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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

KATY ISD

Naming committee recommends honoring Nelsons

FROM STAFF REPORTS

During the December 4th work study meeting of the Katy ISD board, the Naming Advisory Committee for Junior High School #18 recommended to the Board of Trustees that the new school be named after the Nelson family, who have resided in the Katy area for over five generations and who since the 1940s have farmed the land where Junior High School #18 is being built.

The Nelson family history -- presented to the board by KISD Director of Communications Craig Eichorn -- is represented by two patriarchs: Clyde and George Nelson, and their descendants. Clyde's family moved to Katy in 1938 with their three children, Wesley, Wanda, and David. In 1942 the family purchased the land where Junior High 18 is currently being constructed. The



The Nelson Family

George Nelson family also moved to Katy in the early 1930s. George and his wife, Alice, began a farming and ranching business at that time. The family had three children,

George V. (Sonny), Delores and Johnny, and built their home, which still stands today, on Katy Hockley Road. George and Alice were also very involved in a number of organizations throughout Katy, with George being elected to the Katy ISD school board in 1939. In addition, he actively volunteered his time and efforts with the Katy FFA.

A public forum to provide input regarding the proposed name was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, December 6 at the Katy ISD Education Support Complex, 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy, after this issue of the Katy Times went to press.

In other action, the board:
• Conducted spirited discussion regarding Senate Bill 763 which governs the employment or acceptance of volunteer services of chaplains by public school districts

and whether to adopt a policy authorizing the district to employ, or accept as a volunteer, a chaplain under Texas Education Code Chapter 23. Board member Rebecca Fox raised question regarding how a "volunteer" could be "employed" as stated in the state law. Fox brought up additional concerns about the law, noting that there are no provisions in it which would prevent the chaplain from "proselytizing" at their campus. Board member Lance Redmon, who said that he provides chaplain services for his employees in his own private business, suggested that guidelines similar to those used for chaplains in the military and other settings could be drafted to address these concerns. Board president Victor Perez stated that the

See **NAME**, page A3

Mattress Mack speaks at Katy Area EDC event

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Legendary local businessman Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale shared some of his wisdom with attendees of the Katy Area Economic Development Council at the December General Assembly breakfast on December 4th. The event was held at the Embassy Suites, 16435 Katy Freeway.

"Mattress Mack" recounted his history and his entry into business, beginning with living with his parents in Dallas and his case of "bad attitude." He felt he was a victim of circumstance but his boss at the store where he bagged groceries told him that he "was a fighter." His life changed when he heard a preacher on a Sunday morning broadcast -- not speaking about the Gospel but about "how to be successful."

McIngvale outlined his "rules for business:" take care of the customer, take care of your employees, make work fun and help people first. "The best ability of all is availability," he said, noting that he is on the showroom floor at his furniture store all the time. He related that he was able to learn from customers, even learning about marketing from two of his recent customers.

McIngvale also described the community programs that he has put in place at his Gallery Furniture stores. Through one program, kids in the economically-depressed area near the North Freeway store are



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale, well-known Houston icon and owner of Gallery Furniture, addressed the general assembly of the Katy Area Economic Development Council at the Embassy Suites on December 4th. "The most important ability is availability," he told business owners.

brought in and fed -- with one rule: no phones or tablets -- they have to talk to one another. As a result, McIngvale said, they make friends and find support and resources. He also described a trade school program sponsored by his company which offers training in the trades and puts people to work in high-paying jobs.

"The essence of living is giving," McIngvale said. "When you stand before your Creator at the end of your life, He won't ask how much

See **MACK**, page A3



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF KP GEORGE

Kristina Shackelford of Katy (left) participates in Friday's inaugural AIDS walk. The event, hosted by Fort Bend County Judge KP George, was sponsored by Katy Pride and First Christian Church of Katy.

Fort Bend County holds inaugural AIDS Walk for World AIDS Day

FROM STAFF REPORTS

In observance of World AIDS Day, Fort Bend County Judge KP George, in collaboration with Katy Pride, First Christian Church of Katy, and Fort Bend Health and Human Services, hosted the inaugural Fort Bend County AIDS Walk on Friday, December 1, 2023.

The event marks the begin-

ning of a long-term commitment to raise awareness and support for those affected by HIV/AIDS within the community, said the judge's office in a press release.

"This initiative is more than just a walk; it's a unifying force, bringing together community members, organizations, and local leaders with a shared mission—to raise awareness, combat stigma, and express sol-

idarity with individuals affected by HIV/AIDS," stated Fort Bend County Judge KP George.

The historic Fort Bend County Courthouse located at 401 Jackson St., Richmond served as the starting point. The route, spanning over ½ mile (0.63 miles), wound through the heart of Richmond providing a symbolic journey in support of those affected by HIV/AIDS.

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December 7, 2023
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KACC hosts panel of lawmakers for legislative update

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Area lawmakers gave an update on the long legislative session in Texas at the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Embassy Suites, 16435 Katy Freeway on November 28th.

The panelists were State Senator Joan Huffman, State Representative Stan Kitzman, State Representative Mike Schofield, State Representative Jacey Jetton and Holly Arbuckle, district director for U.S. Congressman Morgan Luttrell. The panel was moderated by Robert Long, Division Director for Board Development Services at Texas Association of School Boards.

Long noted that this legislative session -- including four special sessions -- has been exhausting for lawmakers. He asked how historic the session was and how costly it was for taxpayers. Schofield said that there have been only three times in Texas history when the legislature was still in



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY RICHMOND, A LIFETIME OF CLICKS

Providing an update to the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce on the current Texas legislative session were (left to right) Michael Schofield, State Representative District 132; Stan Kitzman, State Representative District 85; Jacey Jetton, State Representative District 26; Joan Huffman, State Senator District 17; Robert Long, moderator; Holly Arbuckle, who appeared for U.S. Congressman Morgan Luttrell; and chamber president/CEO Matthew Ferraro. The panel members spoke at a luncheon at the Embassy Suites on November 28th.

session at Thanksgiving, saying it was historic but becoming more common. "[Being a legislator] is meant to be a part-time job," he said. "It's important that we live the same life you do." Schofield

praised the historic tax cut in property taxes. "It is fundamentally not the role of government to tax you out of your home."

The group also discussed Senate Bill 3 and Senate Bill 4, which

are related to border security. Senate Bill 3 provides \$1.5 million toward over 100 miles of border wall construction, said Jetton. "It's a good investment and another tool we can use," Jetton said. "This will be important for Operation Lone Star."

Senate Bill 4 is an immigration law that would allow Texas police to arrest people for illegally crossing the border from Mexico. The bill has been controversial in some quarters, Huffman said. "The feds have dropped the ball on this," Huffman said the bill is crafted to preserve constitutional rights of those crossing the border; it allows immigrants to receive due process and get a translator. "The feds are already doing this," Huffman added, saying that the federal government was not enforcing the law. The law is needed in those counties that are being simply overrun, she said. Kitzman concurred, saying that border security is the

See **UPDATE**, page A3

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Last day for Christmas bake sale at Miller Career Center's Old Town Bistro is December 7th

The second annual Christmas Bake sale at Old Town Bistro is almost over - shop December 7th from 7 a.m. until sold out. Cakes, cookies and cookie decorating kits may be purchased with cash or credit. All proceeds benefit the culinary arts department at the school. The bistro is located at 1734 Katyland Drive in Katy. For more information, call 281-237-9572.



Vargas Agency hosts blood drive on December 8th

Vargas Agency is hosting a lifesaving blood drive on December 8th at their office at 5718 3rd Street, Katy. The company is seeking 15 successful donors

who will each receive a FREE \$20 e-gift card and a free item of their choice from the blood center — from an assortment of free t-shirts, beach towels, fun socks, and more. To register: commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/377372?fbclid=IwAR0eBSP58qkRH8g80tuibIfwse-jo3nJghtv7nnR19isdcbkvWKMbwiGAmQo

Santa and Mrs. Claus attending "Meet and Greet" at Katy Crossing Icehouse on December 9th

As a surprise for the kiddos, the owners of Katy Crossing Icehouse made a special request to the North Pole and they said yes!! Santa and Mrs. Claus are coming to take pictures with the kiddos and to get those Christmas lists at the venue in

historic downtown Katy on December 9th from 5 to 8 p.m. The icehouse is located at 5733 2nd St, Katy.

Celebrate Hannukah at Central Green on December 10th

One of Katy's most loved events - now in its tenth year - will take place at Central Green Park at LaCenterra on December 10th from 4 to 6 p.m. Join the Hannukah celebration featuring for national singing sensation Roger Spark Band. Rabbi Goldstein will tell the story of Hanukkah and the Menorah will be lit. This is always a fun night of play, family and holiday. The park is located at 2643 Commercial Center Blvd, Katy.

*Event dates and times are subject to change. Please check the Facebook page for updates @WFDDCentralGreenPark. Please no glass, alcohol, balls, or pets on the green.



Midway BBQ sponsoring Hope Impacts' fourth annual "Stay Warm" drive through December 15th

Midway BBQ is collecting blankets, jackets, coats, hoodies, sleeping bags and hats for Hope Impacts, a local nonprofit which helps the homeless in Katy. Donations may be dropped in the "Stay Warm" box at the restaurant at 6025 Highway Blvd, in Katy until December 15th.



Beloved local institution MKT Distillery closes its doors

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

In a post to the company's Facebook page on November 30, the owners of MKT Distillery announced that the locally-owned craft distillery would be closing its doors on December 2.

"Well, it didn't work out the way we had all hoped," the post read. "MKT is going to be closing and liquidating everything after we raise the tree in honor of our hometown - Katy - one last time. Come out ... to celebrate what we accomplished together over the past five years and say a final goodbye."

Nicholas Jessett and Nici Cowan-Jessett founded the distillery and tasting room in 2018. Located at 5372 1st St in the historic American Rice Growers Co-Op rice dryers in downtown Katy, the company made all its spirits onsite, using locally sourced Texas ingredients and even incorporating local Katy rice in their products. The company produced whiskeys, vodka, gin, and moonshine. During the pandemic, the company



PHOTO COURTESY OF MKT DISTILLERY

pivoted to manufacture hand sanitizer.

MKT Distillery was a generous sponsor to the local Katy community, hosting numerous events ranging from Katy Christian Ministries' Gumbo Fest to pet adoptions to fundraisers for cancer. The venue was voted by readers of the Katy Times as "Best of Katy" for several years for its Bloody Mary drink and as "Best Liquor Store."

In 2018, the Jessetts restored the tradition of lighting a tree on top of the rice dryers during the holiday season as a way of celebrating Katy's history. The tree was lit for the final time on December 2.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Katy,

Some of you may remember me as the former editor at the Katy Times. About two years ago, my wife Brandee and I moved to Central Washington to be closer to my family and to get back to a place that had four seasons.

The thing is, while the move has been good for us, there's a lot we miss about Katy. Primarily, the amazing people who come together and lift each other up through hurricanes, pandemics and all of those other challenges life throws at a community.

While I was there, it was my privilege to cover the people that are the heart of Katy. Folks like Nick and Nici Jessett who, until just a few days ago, ran MKT Distillery in the old rice dryers next to No Label Brewing, a facility that has been the heart of Katy for generations.

Nick and Nici always had a smile for everyone that walked in the door and did an amazing number of things to lift others up. They brewed hand sanitizer during the pandemic. They held fundraisers for

local nonprofits. They were simply there as friends when someone needed one.

In the first interview I sat down with them for, they were welcoming and determined to be family-friendly and locally sourced. The rice they used to distill came from Jasek Farm. The tables were made by Republic Creations on First Street in Downtown Katy. Their very label name — MKT — was named for the rail line that is such a big part of Katy's heritage.

Overall, the opening of MKT Distillery in Katy blessed the community with a pair of friends that brought the town together, lifted everyone up — even socially awkward newspaper editors — and was a blessing to Katy. A blessing that I've missed these last two years, and that I know the community will miss for years to come.

Nick and Nici - take care of yourselves and know that the community adores you, will miss you and appreciates everything you did to take care of those around you.

With much love for my second home town,

R. Hans "Rob" Miller



It's time to prepare for Winter's Chill: Safeguarding the Four P's

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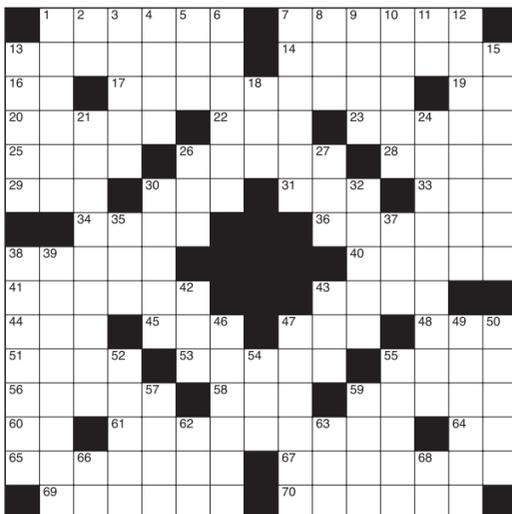
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- Salt
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- It begins with them
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- Back parts
- 8th month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- __ ex machina
- Satisfies
- Quebec river
- A doctrine
- Popular pickup truck
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid material
- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricket frogs
- German founder of psychology
- Endured
- A female domestic
- A "place" to avoid
- Cigarette (slang)
- Canadian politician Josephine
- French ballet/acting dynasty
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom
- Sound
- Yankees' slugger Judge
- Dickens character

CLUES DOWN

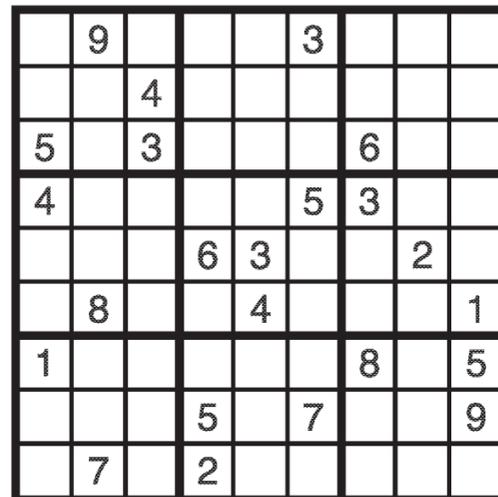
- Animal disease
- Commercial
- Craft supply
- Storage units
- Investment vehicle
- Colorado Heisman winner
- In a way, sank
- Post-birth brain damage (abbr.)
- Lay about
- Intestinal
- The opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Messianic in Islamic eschatology
- Showing since conviction
- Not safe
- The number above the line in a fraction
- Yard invader
- Pouch
- Swedish krona
- Start anew
- White white or yellow flower



- Fourteen
- Graphical user interface
- Up-to-date on the news
- Campaigns
- Touch softly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- One who supports the Pope
- Anxiety

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

SUDOKU



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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.

UPDATE

from page A1

number one issue across the state and “the primary thing on people’s minds”. He said that Border Patrol and National Guardsmen on the border needed more tools in order to do their jobs.

From a federal perspective, Arbuckle said it doesn’t matter what laws are passed if the federal government will not enforce them, and that this situation is very frustrating for Congressman Luttrell. “We should not have to be doing this – the federal government should be doing this, but they are not.”

Long also led a discussion on vouchers and school choice and the governor’s decision to continue to call special sessions. Jetton said that it was possible to have both parental choice and a good education. “School choice is available to wealthy families,” said Jetton, noting that not all families have that choice. “We need to have a real conversation about

what is really in these bills,” he said, adding that there are parameters in there for accountability and to prevent fraud. Huffman said that education is the biggest driver of the budget noting that 51% of the state budget goes to public education. She said that she was sure that the voucher issue would resurface in the next legislative session.

Long asked each panelist to share what they were most proud of in the work they were doing “for the people” this year. Kitzman began by praising the accomplishments of the legislative session, which delivered the property tax cut, the “right to farm” and other issues which had been battled at the grassroots level for years. Schofield was proud of the property tax cut and the work on the border, but that he was most proud of the work he did on behalf of his district, especially the portion of unincorporated Harris County, which is in Houston’s

extra-territorial jurisdiction. The ETJ governs how residents can use their land but land-owners can’t vote in Houston city elections, Schofield said. He said that since he has been in the legislature, he has been fighting to get people out of Houston’s ETJ, and that this session he worked with State Representative Cecil Bell to craft a bill which would enable people and subdivisions to exit the ETJ by request. Huffman said that the state had historic revenues and that “it was spent responsibly,” again praising the property tax relief and the constitutional amendments which were drafted and passed. Jetton was proud of his work on the Appropriations committee and the work on border security. Arbuckle said that Congressman Luttrell was most proud of his work on veterans’ affairs and his bill to protect kids who are crossing the border, ensuring that they are released into proper custody.

EVENTS

DICK’s House of Sport’s Winter Festival comes to the Katy Freeway store on December 12th from 12 to 4 p.m. Santa (Katy’s Man In Red) and Mrs. Claus will be available for pictures. Admission is \$10 per person or a donated toy. All money/donations will go to The Hangar Unity Community Center in Brookshire, which offers a variety of services to the community including activities for teens, resources for families in need and a variety of local events.

- Santa Picture Sign Up: <https://app.anyroad.com/i/plugin/dicks-house-of-sport-katy-tx/tours/santa-pictures?lang=en-US>
- Winter Festival Sign Up: <https://app.anyroad.com/i/plugin/dicks-house-of-sport-katy-tx/tours/polar-express-experience-expo?lang=en-US>

DICK’s will also host an event to benefit local nonprofit Katy Cares on Sunday December 10th.

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. the moms

participating in Katy Cares’ program can come with their kids to enjoy all of the experiences offered at the store, including the rock wall, batting cages, and golf bays.

From 1 to 3 p.m. Santa will be at the store and the Katy Cares crew will get a free photo with Santa. The public can sign up for \$10 and all proceeds go directly to Katy Cares: <https://app.anyroad.com/i/plugin/dicks-house-of-sport-katy-tx/tours/santa-pictures-at-dick-s-house-of-sport?lang=en-US>.

Katy Cares assists the 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 through trauma-informed therapy and training classes.

DICK’s House of Sport is located at 24600 Katy Fwy, Suite 1100, Katy.

NAME

from page A1

purposed of the program was not to provide religious instruction. Perez said that a chaplain program would require the creation of policy and job descriptions and that these factors would be considered.

Discussed and considered Board approval of the design associated with the first floor of the Katy ISD Merchants Way Building, which is designed to house two special education programs: the Behavioral Learning Program which works with KISD students in grades K through 12; and the Katy PLUS program which works with special needs individuals 18 and older, up to their 22nd birthday.

Discussed and considered a resolution regarding adequate funding for public schools, drafted and read by board member Dawn Champagne. Champagne said that she modeled the resolution on similar resolutions adopted by other school districts. Perez said that the board was all in agreement that the board wanted an increase in the basic allotment and an increase in teacher compensation but wondered about the benefit and timing of this resolution at the current time. Champagne replied that it would show a united front for

the Katy ISD board but that it would not change anything. Fox added that similar resolutions had been done in the past during legislative sessions. Board member Amy Thieme questioned whether the resolution would alienate lawmakers and objected to what she called its “bullying tone” and “harsh language.” Board member Lance Redmon said that coming out of the Strategic Design meetings, he saw community members discouraged and he felt that this resolution would be helpful. Perez said that if any board member had input or suggestions or changes on the resolution, to email those to him only in the next couple of days and that a new version of the resolution would be drafted.

Discussed and considered Board Policy CW Local, presented by Redmon, which would modify the campus naming policy, tasking the board policy committee and the administration with clearing up current confusion and adding more robust criteria for honoring namesakes, as well as providing costs for possible renaming of existing facilities.

The next board meeting is a regular Board Meeting, scheduled for December 11.



SUSAN ROVEGNO

The Paetow High School choir provided musical entertainment at the Katy Area Economic Development Council’s General Assembly breakfast at the Embassy Suites on December 4th.

MACK

from page A1

money you made.”

McIngvale shared the story of his daughter Elizabeth and her lifelong struggles with OCD. He said that he and his

wife were “sellers, not buyers” and that they were sold on the idea that she could be helped. He praised the Brookwood Community where Elizabeth

received help, and noted that Brookwood helps find jobs for its residents. Jobs give purpose and meaning to life, McIngvale said.

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Students in Raines Academy earn CDL licenses

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Eight Katy Independent School District students have recently earned their Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) through an innovative program launched for the 2023-2024 school year at the Martha Raines Academy, the district announced in November 30th press release.

In partnership with RGV CDL Services LLC, this pioneering program delivers comprehensive training to students without any financial burden, ensuring accessibility and affordability for all participants. The curriculum encompasses hands-on training covering various aspects of operating an 18-wheeler, including essential skills like straight backing, offset and parallel parking maneuvers, alongside computer-based learning modules.

With this license, students will be allowed to drive the trucks within the state of Texas until they turn 21 years of age. Upon reaching that age, these students will be allowed to drive semi-trucks across state lines.

Two female students are among the first eight students to earn their CDL. Additionally, both young women have deep-rooted family ties to the trucking industry.

"I chose this career path to



COURTESY OF KATY ISD

Raines Academy students earning their CDLs include (l-r): Joel Guerrero, Melanie Martinez, and Eduardo Canales. Eric Macedo is not pictured.

follow in my father's footsteps," said Melanie Martinez. "He owns his own trucking company and really enjoys what he does. Pursuing this career allows me to work for him one day."

Guadalupe Rosales also attributed her interest in the CDL license to her father's influence. "My father was a big influence on me. I observed how much he likes working in this industry and wanted to follow his lead."

Eduardo Canales, the first student to earn his Class A CDL, expressed his long-standing goal of driving a truck. "I've been interested in this field since childhood. This course not only prepared me

for a career but also enhanced my overall enjoyment of school."

Adrian Lopez, another recent CDL recipient through the program, shared his family connection to the industry. "Both of my parents have operated 18-wheelers for many years. I saw this as a new opportunity for me to develop skills that could valuable later in my life."

Joel Guerrero driven by a life-long passion for trucks and driving, emphasized the challenge of the course. "I have always loved driving and maneuvering these 18-wheelers was always appealing to me," he said. "This course is a challenge but if you love something like this, it makes you work that much harder."



COURTESY OF KATY ISD

Also earning their CDL (l-r): Adrian Lopez, Felipe Rodriguez, Guadalupe Rosales, and Josh Sowunmi.

Felipe Rodriguez, who also recently earned his CDL, has family ties to the industry. "Both my parents drive and I have admired their dedication to this profession and wanted to have the same career as they do," he said. "Now that I have earned my CDL, I am ready to start driving a truck once I complete high school."

All the students shared that they had to stop on top of the lessons the entire semester. "This course takes up a lot of your time. You must dedicate yourself to the lessons," Josh Sowunmi said. "It is not just driving the 18-wheeler -- there are so many scenarios you have to navigate through with the computer-based problems and exams."



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER MURPHY

Elizabeth Murphy, who is the mascot for the Woodcreek Junior High School Timberwolves, will perform at the VRBO Citrus Bowl in Orlando on New Year's Day.

Woodcreek JHS mascot to perform at VRBO Citrus Bowl

Local resident is one of an elite number of mascots chosen

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Elizabeth Murphy from Woodcreek Junior High in Katy is one of more than 50 All-American Mascots from across the country who will perform in the Cheez-It Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida on January 1, 2024, according to a November 29th press release from Varsity Spirit special events. The game gives cheerleaders and dancers the opportunity to perform at the seventh oldest collegiate bowl in the country, as well as the opportunity to visit Universal Studios Orlando.

The individuals invited to perform in the half-time performance are Mascot All-Americans from Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) and National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) summer camps, two brands under the Varsity Spirit umbrella. All-Americans are selected via tryout based on their overall character development and crowd leading skills. Only the top 10% of the mascots attending UCA or NCA camps earn the chance to perform in this year's Bowl.

Mascots will travel along with cheerleading and dance team members to Orlando for a week of rehearsals dedicated to preparing them for their Citrus Bowl half-time performance, where they will perform in front of 60,000 fans in the Camping World Stadium in Orlando.

"It's a big accomplishment and we are very proud of her," said Elizabeth's mother, Amber Murphy in an email. "I [am] just hoping to get a good show of support for this local student, who is a straight-A KAP student!"

Drones take off at Harmony School of Excellence competition

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Harmony School of Excellence-Katy held its annual RADC Drone Competition on Saturday morning, December 2 at the school gym at the campus at 22855 Elyson Falls Drive, Katy.

An exciting challenge was presented in the form of a game, where students learn how drones work, how they're built and programmed. This year the event hosted over 24 teams, including local ISDS and teams from out of state.

The drones were small, only slightly larger than an adult's hand.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

Members of the HSA Hawks team await the start of the first round of competition in Saturday's drone competition at the Harmony School of Excellence campus in Katy.

"The REC Foundation Aerial Drones Competition (RADC) offers an exciting educational drone sporting event focusing on hands-

on, student-centered learning. RADC fosters students' development through teamwork, critical thinking, project management,



A drone hovers over the competition field as its pilots and team members attempt to direct it to maneuver the balls around the pipes. Inset: A drone approaches a section of the obstacle course at the drone competition at Harmony School of Excellence on Saturday.

and communication skills required to prepare them to become the next generation of innovators and problem solvers," according to the Robotics Education Competition Foundation.

The Robotics Education Competition Foundation also explains that RADC is an exciting challenge presented in the form of a game. Four Drones made up of two Alliances fly around the field to score as many points as possible. The object of the game is to attain a higher score than the opposing alliance.

Teams also competed in the Programming Skills Challenge where one drone

takes to the sky to score as many points as possible. Additionally, teams were judged on an engineering notebook that shows their understanding of the engineering design process.

Participants were predominantly from Harmony schools in the Houston area, but teams also traveled to the competition from Cypress, Bryan and Austin. Multiple grade levels were represented at the event.

Harmony School of Excellence-Katy will hold another drone competition at its campus in February 2024, said a Harmony district spokesperson.

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KATYTIMES.COM

Slick City Action Park to open first Texas location in Katy

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Slick City Action Parks – the world’s first indoor dry-slide and air court park designed for all ages – announces their entrance into Texas with the opening of their third and largest location coming to Katy. Featuring aptly named slides including “Mega Launch,” “The Dragon” and “Cowabunga,” the brand currently has two locations in Denver, CO and St. Louis, MO. The new Katy location is Texas-sized with a whopping 56,000 sq ft of space, featuring 11 dry slides, an acrobat alley (with a zip line, trapeze swing, tumbling air courts), mini go karts and a junior play area with mini slides, soft play areas and a web crawler. Slick City combines proprietary, “We’ve gotta do that!” attractions with an exceptional guest experience to inspire, engage and entertain thrill-seekers of all ages, said company officials.

With the out-of-home entertainment market valued at \$287.3 billion in 2022 and estimated to surpass \$497.9 billion by 2031, Slick City has seen incredible demand for their experiential destination. As Katy’s population continues to grow at a steady rate of 6.27% annually, the flourishing area is a perfect match for Slick City as it takes the next step in its national expansion.

“We’re thrilled to be opening our first location in the beautiful Lone Star state,” said Bron Launsby, CEO and Founder of Slick City. “Our first two locations have seen incredible recep-

tion in their respective cities and the energy we’ve seen there is perfect for a vibrant city like Katy. We are overjoyed to be bringing the community a new and exciting way to have fun and make memories with friends, family, and loved ones in addition to creating 75+ new job opportunities.”

This new location will be Slick City’s third corporate owned location and will be located at 5000 Katy Mills Circle, Suite 743, Katy, TX 77494, with plans to open in early December. Unlike other out of home entertainment parks, Slick City is truly made for everyone. The brand and its attractions were designed for both the young and young at heart to enjoy while creating new shared experiences with friends and family. Slick City hosts corporate events and adult nights to appeal to grownups, and birthday parties for all ages; the brand has already been named “Best Place for a Kid’s Birthday Party” in St. Louis. On top of that, Katy will have special attractions for guests aged three and under with gated areas and seating for parents. This all-ages appeal also powers major brand growth: Slick City plans for rapid expansion in 2024 and beyond, with numerous new locations planned across the U.S.

Slick City was founded in 2021 by Bron Launsby, an experienced entrepreneur in the trampoline park space and a board member of the International Adventure and Trampoline Parks Association. For more information about Slick City, visit <https://slickcity.com/>.



PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGANO

Family-owned Doneraki Mexican Restaurants opened Fuego y Mar on November 29th at 24205 Katy Freeway. The company has been serving the Houston community for 50 years, said founder Cesar Rodriguez.

Doneraki Mexican Restaurant celebrates 50 years in business

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Doneraki Mexican Restaurant, which has been family-owned and operated since 1973, announced its Golden Anniversary on November 27th. In celebration of 50 year of Mexican culinary excellence, the company unveiled its newest location – called “Fuego y Mar” – which just opened in Katy.

Founder Cesar Rodriguez, wife Magdalena Rodriguez, COO daughter Alexandra Rodriguez-Williams, brother Cesar

Rodriguez and other family members prepared a “birthday” party and soft-opening celebration event at the new restaurant, located at 24205 Katy Freeway near the Grand Parkway, on November 29th. The evening featured live music and entertainment along with free appetizers.

“We are extremely happy and honored to celebrate 50 years of service and support from our friends, family and Houston’s community,” said founder Rodriguez.

“This is a great opportunity to present our new location in Katy and an extension of our Gulfgate ‘Authentic Mexican Restaurant’ concept with Fuego y Mar,” said Rodriguez-Williams. “Fuego y Mar offers may of our classic dishes as well as new menu items that are sure to become favorites. We’re offering a larger seafood selection, a new dessert bar, a larger bar menu, a larger patio and much, much more. Did I mention firewood-cooked fajitas and Angus beef?”

The Katy Times

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Christmas Worship Guide

A6 THE KATY TIMES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

KATYTIMES.COM

YMCAs offer ways to celebrate the season by helping others

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

'Tis the season for festivities, gatherings and family time, and the YMCA of Greater Houston would like to share all their holiday happenings to make this season special for the community. For years, the YMCA of Greater Houston has worked hard to make a difference for Houstonians through YMCA programs that impact youth, families and older adults.

The needs of the Houston and Katy community are diverse and evolving and the Y is needed now more than ever, according to a press release from the organization. A few of the impactful holiday happenings at the YMCA this season include:

- YMCA Adopt-A-Family Program - Help bring smiles to vulnerable community members by participating in the YMCA International Services' annual

Adopt-A-Family program. This program provides an opportunity to fulfill holiday wish lists and provide essential items to those in need now through December 15. To learn more about the Adopt-A-Family program, please visit <https://linktr.ee/adoptafamily>.

- YMCA Holiday Giving Program - Make this season merry and bright for our neighbors! The Y is calling on the community to volunteer to distribute and wrap gifts at YMCA centers as well as donate gifts to families and those in need. To learn more about volunteer and donation opportunities near you, please visit ymcahouston.org/holiday-giving or contact your local YMCA.

- YMCA Holiday Childcare and Camps - To support working families this holiday break, the YMCA is offering holiday camps where youth will have a blast participating in a wide-array of enrichment activities, fun and games. Youth

Holiday Camps begin as early as Dec. 18 and run through Dec. 29. To learn more about YMCA Holiday Camps near you, please visit ymcahouston.org/programs/childcare-and-camps/holiday-camp?selectedCategories=CAT596 or contact your local YMCA.

- YMCA Expert: Strategies for Deepening Connection over the Holidays - As the U.S. struggles with an epidemic of loneliness, isolation, and feelings of disconnection, the YMCA would like to share strategies to encourage deeper connection over the holiday season. Recommendations include engaging in high-quality connections with others, practicing gratitude and seeking out ways to support others.

Local YMCAs in the Katy area include:

- Monte Ballard YMCA at Cinco Ranch, 22807 Westheimer Pkwy, Katy (281) 392-5055
- Ken Lay YMCA, 1901 Charlton House Ln, Katy (281) 392-5055



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You can bring joy to the less fortunate members of the community by adopting a family like this one, shown in 2022 celebrating on Christmas morning.

*Celebrate the
Christmas Season*

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
on December 24 at 6:30 p.m.**

NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1350 N. Mason Road, Katy

December 17
10:30 a.m. Cantata
11:30 Ugly Sweater/Cookie Swap

Katy author's new book examines the role of Joseph

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Local businessman Thomas B. Polvogt III has written a book about the world's most famous stepfather.



THOMAS B. POLVOGT III

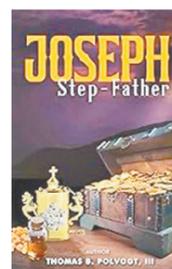
The now-retired insurance agent - a familiar figure who often leads the pledges of allegiance at meetings of the Katy EDC - has penned "Joseph: Step-father," a

treatise on the life of the man who married Mary, the mother of Jesus. "Through Scripture and personal experience, we know a lot about Jesus," the author says on the book's jacket. "But not much is said about Joseph, the husband of Mary." Polvogt continues that little is known or written about Joseph, whom he considers "an honorable man and full of integrity."

Released at the end of September 2023, the book explores these ques-

tions, according to the book's description posted on Amazon.com:

- After Jesus was born, Magi from the east come to worship him, and give him gifts -- gold, frankincense and myrrh. Whatever happened to those gifts?
- Jesus had three half-brothers; did they know that HE was the Messiah?
- When JESUS was on the cross, about to die, he asked John his disciple to take care of Mary, HIS mother. Why did he not ask his half-brothers? Especially James, who later became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem?
- The Angel Gabriel came to Joseph in a dream and told him to go to Egypt. How did he go to Egypt and where did he stay when he was in Egypt?
- Did Joseph and Mary know what happened in Bethlehem after they left (all the babies being killed)? Did they know at the time or later?
- Joseph was not alive during Jesus' ministry. When did he die?
- What was it like for Joseph to raise a "perfect" child?
- How did Jesus and James get along before Jesus started His ministry?
- Why was there room in the Inn,



when Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem? The book is available on Amazon in hard-back, paperback or Kindle format.

Polvogt founded Caleb Insurance and Financial Services, Inc which has been serving the community of Katy and surrounding areas since 1981. The agency has won multiple awards including the President's Council Sales award, the Champion Conference award and the Million Dollar Round Table Award, among others. The agency was acquired by Inszone Insurance Services, a rapidly growing national provider of benefits, personal, and commercial lines insurance in May 2022. But although he is no longer affiliated with the business, Polvogt remains active in the Economic Development Council as well as other community activities.

BEHOLD
Christmas Eve at Katy's First
- 10:30 am -

**Join us Christmas Eve morning at 10:30 AM
for a candlelight service celebrating the
birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!**

KATY'S FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH

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BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



PHOTO BY SHERREL ROGERS

The Katy & Royal 4H Waller County enjoyed breakfast with Santa at the Brookshire Convention Center in Brookshire on Saturday, December 2. Front Row (left to right): Erin Stokes, Aidan Stokes, Santa Claus, Bonnie Tobola Back row (left to right): Ashlee Tobola, Marcia Stokes, Amanda Neuendorf, Doug Neuendorf.

*Christmas
Eve*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
CHRISTMAS EVE AT BECKENDORFF FARMS
4 PM FAMILY FRIENDLY SERVICE
6 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

RESURRECTION
CHURCH

Christmas Worship Guide

KATYTIMES.COM

THE KATY TIMES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 **A7**

ROYAL ISD SCHOOL MUSIC STUDENTS STAGE FLASH MOB PERFORMANCE AT KATY MILLS MALL



In a surprise for shoppers at Katy Mills Mall on Saturday morning, music students from Royal High School and the Royal Junior High School STEM program staged a "flash mob." The musicians performed "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" at the Christmas tree in the courtyard in front of the Polo Ralph Lauren store at the mall.

SUSAN ROVEGNO

Get out and about with these trips hosted by Fussell Senior Center

See the holiday sights all over the region with these tours hosted by the City of Katy's Fussell Senior Center. You do not have to be a resident of the City of Katy in order to sign up.

For sign-up or more information, please contact Amanda Di Dio at adidio@cityofkaty.com or call (281) 391-4837.

- Friday, December 8th at 3:30 p.m. - Christmas Lights Tour of Downtown Houston. Enjoy dinner and a driving tour of Downtown Houston to check out the glittering holiday decorations! There is a \$10 advance fee for this trip.

- Friday, December 15th at 1 p.m. - Shopping, Dinner and Christmas Tour of the Heights. Enjoy shopping, dinner at Spaghetti Western and a driving tour of the historic Heights neighborhood. There is a \$10.00 advance fee for this trip.

- Friday, December 15th at 4:30 p.m. - Christmas Lights Tour of Sugar Land. Begin with dinner at the Adriatic Café, followed by a driving tour of the Sugar Land area's seasonal lights. There is no advanced cost for this trip.

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5:00PM FAMILY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
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If you'd like to volunteer to gift wrap please contact Joanne at www.sunshinethrutherain.org 832-477-1130

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AT GRAND LAKES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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December 17th - Joy

DECEMBER 24th
CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE
5:30pm

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Sing We Noel!
30th Annual Christmas Concert

Featuring the Orchestra and Choirs from Epiphany of the Lord and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Sunday, 10 December 2023, 7:30pm
Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Community
1530 Norwalk Dr, Katy, TX 77450

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DEC. 17 - 11 AM - WORSHIP SERVICE
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DEC. 21 - 7 PM - LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
A service of hope & healing for those experiencing loss, hardship, or grieving

DEC. 24 - 11 AM - WORSHIP SERVICE

ALL SERVICES ARE ONLINE & IN PERSON

DECEMBER 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE
3PM - FAMILY & CHILDREN
6PM - CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION

Royal ISD welding students to participate in rodeo craft competition

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Royal ISD CTE Welding Department announced its participation in the upcoming Industrial Craft Competition (ICC) at the 2024 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (HLSR), where skilled students will showcase their precision and craftsmanship in the welding and manufacturing arena.

"The HLSR provides a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience through the ICC as students prepare to join the

workforce," said the district in a statement. The HLSR ICC is planned and conducted annually by the HLSR ICC Committee made up of member contractor (employer) representatives and Texas ISDs. The contest is "invitation-only."

In this event, students work together to build and execute an industrial skid. Students must plan and execute the construction of an industrial skid using the drawings, donated materials, tools, methods, and safety standards used in industrial construction. In addition

to the physical work, students must comply with daily industrial safety expectations, including the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and daily safety task analysis (STAs). Also, the students will develop detailed schedules for the work and track progress. The competition began at the beginning of the Fall 2023 semester and will culminate at the 2024 Rodeo. After judging, projects will be returned to the participating school districts after the Rodeo for use in teaching the industrial

curriculum.

Students see and experience an entire project build. Many students do not realize all the different opportunities available in construction, such as material handling, scheduling, planning, safety, quality control, and project execution, according to the district's statement. Royal CTE Welding Instructors Selena Castillo and Roldan Salais are qualified and tasked with managing the competitors, supervising the project build, scheduling safety inspections, re-

ceiving materials, and overseeing all aspects of student activities.

Royal ISD CTE Welding students benefit greatly from participation in the ICC Competition, said the district. Students will acquire skills that will prepare them for industry careers in manufacturing. Students have the opportunity to network with local companies who are looking to hire students after graduation. Scholarships are available for students through HLSR so that students may continue their education in the manufacturing fields.

Students at British International School of Houston celebrate outstanding academic results

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The British International School of Houston announced on November 28th outstanding academic results with two perfect PSAT Test scores of 1520 - the maximum score possible. In addition, students were recognized for obtaining the highest marks in the country for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) results.

Five students were also acknowledged for attaining the Highest Mark in the United States for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination results in history, French, fine arts, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. To achieve this award, students had to compete with thousands of other students across the United States and globally for the same exam series and on the same subject.

"All of us here at British International School of Houston are incredibly proud of the achievements of our IGCSE and PSAT cohort," said Barrie Scrymgeour, principal at BIS Houston. "Our students showcased exceptional resilience, hard work, and determination all along the way. I'd like to also thank our dedicated



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF HOUSTON

Celebrating the achievements of 11th graders at the British International School of Houston (located in Katy) are (left to right): Helen Morgan, BIS Houston Head of Secondary; Hannah Eldemerdash, who received the Highest Mark in United States, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE French; Josephine Burge, who received Highest Mark in the Americas, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE Fine Art; Avilash Jayakumar, Highest Mark in United States, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE History; Fowwaz Muhammad, Highest Mark in United States, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE Mathematics A and top score in PSAT; Vaughn Holmes, top score in PSAT; Timothy McCullough, Highest Mark in the Americas, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE Biology & Physics and Highest Mark in United States, Pearson Edexcel International GCSE Chemistry; and Scott Turner, BIS Houston Deputy Head of Secondary / Head of High School.

and inspirational teachers for their role in helping our students make this year's results so great," he added.

"Thanks to these excellent academic results, graduating

students from BIS Houston have received offers to attend top 100 universities globally including Rice, UPenn, Oxford, Cambridge, Columbia, Stanford, and beyond," the school said in a

press release.

To learn more about The British International School of Houston, visit bishouston.org. The school is located at 2203 N. Westgreen Blvd. in Katy.

Three Royal ISD FFA teams advance to state competition

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Five FFA Leadership Development Event teams from Royal ISD competed at the Area XI contest on November 18th with three teams advancing to the state competition.

The Texas FFA State Competition is Friday, December 1st and Saturday, December 2nd at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. The Texas FFA comprises 1,200 chapters in the state and nearly 170,000 members.

Statebound:

- Public Relations / Area XI Champions / StateBound: Kaelyn Hein, Kaylee Meader, Elizabeth Ibarra, Katia Mendoza
- Senior Spanish Creed / Area XI Champion / Statebound: Katia Mendoza
- Agricultural Advocacy / Area XI Runner Up /Statebound: Lauren Hillsman, Elyssa Pruner, Raelee Hacke, Jaylyn Danz, Alexcia Garcia

Also competed:

- Senior Skills / 3rd Place Team: Deysi Rivera, Kaelyn Hein, Elyssa Pruner
- Agricultural Issues / 8th Place Team: Keylin Arragon, Gabriel Velasquez, Guadalupe Cruz, Jade Lopez, Helena Ferro, Isaac Martinez



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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Tompkins tops Cinco Ranch in big early district matchup

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

It's a new look Tompkins squad this year. But for the Falcons the goal remains the same. Tompkins isn't looking for any excuses. They know it will take time to get where they want to be as a team, but they are already making strides, which was on full display Tuesday against Cinco Ranch. The Falcons put together a full team performance with big games from all over the roster on the way to a 59-43 win.

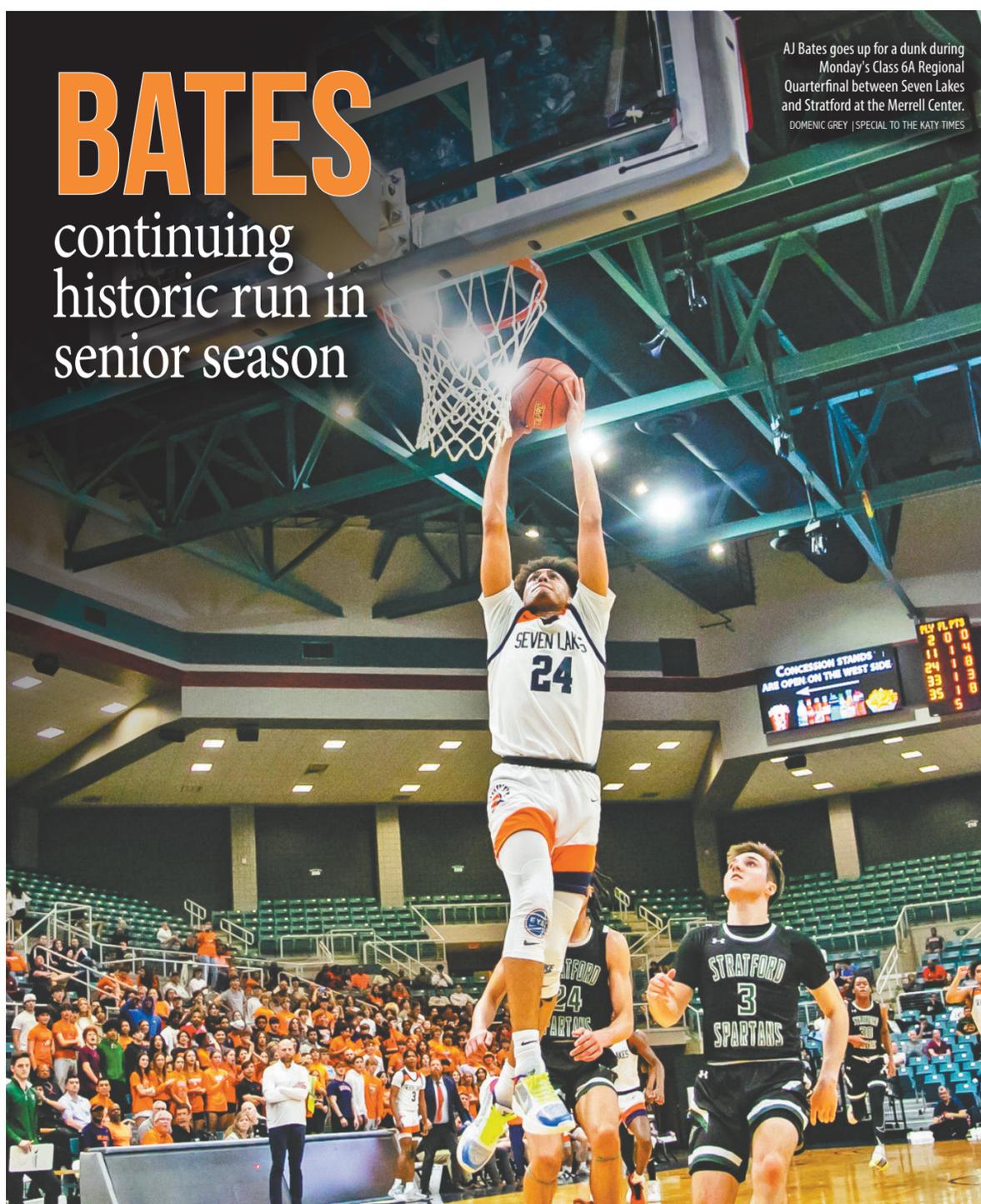
"This is the type of win we needed to have and I think it's going to be huge for confidence and team building," said senior guard Gabby Panter. "It shows we can rely on each other, play together and still get wins against good teams. It was a really good game for us."

Tompkins spread the ball around and got everyone going on the night. Cinco Ranch came out with a gameplan of slowing down Tompkins' leading scorer, Rihanna DeLeon, but that strategy opened things up for the Falcons other scorers. Sascha Coughran led the way with 18 points, including five three pointers, while Caitlyn D'Addieco had 10 points, Haylie Panter had 10 points and DeLeon had eight point.

"Sascha has been doing this for us all year and she's really stepped up and been that second scorer," said Tompkins head coach Tamatha Ray. "She had 26 points in our first game of the year and that was an eye opener for us and she's just kept doing it. The kids have adapted very well, Rihanna knows that when teams key in on her she has to make an impact in other ways and everyone plays together really well."

Cinco Ranch came out strong with a good first quarter, going up 15-10 and leading 19-17 after one quarter, but Tompkins answered back and dominated the rest of the way. The Falcons turned that deficit into a 10 point lead at halftime before growing it to 49-34 at half and to over 20 points in the fourth quarter.

See **TOMPKINS**, page B7



AJ Bates goes up for a dunk during Monday's Class 6A Regional Quarterfinal between Seven Lakes and Stratford at the Merrell Center. DOMENIC GREY | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

BATES

continuing historic run in senior season

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

AJ Bates has been going into the record books at Seven Lakes his entire high school career.

Bates has been part of the highest highs for Seven Lakes. Bates has helped improve the program and that

coincided with the Spartans' best-ever season last year.

But those accomplishments haven't satisfied one of the best to walk through Seven Lakes' halls. The Louisiana Tech commit hasn't taken a day off going into this year and he continues to push himself and his teammates to be the best they can be.

"AJ is here everyday at 6 a.m. shooting and working," said Seven Lakes head coach Shannon Heston. "He's cost me thousands of hours of sleep over the past four years but I absolutely love him for it. AJ sets the tone for everyone else with his work ethic, with

See **BATES**, page B8

Jordan holds off Westside for win in Katy ISD Tournament

Warriors building confidence with big goals this season

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Jordan is out to prove they can build on last year.

The Warriors are coming off their best ever season as they finished with a 28-9 record, reached the Region III-6A Semifinal and finished second in District 19-6A. The goal for the Warriors is to continue that success into this year with a young core of players that are already battle tested.

The Warriors have made sure to play strong opposition throughout non-district play and that included in the Katy ISD Tournament, where they overcame a strong Westside team Friday, winning 69-67 to improve to 11-1 on the year.

It was a back and forth game where

both teams tested each other from start to finish and Jordan's players had to execute down the stretch. It came down the final possessions and although any team would like to win by a big margin, going through those battles and learning how to play in the clutch is an important thing for players who haven't been at the varsity level before the Warriors get to district play.

"There's going to be a lot of games that come down to these types of situations in district, it's never going to be easy," said Jordan head coach Charlie Jones. "Of course I'd rather it not be that close, but it's good for the kids to play in these types of games, get that experience and learn how to execute in it."

It was a close one the whole way, Jordan led 22-21 after the first quarter and despite trailing most of the second quarter were able to pull back ahead for a 36-35 lead at halftime. But the third quarter is where the

See **JORDAN**, page B3



Jaden Holt goes up for a layup during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym. TYLER TYRE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 8

SCORES & SCHEDULES

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Friday

- Morton Ranch vs. Seven Lakes, 7 p.m.
- Jordan vs. Katy, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek vs. Cinco Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Tompkins vs. Taylor, 7 p.m.

Monday

- Seven Lakes vs. Mayde Creek, 7 p.m.
- Taylor vs. Morton Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch vs. Jordan, 7 p.m.
- Katy vs. Paetow, 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Friday

- Seven Lakes vs. Morton Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch vs. Mayde Creek, 7 p.m.
- Taylor vs. Tompkins, 7 p.m.
- Katy vs. Jordan, 7 p.m.

Monday

- Mayde Creek vs. Seven Lakes, 7 p.m.
- Jordan vs. Cinco Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Paetow vs. Katy, 7 p.m.
- Morton Ranch vs Taylor, 7 p.m.

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Three interceptions lead Texans past Broncos



Above: Texans cornerback Derek Stingley Jr. (24) celebrates after intercepting a pass from Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson during an NFL game between the Texans and the Broncos on December 3, 2023 in Houston. The Texans won, 22-17. Left: Texans safety Jalen Pitre (5) and cornerback Desmond King II (25) celebrate with safety Jimmie Ward (1) after Ward made an interception in the end zone in the final seconds of the game to secure a 22-17 win over the Broncos in an NFL game on December 3, 2023 in Houston.

PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

The Texans' defense has stepped up in critical moments this year.

They've led Houston to wins in important spots and along with the offense kept the Texans in playoff contention, and over the past few weeks they have really come alive.

But none of those moments have amounted to the performance the Texans' defense put together Sunday, as Houston kept the Denver Broncos offense in check and came out with a 22-17 win in a critical AFC matchup.

"We knew today was going to be a tough battle and I'm just excited how we came through it," said Texans head coach DeMeco Ryans. "Our guys fought until the end and I'm really proud of them for not blinking in clutch moments. We made plays and stepped up on defense. It's a credit to the defense. Our guys showed the type of football we can play today."

Houston's defense stepped up early and often throughout the entire game. The Texans made a stop on Denver's first drive and got the ball back for Houston in good field position for the Texans offense to start off the right way. The offense did the rest, driving into Denver territory before kicking a field goal and taking the lead early in the first quarter. Houston's defense didn't allow a point for most of the first half and Stroud and the offense took advantage, building a lead with another touchdown late in the first quarter on a Dameon Pierce 3-yard run after getting into the redzone off a big play from CJ Stroud to Nico Collins, before adding a field goal in the second quarter to make things 13-0. Denver's offense finally got on the board late in the half, kicking a 34-yard field goal to trim Houston's lead to 10. Houston has a chance at a late drive in the half but weren't able to do anything with it as Houston went into the locker room leading 13-3.

"We keep getting better and that's what you need out of team," Stroud said. "You don't want these games to always be close, but the

Denver Broncos are a great team and for us to step up and get this win was huge. The NFL is a hard league. We just have to keep getting better and learning from our mistakes because this season isn't over. We want to stay resilient and keep making a push."

Houston came out of the locker room and added a field goal on their first drive of the half, but the Broncos responded and got back to a one score game on a big 45-yard pass from Russell Wilson to Cortland Sutton midway through the third quarter. Denver got the ball back with a chance to take the lead, but Derek Stingley came up with his third interception in three games giving Houston the ball deep in Denver territory to start the fourth quarter and took advantage, finding the endzone on a 3-yard pass from Stroud to Collins, increasing the Houston lead to 22-10. Denver came back to score on a 1-yard Wilson quarterback sneak and the Texans couldn't answer back, having to punt. Stingley bailed the Houston offense out again though, coming down with an interception and getting the ball back, but the Texans couldn't get past midfield and were again forced to punt. Denver drove all the way down the field with a chance to tie in the final seconds, but the defense came up big one final time and Jimmie Ward intercepted a third and goal pass in the endzone to give the Texans a key win that greatly increased the teams playoff chances.

Houston will be on the road next, as they face the Jets before traveling again to take on the Titans, as the Texans have a chance to put a winning streak together heading into the final weeks of the season.

"This is the NFL every week," Ryans said. "These games are going to come down to those final small moments — most games are going to be within a score so it's how you operate when that's the case. Our guys have gotten a lot better with handling that and finding a way to win. They kept calm, executed and did what they needed to do in those moments today and that's what we need going forward as well."

LOCAL AUTHOR BOB DOLL COACHES ON CREATIVITY

First published in 2021, *Shut Up and Draw: A Journey to Creativity* is a book about how anyone can be creative in whatever they're doing. You don't have to be an artist. The book tells a story about how drawing is just one way to explore one's own creative endeavors with information about:

- How upbringing can influence your creativity
- How challenging long held traditions can be beneficial to your creativity
- How looking at things differently can reveal hidden treasures
- The creativeness of journaling
- How you're not locked into a mindset
- and more

The book is loaded with the author's own humorous illustrations to enhance your reading experience. Bob represents himself as an artist/writer who emphasizes creativity is for everyone regardless of your stage in life.

Available on Amazon: *Shut Up and Draw: A Journey to Creativity*

For more information, contact Bob at bob@bobdoll.com



PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Left: Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud (7) passes the ball to tight end Brevin Jordan (9) during an NFL game between the Texans and the Broncos on December 3, 2023 in Houston. The Texans won, 22-17. Above: Texans wide receiver John Metchie III (8) is tackled after a catch during an NFL game between the Texans and the Broncos on December 3, 2023 in Houston. The Texans won, 22-17.

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PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE

Jaden Holt drives to the basket during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym.

JORDAN

from page B1

Warriors started asserting themselves. Jordan upped the defensive intensity and got out in transition for quick buckets, opening up a 61-55 lead and held on, executing well in the fourth to clinch the win.

"We really locked in defensively in the third and fourth quarters," said junior forward Jude Oluokun. "We got stops, got rebounds and pushed and scored. When we play like that, it helps us so much as a team. Nobody can guard us — nobody can stop us when we play like that. When we have that intensity and play the right way, we can play with anyone."

Jaden Holt led the way with 23 points while Corey Nicholson had 11 and Jacob Oluokun, Rayan Fadika and Jalen Black each pitched in eight points.

The Warriors and the rest of Katy ISD start up District 19-6A play once the Katy ISD tournament is over, and Jordan knows it has a long way to reach its goals, but they are working every day to get better and reach them.

"It's really just about going out and doing the



Elian Dudziak shoots a jumper during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym.

right things every day," Holt said. "We need to stick to Coach Jones' plan, execute in practice and go out there and play hard every night.

If we execute the plan the right way and we play hard, I don't think there's anyone out there who can beat us. We're excited to get to



Above: Elian Dudziak goes up for a layup during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym. Below: Jalen Black shoots a jumper during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym.

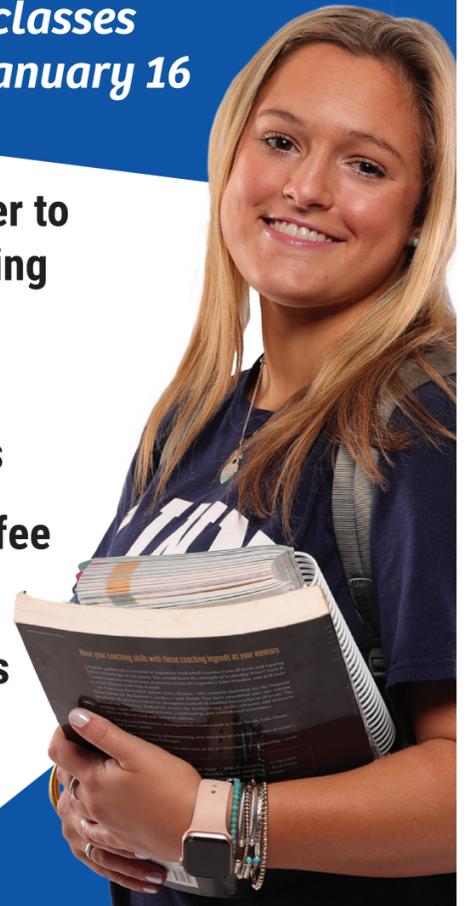


Corey Nicholson shoots a jumper during Friday's game between Jordan and Westside at the Jordan gym.

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from the staff of
Katy Times

We will close at Noon on Friday, December 22 and reopen on Tuesday, December 26 so that our employees may spend time with their families.

Deadline for Dec. 28 publication is Dec. 21, Noon
Deadline for Jan. 4 publication is Dec. 28, Noon

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a TABC Wholesaler's Permit by **Torre De Pedra Beverage LLC, dba Torre De Pedra Beverage, to be located at 7737 Cherokee Rd, Unit A, City of Katy, Waller County, Texas. Officer of said LLC is Michael Owen McEntee, Managing Member.**

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

Katy ISD Provides Evaluations for Students with Suspected Disabilities with Suspected Disabilities
The Katy Independent School District Department of Special Education provides evaluations for students with suspected disabilities to identify every student with a disability living within the district's boundaries. These evaluations are designed to help identify children who may qualify for the district's special education or Section 504 program.
Students with all categories of disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 can be provided with services to ensure their success in school. These services and supports may be provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Special Education services are also available to children who are visually and/or auditory impaired starting at birth.
If you are aware of a child who may be challenged with a disability, please contact the Katy ISD Department of Special Education at 281-396-2066. The Department of Special Education will coordinate efforts to evaluate the student and, if eligible, ensure that the student is provided with supports and services needed to obtain academic and non-academic benefit. Please do not hesitate to call should you have any questions.
Katy Independent School District
6301 South Stadium Lane
Katy, TX 77494
Katy Independent School District is an equal opportunity employer. The Board of Trustees, and its agents, officers, and staff members shall not discriminate based on gender, race, disabling condition, age, color, religion, national origin, military status, or any other legally protected status in making decisions regarding staff members or students.

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION BY COMMISSIONERS' COURT TO AMEND THE MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN/MAP FILED FOR RECORD WITH THE COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE
APPLICATION: On behalf of the property owner, North Pines 1488 LP, Quiddity Engineering, LLC is requesting to be allowed to amend The Major Thoroughfare Plan/Map as noted in the application (9706 / 13854). The amendment will adjust Stone Bridge Parkway to align with the approved Solar Farm's 120' exclusion area for future ROW extension along the west side of the property.
This amendment request, if approved, will only effect the applicant property.
PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be held during the regular session of Commissioners' Court on (December 20th, 2023) at the Waller County Courthouse Annex, 425 FM 1488, Hempstead, Texas 77445.

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

INVITATION TO BIDDERS
Sealed bids addressed to Harris County MUD 71, Trail Improvements at Mirror and Morton Lake, will be received in the office of Half Associates, Inc. 14800 St. Mary's Lane, Suite 160, Houston, TX 77079 until 2:00 p.m. Thursday, December 21st, 2023, at which time all bids will be opened and publicly read in Suite 160 for the furnishing of material, equipment, labor and supervision necessary or incidental to the Construction of Harris County MUD 71, Trail Improvements at Mirror and Morton Lake. Proposals tendered after closing will be returned unopened. Scope of Project: 1. Demolition of existing decomposed granite trail 2. SWPPP 3. Minor Site Grading and Preparation 4. Concrete Flatwork 5. Sod. Bid documents in digital format will be available via CivCast. A MANDATORY pre-bid conference will be conducted in the office of Half Associates, Inc. 14800 St. Mary's Lane, Suite 160, Houston, TX 77079 on Thursday, December 14th @ 2:00 p.m. The successful bidder may be required to provide a performance bond, payment bond, and a maintenance bond as provided for in the bid documents, for the full amount of the contract. The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
(1) General Description of property: Unit is 10' by 20' climate-controlled unit. Unit contains a dryer, several pieces of furniture including a couch set, and an HP printer.
(2) Lien: This unit is being sold to satisfy a lien owed to Cane Island Storage.
(3) Owner: The owner of this unit is Thomas Wiley.
(4) Address: The address of the self-storage facility is 27748 Highway 90, Katy, Tx 77494
(5) Site/Time: Auction will take place on December 18 Through December 31, 2023 at 11 am and will be hosted on SelfStorageAuction.com

November 30 Puzzle Answers

8	7	1	9	6	3	5	4	2
2	6	5	8	1	4	3	9	7
4	9	3	2	7	5	1	6	8
3	1	7	4	8	6	9	2	5
6	2	4	5	9	1	7	8	3
5	8	9	3	2	7	4	1	6
9	3	6	1	5	8	2	7	4
7	5	2	6	4	9	8	3	1
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Pat Origo drives to the basket during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.



Dylan Jones-Bynum shoots a layup during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.

Cinco Ranch gets hard fought victory over Klein as Cougars gear up for district schedule

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Cinco Ranch is fired up for this year. The Cougars have been building momentum heading into this year. They have one of the best returning players in the district in junior point guard Prince Jones -Bynum and a vast array of lengthy players that can get up and down the court.

Despite a young squad the Cougars have jumped out to an 11-2 start to the year and that continued on Friday, as they won two games in the Katy ISD Tournament, beating Foster in their first game of the day before overcoming Klein in a thriller 68-61 as the Cougars came out on top in a back and forth matchup. It was a physical, chippy game, but one that the Cougars thrived in and they loved playing in that type of environment.

"It was amazing the way our team came together and fought tonight," Jones-Bynum said. "We needed a game like that — it's really going to show the level that we have to play at. It was such a fun atmosphere."

Cinco led most of the way but was tested throughout by Klein. The Cougars jumped out to a 21-12 lead after one quarter and led 35-26 at half, but Klein came roaring back in the third quarter to trim Cinco's lead to 46-44. Cinco though executed down the stretch and found a way to hold on for the win with strong defense and clutch baskets down the stretch.

"The guys gained some really valuable by playing in a game like this," said Cinco Ranch head coach Neil King. "We only have one returning letterman so these guys are learning how to play at the highest level of high school basketball in the state of Texas. The competition is great in the Katy ISD Tournament and being able to play all these guys is a great test. I was proud of the way they came out tonight in their second game of the day and the effort they had."

Jones-Bynum led the way with 24 points while Noah Pearce had 13, Dylan Jones-Bynum had eight and Kellen LeCronier had seven. Cinco spread the ball around and everyone contrib-



Prince Jones-Bynum drives to the basket during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.



Kellen LeCronier goes up for a layup during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.



Noah Pearce shoots a 3-pointer during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.

uted offensively and defensively. The Cougars will hope to use that same formula to have success in district play, which starts next week. Cinco believes they have a real shot to compete with anyone in District 19-6A, but knows they have to keep building and getting better day by day.

"We're on the right path,"

LeCronier said. "We just have to keep doing what we've been doing, coming in every day and trying to get better. These guys aren't going to be satisfied and we know we aren't going to become the best team overnight but if we keep grinding every day, I think we can play with anybody. We're going to be ready."



The Cinco Ranch bench jumps up and celebrates during Friday's game between Cinco Ranch and Klein at the Cinco Ranch gym.

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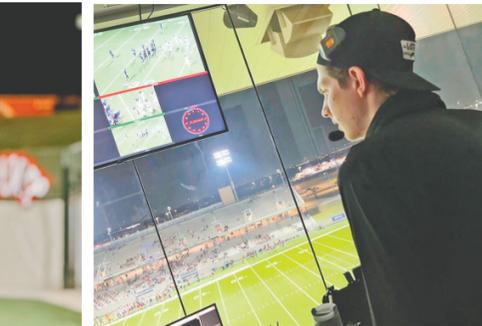
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Katy ISD sports video crew earns Dave Campbell award



STAFF REPORT

The Katy ISD Miller Career and Technical Center video crew recently received the Dave Campbell's Student Multimedia Spotlight Award, recognizing their contributions to the world of sports media.

These 22 Katy ISD students passion, dedication and skill to their craft elevates the viewing experience for thousands of fans. In the ever-evolving field of sports media, these students are raising the bar by utilizing technology to deliver a professional-level broadcast, enhancing the overall production and in-game commentary.

According to the Dave Campbell's Texas Football website, 10 schools will be spotlighted during the 2023 Texas high school football

season and each one will receive a \$1,000 donation to their program thanks to the support of VCRNOW.

"These students have greatly enhanced the game day experience by providing quality action shots, instant replays and fulfilling advertising contracts. The production is such great quality that our partner Dave Campbell's Texan Live uses our content for their live game day feed," said Lance Carter, Executive Director of Athletics at Katy ISD. "We are grateful for this recognition of our hardworking kids," he added.

The 10 winners of the weekly award will be eligible to compete for the Multimedia Program of the Year for a chance to win a \$2,500 donation to be presented at the 2023 UIL State Championships at AT&T Stadium.

MILLER CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER VIDEO CREW

Executive Director: Kerrie Thompson
Junior Stadium Directors: Alesi Cole (Tompkins HS c/o 2021) & Rachel Rafferty (Seven Lakes c/o 2020)

Student Workers

- Brianna Agustin - Paetow High School
- Juan Alvarado - Cinco Ranch High School
- Sarim Anis - Jordan High School
- Alisa Assed - Seven Lakes High School
- Dominic Carreira - Taylor High School
- Chase DeLellis - Tompkins High School
- Brendon Fortney - Seven Lakes High School
- Guillermo Garcia - Mayde Creek High School
- Mark Jorn - Jordan High School
- Elizabeth Lemke - Taylor High School
- Dylan Navarrete Ortega - Seven Lakes High School
- Jared Nielson - Cinco Ranch High School
- Kaleigh Olds - Seven Lakes High School
- Solene Partouche - Seven Lakes High School
- Ashtyn Rector - Seven Lakes High School
- Lyannia Reyes Russi - Cinco Ranch High School
- Ethan Roberts - Tompkins High School
- Jaylen Staton - Paetow High School
- Alix Teran - Cinco Ranch High School
- Jay Van Dyke - Tompkins High School
- Breno Werneck Genofre Rocha - Tompkins High School
- Juan Pablo Zapata - Seven Lakes High School

Clockwise from top: Dominic Carreira on the stationary camera during a game at Legacy Stadium. Ethan Roberts on show control during a game at Legacy Stadium. Ashtyn Rector directing during a game at Legacy Stadium. Juan Alvarado on the wireless camera during a game at Legacy Stadium. Alisa Assed doing technical director duties during a game at Legacy Stadium.

PHOTOS COURTESY KATY ISD

Holgorsen fired as UH head coach after five seasons

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Houston fired football coach Dana Holgorsen last week, following a 4-8 year in their inaugural season in the Big 12.

The Cougars finished 2-7 in Big 12 play on the year, which culminated with three straight losses. The wins came against Baylor and West Virginia. Overall Holgorsen had three losing seasons in his five years and went 31-28 through his five years, the highlight of which was a 12-2 season in 2021.

"Over the course of his five seasons with the Cougars, Dana made strides in our football program in many ways and laid the groundwork for our transition to the Big 12 Conference," said Vice President of Athletics Chris Pezman. "Ultimately, the results on the field fell below our standards of excellence. We are grateful to Dana for his efforts and commitment to our student-athletes and we wish him the very best in his future

endeavors."

Holgorsen was hired with the idea that he would help the Cougars get into a power five program and be a good coach through that transition and he did have some special moments with the program, with Houston receiving an invitation to the Big 12 and beating Auburn in a bowl game during his tenure. But there were also low moments — a loss to Rice this year, losses to Tulane, SMU and Tulsa last year and overall not being able to compete on a level that was adequate in the Big 12, having games where they failed to score a touchdown against TCU and were shutout against Kansas State.

But the program is laying the groundwork to be competitive. There is a new football operations building that will open in 2025 as Houston hopes to keep talent in the Houston area at home.

Assistant coach Corby Meekins will serve as the interim coach while UH is in transition and searching for a new head coach.

Early front runners are rumored to include UTSA head coach Jeff Traylor and Tulane head coach Willie Fritz. Both have been exceptional during their time with their current schools. Traylor is lauded for his recruiting after his time as a head coach in the high school ranks in Texas before taking over at UTSA and is thought of highly around the state. Fritz has turned Tulane into one of the top group of five programs in the nation and has won at every level he has coached at.

"The University of Houston is committed to a championship-caliber football program and ensuring the success of our student-athletes," said Pezman. "Our search for a new leader begins immediately and I am confident with the incredible fan support, tradition, access to prospective student-athletes and the pending opening of the Memorial Hermann Football Operations Center, we will attract a very strong pool of candidates."



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Houston head coach Dana Holgorsen reacts after watching a video replay of a play that is spotted short of a first down in the final minutes of a Big 12 Conference football game between the Houston Cougars and the Texas Longhorns on October 21, 2023 in Houston. Texas won, 31-24.

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Gabby Panter shoots a layup during Tuesday's game between Tompkins and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins gym.



The Tompkins bench celebrates after a 3-pointer during Tuesday's game between Tompkins and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins gym.

TOMPKINS

from page B1

A key part of Tompkins having such success was the play of Gabby Panter. She draws the toughest defensive assignment every night and on Tuesday that was junior four star guard Aniya Foy. From the second quarter on, Panter completely shut Foy down and made a huge impact on the defensive end.

"She is our floor general on defense and we're just a different team when she's out there," Ray said. "She's hard on herself when she doesn't score but I always try to tell her that it's ok because she does so much. She manages the entire team and she gets that assignment every night and does a tremendous job at it every time."

The win moved Tompkins to 10-2 on the year and 2-0 in District 19-6A play after a win over Katy the previous Friday. The Falcons' goal, as always, is to compete for a district championship and the team is headed in the direction where the hope

to do that. They'll continue to try and add to their four-game win streak when they go up against Fulshear next before continuing district play against Seven Lakes.

"We know that this year people think we're underdogs but we know we can beat anyone," Coughran said. "This just shows the type of team we are and it just shows that everyone needs to be prepared when you play us."

District 19-6A

TOMPKINS 59, CINCO RANCH 43

Points: (T) Sascha Coughran 18, Caitlyn D'Addieco 10, Haylie Panter 10, Rihanna DeLeon 8, Gabby Panter 6, Bella Riggan 3, Peyton Musselman 2, Kate Hopkins 1; (CR) Aniya Foy 27, Keeana Hickman 12, Kinsley Harding, 4

Halftime: Tompkins 32-24; 3-Pointers: (T) Coughran 5, DeLeon 2; (CR) Hickman 4, Foy 3; Records: (T) 10-2, 2-0 (CR) 6-3, 1-1



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For More Information

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The National Civics Bee is presented by The Katy Area Chamber of Commerce with support from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

BATES

from page B1

his voice and with his leadership. He sets the example on the court and he's one of the most coachable kids I've ever been around. He's made me look smarter than I am and we're going to enjoy this year."

This all comes after Bates has won back to back District MVPs, was named an All-Region and All-State player and a received a number of Division I offers. But for Bates it isn't about that, it's about continuing the trajectory Seven Lakes has been on. The Spartans have gotten better every year that Bates has been there, winning two straight district titles and making it to the regional semifinals last year. And their goals are to go further this year.

"This is a fun group this year and I think we have a lot of potential," Bates said. "It's different than the last three years. We don't have the most size but these guys play with so much energy and these guys really care for each other. I feel like this team has the best chemistry that I've been a part of and if we just stay together, play for each other and do everything we can I think that can carry us to San Antonio."

Bates has already started his senior year in a big way. He already has broken the career scoring record for Seven Lakes and is up to 1,600 points for his career while he is averaging 24 points per game on the season. The Spartans have started the season off very strong with

a 9-2 record while playing a number of state ranked teams. As Bates said, the goal for the team is to get to the state tournament this year and everything they do is to try and build towards that, and the Spartans know Bates is at the center of what they are trying to do.

"What's been fun for me is that I've been able to take a moment to appreciate AJ and what he's done not for just this program, but for myself even and for all the fans and kids here at Seven Lakes," Heston said. "He's such a fantastic kid on and off the court and is basically a coach on the court. He's just an incredible person and player and we are so lucky to have him here."



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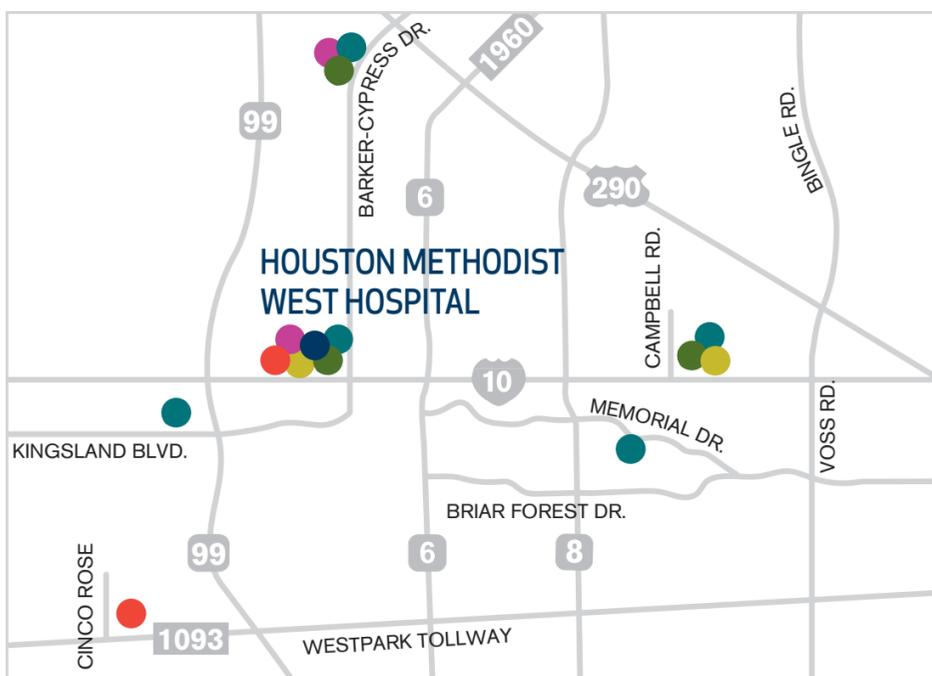
AJ Bates drives past a defender into the lane during a Class 6A Regional Semifinal between Seven Lakes and Clear Falls at the M.O. Campbell Center in Aldine.

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