

KATY

## Council approves \$6M bond and city elections

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

During a special Feb. 12, Katy City Council voted unanimously to move forward with the a \$6M bond referendum and its regular city elections, as well as a measure requesting approval for updates to the city's charter. The bond package is broken down into Proposition A which provides public safety improvements for the city while Proposition B will be directed toward parks and walkability.

"This is one of the greatest days for me being on city council," Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris said in an interview after the meeting. "Councilmember (Janet) Corte, myself, Mayor (Bill) Hastings and many previous mayors - we have worked on (the parks issue) many years and just - I'm almost in tears of joy that we're going to be able to send this to voters for approval."

The parks bond in Proposition B totals out at \$4.2 million and includes the construction of a new parks administration building at Katy City Park, said City Administrator Byron Hebert. The new facility will allow the city to move Parks Department staff from the city's Public Works facility and move them to Katy City Park, making it more efficient for those staff members to maintain parks facilities, Hebert said.

A building already exists at Katy City Park which could either be renovated or replaced in order to provide the new facility, Hebert said. He added that it was too early in the planning process to know which option was the more feasible plan.

The proposition would also set up a hike and bike trail that would lead from downtown Katy and follow the Cane Island Branch of the Buffalo Bayou north to the Pitts Road drainage pond which is now being expanded, Hebert said. An exact route has not been determined yet because the bond would also pay for engineering and design of the trails system.

Proposition A would be a public safety bond which would improve the city's fleet maintenance facility to allow the city to work on its own fire trucks and

See **COUNCIL**, page **A3**

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WINTER STORM

## Severe weather hits Katy, Greater Houston

*Power outages cause many to face sub-freezing temps without heat*

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

Severe weather slid into the Katy area - and in fact, all of Texas - Sunday evening. Freezing rain began locally around 5 p.m. that evening and overnight, many homes throughout the region were without power due to rolling blackouts or outages. Various electrical providers continued to scramble to restore power well

into Tuesday and beyond with another freezing rain weather event expected Thursday.

"The blackouts have become necessary due to record breaking demand for power and the extreme conditions have caused some power generating units to go offline, causing a shortage," said Waller County Judge Trey Duhon in a Monday morning social media post.

See **WEATHER**, page **A3**



R. HANS MILLER

Roadways throughout the Katy area saw a mix of slush and ice as they began to slowly thaw during the day on Tuesday. However, weather forecasts called for additional severe later into Thursday.

## MOVING ON



PRENTICE C. JAMES | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Tompkins sophomore guard Loghan Johnson (23) drives to the basket during a Class 6A bi-district playoff game against Fort Bend Travis on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center in Katy.

## No. 14 Tompkins girls begin playoff run with rout of Travis

By DENNIS SILVA II  
SPORTS EDITOR

For about four minutes, Tompkins' Class 6A bi-district girls basketball playoff game was competitive. Fort Bend Travis, the No. 4 seed out of District 20-6A, quickly established momentum and energy against the District 19-6A champions, and the game was tied at six halfway into the first quarter.

And then the Falcons went to their hellacious '21' press defense and, well, that was that.

**FOR MORE  
GIRLS BASKETBALL  
PLAYOFF COVERAGE,  
SEE PAGES B1, B2**

A close game turned into a 12-2 Tompkins run, and the Falcons rolled from there, earning a 68-37 win over the Tigers on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center.

See **FALCONS**, page **B6**

HARRIS COUNTY

## HCSO program works to support residents in crisis

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

Harris County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Jose Gomez says he's proud to be one of the first officers in the Harris County Mental Health and Jail Diversion Program, a program which works to help those facing mental health crises or dealing with intellectual and developmental disabilities have positive interactions with law enforcement.

"I was one of the first members that began with the crisis intervention response team, when we first formed it (in 2011 or 2012) that paired a mental health peace officer ... with a mental health clinician from the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, which is our local mental health authority," Gomez said.

Gomez spent nearly seven years on that team and said he felt it was one of the best units he's ever been involved in. The program allows officers with specialized training to identify situations on

police calls wherein a disturbance is caused by someone facing a mental health crisis such as suicidal tendencies, depression, anxiety disorders or other issues. Once the situation is understood, the clinician from the Harris Center can step in and help to deescalate the situation and provide a more positive outcome for the individual in crisis and those affected by that person's behavior, Gomez said. The program, he said, has been quite effective in improving results for both officers and those they interact with.

Gomez said an evaluation of the program was set up in 2019 and conducted by Arnold Ventures and the University of Houston to evaluate the program. The program, which also issues iPads to 20 deputies across HCSO's Mental Health and Jail Diversion Program to help them connect to mental health professionals at the Harris Center, evaluated 400 calls for service.

See **HCSO**, page **A3**



COURTESY HCSO

Part of the HCSO Mental Health and Jail Diversion program is intensified de-escalation and training for deputies - both regular street deputies and MHJD deputies - as well as command staff to participate in increased mental health and de-escalation trainings such as the one shown here in this picture. For more information, readers are encouraged to visit [www.theharriscenter.org](http://www.theharriscenter.org).

KATY

## Schofield files bills to shore up homeowner protections, announces staff

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

State Representative Mike Schofield, R-Katy, has filed two bills that look to assist homeowners' rights. The first, HB 1705 would freeze property taxes for homeowners 65 years of age and older. He has also filed HB 1659 which would allow homeowners to place religious displays anywhere on their properties, in spite of prevalent homeowners associations' rules.



REPRESENTATIVE  
MIKE SCHOFIELD

someone from having a religious symbol on their own lawn is an infringement on freedom that is

"No one has a right to tell you that you cannot worship at your own home," Rep. Schofield said. "Preventing

positively un-Texan, and it must stop."

**1st Amendent protections**

Schofield said some HOAs have misinterpreted a law which prevents them from removing religious displays from residents' front doors to give them the authority to remove displays from other parts of the property, such as the front lawn. HB 1569 clarifies that homeowners can have religious displays anywhere on their property, ensuring easy

access to their First Amendment right to freedom of religion and speech.

Katy residents who received letters from their HOAs demanding the removal of crosses displayed in their lawns at Easter had requested Schofield file his bill.

Schofield represents House District 132 which includes the Katy area and portions of Cy-Fair.

See **SCHOFIELD**, page **A3**

### OUTSMARTING CANCER IN WEST HOUSTON & KATY

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# Harris Co. joins Houston to establish rental and mortgage assistance program

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

Harris County has joined with the city of Houston to establish a \$159 million rental assistance program dubbed the Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The program will focus on past-due rent, some past-due utilities and future rent payments for those economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance Program offers a critical lifeline to scores of residents facing economic hardship through no fault of their own, offering hope that they might emerge from this crisis with their households intact,” said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo.

Hidalgo said many hard-working families throughout the county have been impacted by the pandemic’s devastating effects on the economy and the new assistance program will ensure residents facing hard times are ready to get back to work and contributing to the economy as soon as the anticipated economic rebound arrives.

Landlords may enroll in the program beginning this week and it is anticipated that renters will be able to apply for assistance by the end of February, a press release said. Applications will be serviced through [www.HoustonHarrisHelp.org](http://www.HoustonHarrisHelp.org), which will service both landlords and tenants. Per U.S. Treasury guidelines, most payments will be made directly to landlords instead of tenants in order to reduce the wait times for past-due rent to be paid. Landlords will be required to credit renters’ accounts within five business days, cease eviction proceedings and late fees in addition to dropping all legal action against the tenants.

“This rental assistance program represents a smart, responsible, and



STOCK PHOTO COURTESY PEXELS/PHOTOMIX

According to a recent Rice University study, evictions cost Harris County more than \$241 million in 2016 with about 35,335 evictions in 2016. Houston is second only to New York City in evictions nationwide. A renewed program to help those facing eviction because of the COVID-19 pandemic seeks to mitigate the economic impact of the disease by preventing homelessness and costs associated with such legal actions.

compassionate investment in our collective prosperity,” Hidalgo said.

The program will be run by BakerRipley and Catholic Charities which ran a similar program last year, beginning in June and were selected, in part, because of their emergency management experience. Supplemental agencies will be pulled into the effort to help families apply and ensure underserved populations are informed about the program. Any Harris County renter can submit an application, provided funds are paid directly to landlords.

Renters who applied in the fall of 2021 but were not selected will need to update their applications and will be included in the application pool. For those who do not qualify or are in need of immediate assistance, it is recommended they dial 2-1-1 (open 24 hours a day) and operators will help

them connect to assistance services as appropriate.

Houston mayor Sylvester Turner said the program was necessary to help thousands in the county and city of Houston who had been severely impacted by the economic side effects of the pandemic.

“The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has decimated thousands of people and made it difficult for hard-working families across our region to pay rent,” Turner said. “The City-County partnership with BakerRipley and Catholic Charities demonstrates how critical a coordinated collective response is to helping our neighbors. Our current state demands we align our efforts and leverage our resources and expertise to better support the growing needs of our community.”

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Information regarding qualifications for the program is available at [www.houstonharrishelp.org](http://www.houstonharrishelp.org). Community members meeting certain income guidelines or who are already members of certain social services programs are eligible to receive assistance. Documentation reflecting the requirements for the program will need to be submitted with the tenant’s or landlord’s application. Required documentation may include proof of identity, proof of residence at a rental unit, proof of income, proof of economic hardship due to COVID-19 and/or proof of housing instability.

**Note:** This information is noncomprehensive due to limited space. Visit the Houston-Harris Emergency Rental Assistance Program website for complete information.

### Income requirements by household size

Household Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
1	\$3,679	\$44,150
2	\$4,204	\$50,450
3	\$4,729	\$56,750
4	\$5,254	\$63,050
5	\$5,675	\$68,100
6	\$6,095	\$73,150
7	\$6,516	\$76,200
8	\$6,937	\$83,250

Qualifying Programs:

- Medicaid
- Federal Pell Grant (current student)
- Harris Health Gold Card
- Public Housing Assistance through Houston or Harris County
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- National School Lunch Program (Free/Reduced school lunches)
- Women, Infants and Children program (WIC)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Tribal Assistance
- VA pension or disability
- Head Start

Source: Harris County

## Ferraro named to Texas board of directors

By R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

Katy Area Chamber of Commerce President Matthew Ferraro has been named to the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives Board of Directors for the 2021 fiscal year, according to a TCCE press release. Ferraro has been in his position at the Katy Area chamber since April of 2019.

“I am excited to have Matthew Ferraro as a Board Member for TCCE this year. Matthew is an outstanding leader, innovator, and collaborator. I am fortunate to get the opportunity to work with Matthew these next 12 months,” said Steve Ahlenius, TCCE 2021 chairman.

Ferraro previously served the Fort Bend County community through the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce. Since coming to Katy, he has focused on increasing membership and ensuring the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce provides networking,



MATTHEW FERRARO

training and business opportunities for its members.

TCCE is a statewide group that was founded in 1906 and seeks to help chambers of commerce improve services through professional development programs for professionals in the industry.

This year, TCCE will host events across Texas both virtually and in-person. Programs will include innovation, leadership, selling, small business development and other opportunities for chambers that are TCCE members.

“I’m looking forward to serving on the TCCE Board. It’s an honor to have been nominated and selected to serve on TCCE as we produce new programs and initiatives that can support Chamber’s across the state,” Ferraro said.

## TEXAS CHILI COOKOFF



COURTESY PHOTO

Community members bundled up against the cold Friday, Feb. 12 to support students participating in the Katy Independent School District Future Farmers of America Livestock Show by competing or testing chili in the Texas Chili Cookoff. The annual event was sponsored this year by the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce, Matt Shoemberg State Farm, Independent Bank, Katy ISD and the FFA. A donation was also made by The Oaks Kitchen out of the Cane Island master planned community. All proceeds from the cookoff are donated to the FFA program.

This Week’s Puzzle Sponsored by

**Katy Times**

## SUDOKU

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

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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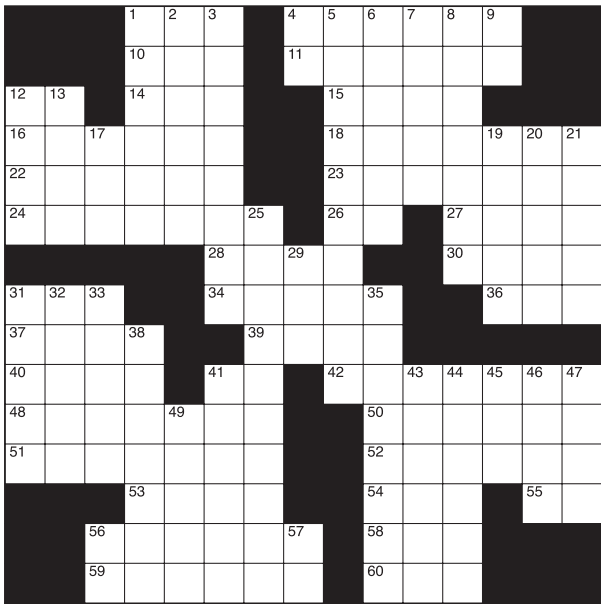
## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### CLUES ACROSS

1. Big tech firm
4. Picked
10. Type of whale
11. A woman of refinement
12. New England state
14. Common gibbon
15. Tall coniferous tree
16. State capital
18. Making a liquid muddy
22. Vinegary
23. Peninsula
24. Thee
26. Atomic #55
27. Used in units of measurement
28. Welsh female name
30. Arab ruler title
31. One’s mother
34. Trap
36. Soviet Socialist Republic
37. Assn. of oil-producing countries
39. Holy fire
40. Emit coherent radiation
41. Atomic #81
42. Orthodox Jewish college
48. Herbs
50. Ran after
51. Begin again
52. Named
53. Barbary sheep
54. Unwell
55. Postscript
56. Drivers
58. One point east (clockwise) of due north
59. Prim
60. A facility equipped for sports or physical training

### CLUES DOWN

1. Small islands



2. Skullcap
3. Unexplained events
4. One hundredth of a meter
5. Beloved baseball announcer
6. Repulsive
7. Northern European languages
8. Match or surpass
9. Northeast
12. Chew the fat
13. Innovative industry
17. Land to put down to grass
19. Products
20. Nostril
21. Surprise Icelandic politician
25. Conclusive acts
29. Inform on
31. Grinding tooth
32. Keep up
33. Tablelands
35. Raising
38. Mythical creature
41. Hums
43. Mountain in Antarctica
44. Neighborhood in Manhattan
45. Distinctive practice
46. Vice president
47. Contributes to
49. Small bones
56. Oil company
57. Empire State

Answers will be provided in next week’s edition.

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NEWS

WEATHER

from page A1

According to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, – also known as ERCOT – which manages the state’s electrical grid, said Tuesday it was working as quickly as possible to restore power to as many Texans as possible. ERCOT CEO Bill Magnes said in a Tuesday afternoon interview with ABC affiliate WFAA out of Dallas that some electrical customers may be without power through Friday but power should be restored by the weekend.

ERCOT representatives said the outage was caused by a greatly increased demand for electricity as Texans turned up their thermostats. Texans were asked to lower their thermostat to between 64 and 68 degrees, depending on which electrical provider they had. However, rolling blackouts were required in order to manage the pull on the state’s electrical grid, they said. Additional problems were caused by natural gas and coal power plants going offline due to a lack of fuel deliveries. About 30,000 Megawatts of electrical capacity – enough to service roughly 2 million households – was taken offline by lack of fuel and high demand, about 4% of which was wind turbines in West Texas freezing up, with the remainder of the loss being natural gas and coal.

“Every grid operator and every electric company is fighting to restore power right now,” said Magness.

Tex. Governor Greg Abbott expressed his disappointment in ERCOT’s response to the storm in a brief statement Tuesday afternoon. Abbott tore into ERCOT’s lack of reliability which led to millions of Texas

households being without power and subsequently without heat during unprecedented winter weather in Texas. Abbott’s statement also called for a review of ERCOT’s mandates and emergency preparedness.

“I have issued an executive order adding an emergency legislative item to review the preparations and decisions by ERCOT so we can determine what caused this problem and find long-term solutions,” Abbott said.

Abbott issued a statewide declaration of emergency ahead of the arrival of the storm, and secured a federal emergency declaration from the White House to make extra resources available for communities impacted by this weather event.

Local response

Locally, Katy and Royal ISDs cancelled classes early on and extended those cancellations as more information became available regarding road conditions. While both districts are set up to conduct classes online, they elected not to have online classes due to so many in the region being without power. As of 3:45 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, KISD had extended its closure through Thursday, Feb. 18, while RISD had cancelled classes for Wednesday, Feb. 17 and was awaiting more information before deciding about Thursday classes.

KISD has also postponed the KISD Future Farmers of America Livestock Show to Feb. 23-27.

“The safety of our students and staff is the utmost priority as we continue to navigate the impact of freezing conditions,” Katy ISD Spokesperson Maria DiPetta said in a Tuesday afternoon statement sent to local media outlets.

County offices in Fort Bend, Harris and Waller counties were closed Monday and Tuesday with the exception

of emergency management offices and first responder operations. It was unknown at press time whether those closures would be extended later into the week.

“I’ve signed a disaster declaration for Harris County to give our emergency officials the flexibility to utilize every available resource to respond to this historic weather. This is the beginning of an incredibly challenging few days for our region,” said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo.

Fort Bend County closed several roads and, like all surrounding jurisdictions asked residents to stay home unless an absolute emergency arose.

The Houston Toll Road Authority shut down multiple tollways throughout Greater Houston as bridges and flyovers froze over, making travel unsafe for area residents.

The city of Katy announced online Tuesday afternoon that City Hall and the municipal court would remain closed on Feb. 17. Those needing to pay utility bills would have their deadlines extended through Feb. 22 in consideration of the situation. Additionally, multiple roads and overpasses in Katy were closed including the Pin Oak Road overpass and other I-10 crossings due to ice on bridges.

Fulshear Public Information Officer Mike McCoy said Tuesday afternoon that city offices were shut down and no decisions had been made regarding Wednesday. Fulshear residents are advised to call ahead before heading to Fulshear City Hall.

Aldersperson Lyndon Stamps of Brookshire confirmed Tuesday afternoon that Brookshire’s office were also closed. No estimated time to reopen was provided.

No response was received from the city of Pattison regarding openings in time for publication.

Still, many Texas seniors do have trouble paying tax bills and Schofield said he would like to help them remain in their homes.

“Older Texans tell me all the time that rising property taxes are forcing them to consider moving out of state. It is not the government’s job to tax you out of your home,” Schofield said. Schofield was elected to his old seat representing House District 132 in November after a one-term hiatus in which Democrat Gina Calanni held the seat.

Schofield has selected Pam Johnson to serve as his chief of staff, Annie Callegari as his district director and legislative aide and Emily Knaub as his legislative director. Callegari is the granddaughter of former Texas State Representative Bill Callegari who represented Texas’ 130th House District.

SCHOFIELD

from page A1

Senator Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, has filed Senate Bill 581 as a companion bill in the Texas Senate to support Schofield’s filing.

“The HOA does not own your property and should not be in the business of placing overly burdensome restrictions on the free exercise of your religion,” Bettencourt said.

Property tax protections

Schofield also filed HB 1705 which is set to freeze all property taxes for homeowners over the age of 65. The bill is set up to prevent increases in property taxes so long as they own their homes.

“Texas is a great place to work and raise a family, but it needs to be a better place to retire,” Schofield said.

When a homeowner turns 65, the portion of their property taxes sent to school districts is frozen while the rest of the property taxes continue to rise. His new bill is intended to freeze the entirety of the homeowner’s property taxes including city, county and special district taxes, Schofield explained via press release. With those protections in place, seniors – who often have limited incomes – will be able to predict their property tax bills more consistently.

Many municipalities already have various tax exemptions in place for seniors who are homeowners and readers are encouraged to reach out to the municipalities on their tax bills to investigate those exemptions.

HCSO

from page A1

“One of the things we found is that ... of the 42-46% of the calls for service where a tablet was introduced to the scene where the deputy was able to connect the consumer out in the field with the clinician; it showed that over 40% to 45% (of suspects) were able to be left on scene because of the use of

the tablet because of an appropriate assessment out in the field,” Gomez said.

Because the program significantly reduces the need to take suspects to jail, it saves the public money, Gomez said. He added that the program increases officer availability because with the clinicians’ aid, those calls are cleared faster and officers are available to move on to the next call.

The program also establishes follow-up services for the person facing a mental health crisis, Gomez said. Once

the situation is deescalated and everything is under control, the Harris Center connects the suspect to community resources that can help them face their situations from a stronger standpoint.

“So, what that die is reduce the likelihood of (HCSO) to have to come back out (to the scene) because now (the suspect) is connected to the Harris Center,” Gomez said. “And they’re connected to resources which is huge, and all without having to transport (to a jail or mental health facility).”

COUNCIL

from page A1

emergency apparatus. That improvement is estimated to cost about \$100,000. Another \$100,000 would go to building a new training tower for the Katy Fire Department, while \$800,000 would be set aside to reimburse the city for repairs to Katy Fire Department’s Fire Station 1. The final

\$800,000 of the proposition’s \$1.8 million public safety bond would be set aside for renovations for the Katy Police Department located on Franz Road.

Also on the ballot will be a measure to update the city charter. A variety of updates are proposed and will be available to review on the city’s website, city staff said.

Finally, a city council election for the Ward A and Ward B seats. Dusty Thiele who was appointed to council

in late 2020 after former Councilmember Frank Carroll resigned is not running for his Ward A seat. Instead, newcomer Dan Smith will face Diane Walker for that seat. In the Ward B election, incumbent Jenifer Jordan Stockdick will face newcomer Gina Hicks.

“I would like to let council know at this time that we will be utilizing the Katy Civic Center for early voting for Ward A and for Election Day,” said City Secretary Becky McGrew.

TRIBUTE



FRANK J. FRUIA  
1939 - 2021

Mr. Frank John Fruia, age 81, of Katy, TX passed away to his eternal home with our Lord Jesus Christ on January 27, 2021. Frank was a leader in the Houston and national fashion community as a member of Hair America, the Lone Star Styling Committee, and Official Hair Fashion Committee of America (OHFC) for many years.

He was a multi-award-winning hair designer who had the honor of working with celebrities. He was also a respected educator and mentor. He was also a St. Thomas High School alumna.

Frank also served his community as a Lector Reader and Eucharistic Minister at Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church and brought communion to hospitalized people who were unable to attend mass. In addition to his many talents, Frank was an accomplished photographer who often donated his skills to such noble causes as the Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep organization.

Frank was a beloved husband, brother, father, grandfather, and great grandfather.

He is survived by Carolyn Fruia, his wife of 45 years. He is also survived by his children Paul Fruia (Kelly), Perry Fruia (Sallie), Troy Fruia, Dwayne Fruia (Veronica), Simone Hamilton (Eddie), and Shantel Crutcher (Terry), foster children Nicole Crutcher and Peyton Crutcher, 14 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. His surviving siblings are Joe Fruia (Doranne) and Francis Dibello (Sam). He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews and was preceded in death by his parents, Johnnie and Rosalie Fruia, and his twin brother Joseph who passed at 18 months.

A mass will be dedicated to Frank at Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church in Katy, TX on March 27, 2021 at 10:00am. A memorial celebration will be held in the near future once it is safe for the family and friends to congregate.

We pray:  
“Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.”

The family requests those who wish to express sympathy to consider donating to the Frank J. Fruia Memorial Fund for Frank’s COVID-related medical and final expenses. Direct deposits may be made to Brazos Valley Schools Credit Union. Contact Paul Fruia via email at paul.fruia@redhotcode.com for information regarding how to contribute.



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With optional Q&A at 8:30PM



FOR MORE INFO VISIT: KATYSFIRST.ORG

**Jim Baker’s Unified  
Theory Of Everything  
--- With God’s Help**

**(JBUTOE-WGH) A new book about Science and God. Revised publish date: late 2020**  
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(ad revised: 11/22/2019; previous ads are null and void)



This new book will contain a credible “unified theory of everything” that can explain the very basics of science. Albert Einstein predicted that someone “off the street” was going to do this someday. After 53 years (at approx. year 2000), I decided to include God at every step of the process of trying to come up with a scientific “Theory of Everything”. Prior to this, it was about the “only thing” I felt I had not been successful at inventing or figuring out. --- You see, God had already given me the gift of inventing at age 9-10, in His response to my Second Major Prayer. --- By the year 2014, God had allowed me to assemble sufficient knowledge that I felt 95%, of what I needed to figure out, had been accomplished.

One thing I had always wished for, especially as I was approaching the age of 40, is for God to speak to me. Well, when God did speak to me, I liked my first message from God about as much, I suppose, as Abraham liked his message from God, when he was told to sacrifice his son. But God was testing both of us! God was also making us stronger.

There are still two major topics in life to be addressed, prior to publishing the new book. One is a major release of scientific information of the new theory across the U.S.A. The second is starting an evangelical ministry.

Author of new book is a Chemistry graduate (B.S. 1971/M.S. 1978) of Texas A&M (A&I) in Kingsville, TX. He also attended S.A.C. in San Antonio. He has additional hours at SWTU, Texas Tech U., Boston College, Westinghouse PWR. He has worked at Texas Uranium Operations as Chief Chemist, at South Texas Nuclear Project as Nuclear Chemist during pre-startup, and retired from City of Houston where he was in charge of Technical Services Section of Bureau of Air Quality Control. Owner of BAKER’S BOOKS is also the author of *God’s Amazing Answer To Prayer*, in 2012.

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# Analysis: Texas tries to make the connections on broadband web

Of all the things on Gov. Greg Abbott's list of priorities, the call for broadband internet might be the most popular in the state Legislature. But fixing the problems of accessibility and affordability will be expensive and time-consuming.

And it's not a new problem. The governor has had a task force working on it; they've already issued a report. A majority of the members of the Texas House spotlighted the issue in a letter to Abbott last September. And a related telecommunications dispute at the Public Utility Commission is tied up in court, potentially threatening phone service in some rural areas of the state and with it, access to broadband internet.

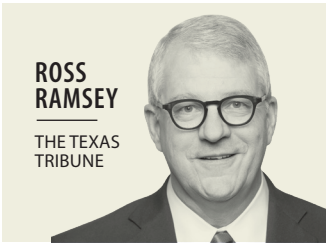
The pandemic has made the need clear. Texans stuck at home need high-speed internet for schooling, for work, for shopping, for medicine, for entertainment — the live, in-person activities we all took for granted a year ago.

Sounds simple enough, but there's a lot to untangle. It's expensive to run lines to the most sparsely populated areas of the state, which is why so many people don't have access to broadband, especially in rural areas. And it's expensive to subscribe even if access isn't the problem; just because there is a fiber optic line next to the house doesn't mean you can afford the service.

Some of the state's smallest phone companies depend on the state's Universal Service Fund — an account filled by a tax on local phone lines — to subsidize the higher costs of getting telephone service to the less populated parts of Texas. But those subsidies have been dwindling, which could make it more difficult to get broadband internet service to customers in those areas.

The state fund is for phone service — not internet. But those are linked — often delivered over the same infrastructure. Weldon Gray, CEO of the Texas Statewide Telephone Cooperative Inc., said it's possible to build a broadband network without a phone network, but it's more often the case that the broadband piggybacks on phone lines.

"As a practical matter, broadband is carried on the phone network," he said. "It's the foundation to carry the broadband."



The tax on phone lines that supplied the fund has been shrinking for years as customers shift to cellphones, and state officials didn't raise the tax to match spending. Funding ran out last month.

And now the companies are suing the Public Utility Commission for leaving them high and dry.

"Our members have reported they are not hiring, not filling any job openings, curtailing new construction and system upgrades," Gray said.

On Friday, Abbott unveiled general plans for state spending — he called it a budget, but it was noticeably short of recommended spending amounts — that includes support for broadband internet and other telecommunications services.

"To further expand access to high-speed internet and cultivate prosperity for the state, Texas should support the creation of a state broadband plan, authorize a broadband office within the Economic Development and Tourism Office and eliminate barriers to provide greater access to broadband services," he wrote. "Expanding access to high-speed internet will provide opportunities and improve the quality of life for all Texans, especially those in rural and low-income communities."

"I recommend the 87th Legislature continue to invest in broadband initiatives that will help expand access to high-speed internet in unserved areas across the state."

There was no mention of the Public Utility Commission or of the Universal Service Fund, and no dollar figure attached to his call for new investments.

Virtual public education is almost a year old in Texas, as are the other quick conversions to working at home, talking to doctors from home and all the rest. State officials are engaged in ways they never have been. But for all of the new attention and talk about the digital divide, and the studies, task forces and litigation, the fixes are going to take a while.

# OPINION

"I was allowed to believe things that weren't true."

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene.

JOHN COLE  
THE KATY TIMES



# It's time to pay attention to the water that we can't see

Texas' rivers are iconic. But the groundwater that sustains them is invisible. State law perfectly captures this dichotomy. Naturally flowing water in rivers and streams is owned by the state and held in trust for the public good. That's because we can see what that water means to us: It provides for our cities, towns, farms, and ranches. We picnic next to it and we float in it with our friends and family. So the state has laws that try to prevent rivers from running dry.

The laws that apply to groundwater in Texas are different and don't necessarily protect groundwater from drying up. If you own property, you own the groundwater beneath your land, and you have the right to pump as much water as you want in many areas of the state where groundwater is unregulated. Even where groundwater is managed by local groundwater conservation districts, the law allows over pumping to occur, causing groundwater to decline across the state.

This can also cause rivers to decline. That's because groundwater and surface water are intrinsically connected — nearly a third of the water in Texas' rivers originates underground. Texas law, unfortunately, doesn't fully recognize this connection.

Now, the state's population is booming, and its climate is ever more susceptible to drought, so underground aquifers are increasingly vulnerable to over pumping. That's a huge risk to farmers, ranchers, big cities, small towns and wildlife. It also threatens the rivers and streams that the state is trying to protect.

Beneath the Surface, a new Environmental Defense Fund report outlining five major groundwater management challenges in



Texas, shows that in many places, overstressed aquifers are already affecting life above-ground.

The Devils River in West Texas is considered the state's most unspoiled and wild river. A huge amount of public and private investment has gone into protecting it. But studies by the Texas Water Development Board show that significant pumping from the Edwards-Trinity Aquifer, which feeds the Devils River, can affect the river's surface water flow.

Val Verde County, where the Devils River originates, lacks a groundwater conservation district — a local agency with some authority to limit groundwater pumping. As the Beneath the Surface report notes, local residents and landowners worry that unregulated groundwater pumping will affect their own property rights to groundwater, harm flow to the Devils River and the nearby San Felipe Springs, and even affect water in the Rio Grande that surface water right holders and endangered species all count on.

There's more. Wimberley, a charming Hill Country town on the banks of Cypress Creek, is home to a beloved spring-fed swimming hole called Jacob's Well — a vertical cave dropping straight down into the Middle Trinity Aquifer. The well provides about 20% of the Blanco River's baseflow and 100% of the flow of Cypress Creek.

In 2000, Jacob's Well stopped flowing for the first time in recorded history. In 2008 and 2009, the well stopped flowing again, and then again in 2011 and 2013. This month, overpumping and a lack of rain has reduced Jacob's Well to a trickle. The community is trying to save it.

Last year, after a lengthy, science-driven stakeholder engagement process, the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District adopted rules to maintain spring flow from Jacob's well and to protect rural water supply wells from going dry. The rules create a 39-square-mile management zone that cuts permitted pumping when spring flow drops below a certain level, an indication of declining groundwater levels in the area. It's a step toward conjunctive management of groundwater and surface water.

It's also the exception in Texas. Texas needs a clearer view of how groundwater affects surface water. By letting science guide management decisions at the local and state level, Texas can protect groundwater as well as the communities and ecosystems — and rivers and streams — it supports.

In its interim report, the Texas House Committee on Natural Resources recommended creating an advisory board to develop recommendations for "improving the understanding and management of groundwater and surface interactions in Texas."

This is a good first step that would spotlight options for creating a badly needed Texas-specific solution to water management — one that preserves the state's economy, its natural resources, and Texans' lives and livelihoods.

Vanessa Puig-Williams is director of Environmental Defense Fund's Texas Water Program.

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R. HANS MILLER | News Editor  
DENNIS SILVA II | Sports Editor  
DON GRABOWSKI | Designer  
DEBBIE PREJEAN | Bookkeeper

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ADDRESS: P.O. Box 678, Katy, Texas, 77492-0678  
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:  
The Katy Times (ISSN 067-180) is published on Thursday for \$35 per year in Harris, Waller and Fort Bend Counties and \$45 elsewhere by The Katy Times, P.O. Box 678, Katy, Texas, 77492-0678. Periodical-rate postage paid at Katy, Texas 77494.

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CIRCULATION:  
Address billing inquiries at 281-391-3141.

POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to The Katy Times, P.O. Box 678, Katy, Texas, 77492-0678.

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



# CONSTITUTION CORNER

## ARTICLE IV, SECTION 3

### SECTION 3

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this union; but no new state shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other state; nor any state be formed by the junction of two or more states, or parts of states, without the consent of the legislatures of the states concerned as well as of the Congress. The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

U.S. Constitution



KATYTIMES.COM

Bernard B. White, 92, of Carthage, Texas, passed away on Monday evening, Feb. 8, 2021, in Carthage. He was born on Feb. 1, 1929, in Mt. Pleasant, Texas to the late Morris S. and Josie Moore White. Mr. White graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School with the class of 1947, and attended Texas State Teacher's College in Commerce. He married Dorothy Marie Howell on Aug. 11, 1951, in Bellville, IL and they celebrated 67 years together before she preceded him in death on Jan. 7, 2019. Mr. White served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War from 1950-



**BERNARD B. WHITE**  
1929-2021

1954 at which time he was honorably discharged. He worked as a wireline engineer for Welex, a division of Haliburton, until his retirement. Bernard was a ham radio operator, en-

joyed fishing and camping, and was a member of the Avion Trailer Club. Mr. White moved to Carthage in 2013, from Katy, Texas where he had lived for 34 years. He was of the Baptist faith. Mr. White was also preceded in death by a daughter, Brenda Renee Forman and his brothers, Bob, Dean, and Gene White.

He is survived by his children, Dennis White and wife Donna of Roanoke, Texas, Bernice Gipson and husband Ken of Fritch, Texas, Beverly Goodman and husband Steve of Carthage, Texas, and Donald White and wife Amy of Cibolo,

Texas; sister-in-law, Bettye Wilson and husband John of Mt. Pleasant; 10 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren. Numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and many friends also survive Mr. White.

The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the staff and nurses

at Winkler Place and at UT Health Carthage for the loving care provided to Mr. White.

A graveside service was held on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, at Restland Memorial Park with Rev. David Mark White officiating. The family received friends at the funeral home prior to the grave-

side service.

Honorary pallbearers were Micah Cobb, Cody Allen, Ben Goodman, David White, Parker White, and Jerod Gordon.

Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Association.

A guestbook may be signed online at [www.jimerson-lipsey.com](http://www.jimerson-lipsey.com).

Geraldine Anne "Gerry" Williams passed away in Katy, Texas, on Sunday, February 7, 2021, at the age of 74. She was born on November 4, 1946, in Philadelphia, PA, to Albert William Roddy and Margaret Mary Burnett Roddy. Gerry moved to Katy in 1979 and became a parishioner at St. Bartholomew Catholic Church. She was a beloved first grade teacher at Sundown Elementary for 20 years and retired in 2004 after a very dedicated teaching career. She loved her family, especially her grandchildren, more than anything.

She is survived by her children, Kelly Lynn Minnick and her husband Matthew of Katy, Texas, Katie Lynn Wyckoff of Katy, Texas, and Patrick James Wyckoff and his wife Holly of Magnolia, Texas; stepsons, Mark Williams of Houston, Texas, and Brad Williams of Beaumont, Texas; grandchildren, Kailey Lynn Wyckoff, Mackenzie Morgan Minnick, Joshua Patrick Wyckoff, Cassidy Kolleen Minnick, and Kennedy Nicole Wyckoff; sisters, Margaret Von



**GERALDINE ANNE "GERRY" WILLIAMS**  
1946-2021

Schondorf of St. Petersburg, FL, and Teresa Peterson of Slippery Rock, PA; as well as other loving family members and friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, William Williams;

and her daughter, Amy Lynn Wyckoff.

A memorial service was held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 13, 2021, at the Schmidt Funeral Home East Avenue Church, in Katy, with Deacon William C. Wagner officiating.

Those wishing to make memorial gifts may do so to M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, <https://gifts.mdanderson.org/>

Condolences may be expressed at [www.Schmidt-FuneralHome.net](http://www.Schmidt-FuneralHome.net).

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CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

# More than 1 million Texans fully vaccinated, state top exporter

By GARY BORDERS  
TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

The state passed the one million mark of Texans who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. More than 2.8 million have received the first dose.

The state, as it did last week, is receiving more than 400,000 doses. The vaccine is being shipped from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to 302 providers in 158 counties. In addition, the federal government has shipped 80,000 doses across the state to 376 pharmacies, including CVS, H-E-B, Walmart and a group of independent pharmacies. Details of the allocations are available on the DSHS vaccine allocations page (<https://tinyurl.com/1klvcfip>).

The number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to drop, with 73,888 reported statewide last week, down more than 50% from the record high of nearly 159,000 recorded Jan. 10-16. However, weekly fatalities continue to hover just below 2,000, not far below the record high of 2,311 set the week of Jan. 17.

## COVID-19 rental relief program unveiled

Renters hard hit by the pandemic with job losses now can seek relief through the Texas Rent Relief Program, which was rolled out on Monday, Feb. 15. More than \$1 billion has been allocated to Texas through the latest COVID-19 federal stimulus bill to assist tenants in paying rent and utilities. It will be administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

To qualify, households must be at or below 80% of the area median income. Preference will be given to households with income below 50% of the area median income, and households where one or more members have been unemployed for at least 90 days.

Applications can be submitted online at [TexasRentRelief.com](https://www.texasrentrelief.com), or by calling 1-833-9TX-RENT (1-833-989-7368) from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

**Editor's Note:** See more information about rental assistance for Harris County on page A2.

## Deadline nears for Texas Tuition Promise Fund

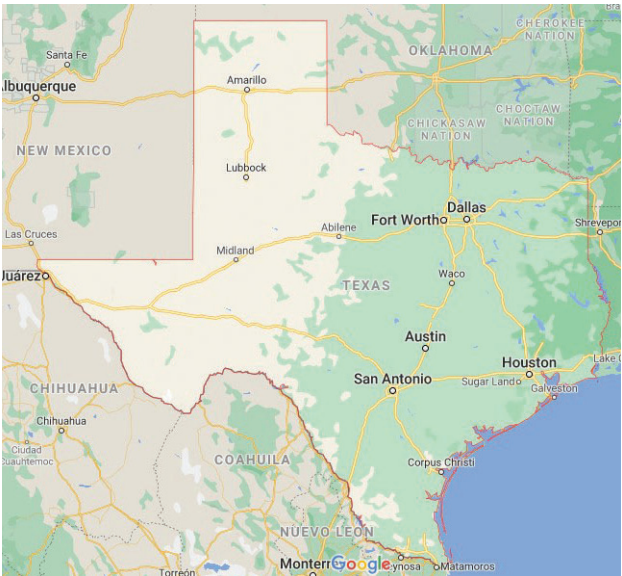
Texas parents have until the end of February to enroll their children in the state's prepaid college tuition fund. Enrollment for children under 1 year continues through July 31. The Texas Tuition Promise Fund allows parents to lock in current undergraduate tuition rates and fees at the state's public colleges and universities.

Earnings from money placed in the fund are tax free. The next enrollment period begins on Sept. 1. For more information, go to <https://www.texas tuition promise fund.com/>.

## Texas ranked top exporting state for 19th straight year

Once again, the Lone Star State leads the nation in exports. Its \$279.3 billion in exports outpaced California and New York combined. The state also led the United States in tech exports for the eighth straight year.

"Texas' exporting prowess is a testament to our business-friendly climate, strong trade partnerships, and most of all, the millions of hardworking Texans in communities



The last year has been difficult for many Texans, but there is assistance out there for those in need and the Texas economy shows that the state is set up with strong exports which should help those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic recover quickly.

across our state," Gov. Abbott said in a press release.

Petroleum-related products dominated the top 10 list of exports, occupying six of those spots, according to the Census Bureau.



The U.S. Capitol Building on the fifth day of the impeachment trial of former U.S. President Donald Trump, on charges of inciting the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol, in Washington, D.C., Feb. 13, 2021.

# Cornyn, Cruz join GOP colleagues in successful acquittal of Trump

By ABBY LIVINGSTON  
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

WASHINGTON — Texas' two Republican senators, John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, joined with most of their GOP colleagues on Saturday to successfully acquit former President Donald Trump of an impeachment charge that accused him of inciting the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

While Republicans were successful in holding the line for a president who left office nearly a month ago, a majority of the Senate voted to convict the president. In all, seven GOP Senators joined with 50 Democrats in a guilty vote against Trump.

That sum fell short of a conviction, as a two-thirds majority is needed for a guilty verdict. The impetus for Democrats and some Republicans to push for Trump's conviction after he left office was to bar him from running again in the future.

This fourth presidential impeachment in American history — the second against Trump — was a bitter affair, but only lasted five days. And repeatedly, Texans played key roles — as prosecutor, jury, de facto witnesses and defense counsel adviser.

While a trial, the events over the last week did not ascribe to the normal rules of a court of law. For instance, reporters often spotted Cruz ducking in and out of meetings with Trump's legal team, even as Cruz also served as a juror.

U.S. House Rep. Joaquin Castro, a San Antonio Democrat, served as a House impeachment manager — the prosecutorial arm of the proceedings. In the case he and his colleagues made before the Senate, they argued that Trump methodically primed his following with false claims of im-

pending fraud months ahead of the November election.

Then, they argued, he amped his rhetoric up after he lost and specifically promoted Jan. 6 — the day a joint session of Congress counted electoral votes — and the Capitol as the time and place for his followers to make their grievances known. Lastly, they argued that the evidence showed Trump did not engage the National Guard in a timely manner to prevent a loss of life and extensive damage to the Capitol building.

The Trump defense was brief and pugnacious. His attorney, Michael van der Veen argued that rioters hijacked an otherwise peaceful rally that day, that it was unconstitutional to try a former president and that the case was rooted in Democratic vindictiveness against Trump. He went on to make a series of other specious allegations against House Democrats.

The U.S. House impeached Trump in early January, a week before he left office. But Republicans who then controlled the Senate opted to go into a recess until after the swearing in of President Joe Biden.

The Texas senators sided with Trump, as they did in his first impeachment a little over a year ago.

Cruz was active on social media throughout the trial, calling it a Kangaroo Court.

In a statement released on Saturday after the vote, Cruz called it "a rushed act of partisan retribution" and argued against the trial of a former president.

"The House brought only one charge before the Senate: incitement," he said. "Donald Trump used heated language, but he did not urge anyone to commit acts of violence. The legal standard for incitement is very high and it is clear by the results of this

vote that the House Managers failed to present a coherent standard for incitement."

Cornyn, meanwhile, took a lower profile in the last week. The state's senior senator frequently raised questions about the constitutionality of holding a trial after a president left office even though the Senate voted that it was permissible.

"Ultimately, I am also concerned about establishing a dangerous, and sure to be used in the future, precedent of impeaching a former President after he or she has left office," he said in a statement. "This practice would, I fear, make impeachments a routine part of our political competition as a tool of the majority party to exact political revenge over the minority party."

Castro had little patience for that line of argument when he spoke to reporters after the vote.

"The defendant Donald John Trump was let off on a technicality ... they let him off on a technicality," he said.

"And you also heard Mitch McConnell go up there and say, essentially, that we overwhelmingly proved our case," he added, referring to a floor speech the Senate minority leader made minutes earlier.

"That substantively, Donald Trump is guilty of inciting an insurrection, and it has been, I know, for all of us, an honor to work and a solemn honor to work on this case."

"Even though we didn't get 67 votes, this has been the most bipartisan vote for impeachment and conviction ever, and we know that we spoke the truth on the Senate floor and the American people by and large have agreed with us."

# Latest census delay will push Texas' redrawing of political maps into the fall

By ALEXA URA  
TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

Texas lawmakers will almost certainly be back for a rare special legislative session in the fall now that the U.S. Census Bureau has set a September deadline for releasing the 2020 census results.

Facing significant holdups in finalizing the decennial count, the bureau announced Friday that the detailed population numbers needed to redraw legislative and congressional districts to reflect the state's growth in the last decade will be delivered by Sept. 30, a months-long delay that could upend the next set of elections for seats from Congress down to local offices.

The bureau's original plan was to get the data in lawmakers' hands as soon as this month, giving them time to rejigger district boundaries and decipher Texans' representation during the regular 2021 legislative session. But the census' typical timeline was repeatedly upended by the coronavirus pandemic and interference from the Trump administration.

"If this were a typical decade, we would be on the verge of delivering the first round of redistricting data from the 2020 Census," James Whitehorne, chief of the bureau's redistricting and voting rights data office, said in a statement. "Our original plan was to deliver the data in state groupings starting Feb. 18, 2021 and finishing by March 31, 2021. However, COVID-19 delayed census operations significantly."

Instead, the bureau is still working to release the population numbers that determine how many congressional seats are apportioned to each state by April 30 — blowing past the legal deadline for those numbers by many months. Census officials previously indicated the second set of more detailed numbers needed for redistricting wouldn't be available until after July.

The current timetable puts the data delivery far past the end of the 2021 legislative session on May 31, meaning Gov. Greg Abbott would need to call lawmakers back for legislative overtime in the fall.

Congressional and state House and Senate districts need to be reconfigured before the 2022 elections to account for the state's explosive growth in the last 10 years.

Estimates show Texas has grown by more than 4.2 million residents since 2010, which could garner it up to three additional congressional seats that will need to be added to the state's map. Because the state's growth has been concentrated in the urban centers and suburban communities, the populations of existing districts are significantly uneven.

The census delays have taken the steam out of the ongoing legislative session during which the politically fraught redistricting process was expected to dominate lawmakers' agendas, along with the state budget and the state's response to the pandemic. Still, the state is expected to end up back in court over its eventual map-making — potentially beginning with fights over whether the Legislature is constitutionally allowed to redraw state legislative political maps after a regular session and extending into lawmakers' treatment of voters of color.

Decade after decade, the state has faced allegations — and subsequent federal court rulings — that lawmakers discriminated against those voters, intentionally working to dilute the power of their votes, in drawing up political maps.

That sort of legal wrangling pushed the 2012 primary elections back by more than two months even without any census-related delays at the time. Under the state's current schedule, the filing deadline for candidates hoping to be on the 2021 primary ballot is Dec. 13.



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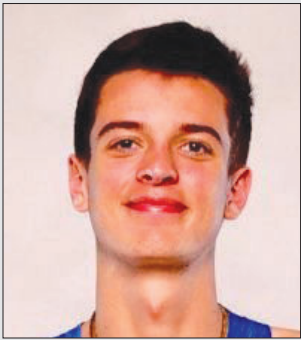
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## AREA SPORTS NOTEBOOK

COLE  
LINDHORSTFORMER FALCON  
LINDHORST STARS  
AT IOWA STATE  
CLASSICBy DENNIS SILVA II  
SPORTS EDITOR

Former Tompkins cross country and track standout Cole Lindhorst broke the 4-minute mile at the Iowa State Classic last weekend. Lindhorst, a true freshman competing for Air Force, ran a 3:59.28 to place third at the event. Lindhorst's time is an Academy record. On Jan. 23, Lindhorst kicked off his collegiate career with a victory in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:53.11. Lindhorst was a state champ in the 1600-meter run and an all-state cross country runner at Tompkins. ... All Katy ISD girls and boys soccer games and district soccer games scheduled for the week of Feb. 15-19 were to be determined due to inclement weather, pending further notice from the district. Katy ISD announced early Tuesday afternoon it was extending its closure through Thursday, Feb. 18. ... Katy ISD boys and girls soccer games scheduled for Friday, Feb. 12, were rescheduled to Tuesday, March 2, at the same sites and times. The games were postponed due to inclement weather. ... Nominees for the Katy ISD Athletic Hall of Honor are being accepted for the 2021 class. Nomination forms should be submitted by April 27. Use the nomination form here by typing into your web browser: [rb.gy/ylrfh4](http://rb.gy/ylrfh4). ... Morton Ranch senior offensive lineman Eric Ramos and Tompkins senior defensive back Dru Polidore were recognized as finalists for the Houston Touchdown Club Football Scholar-Athlete last week. Ramos has a 4.5 GPA (on a 5.0 scale), ranks 11th in his class of 567 and was a team captain for the Mavericks. Polidore has a 3.6 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) and was a team captain for the Falcons. ... Katy High senior Caleb Fields recently verbally committed to continue his baseball career at Concordia University. ... Paetow senior Jayden McCullough verbally committed to continue his basketball career at Texas Lutheran University on Feb. 8. ... In this week's Texas Girls Coaches Association Class 6A state soccer poll, Seven Lakes is ranked No. 6, and No. 2 in the Houston area behind Ridge Point.

**(The weekly sports notebook highlights notes and news that occurred in the Katy area within the last week. To submit a news item, email [dennis.silva@katytimes.com](mailto:dennis.silva@katytimes.com) or message on Twitter @densilva2).**

## SWIM ON TO STATE

**Katy ISD qualified five regional champions and eight relay teams to the UIL state swimming meets at the Bill Walker Pool and Josh Davis Natatorium beginning this week in San Antonio. For qualifiers and more coverage, see B3.**



DENNIS SILVA II

Taylor senior Abbie Alvarez swims through reps during a recent morning practice. Alvarez is one of five regional champions Katy ISD is sending to the UIL state swimming meet in San Antonio over the next two weeks.



PRENTICE C. JAMES | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Seven Lakes freshman post Justice Carlton (30) takes a shot during the Spartans' Class 6A bi-district playoff game against Fort Bend Ridge Point on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center in Katy.

Seven Lakes falls short  
in bi-district playoffsBy DENNIS SILVA II  
SPORTS EDITOR

For 30 minutes of its Class 6A girls basketball bi-district playoff game against Ridge Point, Seven Lakes seemingly had things under control. Victory seemed likely.

The upstart Spartans had executed coach Angela Spurlock's game plan almost flawlessly and looked set to elude the veteran, battle-tested talent of the Panthers.

And then, everything abruptly came to a screeching halt for Seven Lakes. All the momentum, all the energy. The entire season.

Ridge Point outscored Seven Lakes, 8-0, during the final 90 seconds to escape with a 66-60 win at the Merrell Center on Thursday, Feb. 11, ending the Spartans' season in devastating fashion.

Ridge Point improved to 13-7 overall and beat the Spartans in the bi-district round for the second consecutive season. Seven Lakes,

the No. 2 seed out of District 19-6A, wrapped up an encouraging season at 15-5.

"Down the stretch, they played Ridge Point basketball," Spurlock said. "They're a great team. You're going to have to withstand those surges, and I thought we did a good job of that early. With a couple minutes to go, we had chances for a few extra baskets and points and just didn't convert very well. But it's about when you're up five or six early and can't open that lead, those moments throughout the game add up more than the moments at the end of the game."

The Spartans led 58-51 early in the fourth quarter before the Panthers went on a 7-2 run to trail just 60-58 with 1:48 left. Then sophomore guard Inonda Peterson flung in a 3-pointer from dead center that put Ridge Point ahead to stay, 61-60 with 1:27 left.

See SPARTANS, page B2

Cinco Ranch wins first  
playoff game since '14-15By CHAD WASHINGTON  
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

MISSOURI CITY – Cinco Ranch's girls basketball team used stingy defense and the reliable scoring skills of senior guard Abby Bala to earn a 57-38 win over George Ranch in their Class 6A bi-district playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Hopson Field House.

George Ranch never got anything going against the Cougars' tough defense, falling behind early, scoring 12 points in the first half and allowing Cinco Ranch to build a momentum it never lost control of.

The Cougars advanced to the area round against undefeated Cypress Creek, ranked No. 1 in Class 6A in the state at 26-0. It was the first playoff win for Cinco

Ranch since the 2014-15 season.

Under new head coach Tamara Collier, the Cougars are hunting their first area playoff win since 2008-09.

Bala scored 16 of her game-high 22 points in the first half as the Cougars locked the Longhorns down on defense, which led to a lot of easy offensive opportunities in transition on the other end of the floor.

Bala scored seven points in the first quarter, knocking down mid-range jumpers to put Cinco Ranch up 11-8. Then she showed some range, hitting a 3-pointer and helping the Cougars break the game open in a big way during a 16-4 run in the second quarter for a 27-12 lead at halftime.

See COUGARS, page B6



CHAD WASHINGTON | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

George Ranch junior guard Savannah Velazquez runs past a trio of Cinco Ranch defenders during their Class 6A bi-district playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Hopson Field House in Missouri City.



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DENNIS SILVA II

Dulles junior guard Dai Dai Powell moves the ball as she is defended by Katy senior guard Amber Bourgeois in their Class 6A bi-district playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Hopson Field House in Missouri City.

# Katy falls to No. 11 Dulles in bi-district playoffs

By **CHAD WASHINGTON**  
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

MISSOURI CITY — Katy’s girls basketball team had a size advantage against No. 11 state-ranked Dulles in their Class 6A bi-district playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 11, but Dulles’ defense and shooting were too much for the Tigers to overcome.

Dulles created several turnovers and made 12 3-pointers to

top Katy, 65-39, at Hopson Field House to remain undefeated and move on to the area round.

Dulles improved to 23-0. Katy finished its season, 11-10. The Tigers played the Vikings tough, but just didn’t have enough offense to keep up with Dulles’ hot shooting.

Dulles made seven three-pointers in the first half, with junior guards Nya Threatt, Jakiya Thompson and Peyton

Overton each hitting two treys. Senior guard Victoria Moore also hit two 3s and scored 10 points in the half to help the Vikings to a 21-9 lead early in the second quarter.

Katy responded with a pair of layups by senior guard Sasha Fernandez and a 3-pointer by junior forward Darcy Swanson, keeping the Tigers within striking distance with a 27-16 halftime deficit.

The 3-point barrage by Dulles kept coming in the second half,

however, as the Vikings made three more triples in the third quarter. Thompson hit a pair of treys and junior guard Dai Dai Powell hit one as Dulles scored 19 points in the period to take a 46-29 lead.

Threatt took over in the fourth quarter, scoring on four slashing layups off of steals to build as much as a 21-point lead. Powell and junior guard Kaylie Johnson each added a 3-pointer in the

quarter.

Katy junior guard Ashlei Angel and sophomore forward Lyric Barr combined for eight points in the fourth quarter.

Threatt led the Vikings with 18 points, with Thompson scoring 16 and Moore with 12. Fernandez and Barr led Katy with eight points each, with Swanson, senior guard Amber Bourgeois and sophomore post Brianna Nelson getting five points each.

## SPARTANS

from page B1

“Huge 3,” Ridge Point coach Michael Vitek said. “The youngest kid on our team. Played on the freshman team last year. She may not always be in the right spot or do the right thing, but she’s always going 100 percent. For her to step up and hit that shot ... that’s when we knew we were in it.”

After Peterson’s 3, Seven Lakes freshman post Justice Carlton, who was phenomenal all night with a game-high 32 points and 18 rebounds, missed inside. Senior post Dala Allen converted a layup for the Panthers on the other end.

Seven Lakes turned it over on its final four possessions, and senior guard Raven Adams hit three of five free throws in the closing seconds for Ridge Point to seal the win.

“It’s been a rough year,” Vitek said. “We were in quarantine (for COVID-19 protocols) for two weeks prior to this. In the last three weeks, we played two games and had four practices. Getting back on the court was good for us, because our girls know what we can do when everything starts to click.”

It was the Spartans clicking early.

Buoyed by terrific 3-point shooting and the dominance of Carlton, Seven Lakes led 29-25 at halftime and 47-42 after the third quarter. When Spurlock talked about missed opportunities, it’s those moments early on when the Spartans could have extended a six-point lead to eight or nine, or a seven-point lead to double-figures.

“If you look at the whole 32 minutes, I don’t think it comes down to one or two things at the end of the game,” Spurlock said. “It comes down to a few things throughout the game. Wherever we had a chance to open up the lead, their players did great things, and that changes the momentum. Our kids executed exactly what we wanted them to execute. It’s a game. We just fell short right at the end.”



PRENTICE C. JAMES | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Seven Lakes senior Sarah Narum (15) shoots a 3-pointer over Fort Bend Ridge Point’s Raven Adams (0) during the Spartans’ Class 6A bi-district playoff game against Fort Bend Ridge Point on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center in Katy.

Seven Lakes was close a few times to blowing the game open, but Ridge Point always had an answer, often via unbelievable shot-making by senior guard Aleighyah Fontenot, who scored 27 points, drilling five of 11 3-pointers. Fontenot had a big 13-point third quarter to counter the greatness of Carlton, who scored nine in the same period, and keep Ridge Point in contention.

“She’s a special player,” Vitek said. “She can fill it up from anywhere. She’s done that in this building before, last year in the regional semifinals. Even if she’s not on early, she’s on late. We lean on her.”

Fontenot only scored three

points in the fourth quarter, but Allen picked up the slack, scoring 10 of her 18 points in the quarter to go with a team-high 11 rebounds. Adams (13 points, seven assists) finished off the Spartans.

Carlton was incredible, scoring 11 of her 20 second-half points in the fourth quarter.

“I’m excited about the opportunity to see her grow in the game, and I thought our perimeter players did a terrific job of getting her the basketball in the right situations,” Spurlock said of her star 6-foot-3 rookie. “Her team rallied around her. Our 3-point shooters stepped up early. You can have a great player like Justice on the inside, but the perimeter players have to open that up so that she

can work. They made Justice better, and Justice made them better.”

Senior guard Sarah Narum added 12 points, connecting on four of seven 3s, and six assists for Seven Lakes. Junior guard KK Tucker and senior forward Lily Baumgardner finished with five points apiece.

Like Ridge Point, Seven Lakes also went through a trying campaign. It was a unique season unlike any other for Spurlock, who was visibly emotional afterward.

“It’s sad to say goodbye to five outstanding seniors. Outstanding,” Spurlock said of Baumgardner, Narum, Addison Poth, Kennedy Johnston-Nelson and Ximena Diaz. “It’s been a special year for all of us, with COVID, and

for me, personally. It’s a senior class I’ll miss a great deal. It’s the small things. They made us laugh as a coaching staff. They made it fun. They made us better basketball coaches. Every day, every practice, every game. They never went a day without telling us hi or telling us goodbye, no matter how the practice or game went. ‘Hello, Coach.’ ‘We’ll see you tomorrow, Coach.’ Every day. A lot of teams can’t do that. That kindness means the most.

“Twenty games isn’t enough. I’d love to have had them in a regulation year. I want more of the fun times. I want more because of how much I love them and how much they love each other. I’m blessed to have coached them.”



SPORTS

2020-2021 KATY AREA VARSITY SPORTS  
RESULTS & SCHEDULE

To submit scores, news or schedules, email [dennis.silva@katytimes.com](mailto:dennis.silva@katytimes.com). Schedules are tentative. All girls and boys playoff basketball games and district soccer games scheduled for the week of Feb. 15-19 were to be determined due to inclement weather, pending further notice from Katy ISD.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10  
GIRLS SOCCER

Paetow 1, Magnolia West 1

THURSDAY, FEB. 11  
BI-DISTRICT GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

Tompkins 68, Fort Bend Travis 39  
Cinco Ranch 57, George Ranch 38  
Ridge Point 66, Seven Lakes 60  
Dulles 65, Katy 39

MONDAY, FEB. 22  
GIRLS SOCCER

Paetow at Waller, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEB. 23  
BOYS SOCCER

Katy at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.  
Taylor at Mayde Creek, 7:30 p.m.  
Tompkins vs. Morton Ranch, at Legacy Stadium, 7:30 p.m.  
Waller at Paetow, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

Cinco Ranch at Katy, 7:30 p.m.  
Mayde Creek at Taylor, 7:30 p.m.  
Tompkins at Morton Ranch, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB. 26  
BOYS SOCCER

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

GIRLS SOCCER

Taylor at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.  
Morton Ranch at Mayde Creek, 7:30 p.m.  
Seven Lakes vs. Tompkins, at Rhodes Stadium, 7:30 p.m.  
Paetow vs. Brenham, at Rhodes Stadium, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 2  
BOYS SOCCER

Tompkins at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.

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

GIRLS SOCCER

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3  
BOYS SOCCER

Paetow at Magnolia, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 5  
BOYS SOCCER

Morton Ranch at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.  
Taylor at Katy, 7:30 p.m.  
Seven Lakes at Mayde Creek, 7:30 p.m.  
Paetow vs. Bryan Rudder, at Rhodes Stadium, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS SOCCER

Cinco Ranch at Morton Ranch, 7:30 p.m.  
Katy at Taylor, 7:30 p.m.  
Mayde Creek at Seven Lakes, 7:30 p.m.  
Paetow at Bryan Rudder, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9  
GIRLS SOCCER

Magnolia West at Paetow, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10  
BOYS SOCCER

Paetow at Magnolia West, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12  
BOYS SOCCER

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

GIRLS SOCCER

Seven Lakes at Cinco Ranch, 7:30 p.m.  
Morton Ranch at Katy, 7:30 p.m.  
Tompkins vs. Mayde Creek, at Rhodes Stadium, 7:30 p.m.  
Paetow at College Station, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19  
BOYS SOCCER

A&M Consolidated at Paetow, 7:30 p.m.



RYAN DUNSMORE | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Taylor's girls swimming team won its third consecutive regional championship two weeks ago and looks to best last season's fourth-place standing at the UIL state championships.

A SWIM TO STATE

Katy ISD qualified five regional champions and eight relay teams to the UIL state swimming meets at the Bill Walker Pool and Josh Davis Natatorium in San Antonio. The Class 6A girls compete Feb. 19 and the boys Feb. 26. The Class 5A girls compete Feb. 20 and the boys Feb. 27.

Here are the state qualifiers by school. Regional champions are in bold type:

Cinco Ranch: junior Brandon Guo (100-yard freestyle); boys 200-yard freestyle relay; boys 400-yard freestyle relay.

Jordan: **freshman Kaeli White (500-yard freestyle).**

Paetow: sophomore Kaleb Velazquez (diving).

Seven Lakes: **sophomore Kailey Koval (diving);** senior Maddie Welborn (200-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle); junior Gracelyn Cox (100-yard breaststroke); girls 200-yard medley relay; senior Justin Liao (100-yard breaststroke).

Taylor: **senior Abbie Alvarez (200-yard individual medley, 100-yard butterfly); senior Roxana Nolte (500-yard freestyle); girls 400-yard freestyle relay; girls 200-yard freestyle relay;** sophomore Mariana Diaz Ponce (100-yard breaststroke); senior Amy Evans (100-yard breaststroke); girls 200-yard medley relay; sophomore Logan Pack (50-yard freestyle).

Tompkins: **junior Matthew Aigner (diving);** boys 200-yard medley relay; senior Drew Ladner (50-yard freestyle; 100-yard freestyle).

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SPORTS

# 13 RAMS TO CONTINUE CAREERS AT NEXT LEVEL



COURTESY OF JEFF DIETZ

Mayde Creek had the second-largest signing class of any Katy ISD school on National Signing Day on Feb. 3. Thirteen Rams put pen to paper to set their athletic careers at the next level. Those student-athletes were Louis Amaya-Rodriguez (football, Texas Wesleyan University), Max Dietz (football, Louisiana College), Kenneth Ellison (football, Navarro College), Ge-Quan Faucette (football, Navarro College), Alpha Khan (football, Houston Baptist University), Julius Loughridge (football, Fordham University), Princeton Rayson (football, University of St. Mary's), L'Den Skinner (football, Eastern Illinois University), Jace Wilson (football, Furman University), Jazmyn Cameron (softball, Texas A&M International University), Jordyn Rodriguez (softball, Tyler Junior College) and Brandon Gaskin (baseball, Finlandia University).

## H.S. SOCCER STANDINGS THROUGH FEB. 16

### DISTRICT 19-6A

#### BOYS

	DISTRICT				OVERALL		
	W	L	TIE	PTS	W	L	TIE
Cinco Ranch	5	1	0	15	9	1	0
Seven Lakes	5	1	0	15	12	1	0
Taylor	3	2	1	10	4	4	1
Tompkins	3	2	1	10	5	3	1
Morton Ranch	2	4	0	6	4	4	1
Katy	1	5	0	3	2	7	2
Mayde Creek	1	5	0	3	4	7	1
x-clinched playoff berth							
y-clinched district title							

#### GIRLS

	DISTRICT			OVERALL			
	W	L	TIE	PTS	W	L	TIE
Seven Lakes	6	0	0	18	12	1	0
Tompkins	5	1	0	15	9	3	1
Cinco Ranch	1	3	2	5	3	4	3
Mayde Creek	1	3	2	5	7	4	2
Taylor	1	3	2	5	8	4	2
Katy	1	3	2	5	4	5	4
Morton Ranch	1	3	2	5	4	4	2
x-clinched playoff berth							
y-clinched district title							

### DISTRICT 19-5A

#### BOYS

	DISTRICT			OVERALL			
	W	L	TIE	PTS	W	L	TIE
Paetow	4	0	1	13	9	2	5
x-clinched district title							
y-clinched playoff berth							

#### GIRLS

	DISTRICT			OVERALL			
	W	L	TIE	PTS	W	L	TIE
Paetow	2	2	1	7	4	4	2
x-clinched district title							
y-clinched playoff berth							

## KENNEDY, CHARGERS DOMINANT EN ROUTE TO STATE



COURTESY OF CLAY KENNEDY

Fulshear High freshman Kailey Kennedy won the Region VI-5A 50 freestyle championship on Feb. 5. Kennedy joins seniors Brianna Roberson (100 and 200 freestyle) and Jake Litchfield (50 and 100 freestyle), and the girls' 200 and 400 freestyle relays as Fulshear's regional champions. The relays, which Kennedy is a part of along with Roberson, and sophomores Kynley Dillon and Ellie Paisley, are seeded first and second, respectively, going into the Class 5A state swimming championships in San Antonio on Feb. 20. Kennedy, 14, is currently seeded fifth in the state in her event and is ranked 21st in the USA in the 13-14 age group this year.



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**FALCONS**

from page A1

Tompkins, ranked No. 14 in Class 6A in the state by the Texas Girls Coaches Association, improved to 18-3 and advanced to the area playoffs to play Memorial (19-7).

It's a meaningful stage of the postseason for Tompkins. Though the Falcons are back-to-back undefeated district champions, they fell in the area round last season in a two-point setback to Cy-Fair.

"Obviously, nothing's perfect," Johnson said of the win over Travis. "We still have things to work on, defensively and offensively. But I think we're looking good so far and going in the right direction."

The Falcons forced 29 turnovers as the Tigers got hardly anything going offensively. Travis made only 14 field goals and had five more turnovers at the half (16) than points (11).

It was typical of a Tompkins defense surrendering just 36.7 points per game this season, ignited by a ferocious press defense engineered by the length, athleticism and confidence of the Falcons' guards and wings.

"We know it does create a lot for us on offense and it definitely does intimidate other teams to where they're scared bringing the ball up against us," Tompkins sophomore guard Loghan Johnson said of the Falcons' press. "I know they hear about our defense, and I think all of that helps us."

Tompkins scored 41 points in the first half, buoyed by a slew of easy baskets thanks to turnovers. The Falcons started the game in their base half-court man defense before coach Tamatha Ray unleashed defensive chaos.

"The idea is for the kids to get settled in for the first 2-3 minutes, and that lets me assess the opponent and where we're at," Ray said. "The ball wasn't dropping for us ... it's more of a feel thing than a plan. The plan is we're going to press. I just don't know when."

With the offense struggling early in the first quarter, Ray went to the press, sparked by senior guard Crystal Smith. The next few



PRENTICE C. JAMES | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Tompkins senior guard Sydnee Smith (10), right, plays tight defense against Fort Bend Travis' Mia Mitchell (1) during their Class 6A bi-district playoff game on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center in Katy.

minutes felt like a bizarre case of déjà vu over and over again.

Tompkins would force a turnover, the ball would end up in Smith's hands, and she'd deliver to Johnson for an easy layup. Wash, rinse, repeat. The onslaught resulted in a 14-point first quarter for Johnson.

Johnson finished with a game-high 20 points, but she had plenty of help. Depth and two-way playmaking have been strengths of this Tompkins team.

Ray has juggled the starting lineup often this season; only senior post Kenzie Durnford has been a consistent starter. But that has only established confidence and assuredness in other players, and it showed against Travis.

Sophomore guard Macy Spencer, a recent revelation as a defensive standout and perimeter shooter, scored 15 points to go with four steals. Smith, who did

not start against Travis, added 11 points, six assists and four steals. Sophomore guard/forward Fiyin Adeleye, a platoon starter at forward with senior Ashley Ngene, scored nine points to go with four rebounds and three steals.

Durnford added six points and eight rebounds.

"It's nice to have that luxury of, depending on which players don't start, we actually get stronger when I do make subs," Ray said. "I know what I have in the back of my head. I go back and forth between Fiyin and Ashley, for instance, and I know I'll get a big boost either way. We have a post that's a guard (Adeleye). We use her for versatility. Same thing with Loghan, who can guard a post. It's a luxury to have that type of versatility in players, and I tip my hat to them because it's total buy-in. Whatever we need them to do, they'll do it."



PRENTICE C. JAMES | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Tompkins senior guard Crystal Smith (5) attempts a 3-point shot during a Class 6A bi-district playoff game against Fort Bend Travis on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the Merrell Center in Katy.

**COUGARS**

from page B1

George Ranch finally generated some offense in the third quarter as junior guard Savannah Velazquez scored six points by attacking the basket against Cinco Ranch's taller frontcourt, but it was too late. Every time the Longhorns got a score, Cinco Ranch had an answer. Bala continued to stay hot with her perimeter shooting, and junior forward Madison Mascorro added a couple of buckets in the third to help the Cougars maintain a 14-point lead.

George Ranch's offense again went south early in the fourth quarter. The Longhorns scored their first points in the period with three minutes remaining. By then, Cinco Ranch had built a 20-point lead, thanks to a nine-point effort in the quarter by sophomore Danielle Williams, who had 12 points.

Velazquez led George Ranch with 12 points.

Cinco Ranch, the No. 3 seed out of District 19-6A, moved to 13-6 this season, while George Ranch, the No. 2 seed out of 20-6A, finished with a 15-9 record.



COURTESY OF CINCO RANCH ATHLETICS

Cinco Ranch's girls team celebrated their bi-district playoff win over George Ranch on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Hopson Field House in Missouri City.



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