

Katy Times



OFFICIALS
CONSIDER
CHANGING
SEX ED POLICY
PAGE 10

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

THURSDAY, JULY 2, 2020

FBC opens business grant

By SANDRA SADEK
EDITORIAL INTERN

Fort Bend County is accepting applications for its latest Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant program, funded by the CARES Act.

The program offers one-time grants up to \$25,000 to small businesses to aid in eligible CARES Act activities such as costs for personal protective equipment; re-opening supplies, equipment, and renovations; inventory; utilities; remote working expenses; leases and mortgage assistance. Grants are on a first-come, first-served basis and will last until all funds run out.

Grant amounts will be based on the business' total 2019 revenue. If not in business for at least six months in 2019, a projection of annual income based on the three months preceding the Stay at Home Order on April 3, 2020, will be accepted.

Annual sales totaling between \$25,000 and \$100,000 will receive grants up to \$5,000. Annual sales between \$100,001 and \$2,000,000 will receive up to \$15,000. Annual sales between \$2,000,001 and \$5,000,000 will receive up to \$25,000 in grants.

Eligible, Fort Bend County businesses must employ between 1-50 full-time equivalent employees. Annual business revenue total must be at least \$25,000 and not exceeding \$5,000,000. They must be for-profit businesses only and must have been substantially impacted by COVID-19. The business must be operational as of February 15, 2020, and not be permanently closed. The business and all principals must be in good standing at the time of application with the State of Texas and their respective cities. This includes real and personal taxes, outstanding payments, potential judgments, fines, or other amounts due to the city.

The expectation is that the business would remain opera-

See **GRANT**, page 5

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July 2, 2020
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July 14 early voting begins

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy area voters have several items on the ballot for the runoff election slated for July 14. Early voting began June 29 and will run through July 10. Voters should check their county's elections websites for polling locations and hours and to view full sample ballots.

This article presents a noncomprehensive listing of runoff elections in Fort Bend, Harris and Waller counties.

Fort Bend County

Fort Bend Republicans have four items on the ballot depending on where they live

in the county. Below are the ones affecting Katy area voters.

Troy Nehls and Kathaleen Wall are battling for the Republican nomination for Texas House District 22 after incumbent Pete Olson, who lives in Sugar Land, announced he would not be running for reelection. The winner of the runoff will face Democratic nominee Sri Preston Kulkarni and Libertarian nominee Joseph LeBlanc in November.

As Nehls leaves the position of Fort Bend County Sheriff, Democratic candidates Eric Fagan and Geneane Hughes are vying for the chance to face Nehls' brother Trever Nehls in November. Trever current-

See **VOTING**, page 5



Katy area voters will have the opportunity to cast early ballots through July 10 and will be able to participate at the polls July 14. Elections officials in Fort Bend, Harris and Waller counties are encouraging social distancing and the use of face masks to keep voting safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.



ANNA SHVETS

Medical professionals throughout the Katy area are recommending everyone wear cloth face masks that cover the mouth and nose while interacting with people outside of their households such as on trips to the grocery store in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets and saliva.

County mask orders extended

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Harris and Fort Bend counties both extended their relevant mask orders for businesses to require all staff and visitors to their establishments wear face masks to help stop the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19, among other restrictions Tuesday afternoon. Fort Bend has extended its order through July 31, while Harris goes through Aug. 26.

"We are all in this together and if we continue doing our part, we will succeed in beating the coronavirus without the governor of Texas forcing lockdowns or other

extreme measures," said Fort Bend County Judge KP George.

The order extensions come about a week after Governor Greg Abbott reversed course in opening the state back up due to rising cases statewide. As of June 30, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported 159,986 cases of COVID-19 in Texas since the pandemic began, with 72,744 remaining active. Harris County reported 31,422 cases total with 20,343 remaining active. Fort Bend County reported 3,782 total cases with 2,405 cases active. DSHS reports 152 cases in Waller County, but 92 had been categorized as recovered on June 29.

As of June 29, the Texas Medical Center

had a maximum ICU surge capacity of 2,207 beds, if needed. Of the available beds, 460 had COVID-19 patients in them. CEOs of the hospitals that make up the TMC said they can adjust capacity to ensure patients are treated, but stressed that it remains vital the community work to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"The reality is we have to do a much better job of masking, hand hygiene and social distancing ourselves. The spread is increasing and it's very concerning," said Dr. Doug Lawson, CEO at St. Luke's Health.

Local health authorities, hospital CEOs, and Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Linda

See **MASK**, page 10

Pastor helps community despite COVID-19

By JOSELYN HOFER
EDITORIAL INTERN

Pastor Beverly Vaughn is the founder and owner of resale shop, Help a Sister Out, in Brookshire on Highway 90. The shop first opened in 2010 and has been running ever since, selling gently used clothes and giving out food and support to those who need it in the Brookshire community. Although Help a Sister Out provides support for everyone in need, the shop revolves around supporting the New Birth Ministries women's shelter in Brookshire, Vaughn said.

"Well, my main goal was to open up a women's shelter. And we have the New Birth Ministries woman's shelter. And after we opened up, we were getting a lot of donations, (but) the donations weren't utilized like I thought they were supposed to be," Vaughn said.

Years later, Help a Sister Out was officially opened with a mission to serve the women's shelter, said Vaughn, but as time went by, it grew into something much bigger that branched out to the whole town.

"It just grew into giving to the community. So, what we do is like on Tuesdays we give out an abundance of food but every day we have pastries and breads to give to the community. Everything I



JOSELYN HOFER

As well as forming Help a Sister Out, Beverly also founded New Birth Ministries and ministers to the women there along with offering them support and prayers.

See **PASTOR**, page 5



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Benefit emerges for Aristoi Classical Academy

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

An unexpected advantage appeared for Katy's Aristoi Classical Academy when COVID-19 struck and they realized they had just the right amount of technology for everyone to transition online. Nearly two years ago, the academy was gifted 300 computers from the well-known energy company, Shell, which helped the school face the challenges of home-based learning during COVID-19.

With the help of volunteers like Jim and Cathy Jones, the school managed to transition to this new atmosphere without trouble and had the technology on hand prior to the pandemic, said Aristoi Classical Academy Superintendent, Brenda Davidson.

"Parent volunteers add the bells and whistles to Aristoi Classical Academy by their caring donations and volunteer hours," said Davidson.

With experience working at Shell, both Jim and Cathy helped coordinate the donation and facilitate the setup of all the computers. They began by re-imaging the software profiles on the computers to replace the old software with appropriate programs for both students and teachers. This included a replacement of computers in Aristoi elementary



CONTRIBUTED

Classical education usually encourages students to find knowledge within classical texts and Socratic seminars but the Aristoi staff is more than happy to begin this new era.

schools and other upper school campuses before finally preparing the computers for Shell's donated technology. Little did anyone know that the technology would become so vital at the end of the 2019-20 school year, said Davidson.

"They had all of this done prior to COVID-19," Davidson said. "I just consider it divine intervention. We would not have been at this place without this donation."

Although the academy is usually not a place that accepts modern electronics and considers them

central to education, they have discovered a balance between the two, said Davidson.

Aristoi plans to educate students in the fall whether that be on-campus or online. With a new computer center and two new IT employees, the academy is ready

for what the new school year will bring while still honoring the academy's roots in classical education.

"(The Joneses) have not in any way tried to move us from our goals and philosophy of a classical education. They've struck the perfect balance," said Davidson.

Gov. Abbott appoints UHV student regent

By JOSELYN HOFFER
EDITORIAL INTERN

Alvaro De la Cruz Jr., a recent graduate of the University of Houston-Victoria, has been appointed as a student regent on the UH System Board of Regents by Texas Governor, Greg Abbott, until May 31, 2021. As a student regent, he gets to attend UH board meetings with nine board members and represents the voice of the university's students. Although, he doesn't get a vote in final decisions, De la Cruz Jr. is grateful for the opportunity to be the second UHV student regent in over 45 years.

"This appointment is an incredible honor, and I am so excited to be able to represent my university and all of the UH System's students," De la Cruz said. "It's a huge responsibility, and I'm looking forward to being part of this critical group."



ALVARO DE LA CRUZ JR.

De la Cruz Jr. is no stranger to being in leadership roles as he has held many over the course of his college career, said UHV President Bob Glenn. As an undergraduate he has been the president over two organizations, the vice president of one and has served in many other capacities for other organizations. He has also won many awards recognizing his leadership in the student community.

"Alvaro is a young man who has become a major part of the student leadership group at UHV," Glenn said. "His commitment to excellence and his love for the university have made a lasting impact on UHV. I am excited to see how he will bring that same level of excellence to serve as the student representative for the Board of Regents."

Usually, a student regent begins by touring each campus apart of the UH system, but because of COVID-19, De la Cruz Jr. must use alternate methods for touring.

"It's important for me to know about each institution so I can offer an accurate student perspective," De la Cruz Jr. said. "We're looking into scheduling virtual sessions, so I can still meet the leaders of each university while also practicing social distancing."

De la Cruz Jr. said he is excited to start his year long term and is grateful for the support of his friends and advisors over the course of his undergraduate studies and application process for student regent.

"I have a wonderful support system of friends and advisors who have believed in and encouraged me," he said. "They are always giving me positive feedback. They don't let me forget that in everything I do, I always give my best. Now I plan to bring that commitment to my role as student regent so I can do a good job for everyone in the UH System."



PHOTO COURTESY OF VINCENT RAPP

TSTC's Fort Bend County campus gets festive for graduates.

TSTC celebrates 44 spring 2020 graduates

By SANDRA SADEK
EDITORIAL INTERN

Texas State Technical College's Fort Bend County campus held a small, socially-distant commencement ceremony for its 44 spring 2020 graduates on June 19, 2020.

TSTC campus enrollment executive Georgeann Calzada said the school's staff wanted to do something for its graduates despite the pandemic canceling major events. The entire ceremony lasted around 15 to 20 minutes.

"Celebrating something positive during this pandemic is something we were all happy to do. I hope the graduates know that we will always be here to support them, encourage them, and join in on what we know will be a lifetime of accomplishments," Calzada said.

Kenneth Buford, TSTC's director of veteran recruitment in Fort Bend County, and Christina Vargas, TSTC assistant director of enrollment management, offered their congratulations to the Class of 2020 and encouraged them to stay in touch.

"The fact that they were able to rise to the challenge and complete their degrees proves that they are more than just trained in their craft," Vargas said. "They have the heart and spirit to rise above adversity. That is as valuable, if not more, than any other quality."

According to Naissa Lopez, TSTC is confident graduates will find a job within six months of graduating. If not, the college offers a money-back program for certain degrees.

Fall registration is currently open. For more information, visit tstc.edu.

Katy ISD approves pay increases for all staff

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

The Katy ISD Board of Trustees has approved pay increases for all KISD staff at their last board meeting held June 22. The pay increase includes a \$660 raise for all teachers with an additional lump sum payment in December of this year. Non-teachers will receive a 1% increase in pay at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, according to a Katy ISD press release.

"It's because of our employees' drive and passion to be there for our kids and establish relationships with families, regardless of circumstances, that Katy ISD students consistently outperform students from across the state," KISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski said. "They ensure that our students have access to resources, opportunities and experiences that have positioned Katy ISD as a destination school district."

Administration praised district staff for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic that successfully helped the district's roughly 84,000 students continue their educations despite needing to participate in classes from home.



FILE PHOTO BY R. HANS MILLER

Katy ISD staff will see a bump in pay at the beginning of the next school year.

Gregorski appoints principal, special ed director

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy ISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski has appointed two staff to important roles within the district according to a June 29 press release. Andrew Lowery has been appointed as principal of WoodCreek Junior High School while Gwen Coffey has been promoted to executive director of special education.

"It is with great pride and excitement that I accept the role of Principal at WoodCreek Junior High. I feel very honored to have the opportunity to lead a school with such a rich tradition of excellence," Dr. Lowry said.

Priorities at WoodCreek will focus on maintaining the school's successful track record and building relationships



GWEN COFFEY



ANDREW LOWERY

with students, parents and the community, Lowry said.

Lowry is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Houston. He has worked in various roles within KISD for the last 14 years including teaching and coaching roles.

Coffey steps into a role to help students facing educational challenges overcome them and has been

an educator since 1996. She was worked in Katy ISD and other nearby school districts since that time and has served as principal of Rylander Elementary. She is being promoted from KISD's director of compliance position into this one. She holds degrees from the University of Houston-Victoria and expects to graduate from Texas Tech with a doctorate later this year.

"I am honored and humbled at the opportunity to lead the Katy ISD Special Education department in supporting our students, families, teachers, and administrators," Mrs. Coffey said. "I look forward to the continued development of outstanding opportunities for Katy ISD students through the combination of departmental support, the ongoing efforts of campus staff, and parent partnerships."

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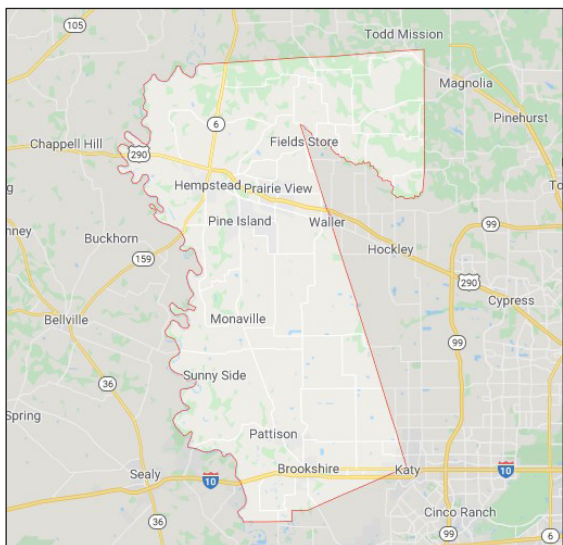
Waller County debates plan

By SANDRA SADEK
EDITORIAL INTERN

The Waller County Commissioners' Court tabled a land plan due to a missing agreement and Judge Trey Duhon gave COVID-19 updates during the court's June 24 meeting.

The court decided to table the approval of a General Land Plan for Sunterra Outdoors due to the development agreement between the county and the company not being executed yet. Three of the commissioners, Pct. 1's John Amsler, Pct. 2's Walter Smith and Pct. 3's Jeron Barnett, were worried that approving the preliminary plan prior to the development agreement being approved would limit the court's overview of the project. Rather than letting the plan fail, the court decided to table it to a later date.

Judge Duhon gave some COVID-19 updates as well, stating the current number of cases in Waller County is 111, with a few hospitalizations and no confirmed fatalities yet. Duhon reminded citizens that, despite Waller not being a hotspot and having lower rates of cases com-



Waller County Commissioners approved multiple contracts totaling nearly \$150,000 for bridge work and a generator during their June 24 meeting.

pared to neighboring counties, protocols for social distancing and wearing masks must still be followed.

Duhon said he doesn't plan on issuing an executive order mandating businesses have employees and clients wear masks at the moment.

Discussion about removing the requirement that eligible applicants for

plat exemptions must comply with the 2019 Major Thoroughfare Plan were held. A potential ordinance with new requirements may be proposed, but no final decision was made and the item will be examined on a future agenda.

A change order was approved for a new bridge structure on McAllister Road over the Brookshire Creek, amounting to around \$18,000. The court also selected Cummins as the vendor for the Precinct 4 generator at a cost of \$129,665.

Vince Yokom was re-nominated for the June 2020-May 2023 term to the Houston-Galveston Area Council Advisory Committee for the Gulf Coast Economic Development District representing Waller County.

The Waller County Commissioners' Court meets Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at the Waller County Courthouse in Hempstead. Meetings are currently being held virtually, including the public comments portion of the meeting. Local callers should call 979-921-6212 and non-local callers should call 800-576-1131. User code is 14329937.



JOSELYN HOFER

The next season of Buzzword will last eight weeks and can range from a variety of subjects such as math, science and fine arts.

Local student earns seventh

By JOSELYN HOFER
EDITORIAL INTERN

Ozan Demiroglu, an eighth-grade student attending Beckendorff Junior High, placed seventh out of twenty-one students competing online in Buzzword. Buzzword is an international quiz bowl where students are given a series of questions and have to buzz in immediately when they know an answer.

Because of the current pandemic, Demiroglu played at home as an individual rather than working side by side with a team, said the National Academic Quiz Tournaments organization in a press release.

Buzzword was created by the NAQT in order to allow academic competitions to continue during COVID-19. Students in middle school, high school, and college have a chance to play as well in their respective sections. Even the general public is given the opportunity to play in an Open Division.

Those who are interested can try a sample game and register at <http://naqt.com/buzzword> for a chance to compete in the next season, starting July 2, 2020.

Man arrested in animal cruelty case

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Timothy Holloway, 32, of Fort Bend County has been arrested after an investigation into a Dec. incident where in a dog named Clarence was left in a wire kennel with a gunshot wound to the head, according to a social media post by Constable Wayne Thompson of Fort Bend County's third precinct.

"Subsequent to arrest, Holloway confessed to the crime. Clarence is

thriving to this day although he suffers from sinus infections and other traumatic issues from the gunshot wound," Thompson said.

Fort Bend County Jail records indicate that Holloway is currently being



TIMOTHY HOLLOWAY

held on \$7,500 bond and is facing charges of cruelty to a non-livestock animal.

Thompson credited his department's animal cruelty investigator, Howard Kreusel for solving the case and expressed appreciation to Fort Bend County Judge KP George and the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court for funding the animal cruelty investigator position.

Thompson said Clarence is now being trained as a therapy dog.

Sheriff's Office arrest burglar in Rosenberg

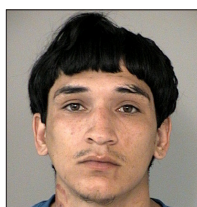
By SANDRA SADEK
EDITORIAL INTERN

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office responded to a burglary of habitation on June 23 at 9:43 a.m. at the 500 block of San Carlos in Rosenberg. Deputies

arrested Julian Olvera, 21, of Rosenberg.

FBCSO reports that Olvera stabbed one of the homeowner's dogs, which is expected to survive after treatment at the Houston Humane Society. No one was injured and no property was stolen.

Olvera is booked in the Fort Bend County Jail and has been charged with burglary of habitation, a first-degree felony with a \$20,000 bond. He has also been charged with cruelty to animals, a third-degree felony with a \$15,000 bond.



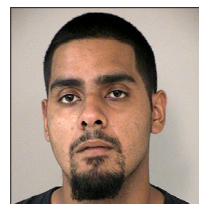
JULIAN OLVERA

By SANDRA SADEK
EDITORIAL INTERN

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office arrested Mahmood Ayaan Rehmatulla on June 23 in response to a shooting in the Richmond area on June 18 at 1:03 a.m. at the 1900 block of US 90A Eastbound.

Rehmatulla, 19, of Richmond was arrested and charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a second degree felony. The victim was transported to the medical center where he was treated.

Rehmatulla's bond is set at \$20,000 and he is currently in the Fort Bend County Jail. He was previously charged for assault causing bodily injury, a class A misdemeanor.



MAHMOOD AYAAN REHMATULLA

This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

SUDOKU

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

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

Katy Times

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- African nation
- ___ fi (slang)
- Not arranged according to size
- A demand for a show of hands in a card game
- Having a play of lustrous rainbowlike colors
- Panama has one
- Taking legal action
- Top of the body
- Part of (abbr.)
- Soul and calypso song
- Murres
- Irish river
- Accepts as true
- The Bay State
- 1950s Hollywood icon
- Blood type
- In a way, became lost
- Large primate
- A spongelike cake leavened with yeast
- Mama __, folk singer
- Visual metaphor (computers)
- Trim by cutting
- Small group of people
- Pulitzer-winning scientist
- Unique S. American mammal
- Energy, style and enthusiasm
- One who works for you
- Snakelike fish
- Consumers

CLUES DOWN

- Cylindrical sacs
- Extinct North Germanic language
- Late rocker Allman
- Word element meaning ear
- Amino acid (abbr.)
- Promotions
- Actress Lathan
- Clothed
- Unwell
- Loosen
- Cephalopod mollusks
- ___ at Obdurata: Harmful papal bull
- Musical composition
- Irish bar
- Greek island
- Afflict
- Goes by
- Ambience
- Video game manufacturer
- Surplus Marketing Administration
- Football position
- Electronic musical style (abbr.)
- Furniture with open shelves
- Clouds of gas in outer space
- Indian midwife
- Packers' signal caller
- Secret political clique
- Cry weakly
- Gomer __, marine
- Academic Bill of Rights
- Negatives
- Hip hop icon Kool Moe __

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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What’s your state’s rank?

The personal finance website WalletHub recently released its ranking of the “patriotism” of all 50 states.

In an era of toppled statues, kneeling athletes, microaggressions, border wall controversies and globalist agendas, trying to define and quantify patriotism resembles voluntarily crisscrossing a minefield.

We’ve settled for a society where the “melting pot” is less important than “TAXING pot”; but once upon a time, patriotism was easier to recognize. Good Americans knew that true patriots kept a watchful eye on the oddball who planted a tree on Arbor Day. (“Mark my words: he’s planting that poplar just so a communist can lurk behind it someday!”)

Nowadays, greed seems to outweigh civic responsibility. If composer John Philip Sousa were alive today, his FIRST march would be down to the offices of Spotify and Pandora. (“Now, how much will you pay to stream the catalog of songs I’ve been holding out? You’re kidding. I think you know where you can put these 76 trombones...”)

Yes, throngs of townspeople used to be able to belt out the uplifting lyrics “Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue” on Independence Day. In 2020 the song would have to be rendered suitable for the colorblind, the deaf, the hoarse and the mathematically challenged. (“After the neutered fireworks display, instead of a singalong, we have a multiracial, non-binary mime attempting to escape from an invisible box we like to call Western Civilization.”)

Luckily, WalletHub had a panel of experts to help it hash out its criteria. (Patriotism experts? Is that even a thing? Do people graduate summa cum laude in watching the Old North Church, with minors in tight lips and remembering the Alamo? Do experts say things like “I’d love to go to the party, but I must scan the skies in case Commissioner Gordon



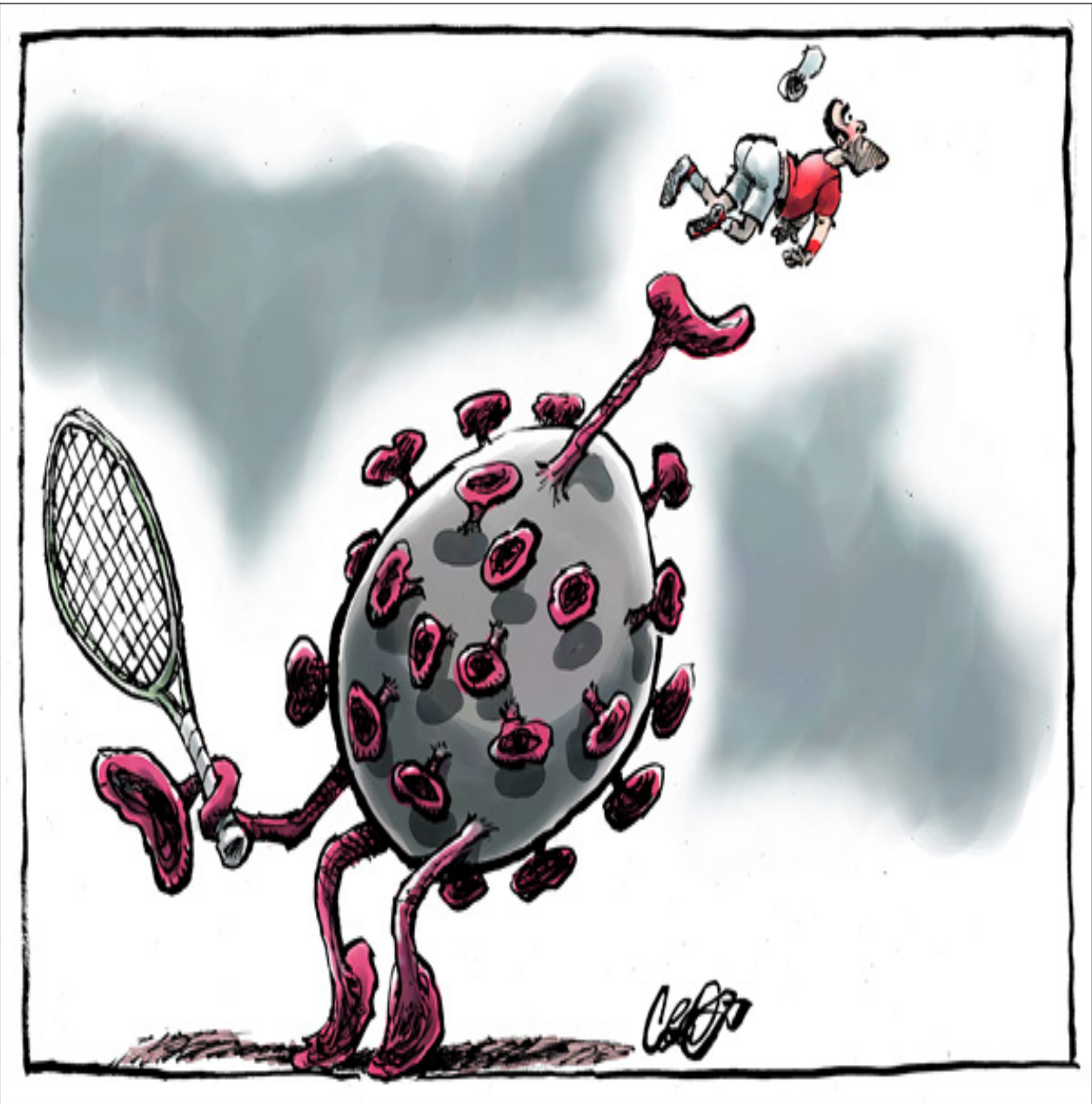
sends up the Patriotism Question Signal”?)

One of the tasks WalletHub charged the experts with was naming the characteristics of a good patriot. But it would be more fun to enumerate the characteristics of a BAD patriot. (Does bad impressions of Christopher Walken insisting, “Needs more Liberty Bell.” Finds a shortcut to Tipperary. Gives until it hurts... his feelings. Rips up his pocket copy of the Constitution while frantically seeking the words “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose...”)

Some of the criteria for ranking states’ patriotism are uncontroversial: highest average number of military enlistees, percentage of veterans per capita, most Peace Corps volunteers per capita, etc. But “highest volunteer rate” sticks in my craw. Not all volunteer work in this great land comes through organized charities. Much of it arrives in spur-of-the-moment gestures, even if they ARE more “showing off” than altruistic. (“You say your boy has a ruptured appendix, Bubba? Let me tie a string to my monster truck. Naw, it ain’t no trouble...”)

I’m also embarrassed that my home state (Tennessee) ranked 48th in the category of “highest percentage of adults who voted in the 2016 presidential election.” In our defense, the pollsters were all saying, “Every minute in the voting booth is a minute away from SEC football.” Pollsters, Jack Daniel... potato, potato...

Anyway, if WalletHub publishes the listing again next year, maybe some of the lower-ranking states will be spurred to improve their score. And maybe old man Jones will finally repurpose that poplar tree as a SCHOOL DESK, to ward off commie nukes.



Kids, pedal those pandemic blues away

Here’s one good thing about the COVID-19 pandemic: Bike sales are booming. I hope that means kids will begin riding in big numbers again.

There was a big bike-sales boom in the early 1970s, too – the result of millions of baby boom kids, like me, riding our bikes from dawn until dusk.

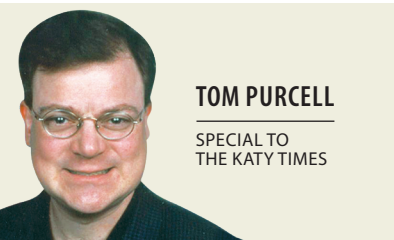
From its inception in the 1800s, the bicycle had been produced mostly for adults. In the 1900s, bikes offered urban working-class folks an inexpensive way to get to and from work. Sales were brisk into the early 1900s.

But as America prospered – as the automobile became the chief mode of travel – bike sales plummeted. Sales wouldn’t grow again until millions of baby boomer kids were living in wide-open suburbs.

Schwinn was the first bike maker to tap that youth market.

In the 1950s, the standard bike design was the cruiser, a gargantuan, fender-covered machine built for adults. There was only one gear (slow) and you braked by reversing the pedals and pressing down hard.

In the early 1960s, however, Schwinn designer Al Fritz had an idea, reports Bike Magazine. He’d heard about a new youth trend centered in California: retrofitting



bicycles with drag-racing motorcycle accoutrements. “Choppers” – custom motorcycles with long handlebars – were all the rage. Fritz introduced chopper elements into his new design.

The Schwinn Sting-Ray was born. It had smaller, 20-inch tires – with flat racing treads – and high handlebars and a banana seat. Every kid had to have one. And every manufacturer began making bikes just like it – a style we referred to as the “spyder” bike.

I got my first spyder bike for Christmas 1970, when I was 8: a red Murray one-speed with chrome fenders and a black banana seat. I rode it so often and so hard, it was worn out by my 12th birthday.

As Christmas 1972 approached, I dreamed of every kid’s early-’70s dream bike: the Schwinn Orange Krate, the greatest five-speed bike in the history of childhood.

Such a bike sold for \$95 when it

was introduced in 1968, but there was no way my single-income family could afford one. It cost the equivalent of nearly \$700 today!

Still, I was plenty blessed that Christmas morning. I got a neon-green Huffu spyder bike, a color that made it one of the cooler bikes in my neighborhood. I loved it – but it got stolen when my sister, Kris, left it unlocked outside a department store.

My dad found me a used Murray five-speed that was even better. I polished it every day, and rode the wheels off of it exploring and discovering the outside world.

Childhood has changed since then. With adults so often structuring and monitoring activities, kids who ride today likely ride with adults. And just last year, The Washington Post reported on industry research showing significant declines in children’s bike riding and bike sales.

But now, pent-up energy from pandemic lockdowns is causing bike sales to explode. Let’s hope that means more of today’s children will put down their electronics, pedal long and hard with warm summer air whipping through their hair, and experience what bikes have long represented for kids, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics: “a source of pride and a symbol of independence and freedom.”

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ICE ordered to release migrant children

By MEENA VENKATARAMANAN
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

As the coronavirus spreads in detention centers, a federal judge ordered the release of migrant children held for more than 20 days at three family detention centers in Texas and Pennsylvania, the Associated Press reported June 26.

District Judge Dolly Gee wrote in an order that detention centers

“are ‘on fire’ and there is no more time for half measures.” Her order mandated that by July 17, the affected children and their parents be released from the centers or sent to live with family sponsors.

In May, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said it was detaining 184 migrant children along with their parents at these three centers, which include the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley and the Karnes

County Residential Center in Karnes City.

At the Karnes City facility, ICE reported 11 children and parents have tested positive for COVID-19, and in Dilley, at least three individuals, including a two-year-old, have been placed in isolation after two private contractors and an ICE official tested positive.

“[ICE needs] to make the sensible choice and release the parents to care for their children,”

Amy Maldonado, an attorney who works with detained families, told the Associated Press.

Gee’s order does not directly apply to parents, but most parents at the detention centers last month refused to designate a different family sponsor for their children upon the children’s release, leading ICE to establish “routine parole reviews” for children and their parents.

More than 2,500 detainees

have tested positive for COVID-19 while in ICE custody, the AP reported. ICE has said it has released more than 900 detainees with increased medical risks and de-densified the detainee populations at the three family detention centers in Texas and Pennsylvania. But according to the agency in May, most people in family detention are considered flight risks because of pending deportation orders or cases under review.

VOTING

from page 1

ly serves as constable for Fort Bend County Precinct 4.

J.J. Clemence is facing James Pressler in the runoff election for the Republican nomination to the Fort Bend County Tax Assessor-Collector.

Fort Bend Democrats are looking at multiple runoffs as well.

For the U.S. Senator position, MJ Hegar is facing Texas Senator Royce West in a race that will have the winner of the runoff facing incumbent John Cornyn (R – Austin).

The Railroad Commissioner race has Roberto R. “Beto” Alonzo facing Christa Castaneda. The Railroad Commission’s name is not indicative of its function which has shifted away from managing railways and is now primarily involved in regulating the energy markets and reserves for the state.

The seventh seat for the 14th Court of Appeals which has jurisdiction over Fort Bend, Harris and Waller Counties is on the ballot for the entire Katy area. Tamike “Tami” Craft is facing Cheri Thomas for the party’s nomination to face the Republican incumbent, Ken Wise.

Kali Morgan and Surrendran K. Pattel will face off for the Democratic nomination for Texas’ 505th Judicial District and a chance to face incumbent Republican Judge David Perwin.

Harris County

Republicans in Harris County have multiple races including a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, a Court of Appeals judge’s seat, Harris County Sheriff and a Justice of the Peace for Precinct Five. Harris voters will also vote either for Hegar or West for the U.S. Senator position, as well as in the race for Railroad Commissioner.

The judge’s seat competition between Craft and Thomas noted in the Fort Bend portion of this story will also be voted on by Harris residents.

Paul Day and Joe Danna are fighting for a chance at the office of Harris County Sheriff. The winner of the runoff will face Democratic incumbent Ed Gonzalez in November.

Terry Adams is facing James Lombardino for a chance to run against Democratic nominee Amparo Monique Guerra for the First Court of Appeals.

Russ Ridgway is facing Mike Wolfe in a runoff for Harris County Justice of the Peace for Precinct 5, Place 1.

Democrats in Harris County face a few more decisions. Countywide, there are 14 Democratic runoffs taking place, though only a portion of those will be voted on by Katy area residents.

In the wake of County Commissioner for Precinct 3 Steve Radack announcing his departure from the seat he’s held since 1988, Democratic opponents Michael Moore and Diana Martinez Alexander will be vying for the opportunity to face Republican opponent Tom Ramsey in November.

The winner of the runoff between Randy Newman and Mark Alan Harrison will face Republican incumbent Constable Ted Heap of Harris County’s fifth precinct in November.

For the House of Representatives,

POLL POSITIONS

With the number of runoff elections underway, voting information that is easy to find is important. Voters in Harris and Fort Bend Counties may vote at any polling location countywide, while Waller voters should vote in their assigned voting locations. To find an appropriate polling location, visit the websites below.

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PHONE: 281-341-8670
EMAIL: vote@fortbendcountytexas.gov

HARRIS COUNTY ELECTIONS:

WEBSITE: www.HarrisVotes.com
HELPLINE: 713-755-6965
EMAIL: County.Clerk@cco.hctx.net

WALLER COUNTY ELECTIONS:

WEBSITE: <https://www.co.waller.tx.us/page/Front%20Page>
PHONE: 979-826-7643
EMAIL: vote@wallercountytx.us

Pritesh Gandhi will be facing Mike Siegel in a runoff to determine who will face incumbent Michael McCaul (R – Austin) who has been in office since 2004.

Katy area voters living near Addicks Reservoir will participate in a runoff election between Akilah Bacy and Jenifer Rene Pool for the Texas House District 138 Democratic nomination. The winner will face Republican candidate Lacey Hull. Incumbent Dwayne Bohac (R) has opted not to run for reelection.

Waller County

Republicans have a two-race ballot this time around with only one race on the GOP ticket. In addition to the First Court of Appeals race, a candidate for sheriff will also be chosen.

Republican candidates for Waller County Sheriff on the runoff ticket include incumbent R. Glenn Smith and Troy Guidry. The winner will go up against Democratic nominee Cedric Watson in November. Additional coverage of this race is available at www.katytimes.com.

The Democratic ticket is a bit longer for Waller voters with four political competitions to determine candidates for Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives, railroad commissioner and a judge’s position for the 14th Court of Appeals District, Place 7.

Waller Democrats will participate in the race between Hegar and West for U.S. Senator as noted in the Fort Bend entry above. They’ll also vote between Alonzo and Castaneda for Railroad Commissioner and to see who will face McCaul in the House of Representatives race.

The final race on the Democratic ticket is the race between Thomas and Craft mentioned in the Harris County section above.

NEEDED DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Executed and notarized complete application including true and correct statement.

THE APPLICATION WILL INCLUDE:

- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or State Identifier
- Document monthly revenue for March, April & May 2019 vs 2020 or if not in business all of 2019, monthly revenue for January, February & March 2020 compared to March, April & May 2020.
- Gross Revenues for 2019 (Profit and Loss Statement, Schedule C, or similar documentation will suffice). If not in business all of 2019, use a projection of annual income based on the three months preceding the Stay at Home Order on April 3, 2020
- Expenses for 2019. If not in business all of 2019, use a projection of annual income based on the three months preceding the Stay at Home Order on April 3, 2020
- A brief description of how the grant would be used and how COVID-19 has impacted operations.
- Any information that will be helpful to the reviewer for approval of your application
- Last 2 or most recent payroll statements for all employees, indicating the number of employees
- Rent/Lease Agreements or Mortgage Statement (if using for these funds)
- Recipients must certify that the funds will be used for approved purposes and that they are not receiving assistance for these items from another source.
- Authorization for a FICO report
- State of Texas Franchise Account Tax Status dated in June 2020. This can be obtained through the Texas Comptroller’s office. Use the following link to obtain the form needed for your grant application. <https://comptroller.texas.gov/UnderBusinessCenterLookUp/FranchiseAccountStatus>.
- Copy of valid Driver’s License or a valid government-issued photo ID.

GRANT

from page 1

tional in Fort Bend County for at least one year, or at a minimum through December 30, 2020.

PASTOR

from page 1

do, it all stems around helping people,” Vaughn said.

The only problem with businesses like Help a Sister Out is that they rely on volunteers and donations to keep the place running, Vaughn said.

“I faced a lot of obstacles as far as having people to volunteer. Keeping supplies, you know, keeping the food pantry open,” Vaughn said.

Even during the pandemic, the store is still looking for donations and volunteers as well as attention from the public. Brookshire is a community in need, said Vaughn, that not a lot of people know about. Vaughn herself was raised in Brookshire and holds a personal connection to the town.

“Brookshire is a town that really, really needs the support. So, we need for people to come to Brookshire,” said Vaughn.

Financially, it hits especially hard with COVID-19, Vaughn said. People stopped coming in to buy clothes or furniture and with donations and volunteers already scarce, it becomes a fight to continue serving both the women’s shelter and the community.

“People haven’t been buying clothes

Receipts and documentation for all eligible expenditures must be submitted for audit purposes within three months of loan disbursement or funds. Funds dispersed that were not documented would need to be repaid within 30 days of notice of ineligibility.

since COVID. So, it impacts us financially, but we still get a joy out of giving out the food,” said Vaughn.

With the help of family members like her husband and daughter as well as some few dedicated volunteers, the business remained afloat and continues to give out food and necessities to those who need it.

“Just to see the happy faces when people come in to get their food and just to see the girls when they complete the program and make an impact in their lives and change in their family’s lives. That’s the most important thing. Just helping people,” Vaughn said.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 brings, Help a Sister is continuing to assist the community on all days of the week except Sunday with healthy hygiene practices.

“We’re wiping down furniture, the counter tops and social distancing. Whenever we do food on Tuesdays, we bag it up ourselves and take it to their cars. And we do insist you wear a mask,” said Vaughn.

Vaughn hopes to expand Help a Sister Out and place another store in a different town where she can continue to aid those who need it but for now, she’s happy making an impact in Brookshire.

“(My favorite thing is) just praying for people and seeing lives changed. That’s the most important thing,” said Vaughn.



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Katy Times



COVID-19 curveball strikes MLB

By JOE SOUTHERN
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a serious curveball at Major League Baseball, but the league hit back with plans for a shortened 60-game season that comes with some curves of its own.

After shutting down spring training and canceling the first half of the regular season amid the nationwide pandemic shutdown, the league last week announced plans to play an abbreviated season. The game, however, will be very different than any season in baseball's 144-year history.

When players report July 1 for Spring Training 2.0, there will be several health and safety protocols in place. Players will be tested for COVID-19 when they arrive and every other day during training camp, the regular season and the postseason. Anyone testing positive will be quarantined until they have two negative tests. Players will be administered temperature and symptom checks twice a day and antibody testing will be done monthly.

Most teams will do their training camps at home, including the Houston Astros. The Astros will also use the ballfields at the University of Houston as their alternate site. The regular season starts July 23.

To reduce travel, the schedule will include 10 games for each team against its four divisional opponents (Rangers, Athletics, Angels, Mariners) along with 20 games against the opposite league's corresponding geographical division (for example, the AL West will play the NL West). The Astros will play the Rockies, Diamondbacks, Padres, Giants and Dodgers. It also means there will be no World Series rematch between the Astros and Washington Nationals unless they meet again in the World Series.



FILE PHOTOS BY JOE SOUTHERN

Houston Astros pitcher Zack Greinke pitches against the Washington Nationals in Game 7 of the 2019 World Series at Minute Maid Park. There will not be a regular season rematch between the two teams this year as Major League Baseball embarks on a COVID-19-shortened 60-game season.

When games resume, initially there will be no fans in the ballpark, although that could change.

Teams will begin the season with a 30-man active roster that will be pared down to 28 after two weeks and 26 after a month. The trade deadline is Aug. 31 and a player must be on a team's roster by Sept. 15 to be eligible for postseason play.

Teams will be allowed up to three taxi-squad players on the road, one of which must be a catcher.

The designated-hitter rule will be used in both the American and National leagues.

Any games going into extra innings will start with a runner on second base. The batter who made the last out in the previous inning (or a pinch-runner) will start on second base.

The injured list (IL) will be a modified 10-day list for pitchers and hitters, the 60-day list will be cut to 45 days, and there will be a separate list for players with COVID-19 who will not be able to return until they have two negative tests for the virus.

Team personnel and players not expected to play in the game will sit in the stands or other

designated area at least six feet apart. They will wear masks in the dugouts and bullpens at all times.

There will be no spitting, chewing tobacco or sunflower seeds allowed, although gum is permitted. There is to be no celebratory contact such as high-fives and fist bumps.

Welcome to camp

The Astros have named 56 of the 60 players they can invite to training camp, presumably with more to be named later. Among

the players are Astros stars Jose Altuve, George Springer, Carlos Correa, Alex Bregman, Yuli Gurriel, Martin Maldonado, Josh Reddick, and pitchers Justin Verlander, Zack Greinke, Lance McCullers Jr., and Chris Devenski.

They will be joined by a number of supporting players such as Aledmys Diaz, Yordan Alvarez and Kyle Tucker, along with about 16 top prospects, among others.

Managing the team will be Dusty Baker, taking over for A.J. Hinch, who lost his job in the off season when the team's 2017 signal-stealing scandal broke.

Sugar Land Skeeters launch new league next week

By JOE SOUTHERN
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

From concept to competition, the Sugar Land Skeeters have created a four-team league in just four weeks that is set to play professional baseball on Friday, July 10.

The Constellation Energy League was set to start this Friday, but on Monday was postponed a week due to COVID-19 concerns.

"Due to the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases over the last two weeks, and based on advice from our medical advisors, we believe it is prudent to delay the start of the season one week," said Skeeters owner Kevin Zlotnik said in a news release. "This is not a decision our organization entered into lightly. We have spent weeks meticulously preparing for the schedule we had initially set forth and we look forward to a successful season. But our overriding priority is the safety of our players, fans and staff."

A revised schedule for the Constellation Energy League will be made soon.

"We've received all the approvals to open this weekend and remain confident in our safety protocols, but saw no downside in delaying one week," Zlotnik continued. "We look forward to seeing everyone on July 10 and in the meantime encourage our friends and fans to follow the safety guidelines set forth by our local officials."

Each of the four teams in the Constellation Energy League were set to play 28 games for a total of 56 games prior to the postponement. All games will be played in Sugar Land at Constellation Field.

Skeeters manager Pete Incaviglia, the father-son duo of Roger and Koby Clemens, former Major Leaguer Greg Swindell, and former MLB pitching coach and former Major Leaguer Dave Eiland will coach the teams. The league will feature a mix of former Major League and Minor League players.

"This was originally (Roger Clemens) idea," said Skeeters President Chris Hill.

Clemens, the former all-star with the Houston Astros, New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox, made two appearances with the Skeeters with his son during the



JOE SOUTHERN

Skeeters second baseman Jason Martinson makes the catch to get Long Island Ducks baserunner David Washington out during Game 5 of last year's Atlantic League Championship Series at Constellation Field. The Skeeters are hosting a four-team league for the next two months at the ballpark.

inaugural 2012 season. He pitched the idea of the league to Hill, who ran with it.

"The idea was we couldn't pull it off until Major League Baseball cut contracts with minor league players," Hill said.

The league is designed to give players sidelined by the COVID-19 pandemic a chance to play and hone their skills.

"We've always prided ourselves on being an organization that gives players another chance," Zlotnik said. "Given the unfortunate releases of hundreds of minor league players over the last few weeks, we realized there was a major need for a league like this. Already, we've received commitments from guys with great resumes, former Major Leaguers, former first-rounders, and high-caliber prospects. I know people are going to be really impressed with the quality of play."

Hill said social distancing and other

guidelines are going to put a limit on team interactions with the fans, meaning no autographs or baseballs thrown into the stands.

"This is far more about baseball than entertainment," he said.

The teams

For two months the four teams will play each other with doubleheaders on weekends and Mondays off. The teams are Skeeters, coached by Incaviglia; Sugar Land Lightning Sloths, coached by Swindell; Texas, coached by Roger and Koby Clemens; and the Eastern Reyes el Tigre (Tiger Kings), coached by Eiland.

"Their mascot will be a tiger with a mullet," Hill said.

Hill said the names were chosen based on the uniforms they had available. Naturally, they have plenty of uniforms that say Skeeters and Sugar Land. Their uniform

provider had jerseys for Texas and ones that say Eastern on them.

"We couldn't get uniforms turned around in time, so we have to make do with what we have," Hill said.

If you go

Due to restrictions related to COVID-19, there will be limits on fans who attend the games. For starters, they will not be able to select specific seats. Ticketing agents will assign seats based on social distancing guidelines, though families will be able to sit together. There will be about 1,800 seats available for each game, compared to the regular capacity of 7,500 fans.

Fans will have to wear face covering while entering and exiting the ballpark, waking on the concourse, getting concessions or whenever social distancing is not possible.

There will be hand sanitizer stations at the gates for entry and exit into Constellation Field as well as other designated locations throughout the ballpark.

The cost of parking will be included with every ticket in order to limit contact between fans and Skeeters staff.

The playground, splash pad, sport court, and inflatable area will not be open during games. The Bud Light Ice House, H-E-B Picnic Plaza, and Grassland will be open.

"We're trying to keep the experience as safe as we can make it," Hill said. "We've gone above and beyond what the state, county, city, and Memorial Hermann officials have advised us to do. The safety of our fans, and the front office and the players and game day staff are of the utmost importance."

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Make an impact while social distancing

By **BRANDEE MILLER**
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Those who want to volunteer but have been unable to do so in the past few months may have been feeling a bit lost. It's difficult to know how to reach out without having direct personal contact with those who most need the help. Here are 10 ways for people of all ages to lend a helping hand.

1. **Volunteer Match** offers virtual and on-site opportunities locally and around the country. Opportunities range from graphic design to app creation to tutoring online and everything else in between. This site matches your interests to available volunteer opportunities. volunteermatch.com

2. **Color A Smile** has pages for children, young adults and adults to print, color and send to the address listed on their website. They then send them on to those who might need a bright spot in their day. colorasmile.org

3. **StoriTime** matches children and seniors for story time. Children read virtually to seniors from either a book they have already or from a list of free books offered on StoriTime.com. This provides reading practice for your children and gives seniors a connection they might not otherwise have during this time of isolation.

4. **TED**, an organization that coordinates short seminars on a variety of topics from global warming to advancing STEM in schools, needs translators for 117 languages for those who are fluent in two or more

languages and transcribers for those who are comfortable in only one language. Sign up and apply at ted.com/participate/translate.

5. For those who love to crochet/knit, **Warm Up America!** accepts sections, finished afghans and accessories year-round for various projects. They also have groups with specific needs listed on warmupamerica.org/make/current-needs/

6. **Do Something** is a nonprofit exclusively for young people and offers chances to win scholarships as well. Their projects for social change offer young people a chance to make impact in the world. dosomething.org

7. **Project Gutenberg** is a library of over 60,000 free eBooks. Started in 1971, this site offers various ways of volunteering remotely: proofreading eBooks, procuring eligible paper books and burning CDs and DVDs for people without internet access are just a few. http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Gutenberg:Volunteering_for_Project_Gutenberg

8. **The United Nations** offers various virtual volunteer opportunities by registering at youcanleadbn.com/unonline. They need teachers, translators, writers and editors, researchers and organizers.

9. If ornithology is your thing, **eBird.org** offers a free mobile app to help you keep track of your bird lists and photos while contributing to science and conservation. www.ebird.org

10. If you're social media savvy, you can help your favorite local nonprofit organizations by sharing their social media posts and any announcements they may have.



FILE PHOTO

While many people enjoy volunteering because of the direct personal impact, social distancing has made volunteering unsafe for some people. Below are ten ways people can make an impact in their community and around the world while maintaining social distancing.

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This devotional page and directory is made possible by these businesses who encourage all of us to attend worship services. For more information, see our Church Directory Online at www.katytimes.com

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Psalms 94:19

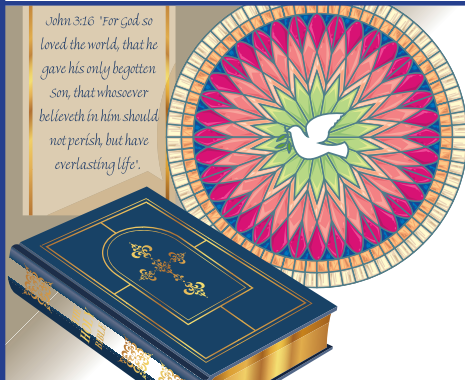
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4 who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort those in any
trouble with the comfort we ourselves
receive from God.

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on the LORD shall
renew their strength;
they shall mount up
with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not
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June 25 Puzzle Answers

H	A	T					S	H	F	
A	R	A					B	O	A	R
P	R	I	G				D	U	B	A
P	I	P	A			A	S	L	I	N
E	V	E	N	S		E	D	T	I	T
N	E	I	G	H	B	O	R	H	O	O
				A	A	R		P	A	L
			H	A	L	F		O	G	R
			O	K	A	U	C	A		
		J	E	A	N	S	T	A	P	L
D	E	A	D	C	I	A		B	L	A
A	N	C		H	E	N		I	B	I
H	A	K	K	A				S	L	O
S	T	A	G	G				E	L	L
	E	L	F					D	E	E

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
Owner: Mason Creek Utility District
Owner's Office: 847 Dominion, Katy, TX 77450
Project (the Work): Furnish, deliver and install smart water meters; provide related goods and services; and provide, by service agreement, an automatic water meter reading system with Internet portal; all as further described in the Contract Documents.
Project location: In Western Harris County, Texas generally bounded by IH 10, Fry Road, Kingsland Blvd. and Westgreen Blvd. and on the Internet
Owner proposes to let a contract for the Project and seeks bids. Generally, bids must be signed, sealed and physically submitted at Owners Office by **July 17, 2020 at 11:00 AM**, when they will be opened and publicly read, all in accordance with the Contract Documents, which are: (i) on file at the Owner's Office where all bidders may examine them and get copies; (ii) incorporated herein by reference, including prevailing wages; and (iii) posted on civcastusa.com. A pre-bid conference is set for July 10, 2020 at 11:00 AM at the Operations Center, 851 Dominion, Katy, Texas 77450 (also accessible by telephone conference at 800-719-8139; conference code 447079). /s/ Len Forsyth, Project Officer.

PUBLIC NOTICES

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
Sealed proposals for the **HARDSCAPE PHASE 1 TO SERVE KATY CITY HALL PLAZA** will be received at City of Katy City Hall, 901 Avenue C, Katy, Texas 77493, until 2:00 p.m., Thursday, July 16, 2020.
The Owner is the City of Katy, Texas.
The City of Katy will hold a non-mandatory audio/web pre-bid conference at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, July 9, 2020. The Dial-In number for the non-mandatory Pre-Bid Conference is 713.358.8400, Access Code 0877892.
The successful bidder(s) will be required to enter into a contract with the Owner.
A Cashier's Check or Certified Check payable, without recourse, to the Owner or an acceptable Surety Proposal Bond, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the largest possible total bid, including consideration of alternates, must accompany each bid as a guarantee that, if awarded the contract, the Bidder will promptly enter into a contract and execute bonds in forms provided as outlined in the Contract Documents. Performance Bond, Payment Bond, and Maintenance Bond, in an amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price will be required.
For public projects, not less than the minimum wage rates as prescribed in the General Conditions must be paid.
The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids, and to waive any informalities in bids.
Copies of the Specifications may be obtained 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., 3600 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. S., Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042 or at <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidders must register on this website to download bidding documents.

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Alcohol-serving establishments restricted

By ED STERLING
CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

Gov. Greg Abbott ordered the state to slow down the reopening process for bars and other venues as coronavirus-related infections, hospitalizations and deaths continued to increase in Texas last week.

"As I said from the start, if the positivity rate rose above 10%, the State of Texas would take further action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19," Abbott said. "At this time, it is clear that the rise in cases is largely driven by certain types of activities, including Texans congregating in bars."

Abbott ordered bars and other state-licensed establishments that receive more than 51% of their gross receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages to close at noon on June 26, but allowed them to continue offering delivery and take-out services until further notice.

The governor allowed restaurants, beginning June 29, to remain open for dine-in service, but at a capacity not to exceed 50% of total listed indoor occupancy.

Also notably, the governor ordered rafting and tubing businesses to close and that outdoor gatherings of 100 or more people obtain the approval of local governments before the event.

While stopping short of issuing a statewide order for Texans to wear nose-and-mouth-covering masks in public, Abbott did say every Texan "has a responsibility to themselves and their loved ones to wear a mask, wash their hands, stay six feet apart from others in public and stay home if they can."

Meanwhile, after news that the Trump administration planned to cut funding for COVID-19 testing stations in Texas and other states, Abbott announced that the federal government had granted his request to extend operations of community-based testing sites across Texas. The expansion is aimed particularly at Dallas and Houston, where the spread of the deadly, influenza-like disease surged in recent days.



FILE PHOTO
Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott issued an order slowing down and reversing some of the reopening process across the state after COVID-19 case numbers skyrocketed for several days in a row.

In related news, Abbott issued an executive order on June 25 prohibiting elective surgeries at hospitals in Bexar, Dallas, Harris and Travis counties. The order, intended to make more hospital beds available to potential influxes of COVID-19 patients, directs all hospitals in those counties to postpone surgeries and procedures that are not immediately, medically necessary.

Cumulative figures posted June 28 by the Texas Department of State Health Services showed some 148,728 COVID-19 cases reported and 2,393 confirmed deaths resulting from the disease in the Lone Star State.

Meeting methods contrast

Plans are in place for the Republican Party of Texas to hold its convention July 16-18 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. Some 6,000 delegates are expected to attend in person.

Conversely, from June 1-6 the Texas Democratic Party held its convention in fully online mode to minimize health risks related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Study: Impact of military

A study conducted by the comptroller's office estimates that military installations in Texas contributed at least \$123 billion to the state economy in 2019 and supported more than 630,000 direct and indirect jobs.

In a June 22 joint news release with the governor's office, Comptroller Glenn Hegar said the military's impact on the state economy "can be felt by every Texan."

Gov. Abbott said, "Now more than ever, these jobs add critical stability for communities focused on economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic."

Military installations listed in the news release include: Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene;

U.S. Army Futures Command, Austin; Corpus Christi Army Depot; Corpus Christi Naval Air Station; Laughlin Air Force Base, Del Rio; Fort Bliss, El Paso; Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base; and Ellington Field, Houston.

Also, Fort Hood, Killeen; Naval Air Station Kingsville; Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo; Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston-Lackland Air Force Base-Randolph Air Force Base; Red River Army Depot, Texarkana; and Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls.

Paxton cheers SCOTUS

A request by the Texas Democratic party and other plaintiffs to have a San Antonio U.S. district court ruling reinstated that would allow all registered voters to vote by mail instead of in person was denied June 26 by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito.

"As I said from the start, if the positivity rate rose above 10%, the State of Texas would take further action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. At this time, it is clear that the rise in cases is largely driven by certain types of activities, including Texans congregating in bars."

— GOV. GREG ABBOTT

The action leaves in place an order issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, blocking the lower court ruling. "Universal mail-in ballots, which are notoriously vulnerable to fraud, would only lead to greater election fraud and disenfranchise lawful voters," Paxton said.

Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa said, however: "The case proceeds on in other filings before the U.S. Supreme Court and the Fifth Circuit, and therefore hope remains that the federal courts will restore equal voting rights in time for the November elections."



\$100,000

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Matching grants available to local small businesses

The Katy Times has set aside \$100,000 in matching grant money to help local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Preference given to locally owned and operated businesses.
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Katy Times

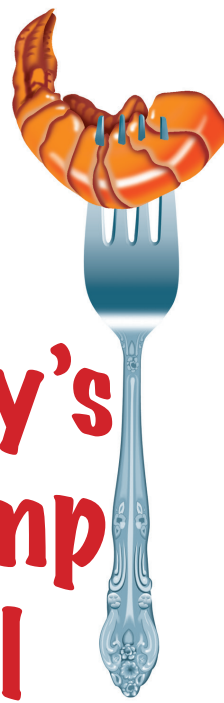
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Officials consider changing sex ed policy

By ALIYYA SWABY
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

For the first time since 1997, Texas education officials will consider a new statewide sexual education policy, and it could include teaching middle schoolers about birth control options beyond abstinence.

That proposed revision to the state's health education standards is expected to draw crowds of people — albeit virtually — to Monday's State Board of Education meeting, where members will take public comment and discuss the changes. Work groups of educators and experts have been working for months preparing recommendations for how the Republican-dominated board should revise its standards.

At what is likely to be a high-tension online hearing, advocates for comprehensive sexual education plan to laud the recommendation to teach abstinence-plus education earlier; opponents will say the proposals go too far beyond abstinence to be legal. The board is expected to make a final decision by November, setting the stage for how teachers and textbook publishers will approach the controversial subject for years to come.

Texas public schools are not required to teach sexual education. State law requires that schools teaching sex ed stress abstinence as the preferred choice for unmarried young people and spend more time on it than any other sexual behavior. Parents can opt their children out of any lesson they want.

According to a Texan Freedom Network study, just 17% of school districts, including some of the state's most populous, taught



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abstinence-plus sex education in 2015-16. At the same time, federal data shows Texas consistently has one of the highest teen birth rates in the country, which studies show correlates with an emphasis on abstinence-only education.

This year, the board will consider requiring all seventh and eight grade health teachers to “analyze the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of barrier protection and other contraceptive methods, including the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, keeping in mind the effectiveness of remaining abstinent until

marriage.” Currently that is only a requirement in high school, where health education is an optional course. All Texas public schools must offer health education for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Advocates for comprehensive sexual education consider the proposed change a win and will rally for the board to approve it. “If we include basic information about topics like contraception and STI [sexually transmitted infection] prevention at the middle school level, we know students will have some exposure to that before

high school,” said Jen Biundo, director of policy and data for the Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

The organization conducted a public opinion poll with the firm Baseline & Associates, which shows that 75% of poll respondents, including 68% of Republicans, support teaching sexual education that prioritizes abstinence but also provides information about contraception and STI prevention.

The state board last took up the health standards in 1997 and then adopted abstinence-only health textbooks in 2004. Abstinence-on-

ly advocates have successfully kept information on birth control and sexually transmitted disease prevention out of textbooks for decades.

As more school districts adopt more robust sexual education curricula, Texas Values, a conservative statewide advocacy group, has organized campaigns to fight back. Most recently, it led a group of detractors to speak out against Austin Independent School District's proposed curriculum for grades three through eight, which included topics like gender identity, reproductive anatomy and body image, tailored for each grade. The school board unanimously approved the curriculum.

“Leftist LGBT advocacy groups are calling this a ‘once in-a-generation opportunity’ to attack Texas’ abstinence focused approach and teach highly sexualized LGBT propaganda starting in kindergarten,” read a Texas Values email blast sent to subscribers Friday.

Texas Values is also urging board members to exclude health standards teaching students about gender identity or sexual orientation. “Teaching children to question the biological reality of their gender or engage in dangerous sexual behavior at a young age is not the job of Texas schools,” said Mary Elizabeth Castle, a Texas Values policy adviser, in a statement to The Texas Tribune.

Advocacy groups like Texas Freedom Network and Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy are asking the board to include LGBTQ students in the standards. The existing standards and the proposed revisions make no explicit mention of those students, who are more likely to be discriminated against and bullied in their schools.

TX GOP moving forward with indoor convention

By MEENA VENKATARAMANAN
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

As the coronavirus pandemic engulfs Texas' metropolitan areas, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has left the door open for massive indoor gatherings. And organizers are moving forward with some big ones, including the Texas Republican Party's upcoming convention in Houston.

Harris County, where Houston is located, has the highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths in the state, but the Texas GOP plans to press forward with plans to hold an in-person convention from July 16-18 in the city's George R. Brown Convention Center.

“All systems are go, folks. This is happening,” Kyle Whatley, the party's executive director, said Tuesday during a tele-town hall, noting the convention program is already being printed.

On Tuesday, Abbott granted local officials the power to restrict outdoor gatherings of more than 100 people, but made no mention of indoor gatherings. The Texas GOP convention is expected to draw about 6,000

attendees, roughly half of what it would expect for such a convention in normal times, according to Whatley. The party's website brands its annual convention as the “largest political gathering in the free world.”

Whatley said registrations are “increasing exponentially” as the convention nears.

David Lakey, the former commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, said he believes large indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are not advisable at this time.

“I think, right now, I wouldn't hold a group larger than 100 individuals,” he said. “I think people need to be very cautious about making — especially in the month of July — any plans for a big conference.”

The party does not plan to require masks at the convention, though chairman James Dickey acknowledged Tuesday that Harris County is currently under an order mandating that businesses require customers to wear masks.

“The Republican Party isn't considered a commercial entity so they themselves are not required to comply with the mask order,” said Melissa Arredondo, a spokesperson for the

office of Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, who issued the mask order.

That order expires Tuesday, and Dickey said the party will “revisit” the mask issue during another tele-town hall next month before the convention.

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

Lakey, the state's former top public health official, said masks are effective at reducing the spread of the virus.

“If you have a convention where there's a large number of people inside, sitting close to each other, especially without masks, then no one should be surprised that there will be people that will get infected in that setting,” he said.

Lakey added that outdoor settings are safer than indoor venues.

“When you're outdoors, you have UV light, and you also have the wind that's going to disperse any respiratory droplets,” he said. “And so, in general, people believe that being outside is less risky than being inside.”

The Houston First Corporation, which operates the George R. Brown Convention Center, said it is legally obligated to honor a

contract with the Republican Party of Texas that was signed before the pandemic began.

“HFC does not have the authority to require masks to be worn by attendees at the Republican State Convention, unless included in the original license agreement,” Carolyn Campbell, a spokesperson for Houston First, wrote in a statement. “Since this agreement was issued prior to the pandemic, no such provision was included, therefore any enforcement of the new mask order would be the responsibility of the Republican State Convention.”

The party is making several adjustments to hold the convention safely. Dickey promised an “abundance” of hand-sanitizer stations and said rooms will be cleaned between meetings. Whatley said the convention center has installed thermal scanners at its entrances to take the temperature of attendees as they walk in.

“Our decision to hold an in-person convention comes as a direct result of wanting to protect the rights of our delegates as the grassroots of our Party, as well as to lead the way in promoting and practicing our principle of personal responsibility,” Dickey wrote in a statement.

MASK

from page 1

Yancey of Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital have stressed that, while the death rate is low, COVID-19 has other serious impacts the public should be aware of..

While Yancey said she is concerned about misinformation about COVID-19 as a disease, its treatment and its prevention that continues to permeate discussions about the virus.

More than just deadly

While the mortality rate for COVID-19 in Texas sits at around 1.5% and globally at about 4.9% of diagnosed cases according to DSHS and the World Health Organization respectively, Yancey said she is concerned about other long-term health effects in survivors.

“We don't know what the long-term consequences are going to be, but we've certainly seen people who ultimately have relatively mild cases who have to be in the hospital for a few days are still on oxygen weeks later,” Yancey said.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report about 81% of COVID-19 patients recover without hospitalization, 19% of patients experience serious symptoms that require inpatient care.

Those who experience severe new coronavirus cases can experience permanent damage to the lungs, heart and kidneys according to Advent Health, a faith-based hospital group.

About 45% of hospitalized patients may experience neurological issues according to the American

Neurological Association. These could include dizziness, headaches and strokes, among other health complications.

COVID-19 presents financial challenges as well. For a mild diagnosed case of COVID-19, prior to health insurance benefits, treatment has a median cost of \$3,045 according to a study published by “Health Affairs,” a medical journal. A severe case requiring hospitalization has a median cost of \$14,366. A year after recovery, follow up care may bring that total to nearly \$19,000.

Remdesivir, one promising anti-COVID-19 drug, recently had its public price set at \$520 per vial, with a five-day treatment of six vials totaling \$3,120 before insurance, according to a press release from Gilead, the drug's manufacturer.

“There aren't very many viral diseases that we can treat well. Most of what we're doing is just supporting the body while it recovers by itself,” Yancey said.

Treatment and recovery

Treatment and recovery take time, Yancey said. Treatments like remdesivir and convalescent plasma are promising but aren't cures.

Convalescent plasma is an investigational treatment coordinated through the Mayo Clinic, Yancey said. It uses plasma from recovered patients to infuse antibodies into those still in treatment.

Yancey said hospitalized COVID-19 patients often need oxygen, but only a low percentage require intubation – an intrusive process which can damage the vocal chords and usually requires the patient be sedated.

Yancey said recovery time increases with challenges such as lung infections that can occur as the lungs are healing, and recovery is slow even without complications.

“We certainly have seen people who have had relatively mild cases who have to be in the hospital for a few days are still on oxygen weeks later,” Yancey said. “There are severe consequences even without mortality.”

Yancey said it is important for COVID-19 patients to take recovery time after being discharged. Following their physicians' instructions and listening when their body tells them to rest are important, she said.

“Give yourself time to recuperate,” Yancey said. “Now is not the time to start marathon training. Rest. Eat. Make sure you're eating right. A little activity every day.”

Fighting misinformation

Yancey said patients sometimes think they should get over COVID-19 quickly because the illness isn't properly understood. She understands the public is frustrated with what seems like a changing story in the face of what is a relatively new virus, but she says there are inconsistencies the public should adhere to and rumors about SARS-CoV-2 that should be disregarded.

Yancey said hospitals have not been instructed by the CDC to report all deaths as new coronavirus-related, despite a widespread myth online.

“I heard that doctors are being paid thousands of dollars to label someone (as) a COVID death. I can report that I have not been paid a

dime. ... It's completely untrue,” Yancey said.

Yancey also said that the test used to diagnose COVID-19 is specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus rather than detecting all viruses in the coronavirus family.

Yancey said, in her medical opinion, all people two and older should wear a cloth face covering in public that they regularly wash. The point of the mask isn't to stop an individual airborne COVID-19 virus, but to keep saliva and respiratory droplets from spreading when people speak, sneeze or cough, she said. Yancey emphasized that with her decades of experience she knew of no physical health condition which would prevent anyone from wearing a mask.

“The general public is being recommended to wear cloth face coverings,” Yancey said. “The general public does not need to be wearing N95 masks. Those are for health care personnel. They're for specialized situations.”

Yancey added masks do not present a health risk of carbon dioxide (CO2) buildup or low oxygen in the body. If that were the case, she said, medical professionals who are currently wearing them for eight-hour or longer shifts would be facing serious health emergencies which simply aren't happening.

Yancey said it was particularly important for those with breathing conditions such as asthma or COPD to wear cloth masks, or even N95 masks, to protect their more sensitive lungs.

“Anybody who has potential lung disease, especially asthma, needs to be laundering their mask

in fragrance-free hypoallergenic detergent, because perfumes that smell great in most detergents (for a person with lung disease) could facilitate an asthma attack,” Yancey said.

Readers with anxiety-related issues are encouraged to speak with their mental health care provider regarding mask usage.

The CDC, World Health Organization and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration all suggest wearing cloth face coverings in public, though OSHA cites situations where different masks may need to be worn in the workplace.

“(Cloth masks) are worn in public over the nose and mouth to contain the wearer's potentially infectious respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks and to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), to others,” OSHA's website says.

While all public gatherings are a concern, Yancey said medical professionals are associating spikes in COVID-19 cases associated with the opening of restaurants and bars across the Katy area after state restrictions were eased.

Yancey also wanted to reassure the public that hospitals can serve non-COVID-19 patients. She said she had heard reports when the pandemic first began that patients weren't going to the hospital when they needed to because they didn't think there were available resources for them.

“We have not had capacity issues,” Yancey said. “Absolutely, if you're having a hard time, please come to the hospital.”