

Katy Times



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

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020



R. HANS MILLER

The new Waller County Precinct 4 annex near Brookshire will allow Waller County residents to pay property taxes and deal with court cases in a more convenient manner than the current trip some have to make from the south end of the county to Hempstead, about 30 miles away.

Waller annex ahead of schedule

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Waller County Construction Manager Danny Rothe said the county's new \$4.8 million Precinct 4 annex being constructed on Hwy. 90 between Brookshire and Katy is on schedule to open in late August barring any unforeseen delays. The new facility will provide convenient services for residents of the southern portion of the county, he said.

"The Pct. 4 Annex will also be fully functional on its own with a generator, water well, and septic system. The building will also serve as the County Southern Command for Emergency Management during any weather or disaster events," Rothe said.

The 18,500-square-foot building is situated on seven and a half acres just west of the Woods Road on Old Hwy. 90.

Construction is under the Rothe's supervision with the

See **SCHEDULE**, page 5

SIMPLE FACTS

- INITIAL BUDGET**
\$4,834,000
- OFFICE SPACE**
18,500 square feet
- OPENING**
Aug. 2020
- STAFF**
About 30 initially

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Disaster declaration extended

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Tex. Governor Greg Abbott has extended his disaster declaration his office announced Easter Sunday. The declaration was initially issued March 13 and Chapter 418.014 of the Texas Government Code requires that the governor renew the declaration at 30 days or it will expire.

"By extending my Disaster Declaration, we are ensuring the state of Texas continues to have adequate resources and capabilities to support our communities and protect public health," Abbott said in a formal statement. "I urge all Texans to continue practicing social distancing and abide by the guidelines laid out by the CDC and my Executive Orders to slow the spread of COVID-19."

According to the statute, the declaration will expire after another 30 days unless it is again extended by Abbott. Additionally, the declaration may be lifted by

See **DISASTER**, page 5



Texas Governor Greg Abbott has extended the state's disaster declaration Easter Sunday for another 30 days. State law requires the extension of the declaration - which was first issued March 13 - would have expired at the end of the day April 12. Abbott has issued more than 110 executive actions since March 13 - most related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

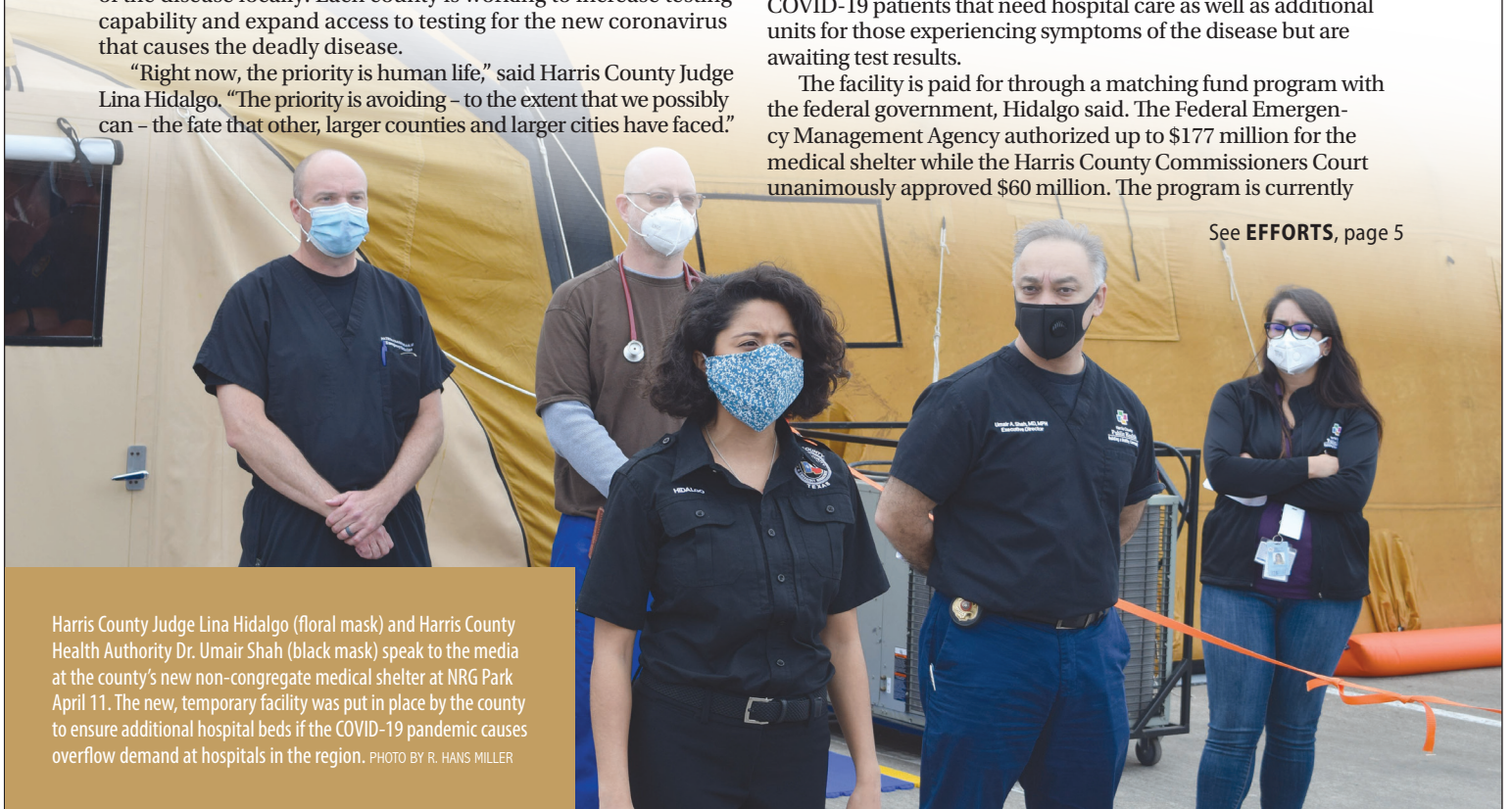
INCREASING EFFORTS

Katy area COVID-19 response marches on into April

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

As the Katy area moves further into the second month of the COVID-19 pandemic locally, Harris, Fort Bend and Waller counties have each increased their efforts to mitigate the impact of the disease locally. Each county is working to increase testing capability and expand access to testing for the new coronavirus that causes the deadly disease.

"Right now, the priority is human life," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. "The priority is avoiding - to the extent that we possibly can - the fate that other, larger counties and larger cities have faced."



Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo (floral mask) and Harris County Health Authority Dr. Umair Shah (black mask) speak to the media at the county's new non-congregate medical shelter at NRG Park April 11. The new, temporary facility was put in place by the county to ensure additional hospital beds if the COVID-19 pandemic causes overflow demand at hospitals in the region. PHOTO BY R. HANS MILLER

Harris County

Hidalgo said those words at an April 11 press conference that followed a tour of the county's new non-congregate medical shelter which has been set up with an initial capacity of 250-patient capacity to help with overflow from area hospitals if necessary. The new facility, located at NRG Park, includes two units for COVID-19 patients that need hospital care as well as additional units for those experiencing symptoms of the disease but are awaiting test results.

The facility is paid for through a matching fund program with the federal government, Hidalgo said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized up to \$177 million for the medical shelter while the Harris County Commissioners Court unanimously approved \$60 million. The program is currently

See **EFFORTS**, page 5

Council postpones hiring of health authority

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy has once again postponed the hiring of its own health authority at its regularly-scheduled April 13 meeting which puts it in the default position of relying on Harris County Health Authority Dr. Umair Shah. The council also rejected bids for sewer construction and rehabilitation as well as parking lot improvements at the library and police station on Franz Road.

"There are some particulars on the (health authority) contract that we're working through, but not as rush-needed because we did verify with all the regional agencies and Harris County - we are fully provided (for) under Harris County's plans for the entire city of Katy, so there's no issue on not having (a health authority in place) right now," said Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris after the meeting.

Harris pulled the contract from the meeting agenda during the meeting per city staff's request, he said.

While hiring Dr. Joe A. Anzaldua, the current candidate for the position, would allow the city to customize its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Harris said the city is currently taken care of because it falls under Shah's jurisdiction. However, having its own health authority physician in place would allow the city to customize its response to the pandemic, such as allowing it to place first

See **COUNCIL**, page 5



Katy City Council met virtually via Zoom as authorized by an executive order from Governor Greg Abbott Monday evening. From top-left to bottom-right: Council Member Duran Dowdle, Council Member Janet Corte, Council Member Jennifer Stockdick, Mayor Bill Hastings, Council Member Frank Carroll III, City Administrator Byron Hebert, City Secretary Becky McGrew, Pastor Roy Meadows of Westland Baptist Church and Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris.

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houstonmethodist.org/virtual-care



Our providers are available to screen for the coronavirus via video visit.



KISD named to '2020 Best Communities for Music Education' list

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy ISD has been awarded a designation to the "Best Communities for Music Education" by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation this year. This is the district's eighteenth time on the list including the last 16 years consecutively.

"Our Katy ISD fine arts educators continually demonstrate an outstanding achievement in their efforts to provide music access," said Katy ISD Executive Director of Fine Arts Mike Ouellette.

NAMM Foundation began issuing the designation 21 years ago, and Katy ISD is among 724 school districts and 98 individual schools receiving the designation this year.

To qualify for the designation, Katy ISD had to answer detailed questions regarding funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified by school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas, according to a Katy ISD press release.

"No matter what type of music you like, playing or listening to music has its benefits for our students, such as brain development, increasing human connections and even helping to relieve stress," Ouellette said.



CHELSEA COOK

Several companies are offering a variety of learning experiences online, including one website that offers a virtual visit to Peru's Machu Picchu.

Free online educational activities

By BRANDEE MILLER
SPECIAL TO KATY TIMES

During the time Katy residents are at home in compliance with various Stay Home, Work Safe orders throughout the area, there are many online opportunities to learn new skills and just explore academia. For adults, this may lead to new job opportunities. For parents, these opportunities can help them keep their children occupied and supplement Katy ISD's online learning programs.

Each of the programs below offers free access on some level to learners of the specified age groups. Some also offer certificates of completion or other paid programs that can help build a resume or enhance enjoyment of a hobby while keeping to good social distancing practices.

Adults and Children

Not everything listed here is appropriate for children of all ages. Please visit each site and take a look before sharing with the whole family. The following are various cultural visits that you can do without a VR headset.

Google Arts & Culture offers virtual visits from around the world at <https://artsandculture.google.com/> for those who are missing firsthand cultural experiences. Learners can explore Parisian rooftops, zoom in on iconic artwork across the world, examine

the architecture of the Sydney Opera House or take a virtual tour of the pyramids of Egypt.

YouVisit.com offers a virtual tour of Machu Picchu which allows visitors to explore the ancient city with a 360-degree guided tour in English. <https://www.youvisit.com/tour/machupicchu>

The Georgia Aquarium offers different webcam views that can be visited anytime to check in on jellyfish, puffins, penguins and more at <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/ocean-voyager/>

VisitHoustonTexas.com offers various virtual experiences from a downloadable coloring book to virtual tours. <https://www.visithoustontexas.com/coronavirus-information-and-resources-for-travelers/virtual-activities/>

Bob Ross' "The Joy of Painting" is offered for free via YouTube and includes all 31 seasons (403 episodes) of the show. Ross, who is known for his calm demeanor and landscape paintings, walks painters through techniques to create "happy little trees" and landscape paintings. <https://www.youtube.com/user/BobRossInc/featured>

Children

Dyson has 44 engineering and science activities (22 of each) for children to work on during the pandemic. The James Dyson Foundation has posted their challenge cards at: <https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.com/resources/challenge-cards.html>

www.nasa.gov/nasa-at-home-for-kids-and-families

NASA offers STEM activities for children split into three groups: K-4, grades 5-8 and grades 9-12. There are also virtual tours available. <https://www.nasa.gov/nasa-at-home-for-kids-and-families>

Scholastic, an Educational company has a "Learn at Home" site that offers projects for children pre-k to grade 9. They have also made available resources for teachers and families. <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

Adults

Nikon is offering free online classes during April. Some classes are specific to Nikon cameras, while other classes have broader topics such as photographing children and pets. Participants must register with Nikon to take these courses. <https://www.nikon-events.com/us/live/nikon-school-online/>

Harvard University and other institutions of higher education are offering free online courses that cover subjects such as literature, art, game development and web programming at <https://online-learning.harvard.edu/CATALOG/FREE>. For a fee, learners can receive a certificate upon completion of some courses. Check individual courses for start/end dates. Email registration is required for most courses.

KATY TIMES PET OF THE WEEK

MEET LUPIN



Hey there! I am an 18 month old solid black kitty named Lupin. I came to Special Pals with my identical brothers. I'm such a fun, loving boy that loves to snuggle anytime.

Lupin is available for adoption at Special Pals Shelter located at 3830 Greenhouse Road, Houston. The shelter is the Katy area's oldest no kill shelter and is open Weds., Thurs., Sat. and Sun. from 12-4 p.m. and Fri. 12-6 p.m.

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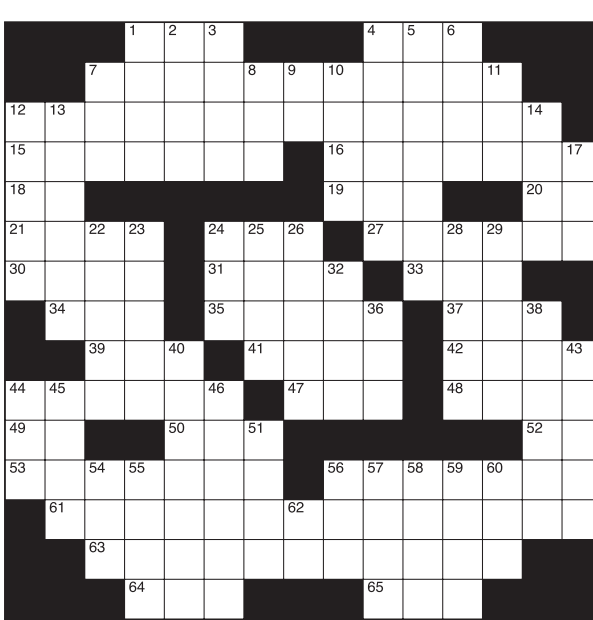
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

1. Germanic mythological god
4. Cash machine
7. Improvement
12. What voters want
15. Sheepish
16. Placed at powerful level
18. Measure of illumination
19. Trent Reznor's band
20. Commercial
21. Amounts of time
24. English broadcaster
27. Rolls of tobacco
30. Position
31. Expresses pleasure
33. Corporate exec (abbr.)
34. Body part
35. Bleated
37. Businessman
39. Beats per minute
41. Defunct Italian monetary unit
42. Broken branch
44. Put in advance
47. Arrest
48. Prefix indicating adjacent to
49. Artificial intelligence
50. Disfigure
52. The Fighting Irish (abbr.)
53. Not in any place
56. Predict
61. A system of getting stuff from one place to another
63. Philosophy of the principles of things
64. US gov't office (abbr.)
65. Seaborgium's former name (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

1. Network connector
2. Primordial matter
3. Get up
4. Uncoordinated
5. Ill-fated cruise ship
6. Work hard
7. Drivers' speed
8. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
9. Healthcare pro
10. Egyptian Sun god
11. Expresses the negative
12. Some are three-legged
13. Clothing manufacturer
14. Close by
17. Tooth caregiver
22. Housing material
23. Flows through
24. Founder of Babism
25. Honorific title
26. A type of letter
28. Seize and hold firmly
29. Artery
32. Body fluids
36. Press against lightly
38. An island in the Pacific
40. A reminder of past events
43. Austrian spa town
44. Peter's last name
45. Something a mob might do
46. Of the bones of the feet
51. "Amazing Stories" writer
54. Nazi-resistant youth group (abbr.)
55. Used to have (Scottish)
56. A way to cook
57. Japanese port city
58. Type of precipitation
59. Engrave
60. Female sibling
62. Expresses emotion



Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

SUDOKU

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

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Restaurants adjusting to keep Katy eating

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Colburn McClelland is getting a lot of exercise these days as he races back and forth between his two businesses at Tiger Square in Old Town Katy - Crown Pizza and Willy Burger. McClelland has been able to keep both restaurants open by adjusting his business plan to meet the needs of as many staff as possible and the community he serves.

"Crown Kitchen has totally changed our operation to meet the demand," McClelland said. "It was a gut decision to do what we needed to do."

Crown Kitchen has adjusted its business model to make things work for the community and for the business, McClelland said. The restaurant is offering a limited menu that is more oriented toward feeding a family at a time rather than individual meals found on the regular menu. The menu is posted online on the restaurant's Facebook page each Monday afternoon. Once the menu is posted, patrons can call in to have their names added to the list for the next day.

Crown Kitchen has been able to keep all of its staff on board during the adjustment, McClelland said.

"I'm not making any money but at this time I just feel that the money will come down the road. I'm mostly concerned about doing my part," McClelland said.

Some of the staff at Willy Burger were furloughed at least until things return to normal, McClelland said. Business at the burger restaurant has just been too slow to keep everyone on board, he said. McClelland praised his staff at both businesses for their efforts both to keep the restaurants going and to help the community.

"Mike (Daniels, manager at Willy Burger) and the team are holding up," McClelland said. "... I always have five to seven people on staff but right now I'm running it with two to three (and they're) doing the best they can."

Daniels, the manager at Willy Burger, said the staff he has are working hard as a team and taking care of folks. The restaurant had tried to do deliveries, but that hadn't worked out as well as they'd hoped and most of Willy Burger's business right now is through the walk up window where people order and then socially distance themselves until their food is ready. Daniels said he thinks part of it is that Katy residents want to get out of the house, so they do the window service and social distancing just to get some fresh air and escape their homes - at least temporarily.

While the staff he was able to keep on have been amazing, Daniels said he worries about the staff the restaurant had to furlough.

"It's just that it hurts, what's going on right now," Daniels said. "Because I had to let four employees go for right now, until it's all over with. It's stuff like that which weighs on my mind right now."

Crown Kitchen's staff are "really grinding," McClelland said. The restaurant's kitchen was set up for dine-in service, so switching to a drive-thru, curbside model and catering-style services makes for some extra work. He said he was proud of his staff for putting in the extra work, which has allowed the restaurant to help out seniors by delivering free meals.

McClelland said he had reached out to Adrienne Davitz, a Katy resident they knew would have information on seniors that need assistance and asked her how the restaurant could help.

Davitz said she asked how many people he thought he could help, then reached out to the people she knows through volunteering around the community. Once a few clients were set up, she got some friends to help deliver the meals a few times a week.

"I go pick up the meals at 5 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and then meet my sweet delivery friends at the empty parking lot of Yaya club and we distribute meals," Davitz said.

The restaurant provides meals for 20 households - one of which is a single mom recovering from a hospital stay rather than



PHOTOS BY R. HANS MILLER

Crown Kitchen diners line up to pick up their food orders. Colburn McClelland, owner of Crown Kitchen and Willy Burger in downtown Katy, said Crown Kitchen is feeding thousands and working to help keep morale up in town.

a senior - three times per week, Davitz said. She and her delivery helpers review some safety rules and then drop off the meals around town as needed.

Safety is important at the restaurants too, McClelland said. Workers are wearing gloves and masks and changing the gloves out regularly. McClelland said he wants to stay open, but he also wants to make sure none of his customers gets sick as a result.

"We don't want to take germs from money and doorknobs and get folks sick," McClelland said.

McClelland also shares his information in the Katy FOOD TO GO during COVID-19 Facebook group which provides information on other restaurants that are adjusting to keep diners fed during the pandemic.

CURBSIDE OPTIONS

Restaurants across the Katy area are struggling during the pandemic. Below is a noncomprehensive listing of restaurants that remain open if Katy residents need a break from cooking. The public has also rallied together to create a Facebook group to help restaurants called: Katy FOOD TO GO during COVID-19 which may have additional information on restaurants and food services as this situation develops.

KATY CROWN KITCHEN
(Formerly Crown Pizza)
Phone ahead curbside drive-thru
Menu posted to Facebook
6191 Hwy. Blvd., Ste. 302, Katy
281-391-0112
facebook.com/crownkitchenkaty

WILLY BURGER
Curbside window service only, Full menu
11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Mon. thru Sat.
6191 Hwy. Blvd., Ste. 101, Katy
832-437-4566
willy-burger.com

SNAPPY'S
Curbside with limited menu.
Menu posted to Facebook daily.
Open daily 7 a.m.-2 p.m.
281-391-8163
snappyskatytx.com

LOS CUCOS MEXICAN RESTAURANT
Curbside drive-thru service, free delivery
Limited menu
5831 Hwy. Blvd., Katy
281-391-9466
loscucos.com

PAPPA GYROS
Drive-Thru, Carry-Out, Phone Orders,
Curbside, Delivery (Uber Eats)
Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
23255 Kingsland Blvd., Katy
281-574-7764
www.pappagyros.com

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281-394-7780
23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Ste. K100
snoozeatery.olo.express/menu/cinco

CASA VERA MEXICAN RESTAURANT
Call by 6 p.m. the day before to order a \$24.99 family meal.
Menu changes daily and is posted to Facebook. Curbside.
1420 Katy Fort Bend Road, Ste. 130, Katy
832-683-0991
casaveramexicanrestaurant.com

PATTISON MAMIE'S KITCHEN
Limited Menu
Curbside only
Open 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Tues.-Fri.
281-394-1112
mamieskitchen.com

BROOKSHIRE SHIRE DISTILLING CO.
Hand sanitizer and spirits to go
Open 1-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
281-375-9151
545 Bains St., Ste. 303, Brookshire
shiredistilling.com

ERNESTO'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT
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281-934-4944
535 FM 1489, Brookshire

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Katy, TX 77450
281.492.1209
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Surviving at home with teen triplets

You're stuck home with your kids and feeling sorry for yourself. How are you going to keep them busy? What about their school work? I've got a better story – stuck at home with 16-year old triplets.

Beat that. Anyone? Anyone?

That's what I thought. Last week, as I was lamenting our collective plight I considered – as I always do – how I can use this situation to my advantage.

There are only so many indoor tasks you can ask of three, housebound 16-year-olds – get out of bed by noon, clean your rooms, put your dishes in the dishwasher. Actually, on a given day, I'd take any one of the three.

So, I went out and bought 22 bags of mulch and quickly morphed into a cross between Gunnery Sgt. Hartman from "Full Metal Jacket" and my father, minus the profanity. When it came to spewing obscenities, my father could go toe-to-toe with Sarge.

I did, however, take a page from my father's playbook as I attempted to motivate the triplets with clichés – "That mulch won't spread itself you know?" "Let the rake do the work."

I know I sounded just like my father, for whom I was a self-contained leaf and snow removal system. Oddly enough, as much as I loathed raking and shoveling when I was young, I actually enjoy it now. Still, when you have three able-bodied 16-year-olds (two girls and a boy) hanging around the house with nowhere to go, why should I risk throwing my back out?

What I didn't account for was their work ethic and efficiency. They were finished in a couple of hours and we had nothing left for them to do.

It is interesting to see how we adjust our schedules and adapt. I can say, without fear of contradiction, this is the longest I have gone in my life without watching sports on TV. I was so desperate the other day, I found myself watching a 30-year-old hockey game on YouTube. Not the entire game, as if that makes it better. About halfway through I had to come to grips with the reality that I have a problem.



RICH MANIERI

SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

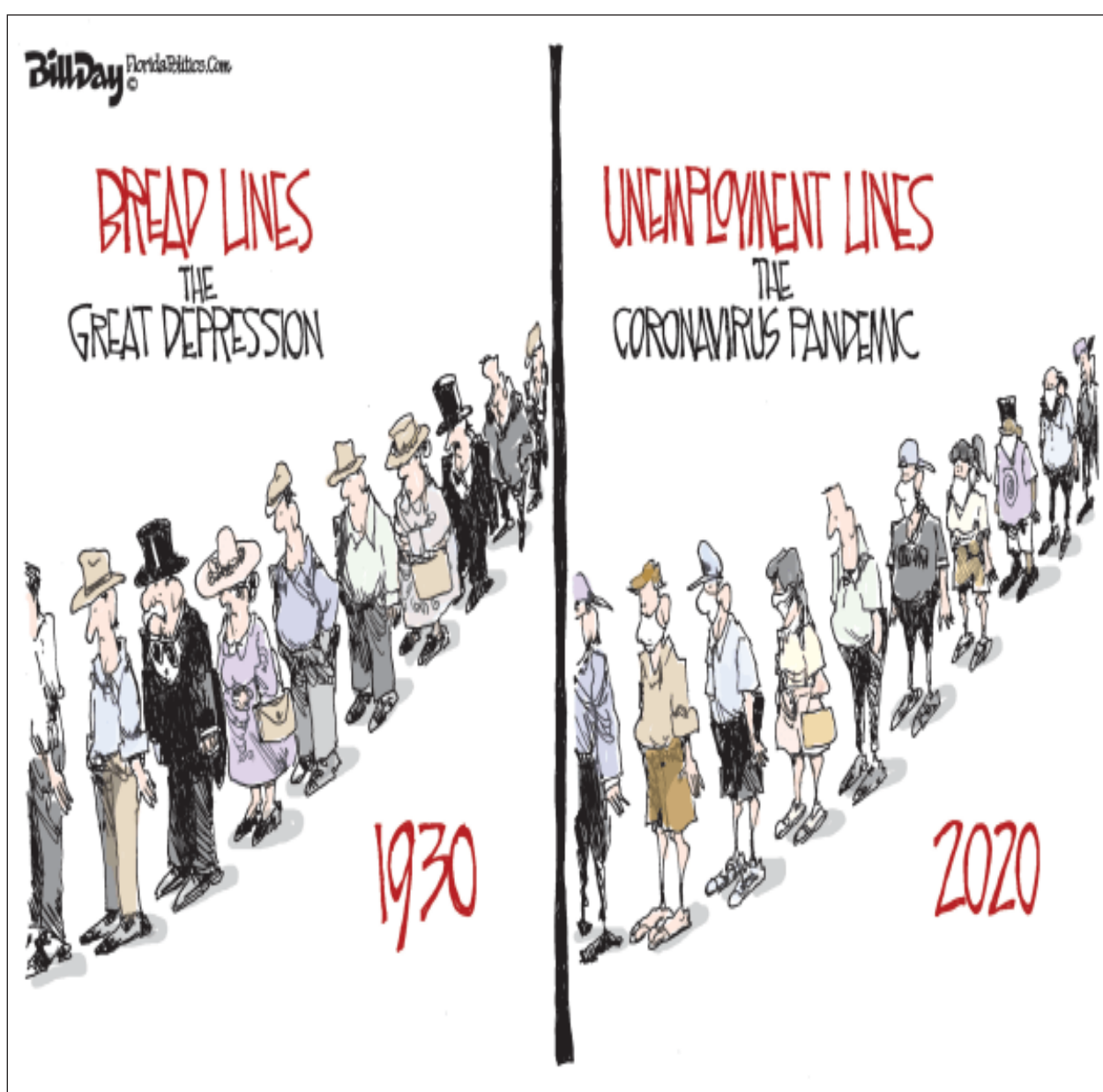
For me, and I would imagine for many, this crisis has drawn a clear distinction between essential and non-essential. Situations we once would have considered intolerable we now tolerate.

For example, our Great Dane Bosco, about whose antics I've written previously, ate my very expensive and only pair glasses. He didn't actually ingest them, but he somehow got the lenses out, intact, and chewed off the tips of the frames, rendering them unwearable. I ordered a new pair but in the intervening week, my optometrist closed up shop due to COVID-19. I was left with no choice but to pop the lenses back in and bend the frames, so they'll stay on my head, at least for a while. Sure, they look ridiculous, like I was in a bar fight and got hit in the face with a stool, but necessity compels in a crisis.

My only outing is my regular run to the grocery store, which isn't much of a field trip because it's about a mile from our house. Still, these trips have led me to make the following observation – Americans, and I'm including myself, need to eat more fruits and vegetables. You can't find a roll of toilet paper or a frozen pizza, but you can buy enough Brussels sprouts and navel oranges to keep you going for weeks.

There is one, universal and undeniable essential with which we all need to come to terms – we're in this together and whether you're dealing with a surplus of sprouts or teenagers, each is a blessing, and small price to pay for the greater good.

Rich Manieri is a Philadelphia-born journalist and author. He is currently a professor of journalism at Asbury University in Kentucky. His book, "We Burn on Friday: A Memoir of My Father and Me" is available at amazon.com. You can reach him at manieri2@gmail.com.



Can we have a few TV Westerns?

The recent death of actor James Drury (star of the 1962-1971 TV Western "The Virginian") adds insult to injury when one considers what will occur next month.

When the networks announce the shows they're canceling and launching, yet again there will be no true Westerns in contention for a coveted spot on the fall schedules.

The year I was born, there were 30 "horse operas" spread out across three broadcast networks in prime time, and that culture left an indelible mark on me. (Not in the public execution sense, but indelible nonetheless.)

I still see Oscar-winning director East Clintwood as Rowdy Yates from "Rawhide". Ten-year-old me agonized when my parents sold my Twenty Mule Team Borax plastic model (the purchase of which was inspired by the company's sponsorship of "Death Valley Days"). I've cheered every attempt to reboot "Maverick". It's not unusual to hear me whistling the themes to "Gunsmoke," "Bonanza" or "The Wild



DANNY TYREE

SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Wild West." (If you happen to hear me whistling anything about "Rubber Ducky," this bathtub ain't big enough for the both of us, pardner.)

Sure, sophisticated viewers wallowing in today's supposed Golden Age of Television might call that sort of genre saturation "wretched excess"; but what about the modern viewer's seemingly insatiable appetite for "police procedural" dramas and true-crime miniseries? Today's teens can't whine, "Is it a CRIME if I stay out 30 minutes past dark?" without their parents replying, "We won't know until after the AUTOPSY. If you cannot afford an attorney..."

Isn't there room for a good ol' "high noon" showdown amidst all the hype-filled competition

shows? During the glory days of Westerns, when you saw someone wearing a mask, it meant there would be bank vaults exploding, stagecoaches careening and bullets flying. Now viewers settle for the thin gruel of "He wears a mask and he... he...be still, my beating heart...he SINGS."

True, there are Western themes in science-fiction programs such as Disney's "The Mandalorian," but I still have a hankering for at least one or two low-tech series about owlhoots and varmints and sidewinders. As long as we don't have to jazz them up by having the loner protagonist take along Baby Grizzled Prospector.

Granted, it would be an uphill battle to resuscitate the Western genre. To a large extent, producers, directors and writers have been so insulated in their world of churning out flashy urban dramas, they just don't know how to produce a wide-open-spaces Western. ("I wish I hadn't skimped on research. Horses do vote Republican, don't they?")

Potential showrunners would be loath to deal with

today's breed of nitpicky fact-checkers. ("The Washington Post gives that anachronistic use of post-1910 medical terminology four Pinocchios. No, wait – they're building a campfire out of Pinocchio! Noooooo!")

Sigh I wouldn't want political correctness to overtake the rugged individualism of Westerns. Guest-star RuPaul anywhere near a group of dance hall "girls" would have me figuring out the saloon exits. It's hard to develop much dramatic tension between herders of laboratory-grown lamb and ranchers of laboratory-produced beef. No one wants to see the cavalry colonel telling Native Americans, "Why compete for scalps when we have these nice PARTICIPATION RIBBONS?"

Seriously, Hollywood – let's sit down with a sarsaparilla and work this out. We already have enough writers growling, "Crud! While I was ripping a story out of today's headlines, I messed up the Sudoku!"

Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetyrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades."

Katy Times

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R. HANS MILLER

By late August, this now-empty shell will be transformed into offices for a justice of the peace, county commissioner and law enforcement officers, among others.

SCHEDULE

from page 1

manager at risk being Collier Construction, based in Brenham. West Point Electric and Afton Plumbing are both installing utilities in the facility.

Once opened, the facility will house offices for Precinct 4 Commissioner Justin Beckendorf, precinct 4 justice of the peace, precinct 4 Constable and staff, a Waller County Sheriff's Office annex, Waller County Tax Office annex, Waller County Clerk annex and offices for Department of Public Safety officers, Rothe said.

"The Precinct 4 Annex will also be fully functional on its own with a generator, water well, and septic system," Rothe said. "The building will also serve as the County South-

ern Command for Emergency Management during any weather or disaster events."

Rothe said the office has room to expand on the property beyond the initial estimate of 30 staff as the county's population grows.

Funding for the project comes from the 2017 Waller County Facilities bond for the most part, but some additional funds were allocated to install additional features in the facility County Judge Trey Duhon said.

Having the facility is expected to make life more convenient for South Waller residents, Rothe said. Waller citizens will be able to pay their property taxes, deal with court cases, and get other assistance that they have had to go to Hempstead for in the past, he said.

"It's over 30 miles from Brookshire to Hempstead, and there is a great need for a full-service county facility in the south part of the county," Rothe said.

COUNCIL

from page 1

responders who contract COVID-19 in hotels to protect their families if the need should arise as the situation continues, Harris said.

Approval of a health authority had previously been postponed from both the April 6 and April 9 special meetings held by the council. However, a contract moving through a government body in Texas - even under a state of health emergency such as has been declared in the city, all counties the city resides in and statewide - in less than a week is not necessarily unexpected or unusual under state procurement regulations. The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts has specific requirements for government contracts in the state that must be met.

City officials said last week that they have been having a difficult time getting in touch with Shah to obtain authorization to move forward with their own planning, which is why

they want to move forward with hiring a Katy-specific health authority. However, Shah said Saturday that he was unaware of the city attempting to reach him for assistance.

"Directly, I haven't gotten any contact like that. Our team may have been contacted," Shah said.

Shah did acknowledge that his pace since the health crisis began has kept him from getting to all of the emails he has received, but he had not heard from anyone at the county level indicating that Katy's administration was trying to reach him.

Katy City Council also rejected bids for sewer projects and repaving of the parking lots in front of the police station and library on Franz Road. Documents provided by the city indicate that the bids received for the sewer projects far exceeded the budget for the sewer renovations.

Katy Public Works Director Elaine Lutringer said the initial budget for the sewer project was \$200,000 but the bids received for the project varied greatly. She

also said that, given budget uncertainties, the city would reduce its goals and only do two of the four sewer projects that had initially been planned. A request for bids from vendors will go out for work that will be done on South Woods Lane and Alabama Street, which Lutringer said would be the projects set to move forward now that the bids had been rejected.

City Administrator Byron Hebert said the project for the improvements to the parking lot at the police station and library would be put on hold in order to be cautious with the budget. Sales tax revenue has taken a hit for the city, Hebert said, which places the city in a position to be more cautious than it ordinarily would.

"We're going to try to keep as much money as we can right now in our general fund to see where that sales tax number is going to go, so right now we're asking that (Katy City Council) would just postpone on this - reject them now, and when we come out of this (health crisis) we'll put these budgets back up," Hebert said.

those found to be price-gouging necessary supplies such as fuel or medical supplies.

Abbott has issued more than 110 executive actions since his initial March 13 disaster declaration, with most of those either directly or indirectly associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Abbott continues to encourage Texans to practice social distancing and support health care workers and others on the front lines in the fight against the new coronavirus.

"The State of Texas is forever grateful for the committed health care workers serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response," Abbott said in an April 11 statement supporting health care workers. "Their sacrifice and hard work cannot be overstated, and they play a crucial role in ensuring their fellow Texans have the care and support they need during this challenging time. I ask that all Texans join me and Cecilia in praying for these heroic Texans."

EFFORTS

from page 1

funded with a 75-25 split, with FEMA covering 75% of costs and the county 25%.

The facility serves Katy, as well as other cities within Harris County such as Cypress and Houston, Hidalgo said. Staffing is provided by the Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council - commonly referred to as SETRAC.

The county's testing sites have also increased their capability to provide testing. All sites within the county can now provide up to 500 tests per site each weekday and those in Houston up to 1,000 tests daily. County residents must call 832-927-7575 to be prescreened prior to being tested for COVID-19 in Harris County. Houston residents should call 832-393-4220.

A Work Safe, Stay Home order is in place throughout Harris County through April 30.

Harris County is also now reporting the number of cases across the county by zip code and city through its public health website: <http://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County has also published case information by zip code on its response hub at: <https://covid-19-fort-bend-county-response-fbcgis.hub.arcgis.com/>

"Providing multiple mapped views of accurate case count density allows citizens and stakeholders to better assess community impact. Regardless of the case count, we should not let our guard down. Continue to practice social distancing, stay home, and wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds," said Dr. Jacquelyn Minter, local health authority for Fort Bend County.

Screening in Fort Bend for COVID-19 is currently

IMPACT OF COVID-19 NEAR KATY

The three counties that the Katy area falls within have thousands of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus. Authorities in the region believe the numbers are underreported due to the lack of testing capability in the region, though that testing ability is increasing. As testing capability increases, the number of cases is expected to continue rising exponentially. The data below is accurate as of 11 a.m. April 14.

HARRIS CO. AND HOUSTON
CONFIRMED CASES: 3,747
ACTIVE CASES: 3,059
RECOVERIES: 642
DEATHS: 46

FORT BEND COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 577
ACTIVE CASES: 500
RECOVERIES: 63
DEATHS: 14

WALLER COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 17
ACTIVE CASES: 9
RECOVERIES: 8
DEATHS: 0

TEXAS
CONFIRMED CASES: 14,624
ACTIVE CASES: 11,726
RECOVERIES: 2,580
DEATHS: 318

offered through OakBend Medical Group hospital locations in Sugar Land and Richmond. Another site is available to the county's west in Wharton.

Fort Bend has also kept its parks open but has placed signage in the parks to provide guidelines for usage of the parks and to encourage social distancing.

"While you enjoy public spaces outside, I ask you to carefully maintain social distancing and the best sanitary practices to slow the spread of coronavirus, especially to those in our community who are most vulnerable," Fort Bend County Judge KP George said.

Waller County

With 17 confirmed cases as of Tuesday morning, Waller County continues to maintain a lower case counts than its two Katy-area neighbors, County Judge Trey Duhon said in a Facebook post.

Duhon said he has made multiple requests to the Texas Department of State Health Services for a testing

site in the county, but the county will not likely receive a site anytime soon. Testing is available in Katy and Bellville. Testing at the Katy site is run by Harris County Public Health and is subject to the prescreening process for Harris County (see the Harris County portion of this story).

Duhon updated and amended Waller County's public health disaster declaration April 1 in order to match Tex. Governor Greg Abbott's orders related to COVID-19. The order restricts public gatherings to not more than 10 people and encourages all Waller residents to practice social distancing and good hygiene. Nonessential businesses are required to remain closed until the order is lifted or amended.

"It is absolutely vital to remember that Texas has not yet reached its peak," Duhon said Monday. "It seems that quite a few people are out and about today, and nothing has changed in terms of staying at home and only going out for essential items or to provide essential services."

DISASTER

from page 1

an executive order from Abbott if he finds that "the threat or danger has passed; or (B) the disaster has been dealt with to the extent that emergency conditions no longer exist."

Abbott's disaster declaration activates Texas' Emergency Management Plan and the State Operations Center to improve the state's ability to respond, according to the governor's website. It also allows the Texas Department of Emergency Management to reassign personnel and other resources - including supplies received from the Strategic National Stockpile - as needed to address the emergency situation that caused the disaster declaration. Abbott's actions also allow the Office of the Texas Attorney General to pursue cases against

Jim Baker's Unified Theory Of Everything --- With God's Help

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

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

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

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

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TRIBUTES

Stephanie Marie was born in Chula Vista, California on April 17, 1987. Stephanie moved to Texas at 1 1/2 years old and lived most of her life in the Katy/Cypress, Texas area. Stephanie's education was spent in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School district, where she was a graduate of Cypress-Springs High School, class of 2005. During her years in school, Stephanie enjoyed cheerleading, track, volleyball, dance and drill team. During her high school years, Stephanie was an accomplished and beautiful dancer serving as a prideful member of the Cypress-Springs High School Panteras dance and drill team.

Upon High School graduation, Stephanie attended Lone Star College where she was the Captain of the Lone Star College dance team. Stephanie earned her Associates Degree in Accounting, graduating on the Dean's List, cum laude with honors. After her graduation at Lone Star College, Stephanie continued her education at Sam Houston State University, majoring in Finance.

In October of 2009, Stephanie married Justin James Lambert. Stephanie always referred to their wedding

day as "the best day of my life." Stephanie and Justin celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary in October 2019.

During their marriage, the Lamberts built two beautiful and loving homes together. While working outside of the home, Stephanie had a successful professional career working in the Accounting, Executive Support and Human Resource fields.

The Lamberts welcomed their first child, a son Ayden Daniel, in August of 2012.

Their second child, a daughter Evelyn Marie, was born in July 2015. Stephanie was passionate about being both a wife and mother, and fulfilled those roles with love, strength, generosity and laughter.

After only 10 months of marriage, Stephanie was diagnosed with brain cancer. Justin lovingly supported and cared for Stephanie for over 10 years, as the disease progressed into a Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) terminal brain tumor. Stephanie showed tremendous grace and strength during her determined battle to beat this cancer. She never lost hope or her sense of humor and was focused on living happily and making as many memories as she could. She was loved

and admired by hundreds of friends and loved ones across the globe.

Stephanie was a member of Katy's First Baptist Church, and was an active and passionate volunteer in her community and at her children's schools.

Stephanie Marie is survived by her loving husband, Justin James, and her beautiful children Ayden Daniel and Evelyn Marie. Immediate family survivors include her parents Catherine and George Shutts, brother Tyler (Wendy) Shutts, grandmother Sally Johnson, aunt Lisa (Howard) Smith, uncle Dan (Jenna) Johnson, cousin Jennifer (fiancé Zach) May, as well as numerous in-laws, aunts, uncles, and cousins by marriage. Stephanie is preceded in death by her grandfather Larry Johnson.

Due to current CDC and state health restrictions, a memorial service and celebration of life for Stephanie will be announced on a later date and held at Katy's First Baptist Church, in Katy, Texas, as soon as allowable.

The butterfly is symbolic of brain cancer awareness, so Stephanie's celebration of life will be filled with vibrant colors and graceful ornate butterflies in her honor.

"As you danced in the light with joy, love lifted you. As you brushed against this world so gently, you lifted us." — T.C. Ring

Funeral services held under the direction of Schmidt Funeral Home at 1344 W. Grand Parkway South in Katy, Texas. They can be reached at (281) 391-2424.

Natalie JoAnn Allen was born on July 20, 1978 in Columbus, Ohio to Stanley "Dick" Allen and Barbara Lee (Schnarr) Allen.

Natalie never met a stranger. She was a loving person who cared about everyone. She was a wonderful daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend to all who knew her. Natalie had a huge heart and a generous spirit. She was blessed with an extraordinary imagination and had passion for the creative arts and photography. Mostly, she enjoyed spending time with her family and friends, and she was an especially compassionate and devoted caregiver to her dad.

Natalie JoAnn Allen passed away on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 in Katy, Texas at the age of 41.

She is survived by her loving parents, Dick and Barbie Allen of Columbus, Texas; her brother, Matthew Allen of Katy, Texas; her sister, Carrie Allen Coston of Brenham, Texas; her Aunts and Uncles JoAnn and Richard Young, Steven and Charlene Schnarr, Daniel and Debbie Schnarr, and Pegg Allen; numerous cousins, nieces, and a nephew; dear family friends Susan, Casey, Cannon and Charles "Chuck" Smith, Michelle Zimmerman, Rookh and Ervin Heinrich, Alex Roig, JD Bowen and her beloved fur baby, Lizzie.

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, a memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Natalie Allen's honor to the GBS/CIDP Foundation International at <https://www.gbs-cidp.org/> or Special Pals Animal Shelter of Houston at <https://specialpalsshelter.org/>.

To express condolences, please visit www.SchmidtFuneral-Home.net.

Arrangements are under the direction of Schmidt Funeral Home at 1344 W. Grand Parkway South in Katy, Texas. They can be reached at (281) 391-2424.



STEPHANIE MARIE LAMBERT
1987-2019



NATALIE JOANN ALLEN
1978-2019

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your consolations cheer my soul.*
Psalms 94:19

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3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

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Psalms 94:19

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April 9

Puzzle Answers

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN ORDINANCE NO. 2945 BEARING THE FOLLOWING CAPTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, ON FEBRUARY 24, 2020:

An Ordinance Amending City Of Katy Zoning Ordinance 621, By Granting A Special Use Permit Located At 5364 Franz Road For Wireless Telecommunication Facilities In A "R-1" Single Family District, As Allowed By Section 15.2-10 Of The City Of Katy Zoning Ordinance; Providing For An Effective Date; Repealing All Ordinances And Parts Of Ordinances In Conflict Herewith; Providing For Severability And Providing A Penalty In An Amount Up To \$ 2, 000 For A Violation Of Any Provision Of The Ordinance.

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN ORDINANCE NO. 2946 BEARING THE FOLLOWING CAPTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, ON MARCH 23, 2020:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY; PROVIDING FOR A FINE IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2, 000 FOR EACH OFFENSE.

Request for Proposals

Drymalla Construction Company, Inc. (CM at Risk) is soliciting Qualifications/Proposals from Subcontractors for the Lamar Consolidated ISD High School and Junior High Renovations and Additions. Project consists of High School Classroom and Administration Renovations, Band and LGI Additions. Junior High, Choir Renovations and Additions. **Qualifications/Proposals** are due at **2:00 PM on Wednesday April 22, 2020** at the offices of Drymalla Construction Company, Inc., 608 Harbert, Columbus, Texas 78934, via fax 979-732-3663, or email to bid@drymalla.com. **NO PHONE BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED!** For information on how to obtain copies of the Request for Qualifications/Proposals documents call 979-732-5731, or email Jason Labay at jason@drymalla.com. Documents are available online at <http://www.drymallaplans.com> and Virtual Builders Exchange.

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids in duplicate addressed to Mr. J.R. Dollins, III, President, Brookshire-Katy Drainage District, will be received in the offices of Brookshire-Katy Drainage District, 1111 Kenney Street, Brookshire, Texas 77423, until **10:00 a.m., Thursday, April 23, 2020**, and then publicly opened and read for furnishing all labor, material and equipment and performing all work required for construction of: **HARVEY CHANNEL RECOVERY – PHASE II STALKNECHT AND WILLOW FORK**. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Federal guidelines of not gathering in groups of more than 10 people, people who want to attend the bid opening must do so by telephone (832-856-3756, Conference ID: 579 657 876#).

The projects are located in Brookshire-Katy, Texas. Stalknecht is located north of I-10, east of Stalknecht Road and south of Morton Road. Willow Fork is located south of US-90, north of I-10 and east of Igloo Road.

If the amount of the bid exceeds \$25,000.00, Official Bidder's Bond signed by the Surety and Bidder, Cashier's Check, Certified Check, or letter of credit from a FDIC insured bank in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the greatest amount bid must accompany each proposal, made payable to the Brookshire-Katy Drainage District.

Plans, specifications, and bidding documents are available at www.civcast.com.

ATTENTION: Pursuant to Texas Government Code 2252.908, you must be able to provide the Brookshire-Katy Drainage District (the "District") with a printed, executed and notarized original of a completed Certificate of Interested Parties Form (Form 1295) with executed Contracts. Failure to do so will result in the District not executing the Contract. To complete the disclosure of interested parties form, or for further information, please visit the Texas Ethics Commission's website at <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us>.

There will be a pre-bid conference via telephone (832-856-3756, Conference ID: 718 818 543#) at **10:00 a.m., Thursday, April 16, 2020. Attendance is not mandatory.**

The District reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any or all formalities in bidding. In case of ambiguity or lack of clearness in stating prices in the proposal, the District reserves the right to adopt the prices written in words or to reject the proposal. No bids may be withdrawn until the expiration of **60 days** from the date bids are opened.

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Ordinance No. 130
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PATTISON, TEXAS REGULATING TRUCK TRAFFIC AND DESIGNATING NO THROUGH TRUCK STREETS; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. Any person who shall violate any provision of this Ordinance, shall, upon conviction, be fined in an amount not to exceed \$500. Each violation shall constitute a separate offense.

Ordinance No. 131
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PATTISON REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 123 AND REPLACING SAID ORDINANCE WITH THIS ORDINANCE WHICH PROHIBITS THE PLACEMENT OF MOBILE HOMES AND MANUFACTURED HOMES WITHIN THE CITY OF PATTISON; MAKING EXCEPTION FOR THE PLACEMENT OF MANUFACTURED HOMES IN A MANUFACTURED HOME PARK OR A MANUFACTURED HOME SUBDIVISION; PROVIDING PROCEDURES FOR THE PLATTING OF MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS AND MANUFACTURED HOME SUBDIVISIONS; REQUIRING A LICENSE TO OPERATE A MANUFACTURED HOME PARK; ESTABLISHING PLACEMENT PERMITS; ESTABLISHING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PLACEMENT OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLES WITHIN THE CITY OF PATTISON; PROVIDING FOR DEFINITIONS; ESTABLISHING PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION OF THIS ORDINANCE. A violation of this ordinance is punishable by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) for violations of a rule, ordinance, or police regulation that governs fire safety, public safety, zoning, and public health and sanitation, other than dumping of refuse.

PASSED by a majority vote of the members of the City Council this 7th day of April 2020.

Details about these ordinances can be found on the City of Pattison website: www.pattison.texas.gov under the Information Section. Contact the City Secretary at 281-934-3715 or via email at CitySecretary@pattison.texas.gov with any questions.

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Fences leaving Texas flagship June 30

By SHANNON NAJMABADI
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

University of Texas at Austin President Greg Fences is leaving the state's flagship college for Emory University, where he will become president Aug. 1, he told the UT community in an email Tuesday.

He will depart June 30. "The timing of this news in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic is not what I had expected or wanted," Fences wrote. "Our dedicated faculty and staff have striven to make the spring 2020 semester meaningful for our students. I want you to understand that I remain singularly focused on continuing that work, completing the semester and getting our community back to normal before my presidency ends on June 30."

Fences has been president of UT-Austin since 2015, after serving as executive vice president and provost, and as dean of the Cockrell School of Engineering.

During his tenure, the university successfully defended its race-conscious admissions program before the Supreme Court and expanded the financial assistance it offers low- and middle-income undergraduates. Fences' comparatively calm



MARJORIE KAMYS COTERA

Greg Fences has been president of the University of Texas at Austin since 2015.

term succeeded years of strife between former President Bill Powers and regents and statewide leaders who were pushing to make the university more closely resemble a business.

"I am proud and honored to have served as dean of engineering, provost and, for the past five years, president of UT," Fences wrote. "I am grateful for the trust you

placed in me as leader of this great university that improves the lives of Texans and changes the world every day."

Fences received a bachelor's degree from Cornell University and master's and doctorate degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, in civil engineering.

The current president of Emory, a private university in Georgia, announced last year

that she would retire effective this August.

Clare Proctor contributed to this report. The University of Texas at Austin has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in the Tribune's journalism.

"The timing of this news in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic is not what I had expected or wanted. Our dedicated faculty and staff have striven to make the spring 2020 semester meaningful for our students. I want you to understand that I remain singularly focused on continuing that work, completing the semester and getting our community back to normal before my presidency ends on June 30."

— GREG FENCES, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN PRESIDENT



MICHAEL STRAVATO

The Tomball nursing home near Houston is where an elderly man lived briefly before dying on March 18 of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

Around 13% of nursing homes have a resident with COVID-19

By EDGAR WALTERS
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

More than 160 of the state's 1,222 nursing homes, or about 13%, have at least one case of the new coronavirus, state officials said Thursday. And 38 nursing home residents and staff members have died of COVID-19 statewide.

The disclosure, made late Thursday by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, is the first time Texas has made public the extent of COVID-19's spread in nursing homes, as other states have done.

The move comes after The Texas Tribune reported Wednesday that Texas was not disclosing comprehensive data on nursing home residents and staffers who have tested positive for the virus.

But the Texas Health and Human Services Commission did not publish the total number of coronavirus infections in Texas nursing homes, and it did not name the facilities that have reported cases of the coronavirus.

"In compliance with patient, resident and employee personal health privacy laws, we cannot provide more detailed information," Texas Health and Human Services Commission spokeswoman Christine Mann said in an email.

Roughly 93,000 Texans live in licensed nursing homes throughout the state.

The health commission also released figures for the first time on the number of assisted living facilities that had reported cases of residents or staff testing positive for the coronavirus. Of the state's 2,002 such facilities, 33 reported at least one case of the virus, according to the health commission. There were also nine deaths related to COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, at those facilities statewide.

Mann said the state's tally was current as of Wednesday and came from data reported to the health commission by facilities and local health departments.

"More than 13% of Texas nursing homes have at least one resident with coronavirus, officials say" was first published at <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/04/09/texas-coronavirus-cases-nursing-homes/> by The Texas Tribune. The Texas Tribune is proud to celebrate 10 years of exceptional journalism for an exceptional state.



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

The Tornillo detention facility, used in 2018 to detain undocumented immigrant children, was reopened last year to hold single adults amid a spike in apprehensions of undocumented immigrants at the Texas-Mexico border.

Millions wasted on detention facility

By JULIÁN AGUILAR
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The federal government wasted millions in taxpayer dollars on food, supplies and personnel during a brief reopening of a West Texas immigration detention facility last year, a government watchdog reported Thursday.

The findings from the Government Accountability Office focus on expenditures from August to December to operate the tent encampment at Tornillo, a rural community in eastern El Paso County. The facility was reopened to hold single adults amid a spike in apprehensions of undocumented immigrants at the Texas-Mexico border. It was previously used in 2018 to detain undocumented immigrant children.

Over those five months, the federal government spent about \$66 million to operate the facility, which was built to hold as many as 2,500 detainees. But it never held more than 70 people, and the average daily population for the first three months was 28 people, according to the report.

That comes out to a cost of about \$431,000 per day.

During the initial three-month contract — which was later extended for two more months — the GAO found that U.S. Customs and Border Protection spent \$5.3 million on food, food delivery and other supplies, enough for 2,500 detainees per day — but averaged just 1% of capacity. The government adjusted food deliveries and reduced those costs during the two-month extension.

The government spent an additional \$6.7 million on 75 unarmed guards to monitor the facility 24 hours a day, and agents from Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as National Guard soldiers, also were temporarily reassigned to Tornillo. The GAO concluded that with an average daily population of 28 detainees, each detainee was being guarded by four soldiers, three security guards and one CBP officer.

The National Guard soldiers were reassigned in mid-November.

The Tornillo facility was reopened to

hold adult migrants after Border Patrol stations in Texas reached or exceeded their capacity last year during a surge of border crossings, mostly by Central Americans seeking asylum. Agents said repeatedly that Border Patrol holding stations were not built to house people for long periods of time and they would need additional facilities if the surge continued.

In its response to the GAO findings, the Trump administration said it didn't have the luxury of hindsight, as did the GAO, when it was operating the facility, and it couldn't predict what effect other border security measures would have on overall crossings.

"In leadership's view, it would have been worse to close facilities such as the one in Tornillo, Texas, too early and be forced again to hold detainees in locations not suited to that purpose than it was to take the risk that CBP would have a level of overcapacity for some time," Jim H. Crumacker, director of the GAO's Office of Inspector General Liaison Office, wrote to the GAO.

The GAO report also states that local Border Patrol officials tried to alert their superiors that Tornillo was an unnecessary use of resources.

"Border Patrol officials in the El Paso sector told us that the sector recommended to Border Patrol headquarters that the facility be closed and resources reallocated elsewhere for other CBP missions, due to the consistently low numbers of individuals held at the facility and the personnel resource requirements to operate the facility," the report states.

"In contrast, CBP headquarters officials told us, despite the consistently low numbers of detainees held in the Tornillo facility, they decided to continue operations for the 2,500-person facility because they were operating in an environment with considerable uncertainty related to migrant flow and wanted to prepare for the possibility of increased apprehensions," the report says.

"In leadership's view, it would have been worse to close facilities such as the one in Tornillo, Texas, too early and be forced again to hold detainees in locations not suited to that purpose than it was to take the risk that CBP would have a level of overcapacity for some time."

— JIM H. CRUMACKER, DIRECTOR OF THE GAO'S OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL LIAISON OFFICE

Katy district stays in 6A

Jordan to join Paetow in 19-5A

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Although there were minor changes made going from the fall to the spring biennial realignment of the University Interscholastic League, not many will end up affecting the Katy schools.

Prior to the last realignment, the last time all Katy schools called the same district home was the 2008-2010 alignment although that group only lasted those two years.

This time around, the all-Katy 19-6A will last another UIL biennial realignment, keeping Katy, Cinco Ranch, Mayde Creek, Morton Ranch, Seven Lakes, Taylor and Tompkins in the fight for the top spot in the spring sports arena.

On the 5A stage, Paetow will also be remaining in its same district with teams from Brenham, Bryan, College Station and Magnolia. One addition will be the newest Katy school, Jordan High School, although only in increments.

When Katy ISD's ninth high school opens this fall in the Fulshear area, individual sports will be able to compete at the varsity level right away. All varsity team sports outside of football can start competing in the UIL in 2021.

Since a football team cannot join in the "middle" year of a biennial realignment, the Jordan Knights won't play in a UIL-sanctioned football game until 2022.

Tompkins turned in the largest enrollment out of Katy ISD, checking in at 4,018 students. Seven Lakes was next with 3,767, then Katy at 3,466.5 who was ahead of Cinco Ranch's 3,257.

Taylor High School turned in an enrollment of 2,915. Mayde Creek registered 2,892.5 and Morton Ranch had 2,567.5 students on snapshot day while Paetow (2,179) and Jordan (1,586.69) remain in Class 5A for another two years.

Sargent named 19-5A MVP



MARK GOODMAN

First-year Paetow head coach Michael Niemi earned co-coach of the year honors in District 19-5A after leading the Panthers to a district championship and playoff berth in their second year of varsity competition. Pictured is Niemi talking to his players during a 5A Region III District 19 basketball game against the Magnolia West Mustangs at Paetow High School on Jan. 24, 2020. The Panthers won, 77-33.

Panthers also earn newcomer, coach of the year honors

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

For a first-year varsity program to nearly make the playoffs is pretty special.

For that team to come back the following year and not only claim a playoff spot but finish atop their district, that takes it to another level.

That's what the Paetow Panthers did in their second year in District 19-5A and they were accordingly recognized with all-district honors in the form of MVP, newcomer and coach of the year.

Senior Davion Sargent was honored with the most valuable player award, leading Paetow back from missing the playoffs by a game last year to taking the district crown this year.

"When he can knock down shots, he forces hard closeouts that can open up drives," said head coach Mike Niemi after the Panthers' 76-50, district-opening win over Bryan Rudder on Jan. 3. "His athleticism being what it is, and him playing in the open floor, is really important, but the fact he can knock down a 3 in the half-court really helps us out as far as spreading the defense and opening up things for other guys."

Niemi was also credited for his role in his

initial campaign at the helm of the Paetow program, garnering co-coach of the year distinction along with A&M Consolidated's Andrew Daily. Niemi had spent the prior two seasons as head coach of the Fort Bend Kempner Cougars and squared off with Paetow twice last year in early-season action, splitting the games.

"We wanted to fix a bit of the mentality about how we approach games and how we approach practice," Niemi said of what he learned in the previous matchups, also after the Rudder game in January. "Davion being able to do what he can do, in addition to David (Bradley) and some of those returners having that experience and being able to see how they were so close last year."

On top of those honors, sophomore Charles Chukwu also took home newcomer of the year honors and will return to guide the Panthers who will see the same district foes for another two years following the biennial realignment.

Paetow also had two athletes on both the first- and second-team all-district as well as an honorable mention.

Senior David Bradley closed his career on the first-team honor and also spoke to the comeback efforts this season after coming up just shy of the postseason last year.

"We were a first-year varsity team last year, and we were still so close to making the playoffs," Bradley said after the Rudder game. "That kept us motivated the whole way, during the offseason and into (district)."

Joining him on the first-team all-district was sophomore Trevor Frank who will return alongside Chukwu, who was the first of two second-team honorees.

Senior Joel Delva rode into the sunset with second-team all-district distinction under his belt in his final season.

On the other end of the spectrum, another sophomore in EJ Roberts bagged honorable mentions this year and will step into a returning role with his classmates next year.

For the Paetow girls, a pair of Lady Panthers were bestowed with honorable mentions while those two and a trio more earned academic all-district honors.

Senior Kaitlyn Galer and sophomore Tianna Murray finished the year with all-district honorable mentions and academic all-district distinction after helping Paetow battle back from a one-win district slate last year to a three-win run this time around.

Seniors Sera Lewis and Kelaiaha Williams, as well as sophomore Daisy Lira, joined Galer and Murray in representing the Lady Panthers with the academic all-district accolade.

XFL suspended operations Friday, filed for bankruptcy Monday

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

After canceling the rest of its rebooted regular season in March, the XFL announced last Friday morning that it has suspended day-to-day operations and laid off team and league employees, effective immediately.

The Houston Roughnecks were undefeated through the first half of the season the XFL's championship was slated to be played at Houston's TDECU Stadium April 26.

By Monday afternoon, the league had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Delaware, allotting both assets and liabilities in the \$10-50 million range.

"The XFL quickly captured the hearts and imaginations of millions of people who love football," the league said in a statement Monday. "Unfortunately, as a new enterprise, we were not insulated from the harsh economic impacts and uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Accordingly, we have filed a voluntary petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. This is a heartbreaking time for many, including our passionate fans, players and staff, and we are thankful to them, our television partners, and the many Americans who rallied to the XFL for the love of football."

In the filing, it was uncovered that WWE owner Vince McMahon was responsible for all of the Class A shares, as well as 76.5% of Class B shares, with the WWE owning the other 23.5% of Class B shares, refuting reports that a different group had owned the XFL.

Among the top creditors were the St. Louis Sports Commission who owns The Dome at the America's Center where the St. Louis BattleHawks played their home games (\$1,600,000), broadcasting service outfit NEP (\$1,208,832) and Dallas Rene-



JOE SOUTHERN

The XFL filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Monday afternoon, three days after day-to-day operations were suspended. The season was halfway over and the Houston Roughnecks were still undefeated at 5-0. Pictured is Roughnecks running back James Butler leaping into the stands after scoring a touchdown against the Seattle Dragons on March 7.

gades head coach/general manager Bob Stoops (\$1,083,333.33).

In comparison to the spring football league that folded last March, the Alliance of American Football filed for a Chapter 7 bankruptcy in April of 2019, "which is all about liquidating assets," reported Daniel Kaplan of The Athletic.

"The XFL bankruptcy is a Chapter 11, which is designed to enable easier renegotiation of debts," Kaplan said, and later followed up with a tweet saying the XFL was for sale.

After the league announced the suspension of day-to-day operations, XFL President and Chief Operating Officer Jeffrey Pollack held a 10-minute conference call to inform employees of the update but made no mention of a season

in 2021 although "a small 'skeleton crew' of league executives will continue to work at the Stamford, CT headquarters," according to Konnor Fulk who was on the call.

When the league announced the suspension of the regular season, it stated the players would be paid in full through the end of the regular season which would have been last weekend. Fulk added that both employees and players received a larger check than normal on their most recent pay stubs.

After the league suspended its season, the NFL was able to offer now-former XFL players contracts and the Roughnecks led the league in that regard as well, having four of their former players crack the big stage.

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Houston Texans make offseason splashes

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

The Houston Texans and Los Angeles Rams agreed on a trade the evening of April 9 in which Houston sent a second-round pick in this year's draft (57th overall) for Rams wide receiver Brandin Cooks and a fourth-round pick in 2022.

Cooks, the 5-foot, 10-inch first-round pick out of Oregon State in the 2014 draft was with the New Orleans Saints his first three years before making consecutive trips to the Super Bowl, although neither were successful.

In 2017, Cooks and the New England Patriots fell to the Philadelphia Eagles. Then the Patriots came back the next year and took down the Rams who Cooks had spent the last two years with, catching 189 passes for 1,787 yards and seven touchdowns.

Cooks has four years remaining on a five-year \$80 million extension signed last year and will have hits against Houston's cap space of \$12, \$13 and \$14 million the latter three years of the deal if he stays the length in Texans colors.

He will join a receiving corps of Will Fuller and Randall Cobb and brings 88 games worth of experience in the league, registering season highs in receptions (84) and touchdowns (9) with New Orleans in 2015 and yards (1,204) with Los Angeles in 2018.

This is the second trade of the offseason for Bill O'Brien and the Texans involving a wide receiver after DeAndre Hopkins and a fourth-round pick in this year's draft (131st overall) went to the Arizona Cardinals in exchange for running back David Johnson, a second-rounder this year (40th overall) and a fourth-rounder next year.

That 40th overall selection is now Houston's first pick in the draft after it gave its next two first-round choices to the Miami Dolphins in exchange for offensive tackle Laremy Tunsil, wide receiver Kenny Stills and a fourth-round pick in this year's draft.

The Texans will be responsible for the remaining two years of Johnson's three-year, \$39 million contract extension from 2018 which will have hits against the cap of \$10.2 million this year and \$7.9 million next year.

The Cardinals selected Johnson out of the University of Northern Iowa with the 86th overall pick in the 2015 draft although it was the next year that saw his numbers jump.

Johnson started all 16 games of his sophomore campaign and racked up 1,293 yards and 16 touchdowns on 293 carries, eventually earning first-team all-pro and pro bowl honors.

However, he suffered a knee injury in week 17 of that year and fractured his wrist in the opening week of the 2017 season and missed the rest of the year.

Johnson is fresh off a 395-yard, two-touchdown season last year in 13 games, nine of which were starts. The 28-year-old has totaled 5,347 yards from scrimmage in 62 career games.

In free-agent signings, Randall Cobb was signed to a three-year, \$27 million deal, \$18.75 million of which is guaranteed. In addition, the Texans added safeties Eric Murray and Jaylen Watkins as well as offensive tackle Brent Qvale.

Houston also agreed to terms to re-sign offensive tackle Roderick Johnson, cornerbacks Vernon Hargreaves, Bradley Robey and Phillip Gaines, backup quarterback AJ McCarron, inside linebacker Tyrell Adams, long snapper Jon Weeks, wide receiver DeAndre Carter, tight end Darren Fells and kicker Ka'imi Fairbairn.

Astros show support with #LightItBlue at Minute Maid

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Minute Maid Park was lit in blue April 9 in the evening as the Astros joined Houston's sports and civic venues in an effort to turn the city blue.

This initiative was part of the global #LightItBlue movement to support the men and women on the front lines of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to Minute Maid Park, the other venues and buildings in Houston scheduled to take part included City Hall, the George R. Brown Convention Center, the bridges over Highway 59, BBVA Stadium, NRG Stadium, Rice Stadium, Reckling Park, TDECU Stadium and the Toyota Center.

All turned their interior LED signage and/or exterior marquees blue Thursday night. Many of the facilities are featuring messages of thanks on their video screens. Teams and organizations across the city are making social media posts using #LightItBlue and #MakeItBlue.

In addition to Houston, the other cities in America who took part in the "Light It Blue" included New York, Seattle, Boston, Kansas City, New Orleans and many more.

The #LightItBlue and #MakeItBlue movement began two weeks ago in the United Kingdom as they lit major landmarks throughout the country in salute to their healthcare providers. The goal of this effort is to create a global expression of support and gratitude to the healthcare and essential professionals who are saving lives and stabilizing our society.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Houston's Minute Maid Park was lit in blue last Thursday night as part of a global movement to support the men and women on the front lines of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Astros joined the city's sports and civic venues in an effort to turn the city blue.

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