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Katy Times

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VOLUME 111, ISSUE 26

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

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023

CITY OF KATY

City Council issues proclamations, honors achievements

Katy's city council meeting began Monday with three happy celebrations, as Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris presided. The City of Katy Public Works Department's Monster Smokers BBQ Team received special recognition for their achievements at the May 24th American Public Works Association Southeast Texas Chapter Annual BBQ Cook-off. Competing with 18 other teams at that event, the Katy group was awarded first place in ribs as well as first place in brisket and they also won the overall Traveling Grand Champions Trophy. A proclamation from Mayor Dusty Thiele, read by Council Member Janet Corte, recognized Norma Kathleen (Kathie) Gerritzen as the 2023 Senior Citizen of the Year.

See **COUNCIL**, page A3



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Council members Janet Corte (left), Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris (second from right) and City of Katy Director of Social Services Amanda Di Dio (right) stand with the family of the late Norma Kathleen (Kathie) Gerritzen, who was recognized as the 2023 Senior Citizen of the Year.



Area veterans will celebrate Independence Day with the annual luncheon and auction, hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9182.

SUSAN ROVEGNO

Independence Day activities planned across the Katy area

There is no shortage of ways to celebrate Independence Day this year - each city has its own festivities planned, and other area organizations have events underway as well.

Brookshire Freedom Fest

Brookshire starts the festivities for Freedom Fest 2023 on Monday, July 3rd, with a dance at the Brookshire Convention Center, 4029 5th Street, Brookshire, from 7-11 p.m., featuring

The Earl Sanders Jr. Band. The fun continues on Tuesday, July 4th, with The Zydeco Mob Performance at the Convention Center at 11 a.m. The action then moves to Hovas Park, 1412 FM 359S, at 7 p.m. for DJ Rumples-tiltskin, followed by a fireworks show at the park, scheduled to begin at 9 p.m.

VFW 4th of July auction and luncheon

Join area veterans as they celebrate

Independence Day with the annual luncheon and live and silent auctions hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9182, 6206 George Bush Drive, Katy on July 4th. The auctions include a firearms raffle and a 50/50 raffle. The "Old Fashioned 4th of July Lunch" begins at 11:45; the \$5.00 meal offers hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, baked beans, chips, cookies, cakes,

See **ACTIVITIES**, page A3

HARRIS COUNTY

Steve Radack Community Center events announced

The office of Leslie Briones, Commissioner for Harris County Precinct 4, has announced the July event calendar for the Steve Radack Community Center. Located at 18650 Clay Road, Houston, 77084, the center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Here are the special classes scheduled for July:

- **A Taste of African Heritage**, Mondays July 3, 10 and 17 at 11 a.m. Join Prairie View A&M University Nutrition Education Associate Janelle Elvy-Verry for a six-session.

See **EVENTS**, page A3

Nominations open for Texas Armed Services scholarships

Austin, TX — Texas elected officials can now nominate students to receive the 2023-24 Texas Armed Services Scholarship (TASSP), a program from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

"The State of Texas is proud to support our students who have chosen to devote their careers and lives to preserving the sovereignty of Texas and our nation through the Texas Armed Services Scholarship program," said Governor Greg Abbott. "Texas is profoundly grateful for our service members who serve courageously each and every day to protect and defend our communities. I thank the Texas Higher

See **SCHOLARSHIP**, page A3

Katy Cares wins nonprofit award

Dr. Dawid J. Pieterse, president of Katy Cares, announced on June 14 that the local nonprofit had been honored by Acquisition International as "Best Single Family Support Organisation 2023" at AI's annual "Non-profit Organisation Awards."

Katy Cares is a 501 (c)3 non-profit

See **NONPROFIT**, page A3

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KATY CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES CELEBRATES 39 YEARS



Katy Christian Ministries celebrated its 39th anniversary with a birthday party at its headquarters, 3506 Porter Road, on Thursday, June 22nd. Pictured are Kevin Hollis, Rodolfo Lobera, Jason Smith, Anita Mancini, Deysi Crespo (executive director), Becce Wallace, Don Flowers, and George Puig.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROVEGNO



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Community Calendar

July

JULY 1 SUMMER PALOOZA

This free event offers something for everyone, including wine from Sonoma, ice cream from Cloud 10 Creamery, hamburgers, pizza, Pho, Boba and more from all the amazing Stableside restaurants. The event also features a fire truck from 12-2 p.m., a juggler, local vendors and live music by Taylor Marberry. The event is from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Stableside at Falcon Landing, 9806 Gaston Road. For more information, call 281-477-4300.

RED, WHITE AND BLUES

Sunset Farm in Jordan Ranch is hosting Red, White and Blues, a free event that includes food trucks, kids' activities and a live performance by Mambo Jazz Kings. The event is from 4-6 p.m. at Sunset Farm in Jordan Ranch, 30270 Jordan Crossing Blvd. in Brookshire.

JULY 3 PROSE PROS WRITING GROUP AT CINCO RANCH BRANCH LIBRARY

This free workshop enables you to take advantage of the library's space, quiet atmosphere, seating, power outlets and snacks to kick-start your own literary masterpiece. Participants will have the chance to share their manuscripts with others and get constructive feedback. The workshop is from 6-7:30 p.m. at Cinco Ranch Branch Library, 2620 Commercial Center Blvd. For more information, call the library at 281-395-1111.



JULY 4 CITY OF KATY 4TH OF JULY FREEDOM CELEBRATION

The city's annual fireworks show begins at 9 p.m. at Katy Mills Mall/Typhoon Texas.

VFW POST 9182 FOURTH OF JULY AUCTION AND LUNCHEON

Join the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9182 for its Fourth of July auction and luncheon, featuring its annual live and silent auction, firearms raffle and 50/50 raffle. The live auction preview begins at 10 a.m. The live auction starts at 12:15 p.m. The silent auction begins at 10 a.m. Lunch, featuring hamburgers and hot dogs, begins at 11:45 a.m. The luncheon will be at VFW Post 9182, 6206 George Bush Dr. Tickets are \$5, with children ages 12 and under are free. For more information, call 281-391-8387.

JULY 6

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE WITH U.S. REP. TROY NEHLS

The Katy Area Chamber of Commerce welcomes U.S. Rep. Troy Nehls, who represents a portion of the Katy area in Congress. The event is at 11:30 a.m. July 6 at Perry's Steakhouse & Grille, 23051 Cinco Ranch Blvd. Tickets range from \$50 for individuals to \$1,500 for title sponsors. For more information, call the chamber at 281-391-5289. To RSVP, visit the website, the abbreviated URL for which is bit.ly/3r1sFe8.

JULY 8

KTX MARKET AT NO LABEL BREWING CO.

The market features a variety of vendors along with live music, beers and food. The market is from 5-9 p.m. at No Label Brewing Co., 5351 1st St. For more information

JULY 9

CAR CULTURE SHOW AT LACENTERRA

The car culture show features over 50 exotic and muscle cars, along with a DJ spinning tunes and other amenities. The show is from 9-11 a.m. in the Alamo Theatre parking lot at LaCenterra, 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd. For more information about the show, see the website thecarculture.org. For more information about the event and other attractions at LaCenterra, visit the website at lacenterra.com.



JULY 14-15

PATTISON PITMASTER COOKOFF

Join the Royal ISD FFA Ag Club in its first annual Pattison Pitmaster Cookoff. Proceeds benefit the Royal ISD FFA senior scholarship fund. The cookoff is set for July 14-15 at the Pattison Volunteer Fire Department, 2950 FM 359 in Pattison. The July 14 events begin at 2 p.m. and July 15 events begin at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are \$5 each day. For more information, visit the website ibcabbq.org/contest-details/?contestid=10611.



JULY 15

KATY MARKET DAY

The monthly Katy Market Day features vendors, a food truck, beer garden, entertainment, and inflatable attractions for children's entertainment. The event is from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in historic Downtown Katy. For more information, call Betsy Proctor at 281-391-1993.

KATY "BAR THE DOOR" POKER RUN

An event benefiting the Texas Elks Camp for Special Needs and Foster Children. For more information, contact Shannon Cope at 281-687-2673 or shannonlcpop@me.com.

LEARNING TO USE COMPOST

Fort Bend County master gardener and compost specialist Sam Guardiola will provide an overview of composting, which will include different methods, container options and troubleshooting. Learn how to take yard and kitchen waste products and turn them into rich, healthy earth that builds the soil, feeds the plants, and improves the environment. The program is free and open to the public. It is from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. in the meeting room at the Cinco Ranch Branch Library, 2620 Commercial Center Blvd.

JULY 18

SUMMER PLAY DAYS

Come enjoy some adult conversation and an iced coffee bar while the kids get to burn some summer steam. Healthy snack options for the kids, air-conditioned restrooms, water, fully fenced and age-appropriate play areas make this free summer event a hit. The playdate is from 9-11 a.m. at Holy Covenant UMC of Katy, 22111 Morton Road. For more information, call the church at 281-579-1200.

JULY 22

MIDSUMMER FEST

Experience the show of the year at the Great Southwest Equestrian Center, 2501 S. Mason Rd., from 6-10 p.m. Enjoy an evening of music and community impact at the Dos Borrachos concert featuring Kevin Fowler and Roger Creager. The event is a special fundraiser for Christ Clinic, ensuring that vital healthcare services are accessible to those in need in the Katy community. For tickets and more information, visit the website midsummerfestkaty.com.

JULY 24

MAUD MARKS LIBRARY 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Maud Marks Library is celebrating its 30th anniversary. The party is free and open to the public. It begins at 1 p.m. at the library, 1815 Westgreen. For more information, call the library at 832-927-7860.

JULY 29

KATY HERITAGE SOCIETY 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Katy Heritage Society invites the public to join in the 20-year celebration of the formation of Katy Heritage Park. The historic homes will be open for tours, with other activities including a scavenger hunt, pioneer games, free commemorative cookies, and ice-cold water. The event is from 8-9 a.m. at the Katy Heritage Park, 5990 George Bush Dr.

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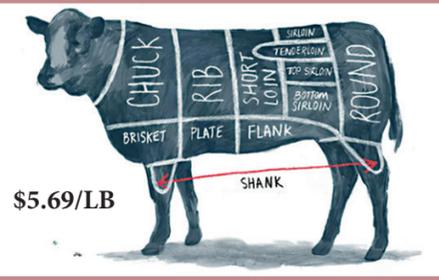
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- Excited movements
- Soap opera actress Patsy
- Unknowing
- Dangerous mosquitos
- Exaggerated and sensationalized
- Military policeman
- Touch softly
- Wrap
- A story of one's life
- Midway between east and southeast
- Toward the mouth or oral region
- A list of dishes available at a restaurant
- Changes the meaning of
- Semitic Sun god
- Sneaker parts
- Capital of Zimbabwe
- Breezed through
- Partner to pedi
- Becomes less intense
- Bottoms
- Vested
- Tested
- Take care of
- Traditional rhythmic pattern
- S. African political party
- Cologne
- Men
- The Science Guy
- Gospel author (abbr.)
- Act of signing up
- Human feet
- A very short time
- Streetscars
- Cuplike cavities

CLUES DOWN

- A type of pool
- Malaise
- Seasoned
- A pair
- Young male
- Make a mistake
- Experienced
- It often accompanies injury
- Old world, new
- Commercial
- Course of lectures
- Promote
- Female horses
- Greek mythological figure
- Small amount
- Orthodox church altar
- Actress Tomei
- Excited
- Looked directly at
- Popular cold desserts
- More reasonable
- Disk above the head of a saint
- Devoted to the extreme
- Make an effort
- It's in the surf
- Member of aboriginal people of Japan
- Discounts
- Cliff in Hawaii
- Extremely wild person
- All persons
- Aromas
- Popular kids' game
- A difficult situation
- Popular Georgia rockers
- It's in all living cells
- Unspoken language
- 'Talk to you' abbreviation
- Influential lawyer

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

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

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

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

SCHOLARSHIP

from page A1

Education Coordinating Board and Texas institutions of higher education for providing opportunities to students aspiring to answer this noble calling. Through this scholarship program, we can help ensure Texas military leaders of tomorrow have the funding and resources needed to thrive in their education and beyond."

The scholarship, with a maximum award of \$15,000 per recipient, is for students participating in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) or other undergraduate officer commissioning programs at Texas institutions of higher education. Upon graduation, these students will go on to serve in the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, or commissioned officers in any branch of the United States

armed services.

"Many Texans serve proudly in our military," said Commissioner of Higher Education Harrison Keller. "The Texas Armed Services Scholarship demonstrates our state's appreciation and support for students inspired to military service while helping them achieve their higher education and professional goals."

To be eligible, students must meet specific scholarship requirements and be nominated by a Texas senator or representative. Each legislator may nominate one student, and the governor and lieutenant governor may separately appoint two. Students seeking a nomination can find their legislative representatives online, but a nomination may come from any legislator.



CONTRIBUTED

Dr. Harry Chapman, chairman of the board of Katy Cares, displays the trophy awarded to Katy Cares by Acquisition International.

NONPROFIT

from page A1

organization founded in 2016 as a solution-driven response to the Katy community's most vulnerable population – single-parent families who are victims of trauma due to a life-altering event such as separation, divorce, abuse, intimidation, domestic violence, financial challenge caused by loss of employment, income, child support, and/or a natural disaster. The charity conducts classes and mentoring programs to help educate single parents and also provides other forms of relief.

For more information on Katy Cares, please call 832-517-1636 or go to katycares.org.

COUNCIL

from page A1

Gerritzen as the 2023 Senior Citizen of the Year. Gerritzen was honored for her countless hours of volunteering at the City of Katy Fussell Senior Center. She was also a previous director of Katy Christian Ministries and membership director of the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce. She passed away on February 6, 2023; her family accepted the proclamation on her behalf.

An additional proclamation read by Harris declared July 2023 as Parks and Recreation Month.

Via approval of the consent agenda, council also approved a Convention & Tourism Bureau Hotel Occupancy Grant application in the amount of \$61,000 from VLK Architects for exhibit design services in the future Visitors Center at 5718 Second Street.

Approval of monthly operating costs for 86 streetlights in the Falls at Greens Meadow subdivision was requested by the Falls at Green Meadows Community Association and granted by council. The neighborhood is located northwest of Avenue D and Franz.

In other actions, council also:

- Awarded a bid of \$191,760.00 to King Solution Services LLC of Houston for a sanitary sewer line rehabilitation project.



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Council members Dan Smith (left), Janet Corte (second from left), Gina Hicks (third from right), Chris Harris (second from right), and Rory Robertson (right) pose with the award-winning City of Katy Public Works Department Monster Smokers team and their three trophies.

- Authorized the mayor to sign a contract with Ambassador Services LLC of Houston for janitorial services in city facilities in the annual amount of \$138,407.00.

- Authorized the mayor to sign first amendment to the interlocal agreement for additional law enforcement services between the city and the Katy Management District No. 1, which covers the Katy Mills area. Chief of Police Noe Diaz said that through the current agreement, the management district funds two KPD officers who are designated to patrol that area; this amendment will provide for two additional officers as well as a police vehicle.

- Authorized the mayor to approve a proposal for

engineering services for a trail feasibility study at Leyendecker Landing from Pitts and Morton Roads to Avenue C and Third Street in downtown Katy, in the amount of \$14,930.00.

- Authorized the mayor to sign a cooperative agreement with Harris County for participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for 2024-2026. During public comments, Katy resident Brenda Washington emphasized to council that this program is designed to provide decent housing, suitable living environments and appropriate economic opportunities for neighborhoods.

- Moved forward with the project to widen Morton

Road between Pitts Road and Katy Hockley Road by authorizing the mayor to sign an interlocal agreement with the Katy Development Authority and authorizing the mayor to purchase the following properties: approximately 0.041 acres at 26642 Morton Road (up to \$8618.00); 0.13 acres at 26634 Morton Road (up to \$17,019.00) and 0.082 acres at 26632 Morton Road (up to \$11,449.00)

EVENTS

from page A1

sion class for people of all ages and interest, including anyone who wants to learn to prepare African Heritage cuisine. Food demonstrations and tasting will be part of each week's class. Registration required.

- **Victorius Chess Club for Children and Adults**, Wednesdays, July 6, 12, 9 and 26, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Ages 6 and older. Beginners are encouraged to become acquainted with the intellectual qualities of chess, improve their skills, and learn about scholarships. Intermediate and advanced players can sharpen their skills for tournaments. No experience is necessary and all skill levels are welcome.

- **Summer Mesh Wreath**, Thursday, July 6 at 10 a.m. Come learn how to create a beautiful wreath using flowers, picks or signs of your choice, for a perfect addition to your own front door. Registration required – please pick up a supply list at the center.

- **College Safety Course for Girls**, Tuesday July 18 at 6 p.m. With a focus on awareness, this course helps women entering college identify problems and dangerous situations before they materialize. Information and demonstrations are offered in personal defense and escape techniques. Course provided by Harris County Precinct 5 Constables.

- **Women's Self Defense Class**, Monday and Tuesday, July 24 and 25, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. This is a comprehensive two-day program for all women that begins with awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, while progressing on to the basics of hands-on defensive training. Course provided by Harris County Precinct 5 Constables.

For more information on these courses or other learning opportunities at the Radack Center, please call 832-927-3000 or go to hcp4.net/Radack.

ACTIVITIES

from page A1

cupcakes, tea, sodas and water. "General George Patton" (alternatively known as Denny Hair) will also make an appearance. For more information, please call 281-391-8387.

Local Table sponsors Patio Party

Local Table Cinco Ranch's 4th of July Patio Party will be held at 24033 Cinco Ranch Blvd, Katy, TX 77494. The flagship location will have festive decor, a play area for children, flags, face painters and a balloon artists. Families can enjoy live music from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. ahead of the area's fireworks.

Fulshear Freedom Fest

The City of Fulshear, in conjunction with the Fulshear Katy Area Chamber of Commerce, will hold its annual celebration from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on July 4th at Jordan

High School, 27500 Fulshear Bend Drive, Fulshear. Enjoy a variety of foods while visiting the vendor booths featuring goods and services from area businesses. The festival also features a children's area. The Chee-Weez band will also perform. For more information, please contact the chamber at 832-600-3221.

City of Katy Freedom Celebration

Get fired up for the City of Katy's annual fireworks show at 9 p.m. on July 4th. "Red, White, & Boom" will be held at Typhoon Texas Waterpark, 555 Katy Fort Bend Road, Katy. Parking spots are also available at Katy Mills Mall or Gateway Church for a perfect view of the show. The Rotary Club of Katy is a founding sponsor of this event. For more information, please call the city parks department at 281-391-4840.



4th of July

Freedom Celebration

Get your tickets at our official watch location

ADMIT ONE



Red, White, & Boom

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Good luck paying Uncle Sam's debt

The national debt broke the \$32 trillion barrier this week.

It's a number so huge it's incomprehensible to the average citizen.

We knew \$32 trillion was coming. It just got here a lot faster than the money experts thought, thanks to the roughly \$5 trillion that the feds spent to help people and businesses withstand the blows inflicted by COVID-19 and lockdowns.

If you are a good citizen who'd like to gift a few bucks to the federal government to help pay down the national debt, you need to know the good news and the bad.

The first bit of good news is that there's an obscure old government program designed to help you do just that.

In 1961 the Bureau of the Public Debt began allowing donations that directly reduce the debt. According to Title 31, Chapter 31 of the U.S. Code, any citizen is free to give a "gift" to Treasury, under the condition that the money will be used only to pay down the debt.

The second bit of good news, reports MSN, is that in 2022 a number of unknown individuals gifted \$1 million to Uncle Sam.

The bad news is, though, is really bad—our debt is at \$32 trillion. Broken out into \$1 million dollar increments, that is 32 million-million dollars.

Forbes reports that the debt is so large that two of the world's richest men, Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, couldn't put a dent in it.

Their net worth is \$340 billion. If all their vast wealth was donated to debt reduction, our debt would go from 32,000 billion dollars to 31,660 billion dollars.

In other words, there really is no point in gifting money to a dead-end cause.

Still, lots of good-hearted Americans have been giving money to Washington for centuries.

According to a fascinating discussion on NPR, the earliest gift dates back to the Madison Administration in 1811, when a random citizen mailed in five dollars. Though there was not yet any formal program to process such gifts, other citizens kept on sending money in.

In 1843, continues NPR, the government set up a gift fund as a general all-purpose account. People donated checks, bags of pennies and even bags of gold.



TOM PURCELL
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

The bad news is, though, is really bad—our debt is at \$32 trillion. Broken out into \$1 million dollar increments, that is 32 million-million dollars. Forbes reports that the debt is so large that two of the world's richest men, Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, couldn't put a dent in it.

Matt Garber, of the Bureau of Fiscal Service, said that in one instance \$63 in gold bullion was gifted. In the 1950s, he continued, "patriotic Americans wanted to help the government pay back the money it had borrowed for war efforts."

That's why, in 1961, the government established a special account specifically for the purpose of reducing the national debt.

Though the Bureau keeps no official records on this program, a senior advisor shared some interesting anecdotes in 2010.

She said gift-givers generally mail in their checks with no notes attached. Others sign over their tax-refund checks and in 1992 someone gave \$3.5 million from their estate.

The record for the largest gift came in 1994 from anonymous donor—\$12 million.

As the debt continues to balloon, fewer Americans are gifting money to pay it down.

But who can blame them? If our debt remained fixed at \$32 trillion and we applied the roughly \$1 million donated every year to pay down the debt, we'd pay it off in exactly 32 million years.

Purcell, creator of the infotainment site ThurbersTail.com, which features pet advice he's learning from his beloved Labrador, Thurber, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist. Email him at Tom@TomPurcell.com.



Forget the mint. How about a fresh pillowcase?

At the Homewood Suites by Hilton in Carlsbad, Calif., guests were piling trash and dirty towels in the hallway, and by the looks of things you'd think the staff had gone on strike. In fact, it was business as usual on a weekend, when housekeeping shuts down and guests are reminded that cutbacks initiated as a presumably temporary response to COVID have now become the hospitality industry's permanent pandemic.

Many hotels—along with airlines, restaurants and other hospitality services—struggled during the pandemic. Customers, for the most part, accepted curtailed service on the assumption that things would return to normal once the crisis ended. Instead, many operators have seized the opportunity to reduce or eliminate things that patrons took for granted.

Services vary widely among hotels and even across multiple brands within large chains. Like many travelers I try to book within a single corporate group, in my case Hilton, because I'm hostage to its loyalty program.

At the Carlsbad property, what was once routine daily housekeeping is now only "by request" and not at all on weekends. Gone are modest amenities such as body lotion and mouthwash. The evening social hour, previously offered Monday through Thursday, now exists only on Wednesday.

For frequent travelers who achieve Hilton's Diamond status, the changes are more annoying. At the company's flagship Hilton brand, as well as at the Doubletree and Garden Inn properties, many executive lounges remain shuttered or have cut back dramatically on food and drink.



PETER FUNT
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

In my view, if a restaurant wants to raise prices it should. But a service charge earmarked for employee benefits seems no different than, say, a 3% charge to make sure the electric bill is paid promptly, or a 6% fee to guarantee tablecloths are properly laundered.

The free breakfast for Hilton's best customers has been replaced by ten- or fifteen-dollar vouchers—which don't cover the price of even a simple buffet breakfast.

My point isn't to single out Hilton, only to cite my own experience in underscoring what is happening across the hospitality spectrum, where services have been reduced in the wake of the pandemic, while prices remain high.

Marriott, which operates 30 hotel brands and more than 8,000 properties worldwide, has adjusted housekeeping so the more you pay the cleaner your surroundings. Its high-end properties, like the Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis, provide free daily cleanings. At the next level, including Sheraton and Le Méridien, rooms get a daily touch-up. Guests at lower-level

properties, such as Courtyard by Marriott, get their rooms cleaned every other day.

Restaurants don't find it quite so easy to reduce service, so they're finding ways to raise prices.

On my Carlsbad trip, dinner at the acclaimed restaurant Campfire included a 4% service charge in addition to tax and tip—a new wrinkle in post-pandemic nickel and diming. The fine print said it was "to help ensure competitive compensation and benefits for our team," adding that the charge would be removed upon request.

In my view, if a restaurant wants to raise prices it should. But a service charge earmarked for employee benefits seems no different than, say, a 3% charge to make sure the electric bill is paid promptly, or a 6% fee to guarantee tablecloths are properly laundered.

Marketing people refer to this as "price partitioning," where the actual cost of a meal is disguised by splitting it into smaller pieces (for example, charging for bread, which at Campfire is \$9). This prompted the Chicago Tribune to editorialize the other day, "Message to the restaurant industry: Sympathy is giving way to frustration and customers are feeling gouged."

The hospitality business is difficult, and the pandemic along with rising costs of goods and a labor shortage, have only made it tougher. But loyal customers haven't removed only their COVID masks. They're taking off their blindfolds and seeing the post-pandemic service cop-out for the greedy ploy it really is.

Peter Funt's latest book is "Playing POTUS: The Power of America's Acting Presidents," about comedians who impersonated presidents.

Katy Times

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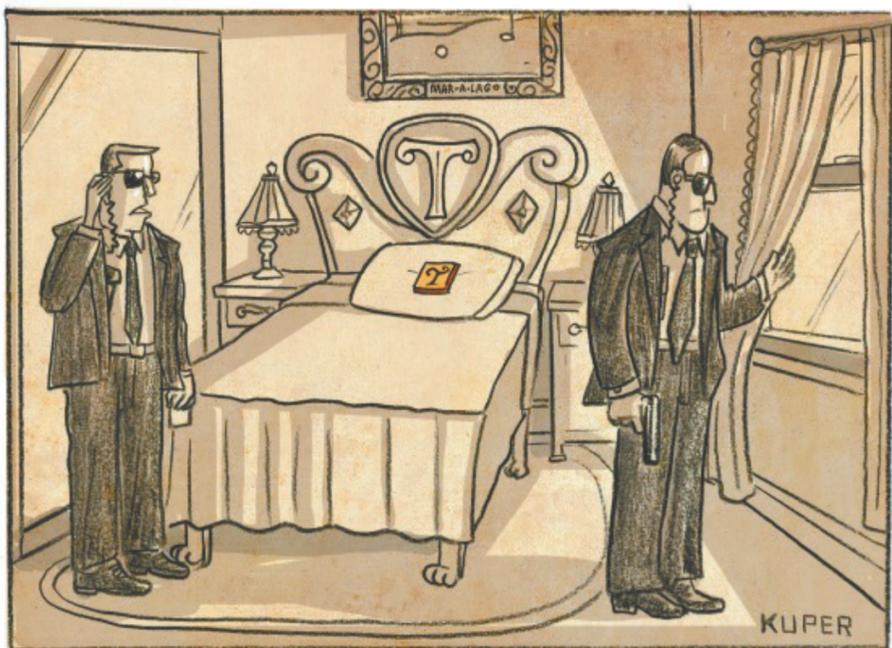
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"...and how much for a room without the chocolate on the pillow?"

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Meyers secures \$1.5 million for critical Meadows Place infrastructure repairs

A City of Meadows Place wastewater treatment plant that is more than 40 years old and in critical need of refurbishment will get some much-needed upgrades thanks to \$1.5 million of federal funding secured by Fort Bend County Pct. 3 Commissioner Andy Meyers.

Meadows Place relies on its wastewater treatment plant to serve the city's 5,000 residents and businesses. While the required repairs are extensive, when completed the plant will be more environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Additionally, it will be modernized with digital controls and will fully comply with state water quality standards.

"I like to find innovative solutions and work with others to help solve problems," Meyers said. "So, when Mayor Charles Jessup asked for help funding this project, I immediately got to work securing this grant to help defray the cost to Meadows Place residents."

Meyers secured funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, which will cover a significant portion of the project's cost.

"This grant solves an immediate environmental concern and infrastructure need, while also reducing the cost to Meadows Place taxpayers. I am very thankful to Commissioner Meyers for his work securing this funding for the project," Jessup said. "We are a small municipality, so Commissioner Meyers' help is instrumental in helping cover the cost to upgrade this facility and extending its operation for the next couple of decades."

Meadows Place is one-square-mile in size, created in 1967 and incorporated in 1983.



Hope Shiver and David Keepman

Cinco Ranch Branch Library hosts musical storytelling performance of "King Rhythm"

The Cinco Ranch Branch Library will host a musical performance of "King Rhythm," for youth in grades 1-5 only, at 2 p.m. July 12 in the meeting room of the library, 2620 Commercial Center Blvd. A second performance will take place at 3 p.m.

In this interactive performance by Young Audiences of Houston teaching artists Hope Shiver and David Keepman, of "Voices from the Past," journey through African-American history via popular musical styles. Selected



FORT BEND COUNTY

Fort Bend Pct. 3 Commissioner Andy Meyers, left, and Meadows Place Mayor Charles Jessup celebrate funding for repairs at the Meadows Place water treatment facility.

audience members will be invited to don costumes and pantomime, becoming loveable characters Bluesy, Jazzy, and others.

A highly acclaimed musician and storyteller, Shiver makes regular appearances with Houston Grand Opera. She has also performed with the Houston Symphony Orchestra and the St. Louis Symphony, and she has acting credits on stage and screen.

Shiver's husband, actor and musician David Keepman, provides musical accompaniment, and together they form the musical storytelling duo of Voices from the Past.

The performance, made possible by a grant funded by Young Audiences of Houston, is suitable for families with children in grades 1-5.

The performance is free and open to

the public. For more information, visit the website fortbend.lib.tx.us or call the library at 281-395-1311.

American Legion Post 164 selling fireworks for July 4 holiday

In preparation for the July 4 holiday, the American Legion Post 164, 22125 Kingsland Blvd., is selling fireworks. Organizations at the post include American Legion Post 164 Katy, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 164 Katy, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 164 Katy, and American Legion Riders Chapter 164 Katy.

For more information about hours, visit the website legionpost164katytx.org/ or call the post at 281-615-5670.

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EDUCATION BRIEFS

Annual Katy ISD volunteer registration launches July 1

Katy ISD requires all volunteers serving on or off-campus during or after the instructional day to register with the district through its Raptor security system. The system requires volunteers to register (or re-register) annually thus creating a new volunteer profile each year. The district's 2023-24 school year volunteer registration process will launch July 1. The link will be included in Katy ISD's PowerSchool student enrollment plus readily available via district and campus websites.

The District's Raptor Volunteer Initiative provides an additional layer of protection for its Katy ISD students, staff, volunteers, and visitors, prioritizing the safety and security of our entire Katy ISD family.

Once registered and approved, individual volunteers can submit and track hours via their volunteer profile for every Katy ISD campus at which they volunteer. The system also provides quick and easy submission of individual off-campus volunteer hours.

The 2023-24 volunteer registration update will feature:

- An expanded range of volunteer functions for athletics, fine arts, and CTE (Career and Technical Education).
- Enhanced communication capabilities with volunteers, allowing for better district-to-volunteer messaging.

For more information, visit the website tx50010808.schoolwires.net/Page/8777.

Katy ISD hosts summer operations job fair July 13

Katy ISD is hosting its summer operations job fair from 4-6 p.m. July 13 at Cinco Ranch High School, 23440 Cinco Ranch Blvd.

Interested candidates for positions in the district's nutrition and food services, maintenance and transportation departments are asked to complete an application at the website katyisd.org before attending the job fair. Hard copy resumes are recommended for attendees, as well as preparation for onsite interviews.

"This upcoming job fair is a perfect opportunity for individuals who are seeking a rewarding career at Katy ISD in which they will contribute to the education of more than 94,000 students," Nathan Fuchs, the district's maintenance and operations executive director, said. "There will be a variety of positions available including bus drivers, kitchen workers, custodians, groundskeepers and general maintenance, among others."

Benefits include competitive salaries, health insurance options and flexible hours for full and part-time positions. Additionally, eligible employees can participate in the Texas Retirement System (TRS).

Lightbridge Academy breaks ground for new center in Katy

Lightbridge Academy, the fast-growing

early childhood education and child care franchise, is on track to reach 150 centers by 2025 and has identified several markets across the country as primed for the concept. In the past six months, the team signed five units in two development deals in the Greater Houston area. Now, Lightbridge Academy has secured a lease for the first new center, which will be located at 1711 Spring Green Blvd. Ste 900 in Katy, and expected to open in summer 2023.

"Houston is the perfect growth market for Lightbridge Academy as more and more young families continue to move to the area from other states," Jim DiRuggeris, senior vice president of franchise sales. "We are very excited to enter the market and serve these Houstonian families."

The population of Houston is currently growing at a rate of 0.88% annually and has increased by 1.40% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 2,313,238 in 2020. The number of children under the age of five has also increased in the area, with home construction booming as more and more families move into the suburbs and need child care.

With its expansion into Texas, Lightbridge Academy is filling a need for high quality child care, as nearly two-thirds of the nation's working families are already having trouble finding child care, according to the research and advocacy organization Children at Risk. Lightbridge Academy is a leader in the child care industry. The franchise brand is popular among parents for providing high quality educational programs, as well as our cutting-edge technology which supports the needs of busy working families.

"We utilize industry-leading technology to create a more secure and healthier learning environment and a deeper connection between home and school," DiRuggeris said. "One of the services we offer is the ParentView internet monitoring system, and along with an e-Communication app, we provide a real-time and ongoing connection for families. With center-wide air purification and filtration and facial recognition security systems, we set the Gold Standard for health and safety in the child care industry along with the high-quality educational child care program that families expect."

In addition to Katy, Lightbridge Academy is focusing on establishing a presence in the flourishing markets of Cypress, The Woodlands, Atascocita and Pearland.

"With 25 years of child care operations and 10 of those years in franchising, Lightbridge Academy is highly experienced in expanding into major markets like Houston," DiRuggeris said. "We are thrilled to start the process of building our first center in the area and are looking forward to teaming up with passionate and qualified entrepreneurs eager to become The Solution for Working Parents in the communities they serve."

For more information, visit the website lightbridgeacademy.com.

—CONTRIBUTED REPORTS



Above: Lightbridge Academy has opened a new center in Katy, at 1711 Spring Green Blvd.

LIGHTBRIDGE ACADEMY



Left: The Royal High School Jazzettes have been busy learning new skills at MDDT (for Miss Dance Drill Team) Dance Intensive Camp at Klein Cain High School.

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The Katy Times will be closed on
Tuesday, July 4, 2023
in observance of Independence Day.

The deadline for all advertising and editorial copy in the **July 6 edition** is **3 p.m.** on **Thursday, June 29.**

Have a safe and happy holiday from The Katy Times staff!

Katy Times

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Tompkins growing through state 7-on-7

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins thinks they have something special this year.

The Falcons have a quarterback/running back duo that can compete with anyone in the state, weapons at the skill positions on offense and defense and an offensive line that brings back a wealth of experience.

So getting even more experience together this summer through state 7-on-7 was just an added plus.

"This summer has been great," said Tompkins quarterback Wyatt Young. "We got a lot closer, we built chemistry and we've seen the talent come out. My receivers and I have grown and we're on the same page. It's just been great to be a part of."

The Falcons had a strong day on Friday, going 2-1 and finishing second in their Pool to advance to the championship bracket, but they

were't able to carry that over into Saturday, falling in their first game of the day to DeSoto 38-18 to end their tournament run.

The Falcons were unable to get much going on the day, struggling against a good DeSoto team and not having many calls go their way, but it served as a lesson in overcoming adversity for the group and is something they are eager to learn from.

"It's something we have to accept and grow from," said senior running back Caleb Blocker. "We've never been in a situation like that before so it's hard to go through it in the moment but now we have. We're going to be better from it and by the time the season comes we'll be ready to go."

The Falcons have a plethora of weapons for Young to deliver the ball too and it was on full display during qualifying and the state tournament. Having those weap-

See **TOMPKINS**, page B3



PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE

Above: Wyatt Young makes a throw during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Tompkins and DeSoto at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station. Right: Caleb Blocker spins away from a defender during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Tompkins and DeSoto at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.

Jordan uses 7-on-7 to build ahead of season

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Jordan is out to make the most of this year.

There's talent all over the field on this season's Jordan team, and the Warriors have spent the spring and summer honing that in to build the best unit possible.

That was evident during the team's 7-on-7 run, where they went unbeaten in qualification play to cinch a spot in the state 7-on-7 tournament.

"This seven on seven we've been doing over the summer is great," said senior quarterback Colin Willetts. "The receivers and I have developed a lot of chemistry through it and they know what I want them to do and I can read them and make plays off of that. It'll really help us I think and by the time the season comes it'll be at a whole different level."

Jordan had a good two days at state to follow it up, advancing out of the pool stage and

See **JORDAN**, page B3



TYLER TYRE

Zechariah Sample makes a catch during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Jordan and Lamar at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.

STATE 7-ON-7

Tompkins advances to championship bracket; Jordan comes up short

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins and Jordan competed in the first day of the state 7-on-7 tournament on Friday, competing in the pool stages in College Station for a chance to advance to the championship bracket.

Tompkins advanced out of Pool M to the championship bracket, while Jordan will compete in the consolation bracket after coming up just short of advancing.

The Falcons went 2-1 in the group stage, finishing second

See **SEVEN**, page B3



TYLER TYRE

Roc Tenpenny closes down on a Klein Cain player during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Jordan and Klein Cain at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.

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PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Top: Janey Campbell of Seven Lakes High School (1630) competes in the Class 6A girls discus during the UIL State Track and Field Meet on Saturday, May 13, 2023 in Austin. Inset: Jayden Keys of Tompkins High School (2953) crosses the finish line third, earning a bronze medal, in the Class 6A boys 110-meter hurdles during the UIL State Track and Field Meet on Saturday, May 13, 2023 in Austin.

Campbell, Keys, Hicks named to Super Elite Track & Field Team

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Seven Lakes' Janey Campbell was named to the Girls Class 6A Super Elite Track and Field Team after making a second straight state appearance and performing well all season long.

Campbell made the state meet in both the shot put and the discus, and had strong finishes in both. Campbell had a throw of 43-6.25 in the discus to finish fourth in the shot put and had a throw of 136-8 in the discus to finish seventh overall. She was one of 16

athletes to the super elite team and the only Katy ISD member.

Keys, Hicks named to Boys Super Elite Track & Field Team

Tompkins' Jayden Keys and Paetow's D.J. Hicks were named to the boys Class 6A Super Elite Team after appearances at the state meet this spring.

Keys had a huge year and a terrific state meet, the Tompkins junior took home bronze medals in the 100-meter hurdles, the 300-meter hurdles and the long jump.

Keys had a time of 13.82 seconds in the 100-meter hurdles, a time of 37.23 seconds in the 300-meter hurdles and a jump of 23-.475 in the long jump for his three medals at state, his third year in a row to reach a state finish.

Hicks also had a medal at state, finishing third in the discus with a throw of 182-06, coming close to the throws of the silver and gold medalists in the event.

The two were named along with just 14 others from Class 6A to the Super Elite Team and were the only two named from Katy ISD.

Rockets select Thompson, Whitmore in first round of NBA draft

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

The Rockets came away big winners in the NBA draft on Thursday, taking two potentially franchise pieces in the top 20.

Houston held the fourth and 20th picks in the draft but walked away with what may analysts considered two of the top five talents in the draft in Amen Thompson and

Cam Whitmore.

They picked Thompson with the fourth pick, and he will be an explosive addition to the starting backcourt that includes Jalen Green. The 20-year old played in the Overtime Elite League last season and averaged 16.4 points per game, 5.9 assists per game and 2.3 assists per game in the regular season, upping it to 17.2 points per

game, 7.2 rebounds per game and 9.2 assists in the playoffs as his City Reapers went on to win the league championship.

Thompson is known as a special athlete with a rare combination of speed and body control he combines that with very good court vision for a point guard and has good defensive instincts while his 6-foot-7-inch frame allows him to be strong on the boards and see over defenses. The biggest knock on his game is that he needs to badly work on his jump shot, as he struggles even from mid-range and will need to develop any semblance of a shot outside of the paint.

"I'm just excited, I'm so excited to be a Rocket," Thompson said. "It's just a dream come true to be in the NBA and I couldn't be happier to go to a team that has these types of guys. I feel like my best brand of basketball is running and pushing the pace and we're a young team so we're going to be able to do that."

Whitmore was projected to go between picks five and nine in the draft but concerns about his medicals as well as Whitmore's workouts with some teams led to a slide in his draft stock. The Rockets were reportedly even interested in him with their No. 4 pick, but a huge slide allowed them to take Whitmore with the No. 20 pick.

Whitmore is an uber athletic player that also has a jump shot that looks like it can be a strong asset in the NBA as well. His collegiate season was delayed by a thumb injury, but once he played, he made a huge impact at Villanova.

"No, we don't (have any concerns)," said Rockets General Manager Rafael Stone. "Cam had his physical in Chicago and every team had access to it. Our doctors had access to it and we're very comfortable with it. I think he's well positioned to have a very good career. We're really excited to have him."

He averaged 12.5 points per game to go with 5.3 assists, shooting 48% from the floor and 34% from the 3-point line during the

"I'm so excited to be a Rocket. It's just a dream come true to be in the NBA and I couldn't be happier to go to a team that has these types of guys. I feel like my best brand of basketball is running and pushing the pace and we're a young team so we're going to be able to do that."

—AMEN THOMPSON,
Rockets draft pick

season, cementing himself as a top prospect in the draft. He has the body to be an elite two-way player and off ball defender but will need to badly work on his decision making with the ball in his hands, as he struggles to create for others and can take too many tough shots at times.

The two are the last two draft pieces the Rockets will add before trying to be highly competitive this year, adding to the Rockets' core of young players that include Green, Alperen Sengun, Jabari Smith Jr. and Tari Eason. Things are looking up as the Rockets head into free agency where they have a large amount of cap space to offer to potential players.

"I'm excited and I'm grateful to be here," Whitmore said. "I've dreamed about being in the NBA for a lot of years so all I can say is that I'm blessed to be here and to have had this dream come true."



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JORDAN

from page B1

into the consolation bracket before getting past the first round of the bracket for the second straight year.

The Warriors won their first game of the consolation bracket, beating Klein Cain 39-6 behind a huge performance by both the offense and the defense.

It was the defense that was most impressive in the win. The Warriors have a high flying and talented offense but during their first game of the day the defense showed true signs of being able to shut a team down.

"Our defense gives the entire team energy when they play like that," said senior wide receiver and cornerback Zechariah Sample. "When they're playing like that we're going to be really hard to beat. Those guys are the ones who bring that energy and the whole team feeds off it."

The Warriors were unable to advance any further, as they fell in the second round to Lamar, 26-12, ending Jordan's run at state 7-on-7.

But despite that the Warriors showed real signs of growth and they hope to carry that momentum forward.

"It's been really fun and it's helped us for sure," Willetts said. "We're all on the same page and the thing we have to do is carry that into the fall now and keep proving that we can compete with anyone."

The Warriors have big goals after coming up just short of the playoffs last year. They think they have a team that can compete in the ever tough District 19-6A, and they want to prove themselves even more than they already have.

"We don't want this year to go how last year went," Sample said. "We want to go to the playoffs and be the team that breaks



PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE

Above: Deacon Stanfield cuts upfield during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Jordan and Klein Cain at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station. Right: Zechariah Sample makes a catch during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Jordan and Klein Cain at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.

through for Jordan. We got so close last season but we have to be better. It can't be 5-5 and try and be that last team. We're trying to be towards the top. We just have to show everyone what we can do."



TYLER TYRE

Wyatt Young makes a throw during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Tompkins and DeSoto at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.

SEVEN

from page B1

in Pool M to Austin Westlake, who went 3-0.

Tompkins fell in their first game of the day to Westlake 38-21 before bouncing back with two wins, 45-20 over Eastlake and 20-14 over Red Oak to make it out of the group and into the championship bracket.

Jordan played a hard fought three games that were all decided by one score or less, but ended the day with a 1-2 record, finishing third in Pool A and falling to the consolation bracket. The Warriors dropped their first game of

the day to Lake Dallas 25-21 before bouncing back with a win over Odessa 27-26, but fell in their last game of the day to Pflugerville Weiss 34-28. The Warriors finished third in the pool, behind Lake Dallas and Weiss.

Jordan advanced to play Klein Cain, which finished 1-2 in Pool I to tie for third in their pool. In the first round of the consolation bracket.

Tompkins advanced to play DeSoto, Desoto went 2-1 in Pool E, tying Arlington Seguin for first out of the pool.

TOMPKINS

from page B1

ons just makes him more excited for the season.

"I know every play I have people that can go up and make plays for me," Young said. "That gives me all the confidence in the world. I know I just have to put it in their vicinity, and they are going to go up and get the ball. That's exactly what you want as a quarterback."

Despite the loss, the Falcons were very happy with what they experienced both over the two days and over the summer with 7-on-7 and they think it will be a big help for them moving forward. But the thing the Falcons are most looking forward to is August, when they will take their next step towards getting back on the field again.

"I'm anxious for it, I'm excited for it and I can't wait to get it going," Young said. "We have a super talented team, I have a great running back in Caleb that I know is going to put up a ton of yards and I'm going to do the same thing. I just want to go out there and put on a show and get some wins, it's going to be fun."

Jhase McMillan tries to make a catch during Saturday's state 7-on-7 game between Tompkins and DeSoto at Veterans Memorial Park in College Station.
TYLER TYRE



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Jordan, Tompkins qualify for state 7-on-7 tournament

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Jordan and Tompkins advanced to the state 7-on-7 tournament which will be held this week.

128 teams from across the state of Texas will make their way to College Station this weekend to compete in the tournament, which runs Friday through Saturday for Class 6A schools.

Jordan and Cinco Ranch both qualified for the tournament at the Tompkins 7-on-7 state qualifying tournament during the second week of June.

The Warriors went 4-0 at the Tompkins tournament, beating Cinco Ranch 22-19, Grand Oaks 28-21, Klein Cain 36-25 and beating Katy in the state qualifying game 29-21.

The Falcons also went 4-0 at their tournament. They beat Dekaney 26-13, Waller 31-14, Taylor 21-13 and Mayde Creek 18-14 in the state qualifying game.

It's the second straight appearance and second overall for the Warriors, who finished last season's state tournament with a 2-4 record, advancing to the second round of the consolation bracket.



PHOTO COURTESY ANTONY BLALOCK

Tompkins qualified for the state 7-on-7 tournament at their home state qualifying tournament.

Jordan will be in Pool A at the tournament along with Lake Dallas, Odessa and Pflugerville Weiss. The Warriors will play Lake Dallas at 1 p.m. Friday, followed by Odessa at 2:30 p.m. and Weiss at 4 p.m.

For Tompkins it's the third time

they have clinched a spot in the state tournament, also having done so in 2018 and 2021.

The Falcons will be in Pool M along with El Paso Eastlake, Red Oak and Austin Westlake. They will take on Westlake at 1:45 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY TONY BLALOCK

Jordan qualified for the state 7-on-7 tournament at the Tompkins tournament.

Friday followed by Eastlake at 3:15 p.m. and Red Oak at 4:45 to round out the day.

The top two teams from each group in qualifying go through to the championship bracket, which begins at 8:45 a.m. Saturday while

the bottom two from the bracket go through o the consolation bracket, which begins at 8 a.m. Saturday.

Bracket times and fields can be subject to change based on weather, field conditions and other factors.

UH volleyball's Georgiades named to US Women's Collegiate National Team

Kate Georgiades was named to the US Women's Collegiate National Team.
CONTRIBUTED

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

University of Houston Volleyball libero Kate Georgiades was one of 20 players to earn a spot on the U.S. Women's Collegiate National Team, USA Volleyball announced this week. She will train alongside the U.S. Women's National Team from June 18-24 in Anaheim, Calif., as the national team prepares for compe-

dition in the final preliminary round of the Volleyball Nations League.

Georgiades is one of three liberos given the call for the Collegiate National Team. She's also the only student-athlete selected from the American Athletic Conference and one of four selected for the team from the new composition of the Big 12 Conference.

This is the second consecutive summer that Georgiades has trained with the Collegiate National Team, having also joined the program last summer.

Athletes will be provided evaluation, feedback and individual development plans (IDP) that will be further accompanied by online learning experiences to help support them in a healthy and holistic way. Training will be aligned with the expectations of the U.S. National Team coaching and performance staff.

Georgiades earned her second consecutive Libero of the Year honors from The American in 2022 and received All-America honors from AVCA (Honorable Mention) and VolleyballMag.com (Fourth Team) after finishing with the sixth most total digs and 11th most digs per set in the country last season.

The College Station, Texas, native currently sits in first on Houston's career digs per set rankings with 5.40 and is in ninth on the team's total digs list with 1,350. She currently holds the fifth and sixth spots on the team's season digs list with 687 and 663 in 2022 and 2021, respectively.



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Houston Texans running back Dare Ogunbowale (33) celebrates with tight end Teagan Quitoriano (84) after a touchdown during an NFL game between the Texans and the Chiefs on Dec. 18, 2022, in Houston. The Chiefs won, 30-24, in overtime.



PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Above: Texans tight end Jordan Akins (88) is tackled by Chargers cornerback Asante Samuel Jr. (26) after a catch during an NFL game between the Texans and the Chargers on Oct. 2, 2022 in Houston. The Chargers won 34-24. Below: Houston Texans defensive end Jerry Hughes (55) during an NFL game between the Houston Texans and the Cleveland Browns on Dec. 4, 2022, in Houston. The Browns won, 27-14.

Texans make strides at OTAs

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

The Texans are aiming for a step up this year.

Houston has been in a downward spiral over the past few seasons, struggling at the bottom of the National Football League and failing to make strides with turnovers among the coaching staff and front office.

But things have started to look up for Houston, especially over this offseason with strong additions to the coaching staff and through the draft and free agency.

Houston carried that momentum into Organized Team Activities, and it showed up on the field as they had a strong few weeks on the field over the past few weeks.

"Overall I've seen a lot of growth over the course of these three weeks of OTA's," said Texans head coach DeMeco Ryans. "That growth is what excites me about working with these guys. They're working together these young guys and veterans and to see them do that and come together over the course of this has been great. That's the goal that we were hoping for."

There is plenty of experience on the team but there are also plenty of young players. For rookies this was the first chance to get a taste of

the NFL and CJ Stroud did everything he could to get used to the pace and practice quickly.

"The biggest thing for me is getting better every day," Stroud said. "I'm trying to push myself, learn from the older guys and get all the feedback that I can so I can continue to improve as a player. I'm just trying to do all the little things and push myself to be great."

Stroud and the other rookies have been helped along by veteran leaders in the Texans' program. A number of key free agent signings have come through over the course of the offseason and it should help those younger players adjust to the NFL level.

"You see these guys and you're coming into a young team and it's so evident that all of them are hungry to prove themselves," said tight end Dalton Schultz. "It was awesome to see coming in and then you spend some time here and you can see there's some really good leaders on this team, especially on the defense. Hearing some of those voices in these first couple months has been great and I feel very hungry coming to work and being around guys who are that motivated to get better on a day to day basis."

The Texans finished up with OTAs and minicamp in late June —next up on their schedule is



training camp, which will start in early August.

"Minicamp was great — it really allowed us to compete at a safe level and protect each other while we

do it," Ryans said. "Those different phases allowed us to really hone in on the fundamentals, the techniques and the small things. Now when we get into training camp

if our players own the techniques and fundamentals and do their job the correct way, it gives them a chance to compete once we get to preseason games."

Aristoi wins inaugural girls flag football championship

STAFF REPORT

Aristoi Classical Academy took home the Girls Flag Football League Championship on Sunday, May 21st.

The Houston Texans hosted the inaugural Girls Flag Football League Championship final at the Houston Methodist Training Center. Aristoi took on Lifestyle Christian School Victors, winning 26-6. Professional football players attended the inaugural girls' flag football



league championship game to cheer on and support the girls participating.

Aristoi coaches included Head Coach, Courtney

Garcia, Offensive Coach, Seth Thompson, Defensive Coach, Terry Boling, and Assistant Coach, Doug Thompson. They helped the team to win.

Emily Hovis threw for three touchdowns and no interceptions for 125 yards. Valentina Bousleiman was named MVP of the game, scoring three touchdowns, one on a 53-yard run, and two different 20-yard touchdown receptions for a total of 110 yards. Additional highlights from the game

include Abrianna Parks, with eight receptions for 45 yards, Selah Thompson, with three rushes for 42 yards, Maddie Sinitiere, with two catches for 15 yards and Gracie Garcia, with seven receptions for 20 yards and a ten-yard dash for a total of 30 yards. Aris-

toi's defensive standouts were Gracie Garcia, Selah Thompson, Zoe Williams, and Valentina Bousleiman. Overall, the Lady Griffins completed an undefeated season going 7-0 in the league.

Terry Boling, Athletic Director, Aristoi Classical

Academy - Katy, said he was grateful for the opportunity given to Aristoi Classical Academy to participate in the inaugural girls flag football league season. The Aristoi Lady Griffins as well as the Aristoi community will cherish this experience for many years to come.



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