chairman Wayne Christian and Commissioners Christi Craddick and Ryan Sitton — had not indicated how they would vote, but on Tuesday only Sitton said he was ready to vote.

“Taking weeks, even days right now to act is in itself a choice,” Sitton said. “We are seeing a level of demand destruction and a level of oil industry downturn that in the past happened over a course of years, now happening over a course of days.”



COURTESY BILL HARVEY

Oil prices dropped below \$0 a barrel early the week of April 20, causing alarm in the industry, especially energy-sector communities such as Katy.

This Week’s Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

SUDOKU

	3							2
			6		7		5	
6					5	1		
7	5						6	
9		1				3		8
5			4					
	1	3	9		2			
4	9			6			8	

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you’ll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test.

Here’s How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers will be provided in next week’s edition.

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This Week’s Puzzle Sponsored by

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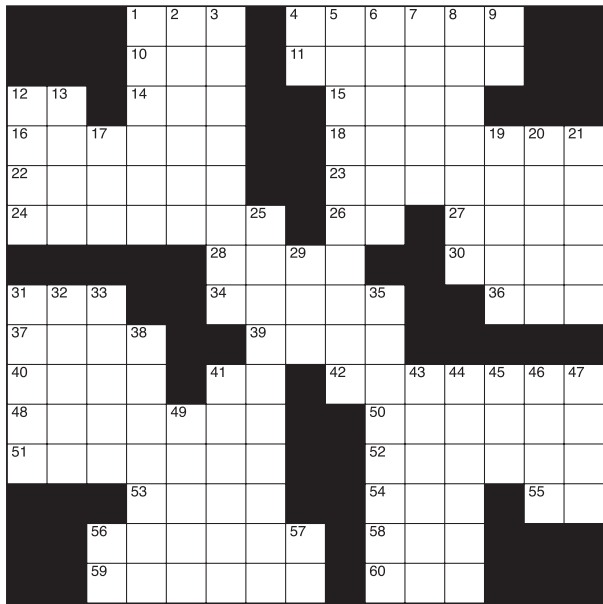
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- Revolutions per minute
- Hymns
- Brew
- Did not acknowledge
- Atomic #77
- Partly digested food
- Not one
- Lesotho capital
- Copyreading
- Living organism that feeds on organic matter
- One’s biological father
- An aggregate of molecules
- Equally
- Khoikhoi people
- Jump in figure skating
- Lantern
- TV network
- Georges __, French philosopher
- Sharp, shrill bark
- Albanian monetary units
- Launched Apollo
- One who graduated
- Exist
- Passed by
- Very unpleasant smell
- Graduates
- Seedless raisin
- Self-protection
- Clue
- Life-savers
- Ingest too much
- Misrepresented
- Small Eurasian deer
- Most mocking
- Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

- Flower cluster



- A form
- Inner organ regions
- Local law enforcement
- A citizen of Senegal
- Positively charged electrodes
- Connects granules
- Business practice
- The Mount Rushmore State
- Leader
- Hindu queen
- Proofreading mark
- European country
- Greek mythological nymph
- Grandfather
- Clears
- Amount of time
- Mollusks
- German municipality
- Body part
- City of Angels hoopsters
- Suffocate
- Pleasing to the eye
- Poplar trees (Spanish)
- Ship officer
- Individual investment account (abbr.)
- Prefix meaning within
- Ceased to live
- Day by day
- Not color
- Condition of withdrawal (abbr.)

Answers will be provided in next week’s edition.

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Orders move state toward reopening

By ED STERLING
CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

In line with signals from the White House to restart the nation's economy, Gov. Greg Abbott on April 17 issued executive orders to move the Lone Star State toward normalizing citizens' activities during the COVID-19 crisis.

Transactions that pose little threat of spreading the deadly virus may reopen using a retail to-go model beginning April 24, Abbott ordered. On the other hand, schools must remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Teachers will have limited access to campuses for video instruction, to perform administrative duties and to clean out their classrooms, the governor added. In response, the Texas Education Agency issued a statement saying, "While a difficult decision to make, it is the right one for our families and communities, and the only one that makes sense for Texas at this time."

Abbott said he would announce a revised plan for the state on April 27 based on recommendations by his newly appointed Strike Force to Open Texas. The team from the public, private and medical sectors will advise him on safely and strategically reopening the state.

Abbott also issued an order that loosens his March restrictions on non-emergency surgeries. That order was aimed at conserving hospital capacity and personal protective equipment for the COVID-19 response.

Additionally, Abbott reopened state parks effective April 20. His new order requires park visitors to wear face coverings and maintain a six-foot distance from individuals outside of their party. Groups are to be no larger than five people.

After Abbott's news conference, Texas House Democratic Caucus Chairman Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie, said, "We want the Texas economy to fully reopen as soon as possible, and public health experts agree that can only happen with robust testing in place. When it comes to decisions on how to defeat COVID-19, we have to continue to follow doctors' orders."

"Texas continues to be in the bottom three states when it comes to COVID-19

"We want the Texas economy to fully reopen as soon as possible, and public health experts agree that can only happen with robust testing in place. When it comes to decisions on how to defeat COVID-19, we have to continue to follow doctors' orders. Texas continues to be in the bottom three states when it comes to COVID-19 testing per capita, and Gov. Abbott has failed to provide a clear plan for how Texas will increase testing. ... We need to dramatically increase testing, right now."

— TEXAS HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CHAIRMAN CHRIS TURNER, D-GRAND PRAIRIE

testing per capita, and Gov. Abbott has failed to provide a clear plan for how Texas will increase testing. ... We need to dramatically increase testing, right now," Turner added.

According to figures posted by the Texas Department of State Health Services at noon on April 19, some 18,923 people in Texas had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and 477 deaths resulting from the disease had been confirmed.

Sales tax holiday set

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar is urging Texans to shop online or practice strict social distancing measures for in-store purchases during the April 25-27 sales tax holiday for emergency preparation supplies.

Hegar noted that the holiday is intended to help Texans prepare for events like hurricanes and spring storms. "Unfortunately, strong spring storms, wildfires and the upcoming hurricane season will still threaten Texans in the months ahead, and so it's important that homes and businesses have the supplies



GLENN
HEGAR

they need to face these emergencies," he said.

Hegar recommended that shoppers visiting retailers practice social distancing as described by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The list of tax-free items is established by law. It does not include items such as masks or personal protection equipment, Hegar stressed. More information can be found at comptroller.texas.gov.

Hemp grower licensed

Earlier this month, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announced the first Texas industrial hemp license had been issued to a farmer in Killeen.

The license grants the farmer the opportunity to grow hemp in Texas for one year. As a part of the application process, the applicant specified a facility where the hemp will be grown, Miller said.

This first license represents the long-awaited launch of the hemp industry in Texas following the passage of the Farm Bill by Congress in 2018, he added.



SID
MILLER

Rebuild hits milestone

Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush on April 15 announced the Texas General Land Office has rebuilt more than 1,000 homes destroyed by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The construction was funded through the Homeowner Assistance Program.

Bush's sights are set on rebuilding 7,000 homes using \$1.334 billion in available Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery, plus an additional \$500 million in Community Development Block Grants for Mitigation that come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

More than 2,500 applicants have been approved for assistance by the General Land Office. An estimated 800 homes are currently under construction, in addition to those completed.

"The GLO's disaster recovery team continues working hard every day to help Texas families rebuild their homes and their lives following one of this nation's largest and most destructive storms," Bush said.



GEORGE
P. BUSH

Physician discusses COVID-19 and Diabetes risks

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

One of the common statements issued by officials from the city to the federal level is that those with underlying conditions such as Diabetes are at higher risks of complications if they contract the new coronavirus which causes COVID-19. However, Dr. Mehjabin Parkar of OakBend Medical Group said the fact that a person has Diabetes doesn't necessarily mean they are more likely to be infected by the virus.



DR. MEHJABIN
PARKAR

"This is apparently true even though research, including a review published in the Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism, shows that the immune systems of people with persistent hyperglycemia function less well," Parkar said in a written statement issued by OakBend.

While diabetics are not at higher risk of catching the virus, Parkar said patients with diabetes that contract COVID-19 are at higher risk of complications according to one of the studies looking at patients in Wuhan, China where the new coronavirus originated.

"A small, preliminary study of 174

"If you are not under quarantine or otherwise advised to stay at home, go for a walk outside in the park – while maintaining social distancing guidelines."

— DR. MEHJABIN PARKAR

people in Wuhan, China, suggested that people with COVID-19 and diabetes but without other comorbidities (presence of two chronic diseases) were at a higher risk for severe pneumonia and inflammation that contributes to an accelerated progression of COVID-19 and a worse prognosis," Parkar said.

The study Parkar refers to was published in the March 20 edition of "Diabetes Metabolism Research and Reviews."

Parkar said there are things diabetics can do at home that will help keep them from catching COVID-19 and gives some advice on managing their condition if they become sick. The advice includes washing hands thoroughly, just as non-diabetics should, and adds a few things.

"(Diabetics) should also use soap and water to clean the areas on their body where they inject their medications," Parkar said.

Additionally, those with cold or flu symptoms should be aware that many over-the-counter medications can affect blood sugar levels, Parkar said.

Sharing needles of any sort, including for diabetes, should never be done. Parkar said patients with diabetes should check to make sure their medications, whether those medicines are for diabetes or otherwise, are fully-stocked in the home.

"I advise having extra glucagon or glucose tablets in case your blood sugar drops too low," Parkar said. "People who take insulin should have backup insulin pens (or syringes and vials) if needed, and extra ketone strips."

Remaining active is important for diabetics, even while under the stay home orders that are present in all three counties that make up the Katy area, Parkar said. She recommends creating an at-home

exercise routine to ensure that patients are able to manage blood sugar levels.

"If you are not under quarantine or otherwise advised to stay at home, go for a walk outside in the park – while maintaining social distancing guidelines," Parkar said. "If you are homebound, pop in an exercise video or hit the Peloton. Also make sure you are stocking up on food that helps you consume carbohydrates in a healthy way."

Parkar recommends that all readers, diabetic or not, follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including:

- Clean your hands often with soap and hot water or sanitizer that is at least 60 percent alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact and practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart).
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue (then clean your hands!).
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, and dirty ones immediately.
 - Stay home if you're sick.
 - Separate yourself from others if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or think you have it.
 - Wear a face mask outdoors.
 - Call ahead about medical attention unless you are having a medical emergency
- "Also, continue to manage stress and prioritize sleep — two other essentials for managing your blood sugars," Parkar said.

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MOST INSURANCES ACCEPTED

Work-from-home productivity has come a long way

COVID-19 has millions working from home. As a longtime teleworker, let me offer some advice.

Working from home has many upsides: no traffic jams, office politics or need for business attire.

But a month-plus into this pandemic, many are realizing teleworking's downsides.

My morning commute goes from my bedroom to the kitchen (for coffee) to a small den in the back of my house.

Every morning, though, one rubbernecker (me) blocks my commute by looking longingly at his unmade bed – and frequently climbing back into it.

Maintaining focus on work is challenging at home. Snacks in the fridge, Netflix on the tube, funny videos on Facebook all compete for attention.

I've been an adult for a while now, but send me a video of talking dogs and I'd hang up on the company CEO to watch it.

Another challenge is hardly ever seeing other real humans during the day.

Sure, we see clients and colleagues on monitors, but, being social animals, we long for small talk. That regrettable need is straining my relationship with my postal carrier.

Me (head covered by a green wool sock with eye holes cut out): "I hear it's going to rain tomorrow."

Postal carrier (sitting in his vehicle by my mailbox): "You're wearing a sock for a mask?"

Me: "How about a cup of coffee?"

Postal carrier: "But you look like Gumby."

I used to hang up on telemarketers. Now I look forward to their calls.

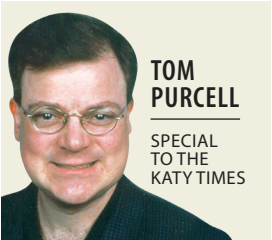
Extended-car-warranty guy: "It's only \$2,000 for three years' coverage."

Me: "My truck's still under the manufacturer's warranty. How's the weather where you are?"

Those of us able to work from home – able to maintain income while much of the country's shuttered – are incredibly lucky.

Thanks to innovation, we have powerful smartphones and laptops, plus super-fast fiber optic lines at home.

We can collaborate with colleagues all over the globe, share large files and run complex financial



TOM PURCELL
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

reports – as if we're in the office.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate the 1918 Spanish Flu killed 50 million people around the world and 675,000 in America, when our population was a third of what it is now.

Working from home wasn't an option for most back then.

Though the telephone had been invented four decades earlier, only about a third of U.S. homes had one, FastCompany reports. Still, the telephone offered some hope.

People were beginning to order groceries by phone. Newspapers and magazines remained the primary forms of mass communication – the first radio news broadcast wasn't until 1920 – but phones offered opportunities to share news.

However, phone calls required operators to manually make connections – operators who couldn't practice social distancing.

They "sat at banks of switchboards in tight quarters, elbow to elbow with any infected coworkers," FastCompany says.

Many operators became sick and phone systems couldn't keep up with demand – making the 1918 pandemic all the worse.

Despite many unpleasant setbacks, lots of positive storylines are arising from the current pandemic. One incredible silver lining is that millions of Americans can still work productively as it unfolds.

That's the good news.

The not-so-good news: When all of this is over and the sock comes off my head, my postal carrier isn't likely to accept that cup of coffee.

Maybe I'll give the FedEx driver a try.

Tom Purcell, author of "Misadventures of a 1970's Childhood," a humorous memoir available at amazon.com, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist. Send comments to Tom at Tom@TomPurcell.com.



The most famous people I've ever met

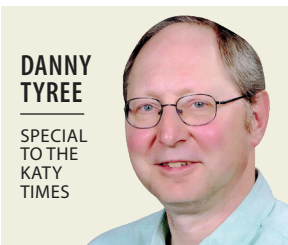
On a recent Saturday afternoon, 86-year-old Uncle Doug shared a bit of family lore about his grandfather (my great-grandfather).

When great-grandpa Henry Lee Gipson was four years old, a stranger came knocking on the door. The visitor introduced himself and went inside to conduct his business. As he was leaving, he apologized for using a pseudonym and confided that his real name was Jesse James!

(This was when Jesse and brother Frank were living in Nashville, and three or four years before "that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard" "laid poor Jesse in his grave," as the folk song goes.)

Times have changed. Now kids are paranoid about accepting a Milky Way from a kindly stranger. In great-grandpa's day, the protocol was "You're getting' a butt-whuppin' unless you hurry up and let the train robber in!"

That insight into family history made me start thinking about the handful



DANNY TYREE
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

of famous or near-famous people I've met over the years. In 1977, while on a youth tour of Washington, D.C., I cornered Sen. Howard Baker (famous for the "What did the president know and when did he know it?" line during the Watergate investigation) so I could deliver an impassioned plea. The hapless senator was obviously thinking, "What is a TASER and when can I get one?"

On the same trip, outside the White House, a fast-walking President Jimmy Carter told me, "The Secret Service will have to take that." (You'll have to wait for my memoirs for the context on that one.) Suddenly, as I sit typing, I FINALLY experience my "what I should'a said" mo-

ment. I should have said, "Well, excuuuuuse me!!!"

On September 23, 1980 I got to shake hands with William F. Buckley, Jr. (founder of "National Review" and host of public television's "Firing Line") after he delivered a speech on campus. I got the impression that if the erudite Buckley ever hit one of those thumbs with a hammer, there would be a torrent of 14-letter words.

On September 22, 1981 I turned down a chance to interview actor William Windom because leaving the theater in time to meet the writing deadline would mean missing his performance as James Thurber. Also, without the modern research crutch of the internet, I would've been stuck in Chris Farley mode. ("Remember when Thurber wrote that story for some magazine or another? That was awesome!")

On November 19, 1981 I dined with public speaker/filmmaker/activist Jean Kilbourne before introducing her presentation about (sexist) "Images of Women

in Advertising." Despite promising, I STILL haven't sent her a copy of my news article about the experience. (There are some remaining commitments ahead of her. Mrs. Shelton, I promise to have that vinegar-and-baking-soda volcano done before summer break!)

But enough about me. I'd like to hear your own accounts of meeting celebrities, either before or after they became famous. Chats in the autograph line are fine, but it would be especially interesting if you "met cute" or there was an ongoing relationship.

Have you kept the encounter to yourself, or are you a name dropper? Was the celebrity everything you expected, or less? Did they put their pants on one leg at a time, or did they lecture you that the evil capitalists at Levi should volunteer to put the pants on for you?

Enquiring minds want to know!

Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetyrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades."

Katy Times

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TESTING

from page 1

two county-run sites in Katy and Baytown as well as two mobile sites and some Walgreens locations, Hidalgo said.

“We still have testing capacity at our sites in Baytown and Katy,” Shah said.

When asked by journalists if she would extend her Work Safe, Stay Home order if she felt it necessary, even if it were against Abbott’s wishes, Hidalgo said she and the governor had worked closely together over the last few weeks and she would work to continue that bipartisan effort but did not directly answer the question.

Fort Bend

Fort Bend County began issuing more comprehensive data on how the new coronavirus has impacted its residents. The county’s online response hub began reporting cases by zip code on April 13 and case demographic information was released April 21.

“I am committed to transparency and that means releasing data about the novel coronavirus cases accurately and quickly,” said County Judge KP George. “I ask everyone of all ages, genders, races and areas in Fort Bend to help stop the spread of this virus in our county by social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks in public places.”

As of April 21, 34% of the confirmed COVID-19 patients in Fort Bend County were black, 22% Hispanic, 21% Asian, 19% white and 4% some other race, a county press release said.

Fort Bend County Commissioner for Precinct 3 Andy Meyers and George both expressed concern as residents submitted complaints regarding property values and the impact property taxes based on Jan. 1 appraisals will have on economic recovery in the county. Both point toward assessments from the Fort Bend County Appraisal District that increased values for home owners significantly.

“This week, I’ve heard horrific stories of homeowners

CASE COUNT

The three counties that the Katy area falls within have thousands of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus. Authorities in the region believe the numbers are underreported due to the lack of testing capability though that capability is increasing. While Harris County’s sites have tested slightly more than 13,000 people, they do not know how many people have been tested by private companies such as clinics and hospitals.

The data below is accurate as of 7:30 p.m. April 21.

HARRIS CO. AND HOUSTON
CONFIRMED CASES: 5,143
ACTIVE CASES: 3,804
RECOVERIES: 1,260
DEATHS: 79

FORT BEND COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 808
ACTIVE CASES: 693
RECOVERIES: 97
DEATHS: 18

WALLER COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 24
ACTIVE CASES: 10
RECOVERIES: 8
DEATHS: 0

TEXAS
CONFIRMED CASES: 20,196
ACTIVE CASES: 13,193
RECOVERIES: 6,486
DEATHS: 517

UNITED STATES
CONFIRMED CASES: 824,069
ACTIVE CASES: 703,895
RECOVERIES: 75,050
DEATHS: 45,124

whose “land value” has shot up by six figures. Flooding victims who allegedly now own homes with a “market value” rising more than 10% a year,” Meyers said in a statement on Facebook.

Meyers and George have both been working with state-level officials who have the authority to address the issue, they said.

The Fort Bend County Commissioners Court passed a resolution April 21 to petition state officials for formal relief on tax assessments.

“The power to revert property appraisals to their 2019 levels lies solely in the hands of our state elected officials such as our Governor, our Comptroller, and our Legislature. I will work with any public official from any side of the aisle to better this process for our residents,” George said.

Waller

Waller County Judge Trey Duhon said via Facebook that the county has a total of 24 cases to date with only about ten of those cases being active and the Texas Department

of Emergency Management in conjunction with the Texas National Guard will be deploying a mobile COVID-19 testing center to the county soon.

“We don’t have a lot of information yet on when, where, etc., but the unit will be here in Waller County for one day and people who want to get tested will have to go online and fill out an application,” Duhon said.

Duhon said orders issued by Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott opened state parks to the public with some restrictions April 20. Texas retail businesses are expected to open April 24, though there would be some restrictions such as only offering curbside service for retail customers. The lifting of additional statewide restrictions will be announced by Abbott on or before April 27.

The governor’s stay home order is currently set to expire April 30. If the governor chooses to, state law allows him to renew the order for up to 30 days, but no announcement indicating such an extension has come at this time.

Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls said his officers were not ticketing anyone during what he said is a difficult time already. Like other offices in the area, his department is focused on education and helping citizens rather than issuing fines.

“We’re not citing people for (violating the order), but for the most part the people of Fort Bend County are complying to the order,” Nehls said. “It’s a difficult time out there and the last thing I need to be doing is harassing people and we’re not doing that. I think people are doing a fantastic job as it relates to heeding the warnings and taking the advice of the CDC.”

Katy Police Chief Noe Diaz echoed the other law enforcement officers’ regarding residents and businesses being compliant with the order. There had been reports of children or young adults gathering at a baseball field, but those matters were resolved without incident, Diaz said.

“As always, the health and safety of our community is a paramount concern of ours and is especially more so during this pandemic,” Diaz said. “We will continue to work diligently to ensure compliance with the measures in place to contain this virus, and we are grateful for the continued efforts of our community to keep Katy healthy.”

regular 2019-2020 school year, a statement from the district said. Online materials will continue to be provided each week to students via online coursework provided by teachers.

Royal ISD is offering resources through its website including counseling for students in need of assistance, details on drive-thru meals, information on the new coronavirus from government agencies, and technical support to support online instruction. Information is available at www.royal-isd.net.

Additionally, the district is asking parents with students who have been issued a Chromebook by the district to get close enough to connect to district WiFi and update their students’ assignment information using the district’s wireless network. Students with their own devices and internet connections may utilize them to complete assignments.

Students in need of a device for online learning may contact the school district to schedule a time to pick one up, Royal ISD Spokesperson Christi Ginn said.

Details on graduation and a possible summer prom

reschedule are expected to be addressed later this week, Ginn said.

Consolidated Communications and Spectrum Internet are both providing internet at no cost to students for a limited time during the crisis. Contact information and details may be found at <https://www.royal-isd.net/article/216654?org=royal-isd>.

“RISD is committed to staying connected with our families; we will get through this together and be stronger when it’s all over,” a statement from RISD spokesperson Christi Ginn read.

Administration in both schools offered words of appreciation and support for their students, parents, faculty and staff.

“I am truly appreciative of our school community’s commitment to supporting student learning, while protecting the health and safety of Katy ISD children and staff,” Gregorski said.

“The safety of our staff and students remains our number one priority, and we are committed to ensuring healthy learning environments across the district,” a statement from RISD Superintendent Stacy Ackley said.

SANITIZER

from page 1

are now allowed to start making sanitizer, there’s a shortage of sanitizer and there’s an increased demand for it,” said Tim Raines, co-founder and master distiller at Shire Distilling in Brookshire. “What we started doing is we switched all our operations over. We shut down all our whiskey and vodka production and everything is strictly sanitizer for the past three weeks.”

The distillery has been pushing out 750 mL bottles as well as four-ounce bottles but last week Raines made a special delivery to the Sealy Police and Fire Departments to drop off boxes of sanitizers to those on the frontlines. The Katy Police Department came in asking for assistance April 20, and with the help of different rotary groups in the region, the distillery has committed to helping them as well said Shire Distillery cofounder and president, George Daher.

“We went in conjunction with two Rotary Clubs, the Rotary Club of Katy and the Brazosport Rotary Club,” Raines said. “They’re a bunch of great folks that volunteered to help us with a lot of the bottling and together we got a lot of a lot of 750-milliliter bottles bottled up. Those are all going the first responders, fire stations, EMS; just anyone that’s strictly in need of it and are on the frontlines. We’re doing everything we can to get this product in everyone’s hands, literally.”

He added four-ounce bottles are also on sale for \$2.50 at the distillery where it has been a hand-made process. The main bottling line has been moved into what usually serves as a taproom and the crew bottles the sanitizer by hand now, Daher said.

“The rotary clubs for these big batches have been a tremendous help,” Raines said. “(They) were able to raise enough funds to go in parts with us to put basically all of our funds to sanitizer. Not only did they help financially, but they helped volunteer-wise as well. We scheduled days

where they would come out to the distillery and we’d set up a big old bottling line. ... It’s all done by hand; we are a small distillery so we don’t have the big automated machinery where you just press a button and everything gets made on its own.”

Shire Distillery was formed in 2017 and Raines said they’ve been learning plenty over the last few years but all of that learning has shifted a bit as they’re now being forced to create concoctions they’ve never had to deal with before.

“It was difficult because we were in our normal trend of our whiskey operations,” Raines said of the transition from drinking alcohol to sanitizing alcohol. “Now we’re here learning recipes we’d never thought we’d be learning before, mixing ingredients we never thought we’d be mixing before; glycerin, hydrogen peroxide, near 80% ethyl alcohol.”

The beginning stages were certainly trial and error but they’ve been able to produce enough to start handing out to local entities in small towns that sometimes get forgotten during a crisis, Raines said.

“The first few batches of making this (was in) very small batches, and then from there we’ve learned how to optimize the process and start scaling things up,” Raines said. “Now here we are doing larger bottles, getting them out to as many folks as we can. A lot of the small towns get forgotten, you know. We’re in a small town so we want to make sure that everyone’s taken care of.”

The distillery itself is in the small town of Brookshire, located at 505 Bains Street suite 303, and is open Monday through Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m.

“Any of our liquor sales, the money we’re making from that is going right back into the sanitizer operation,” Raines said. “The sales we’re making from our front door are just helping push this project and grow it and get it in more folks’ hands. Everyone be safe, keep your hands clean and the quicker we all do our part and do it right then the quicker we’ll get through this.”

R. Hans Miller contributed to this story.



EDUCATING

from page 1

voluntarily and so far, every place that I have visited and explained the rules to them, they have done that.”

Thompson said that, while business owners have generally tried to explain somehow that their business is essential, the business owners know they’re not even in a gray area of the order and are just desperate to keep their businesses operating, which he understands. There are a variety of businesses the order doesn’t allow to remain open, he said, and he understands people are trying to make a living.

“It’s been pretty random so I’ve had everything from a barbecue pit company to a Relax the Back store and yesterday I went to a CBD dispensary, so I think I’ve got them all covered,” Thompson said.

Thompson said he was concerned that children have been found playing with neighbors from other households because that violates the order and can lead to groups larger than ten. Golfing is ok, he added, as long as social distancing is practiced, and golfers don’t go into clubhouses or clump up in groups.

CLOSED

from page 1

May 2020 graduation ceremonies are currently on schedule; however, Katy ISD is planning contingency dates for graduations in the event that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated orders are extended through the May ceremony timeframes. If necessary, graduations would be rescheduled for June 10-18, rather than May 16-22.

Katy ISD seniors should keep their prom dresses and consider rescheduling tux rentals as well. Proms have been rescheduled for June 10-18. The new dates would not require a ticket to the dance, a statement on the district’s website said.

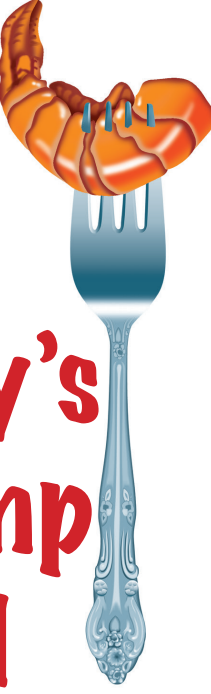
Katy ISD also advises that transcripts for seniors are still being mailed out each Tuesday during the month of April. Parents or students with questions should reach out to their campus registrar for more information.

Royal ISD

Royal ISD schools will continue distance instruction through the remainder of the

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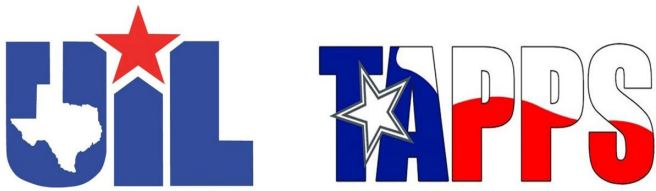
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UIL, TAPPS cancel remaining seasons

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

After Gov. Greg Abbott announced Friday afternoon that schools will not return to physical session in 2020, the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) both canceled their remaining spring activities and state championships.

Boys' basketball, soccer, track and field, golf, tennis, baseball, softball and powerlifting will not crown UIL state champions for the 2020 seasons while no TAPPS teams will complete baseball, softball, golf, tennis or track and field seasons.



Some UIL sports, like boys' basketball, were only games away from deciding the top teams in the state while track and field had just barely gotten its first meets in. Most baseball and softball squads had yet to even start district competition.

"Our staff had been working hard on plans to resume activities this spring, but without schools

in session, interscholastic activities cannot continue," said UIL Executive Director Dr. Charles Breithaupt. "Our highest priority during this challenging time is ensuring the health and safety of our students and communities and making progress in the containment of COVID-19 in Texas. We are now turning our attention to the 2020-2021 school year."

TAPPS Executive Director Bryan Bunselmeyer similarly said their staff had been working on resumption plans via weekly conference calls but offered his thoughts to those missing out on their final year of competition.

"Thank you to our seniors who have worked hard for not only this spring, but over the last four years," Bunselmeyer said. "While we can no longer provide an avenue for your senior season to progress to its normal conclusion, we do wish to recognize you as you move to your next opportunities."

The Faith West Academy Eagles baseball and softball teams had just begun their season but sat atop their standings with baseball

owning a 3-4-1 record and softball registering a 1-1 mark. The track and field team had only attended two meets.

On the UIL stage, spring football at the 5A and 6A levels was also canceled although extra time was added onto the beginning of the fall season.

No Katy teams were affected by the basketball championships being put on hold but the soccer season had just one game remaining in the regular season.

The Seven Lakes boys owned the top spot in District 19-6A with a 9-1-1 record with Cinco Ranch not far behind at 8-1-1 with five

See **CANCEL**, page 9

St. Edward's to cut six athletic programs

Sriniketh already planned on transfer to A&M

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Although St. Edward's University was forced to discontinue six of its Division II athletic programs, former Tompkins tennis state champion Anish Sriniketh already planned on this year being his last in Austin with a transfer to Texas A&M on the horizon even before the pandemic cut his sophomore season short.

"A lot of the guys on the team and other teams are left in a state of uncertainty," Sriniketh said in a phone interview Saturday. "All the sports that were cut are teaming together to get the programs back and we have a petition that 10,000 people have signed."

Men's and women's tennis, men's and women's golf and men's soccer are the sports shutdown while cheerleading will be transitioning to a club sport.

Sriniketh had been starting out on a promising second season, holding a No. 4 ranking in the nation before the National Collegiate Athletics Association canceled the rest of its spring seasons on March 12.

Still, he and his coach came into this season knowing Sriniketh would be an Aggie next year so luckily, he was ahead of the process some of his teammates are entering if they want to transfer to continue their athletic careers.

"I thought it was the right decision for me, I wanted a higher level of tennis as well as the different atmosphere," Sriniketh said of what led to his decision to transfer. "I love St. Ed's and the tennis and the school, but I think what was best for me right now was just a change in the level of competition, I want to improve my tennis to see where it can take me."

Sriniketh's head coach at St. Edward's, Esteveam Strecker, wholeheartedly supported his decision because part of the commitment included the possibility of Sriniketh jumping up to the Division I ranks. Now that it's coming true, Strecker sees the transition similar to "trading in a Honda and buying a Porsche."

"Anish was a dream-come-true recruit for a

school and program like St. Edward's," Strecker said. "In the summer of 2018, I probably was the luckiest head coach of the entire NCAA because this is a guy that is top five in the state of Texas, a lefty, an absolutely beautiful tennis player; and he's not being recruited by anybody. ... One of the things that we talked about during the recruiting process was, 'Look, you're not really getting any interest from Division I schools but I feel like you eventually can get to that level.'"

The hard work they put in seems to be paying off and Sriniketh elaborated on representing the Tompkins Falcons on the college circuit.

"It's really cool to see how far I've gone since playing for Tompkins," he said. "Going from St. Ed's and now to A&M, it's crazy. I hope I can inspire a few kids to also play college tennis. I've talked to some of the guys and they want to play college tennis and I hope I can just help them and they can see how I'm doing and they can get inspired to play tennis at the next level as well."

His high school coach, Joshua Martinez, saw Sriniketh's potential early although it's hard to ignore a sophomore at the state championships.

"As soon as he came on campus, he was legit," Martinez said in a phone interview Friday afternoon. "He took third in district as a freshman in a really, really tough district. His second year, he won the district and went to the state tournament and then the third year he struggled a little bit and ended up taking third in district. His goal his senior year was to go undefeated, and he only had one loss the entire year in the regional final to the kid that he ended up beating in the state final."

Martinez added that he'll soon have another Sriniketh on the team as Anish's seventh-grade sister, Ananya, is coming into her own as a tennis player although there are some stark similarities in the siblings' playing styles.

"He's a really good role model for her and can help her progress," Martinez said. "Really looking forward to getting her in a year or so. ...

See **PROGAMS**, page 9



PHOTO COURTESY ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Anish Sriniketh, a state champion tennis player for Tompkins in 2018, will be moving a little closer to home for his next few years of collegiate tennis. After a year-plus at St. Edward's University, Sriniketh already had plans of transferring to Texas A&M before St. Ed's announced it will cut six athletic programs, tennis included.

Eight Texan basketball players chosen in WNBA draft

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

The next generation of WNBA stars found their new homes at last weekend's virtual draft with all draftees at their homes waiting for calls from respective teams.

Out of the 36 selections over three rounds, eight former collegiate athletes played their NCAA ball in Texas with all but two also attending Texas high schools.

After a pair of Oregon teammates were taken with the top two picks to kick things off Friday night, a pair of Texas athletes were taken consecutively.



Flower Mound High School alum Lauren Cox earned Big 12 Player of the Year honors in her senior campaign at Baylor, finishing

with 12.0 points per game and 7.5 rebounds per game for her collegiate career. She was chosen with the No. 3 overall pick to become

the newest member of the Indiana Fever.

After her was Mansfield Timber-view product Chennedy Carter who led Texas A&M with the nation's sixth-best point-per-game average (21.3) this year and was made the No. 4 overall pick by the Atlanta Dream.

Carter was an All-American all three years in College Station, twice on the second-team and once an honorable mention, and left A&M the second-leading scorer in history while becoming the fastest to score 1,000 points.

In the second round, a trio of

Texas college athletes was picked consecutively starting with Brittany Brewer at No. 17 to the Atlanta Dream. The Abilene Wylie and Texas Tech alum closed her career as a Red Raider with All-American honorable mentions as well as All-Big 12 first-team and Big 12 All-Defensive team honors, being the only player in Division I to average 15 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

Following her was Baylor's Te'a Cooper who was chosen by the Phoenix Mercury with the 18th pick. As a grad transfer from South

See **DRAFT**, page 9

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Linda Marie (Brown) Grayson peacefully passed away Sunday April 12th at home, in Katy, surrounded by her loving family. Linda was born on November 3rd 1948 in Cleveland, Texas to Billy Ray Brown and Norene (Martin) Brown.

Linda grew up in North Houston with her parents, brother, and many family and friends. She graduated from Sam Houston High School in 1966. She married fellow Sam Houston High School alumni of 1965, and married Mike Grayson in August of 1968. They moved to North Carolina for a couple of years while Mike served in the USMC at Camp LeJeune. They moved back to Texas with a new baby in tow. Four years later, they had their second child. They moved to Katy, Texas four years later, in 1978, and have never moved out of the area. Linda was a stay at home mom for many years then worked for KISD at West Memorial Junior High for a time. She's been a housewife since. She was the center of our family. Linda planned many family trips and always made every occasion wonderful. We vacationed and visited with their dear friends from high school, the Coates and Tidwell's for as long as I can remember and mom cherished those times together. She became a grandmother in 2010 to Max. She loved her family beyond measure. Linda always loved and took



LINDA MARIE GRAYSON
1948-2019

care of us and would fight for our happiness. She was a strong woman, a bit feisty, and always had a great sense of humor. In later years, Linda took care of her husband who has Alzheimer's. It was not an easy time, but she persevered. She loved unconditionally and was by my father's side until the day she passed away. It took all her strength to fight a liver disease for over eight years. Sadly, her body grew tired and after a day surrounded by family for Easter, she passed away on April 12, 2020.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, James "Mike" Grayson, her eldest daughter Jamie Grayson, and her youngest daughter Karen Grayson-Kostor and her husband David Kostor, also Max (her eldest daughter's son), as well as her brother Ray Brown and wife Bonnie. She was preceded in death by her parents Billy Ray Brown and Norene (Martin) Brown (formerly of Sealy, Texas) and father/mother-in-laws, James E Grayson and Willie ("Tedd") Craddock-Grayson (formerly of Bogata, Texas, then Houston, Texas). She loved and was loved by many friends and family. We will miss her dearly, but never forget her.

Due to Coronavirus, we will be scheduling a memorial service at a later date. Her immediate family gathered for her burial on April 16, 2020. In lieu of flowers, plants or notes of condolences are preferred.

Steve C. Smith, 63, of Bellville, Texas and formerly of Katy, Texas passed away peacefully surrounded by his family at his home on April 12, 2020. He was born March 22, 1957 in San Bernardino, California to the late James R. and Norma J. Smith

Steve worked as a Maintenance Team Lead for Bass Pro, Katy, Texas for the past 5 years. Prior to that he was Director of Security for Katy Mills Mall for 15 years.

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Tammy R. Smith: Children, Eric C. Smith and his wife Bethany, Kari R. Smith and fiancé Zach



STEVE C. SMITH
1957-2019

Self, 1 grandchild Tristan Deason, all of Bellville. Sisters in law Tracy A. Hogan of Waller, Karen D. Plante of Sealy and brothers in law R. David Albright and his wife Ruth of Salisbury, MA, and Esteban (Stevie) Rivera of Katy. As well as several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents James R. and Norma J. Smith and sister Katherine A (Kate) Smith.

Steve was cremated per his wishes. There will be no services. Those

wishing to make memorial donations, may do so in Steve's honor to the charity of their choice.

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Psalms 94:19

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Isaiah 40:31

*"But those who wait
on the LORD shall
renew their strength;
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

Sharing the Gospel

*When the cares
of my heart
are many,
your consolations
cheer my soul.*

Psalms 94:19

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MISC.

April 16
Puzzle Answers

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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Electronic Bids addressed to Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, Attention: Mr. Steve Sams, President, Board of Directors, will be **electronically** received, until 3:00 p.m. Local Time, May 12, 2020, and then publicly opened and read at via virtual conference call for "Katy Pointe Section 3 Amenities for Harris County M.U.D. No. 495, Harris County, Texas".

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: trail grading, sidewalks/trails, planting, irrigation.

Bids received after the closing time will not be considered. **NO** pre-bid conference will be held.

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. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the *original* certified or cashier's check within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the bid opening.

Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from www.CivcastUSA.com: search "Katy Pointe – Section 3 Amenities" or Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, soils report, and environmental reports for this Project. There is NO charge to view or download documents.

Bidder must submit its Bid and bid securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all Bids and bid securities must be submitted through [www.civcastusa.com]. Bidder must register on this website in order to submit a Bid and bid security and there is no charge to submit Bids and bid securities on this website.

By submitting a Bid, Bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed or agreed to through the use of an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts.

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.

HARRIS COUNTY M.U.D. No. 495

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REAL ESTATE

Bankruptcy Sale – Premium Turnkey Guest Ranch on 72± Beautiful Acres. 4168 County Rd. 444, Waelder, TX – Austin Area. Potential Uses Include: Rehab Retreat, Bed & Breakfast, Wedding/Event Venue, Private Resort. Bid Deadline: May 6. Recently Appraised: \$4,400,000. 855-755-2300 HilcoRealEstate.com.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice Is Hereby Given That The Building And Standards Commission Of The City Of Katy, Texas, Will Hold A Public Hearing On **Thursday, May 7, 2020, At 4:00 P.M.**, By Teleconference At (888)475-4499, Meeting ID: 820 5108 2295. Said Hearing Is To Hear And Discuss Final Corrective Action For A Constructed Stair Case In The Garage. **Legal Description: 7206 Brenta Court In Cane Island Section 16, Block 2, Lot 10 In Waller County.** Property Owner Of Record Is **Mark Foreman Sinclair and Karen Duhon**, And All Other Vested Interests In The Property Are Hereby Notified.

The Building And Standards Commission Will Allow For Public Comment On This Matter.

KATY ISD invites Private Non-Profit Schools

Private non-profit schools serving students who reside in Katy ISD attendance zones have the option to participate in federal grant programs. If the Non-profit school wishes to participate, a consultation meeting can be scheduled to provide an overview of current federal programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) and other services. Non-profit schools interested in participating in these federal grant programs for the 2020-2021 school year should contact Dotty Winski at 281-396-2243 to schedule a consultation meeting to discuss programs and eligibility requirements.

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, May 14, 2020, and then publicly opened and read for "Construction of the Paving and Appurtenances to Serve Bergamo Vista Section 1 for Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, Harris County, Texas". Bidders may elect to submit bids electronically via <https://bids.lja.com>.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: paving and appurtenances.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on Thursday, May 7, 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. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the *original* certified or cashier's check within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the bid opening.

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.

A Bidder submitting electronic Bids must submit its Bid and bid securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all electronic Bids and bid securities must be submitted through <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidder must register on this website in order to submit a Bid and bid security and there is no charge to submit Bids and bid securities on this website.

By submitting a Bid, Bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed or agreed to through the use of an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts.

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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CANCEL
from page 7

fewer goals for and two more goals against. Tompkins (7-3) and Taylor (4-5-1) looked to have the final two playoff spots locked up over Morton Ranch (2-8), Mayde Creek (1-6-1) and Katy (0-7).

For the girls, Tompkins was the top team at 9-0-1 ahead of Seven Lakes with an 8-1-2 record in District 19-6A. Cinco Ranch (4-3-3) was the only other team to register a win in district play, holding a lead over Taylor (0-3-1), Katy (0-4-1), Mayde Creek (0-4) and Morton Ranch (0-6).

Most softball teams had at least one district game played and Cinco Ranch (2-0) led the group ahead of Katy (1-0), Tompkins (1-0), Mayde Creek (0-1), Taylor (0-1), Seven Lakes (0-2) and Morton Ranch (0-0).

On the baseball diamond, Cinco Ranch was the top team in non-district play, finishing with a 13-1-1 record. Tompkins (10-2-1), Katy (12-3-2), Taylor (8-6), Mayde Creek (4-4-1), Seven Lakes (3-1) and Morton Ranch (3-7).

At the 5A level, Paetow boys' soccer owned first place with a 7-1-4 record ahead of second-place Magnolia with a 7-3-2 mark. The girls were at the bottom of the District 19-5A standings at 1-9-2 alongside Waller. The Panther softball team was 0-1 in district play while baseball was 0-5-1 in its start to non-district competition.

DRAFT
from page 7

Carolina University, Cooper earned Big 12 co-Newcomer of the Year honors as well as an All-American honorable mention in her final collegiate season.

The next pick was owned by the Seattle Storm and Joyner Holmes was the choice with the No. 19 overall pick. The Cedar Hill alum played her college ball for the Texas Longhorns and earned Freshman of the Year and Big 12 first-team honors before closing her career with back-to-back Big 12 honorable mentions.

In the third round, Erica Ogwumike was made the newest member of the New York Liberty with the No. 26 pick although she was later traded to the Minnesota Lynx. Erica became the third of four Ogwumike sisters to make the WNBA with former No. 1 overall picks Nneka (2012)

and Chiney (2014) both on the Los Angeles Sparks by way of Cy-Fair High School and Stanford University.

Erica was a 2015 state champion at Cy-Woods High school, earning MVP honors of the 57-49 win over Dallas Skyline with a game-high 26 points. She made her name in the collegiate ranks for the Rice Owls, twice being named Conference USA's Player of the Year and thrice making the C-USA first-team. If that wasn't enough, Erica also graduated from Rice in December of 2019, as the valedictorian, and was class president her final two years at school.

The final two picks of the draft were Texas products, with Baylor's Juicy Landrum landing with the Connecticut Sun with the 35th overall pick before Texas' Sug Sutton was made the newest member of the Washington Mystics with the No. 36 and final pick.

PROGRAMS
from page 7

She's a really nice girl and a very similar tennis player to him, which is kind of scary considering how good he was."

Anish already knows the sibling rivalry is on but they pair have been able to push each other in this time without sports to remain in shape for when they can play once again.

"She always wants to do one better than me in everything we do," Sriniketh said.

"No matter if we're playing cards or if we're playing some game or whatever, she wants to do one better than me. She already said she wants to win two state championships so that she can have one more than me."

Still, he's been appreciating his time at home and hopes St. Edward's can keep the programs running.

"It's a little different with the situation but I like it a lot," he said of transitioning from college living back to living under his parents' roof. "I'm spending a lot of time with family, it's really fun. A lot of people are saying, 'I'm so bored,' but I'm having a really nice time actually."

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Abbott announces team to restart economy

By PATRICK SVITEK
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Gov. Greg Abbott on Friday announced initial steps to reopen the Texas economy during the coronavirus pandemic, including those that in the next week will loosen surgery restrictions at medical facilities, allow all retail stores to provide product pickups and reopen state parks.

Abbott also named a “statewide strike force” devoted to getting the economy going again. Austin banker James Huffines will chair the task force, and veteran lobbyist Mike Toomey will lead its staff. The group will oversee what Abbott described as a phased reopening, starting Friday with additional announcements set for April 27 and sometime in May.

At the same time, Abbott announced all Texas schools will stay closed through the rest of the academic year. He previously shuttered them until May 4.

Abbott made the announcements during a news conference at the Texas Capitol that he began on a note of optimism.

“Because of the efforts by everyone to slow the spread, we’re now beginning to see glimmers that the worst of COVID-19 may soon be behind us,” Abbott said, noting that the number of infections is “beginning to level off” and the death toll, while tragic, has “not come close to the early, dire predictions.”

“We have demonstrated that we can corral the coronavirus,” Abbott added.

In recent days, Abbott has faced pressure from some in his own party to reopen the state’s economy, while Democrats have argued Texas is nowhere near ready to do so, citing the state’s low testing level. Abbott insisted at the news conference that Texas was preparing to dramatically increase its testing capacity, but he did not provide details beyond suggesting a timeline of “late April or early May.”

After the news conference, state Rep. Chris Turner, the chair of the House Democratic Caucus, issued a statement saying Abbott has failed to “provide a clear plan for how Texas will increase testing.”

Abbott’s news conference Friday came a day after President Donald Trump announced guidelines for states to begin lifting restrictions. Trump has agitated for a reopening of the U.S. economy, and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has echoed him at the state level, naming his own task force to restart the economy 10 days. Patrick said Friday that his task force will be “working together” with Abbott’s.

Abbott said his task force will include fellow state leaders such as Patrick and Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, as well as top medical experts including state health



MIGUEL GUTIERREZ JR./THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Gov. Greg Abbott was briefed on the coronavirus outbreak in February.

Commissioner John Hellerstedt and Mark McClellan, former commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The medical advisers will focus on developing a strategy to “comprehensively test and trace COVID-19 that will enable Texas to gradually and safely” begin returning to normal, Abbott said.

The task force will be rounded out by an advisory group of business leaders, Abbott said, naming prominent entrepreneurs including Kendra Scott and Michael Dell.

The first phase came in a series of executive orders issued Friday. One order allows for product pickup at retail stores — what Abbott described as “retail-to-go” — that will begin April 24. Outlets will be allowed to bring orders straight to customers’ cars in a manner similar to how many restaurants are offering curbside pickup.

Another order, which goes into effect at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, will allow a limited amount of nonessential surgeries at hospitals, as long as those surgeries don’t deplete the hospitals’ supplies of personal protective equipment and allow the facilities to keep at least 25% of their capacity available for the treatment of patients with COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus.

Abbott’s previous executive order banning all elective procedures quickly sparked a legal battle because it resulted in a ban on most abortions. Abbott said Friday the courts will eventually settle the matter but that abortions are “not part” of his latest order on surgeries.

A third order will allow state parks to open Monday. Visitors to parks will be required to wear masks, stay 6 feet away from people who are not in their party, and limit gatherings to five people or fewer.

Additional openings will be announced April 27 “after further input from medical staff,” Abbott said. Abbott repeatedly pointed to April 27 as the next date on which he could announce additional steps to reopen the economy, as long as Texas is continuing to make progress in slowing the spread of the virus. Previewing that date, Abbott said, “One of the things that we will consider is the elimination of the stay-at-home policy,” which he announced late last month and expires April 30.

“If the data continues to show a flatlining and then a decline” in positive tests, “that is a signal that we can begin the process of opening up some businesses that adhere to the strictest strategies that will reduce the spread of the coronavirus,” he said.

One thing that could delay the broader reopening of the economy is the availability of testing. The number of tests done in Texas is 169,536, according to state figures. That continues to amount to a tiny fraction of Texas’ nearly 29 million people, fueling concerns about how state leaders can track the virus or know the full extent of the outbreak.

Citing recent talks with the White House, Abbott said Texas would be seeing a “dramatic increase” in testing — “not just testing those

who may show symptoms, but also being able to test entire communities so that we have better information.” Pressed on specific numbers and a timeline, Abbott said Texans can expect a “massive amount of testing capability coming to Texas by late April or early May.”

Democrats said they are tired of waiting for Abbott’s promises of more testing to come to fruition. During a conference call after Abbott’s news conference, U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-San Antonio, told reporters that it is hard to “flatten the curve when our leaders have been so far behind it,” accusing Abbott of first relying on local leaders to address the coronavirus response before finally taking statewide action.

“We’re concerned about the life and the livelihood of Texans,” Castro said. “Throughout the response, Abbott has said, ‘More tests are coming,’ but they still haven’t come.”

Democrats were also quick to note that Abbott’s task force does not include any local officials, whom Abbott had initially deferred to in enacting policies to contain the coronavirus. One of those officials, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, responded to Abbott’s news conference with a statement urging local, state and federal officials to work together to restore the economy in a responsible way.

“Several of the things mentioned by the Governor today were already being discussed by our team in Dallas County such as loosening the restrictions on some surgeries and ‘retail to go,’” Jenkins said. “Others, like opening movie theaters and restaurants are not businesses we contemplate being in the first group of businesses to be opened for in person experience.”

In naming the leaders of the task force, Abbott turned to two men with deep experience in and around business and state government. Huffines, the chair, previously served as Central and South Texas chairman of PlainsCapital Bank in Austin. From 2003-10, he served on the University of Texas System Board of Regents, including two stints as chair.

Toomey, who will be the top full-time staffer for the group, is best known as a close adviser to former Gov. Rick Perry, for whom he was chief of staff. Toomey, a former state representative, also was chief of staff to ex-Gov. Bill Clements. Toomey is a partner at Texas Lobby Group, though Abbott spokesman John Wittman said Toomey has deregistered as a lobbyist to join the task force.

Abbott’s news conference came as the number of coronavirus cases in Texas climbed to at least 17,371, including 428 deaths, according to the latest numbers from the Texas Department of State Health Services. Out of Texas’ 254 counties, 192 are reporting cases.

Alex Samuels contributed reporting.

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