

# HILL COUNTRY NEWS

## TO THE POLLS



## Williamson County incumbents Gravell, Long win GOP primary

BY JOSH MONIZ  
SENIOR REPORTER

Williamson County's local incumbents all secured their expected victories Tuesday night during the 2022 Primary elections. However, the differences in the margin of their victory compared to their last primary tell an interesting story.

For the Williamson County Judge race, incumbent Bill Gravell won with 57% of the votes, or 23,930 votes, over the 43%, or 17,954 votes, for challenger Ryan Gallagher.

Gravell performed only slightly better than in the 2018 Republican primary, which he won with 52% of the votes that year.



CYNTHIA LONG

BILL GRAVELL

He will face off against Democratic challenger Blane Conklin in the Nov. 8 General Elections.

For the Williamson County Com-

See COUNTY, page A2

## Abbott, O'Rourke headed for November showdown

BY RICHARD STONE  
EDITOR AT LARGE

Whether Democrat or Republican, Williamson County voters tended to mirror that statewide voting trends seen during this season's Primary Elections.

Final results may not be known until in early Wednesday morning but, based on the early returns, Democrats — whether across the state or locally — want to see Beto O'Rourke on the ballot running for governor in November.

Republicans nominated incumbent Gov. Gregg Abbott for a third term at the top of the statewide ticket.

Early results show that 95% of WilCo Democrats, and 93% of Texas Democrats, voted for O'Rourke while 71% of local Republicans, and 69% of Republicans across the state want Abbott to represent them in November.

This should set up an expected showdown between Abbott, the two-term incumbent, and O'Rourke, a former El Paso congressman seen by many as the Democratic hope to win the first statewide office since George Bush defeated Ann Richards in 1996.

Republicans were more unified than Democrats about some down ballot races. The early vote showed that 76.23% of local Republicans and about 77% of those statewide prefer incumbent Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick as the nominee in November.

Democrats were less positive. As the early vote

See NOVEMBER, page A2

## Clear words may cause confusion

Leander Council wants to keep, shift sales tax revenues if Leander approves Cap Metro exit. But ballot language challenges might confuse voters.

BY JOSH MONIZ  
SENIOR REPORTER

Sometimes giving a clear, concise and accurate statement can be misleading.

The Leander City Council recently approved a ballot question for the May 7 municipal elections asking residents to vote on whether or not they want to exit the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority public transit and rail system.

If Leander residents choose to exit Cap Metro this year, the Council wants to redirect the funds they are currently required to pay for their Cap Metro membership - the revenues of a 1% sales tax that amount to just over \$10 million annually - to the City of Leander's General Fund. The Council plans to use those funds to meet city growth, such as building needed infrastructure and providing its own public transportation, and for economic development agreements to encourage businesses to open in Leander.

Currently, that 1% sales tax is only authorized for usage with Cap Metro, so it will no longer be collected following a Cap Metro exit. As a result, the Council approved at their Feb. 17 meeting a companion ballot to the Cap Metro vote that will go before voters for approval, which will keep collecting the sales tax and redirect it to the General Fund only if the Cap Metro exit passes.

There's one problem. State law dictates the exact language that can be legally used for this type of ballot question — and the simple, direct and factually-accurate statement they must use doesn't convey what they intend to do with the funds.

The ballot language will read: "CONDITIONAL UPON A MAJORITY "NO" VOTE ON PROPOSITION A. The adoption of a local sales and use tax in the City of Leander at the rate of two percent (2%)."

The Council worries that the language could be confusing to voters on election day and result in them voting it down because they mistake it for some kind of new tax hike.

See LANGUAGE, page A7



PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN  
The polling place at the Leander Public Library on Primary Election Day, March 1, 2022, in Leander, Texas.

## 2 Republican primaries headed for a runoff

Michelle Evans wins primary for House District 136, Jones-Hospod wins primary for Senate District 24

BY JOSH MONIZ  
SENIOR REPORTER

Following the Texas Legislature's redistricting map shaking up Texas

House of Representatives, Texas Senate and U.S. Congressional seats representing Williamson County, a slate of new candidates who haven't represented the area before battled it out Tuesday night in packed 2022 Primary races.

By the end of the night, three races drew clear winners while the sheer volume of candidates resulted in two of the districts entering runoff primary elections, which will be

See STATE, page A2

## CDC drops masking guidance for most

BY RICHARD STONE  
EDITOR AT LARGE

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control marked a new stage in the COVID-19 pandemic by loosening its guidance for the general public.

The CDC announced Friday a new system for monitoring the virus, which designates individual counties as being at low, medium or high risk of residents contracting COVID-19.

As new case counts, infection rates and hospitalizations plummet, Williamson County is considered as a low risk area.

For residents of low-risk counties who are vaccinated and healthy, there are no longer any recommendations for masking. According to the CDC, people in WilCo and other low-risk areas may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

The CDC is revising its universal mask mandates for schools and recommending districts require masks only in high-risk settings.

See MASKS, page A6

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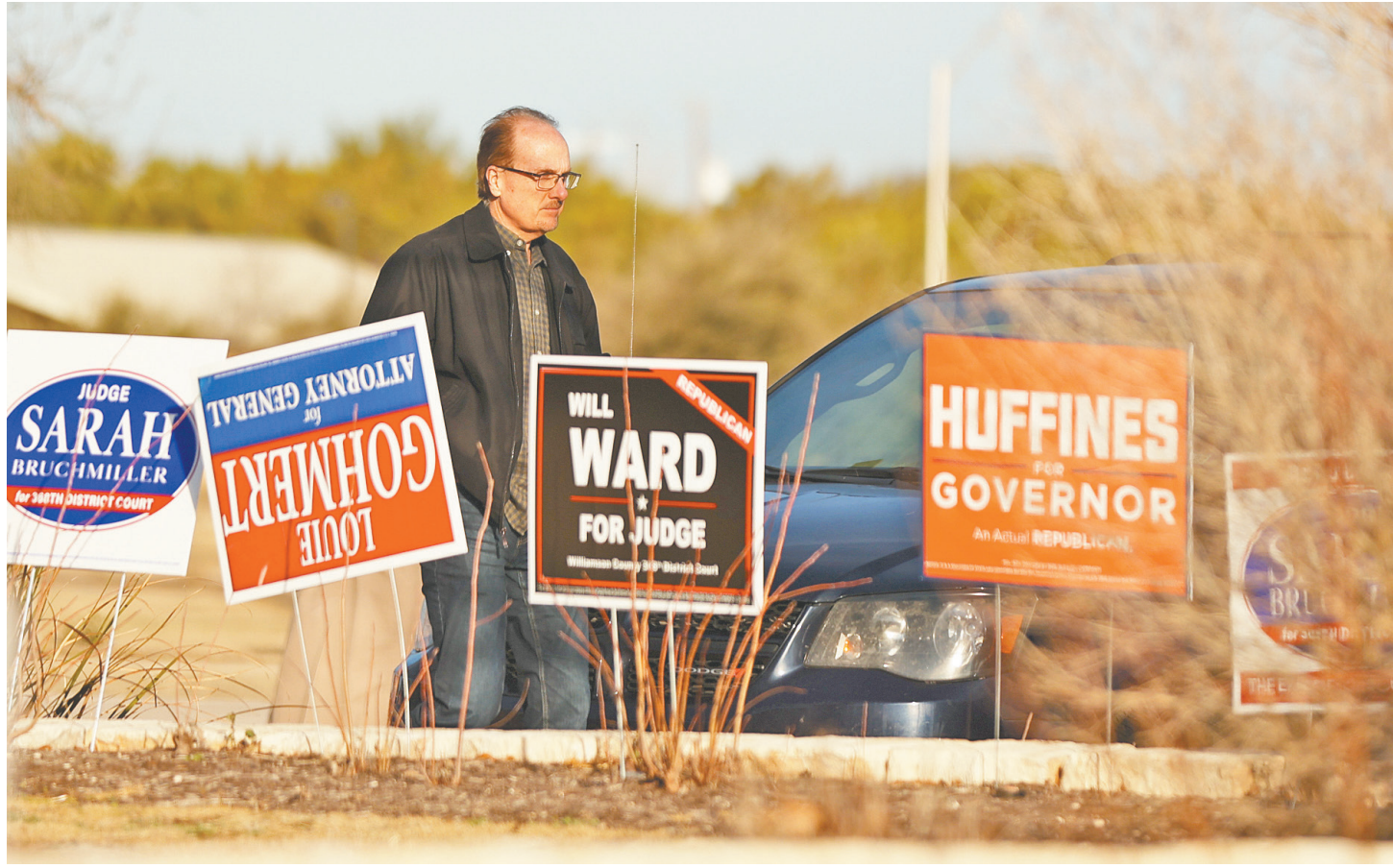
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SCOTT W. COLEMAN

**COUNTY**

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missioners Precinct 2 race, incumbent Cynthia Long won with 56% of the votes, or 5,621 votes, while challenger J.T. Cox received 44% of the votes, or 4,363 votes.

While Long still coasted comfortably into a victory, her percentage of victory is somewhat a rebuke given it represents a significant 12-point drop compared to 2018, which she won with 68% of the votes. The performance is notable because the Commissioners Court's redistricting maps made districts more secure for incumbents, including parsing away the most Democratic voting precincts in Long's district and re-centering it on her stronger precincts.

She will face off against Democratic challenger Brigid Lester in the General Elections.

For the Williamson County Commissioners Precinct 4 race, incumbent Russ Boles won with 61% of the votes, or 6,245 votes, compared to challenger Terri Romere's 39%, or 4,022 votes.



**RUSS BOLES**

Boles's total is significantly higher than the 39% of the votes that he won in 2018, although he was in a four-way Republican primary race for an open seat during that election.

He will face off against Democratic challenger Jose Orta in the General Elections.

**JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**

In the three-way Republican primary race for the Justice of the Peace Precinct 4 seat, Rhonda Redden won with just barely over 50% of the votes, narrowly avoiding a runoff election by securing 5,011 votes.

She beat Carole Callahan's 26%, or 2,156 votes, and Matthew Brading's 23%, or 1,934 votes.

She will face off against Democratic incumbent Stacy Hackenberg in the General Elections.

Meanwhile, on the Democratic Primary side of local races, Sara Groff won the open Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 race by an overwhelming majority of the votes. She won 83% of the votes, or 4,660 votes, while Jim MacKay didn't even break 1,000 votes with his 17% of the votes.

She will face off against Republican candidate Angela Williams.

In terms of voting totals for the two political parties, Williamson County saw a spike in participation this year in the Republican primary races than in the Democratic primary races.

Across the county, more than 47,000 WilCo Republicans cast votes in Tuesday's primary, about 10,000 more than voted in 2018. About 26,000 Democrats voted, up only slightly from 2018's tally of 24,000.

Election watchers would note that this disparity is likely due to the lack of competitive primary races on the Democratic ballot. In the 2018 general election, about 105,000 WilCo voters voted for Democrats Beto O'Rourke and MJ Hegar besting Republicans Ted Cruze and John Carter.

**STATE**

from page A1

held on May 24.

**TEXAS HOUSE, SENATE**

All of Williamson County's Texas House of Representative seats were moved within Williamson County's borders for the first time during redistricting. As a result, all of them now divvy up a portion of Cedar Park and/or a portion of Leander, highlighting the county's population and political shift towards the western side of the county.

Similarly, the newly formed Senate District 24 boasts both a Democratic and Republican primary with a new array of candidates who have never before represented Cedar Park and Leander.

The new C-shaped district extends a tentacle into the heavily urban and suburban section of Williamson County containing Cedar Park, Leander, Liberty Hill and a portion of Austin, pulling it into a heavily rural district stretching from Coryell County to the north for two hours south to Atascosa County, which is south of San Antonio, and three hours west to Sutton County.

Williamson County saw two legislative races draw clear winners Tuesday night.

For the Republican primary in the House District 136 race, Michelle Evans won an overwhelming victory with 84% of the votes, or 6,396 votes, versus the 16%, or 1,240 votes, for Amin Salahuddin.

She will face off against Democratic incumbent Rep. John Bucy in the Nov. 8 General Elections.

Notably, the race and Bucy's uncontested race received about 2,000 fewer votes this year than when both the Democratic and Republican candidates were uncontested in 2018.

For the Democratic primary in the Senate District 24 race, Cedar Park resident Kathy Jones-Hospod also won an overwhelming victory with 80% of the votes, or 20,566 votes, over her opponent Jeremy Kohlwes's 20%, or 5,156 votes.

Within Williamson County, Jones-Hospod had only a slightly larger lead, winning 84% of the votes, or 8,110 votes, compared to Jeremy Kohlwes's 16%, or 1,449 votes.

She will face off against the eventual winner of the Republican primary runoff for



**RAUL REYES**



**PETE FLORES**



**JOHN CARTER**



**KATHY JONES-HOSPOD**



**MICHELLE EVANS**

**Senate District 24.**

Because of its radically different alignment after redistricting, Senate District 24 doesn't have comparable races to determine how much turnout differed from 2018.

**RUNOFF ELECTIONS**

Because no candidates won more than 50% of the votes in the county's two remaining legislative races, two Republican primary runoff elections are already underway. The top two candidates who received the most votes will face off again on May 24.

These races also strongly contrast the two races that saw a clear winner Tuesday night by having races so close that it is unclear that the top vote-getter will have any advantage going into the runoff.

In the open District 52 race, Patrick McGuinness secured 35% of the voters, or 5,706 votes, and will face off in the runoff against Caroline Harris, who received 31% of the votes, or 5,095 votes. They face a difference of fewer than 700 votes.

The other candidates were Nelson Jarrin, who won 26%, or 4,187 votes, and Jonathan Schober, who won 8%, or 1,260 votes. Both were eliminated from the runoff election.

The eventual winner of this primary will go on the challenge Luis Echegaray, the only Democratic candidate in the race.

The race drew about 6,000 more Republican voters than in 2018.

In the Republican primary for Senate District 24, Pete Flores, who received 46% of the votes, or 38,024 votes, will advance to face off again with Raul Reyes, who received 33% of the votes, or 27,069 votes. They face a difference of fewer than 11,000 votes.

Lamar Lewis, who received 21% of the votes, or 17,507 votes, will not advance to the runoff.

The eventual winner will face off against Democratic primary winner Kathy Jones-Hospod.

**U.S. CONGRESS**

The Republican primary for Texas's 31st Congressional District was ultimately the most impactful local race because no Democratic challenger filed for the seat, meaning the Republican winner has already effectively won.

U.S. Rep. John Carter, the incumbent, cruised to an overwhelming victory by earning 71% of the votes, or 50,554 votes while challenger Mike Williams received 20%, or 14,039 votes, and challenger Abhiram Garapati received 9%, or 14,039 votes.

Carter won the biggest in Williamson County, where he received 72% of the county's votes, and Bell County, where he received 81% of the county's votes. Those results indicate his biggest areas of support in Republican primary races are still centered in the skeleton of the old boundaries of the 31st Congressional District.

His performance was above average given his primary victories over the last decade, which ranged between 58% and 82% of the votes. He earned that 82% victory in 2020, indicating he is growing increasingly secure against primary challengers.

The totals were significantly higher this year for Williams and Garapati, who both challenged Carter in 2020. However, Williams's record turnout against Carter was 34% in 2018.



Incumbent Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott (left) will face off against Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke in the November general election.



**NOVEMBER**

from page A1

came in, it appeared that Mike Collier would be in a runoff for the Lt. Gov. nomination with Michelle Beckley (28.37% of the vote) or Carla Brailey (26.64%). If it were up to WilCo Democrats, a hair over 50% were in favor of Collier's nomination.

Incumbent Republican Texas

Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is beset by a criminal indictment and an FBI probe, wasn't having an easy time in his run for re-election. The early vote showed that 42.73% of Texas Republicans favored his re-election. The rest of the vote was scattered between Eva Guzman (17.46%), George P.

Bush (22.05%) and Louie Gohmert (17.09%)

Those numbers were fairly well mirrored in Williamson County, though it appeared that Gohmert would barely clear 11% of the vote in WilCo.

Based on the early vote totals, it appeared that Rochelle Mecerdes

Garza was headed to a runoff with Joe Jaworski for the Democratic nomination for attorney general. At 9 p.m. Tuesday, Garza had about 43% of the vote while Jaworski tallied 22%.

Locally, Garza had about 46% of the vote. Jaworski had about 22%. Further down the ballot, early

tallies show that Democrats will have other runoff elections. No Democrat will win 50% of the vote in the race for the nomination to the general land office or for that of Comptroller.

Elections for any of these races that do end up in a runoff will be held on Tuesday, May 24.

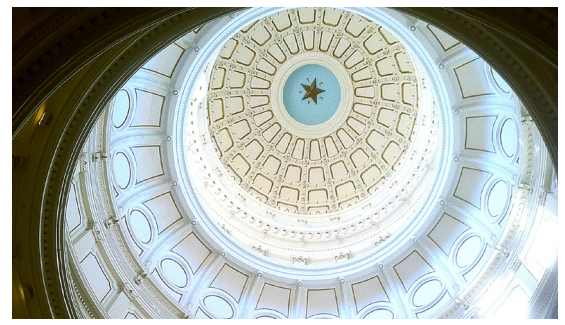
## Cedar Park Public Library earns award for excellence

The Cedar Park Public Library has earned the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association (TMLDA) Excellence in Libraries Award.

Out of the 565 public library systems across the State of Texas, the Cedar Park Public Library is one of only 59 to earn this year's distinction. To earn this award, libraries must demonstrate consistent excellence and outstanding contributions to public library services within their communities.

The Cedar Park Public Library earned this award by:

- Exhibiting excellence in providing services to underserved and special populations
- Enhancing services
- Marketing programs and services in innovative ways
- Promoting cultural, topical and educational programming
- Providing literacy support, summer reading clubs and for digital inclusion
- Pursuing collaborative efforts
- Supporting workforce development
- Comprehensively training Library staff



### CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

#### State high court hears challenge to abortion law

The Texas Supreme Court heard oral arguments last week on the question of whether state regulators can be sued by abortion providers hoping to block enforcement of the state's restrictive abortion law, known as Senate Bill 8.

The Austin American-Statesman reported that abortion providers bringing the suit argued that "state agencies regulating doctors, nurses, pharmacists and the health care system have an enforcement role that makes them an appropriate target of their own lawsuit against SB8."

Solicitor General Judd Stone II argued for the state that the law was written to say only private citizens can enforce SB8 by filing civil suits against abortion providers who violate the ban on abortions after the sixth week of pregnancy.

"The goal here is just to figure out the ordinary English meaning of this statute," Stone argued. "There simply is no ordinary English interpretation that entertains any possibility of public enforcement (by state agencies or regulators)," the Statesman reported.

Abortion providers have filed a number of lawsuits in federal courts, with the U.S. Supreme Court declining to keep the law from taking effect last September as appeals are heard. The case heard in state court last week also will likely end up before the nation's highest court.

#### Comptroller hosting broadband listening tours

State Comptroller Glenn Hegar began touring a dozen Texas communities this month to get insight from Texans about internet access and to receive input as the state develops its first comprehensive broadband internet plan.

The events are free but require registration in advance. The first forum was held March 1 at Prairie View A&M University, with others planned in Victoria, Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Amarillo, Beaumont, Waco, Tyler, Abilene, El Paso, Edinburgh and San Angelo.

Further information and a link to an online survey for those who can't attend can be found here: [comptroller.texas.gov/programs/broadband/communities/tour](https://comptroller.texas.gov/programs/broadband/communities/tour)

#### Abbott orders enhanced protection against cyberattacks

Gov. Greg Abbott has ordered two state agencies to "use every available resource" to safeguard the state's infrastructure as the potential for Russian cyberattacks increases. Abbott sent a letter to the Texas Department of Information Resources and the Texas Department of Public Safety to that effect last week. He ordered DIR and DPS to:

- Enhance Texas' cyber security through the use of best industry practices and other key measures.
- Ensure Texas can quickly detect a potential cyber intrusion through the use of software services, such as antivirus and endpoint detection and response technologies.
- Prepare for an intrusion by utilizing a cyber incident response team.
- Maximize the state's resilience to a destructive cyber incident.
- Track and report any attacks from Russian sources so the public is fully aware of their tactics.

"Protecting the state of Texas from cyber threats during this time of Russian aggression is paramount," Abbott wrote.

#### Arrest made in timber fraud case

Law enforcement investigators with the Texas A&M Forest Service arrested a Magnolia man last week on two counts of timber theft. Philip Eugene McKenzie, Jr., 60, was charged.

"Mr. McKenzie had timber harvest agreements with two Walker County landowners and failed to pay them for the timber that was harvested from their property," said Texas A&M Forest Service Law Enforcement Criminal Investigator Josh Mizrany. In addition, McKenzie has a pending charge for unauthorized timber harvest in Montgomery County.

Timber theft includes harvesting timber without the landowner's knowledge or consent, to entering into a formal agreement and not paying landowners the full purchase price and even stealing timber from logging companies.

Landowners who suspect timber theft or suspicious timber sale agreements should call the forest service timber theft hotline at 1-800-364-3470.

#### Nominations sought for TEA student hero award

The Texas Education Agency is seeking nominations for public school students in all grades who provide an outstanding volunteer service benefiting their fellow students, schools, or their communities. One student from each of the 15 State Board of Education districts will be recognized and will receive a plaque and medal from SBOE.

Nominations may be submitted by anyone. The deadline to nominate an outstanding student is 5 p.m. March 31. The form can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/mubxb7af>.

#### COVID-19 cases continue dropping statewide

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas continues to drop steeply as the omicron variant fades, with 36,814 reported in the past week by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. That is less than 10% of the number reported at the variant's peak in mid-January. A total of 1,127 deaths were reported in the past week, also a sharp decrease. Hospitalizations are also down, with 3,949 reported as of Sunday by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The number of Texans who have been fully vaccinated is slowly inching up, with 17.22 million now fully vaccinated, according to DSHS, with 6.26 million Texans also getting a booster dose.

*Gary Borders, a veteran award-winning Texas journalist, compiled this report. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and, once upon a time, the Hill Country News in Cedar Park. Email: [gborders@texaspress.com](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).*



METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

## Agri-Life offers 3 important programs

It's been cold and dreary out but the weather for the upcoming weekend is springlike.

With spring's arrival, people's thoughts will turn to their lawns and gardens. The Williamson County Agri-Life Extension office has a full schedule of events planned featuring its three major programs: Master Gardeners, Hands On In the Garden and Green Thumbs Up. All these events are free.

#### GREEN THUMBS UP GARDENING PROGRAM FOR MARCH 2022: NATIVE AND ADAPTED PLANTS

For those interested in learning more about which plants do well in this area, the Green Thumbs Up Gardening Program is FREE and open to the public. No registration is required.

The topic for the March program is Native and Adapted Plants, presented by Master Gardener Brenda McIndoo. This program will give you lots of information about which plants to choose for your garden. Green Thumbs Up will be presented at the following locations and times, so you can choose one most convenient to you:

· Round Rock Public Library, Meeting Room A, 216 E. Main St. in Round Rock. Thursday, March 3, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

· Cedar Park Public Library, 550 Discovery Boulevard in Cedar Park. Tuesday, March 8, from 7-8 p.m.

· Brushy Creek Community Center, Oak Room, 16318 Great Oaks Dr in Round Rock. Wednesday, March 23, from noon-1:00 p.m.

#### MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETING: HEALTHY SOILS, HEALTHY PLANTS, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Those interested in organic gardening should check out our March meeting.

Mike Serant is the President and Co-founder of Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance, and manufacturer of MicroLife All Organic Biological Fertilizer. He will present a FREE program about organic gardening, including sustainable lawn and garden practices, pest and disease problems, and cost.

This program is presented by the Master Gardeners of the AgriLife Extension Office and will be held Mon-

day, March 14, 2022, from 7-8 pm. Join us in person at 100 Wilco Way, room 226, Georgetown, or Online.

#### IRRIGATION TUNE-UP TIME

It's time to plan how you will keep your lawn and garden hydrated during the hot Texas summer.

Hands On In the Garden is a FREE monthly gardening program presented by the Master Gardeners of Williamson County. The topic for March is getting your lawn and garden irrigation systems in shape with some simple DIY sprinkler repairs and water-wise practices, presented by Master Gardener Steve Craig and the irrigation team.

Date: Saturday, March 26  
Time: 10-11:30 am

Place: Demonstration Gardens at 3151 SE Inner Loop, Georgetown 78626

The event is free and open to the public. Please bring a lawn chair for your comfort. We hope to see you there!

For more of our events and further information please call our office at 512-943-3300 or visit our website at: <https://williamson.agrilife.org/events/>



#### · WILLIAMSON COUNTY — WILCO.ORG

The Williamson County Commissioners Court is the county's governing body. Commissioners meet beginning at 9:30 each Tuesday morning at the Williamson County Courthouse in downtown Georgetown. Agendas and packets are available, and the meetings are streamed live, on the county's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

#### · LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT — LEANDERISD.ORG

Leander ISD Board of Trustees meet the second and fourth Thursday each month at 6:15 p.m. at 1900 Cougar Country Dr. in Cedar Park. Meetings

are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register. You can find agendas, board meeting packets and a live stream on the district's website.

#### · LAGO VISTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT — LAGOVISTAISD.NET

Lago Vista ISD Board of Trustees meet at 6:15 p.m. on the second Monday of the month at 8039 Bar-K Ranch Road in Lago Vista. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register. You can find agendas and board meeting packets on the district's website.

#### · CITY OF CEDAR PARK — CEDARPARKTEXAS.GOV

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are available, and many meetings

are streamed live, on the city's website.

#### · CEDAR PARK CITY COUNCIL

Meets at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Thursday of each month at City Council Chambers, 450 Cypress Creek Road, Building 4. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

#### · CITY OF LEANDER — LEANDERTX.GOV

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are available, and City Council meetings are streamed live, on the city's website.

#### · LEANDER CITY COUNCIL

Meets at 6 p.m. the first and

third Thursday of each month in the City Council Chambers, Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 N. Brushy Street. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

#### · CITY OF LAGO VISTA — LAGOVISTATEXAS.ORG

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are available on the city's website.

#### · LAGO VISTA CITY COUNCIL

Meets 6:30 p.m. the first and third Thursday of each month in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird Drive. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

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## TEXAS TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

# Put politics on hold; focus on Putin

**BY CHRISTINE FLOWERS**  
DELEWARE COUNTY DAILY TIMES

I'm writing this as Vladimir Putin is eating up Ukraine. Did we fall asleep and wake up in 1938 to hear that Hitler had taken the Sudetenland? Who knew this could happen, in 2022?

Actually, we knew. Putin told us he was going to do it with every public statement that avoided a direct "no," with every troop movement at the border, with every invocation of the sovereignty of the pro-Russian separatist regions. There are no surprises when it comes to Putin's desire to reconstruct the Soviet Union. It's not a matter of "if." It's always been a matter of "when."

As I watch this invasion unfold, switching between networks and social media sites, I've come to the conclusion that we are no longer the breed of American who parachuted onto the shores of Normandy. That sacrificed lives in a bloody grave in the waters of Pearl Harbor, marched with the Fighting 69th to battle Germany a generation before them, and battled in the heat of deserts to avenge the murder of 3,000 fellow citizens.

We are now tribes, divided by loyalties and political expedience. It's not a surprise, given what we've seen unfold over the past 20 to 30 years, but it's a devastating commentary on where we're headed as a nation.

I spent a good part of the last few days unfriending those who blamed Biden for weakness and those who blamed Trump for loving Putin. I don't need their alternative viewpoints, and won't be enriched by their

separate "takes" on the crisis at hand. I'm done with dissent.

That's because whatever you might think of the wisdom of putting boots on the ground in a country located thousands upon thousands of miles away, you cannot simply throw up your hands, offer "thoughts and prayers," and believe that you've done your duty as an American when a dictator swallows up a sovereign nation.

You are also derelict if you try and compare what's happening in Ukraine to our southern border, blaming liberals for caring more about a foreign nation than about our own security and national integrity. That's comparing apples and bloody bodies, or bananas and those standing in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square.

We are obligated to care about our legacy in the world, which has been battered and bruised by many different, flawed men and women. Obama was one. Trump was another. Biden, the failed bureaucrat of Afghanistan, is most definitely and glaringly a third.

But those leaders are not "America." We the people are, and when we start backing off and saying things like "Well, I don't want my nephew or my son or my grandson or my whatever putting boots on anyone else's territory." I despair of ever again being proud of this nation and its history. And if that makes me sound like Michelle Obama, so be it.

On the other hand, you have liberals who are so damn obsessed with what happened on Jan. 6 - something that was regrettable but did not destroy our essential character - they ig-

nore the absolute failure of their own tribe and reach back to blame Trump. To be clear, this invasion happened on their leader's watch, not under the guidance of the man they despise. And yet, if they are calling for engagement, they are making penance for the repellent anti-Americanism they have exhibited in vilifying conservatives over the past years, and decades.

I am devastated to be in this middle place, because I am no moderate. I actually hate that word, because it communicates a lukewarm, tasteless, insubstantial broth. A person without values, in other words. That will anger moderates who believe that they stand on high moral ground. But only those who are willing to make a choice, a decision in moments of crisis occupy that summit. And those who try and see "both" sides are often those who see no side clearly.

Any American who takes more pleasure in attacking her political rival than in seeking comfort and protection for the threatened, or who excuses evil if it advances their own partisan goals, is someone I renounce, and excommunicate, from my life. Effective immediately.

But if you are still reading, and you are still listening, hear this: As someone who cannot shoot a rifle but who has worked with war refugees, please contact me at the below email address if you know of someone in need of assistance in Ukraine. I will try and direct you to someone who can help.

*Christine Flowers is an attorney and a columnist for the Delaware County Daily Times, and can be reached at cflowers1961@gmail.com.*

## GUEST VIEWPOINT

# Put on your church genes

From the time that I was still being knit together in my mother's womb with some defective parts God had left over after making my big brother (he made me write that part), I've been attending Southern Baptist churches.

In fact, one of the first known photos of me was taken on a Sunday morning in 1970 when I had recently been de-wombed and my mother was posing with me in the front yard, both of us wearing heavily-polyestered church clothes.

So I guess you could say that I grew up with red Vacation Bible School Kool-Aid coursing through my veins, and my Southern Baptist heritage has had a profound impact on my worldview—including the high value I place on a 9 X 13 casserole dish.

Here are a few signs that you, too, were raised in the nap-proof wooden pews of Southern Baptist (or similar) churches in the 1970s and 80s.

First, you were always excited about the prospects of a trip to the fellowship hall—because it usually involved red Kool-Aid and/or several 9 X 13 casserole dishes.

And speaking of food, you knew that "dinner on the grounds" was a sacred form of congregational picnic that featured, you guessed it, red Kool-Aid and several 9 X 13 casserole dishes.

And speaking of more food, you knew that when the Lord's Supper was being administered in "big church," the sermon might be a little shorter, and the Dallas Cowboys were probably playing at noon.



**JASE GRAVES**

**GUEST COLUMNIST**

And speaking of even more food, you considered stale Certs mints and Clorets gum from your mother's purse appetizers to get you through that fourth verse of "Just as I Am" before you headed to the fellowship hall, dinner on the grounds or home for a lunch that was probably baked in a 9 X 13 casserole dish.

Before any meal, you could say a blessing in the King James version because you could use "Thee," "Thou," "Thine" and "Thy" without sounding like Daffy Duck.

During "big church," you could do amazing sketch art with one of those eraserless pencil pencils and the back of a complimentary tithing envelope.

When you ran out of tithing envelopes, you could play about 50 games of tic-tac-toe in the margins of the church bulletin with your dad when your mom—and the preacher—weren't looking.

You knew the first, second and last stanzas of almost every selection in the official Baptist Hymnal—located in the back of the pew right next to the improvised art supplies. (The hymnal also served as an excellent lap desk for tithing envelope sketch art and tic-tac-toe.)

You also knew that "God," "Jesus," "Pray," "Read your Bible" and "Go to church" were

the correct answers to approximately 90% of all Sunday School teacher questions.

When the choir director told the congregation to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," some of us only paid attention to the "noise" part.

Seriously, though, I feel truly blessed that my parents exposed me to the gospel shared in church when I was growing up. I've often heard that going to church doesn't make you a believer any more than standing in a garage makes you a car. But for the sake of protection, repair and general maintenance, a garage seems like pretty good place for a car.

And for an imperfect human like me, the church has been instrumental in helping me to stay aligned, balanced, and all those other car metaphors I might know if I wasn't so automotively challenged.

A recent Gallup study showed that since 1999, church membership in the U.S. has dropped by a full 20%, which seems to explain quite a bit about the times in which we live. And although churches aren't perfect places full of perfect people, America might be a different country if more folks still attended church, loved one another and recognized the value of a 9 X 13 casserole dish.

*Copyright 2022 Jase Graves, an award-winning humor columnist from East Texas. His columns have been featured in Texas Escapes magazine, The Shreveport Times, The Longview News Journal, and The Kilgore News Herald. Contact Graves at susanjase@sbcglobal.net.*

GUEST VIEWPOINT

# Leander leaders support local law enforcement

BY CHRISTINE DELISLE  
MAYOR OF LEANDER

A recent article about the candidates for city council elections caught my attention, and not in a good way. One candidate for Leander City Council claimed they were running because they felt that not enough elected officials were vocally supporting law enforcement and that they had to “personally take action” to make that change. As much as I didn’t want to step in to election issues, I feel compelled as both the mayor and the longest-serving member of this council to make a statement about what can only best be called an utter fabrication.

I don’t fault any candidate for claiming to support law enforcement - in my opinion, if you don’t support law enforcement, you aren’t qualified for council. But when a candidate implies that our officers are not supported, that’s not just defamatory, it’s dangerous.

What will residents think when they read that? What will newer officers who haven’t had the chance to regularly interact with us think? And alarmingly, what will good prospective officers we’re hoping to hire think? This sort of comment can cause our great first responders and command staff to second-guess council’s devotion. It can cause great applicants that would be an asset to our city to look elsewhere. And it can dampen the enthusiasm in our community. It’s a morale buster.

It’s not often that I feel offended. I like to think that politics, particularly the type played out on social media in Leander and Cedar Park in recent years, has thickened my skin to the point of being nearly impenetrable. This comment however has me beyond offended - what’s more, I’m offended on behalf of the rest of this council and the 2 previous that I served on. Never once - not once, did I ever see law enforcement anything less than 100% supported.

At our council retreats on both January 29th and February 18th, this council identified “Public Safety” as our number one priority - we agreed that this city could do nothing if we didn’t have public safety and the foundation for all things. For anyone who’s interested in that discussion and (like the candidate who’s statement we’re addressing) didn’t attend

the meetings, that video is available on the city’s website.

In the last two years, Leander City Council has unanimously approved every request involving the Police Department, including hiring and promotions; upgrading cameras, radios, computer-aided dispatch, and records management systems; purchasing new pursuit and fleet vehicles; and renovating the police department building. We do more than attend the annual police awards dinner and pay lip service. We appreciate our PD and we support them, both in-and-out of election season.

I’d also like to remind our readers of an article run in Hill Country News in June of 2020 - It’s titled “Cedar Park, Leander Officials Uniform in Opposing Police Budget Cuts But Community Funding Considered”. In that article, every respondent gave unqualified support for our police department - not just in Leander, but in our neighboring city of Cedar Park as well.

In reflecting on the last several years of articles, council meetings, and even just social gatherings, I cannot think of a single time any member of this or the previous two councils ever betrayed any hesitation to fully support our police.

I am angry. I’m angry at the misinformation and I’m angry that someone would politicize our police in this way. Their job is hard enough without them becoming fodder for campaign season. So I’m going to put this on the record right here: I fully support the Leander Police Department and the Leander Law Enforcement Association. I appreciate their dedication and the risks that they take every day. I value their protection of our community. And while I can only formally speak for myself, I very highly suspect that the entirety of our council is with me lockstep on this one.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to clear the air. I hope very much that the candidate in question was misquoted and this is the last time this issue needs to be addressed. To all of you reading this, please take a moment this week to let our Police Department know that you care as well - send an email, thank them when you see them out and about, or just wave and smile. Let’s reinforce their confidence that they are loved and supported in the Leander community.



Leander Mayor Christine Delisle during a recent ride-along with the Leander Police Department.



Construction on what the federal government says is a levee improvement project near Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park in Mission on Jan. 12, 2022. Local immigrant advocates and environmentalists say the project is actually a border wall.

EDDIE GASPAR/  
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

# Biden’s border moves spur criticism that he’s continuing wall construction

BY URIEL J. GARCÍA  
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

MISSION — For the past eight months, Scott Nicol, an environmental activist in McAllen, has photographed construction crews erecting 15-foot concrete panels topped with 6-foot steel bollards in the Rio Grande Valley.

On a recent January day, Nicol — dressed in jeans, a gray sweater and a black face mask — carried his camera slung from his shoulder as he walked a muddy trail in Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park to a construction site, where he photographed workers in safety vests and tractors flattening and excavating dirt until two National Guard soldiers armed with rifles told him to leave.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection insists the project isn’t a border wall, saying the crews are repairing old earthen levees by building 13 miles of concrete levees topped with guard rails.

But Nicol said, “I think it’s pretty clear that Customs and Border Protection is still building walls.”

And two recently announced federal projects — one to close gaps in border walls built under former President Donald Trump and another to begin an environmental assessment for what would be 86 miles of new border wall in the Rio Grande Valley — have deepened concerns by anti-wall activists that President Joe Biden has abandoned his campaign promise that “there will not be another foot of [border] wall constructed” during his administration.

Biden quickly halted wall construction and began reversing many of Trump’s other border and immigration policies after taking office. He has left in place the pandemic health order issued in 2020 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, known as Title 42, to rapidly expel migrants at the border without allowing them to apply for asylum.

“The general perception was that when Trump left the White House, all the problems would go away related to immigration, but that certainly has not been the case,” said Efrén C. Olivares, deputy legal director for immigrant justice at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The Biden administration says the plan it announced in December to close construction access gaps in walls built under the Trump administration — mostly in Arizona — is part of a bigger project aimed at ensuring safety for border agents, preventing flooding and fixing environmental damage caused by contractors rushing to build as much wall as possible before Trump left office.

The gaps, ranging from a few feet to 100 feet across, were left open as

**“If you’re talking about 100 feet, that’s 100 feet where an endangered wolf or jaguar could cross. If you block that off, now it’s miles in both directions before there’s any kind of an opening, so that gap is really important.”**

— Scott Nicol, environmental activist

construction access areas but were not closed before Biden halted wall construction.

Environmental activists are urging the administration to leave the gaps open so wildlife and endangered species can cross the barrier to find food and mates.

“If you’re talking about 100 feet, that’s 100 feet where an endangered wolf or jaguar could cross,” Nicol said. “If you block that off, now it’s miles in both directions before there’s any kind of an opening, so that gap is really important.”

Republicans, however, want the gaps closed to prevent migrants from using them to cross the border.

The second project, announced in January, seeks public input until March 7 on potential environmental impacts for a proposal to build 86 miles of new border barriers in the Rio Grande Valley. That would be more than four times longer than the 21 miles of new barriers built on the Texas-Mexico border during the Trump administration.

Biden has asked Congress to cancel funding for the border wall, but Congress hasn’t done so.

Customs and Border Protection said the environmental assessment is a way to continue spending the funds Congress appropriated under Trump.

“While the funds remain appropriated ... CBP is conducting environmental planning concerning the proposed construction,” Paul Enriquez, the deputy director of the CBP infrastructure division, said in the announcement.

An environmental impact study can take months to several years, depending on the results of the study. The George W. Bush and Trump administrations both issued waivers to bypass federal environmental regulations to fast-track the construction of border barriers.

Texas Republicans have repeatedly sued Biden for reversing Trump’s immigration policies and failing to spend money Congress approved for border wall construction.

In one lawsuit filed by the

attorneys general of Texas and Missouri, a federal judge last year ordered the Biden administration to restart Trump’s Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as “remain in Mexico,” a program that forces asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico as their legal cases make their way through U.S. courts.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Land Commissioner George P. Bush, who is running for attorney general, also have sued the Biden administration for halting border wall construction and claim it is illegal to use the \$5.5 billion Congress appropriated for anything other than border barriers.

“The Biden administration’s flat refusal to use funds that have already been set aside by Congress to build the border wall is not only illegal and unconstitutional. It’s also wrong,” Paxton said in October when he filed the lawsuit in federal court.

Citing a September letter from former Border Patrol Chief Rodney Scott to Congress regarding Biden immigration policies, the lawsuit says the Biden administration has been slow-rolling the spending of border wall money.

Scott’s letter says the Biden administration discussed “options to do the least action possible to avoid [breaking the law] without doing any construction” on the wall.

In court documents, Biden administration lawyers say Congress gave the Department of Homeland Security up to five years to spend border wall funds, and the agency can spend it to pay for wall contract cancellation fees, cleaning up abandoned construction sites and conducting environmental impact studies.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office, an investigative branch of Congress, concluded in a report published last June that the Biden administration isn’t permanently withholding funds for border wall construction but instead is delaying spending the money.

The Department of Homeland Security “asserts that it is not impounding funds because it is not withholding funds from obligation or expenditure, and we agree,” the report says.

Ricky Garza, a staff attorney for the Texas Civil Rights Project, which represented families fighting the federal government’s efforts to seize private land in the Rio Grande Valley for federal wall construction, said the Biden administration is sending contradictory messages on immigration and border issues.

“What we’ve seen is this double-speak message, that these are not the Trump years, but when the rubber meets the road they defend Title 42, and now we’re seeing this quiet expansion of physical border wall,” Garza said.



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# SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

**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!

**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.

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

ANSWER:

# MASKS

from page A1

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said the new system reflects a belief that the country has entered a different phase of the pandemic. Communities now have more tools to protect themselves from the virus, including an increased access to vaccines, testing and high-quality masks.

A federal mandate still requires Texans to wear face coverings on buses, trains and planes, though the order is set to expire on March 18.

The most recent reports from the Williamson County and Cities Health District show a decided downward trajectory in the spread of the disease. After recording nearly 35,000 new cases during the two-months long Omicron surge, daily reports, seven-day average infection rates and hospitalizations have subsided.

Over the past weekend, only 75 new cases were reported. The seven-day new case average is back to pre-surge levels at 38.29 per day and dropping. The seven-day average infection rate has dropped to 6.8 per 100,000 population and

only about 6% of hospital regional capacity is devoted to lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients.

People are still dying, however. So far, 115 have died this year, 50 of them this month. The county's death toll stands at 854.

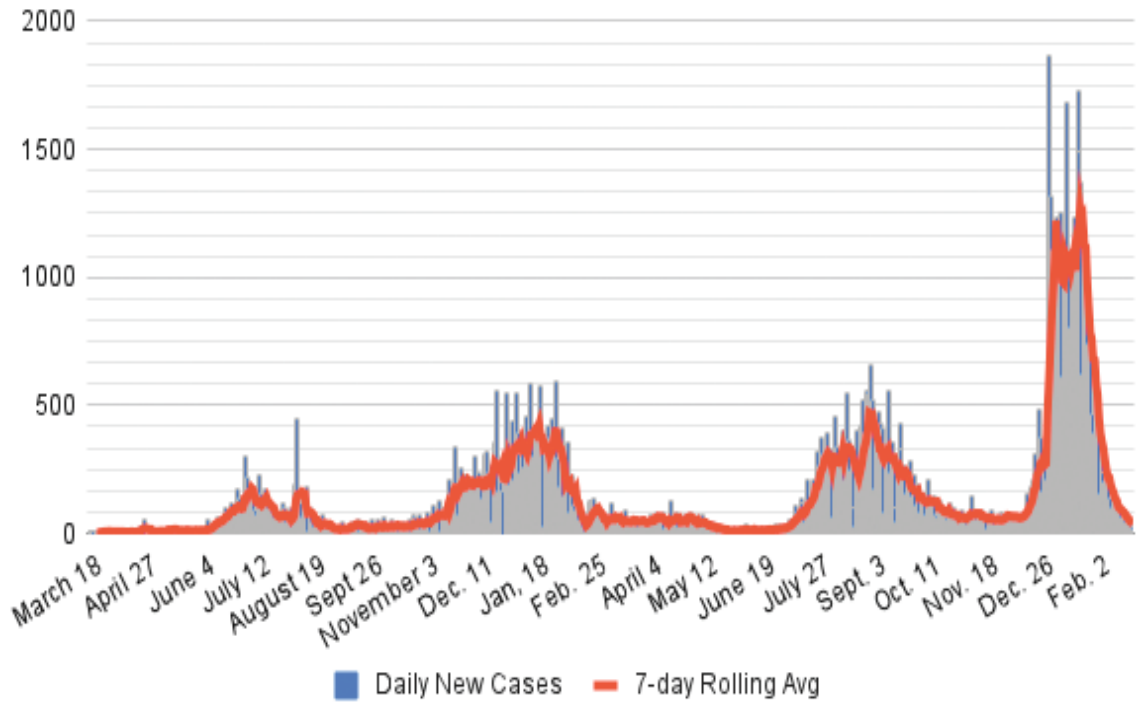
Across the state, the Texas Department of State Health Services estimate that more than 83,000 people have died. Nationally, the CDC estimate stands at more than 950,000.

According to a separate CDC report released last week, more than 140 million people in the U.S. have had the coronavirus, about double the rate regularly cited in national case counts. The estimates, which were based on 72,000 blood tests, suggest that about 43% of the country has been infected, including a majority of children.

WilCo health officials report that about 110,000 county residents have been infected. About 5.4 million Texans have been infected.

According to the CDC report, about 37 million contracted the virus during the Omicron surge.

## COVID over time — Williamson County



# North Shore News



## North Lake Travis CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Lago Vista  
Jonestown | Point Venture

# We have an exciting year ahead

The first Chamber of Commerce Luncheon for our current year was a clear testament to the exciting year we have in store for our members and our community. During our end of year hiatus, we conducted elections for our Board of Directors, Business of the Year, Chamber Member of the Year, Citizen of the Year and Board Member of the Year. The new Board assisted Executive Director Jennifer Sandoval in announcing the winners.

Several of our new members also received their plaques before attentively listening to Jared Fields of the Perdarnales Electric Cooperative and enjoying a delicious lunch prepared by American Girl Grill.



Left to Right: Chamber Member of the Year, Emily Dieckmann of Dieckmann Realty Group; Business of the Year, Suzy Valles, owner of The Wild Navy; Citizen of the Year, Denise Sellers, President of Keep Lago Vista Beautiful; and Board Member of the Year, Trish Aikman, owner of The Hill Country Mobile Notary.



2022-23 Board members look on as new members (left to right) Matt Morcher from the Lucky Rabbit, Libni Garcia Fontanez from Libni Top Modeling and David Morley from the Jonestown Dark Sky Initiative receive their plaques.

# March Chamber Luncheon Changed to March 23

Be sure to make note of the change in date

The luncheon will be held at K-Oaks Clubhouse at the traditional hour of 11:00 am. This adjustment is made to accommodate Spring break and to give everyone a chance to visit with our guest speaker, Ann Howard, Commissioner for Precinct 3. According to Ann, land, water, fire and traffic will continue to dominate the conversation along with COVID-19, criminal justice and overall safety. Precinct 3 is challenged to balance growth with environmental stewardship amidst the governmental soup that oversees transportation, land use and water. Her goal is to emphasize customer service to help our constituents understand which governmental agency governs what, what policy options exist.



Ann Howard  
Precinct 3 Commissioner

Our luncheon sponsor is Imelda Faught with Spy Glass Realty and a delicious lunch will be served by Chef in the House Catering. Reservations are open on our website; just navigate to March 23 on the Events Calendar.



Imelda Faught  
REALTOR®



# Cajun Fest is BACK!

April 2

## Jones Brothers Park

Jonestown will once again bring the joie de vivre of a great New Orleans vibe to the North Shore with plenty of crawfish, four bands with Cajun and Zydeco music, a parade, games, treats and FUN. Save the date and be sure to come hungry!



Leander's train station on the Cap Metro rail system.

JOSH MONIZ

## Cedar Park plans bonding package

With Cedar Park's 2015 bonds finally winding down to completion, Cedar Park voters will decide on May 7 whether to approve a new \$158.8 million bonding package.

The Bond Advisory Task Force designed the size and scope of the proposal to fund the next wave of major capital projects in Cedar Park over the next five to seven years without requiring any raising of the city's tax rate.

The bond proposal is broken down into three separate propositions: \$86.6 million for Transportation projects under Proposition A, \$42.2 million for Parks and Recreation projects under Proposition B and \$30 million for Public Safety projects under Proposition C.

Similar to the Leander City Council's challenges, the Cedar Park City Council approved broad language to avoid legal limits on how they can use these funds if voters approve them.

However, the Council and city staff have a list of about 20 recommended city projects they hope to fund with these bonds.

Under Proposition C, the list would dedicate the majority of this proposition's funds towards building a joint police, fire and emergency management training facility that includes a hardened Emergency Operations Center to be used by Emergency Management for City disasters or emergencies.

Under Proposition B, the list would dedicate \$22.7 million, or just under half this proposition's funding, towards completing the second and final phase of the 200-acre Lakeline Park project.

Another \$8.2 million would go to expanding and remodeling Veterans Park Pool, \$5.8 million would go towards converting multi-use fields to synthetic turf and improving parking at the Brushy Creek Sports Park Athletic Fields and \$5.4 million would go towards lighting along existing Parks trails and reconstruction of existing trails at Milburn Park.

Under Proposition A, the list would seek a combined total of about \$55.4 million for a wide variety of mobility and road safety projects that includes road expansions and extensions, intersection improvements, turn lane improvements and traffic signal improvements.

Additionally, it would seek to use a further \$22 million for various types of road surface improvements and repairs, including \$3.3 million to repair damage from the February 2021 ice storm and make safety improvements to the surface of Lakeline Boulevard.

Finally, it would seek a combined \$8.6 million for various bike and pedestrian improvements.

## LANGUAGE

from page A1

Leander currently levies a combined total of 2% in sales tax — a 1% sales tax that already goes to the General Fund and a second 1% sales tax that goes only to Cap Metro. The total is the maximum combined total the state allows a city to levy and the companion ballot would not change how much the city taxes, only where the revenues from the second 1% sales tax would go if an exit is approved by voters.

Even the Council members who are the most ardent supporters of exiting Cap Metro only want the exit so they can use the sales tax revenues for something more useful, such as economic development. All of the Council feels that a Cap Metro exit passing but the companion ballot failing would be a disaster because it would result in Leander losing service in exchange for nothing.

If this sales tax companion ballot fails, the Council wouldn't be able to call a new one for a year.

### CHALLENGES

The crux of the problem that could cause confusion for voters is paradoxically the dry, clear language legally required for ballots to prevent voters from being misled.

First, the ballot language cannot advocate for or against its own passage and the Council cannot put much more additional language on the ballot without the risk of the state rejecting it or voters later suing the City because the ballot was misleading.

The Council extensively discussed what possible options are available to

them at their Feb. 17 meeting, noting the only ballots submitted by area cities in recent years were only able to get more detailed information if they were dedicating funds to a more restricted source, such as dedicating it only to street maintenance.

The Council briefly discussed adding a third ballot that would dedicate half of these 1% sales tax revenues to only economic development agreements just to find a way to convey intent on the ballot. However, they ultimately decided against it because they feel it would only make the issue even more confusing.

Second, the Council isn't able to add more explanation language because the current language is more factually accurate.

The current Council has been very explicit about its intent to use the funds for economic development, public transportation and growth needs. They are mulling passing a resolution just to boost public confidence in their commitment to the plan.

However, future Councils will have the right to change where those funds go, so the ballot language has to convey this fact. For example, once Leander is built out in the future, the Council won't have any use for economic development agreements and would want to use the funds for other purposes.

Third, if any specific entity, organization or fund is listed in the ballot language, state law limits usage of funds or other resources approved in that ballot to only those entities until a new ballot is passed. The Council is avoiding

specifying too many specifics on the ballots to avoid accidentally tying their hands with the funds.

The specter of the yet-unbuilt new Senior Center and Recreation Center hangs over all three of these problems. A previous Council claims they always planned to enlist the YMCA to run the planned Recreation Center but didn't list it in the ballot because they would have then been prevented from swapping in a better option in the future. Some residents and later Council members criticized the plan and claimed they were misled about the plan by the ballot language.

Regardless of who is right, the resulting political fallout stalled both projects and neither have been built to this day despite being approved by voters in 2016.

State ethic rules prohibit Council members from advocating for or against the passage of a ballot. So, the best way forward for informing the public will rely on city staff's extensive public information campaign, which they plan to push over the coming months.

City staff plans to establish an information page on the City's website providing clear facts about the ballot and some information about the Council's intent without advocating for or against the package. They also plan to send copies of the information to Leander's registered voters and promote it over the City's social media pages.

The Council is hoping the best way to clear up confusion caused by a clearly worded ballot is clear language from the City itself.

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Sealed responses addressed to the Purchasing Department, City of Leander, 105 N. Brushy Street, Leander, Texas 78641, for:

### CITY OF LEANDER LEASE OF GOLF CARTS

will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., March 17, 2022 then be publicly acknowledged.

The City of Leander seeks an agreement with a qualified Individual, Firm, or Corporation to provide ninety (90) golf carts and two (2) utility carts for a lease period of 48 months commencing on September 1, 2022. New vehicles, model years 2021, 2022 or 2023 are acceptable.

Questions can be directed to the City of Leander Purchasing Department at [kwenzel@leandertx.gov](mailto:kwenzel@leandertx.gov) or 512-528-2792. Solicitation documents and complete specifications may be downloaded from the City website at <https://bids.leandertx.gov/>.

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Sealed responses addressed to the Purchasing Department, City of Leander, 105 N. Brushy Street, Leander, Texas 78641, for:

### CITY OF LEANDER OLD TOWN MASTER PLAN

will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., March 17, 2022 then be publicly acknowledged.

**PURPOSE:** The City of Leander seeks an agreement with a qualified Individual, Firm, or Corporation, to provide an Old Town Master Plan.  
**GOAL:** The City of Leander recognizes that there is a great opportunity for the promotion and revitalization of the historic town center, Old Town. Citizens describe the future of Old Town as: funky, artsy, pedestrian-scaled, historic hot spot, restaurant.

Questions can be directed to the City of Leander Purchasing Department at [kwenzel@leandertx.gov](mailto:kwenzel@leandertx.gov) or 512-528-2792. Solicitation documents and complete specifications may be downloaded from the City website at <https://bids.leandertx.gov/>.

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Sealed responses addressed to the Purchasing Department, City of Leander, 105 N. Brushy Street, Leander, Texas 78641, for:

### CITY OF LEANDER PARK AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE AND MOWING

will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., March 17, 2022 then be publicly acknowledged.

The City of Leander seeks an agreement with a qualified Individual, Firm, or Corporation to provide full, turnkey services inclusive of necessary equipment and labor to maintain various park property and municipal buildings as specified herein resulting in clean, attractive and safe areas. Work shall include mowing, edging, fertilization and ornamental bed pruning, maintenance and mulching at select locations.

Questions can be directed to the City of Leander Purchasing Department at [kwenzel@leandertx.gov](mailto:kwenzel@leandertx.gov) or 512-528-2792. Solicitation documents and complete specifications may be downloaded from the City website at <https://bids.leandertx.gov/>.

## INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to TRAVIS COUNTY MUD NO. 20 Attention Samuel G. Billings, President, Board of Directors, will be received at the office of Pape Dawson Engineers, Inc., 10801 North Mopac Expressway, Building 3, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78759, until 2:00 p.m. Local Time, March 18, 2022, and then publicly opened and read for "TRAVISSO PHASE 5, SECTION 1" for Leander, Travis County, Texas.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: Reclaimed Water Irrigation and Landscaping Improvements.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A **MANDATORY** pre-bid conference will be held on March 4, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. Local Time, at the office of Pape Dawson Engineers, Inc., 10801 North Mopac Expressway, Building 3, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78759. Attendance by each prospective bidder or its representative at the pre-bid conference is **MANDATORY**, and no Bid will be opened unless the bidder or representative was present at the pre-bid conference.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Payment and Performance Bonds on the forms provided, and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor.

Copies of the bidding documents are on file at the following locations: 10801 North Mopac Expressway, Building 3, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78759.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The Successful Bidder, if any, will be the responsible Bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

TRAVIS COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT  
NO. 20

**Notice is hereby given in accordance with the terms of the provisions of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code**

**THAT: Leander Stores, L.L.C. d/b/a Corner Market**

**HAS FILED APPLICATION FOR A: Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's Off-Premise Permit**

**SAID BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED AT: 1701 S Highway 183, Leander, Williamson County, Texas 78641**

**OWNER: Leander Stores, L.L.C.  
7211 BTCM, LLC-Member  
Omar Bashir-Manager/Member of  
7211 BTCM, LLC**

## CITY OF LAGO VISTA, TEXAS NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND INTENT TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS, TAXABLE SERIES 2022

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Lago Vista, Texas ("the City"), intends to issue its General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Taxable Series (the "Bonds") for the purpose of providing funds for (i) refunding the Refunded Obligations and (ii) paying the costs of issuing the Bonds. The City will conduct a public hearing at its meeting to commence at 6:30 p.m. on March 17, 2022, expected to be held at the Lago Vista City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird, Lago Vista, Texas, on the issuance by the City of the Bonds. Due to the ongoing public health concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, and as may be authorized by an Executive Order of the Governor of Texas, such meeting may be conducted via a free public video conference or other lawful electronic means. In such event, information regarding how to access the meeting and public participation in the meeting will be available on the City's website and in the agenda posted no less than 72 hours before the March 17, 2022 meeting. The following information is included in this Notice pursuant to Sections 8.10 and 8.11 of the City's Home Rule Charter: (i) the relevant statutory provisions providing for a petition and election: none; (ii) the time, date and place at which the ordinance authorizing the issuance of the Bonds is planned to be authorized: at the meeting of the City Council to commence at 6:30 p.m. on March 17, 2022, at the Lago Vista City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird, Lago Vista, Texas or via a free public video conference or other lawful electronic means; (iii) the manner and funding source proposed for the payment of the Bonds is ad valorem taxes; (iv) the maximum principal amount of the Bonds to be issued is \$8,000,000; and (v) the purpose for which the Bonds will be issued is to provide funds for refunding certain outstanding debt of the City for debt service savings.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Leander Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on March 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

AND

The City of Leander City Council will meet on April 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

Conduct a Public Hearing and consider action regarding Zoning Case 22-TOD-Z-004 to amend the current zoning of SFU-2-B (Single-Family Urban), GC-3-C (General Commercial), and T4 Transect (General Urban Zone) to T5 Transect (Urban Center Zone) on twenty-one parcels of land approximately 6.652 acres ± in size, more particularly described by Williamson Central Appraisal District Parcel R036035-R036040, R036043-R036046, R036072, R036074, R036078-R036080, R036087-R036089, R036104, R036105, and R097401; and generally located on the east side of N Brushy Street between W Broade Street and W South Street, and located along Broade Street between Brushy Street and N West Drive, Leander, Williamson County, Texas. Applicant/Agent: City of Leander on behalf of Robert Abbott, Baireuth LLC, Mark A. & Mary Jeanene Snyder, Terry & Iris E Davis, Iris T Davis Trustee of the Edna Conner Beasley Charitable Trust, MKS Stewardship LLC, Glenn R Saler, 105 W Willis LLC & the No 1 Sideline INC, Vilma E Valdivieso, Douglas W & Della Fay Lohmann, Randall Lee McSpadden, R & R Elite Investments LLP, William Wade & Heike Ward, Peggy Sue Whitt (LE) & Dennis J Roberts, CJJJP LLC, Century Water Solutions LLC, Krasniqi Real Estate Holdings LLC, and Joshua Waley.

Conduct a Public Hearing and consider action regarding Ordinance Case 22-OR-001 to amend the Composite Zoning Ordinance to adopt regulations for Mobile Food Establishments, update accessory structure requirements, updating definitions, and to provide for related matters; Williamson & Travis Counties, Texas. Applicant: City of Leander.

Conduct a Public Hearing regarding Special Use Case 22-SU-001 to allow for the temporary residential use of a travel trailer or recreational vehicle for use by an ill, convalescent or otherwise disabled friend or relative needing care from the occupant of the primary residence, or a friend or relative providing necessary care for an ill, convalescent or otherwise disabled occupant; on one parcel of land approximately 0.3856 acres ± in size, more particularly described by Williamson Central Appraisal District Parcel R036092; and more commonly known as 107 Bagdad Street, Leander, Williamson County, Texas. Applicant/Agent: Faith Wickcy.

Robin M. Griffin, Planning Director  
512-528-2750

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Sealed responses addressed to the Purchasing Department, City of Leander, 105 N. Brushy Street, Leander, Texas 78641, for:

### CITY OF LEANDER PLAN REVIEW, BUILDING AND FIRE INSPECTION SERVICES

will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., March 17, 2022 then be publicly acknowledged.

The City of Leander seeks an agreement with a qualified Individual, Firm, or Corporation to provide as-needed Plan Review, Building and Fire Inspection Services, herein "Services".

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Leander is located 25 miles north of Austin on Highway 183. The City issued over 2,400 residential building permits in 2021 and is expected to exceed that in 2022. Due to this sustained increase in residential and commercial construction projects in the City, the need for plan review and inspection services continues to rise. The City employs a number of staff inspectors and contracted inspection firms, however, the City seeks additional turnkey, outsourcing relationships with one or more inspection companies to assist with workload on an as-needed basis with various permits and inspections. The Building Inspection and Fire Departments oversee the plan review and building and fire inspection services for the City. The successful respondent hired by the City to provide the Services shall report directly to the Building Inspection Department and/or Fire Marshall Office, as applicable, in addition to interacting with the public, citizens of Leander, design and construction professionals and other City staff members.

Respondents do not need to propose on all services listed.

Questions can be directed to the City of Leander Purchasing Department at [kwenzel@leandertx.gov](mailto:kwenzel@leandertx.gov) or 512-528-2792. Solicitation documents and complete specifications may be downloaded from the City website at <https://bids.leandertx.gov/>.

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## Driussi and Ring leading reinvigorated Austin FC midfield

BY ZACH SMITH  
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

The biggest tactical shift for Austin FC in the offseason was pushing Alex Ring more forward. Early indications are that the move is going to make a solid group even more dominant.

The 30-year-old midfielder scored a goal and led the team with four key passes as Austin FC kicked off the 2022 MLS season with a 5-0 win over FC Cincinnati, the largest margin of victory in a season-opening match in league history.

"I think you saw glimpses of how good we can be today, and I hope we'll get even more together," Ring said. "Everyone understands their role."

Cecilio Dominguez finished with a pair of goals and Sebastian Driussi had a goal and an assist.

All the goals and assists credited to Austin FC on Saturday were by players that were with the team last year and, more importantly, have an even firmer understanding of head coach Josh Wolff's style of play.

"I would like to think what we've been working on and building for a year is on display," Wolff said. "I'm excited by what the potential is, and we'll continue to work on it. To get the shutout and five goals is an example of what we can be."

The starting XI included nine players from last year's squad, with veteran striker Maxi Urruti starting up top and rookie defender Kipp Keller in central defense.

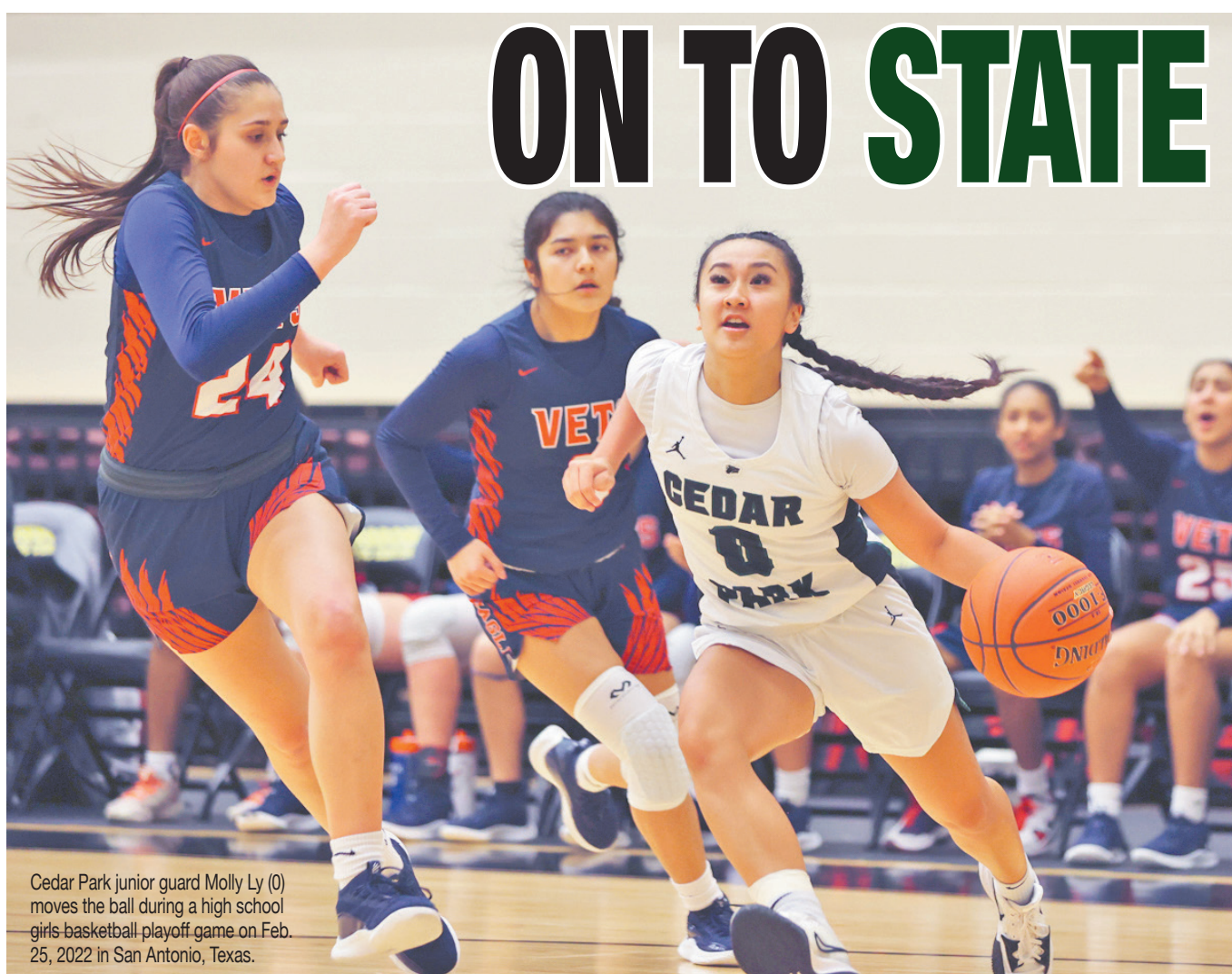
New signings Jhojan Valencia, Ethan Finlay, Ruben Gabrielson and Felipe Martins all made their debuts for the Verde & Black as second-half substitutes.

"The character and the personality and the quality that we added to the team helps now propel this thing in a new direction," Wolff said. "It's still related to the identity that we have,

See **SOCCER**, page A12



Austin FC forward Sebastian Driussi (7) celebrates after scoring a goal in the first half of a Major League Soccer match on Feb. 26, 2022 in Austin, Texas.



Cedar Park junior guard Molly Ly (0) moves the ball during a high school girls basketball playoff game on Feb. 25, 2022 in San Antonio, Texas.

## CEDAR PARK EMPHASIZING DEFENSE AHEAD OF SECOND STRAIGHT STATE APPEARANCE

BY ZACH SMITH  
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

Cedar Park junior Gisella Maul has made her fair share of eye-popping plays and clutch shots on offense, but she gets just as much joy from stopping one.

As the old saying goes, defense wins championships, and the Timberwolves have taken that to heart this season, allowing less than 35 points per game on their way to the state tournament for the second year in a row.

"We are a team that takes defense really seriously," Maul said. "We know that gets us going, and that's what we've been focusing on (all season). Really my entire time at Cedar Park, I'd consider us a defensive team first."

That defense will be put to the test again this week at the state tournament at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

Cedar Park will face College Station in the first semifinal at 7 p.m. on Thursday. Frisco Liberty and Amarillo face off in the other

semifinal, and the winners will play for a state title Saturday at 3 p.m.

Cedar Park gave up double digits in the quarter for the first time in the postseason in the first quarter against Corpus Christi Veterans Memorial Friday night in the regional semifinals in San Antonio.

The Timberwolves came out in the second half and held the Eagles to one field goal and three total points in the third quarter, running away for a 59-35 win.

"They were mad (in the locker room at halftime) about the way they played defense," Cedar Park head coach Donny Ott said. "Defense is the one thing that travels. You can take it everywhere."

Good defense leads to a good offense, and Maul is one of the best offensive players in the state, averaging nearly 26 points per game.

In the regional tournament, Maul finished with a double-double in the win over Veterans Memorial, scoring 26 points and grabbing 10 rebounds, and followed that

See **STATE**, page A12



Cedar Park junior guard Gisella Maul (21) leans into contact while driving to the basket during a high school girls basketball playoff game on Feb. 25, 2022 in San Antonio, Texas.

PHOTOS BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN



Arkansas shortstop Jalen Battles (2) tags out Stanford second baseman Tommy Troy (12) at second base as second base umpire Mike Morris makes the call during an NCAA baseball game on Feb. 27, 2022 in Round Rock, Texas. Stanford won 5-0.

## No. 6 Stanford downs Arkansas to win Round Rock Classic

BY ZACH SMITH  
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

No. 6 Stanford finished 3-0 on the weekend, including a 5-0 win over No. 2 Arkansas on Sunday, to win the 2022 Round Rock Classic at Dell Diamond.

"I love playing tournaments,

and this stadium and field is a great venue to hold a tournament," Stanford head coach David Esquer said. "The opponents were second to none. We're fortunate to come out with three wins."

Quinn Matthews threw a gem in the most high-profile game of the weekend allowing just two hits

and four walks with a career-best 10 strikeouts over six shutout innings against Arkansas.

"The control aspect was the biggest upside for me, I was in control for more than six innings," Matthews said. "It was a good day

See **BASEBALL**, page A12

## Texas falls to Baylor in final men's basketball game at Erwin Center

BY ZACH SMITH  
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

Texas couldn't send the Frank Erwin Center out on a high note.

In the final men's basketball game at the 45-year-old arena, the No. 21 Longhorns lost to No. 3 Baylor 68-61 in front of a sold-out crowd of more than 16,000 on Monday night.

"The outcome of the game was disappointing for us, but it can't and it should not take away from the last game ever here," head coach Chris Beard said. "The Erwin Center has meant so much for so many people over the years."

The Texas Men's basketball team is 549-143 all-time at the Frank Erwin Center. They will play in the \$340 million Moody Center being built across the street beginning next season.

The Texas Women's team still has one more game at "The Drum" Saturday afternoon against Oklahoma State and will most likely host the NCAA Tournament.

Christian Bishop finished with a double-double, scoring 13 points and grabbing 11 re-

bounds, while Marcus Carr also scored 13 points and Timmy Allen added 10 points. Jase Febres added seven points off the bench.

The Longhorns shot 17.4% (4-for-23) from 3-point range.

"You get in the tournament and you have a bad shooting night, how are you going to win the game?" Beard said. "You've got to get the free-throw line or have a special performance on defense."

Baylor guard James Akinjo neared a triple-double with 19 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, while Adam Flagler scored 19 points for the Bears.

Bishop tied the game at 54 apiece with just over six minutes left in the second half, but the Bears went on a 7-0 run over the next five minutes to pull away for good.

"I think we're playing our best ball, but maybe not our best shooting," Beard said.

Texas closes out the regular season on the road at No. 6 Kansas on Saturday.

"We're right there," Beard said. "We've just got to turn the corner in March, and that's always been our plan."

# Top-ranked Texas sweeps Alabama

BY ZACH SMITH  
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

It's been nearly 100 years since Alabama and Texas faced each other in baseball. If last weekend is any indication, it might be another century until the Crimson Tide want to plan a return trip. The top-ranked Longhorns swept Alabama in three games at Disch-Falk field, capped off by a 6-1 win on Sunday afternoon.

"We always have the mindset that we've got to win on Sunday," shortstop Trey Faltine said. "We really want to bring that focus and energy on Sunday. It's a big game to separate the good teams from great teams."

The last time the two teams met in Austin was in April 1922. The three-game series against Alabama was the first time the Longhorns and Crimson Tide met since the 1983 College World Series, where Texas won its fourth National Championship.

Sophomore Tanner Witt (2-0, 1.64 ERA) had a career day in the second start of his Texas career, giving up one run on four hits with a career-high nine strikeouts in six innings of work. Lucas Gordon had one strikeout in two innings of relief, and Aaron Nixon earned his third save of the year, allowing two hits and striking out two in the ninth inning.

"I had everything working and was throwing a lot of strikes," Witt said. "The biggest



Texas shortstop Trey Faltine (0) during an NCAA baseball game on Feb. 19, 2022 in Austin, Texas.

SCOTT W. COLEMAN

thing today was attacking, especially with the wind blowing in today."

Texas outscored Alabama 9-1 on the weekend and has outscored its opponents 62-8 in eight games.

Pete Hansen struck out eight batters in five innings, and Skyler Messenger scored the only run of the game in the Longhorns' 1-0 win on Friday. Doug Hodo III and Trey Faltine each drove in a run, while Tristan Stevens struck out four in Saturday's 2-0 win over the Crimson Tide.

"You're never going to be perfect, but I really felt like we

played as clean of a series as we could play," Texas head coach David Pierce said.

Witt cruised through four innings, allowing no hits and striking out six in that span.

After loading the bases in the bottom of the fourth, Ivan Melendez scored when Todd grounded out to third base.

Owen Diodati tied the game with the first Alabama hit when he blasted his second home run of the season over the wall in right field. Witt got revenge on Diodati one inning later when he struck him out with the bases loaded to keep the game tied.

"I kind of thrive in those

situations, so it wasn't anything that I haven't done before," Witt said. "I was ready for it, and I just wanted to attack."

Texas got some production from the bottom part of the order when Faltine drove in a pair of runs immediately followed by an RBI single by nine-hole hitter Dylan Campbell in the bottom of the sixth.

"We have a deep lineup, and there is no drop off 1-9," Faltine said. "That's something me and the guys at the bottom of the order take pride in. That's a reflection of the coaching staff and the hard work the entire team puts in."

Campbell scored on an Alabama balk in the eighth inning. Murphy Stehly tripled off the right-field wall in the next at-bat to push the lead to 6-1.

Texas is away from Disch-Falk field for the next five games and 10 of the next 11 games, beginning Tuesday at Sam Houston. The Longhorns play three games at Minute Maid Park in Houston beginning Friday.

The Longhorns take on Texas State in a home-and-home series midweek, facing the Bobcats in San Marcos on March 8 and at Disch-Falk Field on March 9.

"We're really good at home, and we've proven that," Pierce said. "Going on the road is a different environment. It's a great test for us. I'm looking for us to go out and continue to play clean. It's gonna be a grind for us."

## BASEBALL

from page A11

overall. I'm just going to try to carry that on."

Matthews was one of four Stanford players on the All-Tournament team. Cardinal designated hitter Brett Berrera was named Tournament MVP after finishing with seven hits, eight RBIs and a pair of home runs.

Arkansas reliever Kole Ramage and infielder Cayden Wallace were also on the All-Tournament team.

Indiana was represented by infielder Phillip Glasser and outfielders Bobby Whalen and Morgan Colopy, while Louisiana player Will Veilan was named as one of the top outfielders of the tournament.

Arkansas took second place in the tournament with a 2-1 record, while Indiana finishes 1-2 and Louisiana finished 0-3.

## STATE

from page A11

up with 17 points in a win over Liberty Hill in the regional final.

"I've been in the gym a lot working on things I knew I wasn't too good at," she said. "I spend hours in the gym putting up shots. My mentality and confidence have been really good this season."

That work ethic has rubbed off not just on her teammates, but her coaches too.

"She worked so hard in the summer to elevate all the parts of her game," Ott said. "She's meticulously worked on her craft. It's been fun to watch her put it all together with her teammates, and it's very rewarding for the team and her."

There are only two girls' high school teams in the country with a winning streak longer than Cedar Park's 59-game run, and both of them are private schools.

For Maul, winning only gets better as the Timberwolves keep rolling. If that streak gets to 61 games, they'll have another state championship ring as well.

"Achieving something like that is amazing," Maul said. "Especially when we play the kind of defense we know we can play. We know our offense is going to come to us most of the time. It's really rewarding when you can shut a team out. Each and every win feels more special."

## SOCCER

from page A11

but there are winners that have come to play that understand it's about being connected."

One of the biggest struggles for Austin FC a season ago was its inability to consistently claw back from an early deficit.

The Verde & Black didn't need to worry about that at all on Saturday when Dominguez scored on a set piece two

minutes in and Ring slammed home a close-range shot about 10 minutes later.

Diego Fagundez, Ring and Driussi combined for a beautiful team goal just before halftime, Dominguez finished off his brace early in the second half and, after some nice footwork from Moussa Djitte, Cincinnati keeper Alec Kann was charged with an own

goal in the 93rd minute.

"I think tonight was a performance to build on," Wolff said. "I think it's the culmination of a long preseason and a preseason that was layered in with some adversity and some adjustments we had to make, but it got us to today."

Austin FC only won back-to-back games just once last

season, but it will look to equal that mark when Inter Miami CF comes to Q2 Stadium Sunday afternoon.

"I know how challenging this league is, week by week it's a grind," Wolff said. This was just the first week, we got a win, and the guys will enjoy that. We'll make sure we don't get too carried away."

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