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SPORTS | A8

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## KISD board approves bonus for classroom teachers

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO  
PUBLISHER

The Katy Independent School District's Board of Trustees held a special board meeting on Tuesday, July 16 at 11 a.m. at the Martha Lopez Aki ECI Project Tyke Center, 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy to discuss and consider action on a one-time lump sum payment for classroom teachers. Board President Victor Perez has said in prior board meetings that the lump sum payment is part of the district's plan to retain classroom teachers.

But trustees differed on the

See **KISD**, page A3

CITY OF KATY

## City council meets in special joint session with KDA

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO  
PUBLISHER

In a special session announced early Monday morning, the Katy City Council met in a joint meeting with the Katy Development Authority at 11 a.m. on Monday. Katy Mayor Dusty Thiele presided over the city council meeting while KDA Chairman Skip Conner presided over the KDA meeting. Councilmember Dan Smith was not present.

Following the invocation and

See **CITY**, page A3

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July 18, 2024  
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### HURRICANE BERYL AFTERMATH



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF KATY

## Katy mayor signs disaster declaration

FROM STAFF REPORTS

In response to the impact of Hurricane Beryl, President Biden has approved a major disaster declaration for Texas, extending federal funding to 67 counties including Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller County for recovery efforts, according to a press release from the City of Katy.

Concurrently, Mayor William

H. Thiele signed a Declaration of Local State of Disaster on the morning of July 11 for the City of Katy, in order to enhance local response and recovery efforts combatting Hurricane Beryl's effects. This action enables Katy to potentially receive reimbursement, aiding in the city's recovery efforts and debris management following Hurricane Beryl, city staff said.

### FOOD AND WATER DISTRIBUTION



Above: Employees from Harris County Precinct 4, along with area volunteers, set up for free food and water distribution at the county's Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road in Houston on Thursday, July 11. Although distribution was not scheduled to begin until 11 a.m., cars were lined up by 9 a.m. and supply distribution began at that time. Right: On Wednesday, July 10 Katy area residents were able to get free water at the Academy Sports + Outdoors store at 23155 Katy Freeway in Katy. Starting at 9 a.m., five Academy stores across Houston distributed free 24-packs of bottled water to help those affected by Hurricane Beryl. Customers were directed to look for the 18-wheeler parked in front each of the five stores to pick up their free case of bottled water (no purchase necessary). Academy planned to donate nearly 8,000 24-packs of water in total to the greater Houston area, according to a company press release.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROVEGNO



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Strong winds from Hurricane Beryl took down trees and tree limbs and created debris across the greater Katy area, as shown in this photo taken July 8 at Active Cycling Shop at 5415 E Fifth Street in Katy. The City of Katy announced on July 11 that it would launch its plan for debris pick-up beginning on July 16.

## City of Katy announces plan for storm debris removal

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

The City of Katy announced in a July 11 press release that debris removal operations were scheduled to commence on Tuesday, July 16th, following the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl.

Confirm your location within the City of Katy's city limits at [www.cityofkaty.com/maps](http://www.cityofkaty.com/maps). If you live outside the City of Katy, please contact your Municipal Utility District (MUD) for information specific to your

See **DEBRIS**, page A3

## More cooling centers offered throughout the greater Katy area

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

Harris County Precinct 4 expanded the number of locations opened as cooling centers, to assist Katy-area residents without power. Locations now open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., which are in or near the Katy area, are:

- Hockley: 28515 Old Washington Road, Hockley
- Peckham: 5597 Gardenia Lane, Katy
- Radack: 18650 Clay Road, Houston
- Weekley: 8440 Greenhouse Road, Cypress


For more information, please visit [cp4.harriscountytexas.gov](http://cp4.harriscountytexas.gov).

Katy ISD, in partnership with the City of Katy and Fort Bend County, opened a cooling bus until July 14 for residents needing relief from the summer heat after Hurricane Beryl. The bus was located in the west parking lot of the Leonard Merrell Center at 6301 South Stadium Lane, Katy. On-board guests were able to charge their phones and grab a bottle of water and a snack.


See **COOLING**, page A3

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Maud Marks Branch Library announces late July programs

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The following free programs will take place at the Maud Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Blvd. Katy, during late July:

Book Sale

The Friends of the Maud Marks Library will hold their June book sale on Saturday, July 27 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. There is a large selection of hardback fiction and nonfiction, as well as children’s books and paperbacks and other hidden gems. The library will also be hosting a Friends Members-Only preview on Friday, July 26 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. All items sell for rock bottom prices.

Afternoon Adventures

On Mondays, elementary school aged children are welcome to the library for special programs. Tickets will be given out 30 minutes before each performance.

Priority seating is for children ages 5-11; little kids and parents will be allowed in as space permits.

- Monday, July 22 at 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.: Incredible Animals. Experience a variety of animals at this show.
- Monday, July 29 at 1:30 p.m.: Silambam Story Time. A treasure trove of stories from Indian mythology and folk culture, presented in a unique narrative style that incorporates facial and gestural storytelling (abhinaya)--the hallmark of Indian classical dance tradition.

Chess Wars

Tweens, teens, and school-aged children are invited to drop in for Chess Wars as we battle it out on the chessboard in random pairings. Challenge a friend or meet



someone new! Join other chess aficionados on Thursdays July 25, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Teen Time Craft – Make a Memory Board

Want to add a personalized touch to your room? A memory board is a stylish bulletin board for you to display special keepsakes like ticket stubs, performance programs, artwork, or photos. It’s a showcase of you, for you – and you are awesome! Snacks and supplies provided, Tuesday, July 23, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Salt Grass Trail Ride and Marks Family History

Join us on Saturday, July 20, at 10 a.m. for an interesting historical discussion. Meet local author, Ray Viator, who will discuss his book, All Trails Leads to Houston: Riding to the Rodeo. He will discuss the history of LH7 Ranch and the im-

portant role that the Marks family played in starting the Houston Rodeo and the Salt Grass Trail Ride. He will display the photos from the book, including several provided by the Marks family as well as photos from the Valley Lodge Trail Ride that passes through our community each year on its way to downtown Houston and the Houston Rodeo Parade to kick off the start of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Nailed It! Cupcake Edition

Are baking shows your favorite? Ever wish you could express your artistic side through delicious cakes? We’ll watch a video on how to decorate an assortment of flower cupcakes and attempt to recreate those beauties ourselves. All materials will be provided and very DIY. Join us on Monday, July 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and explore your inner cupcake designer instincts...or not? Registration is

required. Please do not register if you have any allergies or need food substitutions.

"Patty Cake Infant Time" - Infant Storytime

Join us for an interactive early literacy experience for infants and their caretakers on Wednesdays at 10:15 or 11:15 a.m. This program geared to 3-17 months features nursery rhymes, songs, books, and fingerplays.

"Totally Toddler Time" - Toddler Storytime

Toddler Time provides a fun early literacy experience for toddlers aged 18–35 months on Thursdays at 10:15 or 11:15 a.m. Toddlers participate through songs, finger plays, shared reading, parachute fun and group activities.

For more information, call 832-927-7860 or email hannah.blanton@hcpl.net.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rummage through treasures at First Christian Church's rummage sale on July 20

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will host a rummage sale in their parking lot at 22101 Morton Ranch Road on Saturday, July 20, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Come and find all the treasures you can, including items including furniture, housewares, clothes, bedding, curtains, kids items and so much more.

Katy Market Day is back at Katy's historic downtown square on July 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Katy Market Day returns at 5717 Second Street in old Katy with 100 vendors, food trucks, entertainment, free snow foam and inflatables for the kids and all the wonderful antiques and boutique

shops will be open. New vendor sign up is in person at The Limited Edition Art and Antiques! 281-391-1993; no online booth rental (in person only) at The Limited Edition! Katymarketday.com

It would be a dog-gone shame if you missed the Chihuahua Races at Home Run Dugout on July 21

Join the fun on Sunday, July 21st as the dogs race to bring home the bacon at the inaugural



Chihuahua Races at Home Run Dugout, 1220 Grand West Blvd. in Katy. Races begin at noon, are free to watch, and family-friendly! Enter your chihuahua in the race at bit.ly/45IM2co. For more information call (713) 538-2989 or email info@homerundugout.com.

Hear research updates from the Katy/West Houston Alzheimer's Association on July 23

All are invited to a presentation by the Katy/West Houston Alzheimer's Association sharing updates to research in Alzheimer's Disease, to be held at the Fussell Senior Center, 5370 E. Fifth Street in Katy at 10:30 a.m. No RSVP or membership is required. Please call 281-391-4837 with any questions.

It's "West Houston Bike Night" on July 25 at Katy Crossing Icehouse

Join the crowd at Katy Crossing Icehouse's monthly Bike Night with Mancuso Harley-Davidson

Crossroads on the fourth Thursday of every month – this month's event is July 25 from 7 to 10 p.m. 5733 2nd St in Katy. Bring your motorcycle-loving friends and make new connections with fellow riders as you enjoy a night of entertainment and camaraderie. Whether you're a seasoned rider or new to the scene, our Bike Nights have something for everyone.

So get your motorcycles ready and join other aficionados every fourth Thursday for a night of fun, live music, and mouth-watering food. For more information call (281) 396-4294



Fussell Center announces late July excursions

The City of Katy's Fussell Center, located at 5370 E. Fifth Street in

Katy, has announced the following activities for area seniors:

- Tuesday, July 25 at 11 a.m.: Movies and Lunch. Join with other area seniors to watch a film on the big screen and to enjoy a delicious lunch. Movie and restaurant TBD. There is no advanced cost.
- Sunday, July 28: Lunch and performance at Gaslight Theatre in Shiner: The Shiner Gaslight Theatre is a nonprofit community dinner theatre which seats 132 and which provide contemporary and classic theatre. Except as noted, plays are appropriate for adults and older children. The Theatre is completely staffed by volunteers. The summer play at the Gaslight Theatre is "In Praise of Miss Brown," by Pat Cook, an ingenious play about a high school teacher, Constance Brown, and her students in a small town in the early 1960's. The play is directed by Bill Matthys.

Clearly, you can make a difference!

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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

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Partner to "flows"
- French industrial city
- Diagrams
- Diplomat
- Hires
- Hawaiian island
- Set aflame
- Very happy
- Blue dye
- Small terrier with short legs
- One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- Northern pike genus
- Expression of annoyance
- Female deer
- Casella and Kellerman are two
- Actor's lines to audience
- Days (Spanish)
- Close a person's eyes
- Cloaked
- Comedic actor Rogen
- It's all around us
- Neutralizes alkalis
- Native people of New Mexico
- No seats available
- Famed "Air Music" composer
- Fit of irritation
- Psychic phenomena

**CLUES DOWN**

- Type of moth
- A Christian sacrament
- It lends books to Bostonians (abbr.)
- Turn away
- Impersonal
- Shortly
- Indigenous Alaskans
- Subtle difference of meaning
- Sicilian city
- Put in harmony
- Administrative divisions
- As happily
- Horse mackerel
- Muddy or boggy ground
- Monetary unit of Italy
- Construction site machine
- 22
- Tracts at the mouths of rivers

28. Earnings  
30. Insect repellent  
32. Runner-up  
34. Musician  
35. Serious or urgent  
37. Esteemed one  
38. Where rockers play  
40. Work furniture  
42. Greek prophetesses

43. Quantitative fact  
45. Missing soldiers  
47. Minute  
49. This (Spanish)  
50. Maintain possession of  
51. Assault with a knife  
55. Holiday text message greeting

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

**SUDOKU**

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

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.



# SUPPLY BRIDGE MINISTRIES DONATES FOOD, WATER AND SUPPLIES TO KATYITES IN NEED



PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

Supply Bridge Ministries, together with nonprofit groups Children Like Loni and Hope Impacts, conducted a distribution of water, food, cleaning supplies and hygiene supplies to Katy residents affected by Hurricane Beryl. The drive-through event took place on Friday, July 12 in front of NBD Graphics at 917 S. Mason, Katy. NBD Graphics General Manger Nicholas Doherty said that they hoped to serve 300 families. “We are receiving trucks from Convoy of Hope thanks to our partners at Children like Loni and we have received an amazing outpouring of donations and volunteers from many in our local Katy area community,” Doherty said on the SBM Facebook page.

## DEBRIS

from page A1

neighborhood.

Please review the following guidelines to ensure a smooth and efficient process within the City of Katy:

### Debris Preparation (stack separately by these categories)

- Vegetative Debris: stacks of tree branches.
- Fence Debris: Stack damaged fencing in sections no larger than 6’ x 8’. Do not bind the sections.

### Placement

- Place separated debris by the curb. Ensure it is clear of obstacles such as fire hydrants and mailboxes to facilitate collection. Keep it separate from regular garbage, which will be collected by Texas Pride as per your regular schedule.

### Accessibility

- Do not block ingress/egress points, public walkways, or drainage outlets with debris for safety and access reasons.

### Collection Details

- Starting July 16th (as the Katy Times was going to press for this issue), crews from Ceres Environmental were to begin collection Monday through Friday until all areas of the city are covered.
- The route will be strategic based on the debris contractor’s assessment.

### Additional Information

- For questions or more information, please email [publicworksinfo@cityofkaty.com](mailto:publicworksinfo@cityofkaty.com).

### Regular Garbage Services

- Texas Pride Disposal services

resumed regular service on Monday, July 15th. Bagged vegetative debris (grass clippings/leaves/small branches) or bundled limbs should be placed with regular garbage.

### Service & Collection Guidelines for Texas Pride Disposal

- Household Garbage: Place waste in the cart near the curb by 7 a.m.
- Heavy Trash: Each week, up to three bulky items like furniture or appliances can be placed next to the garbage cart.
- Yard Debris: Weekly collection includes up to 15 bags (not exceeding 35 pounds each) of yard debris. Branches should be tied in bundles (less than 2” in diameter and cut to 4-foot lengths), limited to 4-cubic yards per service day. Commercial tree services must handle their own limbs.

## TRIBUTE

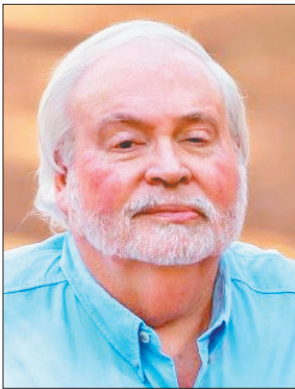
Larry Dean Barak Sr, 74, passed away to be with our Lord and Savior on July 11, 2024, in Huntsville, Texas. He was born October 24, 1949, in Bay City, Texas to Willie and Edna Barak.

Larry is preceded in death by his father Willie Barak, mother Edna Barak, his brother-in-law James Williams, and his loving wife of 45 years, Diana Barak.

Larry is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Deidra and Brian Mannion; his son and daughter-in-law Larry Dean Barak Jr. and Rachel Barak along with three gorgeous grandchildren, Alexis Hope Mannion, Cameron Dean Mannion and Constance Kelly Barak; his father-in-law, James “Buster Ford;” his sister, Peggy Barak, and sisters-in-law Teresa Williams, Debra and Mike Perroni, and Kim and Kenny Moulder along with numerous nieces and nephews. Larry was affectionally called Mr. B by the countless family friends that considered him a second father.

Larry was a graduate of Columbia High School and Sam Houston State University where he received his bachelor’s degree. He went on to work as a controller in the oil and gas industry for over 40 years before he retired in Trinity, Texas, where he would work alongside his wife for the Westwood Shores POA. He found true joy in working with the community and creating events that would bring the neighborhood together with their family and friends by opening the 19th Hole and organizing the now Annual 4th of July celebration.

Larry’s passions included beach vacations and cruises with his family, children and his adopted children whom



LARRY DEAN BARAK SR.  
1949-2024

he would load up year after year to take them to their happy place in Destin, Florida. He found great joy on Friday nights sitting in the stands watching his son play for his beloved Katy Tigers. In his later years he was happiest surrounded by family, especially his grandchildren and great nieces and nephews.

Larry was a faithful Christian who enjoyed his duties as Deacon and being actively involved in Dorcas Wills Baptist Church where he would be baptized to ensure his eternal resting place alongside his wife and children. He will be dearly missed by all that knew and loved him as they treasure all their fond memories.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked for donations to be made to the Kaille Mills Foundation.

Visitation will be held Monday, July 15, 2024, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Waller-Thornton Funeral Home in Trinity, Texas. Funeral Service will be held Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Dorcas Wills Memorial Baptist Church in Trinity, Texas, with Pastor Greg Kitts officiating.

WALLER-THORNTON  
FUNERAL HOME

PLEASE SEE PAGE 5  
FOR ADDITIONAL OBITUARIES

## CITY

from page A1

pledges, Justin Graham, a Katy resident who is the general counsel for Katy ISD, spoke during public comments about the proposed limited purpose annexation of property near his neighborhood of Young Ranch, citing opposition to possible multi-family housing which could be built there. Graham added that the school district is also concerned about the possibility of additional multi-family housing going into that area. Due to overcrowding at Bryant Elementary,

new students moving in there could be bused to either Robertson Elementary or Katy Elementary. Graham is also president of the Fort Bend-Waller County MUD No. 3. At 11:07 a.m. the two groups then went into closed session, which lasted until 3:44 p.m. The executive session was described on the agenda as “consultation with an attorney to discuss or deliberate the offer of financial or other business prospect to expand in or near the territory of the government body

with which...is conducting economic development negotiation.”

When the groups reconvened in open meeting, a public hearing was held on a proposed strategic partnership between the City of Katy and the Willow Creek Farms MUD in relation to land at the southeast corner of I-10 and the Texas Heritage Parkway, which is being developed as the Texas Heritage Marketplace. There were no public comments or discussion from

council.

A second public hearing on the matter is scheduled for July 22 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 901 Avenue C in Katy.

Council did approve a resolution authorizing KDA to enter into a road improvement agreement with the Willow Creek Farms MUD.

The next meeting of the city council is July 22 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 901 Avenue C in Katy.

## COOLING

from page A1

Fort Bend County also opened additional refuges for storm victims. The 24-hour shelter at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Building C., located at 4310 Hwy. 36 South, Rosenberg, is currently housing 90 individuals, county officials said in a July 12 press release. Additionally, the Attack Poverty Shelter, located at 1908 Avenue E., Rosenberg, is housing 22 individuals. Under a sustained heat advisory, additional Cooling Centers have been opened in Fort Bend County as of July 12 at:

- River Point Church, 21000 Southwest Freeway, Richmond
- Fresno Fire Station – ESD7, 1834 W Sycamore, Fresno
- Mark A. Chapman YMCA 1350 Main Street, Katy
- Fort Bend County Libraries. The following libraries will be OPEN as cooling centers

Monday through Thursday (10 a.m.-6 p.m.), and Friday and Saturday (10 a.m.-5 p.m.):

- Albert George Branch, 9230 Gene Street, Needville
- First Colony Branch, 2121 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land
- George Memorial Library, 1001 Golfview Dr., Richmond
- Mamie George Branch 320 Dulles Avenue, Stafford
- Mission Bend Branch, 8421 Addicks Clodine Rd., Houston
- University Branch, 14010 University Boulevard, Sugar Land
- All other libraries will remain closed at this time, according to the July 12 press release.
- Mobile cooling stations via Coach buses in Katy, Sugar Land, Missouri City, and Stafford

## KISD

from page A1

objectives of the plan, with Vice President Amy Thieme and Secretary Mary Ellen Cuzela seeing it as a tool for teacher recruitment and retention, while trustee Lance Redmon viewed it as a retention-only tool. Cuzela added that she wanted to give a “gift of appreciation” to the district’s classroom teachers.

After almost three hours of spirited discussion, the board voted 5-2 to approve a plan that would reward classroom teachers at “benchmark years of service” at five, ten, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years or service, including service outside Katy ISD. The plan, which includes classroom teachers only as defined by Texas Education Agency rules, would start with \$250.00 at five years of service, increasing by \$250.00 at each “benchmark” tier until the “25 years of

service” tier when payouts increase. Perez said that the plan would cost the district about \$855,000.00 in its first year of implementation and would issue payouts to about 1154 of the district’s approximately 7,000 classroom teachers. There is already \$775,000.00 allocated in the upcoming budget for a lump sum payout, he said. Trustees Perez, Thieme, Cuzela, Morgan Calhoun and Lance Redmon voted in favor of the plan. Trustees Rebecca Fox and Dawn Champagne voted against the plan, saying that more information as well as more public input was needed. The next board meeting, which is a work-study meeting, is scheduled for July 22 at 5 p.m. at the Board Room in the Education Support Complex at 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy.

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# KCM seeking donations for school supplies program

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Katy Christian Ministries is seeking donations of school supplies for the nonprofit group's annual "Red Apple" and "Happy Feet" programs. Over the past 30 years, The Red Apple Program has supported thousands of children, according to the KCM website, serving 1,392 students in 2023.

"This year we hope to serve at least as many children, if not more," the website said. KCM is also continuing its annual "Happy Feet" program, now in its fourth year, which provides all registered children

with a new pair of shoes to start the school year off on the right foot.

The fundraising goal for both programs is \$70,000.00. Donations may be made by mail, with checks payable to Katy Christian Ministries at KCM Red Apple Program, PO Box 986, Katy, TX 77492. In person donations may be made at KCM's administrative office at 3506 Porter Road in Katy, Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1 to 5 p.m.

For questions or more information, please email [redapple@ktcm.org](mailto:redapple@ktcm.org) or call 281-391-5261.

### SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR EACH CHILD

- 1x Backpack
- 12x #2 Pencils
- 1x Pink Erasers
- 1x 3 ring binder 1.5"
- 2x Notebook Filler Paper Wide Ruled
- 3x Composition Books
- 5x 2 pocket folders with brads
- 1x 24ct Crayola Crayons
- 1x 8ct Markers Washable
- 1x 12ct Colored Pencils
- 2x Highlighters yellow
- 3x 1 subject spiral notebooks
- 1x Blunt scissors or Student size Scissors (Right & Left-handed)
- 1x Lined 3x5 index cards 100ct
- 3x Expo dry erase markers black
- 1x Kleenex
- 1x School Glue
- 1x Ziploc Bags Gallon
- 1x Zippered Pencil Pouch
- 1x Colored Construction paper 9x12" 40 ct

# SEAT sends letter to more than 1000 Texas school superintendents

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT), a student-led movement founded in Katy which demonstrates youth visibility in educational policymaking, delivered a letter on June 19 to more than 1,000 superintendents of Texas public schools to clarify federal legal guidance, to condemn Gov. Abbott's refusal to accept Title IX protections, and to urge districts to uphold their duty to support and embrace all Texas students.

The letter (available publicly at [drive.google.com/file/d/1kckVGKXEwp-pu8ZS8dcLPNUNsj4YgCh8P/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kckVGKXEwp-pu8ZS8dcLPNUNsj4YgCh8P/view)) was co-signed by 30+ local and national organizations, including the ACLU of Texas, Transgender Education Network of Texas, GLAAD, and the Human Rights Campaign.

"Efforts to denounce Title IX have a direct impact on the safety of LGBTQIA+ students and families," said SEAT in a press release. "Discrimination has empirically followed, and districts have often embraced the initiatives of anti-LGBTQIA+ state leaders, putting students in harm's way. SEAT is monitoring and leading efforts against recently proposed school board resolutions rejecting Title IX and provisions targeting transgender students."

"As a student who leads a Gay Straight Alliance club, I can say that schools are, more often than not, unsafe spaces for LGBTQ+ students, whether that be due to culture, other students, or discriminatory district or state policy," said Jarred Burton, SEAT student organizer in Katy ISD. "These protections under the Title IX reforms bring us one step closer to equality with our

**June 26, 2024**

Dear Superintendent,

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our profound disappointment and strong condemnation of the state administration's active refusal to accept Title IX protections as interpreted by the federal government and its relentless audacity to challenge the law in court at the expense of the people of Texas. Enforcing Title IX is a necessary step to uphold the law's fundamental principle and within the spirit of its original intent.

Since its inception in 1972, Title IX has been a cornerstone of educational equity, designed to protect all students, not just cisgender girls and women, from discrimination based on sex. This federal law has played a crucial role in ensuring that every student, regardless of gender identity or expression, can pursue their education in a safe and inclusive environment.

The new guidelines were updated in order to clarify, and thus fully effectuate, the existing protections under Title IX, ensuring that all students, including transgender and gender expansive individuals, are shielded from the very discrimination that school districts and our state as a whole have pushed with increasing frequency and scope in recent years.

Recently, Texas has wasted taxpayer dollars on frivolous federal lawsuits aiming to narrow the scope of Title IX protections. Specifically, Texas is trying to sidestep Title IX nondiscrimination protections at the expense of LGBTQIA+ students, which defies the recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020), and the consensus among other federal courts, such as *Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District No. 1*, 858 F.3d 1034 (7th Cir. 2017).

P.O. Box 1113, Katy, TX 77492

[info@studentsengaged.org](mailto:info@studentsengaged.org)

cisgender and heterosexual peers. To try and block those protections shows that it was never about protecting the children, but protecting bigotry."

"For many trans youth, the friendships and community built in school are a sanctuary space," said Landon Richie, Policy Associate at TENT. "Trans students deserve to participate in school activities and foster community in schools without discrimination. Title IX has helped make this possible, and it's up to educators and administration to ensure trans students have a safe and open school environment by upholding Title IX."

"The ruthless attacks from Texas' anti-LGBTQIA+ leadership can never erase the powerful, beautiful existence of LGBTQIA+

people in our state. All Texans deserve to be protected from hate and discrimination wherever they are, but especially in the halls of our public schools where every child should be uplifted and supported," said Marti Bier, Vice President of Programs at Texas Freedom Network. "It is imperative that Texas superintendents obey federal law and updated Title IX guidelines, regardless of political pressure from leaders motivated by hate and cruelty. We're calling on every superintendent in Texas to refuse to let themselves become political pawns, and prioritize the safety of LGBTQIA+ students in our public schools."

A district spokesperson for Katy ISD told the Katy Times in a July 12 email that the school district had not yet received the letter.



CONTRIBUTED

# Legend Homes returns to Katy area

## Houston builder brings affordably priced homes to Bluestem in Waller County

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

After selling out in several Katy-area communities, Houston homebuilder Legend Homes has returned to the region where it is adding new, affordably priced homes in the Waller County master-planned community of Bluestem, the company announced in a July 12 press release.

Starting in the \$280s, Legend Homes' award-winning single- and two-story floorplans offer sought-after features such as open-concept living, kitchen, and dining areas, large family room, kitchen island with bar seating, primary suite with walk-in closet, flex room, and dedicated laundry room. New homes also feature a covered back patio, mahogany front door, granite or quartz countertops throughout, and soaking tub with separate shower in the primary ensuite bath.

Plans range from 1,912 - 2,727 square feet. Legend Homes' initial section in the new Brookshire community spans 116 homesites where construction of several

move-in ready homes are underway or nearing completion.

Legend Homes will grand open in the community on Saturday, July 20. A Realtor preview will follow on Wednesday, July 24. For more information, contact online-sales@livelegendhomes.com.

Bluestem marks Legend Homes' first new homes in the Katy area since 2023 when the builder closed out in the top-selling community of Camillo Lakes.

"West Houston remains one of the most attractive regions in the entire metropolitan area," said Daniel Baner, Legend Homes Vice President of Sales in Houston. "As more residents move toward Katy, the surrounding areas will naturally expand as well. Bluestem meets these buyers where they want to be with affordably priced, well-built new homes in nearby Brookshire."

A 356-acre community, Bluestem offers an onsite community park and planned greenspace residents can use for picnics, dog walks, exercise, and more. Homeowners also have easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment options in Katy.

"We're excited about this new opportunity to connect homebuyers with a product they love at a price they can afford," Baner adds.

To learn more, visit [livelegendhomes.com](https://livelegendhomes.com).

## clay shoot TOURNAMENT

A Program of the Katy Area Chamber

**The Katy Area Chamber invites you to our upcoming Clay Shoot Tournament**

**July 26, 2024**

**at Westside Sporting Grounds**

**10120 Pattison Rd., Katy, TX 77493**

*The Katy Area Chamber is excited to announce our 4th annual Clay Shoot Tournament, set to shoot this summer on July 26, 2024 at Westside Sporting Grounds. Last year's shoot had over 15 teams of local business leaders, community members, and shooting enthusiasts that participated in a day of friendly competition, networking, and community building.*

**Individual Shooters: \$250**      **Teams of 4: \$1,000**

**Station Sponsor: \$500**

Register at <https://katyareachamberofcommercetx.growthzoneapp.com/ap/r/c5b1fbeb5a774329a9e44b1993d5a435>

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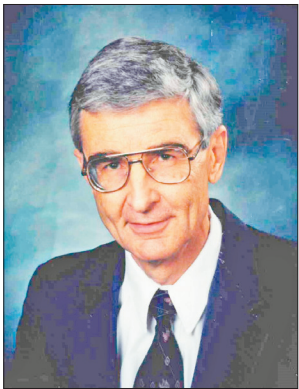
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TRIBUTES

Herman Maxwell Clay, Jr. passed away Saturday, June 29, at home in Weston Lakes (Fulshear), Texas. Born to Herman and Billie Clay, May 11, 1940, in Dallas, he heeded his father's observation that there would always be a need for engineers and attended Southern Methodist University, and later Texas Tech and the University of Texas, culminating in a PhD in civil engineering. He and his family moved to Houston where he established O'Malley and Clay Engineering along with his partner Richard O'Malley of Brenham, Texas, and later Clay and Leyendecker



HERMAN MAXWELL CLAY JR.  
1940-2024

Engineering in Katy, Texas with subsequent partner David Leyendecker. Dr. Clay will be re-

membered by those who knew him as a man of wit and wisdom, conversant in many fields of thought and endeavor, comfortable in virtually any company; a fabulous story-teller; a voracious reader. He took care of his family; his advice, often sought, was thoughtful and considered. He played a significant role in the growth and development on the west side of Houston. He was careful with a penny. A man of simple pleasures, he took great satisfaction in his carefully maintained acreage of pecan trees along the Brazos River near Wallis, Texas. Dr. Clay was prede-

ceased by his second wife, Louise Abt Clay; survived by his first wife, Sheila Moon; son, Rush Clay, wife Lucy and children Dominic and his wife, Grace, and Billie; and daughter, Lisa Dimmitt, husband Todd and children Maxwell and Alexander. He will be profoundly missed.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Texas Panhandle Wildfire Relief Fund. For further information on this cause, visit <https://texas-farmbureau.org/panhandle-wildfire-relief-fund/> or contact Tina Duty directly at 254-751-2432 or [tduty@txfb.org](mailto:tduty@txfb.org)

FEMA offers aid for storm-damaged houses of worship

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

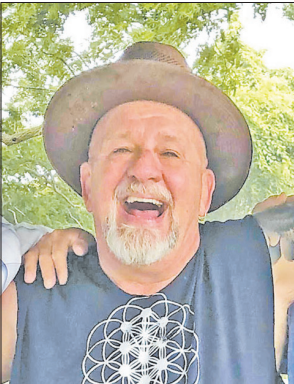
FEMA may provide funds to houses of worship and other private nonprofit organizations to help pay for emergency protective measures, debris removal and restoration of facilities damaged by the storms and flooding April 26-June 5 in Texas, the agency said in a June 26 press release.

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program may cover costs to repair or replace damaged facilities or provide funding for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

- The house of worship must be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization and have sustained damage caused by the storms.
- The facility must be open to the public.
- The application must include state and/or U.S. IRS documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.

Organizations that provide non-critical services may be required to apply for a low-interest disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to be considered for Public Assistance grants. Grants may be available to these organizations for repair or replacement costs that SBA loans do not cover. These organizations can also apply to FEMA and the SBA at the same time.

For more information, see FEMA's Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide Version 4 at [ema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_pap-pg-v4-updated-links\\_policy\\_6-1-2020.pdf](https://ema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_pap-pg-v4-updated-links_policy_6-1-2020.pdf). Private nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship, interested in applying for a grant should contact their local or state emergency manager.



CLYDE RANDALL ODER  
1960-2024

Clyde Randall Oder, 63, of Katy, Texas, passed away on Thursday, June 20, 2024.

Clyde was born December 8, 1960, in Houston, Texas, to Wesley Ray and Laurie (Taylor) Oder. Clyde grew up in Katy, Texas, graduating from Katy High School. For many years, Clyde was a salesman at a roofing company in Katy. In his spare time, Clyde enjoyed his family, cooking, laughing, music, art, painting and playing the guitar. He is survived by his

mother: Laurie Oder of Whitney; son: Derek Oder and wife, Ashley, of Brookshire; daughters: Lauren Burnett and husband, James, of Katy and Erin Oder of Houston; grandchildren: Easton Oder, Gatlin Oder, Ace Oder, Finn Oder, Shepherd Burnett, and Durham Burnett; brother: Richard Oder and wife, Evelyn; nephew: Samuel Oder of Gatesville; and mother of his children: Carla Oder of Houston.

Clyde was preceded in death by his father: Wesley Ray Oder.

Family will be present to receive friends from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at LifeBridge Community Church located at 2162 FM 2187, Sealy, TX 77474.

Memorial Service will follow at 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 18, 2024, with Pastor Scott Heitshusen officiating.

Funeral arrangements under the direction of the Schmidt Funeral Home, PO Box 248, 819 Waller Avenue, Brookshire, Texas, 77423 - (281) 934-2424 - [www.schmidtfunerals.com](http://www.schmidtfunerals.com).

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# Third round of National Merit Scholars named

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

On June 5 the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) issued its third release of National Merit Scholars for 2024. NMSC named recipients of corporate-sponsored awards on April 24 and winners of National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships on May 8. Additional recipients of college-sponsored awards will be announced on July 15. By the conclusion of this year's competition, more than 6,870 academic champions will have won National Merit Scholarships worth approximately \$26 million.

College-Sponsored Merit Scholarship Winners (Evanston, Illinois) Today, National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced over 2,900 winners of National Merit Scholarships financed by U.S. colleges and universities. Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the Finalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program who plan to attend their institution. These awards provide

between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship. An additional group of Scholars will be announced in July, bringing the total number of college-sponsored Merit Scholarship recipients in the 2024 competition to more than 3,600. This year, 149 higher education institutions are underwriting Merit Scholarship awards through the National Merit Scholarship Program. Sponsor colleges and universities include 77 private and 72 public institutions located in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

College-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners announced today are a part of the distinguished group of more than 6,870 high school seniors who will receive National Merit Scholarships for college undergraduate study worth nearly \$26 million. Earlier this spring, NMSC announced winners of corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards and National Merit \$2500 Scholarships.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without

government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of National Merit Scholarships provided each year are made possible by the support of approximately 320 independent corporate and college sponsors. These sponsors join NMSC in its efforts to enhance educational opportunities for America's scholastically talented youth and to encourage the pursuit of academic excellence.

Recipients from the Katy area included:

- Matthew Z. Ting, Jordan High School, Fulshear. Probable career field: Information Systems Management.
- Seung Bin Ahn, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Engineering.
- Charity Y. Chern, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: chemical engineering.
- Sarauswathy R. Chockalingam, Obra D. Tompkins High School, Katy. Probable career field: Medicine
- Preston Jeremy Cole, Obra

- D. Tompkins High School, Katy. KATY 77494 Probable career field: Engineering.
- Vanshika Dheer, Jordan High School, Fulshear. Probable career field: Chemical Engineering.
- Shruti Prashant Godbole, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Psychiatry.
- Jeremi Gomola, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Software Engineering.
- Tess T. Jackson, James E. Taylor High School, Katy. Probable career field: Medicine.
- Haseong Jang, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Biomedical Engineering.
- Brady Ji, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Computer Engineering.
- Fadhil E. Lawal, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Electrical Engineering.
- Brad Le, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Dentistry.
- Luke W. Lennon, James E. Taylor High School, Katy. Probable career field: Mechanical Engineering (Automotive).

- BoKai Liao, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Engineering.
- Tiffany L. Lowry, Jordan High School, Katy. Probable career field: Computer Science.
- Sarah S. Malik, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Science/Research.
- Akansha Mohta, Obra D. Tompkins High School, Katy. Probable career field: Engineering.
- Krish V. Parikh, Katy High School, Katy. Probable career field: Electrical Engineering.
- Omar O. Ramadan, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Aerospace Engineering.
- Hannah E. Shilk, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy. Probable career field: Engineering.
- Mira K. Tahkku, Obra D. Tompkins High School, Katy. Probable career field: Electrical Engineering.
- Davis M. Veith, Seven Lakes High School, Katy. Probable career field: Law.
- Jerry X. Zhou, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy. Probable career field: Software Engineering.

## Record number of Katy ISD teams reach Destination Imagination global finals

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Katy ISD announced June 3 that a record number of teams – 16 in total – represented the District at the Destination Imagination 2024 Global Finals, held May 22-25 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Teams earned six of the competition's top spots across the three levels of competition and were ranked among the world's most creative students.

Team T-R. EX from Beckendorff Junior High was also awarded the Renaissance Award for demonstrating outstanding skill in design, engineering, execution and performance for their life-like dinosaur creatures, spacecraft and waterfall feature as part of their Engineering Challenge.

"We are so proud of the work of our Destination Imagination teams in this year's competition for their hard work and creativity," said Joan Otten, Director of Gifted and Talented & Advanced Academic Studies.



The Two-Toed Dinos team from Cinco Ranch High School was one of the Katy ISD teams reaching the global finals of Destination Imagination in Kansas City in May.

"It is gratifying to know that our students continue to display their innovation, talent and imagination, particularly representing the district in international competition."

Destination Imagination celebrates K-12 students'

creativity and innovation, providing students with the opportunity to display their talents and gifts in team competition. Students use their ingenuity, along with acquired skills, to answer unique learning challenges.

This year's challenges were:

- Technical Challenge prompted students to use principles of engineering, research, strategic planning and related skills to design, build and operate a pinball system
- Engineering Challenge asked students to use engineering skills and tools to design and build a modular device that could accurately launch bean bags
- Scientific Challenge tasked students with creating and presenting a historical vignette that included the discovery of an archaeological artifact
- Fine Arts Challenge asked students to bring a piece of visual art to life, reimagining the work as performance and kinetic art
- Improvisational Challenge prompted students to create and present a 2-act improvisational skit
- Service Learning engaged students in public service to identify, design, execute and evaluate a project to address a community need

## Harmony Public Schools wins the most school communications awards in U.S.

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Texas-based Harmony Public Schools was honored with 43 awards for excellence in school communication and marketing during the week of June 25 by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), making the Texas charter school system the most award-winning public school of any size or any kind in America, the charter school office said in a June 25 press release.

Harmony, which is headquartered in Houston but includes more than 60 locations in 23 communities across Texas, was recognized for its extraordinary efforts in keeping families informed and engaged during the 2023-24 school year, as well as spreading positive school culture through effective communications and marketing strategies.

The awards Harmony received were:

- Award of Excellence (21)
- Award of Merit (15)
- Honorable Mention (7)

Team members earning awards included John Boyd, Susan Campbell, Shadan Gunonu, Tim Hal-lila, Candice Keutzer, Mark Kramer, Emma Lewis, Sally Magnuson, Dani Marquez, Allen Reid, Nicole Romanos, Tracie Seed and Ajdina Selimovic.

"Harmony Public Schools has a great story to share, and we're proud to be a part of doing that each school year," John Boyd, Harmony's Chief Communications & Marketing Officer, said.

Harmony also won 51 awards this spring from the Texas Public School Relations Association (TSPRA) annual awards in Sugar Land, Texas.

Harmony Public Schools is a Texas-born, Texas-wide public charter school system with campuses serving PreK-Grade 12 students in 23 cities across the state, including Greater Houston, DFW, San Antonio, Austin, El Paso, Waco, Lubbock, Midland-Odessa, Bryan, Beaumont, and the Rio Grande Valley. Harmony's curriculum places a heavy focus on STEM skills, Character Education, project-based learning, and college readiness.

Harmony Public Schools is currently accepting applications for the 2023-24 school year for students and team members.

### KATY ISD TEAMS IN THE 2024 GLOBAL FINALS

Campus	Team Name	Challenge	Global Ranking
Beckendorff Junior High	Team T-R. EX	Engineering – Going the Distance (Middle)	3
Beck, McMeans and WoodCreek Junior Highs & Exley Elementary	Team DinoMite!	Scientific – Blast from the Past (Middle)	3
McMeans Junior High	5 to Infinity	Fine Arts – In Motion (Middle)	4
Seven Lakes High School	"Houston We Have a Problem"	Scientific – Blast from the Past (Secondary)	4
Alexander Elementary	Phoenix 5	Engineering – Going the Distance (Elementary)	5
Seven Lakes and Jordan High Schools	The Ultimate Knights	Engineering – Going the Distance (Secondary)	5
McMeans Junior High	Industrialists	Technical – Pinball Heroes (Middle)	6
Tompkins High School	Epic Failliers	Service Learning – Uncharted (Secondary)	12
Davidson Elementary	Mission Impossible Dragons	Engineering – Going the Distance (Elementary)	16
Cinco Ranch High School	Two-Toed Dinos	Fine Arts – In Motion (Secondary)	17
Wilson Elementary	The Talented Tribe	Service Learning – Uncharted (Elementary)	17 (Tie)
Alexander Elementary	Blooming Blossoms	Service Learning – Uncharted (Elementary)	17 (Tie)
McMeans Junior High	SKAMM'D	Fine Arts – In Motion (Middle)	19
Nottingham Country Elementary	Chocolate Fudge Cookies	Fine Arts – In Motion (Elementary)	19
Alexander Elementary	Bright Lights	Fine Arts – In Motion (Elementary)	24
Memorial Parkway Elementary	The Candy Nerds	Improvisation – So Extra (Elementary)	27

## Business partners sought for Royal ISD's 2024 Convocation on Aug. 9

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Royal ISD has set the date for the 2024 Convocation event, which will be held August 9 from 7:45 a.m. to 12 p.m. Royal High School, 34499 Royal Road, Brookshire. The Falcon team is seeking community partners interested in reaching 450 potential customers while making the event special for the hard-working Falcon educators.

Area businesses interested in becoming a partner with the school district may do so by visiting [bit.ly/FalconConvocation2024](https://bit.ly/FalconConvocation2024).

Convocation is one of Royal's premier annual events, offering approximately 450 Royal ISD employees an electrifying experience to kick off the new school year, a district spokesperson said. Royal provides the tables; participating companies can personalize them with decorations and branded items to promote their businesses during the breakfast portion of the event. All partnership funds will be used to purchase food, beverages, team t-shirts, prizes, and more to empower and inspire the Falcon team as they soar into the 2024-2025 school year.



FILE PHOTO

Royal ISD welcomed teachers and staff back to school on Friday, August 11, 2023 at the district's annual convocation. District employees gathered in the cafeteria at Royal High School for breakfast and were able to meet with vendors who donated door prizes and giveaways. The district is seeking business partnerships for the 2024 convocation to be held on August 9 at Royal High School.

Donations of door prizes are also greatly appreciated.

For more information, please call Christi Ginn in Royal ISD's Communications & Marketing Department at 979-221-4080.

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#### RESEARCH SCIENTISTS - MOTION

Planning and Prediction are needed in Brookshire, TX office to design & implement algorithm, research on machine learning & artificial intelligence, control algorithm, build infrastructure. Requirements: MS in Computer Science; 5 Years in motion planning & prediction in autonomous vehicle industries. with machine learning, design & optimal control, decision-making, standard for HD map, with knowledge in algorithm, design, computer science, machine learning, C/C++, Python. Mail resumes to CSO/Qian Chu, BOT AUTO TX INC, 2800 Twinwood PKWY, BLDG 22, Brookshire, TX 77423, or email to [recruit@bot.auto](mailto:recruit@bot.auto)

#### PROJECT MANAGERS - AUTONOMOUS

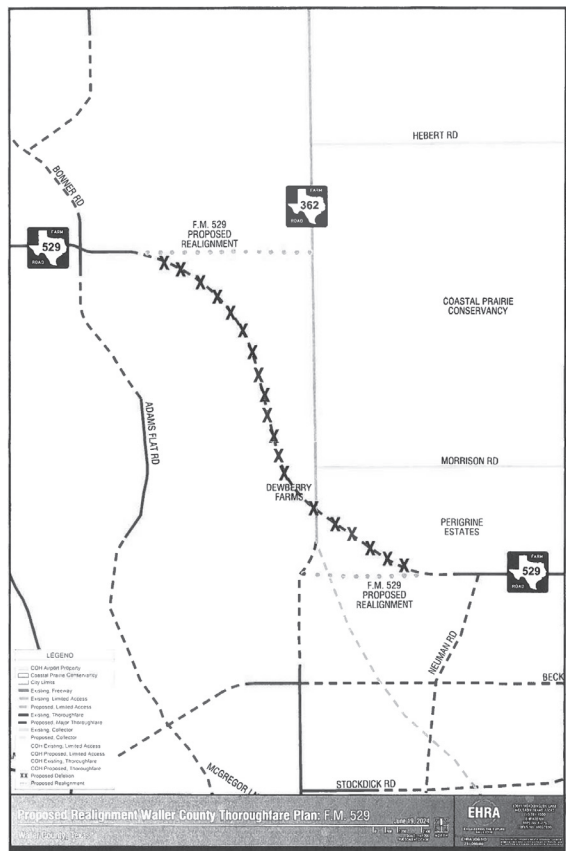
Vehicle are needed in Brookshire, TX office to collaborate in autonomous vehicle project, manage delivery, identify communication & execution impacts, analyze inventory & evaluate expansion & project impacts, forecast budget, control project cost & scope. Requirements: BS in Project Management or Economics; 4 Years in autonomous vehicle project management & vehicle project, development & visualization framework, analysis & evaluation expansion & project impacts. Mail resumes to CSO/Qian Chu, BOT AUTO TX INC, 2800 Twinwood PKWY, BLDG 22, Brookshire, TX 77423, or email to [recruit@bot.auto](mailto:recruit@bot.auto)

### 950 PUBLIC NOTICES

#### NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION TO AMEND THE MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN/MAP FILED FOR RECORD WITH THE COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE

APPLICATION: Gamal 318 Acres LLC, owner, is requesting to be allowed to amend The Major Thoroughfare Plan/Map as noted in the application Property ID#263799. The amendment will Realign F.M. 529 between Bonner Road and the Peregrine Estates subdivision.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be held during the regular session of Commissioners' Court on July 24th at 9:00am at the Waller County Joe Kuciamba Annex, 425 FM 1488 Hempstead, Texas 77445.



### 950 PUBLIC NOTICES

## July 11

### Puzzle Answers

H	E	R	D		H	E	R	E	S	T	E
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EVENT

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Katy Times



# 4 Katy softball players named to All-State team



PHOTOS BY DOMENIC GREY | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES  
Above: Montgomery Henderson pumps up the dugout during a Region III-6A Final between Katy and Kingwood at the Katy softball field. Left: Ashtyn Reichardt rounds the bases after hitting a home run during a Region III-6A Final between Katy and Kingwood at the Katy softball field.

**BY TYLER TYRE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Four Katy Tigers were named to this year’s Blue Bell/Texas Sports Writers Association Class 6A All-State Team, with two being named first team all-state after a tremendous year for the Tigers.

Cameryn Harrison and Ashtyn Reichardt were named first team all-state, while Montgomery Henderson was named to the third team and Ella-Kate Smith was named an honorable mention on the team.

The four of them led Katy to its best season since 2019, as the Tigers went 39-3-1 this season, going undefeated with a 16-0 record in district play and making a huge run in the playoffs to make it to the Region III-6A Final.

Harrison had a 22-1 record on the mound with a .53 ERA on the year, striking out 232 batters in 119.1 innings while also batting .500 with 47 RBIs, hitting 10 home runs and scoring 28 runs herself.

Reichardt was the leadoff hitter and defensive anchor of the team and was also one of the biggest leaders on the team, helping the younger players both vocally and by leading the way with her actions. Both Reichardt and Harrison will join the Arkansas Razorbacks in the fall.

See **SOFTBALL**, page A9

## Pezman out as University of Houston Athletic Director after six years

**BY TYLER TYRE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Houston made a brave and rather shocking move at the end of June, parting ways with Athletic Director Chris Pezman, who had led the Cougars Athletic Department for the last seven years.

Raymond Bartlett, who is Houston’s senior vice president of administration and finance, will serve as interim Athletic Director as Houston conducts a search for a replacement.

“Chris Pezman has ushered our athletics program through a period of incredible transformation, and we are grateful for his leadership over the past six years,” said UH President Renu Khator. “He has been a pivotal part of our entry into the Big 12 Conference and championed the success of student athletes on the field and in the classroom. This was a difficult but necessary decision as we navigate a paradigm shift in collegiate athletics. I want to thank Chris for his dedication to UH and to our student athletes. On behalf of the University, I wish Chris and his family the very best.”

Pezman is a University of Houston graduate and was on the football team for three years

See **PEZMAN**, page A9



Katy High alum Eman Naghavi coaches during a practice at the University of Houston.



SCOTT W. COLEMAN  
A general view of a sold-out TDECU Stadium during a Big 12 Conference football game between the Houston Cougars and the Texas Longhorns on October 21, 2023 in Houston. Texas won, 31-24.

## Paetow head coach Hicks, Katy graduate Naghavi named to Dave Campbell 40-under-40 list

**BY TYLER TYRE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

David Hicks was named to one of the most prestigious lists for high school coaches in the state last week, being named to Dave Campbell’s 40-under-40 list, which highlights some of the best young coaches around the state under the age of 40.

Hicks was named to the list after his first full year in charge of Paetow. The Panthers had to rebuild last year and went 2-8 overall and Hicks has an overall record of 4-10 overall as head coach. Hicks has been on the up and coming for a long time and was quite a get for Paetow when Katy ISD hired him originally as an assistant in 2022. He coached at Morton Ranch and Allen before coming to Paetow and eventually becoming head coach.

See **40**, page A9





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40  
from page A8

Hicks graduated from El Dorado High School and played college football at Grambling State. He turned that into an NFL career where he played for the Kansas City Chiefs, New York Giants and Cincinnati Bengals. Paetow will start the year by playing Langham Creek and Dekaney before opening district against Tompkins.

Hicks was joined on the list by Katy native and University of Houston Running Game Coordinator and Offensive Line Coach Eman Naghavi. Naghavi, a Katy High School graduate who was a captain on the 2003

Tigers state championship team, has been coaching at the collegiate level for 14 years. He started his career at C.E. King as an offensive line coach before moving to McNeese to coach Offensive Line, eventually becoming a recruiting coordinator for McNeese. He then coached at the University of Louisiana Monroe as offensive coordinator before going to Georgia State to coach offensive line and then Tulane to coach offensive line, eventually moving to Houston in 2023. He was kept on staff after the transition from Dana Holgorsen to Willie Fritz.

He earned his degree from McNeese.

During his four years at McNeese, where he was named all-conference three times and led the team to a conference title in 2000, the team led the league in rushing offense twice and scoring offense three times. He was also a part of a Georgia State team that was the most successful in school history with eight wins and helped Tulane to a huge 12-2 season in 2022 that ended with a Cotton Bowl win over USC. He and Fritz hope to bring that same success to the Cougars.

SOFTBALL  
from page A8

Montgomery Henderson stepped up hugely in her junior year. She took over cleanup hitter duties and was one of the best hitters in the Tigers' lineup, hitting for both average and power while providing exceptional defense at first base. She is committed to play at Oklahoma State after her senior year.

Ella-Kate Smith also took a giant step in her sophomore season. She became one of the most potent hitters in the Tigers' lineup, coming up clutch in a number of games and she also took a big step forward as a pitcher, stepping up in the playoffs in a number of different deciding games with strong performances on the mound that helped Katy go five rounds deep.

Weslaco's Madelynn Cantu was named the Class 6A Player of the Year after leading Weslaco to a state title. Voting was conducted by TSWA members based on nominations from coaches and media members around the state.

Following is the full Class 6A Blue Bell/TSWA Class 6A All-State Team

FIRST TEAM

Pitcher: Madelynn Cantu, Weslaco; Cameryn Harrison, Katy; Peyton Tanner, Brazoswood

Catcher: Lille Hope Gaudio, Mansfield Legacy

First Base: Brook Wells, Vista Ridge

Second base: Leilani Garcia, Humble Kingwood

Shortstop: Isabel Cruz, New Braunfels

Third base: Dania Durr, Midway

Outfield: Kelsey Mathis, Midway; Ashtyn Reichardt, Katy; Ava Jolley, Humble Kingwood

Utility: Natalie Moreaux, Mansfield Legacy

SECOND TEAM

Pitcher: Arlette Hernandez, La Joya; Finley Montgomery, Denton Guyer; Hunter Quentel, Humble Kingwood

Catcher: Riley Cassidy,



TYLER TYRE

Cameryn Harrison pitches during a Region III-6A Final game between Katy and Kingwood at the Kingwood softball field.



TYLER TYRE

Ella-Kate Smith pitches during Thursday's Region III-6A Semifinal game between Katy and Brazoswood at Iowa Colony.

Pebble Hills

First base: Elizabeth Craig, Weslaco

Second base: Mia Rodriguez, Weslaco

Shortstop: Addyson Sheppard, Humble Kingwood

Third base: Larisa Perez, Copperas Cove

Outfield: Kelsey Martin, Pearland; Kayla Santiago, Wylie; Kylie Wilson, Deer Park

Utility: Lexi Clark, Frenship

THIRD TEAM

Pitcher: Ashley Pemberton, Rockwall; Haiden Anderson, Dripping Springs; Sadie Beck, Keller

Catcher: Roma Nunez, Weslaco

First base: Montgomery Henderson, Katy

Second base: Addie King, Allen

Shortstop: Bri Duffey, Royse City

Third base: Aundrea Wilson, North Forney

Outfield: Emma King, Clear Spring; Jocelyn Brisenio, Alvin; Kaylee Schweitzer, Pearland

Utility: Braelyn Daniels, Fort Bend Ridge Point

HONORABLE MENTION

Pitcher: Lane Brown, Midway; Miranda Guillen, El Paso Eastwood; Matti Matthews,

Alvin; Samantha Scott, Arlington Martin

Catcher: Mia Gagliardi, Humble Kingwood; Lorelei Gamble, Dripping Springs; Abby Ptak, Alvin; Katelyn Havemann, Klein Oak; Payton Shugart, Pearland

First base: Isabella Bojkovic, Timber Creek; Jai Flores, Dripping Springs; Addie Hall, Willis; Ariana Hernandez, El Paso Eastwood

Second base: Kaylynn Jones, Denton Guyer

Shortstop: Audrina Ramirez, Odessa Permian; Paislie Allen, Lewisville; Cassidy Chance, Mansfield Lake Ridge; Scarlett Kuhn, Southlake Carroll; Erin Peterson, Denton Guyer

Third base: Jewliana Cartagena, San Antonio Madison; Scarlett Poore, Mansfield Lake Ridge; Alexis Soliz, Weslaco; Jordan Stewart, Southlake Carroll; Brielle Moreland, Klein Oak

Outfield: Ava Wallace, Rockwall; Kenna Spence, Hutto; Paige Elrod, Cy Fair; Kiley Huffman, Alvin; Rachel Lawyer, Rockwall; Isabel Ramos, Pebble Hills; Gaby De Anda, El Paso Eastwood

Utility: Krisilyn Corral, El Paso Socorro; Joleeanna Hair, Copperas Cove; Ella Smith, Katy; Morgan Sanchez, Klein Oak; Dayla Hinojosa, Weslaco

TOP CHEERLEADERS



PHOTO COURTESY KRISTIN REID

Two Katy ISD cheerleaders were selected to perform at the TGCA Class 5A-6A All-Star Basketball Game on June 26th. Taylor Reid and Seven Lakes incoming senior Annelise Pickett were selected to the cheer team and celebrated at the All-Sar Game, which the Red Team won 75-59. They were two of just 24 cheerleaders selected around the state to cheer at the Class 5A-6A game.

PEZMAN  
from page A8

during his college career, serving as a team captain in 1992. He took over as athletic director in 2017 and had two years remaining on his contract.

There were lots of highs for the Cougars with Pezman at the helm. He helped the school earn a spot in the Big 12 and with the transition and the University of Houston basketball program has truly blossomed over the past six years. It was under Pezman that the Fertitta Center opened in 2018 and excluding the 2020 Covid season, the Houston basketball program has made five straight sweet 16 appearances.

But over the last year, things have been up and down for Houston athletics. The Cougars football team finished 4-8 this year and Dana Holgerson was fired after the season after accumulating a 31-28 record as head football coach and Pezman hired new Houston head coach Willie Fritz to the position.

Houston has been very vocal about needing to generate more revenue for and through athletics as it remains highly subsidized through University and student fees, which may have been part of the decision to go in search of a new athletic director.

"It has been a true honor and privilege to serve my alma mater during a transformational period in



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Houston fans cheer during a Big 12 Conference football game between the Houston Cougars and the Texas Longhorns on October 21, 2023 in Houston. Texas won, 31-24.

college athletics," Pezman posted to X (formerly known as twitter). "Together we achieved unprecedented growth and success that has laid the foundation for a bright future for Houston Athletics. The incredible commitment to comprehensive excellence exhibited by our student-athletes, coaches and staff is made possible by the support of our university, donors, season ticket holders and fans. To continue that momentum we must rally together and remain true to our values and commitments. I will forever be grateful to President Khatur, Tillman Fertitta and the Board of Regents for the opportunity to serve as Director of Athletics and I move forward confident aht we are in a better place."

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# Rockets draft sharpshooter Sheppard third overall

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Rockets took care of one of their biggest needs and drafted a player with a special skill set last week with the No. 3 overall pick, taking Kentucky guard Reed Sheppard early in the NBA draft and getting a lock down shooter with tons of room to grow in the process.

“I’m going to come out every game and do whatever it takes to win for this team,” Sheppard said. “It doesn’t matter what coach needs or the team needs I will do it to the best of my ability and come in every day in practice with a positive mindset, work hard and I will

be the guy on the team that does whatever it takes to win.”

Sheppard has a rare skillset and is regarded as one of the best shooters to enter the draft in years. Over his one year at Kentucky, the freshman averaged 12.5 points, 4.5 assists, 4.1 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game coming off the bench. He shot 53.6% from the floor and led the nation in 3-point percentage, shooting 52.1% behind the line and 83.1% from the free throw line. He was the only player in the country to have 145 assists, 80 steals and 75 three 3-pointers this season.

“I’m super excited to be here,” Sheppard said. “I can’t wait get here and call Houston my new

home. I just am ready to get the seasons started and be a part of this team. I’m excited and thankful to be here.”

The Rockets already have lots of young talent and will add Sheppard to a core that already has Alperen Sengun, Jalen Green, Tari Eason, Jabari Smith, Amen Thompson and Cam Whitmore as players 23 years old or younger. If it were another player in the draft, Houston might have traded out of the pick, but the Rockets had their sights set of Sheppard if he fell to the third pick.

“In this case at the end of our process we had Reed as the best player in the draft by quite a bit,” said Rockets general manager

Rafael Stone. “We thought he was the best prospect and he was the only guy we were really focused on. If he hadn’t gotten to us we probably would have traded down or out of the draft, but when we had the opportunity to draft Reed we jumped on it.”

The Rockets started Summer League this week and it will be a chance for Sheppard to start to prove himself to the coaching staff. This will be a team where it is hard to earn playing time right away, as fellow guards Fred Van Vleet, Green, Thompson and Whitmore all will be trying to prove themselves as well, but Sheppard is excited to get to work and start to prove himself early in the offsea-

son.

“We are in a situation where we want to win but we are also developing young guys,” said Rockets head coach Ime Udoka. “We want them to have a chance to get out there and get playing time. I want Reed to make it tough on those guys in front of him and on us as a coaching staff. I want us to have to make hard decisions because he is playing well. The guys are going to come in and get the playing time they deserve. The young guys are the core of this team and they’re the guys who are going to elevate us and bring us forward and Reed is in that same situation to come in and compete and then guys will get what they earn.”

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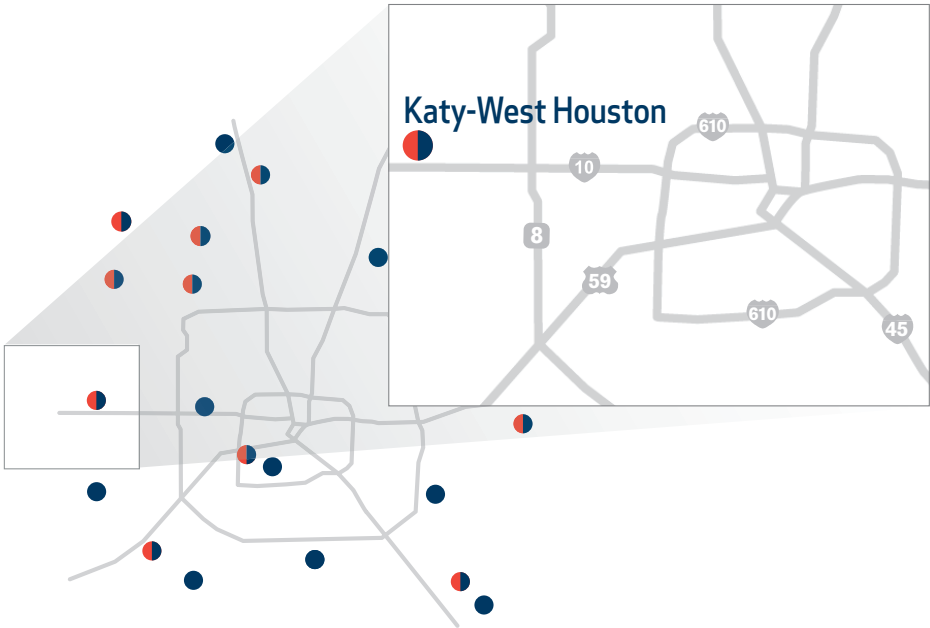
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