

Katy Times



TAYLOR ROUTS CYPRESS CREEK, RIDES 'CRAZY TRAIN' TO STATE SEMIS
PAGE B1

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2019



1 drops out of election

Thompson announces his withdrawal from Pct. 3 constable election

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Fort Bend County Constable for Precinct 3 Wayne Thompson announced via Facebook that he has withdrawn his bid for reelection, citing a need to return to private life rather than public office. Thompson had previously announced Nov. 20 that he would be running for reelection.

"Since that time I have come to some personal decisions that have led me to believe that I need to return to private life," Thompson said via Facebook. "Therefore, I withdrew my filing and will not be on the ballot."

During his time in office, Thompson has worked to expand the precinct 3 constables office, he said. The department has increased contract patrols with subdivisions, established a motorist assistance program and added several officers with command and other special purposes including animal cruelty investigations and SWAT capability.

Three other candidates are running for the position - Chad Norvell, Jesse Zamaripa and Mohammed Nehad Abdulhameed will be on the ballot.

Thompson will finish the remainder of his term at the end of which whomever wins the election will be sworn in.

"Thanks for the opportunity to serve. It has been a blessing and an honor," Thompson said. "I will continue to do great things in this last year."

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December 12, 2019
16 pages | \$1

Council rejects development



R. HANS MILLER

Katy City planner Anas Garfaoui provides a brief overview of the 25K Morton Ranch and Silver Oaks Estates planned development district which was voted down by Katy City Council Monday night.

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy City Council rejected the 25K Morton Park and Silver Oaks Estates planned development district - known as a PDD - at its Dec. 9 meeting, citing concerns about commercial properties creeping into the residential portions of Katy. In February 2018, the plan was withdrawn from consideration by the developer in order to modify the PDD request to address City Council and resident concerns.

"At the time the city had just recently begun going through a drainage study by Costello, [Inc.], so... the city asked us to hold off until they finished their drainage study," said Matt Stoops, manager of planning services with LJA Engineering.

LJA is the engineering firm

helping JPSPS Development create plans for the PDD and Costello is the engineering firm in charge of Katy's drainage plan.

This is the second time the requestor, JPSPS Development has submitted the request for a PDD which would change zoning for the property located in the northwest corner of the intersection of Katy Hockley Cut Off and Morton roads. Since the initial application, LJA has worked with Costello and the city to adjust the development's plans to fit into the city's drainage plan, Stoops said.

Rick Lawler, the attorney representing the developer said he estimated JPSPS has spent between \$60,000 and \$80,000 on the additional studies involved in adjusting the PDD plan to address

See **COUNCIL**, page A7



JANET BULLER, BULLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Boutot announces the expansion of Brookshire's Grundfos pump manufacturing plant into the company's Americas headquarters at the Brookshire Economic Development Corporation's business expansion program Dec. 7.

EXPANDING

Grundfos to expand plant in Brookshire

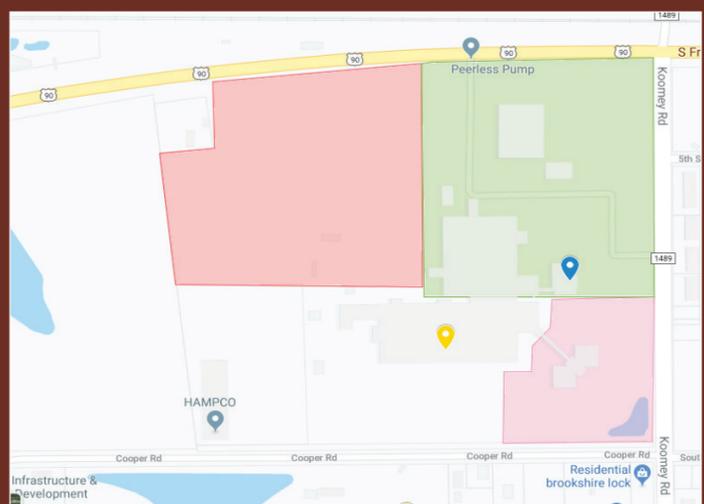
By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Eric Boutot, Grundfos' regional operations vice president, announced at the Brookshire Economic Development Corporation's business and development program dinner Saturday evening that he will lead the company's expansion of its Brookshire plant which will become company's Americas headquarters. The plant is in the southwest corner of the intersection of State Highway 90 and Koomey Road on the west side of Brookshire, north of I-10.

Grundfos Chief Operating officer Stéphane Simonetta said in a written statement that he had great faith in Boutot's professional record to ensure the expanded plant's success.

"I am confident that [Boutot] will enhance Grundfos Americas' ability to meet the needs of our customers, strengthen our end to end supply chain, operations excellence and increase our focus on quality," Grundfos' Chief Operating Officer said in a statement distributed at the banquet.

Grundfos is the world's largest pump manufacturing company, Boutot said during a short presentation at the annual dinner hosted at Hemi Hideout. Amid



The portion of the map highlighted in green is the current Grundfos facility. The sections to the west and south highlighted in pink indicate the location of the expanded plant into Grundfos' Americas headquarters.

the museum-like facility which pays tribute to the American auto industry, Boutot said Grundfos will break ground March 2020 and expects to open the expansion in the first quarter of 2021.

According to documents provided by Grundfos at the banquet, Grundfos was founded in 1945 and owns 83

See **EXPANDING**, page A7

Texans follow big win with bad loss to Broncos

BY BILL MCCAUGHEY
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

HOUSTON — One week after playing their best game of the season on national TV in an impressive win over the New England Patriots, the Texans allowed the Denver Broncos to score on their first five possessions en route to a 38-24 loss on Sunday, Dec. 8, at NRG Stadium.

The Texans now go to Tennessee to play the Titans on Sunday in a big AFC South game. Houston and Tennessee are tied for first place in the division, each 8-5. They play twice over the next three weeks.

The Broncos, who entered the game 4-8 overall, started their first drive at their 8-yard line and needed just 2-minutes, 59-seconds to drive 92 yards and score their first touchdown, a 14-yard pass from rookie quarterback Drew Lock to Noah Fant.

On the Texans' next series, Broncos linebacker Alexander Johnson stripped receiver Keke Coutee of the ball, and Jeremiah Attaochu recovered it and lateraled the ball to former Texan Kareem Jackson,



Houston Texans running back Duke Johnson (25) tries to escape from a Denver Broncos defender on Sunday, Dec. 8, during their game at NRG Stadium. The Broncos won, 38-24.

who took it 70 yards to the end zone to give the Broncos a 14-0 lead with 3:33 to go in the first quarter.

The Broncos scored on their next four series as they took a 38-3 lead with 9:15 to go in the third quarter.

Texans players said the game could have been looked at as a "trap

game" following such an emotional win the previous week.

"I believe it was, because we were on a high (after the Patriots win)," cornerback Bradley Roby said. "It was a team not making the playoffs ... you think you can just roll it out there and win, but in the NFL, every week, they have guys on

the other team that can go out and get a win. We learned that today."

The Texans scored on a 43-yard pass from Deshaun Watson to DeAndre Hopkins. After the Texans defense finally stopped a Broncos drive, Watson scored on a 6-yard run to cut the lead to 38-17 with 13:45 remaining.

The Texans again stopped the Broncos and moved to the Broncos' 32-yard line before Jackson intercepted a tipped Watson pass to kill any hopes the Texans may have had for a comeback win.

Jackson, a 2010 first-round draft pick by Houston, had 11 total tackles and two takeaways.

"Kareem played well. He is a good player and he played a really good game," Texans coach Bill O'Brien said.

The Texans scored their final points on a Watson 3-yard run with 25 seconds left.

Lock, making just the second start of his young career, completed 22 of 27 passes for 309 yards, three touchdowns and a quarterback rating of 136.0. He spread the ball around to 10 different receivers.

"Lock did a good job. They had a good plan and we had a hard time defending it. Lock and his teammates did a good job," O'Brien said.

Fant, another Broncos rookie, had four receptions for 113 yards and one touchdown, and second-year running back Phillip Lindsay rushed for 51 yards on 16 carries.

Watson completed 28 of 50 passes for 292 yards, and had one touchdown, two interceptions and a quarterback rating of 63.1. He also rushed six times for 44 yards and two touchdowns. Hopkins had seven receptions for 120 yards and one touchdown, and Carlos Hyde rushed 14 times for 73 yards.

"We didn't play well," O'Brien said. "Our pass coverage wasn't very good. But it just wasn't pass defense, it was false starts, and we didn't stop the run very well. I thought our guys fought hard to the end, but the lead was too large."

"We are all in this together. There is a lot of football yet to be played, and we are all in this together. I think we have a really good football team, but we have to be more consistent."

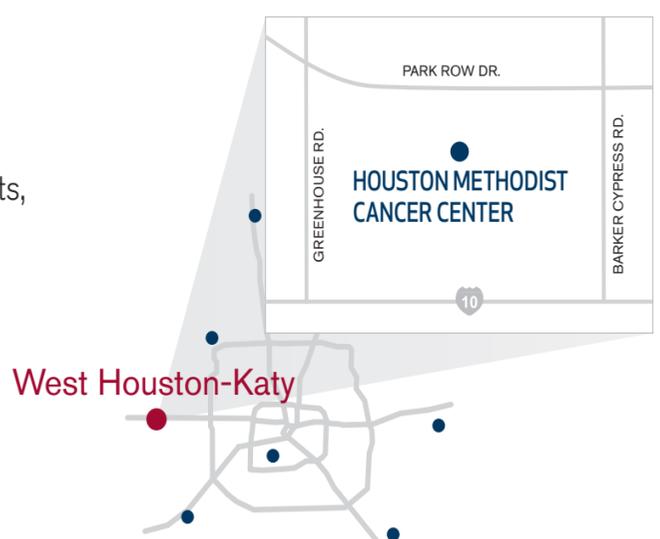


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A menu for fun-filled holiday festivities

FAMILY FEATURES

When holiday gatherings turn into all-day events, having meals ready from morning to night becomes an important part of seasonal hosting.

Starting with breakfast through the main course followed by a savory dessert, a full day of celebration calls for a variety of dishes.

To help keep your crowd fueled for a wide range of activities, consider these recipes for Hot Cocoa Pancakes that get your morning started, Browned Butter Smashed Potatoes with Butternut Squash to pair with a holiday ham and Black Forest Cake to end the festivities on a high note.

Find more holiday recipe inspiration at Culinary.net.

Begin the holiday with a family breakfast

With so many activities scheduled and places to be during the holidays, starting the morning with a filling breakfast can help set your family on the path to enjoyable moments with loved ones.

These Hot Cocoa Pancakes require little time in the kitchen, leaving you more time to spend with the family before hitting the road or working on decorations for seasonal gatherings. Made with Aunt Jemima pancake mix,



containing no artificial coloring or flavors, this recipe makes it simple to put breakfast on the table quickly while still achieving a meal full of flavor.

Visit auntjemima.com for more family-friendly recipes.

Hot Cocoa Pancakes

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 2 minutes per pancake
Yield: 12 pancakes (3 per serving)

- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup 2% or non-fat milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups Aunt Jemima Original Complete or Buttermilk Complete Pancake & Waffle Mix
- 1/4 cup water

- marshmallow spread (optional)
- chocolate syrup (optional)
- Aunt Jemima Syrup (optional)

Heat skillet over medium-low heat or electric griddle to 375 F.

In microwave-safe bowl, mix cocoa powder, sugar, milk and vanilla until well combined. Heat in microwave 30 seconds, or until warm. Stir again to ensure mixture is combined.

Combine cocoa mixture, pancake mix and water. Stir until large lumps disappear (do not beat or overmix). If batter is too thick, add additional 1-2 tablespoons water.

Pour slightly less than 1/4 cup batter onto lightly greased skillet or griddle. Cook 90 seconds, or until bubbles appear on surface. Turn

and cook additional 30 seconds. Repeat with remaining batter.

Top pancakes with marshmallow spread and drizzle chocolate syrup, or top with syrup.

Party-perfect potatoes

Almost every holiday meal calls for side dishes to complement the main course, and as one of the most versatile base ingredients available, potatoes often provide home chefs with a multitude of options.

Served mashed, fried, scalloped, sliced, diced, boiled, roasted or just about any style in-between, potatoes are ideal for matching with the centerpiece of your family meal. These Browned Butter Smashed Potatoes with Butternut Squash call for Wisconsin yellow-flesh potatoes to achieve a dense, creamy texture with their just-battered appearance.

Find more dishes for your holiday gatherings at eatwisconsinpotatoes.com.

Browned Butter Smashed Potatoes with Butternut Squash

Prep time: 25 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

- 1 pound (3 medium) Wisconsin yellow-flesh potatoes, cut into 3/4-inch chunks

- 1 small butternut squash (about 1 pound), peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks
- water
- 1 teaspoon salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 8-10 fresh (2-3-inch) sage leaves, stacked and cut into 1/4-inch strips
- 1/2 cup 1% milk
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In 3-quart saucepan, cover potatoes and squash with water; add 1 teaspoon salt.

Bring to boil over high heat; reduce heat, cover and cook until tender, 12-15 minutes.

In small saucepan over medium heat, mix 2 tablespoons butter and sage. Tilting pan and watching closely, cook about 3 minutes, until butter foams and begins to brown; keep warm.

Thoroughly drain potatoes and squash, return to pan and shake 1-2 minutes over low heat. Using hand masher, roughly mash to create chunky mixture.

Over low heat, gently mix in remaining butter and milk.

Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Spoon into serving bowl and drizzle with brown butter and sage.

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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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Believe

Mavs take title for 2nd straight year

By STEPHEN GREENWELL
TIMES CORRESPONDENT

While anyone can look at the box score and see the gaudy 42-point night that Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer had, that would obscure the real reason the Mavericks prevailed in the 75-65 championship game against Klein Forest in the gold bracket of the Katy ISD Classic tournament at the Merrell Center on Saturday, Dec. 7.

The Mavericks (10-5) were actually in a hole at the end of the first quarter as the Eagles took advantage of slow defensive rotations for open 3-point shots. Klein Forest had an offensive rebound and a put-back for the 9-point lead at the end of the period, its largest of the game, after a Maverick failed to box out.

Facing the nine-point deficit, senior guard Westley Sellers and senior forward Adrian Caldwell said coach Chris Turner stressed the importance of trusting one another and increasing the defensive intensity.

"He just said to keep believing in each other," Sellers said. "We've been in tougher situations before, so he just wanted us to keep our heads up and let each other know that we're going to get through this together. We just counted on each other and basically just brought our defense throughout the rest of the game."

Caldwell, who was on the bench as the deficit increased, said he was eager to get back on the court.

"Energy is what we needed," he said, pointing toward the 75-65 final on the scoreboard as he spoke. "Throughout the second half, we turned it up. You see the scoreboard now."

Sellers and senior center Eddie Lampkin (11 points, eight rebounds) were named to the all-tournament team. Cryer, who averaged 33.9 points on 48 percent 3-point shooting entering the championship game, was named the tournament's most valuable player for the second straight season as the Mavericks won the tournament for the second straight year.



Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer (4) shoots a layup during the gold bracket championship game of the Katy ISD Classic on Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Merrell Center. The Mavericks beat Klein Forest, 75-65, as Cryer was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.



Morton Ranch senior center Eddie Lampkin (32) dunks during the gold bracket championship game of the Katy ISD Classic on Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Merrell Center. The Mavericks beat Klein Forest, 75-65, as Lampkin was named to the all-tournament team.

The defensive intensity picked up noticeably for the Mavericks in the second quarter and beyond, as they made up eight points, trailing 34-33 at the half. And in the second half, Cryer hit a pair of 3s to give Morton Ranch a 39-36 lead it wouldn't relinquish.

While Turner said he was happier with the defense as the game wore on, it still isn't at the level that he's seeing in practices.

"I know we're not going to be perfect, and we work on it, but I get frustrated because we don't necessarily do the things that we work on all the time," he said. "We try to find as many drills as we can to mix it up, and we make sure we compete at practice. Whatever we're doing, we find time to compete."

In addition to leading to some

easy buckets in transition and turnovers, the defense also seemed to wear Klein Forest down, forcing its top offensive players to expend more energy, and in turn, slowing its rotations on defense. While Cryer had one step-back 3-point shot in the corner, the majority of his looks were open in the second half.

Sellers said his defense is a source of pride, and something he wants to be known for. While he only had two points, he finished with nine assists and five steals.

"I know what I bring to the team, and that's intensity and good defense," said Sellers, who is averaging more than three steals per game this season. "I feel like I'm the best defensive player in the city of Houston, so when I step on the court I know I need to prove that.

The other team's best player, I want to guard them."

Caldwell, a 200-pound 6-foot-3 wing, alternated between matching up with Klein Forest wings and spelling Lampkin in the frontcourt. He finished with nine points, four rebounds, two steals and only one turnover. He was often matched up with Klein Forest wing Dylan Hamilton, and the two jawed with one another on several possessions.

"That's family right there," he said about Hamilton, laughing. He said they often played on the same offseason squads. "That's something we have between each other, which the referee didn't know, but we play hard against one another."

Although he knew Hamilton, Caldwell said his approach is similar against other players.

"Whoever the leader is, I'm going inside their head and changing the game, and seeing what happens," he said. "I want to make them as uncomfortable as possible. Make them play our game instead of their game."

Turner said he's glad to see the team's improvement, but it's still a work in progress despite returning experienced players. The Mavericks started the season 0-4, but have since won 10 of their last 11 games.

"I think we're still trying to find our game, with the pieces we have," he said. "Yes, we return four starters, but at the same time, we've had some injuries and some other stuff, so it's harder and we need to work these pieces in. I think we're starting to figure it out."

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Bailey's anticipated return sparks Mavs' win

By **STEPHEN GREENWELL**
TIMES CORRESPONDENT

Heading into their non-district matchup against Fort Bend Travis on Monday, Dec. 9, only two people knew it would be the long-awaited return to game action for Morton Ranch senior center Madyson Bailey — her and head coach Kisha Jones.

"They (players) didn't find out until right beforehand that she was going to play," Jones said, adding that she thought it would provide a spark for the team. "We explained to her and to the team that there would be a minutes restriction, but they had more confidence knowing big sister was going to be out there."

While Bailey only played about 10 minutes and scored six points, her presence in the lineup paid dividends in the Mavericks' 61-59 win. It allowed fellow senior and captain Jharyn Craig to attack more in transition and finish with a team-high 18 points.

Bailey missed almost a year because of a torn ACL suffered in January. She said she was still working herself back up to full strength.

Before the setback, the nightly double-double threat was a serious contender for District MVP.

"I just want to focus on getting back into the game," she said. "It's been 10 months and it's difficult, but I want to get back to where I was, like the injury never happened."

Going forward when Bailey is fully healthy, Jones said their starting lineup would likely include her and senior captain Nekil Richardson, who finished with 11 points against the Tigers.



From left to right, Morton Ranch seniors Jharyn Craig, Madyson Bailey and Nekil Richardson were vital in helping the Mavericks improve to 6-6 with a win over Fort Bend Travis on Monday, Dec. 9.

"I clear my mind when I'm in a game," Richardson said of her post game, which featured multiple put-backs and fighting for rebounds. "I block everything out, and I just do me. I just get aggressive."

Bailey and Richardson are a rugged duo down low, but they both have finesse aspects to their games. Richardson has the speed to bring the ball up or to drive past slower defenders on the perimeter, and Bailey—a college softball signee for Texas-Tyler—can throw a stellar outlet pass the length of the court.

Jones anticipated improvements throughout the starting lineup as Bailey worked herself back in. Craig, senior Amya Scott, junior Schyler Falls, junior America Lopez and sophomore A'lyvia Jackson will all play significant minutes in the guard and wing rotations.

"Jharyn (Craig) is actually a guard who's been forced to play a post position while Maddie is out. So when Maddie comes back, she's going to work back to the (wing) position," Jones said. "Once she settles in and she's

healthy enough to play a full game, then Jharyn Craig will be able to fill those lanes and play her normal position a bit more."

With players forced into different positions and roles because of the injury, Morton Ranch has played unevenly to start the year. The win against the Tigers improved the Mavericks to 6-6, although they had to survive a furious comeback to secure it.

The Mavericks led by 11 in the second half, and by eight after three quarters. However, they gave up four 3-point shots in the

fourth, with the final one cutting the lead to 60-59 with seven seconds left. Morton Ranch was able to hit a free throw, and a final drive by the Tigers was contested in the lane by Bailey, with the shot not reaching the rim.

In light of the fourth quarter, the three senior captains said they needed to work on their communication on offense and defense. The Mavericks struggled to break the Travis fullcourt press and committed four five-second violations during the game.

They also shot 8-for-16 from the free-throw line in the fourth.

"It's mostly the communication on the court that we need to work on," Craig said. "We had a cushion, but toward the end we lost that momentum that we had coming into the game. Certain things that helped us in the beginning, we didn't have in the end, so we need to work on finishing, and finishing with the lead."

Jones thought those smaller things would naturally improve as players got more comfortable in their roles. She saw an early-season close call like this as something the players could build upon in practice.

"I think it's something we definitely need to work on, and I hope that winning the game is going to give them confidence to know that they can do it," she said. "The whole time, I told the girls, 'We're still ahead. Just make your free throws, get to your defensive assignments.' I think it's something we're going to build on and work on."

"The girls have a positive mindset because of how it turned out, but we still have work to do."

Fernandez, others step up for Thompson-led Tigers

By **STEPHEN GREENWELL**
TIMES CORRESPONDENT

While most of the Katy area, if not Region III girls basketball, knows about the stellar individual talent of Katy High senior Allana Thompson, it was her teammates that finished strong without her in the fourth quarter of the Tigers' 64-54 win against Clear Brook on Tuesday, Dec. 10.

Thompson—a NCAA Division I signee to Prairie View A&M—was the game's high scorer with 23 points, but she fouled out on a reach-in attempt with 5:09 remaining and Katy (8-8) holding a 49-38 lead against Clear Brook (12-8).

"I sort of lost track of my fouls," Thompson said. "I was trying to get the ball, and I didn't realize I need to be careful when it came to a ticky-tack foul."

However, without Thompson, junior point guard Sasha Fernandez was a steady influence. She finished with 18 points, which included two 3-point shots and four free throws in the final 5:30.

Fernandez said she knew she needed to be more aggressive in the game's final moments without Thompson in the lineup.

"I'm depending on my teammates then, because I know they're solid, especially on defense, and that they can help out," Fernandez said. "Allana's a big factor, offensively and defensively, but today we were emphasizing the fact that we need to play all 32 minutes."

Beyond Fernandez and Thompson, junior power forward Aubrey Ridenhour finished with 11 points, including a trio of 3-point shots. Senior center Joy Jegede had five points, which included an old school 3-point play with 2:31 left to extend the lead to 11.

Both Thompson and coach Shanna Marhofer repeated the need for 32 minutes of intensity, defense and focus.

"Playing our game the whole game, and not turning it on and off," Thompson said. "We need to make sure we bring our defensive intensity, because it leads to easy buckets."

Marhofer added, "We can't take quarters or minutes off. Once we play 32 minutes, we're going to be hard to beat. We had our moments, but we had our

most complete game that we've had. We did a good job."

When Katy did let up, Clear Brook took advantage. With 2.68 seconds left in the first half, Thompson hit two free throws, but the Tigers didn't defend the inbound pass. As a result, Clear Brook sophomore Alyssa Berry got an uncontested look from about 65 feet and nailed it, giving her team a 27-24 lead at the half.

Marhofer said they restressed the idea of playing every minute at halftime. Berry had nine points at the half, but only finished with 14. Better defense led to more transition opportunities for Thompson, and Katy outscored Clear Brook by eight and five, respectively, in the final two quarters.

"We did a better job of sealing gaps and getting hands on penetration, blocking out and getting butts in guts," Marhofer said. "They improved in those areas, which allowed the intensity to increase, and that translated into good things for us."

Going forward, Marhofer anticipated continued development for her team, partially because of Thompson's influence.

"She does a great job attacking, but she always finds her open teammates who are ready to score," she said. "We have an unselfish team, and they're always looking for one more pass, even when it's not there." Thompson said she had no idea she had the most points on the team. It's something that doesn't interest her.

"I'm not really counting my points or trying to score the most points," she said. "I'm just trying to play my game and make sure everybody gets their best game, too. I'll get my points whenever I can, but I'm mostly focused on passing the ball and getting my teammates their shots."

Marhofer also anticipated seeing more of "fourth-quarter Sasha" as the year wore on.

"Of the three guards, she's the one returner, and she played returner minutes in that fourth quarter," Marhofer said. "She played with confidence. She played in-charge and in-control. The point guard is the captain of the floor, and she did a great job with that. She was just bringing that confidence."



Katy High's Allana Thompson (11) drives the lane to the basket, guarded by Clear Brook's Hailey Henry (12), during a non-district basketball game between Katy and Clear Brook on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at Katy High.



Katy High's Sasha Fernandez (4) brings the ball up court during a non-district basketball game between Katy and Clear Brook on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at Katy High.

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Panthers named to all-district teams

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Last season, Paetow won three games, none in district play, in its inaugural year of varsity football.

This season, however, the Panthers officially put the rest of District 10-5A, Division II—one of the more competitive districts in Texas—on notice.

Paetow won eight games in all and went 5-2 in the district this season, falling to league champ A&M Consolidated and Lamar Consolidated, but earning a landmark victory with a huge win over regional power Huntsville in late October that officially secured the Panthers' first playoff berth.

As a result, Paetow had a heavy presence on the 10-5A, Division II, all-district honors, which are voted upon by the district's eight head coaches.

Senior linebacker/defensive lineman D.J. Mourning was named Defensive Newcomer of the Year. The 6-foot-3, 215-pound Mourning totaled 6.8 tackles per game, 10 tackles for a loss, seven sacks, three fumble recoveries, a fumble caused and an interception.

Five more Panthers were named to the all-district offensive first team: junior center Demetrius Elko, senior lineman Cameron Gross, junior fullback Randle Kelley, senior running back Jonathan Jolly and senior deep snapper Dylan Ondruch.

Four Panthers were recognized on the all-district defensive first team: junior end Agumba Otuonye, junior lineman Andrew Rutherford, senior inside linebacker Calevin Curry and senior outside linebacker Alex Elko.

Six Panthers were named to the all-district offensive second team: sophomore lineman James Bailey, senior lineman Jose Coleman, senior tight end Jordan Armstead, senior receiver Johnathan Baker, sophomore quarterback Channing Dumas Jr., and junior Damon Bankston was named as a running back and kick returner.

Two Panthers were recognized on the all-district defensive second team: senior inside linebacker Dylan Ondruch and sophomore punter Anthony Fuentes.

The district named five Panthers as honorable mention selections: senior cornerback Dane Presto, sophomore cornerback Michael Jordan, sophomore free safety Kentrell Webb, junior free safety Carl Simon and senior kicker Isaac Jimenez.

Paetow finished third in the district this season, behind A&M Consolidated (7-0) and Lamar Consolidated (5-2). Huntsville (5-2) finished fourth.

Rudder (3-3), Lake Creek (2-5), Montgomery (1-6) and Cleveland (0-7) rounded out the bottom half of the district this season.

A&M Consolidated senior Kerry Brooks, a talented two-way player, was named the district's Most Valuable Player. Brooks rushed for 531 yards and six touchdowns and had three interceptions. Bryan Rudder sophomore quarterback EJ Ezar was named Offensive Newcomer of the Year. Ezar completed 56.6 percent of his passes and threw for 1,425 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Lamar Consolidated senior running back Taye McWilliams (1,343 rushing yards, 16 TDs) was named Offensive MVP, while A&M Consolidated senior Makel Williams and Huntsville senior Jordan Brown shared Defensive MVP honors.

A&M Consolidated's Lee Fedora was named Coach of the Year.



TIMES PHOTOS BY MARK GOODMAN & ALLEN SCARROW

D.J. Mourning



Jonathan Jolly



Calevin Curry



Johnathan Baker



Damon Bankston



Channing Dumas Jr.

SPORTS

Taylor's 'nasty' O-line dominating in playoffs

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

After a late afternoon practice on Tuesday, Taylor High's offensive line huddled up to hear some final words from position coach Travis Sharp.

And then, all together, they met with hands raised in a pile and shouted, "Nasty!"

It's who they are. "Being nasty and being physical, that takes out a lot of the thinking," junior center Abraham Okezie said. "If we can do that, we can just play football."

If there's a term that appropriately describes the Mustangs' front, 'nasty' could be it. 'Dirty,' in an affectionate sense, could also be another, in the way they play aggressively to the whistle, doing anything and everything to win yards. 'Dominant' is another.

It's a line that claims three players weighing more than 300 pounds, and another close to it.

Junior left tackle Hayden Conner (6-foot-6, 315 pounds), senior left guard Michael Tulenko (6-5, 320), Okezie (6-2, 275), junior right guard Bryce Foster (6-5, 330) and senior right tackle Gunner Elliott (6-1, 195) are the starters. But also not to be overlooked are senior backups Ethan Fahey, Alex Derrough, Nathan Walters and Luke Sykes, the last a two-year spot starter who switches on and off with Elliott.

Sharp uses a quality rotation of players to keep his unit fresh, which is why defensive fronts tend to wear down well before Taylor's offensive front does.

"It's not about five guys," Sharp said. "It's about five guys playing well together."

The line is coming off a game where it cleared the way for 302 rushing yards, at 5.6 yards per carry, during last week's regional final win over Cypress Creek. In all this season, they have paved the way



DENNIS SILVA II

Taylor's offensive line is coming off a dominant performance after clearing the way for 302 rushing yards during last week's regional final win over Cypress Creek. Top row, left to right, are senior Michael Tulenko, junior Bryce Foster and junior Hayden Conner. Kneeling, from left to right, are junior Abraham Okezie and senior Gunner Elliott.

for more than 2,500 yards, at 4.8 yards per carry, and 23 touchdowns on the ground.

If there's an undeniable force for Taylor heading into its Class 6A-Division II state semifinal against Austin Westlake in Waco on Saturday, it's the offensive line.

Conner said the line's communication from tackle to tackle is better. Foster said the line is doing better establishing "power angles" and lining up to fight off blocks.

Drive-blocking is unquestionably the line's forte.

"During these playoffs, starting with Fort Bend Elkins (in the bi-district round),

we really realized what movement on the defensive line will do to linebackers," Foster said. "That movement from the line of scrimmage, getting reset ... that opens up so many yards right there, and it opens up more holes for the running backs."

It is a confident offensive line, one that knows it almost always has the upper-hand physically in any game.

"We've embraced a new identity," Conner said. "The first drive for every game these playoffs has been phenomenal. We establish our dominance and we establish how physical we're going

to be, and I feel like that's who we are now. We're going to be the bigger, stronger guys out there, and we're going to control the line. Going into games, we know we're going to mash guys up front."

Sharp said his boys "are great students of the game of football." Film study and relentless work during practices have improved footwork and hands.

The Mustangs are not just physically intimidating. Their technique and fundamentals are just as effective.

"We just keep getting better," Tulenko said. "We've played tough teams, and that helped us knowing what looks we'll see in the playoffs. It got us ready. We know what it's like to lose, and we don't want to feel that again. We're just going to keep on pressing."

The Mustangs are a team that wants to run first. They are averaging 44.5 rushing attempts per game in the playoffs. More than half of their offensive touchdowns (8 of 15) have come on the ground.

That will be needed again against Austin Westlake. It will be important that Taylor controls possession and keeps the ball away from a Westlake offense averaging almost 50 points per game.

Westlake's defensive line is not as big or as strong as Taylor's offensive line, but has speed and quickness Taylor has rarely seen this year.

"They get off the ball really well, and their defensive line moves quite a bit and the linebackers are moving around," Sharp said of Westlake. "We've got to control the chaos, and if we can do that we'll be alright."

Basically, the Mustangs have to be nasty. No biggie. They've done it all year.

"I feel, physically, we can dominate them," Tulenko said. "It's a quick versus strength thing, and if we can just be who we are, we'll be fine."



MARK GOODMAN

Taylor junior safety Trevor Woods (43) celebrates his interception return for a touchdown with teammate Brandon Choi (8) during the Mustangs' Class 6A-Division II regional final win over Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, at NRG Stadium.

WOODS

from page B1

had a 33-yarder in Taylor's first-round playoff win against Fort Bend Elkins.

"It is crazy," Woods said. "They just keep giving it to me right when I'm in full speed, breaking to the ball."

Woods' 38-yard pick-6 against Cypress Creek during last Saturday's regional final win was a back-breaker for the Cougars. It put Taylor up 24-0 with 2:39 left in the first quarter.

"That actually should have been Braden's," Woods said, referring to senior safety Braden Hay. "He (Cougars quarterback Julian Uwadia) saw Braden break on it so quick, he had to change in the middle of his throw and had to throw it to my guy. He stuttered, so it gave me even more time. Braden broke on that really well."

Taylor coach Chad Simmons saw it coming. Woods gave him a heads-up.

"He told me, 'If I'm off and they throw that little slant route, I'm picking that off,'" Simmons recalled. "And he did. He just recognizes things."

Woods, who played varsity as a sophomore last season, had not had a pick-6 until this season. His first was his most memorable, a 100-yard scamper for a score in a 65-34 win over Deer Park on Sept. 14.

It's no coincidence that the Mustangs are 4-0 in games which Woods returns an interception for a touchdown.

"It's unheard of," Simmons said. "Unheard of."

Players and coaches are in awe of Woods. But Woods credits his coaches and teammates.

Woods said Taylor's coaches gave such a detailed, thorough scouting report each week that "we know what (opponents) are going to do before they do it."

"We don't even have to do much," Woods said. "We know where everything is going to be. When we watch film, we have to know what the play-call is before the ball is even snapped. Coaches test us. All week, we get to where we can perfect it."

Woods also noted the defensive line of junior ends Marcus Daniels and Jordan Daniels, and junior tackle VJ Bronson and senior tackle Jahmai Edwards as essential to his success. Because of their ability to consistently apply pressure on opposing quarterbacks, Woods and his fellow secondary mates Hay, senior cornerback Lee Davis, junior cornerback Cecil Ivey Jr. and sophomore cornerback Hollis Robinson can feast on rushed, wayward throws.

"It's not about me," said Woods, who is far from a one-trick pony with nine tackles for a loss, seven sacks and four fumbles caused this season. "Our entire defense has been flying around to the ball, and it makes my job that much easier. This is the most passion I feel I've ever played with, because we're just so into it. We have this brotherhood that we don't want to end."

PUZZLE ANSWERS

L	A	R	I	A	T	B	A	U	S	C	H	E
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8	7	9	3	1	2	5	4	6
3	4	1	6	5	8	7	9	2

Taylor's twins impact defense

By STEPHEN GREENWELL
TIMES CORRESPONDENT

Taylor junior Jordan Daniels asked to switch from wideout and fullback to the defensive line as the Mustangs' playoff run started last month. While it might seem like an unusual switch to some, he had a couple of good reasons to think he'd excel in the role.

His twin brother, Marcus, has been a starter at defensive end the whole year, plus Jordan had experience playing defense, although that came two years ago.

"My freshman year, I played outside linebacker, so it's really nothing new," Jordan Daniels said.

Marcus added, "He usually played more on the offensive side, and I was more on the defensive side. He used to play fullback and tight end, and I would play D-end and linebacker."

Taylor defensive coordinator J. Jensen said he brought up the idea of the position change with Jordan Daniels after the team suffered a few injuries in the front seven. Jensen remembered Jordan's past play on defense as a freshman, and one play in particular stuck in his mind.

"Katy had a fourth-and-1 and he reached across the line of scrimmage and made a tackle for a two-yard loss," Jensen recalled. "It was a great play, and I kind of always kept that tucked away."

After several Taylor receivers got healthy and the depth chart was re-arranged as a result, Jensen said they made the switch at the start of the playoffs.

"I went to him and said, 'Hey man, I know you can play,'" Jensen said. "I went to him and I went to his brother, and I got a call later on that night from Marcus saying, 'Hey Coach, Jordan's going to be ready to play. He wants to play defensive end,' and he's doing everything we thought he could."

"He always says 'Yes, sir' and he's got a great work ethic. He locks in on film, he learns, he studies. They're both great football players and conscientious young men."

In his season debut on defense against bi-district playoff foe Fort Bend Elkins on Nov. 16, Jordan Daniels had seven

tackles and a sack. He had eight tackles, a sack and a fumble caused the next week in an area playoff win against Houston Memorial on Nov. 23, and eight tackles, a sack, a fumble caused and a fumble recovery in the regional semifinal win against Humble on Nov. 30.

Unsurprisingly, Marcus Daniels has similarly stellar numbers, with 19 tackles, three sacks and a fumble caused in the same time span. For the season, Marcus has 91 total tackles and seven sacks.

In the Mustangs' latest playoff game, a 58-20 regional final win against Cypress Creek on Dec. 7, the defense and the line performed strongly, with the Daniels brothers right there in the mix once again.

Cy-Creek was limited to 13 rushing yards on 18 carries, an average of 0.7 yards per carry. Marcus Daniels had eight tackles, including two for a loss, and Jordan Daniels had eight tackles, with three for a loss, a sack, two pass breakups and tipped a pass at the line.

"We really stressed getting our hands up in the passing game, and Jordan batted down a pass on the goal line, so as far as that went we did a great job," Jensen said. "We had hands up in (the quarterback's) face the whole day, and it caused some of the high throws early, and then we added on a blitz and we were really able to get some pressure on to him."

Both Daniels brothers are listed at an imposing 6-foot-2, 210 pounds, with enough speed and power to get through their blocks regularly. Even worse for opposing linemen, they're more than happy to help each other out.

"I've taught him some moves," Marcus Daniels said. "I'm just trying to make sure I get to the quarterback more and get to my sides."

Jordan Daniels attributed his success to the coaching staff and the hard work of his teammates on the scout team.

"It comes from practice, and scouting them," he said. Jensen also had praise for the scout team, noting it has pushed the varsity in recent weeks to get better.

"The young kids who are giving us the scout look in practice have really cracked up the intensity to try to make a name, and it's really carrying over to everybody," he said.

Going forward, Jensen thought his unit still had room to grow as Austin Westlake looms in the state semifinals Saturday, Dec. 14, at McLane Stadium in Waco.

"We're still improving," he said. "We still need to do a better job on holding our gap and not peeking, just punching the leverage in the gap and doing our job. The guys are getting better every day and still making improvements, and that's got us really excited as coaches."



MARCUS DANIELS



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MARK GOODMAN

Taylor High junior Cecil Ivey Jr. (23) celebrates his interception return for a touchdown during the second half of the Mustangs' Class 6A-Division II regional final win over Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, at NRG Stadium.

Ivey Jr. rebounds in regional final win

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Taylor's 58-20 Class 6A-Division II Region III final win over Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, was emotional for the Mustangs, who gleefully exacted revenge after the Cougars eliminated them in the area playoffs last season.

But perhaps no Mustang took the win as personally as junior cornerback Cecil Ivey Jr.

In Cy-Creek's 24-14 win over Taylor in the playoffs last year, Ivey was torched for all three of the Cougars' touchdowns. Then a sophomore newcomer to varsity, Ivey was picked on relentlessly by then-junior Cougars quarterback Julian Uwadia.

A little more than a year later, Ivey was desperate for redemption once he learned Cy-Creek stood in Taylor's way of a state semifinal appearance. And redeem himself he did, making up for last year with an impressive performance against the Cougars the second time around last weekend.

Ivey had a fumble recovery for a touchdown and interception for a touchdown to go with two tackles and a pass break-up in helping lead Taylor to its first regional final win and first state semifinal appearance.

"I was ready for revenge," Ivey said. "We didn't come here just to come here. We want more. We're ready for more."

Ivey's fumble recovery for a score put Taylor up 17-0 with 3:25 left in the first quarter. On a kickoff return, a Cy-Creek player advanced the ball to the Cougars' 17-yard line before Taylor senior Juan Romero knocked the ball loose.

The ball bounced backwards freely a few yards, was kicked farther back by Taylor's Zac Terry, and was pounced on by Ivey in the end zone.

"I don't know how to explain it," Ivey said, laughing. "I blanked out at that point because I didn't even know who fumbled the ball. When I

looked down, the ball was there, and I took that opportunity and jumped on it."

And how did he feel afterward? "Excitement," he said. "I didn't even realize it was a touchdown until after."

Later, in the third quarter, Uwadia dropped back to pass from within the Cougars' own end zone after faking a handoff and threw a back-shoulder pass that Ivey read the whole way.

Ivey briefly halted to control his grasp of the ball and raced back down the visitors' sideline 23 yards the other way for a 51-14 Taylor lead.

"The first time, they got me on the out-and-up, so I knew they'd come back at me on that," Ivey said. "I read it. I was already on top of it, so I cut my split and when he threw that back-shoulder fade I was there."

Taylor coach Chad Simmons was impressed by the precocious defensive back, who is not big in physical stature at 5-foot-7 and 165 pounds but has incredible skills on the ball.

"He was a sophomore then and they targeted him, as anybody would," Simmons said of last season's game against Cy-Creek. "He was new, less experienced. He made up for it."

"He was very opportunistic. He's got really good quickness closing on the ball, good instincts. Good ball skills."

Ivey said the Mustangs were coached to watch for any double moves from the Cougars' receivers. Taylor controlled that, and also defended end breaking routes well.

"I feel like we had a better game-plan," Ivey said. "Having seen them already, we had a better feel for what they do and what the offense is known for doing."

He took full advantage. "It was an emotional game, especially for me," said Ivey, who has four interceptions and two fumble recoveries this season. "I gave up three touchdowns last year in that game. When I got that pick-6 ... it was crazy. This game really meant a lot to me."

CLASS 6A-DIVISION II STATE SEMIFINALS AT A GLANCE

TAYLOR (9-5) VS. AUSTIN WESTLAKE (13-1)

SATURDAY, DEC. 14, 2:30 p.m.
AT McLANE STADIUM, WACO

	 TAYLOR	 WESTLAKE
Points Per Game	30.4	47.7
Points Allowed Per Game	29.1	10.1
Total Yards Per Game	351.3	440.1
Rushing Yards Per Game	184.4	179.1
Passing Yards Per Game	166.9	261.0
Top Passer	J. Jensen III: 149-270-10 1,991 yards; 17 TDs	Kirkland Michaux: 178-255-7 2,299 yards; 34 TDs
Top Rusher	Casey Shorter: 28 carries, 1,358 yards, 15 TDs	Zane Minors: 88 carries, 819 yards, 14 TDs
Top Receiver	Griffin Dougherty: 45 catches, 661 yards, 4 TDs	Ryan Lindley: 90 catches, 1,176 yards, 20 TDs
Top Defensive Player:	Trevor Woods: 9.9 tackles/game, 7 sacks, 4 INTs	Austin McClendon: 11 tackles for loss, 8 sacks, 1 INT, 2 fumbles recovered

MUSTANGS

from page B1

to be the district's first state champion in football since the 2015 Tigers.

"It felt great for all of us," senior running back C.J. Tolbert said. "We were focused and ready to play. We're playing for each other. This is what we've been dreaming of, trying to win a state championship."

Against a potent passing attack and high-scoring offense, the Mustangs were brilliant defensively, collecting four takeaways, including two interceptions returned for touchdowns and a fumble recovery for a touchdown, and holding Cy-Creek to 267 total yards at 4.5 yards per play.

The Cougars (9-5) entered averaging 38 points per game behind the play of senior quarterback Julian Uwadia, who had completed 60.1 percent of his passes this season for 3,129 yards and 30 touchdowns. Against Taylor, however, Uwadia was flummoxed all game, completing 21 of 41 passes (51.2 percent) for 254 yards and two touchdowns to three interceptions.

Two of those three picks went for touchdowns the other way, courtesy of junior safety Trevor Woods and junior cornerback Cecil Ivey Jr.

But the real heroes of the defense was the line of junior ends Marcus Daniels and Jordan Daniels, and junior tackle VJ Bronson and senior tackle Jahmai Edwards. They combined for 12 total tackles, and two tackles for losses, and never let Uwadia out of their sights, applying constant pressure and disrupting timing time and time again.

Their counterparts on offense were just as dominant. The Mustangs' offensive line of junior left tackle Hayden Conner, senior left guard Michael Tulenko, junior center Abraham Okezie, junior right guard Bryce Foster and senior right tackle Gunner Elliot was an immovable and aggressive force for Taylor running backs Casey Shorter (118 yards, touchdown) and Tolbert (114 yards, touchdown), and kept junior quarterback J. Jensen III off the ground by not allowing a sack.

"Really, across the board, on both sides of the ball, our of-



MARK GOODMAN

Taylor junior running back Casey Shorter (22) looks on as teammates celebrate his touchdown run during the Mustangs' Class 6A-Division II regional final win over Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, at NRG Stadium.

fensive line and defensive front dominated the game," coach Chad Simmons said. "That was the biggest thing. We were really concerned about them throwing the ball, and we got pressure on (Uwadia) and made it to where he didn't have time to stand back and get comfortable."

It was a picture-perfect win for Taylor, one players credited to coaches for a stellar game-plan. For instance, the Mustangs' secondary was drilled into not falling for double-moves from Cy-Creek receivers. Senior linebacker Martin Nowlin said he knew what he was doing on every formation.

All of that is a testament to film study, something Simmons implores all of his players to do.

"We're focusing on our gaps," said Nowlin, who had an outstanding game with five tackles, three tackles for a loss, two sacks and an interception. "We're getting the exact same looks from the scout team that we get in the games. It makes it easy for us to make plays in the game."

If his defensive players can recognize the offensive formation quickly prior to the snap, Simmons said, then they can narrow the looming play-call to "2-3 plays."

"Coaches give us this really detailed scouting report. We know what they're going to do before they even do it," Woods said.

Two of the Mustangs' first three touchdowns in the game came via the defense; Ivey had a fumble recovery in the end zone

late in the first quarter and, 46 seconds later, Woods returned his interception 38 yards for a score.

Taylor led 27-7 before the offense scored its second touchdown on a Tanner Isola 35-yard pass from Jensen with 7:52 left in the second quarter.

"That's big," Tolbert said. "The defense scoring gives us momentum and gets us going."

The Mustangs totaled 396 yards and 20 first downs. They rushed for 302 yards, 5.6 yards per carry. They turned the ball over once, late in the second half, and converted four of five red-zone opportunities. Jensen threw two touchdown passes, the aforementioned initial one to Isla and an 18-yard dart to Gavin Belue. Junior kicker Renan Baeta drilled field goals of 48, 42 and 26 yards.

Isola said the offense keyed in on Cy-Creek senior linebacker Josh White and took advantage of strong blocking on the perimeter.

"We were reading the box and kept going to the perimeter," Isola said. "We took those guys down."

Taylor has outscored its four playoff opponents 165-89, a point differential of plus-19 per game. The Mustangs are averaging 41.3 points and have collected 11 takeaways in the postseason.

So, off to Waco they go.

"It's awesome," Isola said. "We're the underdogs and we're doing it. We're like a bunch of Ozzy Osbournes. We're on the crazy train, man. Next stop: Baylor. It's unreal."

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

CLASS 6A-DIVISION II REGIONAL FINAL FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

- Taylor 58, Cypress Creek 20
- GIRLS BASKETBALL**
- Katy ISD Gold Bracket Championship: Cypress Creek 89, Oak Ridge 52
- BOYS BASKETBALL**
- Katy ISD Gold Bracket Championship: Morton Ranch 75, Klein Forest 65
- Tournament MVP: L.J. Cryer, Morton Ranch

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Morton Ranch 61, Fort Bend Travis 59

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Cinco Ranch 71, Crosby 17
- Katy 64, Clear Brook 54
- Lamar 52, Mayde Creek 50 (OT)
- George Ranch 74, Paetow 31
- BOYS BASKETBALL**
- Morton Ranch 57, Eisenhower 45
- Klein Oak 52, Katy 49
- Mayde Creek 58, College Park 57
- Cinco Ranch 63, Kempner 46
- Fort Bend Elkins 75, Tompkins 61
- Fort Bend Travis 59, Paetow 49
- Taylor def. Fort Bend Austin

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Seven Lakes at Tompkins, 7 p.m.
- Taylor at Morton Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Cinco Ranch, 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Cinco Ranch at Pearland Dawson, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

CLASS 6A-DIVISION II STATE SEMIFINAL FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

- Taylor (9-5) vs. Austin Westlake (13-1), at McLane Stadium in Waco, 2:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Jersey Village at Katy, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Cypress Park, 6:30 p.m.
- Paetow at College Station, 6:30 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Pearland Dawson at Seven Lakes, 7 p.m.
- Aldine at Cinco Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Katy at Hastings, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Eisenhower, 7 p.m.
- Taylor at Ridge Point, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Katy at Taylor, 7 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch at Seven Lakes, 7 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Mayde Creek, 7 p.m.
- Magnolia West at Paetow, 4:30 p.m.
- Tompkins at Manvel, 4:30 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Spring at Tompkins, 4 p.m.
- Kempner at Katy, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Fort Bend Bush, 7 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch at The Woodlands, 7 p.m.
- Taylor at Dulles, 4 p.m.

ROLLING THUNDER

Mustangs rout Cypress Creek, ride 'crazy train' to state semis

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

HOUSTON — Strong run game. Dominant defense. History made. Wash, rinse, repeat for the Taylor Mustangs during these playoffs. The typical ingredients helped Taylor add another chapter to a remarkable storybook season and make the most of its first regional final appearance in the school's 40-year history.

The Mustangs used 137 yards and a touchdown rushing, and two defensive touchdowns to build a 30-point halftime lead before riding out the rest of their Class 6A-Division II Region III final against Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, for a 58-20 rout at NRG Stadium.

The Mustangs (9-5) were, arguably, at their finest in exacting revenge on the Cougars, who beat Taylor in the area playoffs last season, and play Austin Westlake (13-1) in the state semifinals at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, at McLane Stadium in Waco.

Taylor is Katy ISD's third state semifinalist in football in the last four seasons, joining the 2017 Katy Tigers and 2016 Cinco Ranch Cougars. The Mustangs are striving

See **MUSTANGS**, page B2



MARK GOODMAN

Taylor High senior C.J. Tolbert (3) celebrates the Mustangs' Class 6A-Division II regional final win with a Mustangs cheerleader on Saturday, Dec. 7, at NRG Stadium.

"It's awesome. We're the underdogs and we're doing it. We're like a bunch of Ozzy Osbournes. We're on the crazy train, man. Next stop: Baylor. It's unreal."

— TAYLOR SENIOR RECEIVER TANNER ISOLA

Taylor's Woods a 'pick-6' phenom



MARK GOODMAN

Taylor junior safety Trevor Woods (43) makes the interception to score a 38-yard touchdown during the Mustangs' Class 6A-Division II regional final win over Cypress Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7, at NRG Stadium.

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Sometimes Taylor senior linebacker Martin Nowlin will just sit back and watch in awe.

He'll see an opposing quarterback launch an ill-advised throw in the direction of teammate and junior safety Trevor Woods. Any pass within Woods' reach is a bold decision for any opponent.

And then Nowlin will see Woods leap to snare the ball and race the other way, untouched for yet another game-changing "pick-6," or interception returned for a touchdown.

"It's fun watching him," Nowlin said. "Every time he gets a pick, I like to stop in the middle of the field and throw up my hands. Touchdown. You already know he's running it back."

The 6-foot-2, 190-pound Woods has been a revelation this post-season for the Class 6A-Division II Region III champion Mustangs, who play Austin Westlake in the state semifinals at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, at McLane Stadium in Waco. Woods has three interceptions returned for touchdowns in four playoff games, and four overall this season.

He has a pick-6 in each of the last two playoff games—a 38-yarder against Cypress Creek and 92-yarder against Humble—and also

See **WOODS**, page B3

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Changing political climate in Fort Bend County

By ROSS RAMSEY
TEXAS TRIBUNE

Rick Miller is hardly the first Texas legislator to make a racist remark. The news here is that he was roundly and quickly abandoned by elected Republican leaders who usually disappear into their lairs when words like Miller's are spoken.

In an interview with the Houston Chronicle, Miller assessed two of his Republican primary opponents in racial terms: "He's a Korean," he said of Jacey Jetton, a former county GOP chairman. "He has decided because, because he is an Asian that my district might need an Asian to win. And that's kind of racist in my mind, but anyway, that's not necessary, at least not yet."

Leonard Chan "jumped in probably for the same reason," Miller told the paper. "I don't know, I never met the guy. I have no idea who he is. He has not been around Republican channels at all, but he's an Asian."

Gov. Greg Abbott revoked his endorsement of Miller in response, an exception to the governor's stated intention to back any and all Republican lawmakers seeking reelection. Linda Howell, the current Fort Bend GOP chair, said Miller should consider getting out of the way to "allow a candidate that fully embraces and respects diversity in candidates and office holders to fill this important seat." Miller announced a change of plans soon after, calling his remarks "insensitive and inexcusable" and saying he won't seek a fifth term in the Texas House.

"My comments were not made with malice nor do they reflect who I am or who I strive to be," he said in a statement. "I want to publicly apologize to Jacey, Leonard and my constituents and friends who have put their trust in me through the years. I do not want to be a distraction for my party or my constituents, and therefore I have decided not to seek re-election."

Give him this: You don't often see public apologies, either from politicians or celebrities, as straightforward as Miller's. He screwed up and said he was sorry. That's rare.

By the next day, Comptroller Glenn Hegar, a Republican who represented Fort Bend County as a legislator, and state Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, who represents it now, had endorsed Jetton, one of the



MARJORIE KAMYS COTERA FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

State Rep. Rick Miller called his remarks "insensitive and inexcusable" and said he won't seek a fifth term in the Texas House.

three Republicans who were set to challenge Miller in the March primary.

That has to be a new land-speed record for Texas Republicans.

What happened to Miller this week was unusual because of the strong GOP backlash. There was nothing like it when U.S. Rep. Pete Olson, a Republican from the same county, called his 2018 Democratic opponent, Sri Kulkarni, a "liberal, liberal, liberal Indo-American who's a carpetbagger."

Only House Speaker Joe Straus spoke up when then-state Rep. Matt Rinaldi, R-Irving, called on federal immigration authorities to round up "sanctuary cities" legislation protesters in the House gallery in 2017. "There's no excuse for members making insensitive and disparaging remarks on the floor of the Texas House," Straus said at the time.

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller (no relation to Rick Miller) didn't lose the public support of other Republican officials with a Twitter message comparing

Syrian refugees to rattlesnakes in 2015 — a year after he won that statewide office.

Lisa Luby Ryan didn't hear from the endorsement police last year when she told an audience at a Dallas forum that her son "had been robbed by three black thugs, with 9 mm guns to his head, asking for his money." In fact, after she beat state Rep. Jason Villalba in the Republican primary, Abbott endorsed her. She lost the general election to Democrat John Turner.

And party leaders remained quiet when then-state Rep. Betty Brown of Terrell, during a 2009 legislative hearing on voter identification, suggested Asians should change their names to make identification easier. "Rather than everyone here having to learn Chinese — I understand it's a rather difficult language — do you think that it would behoove you and your citizens to adopt a name that we could deal with more readily here?" Brown said.

Texas politics are changing as quickly as the state's demographics — and the

consequences of words like Miller's are changing with them. In his home of Fort Bend County, only a very sound sleeper could miss those changes. It has become one of the most diverse counties in the U.S.; 178 languages are spoken by the families with children in the Fort Bend schools. And the politics have shifted, as well: An electorate that was reliably Republican at the beginning of the decade now often puts Democrats in office.

Democrat K.P. George beat Republican County Judge Robert Hebert in the 2018 election, knocking out an incumbent who had served for four terms. Hebert said at the time he wasn't surprised by the result because the political shift was already well underway before the election. And George wasn't a newcomer to the ballot. He'd been the president of the Fort Bend ISD board and had been watching the same changes Hebert was.

Miller's own elections got closer over the years. He first won in 2012, with 63% to Vy Nguyen's 37% — a snapshot of both the

"My comments were not made with malice nor do they reflect who I am or who I strive to be. I want to publicly apologize to Jacey, Leonard and my constituents and friends who have put their trust in me through the years. I do not want to be a distraction for my party or my constituents, and therefore I have decided not to seek re-election."

— STATE REP. RICK MILLER

partisan and demographic status of the district at that moment. Miller won by almost 40 percentage points in 2014. Two years later, his advantage was trimmed to 15.7 percentage points. And in a 2018 rematch against Sarah DeMerchant, his 2016 opponent, Miller's margin was whittled to 4.8 percentage points.

DeMarchant is one of four Democrats planning a 2020 campaign, along with three Republicans, including the two Miller insulted in his comments to the Houston Chronicle.

It's not a sure bet that the next state representative from House District 26 will be a Republican. Beto O'Rourke beat Ted Cruz there in 2018. Trump won, but by less than his statewide average, in 2016.

The culture is changing rapidly. So are the politics.

Governor proclaims results in constitutional amendment election

By ED STERLING
CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

AUSTIN — Before voter-approved amendments to the Texas Constitution are set in stone, it is the governor's duty to publicly proclaim the results of the election.

On Dec. 4, Gov. Greg Abbott posted such a proclamation, having first certified the tabulation prepared by the Texas secretary of state, the state's chief election officer.

In his proclamation, Abbott listed the nine of 10 proposed amendments that passed in the Nov. 5 constitutional amendment election. The one that did not pass, and therefore not included in the proclamation, was Proposition 1, the proposed constitutional amendment allowing a person to hold more than one office as a municipal judge at the same time.

Complete results of the election are available at sos.texas.gov and analyses of proposed constitutional amendments are available from the Legislative Research Library of Texas at lrl.texas.gov.

Data resource launches

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on Nov. 29 announced an online resource to update the public on response efforts regarding the Nov. 27 TPC Group Plant Explosion in Port Neches.

More than 20 federal, state, county and local government entities worked together in response to the explosion that resulted in three injuries and the release of butadiene, a petrochemical used in the manufacture of tires. The EPA and the TCEQ continue to be focused on providing the assistance and coordination needed to address on-site and off-site environmental impacts.

The resource, called Story Map, can be accessed online via epa.gov and tceq.texas.gov. Response actions, maps and photos are featured.

Revenue total is higher

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Dec. 3 announced state sales tax revenue totaled \$3.18 billion in November, 6.2 percent more than the amount reported in November 2018.

Hegar said growth was led by collections from the wholesale trade, construction and restaurant sectors, while collections from the oil and gas mining sector declined from last year. Also, total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in November 2019 was up 4.8 percent compared to the same period a year ago.

The sales tax is the largest source of funding for the state budget, accounting for 57 percent of all tax collections.

Goal: Strengthen trade

Texas Secretary of State Ruth Hughs on Dec. 2 posted details about a recent cultural and economic trade mission to Japan hosted by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

Attending with Hughs were Texas business and workforce development leaders. The group met with Nakayama Norihiro, Japan's parliamentary vice minister of foreign affairs, and representatives of Toyota Motor Corporation, Daiwa House Group, Omron Industrial Automation, Japanese External Trade Organization, Japanese Business Foundation and Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

"As one of the Lone Star State's largest trade partners, it is vital that we not only maintain, but continually strengthen our relationship with Japan," said Hughs, who serves as chief international protocol officer for Texas.

"By working collaboratively to promote opportunities for cultural exchange and economic growth, both Texas and Japan stand to mutually benefit," Hughs added.

Disaster hearings are set

The Texas General Land Office on Dec. 6 announced three regional public hearings on the state's plan for distributing some \$4.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation funds for Hurricane Harvey recovery purposes.

The hearings, which also will address flood disasters that occurred in 2015 and 2016, are set for Dec. 9 in Dallas, Dec. 10 in the Rio Grande Valley and Dec. 11 in Houston.

"Hurricane Harvey was a storm of historic proportions, with more than

\$100 billion in property damage and immeasurable disruption to the lives of Texans," Land Commissioner George P. Bush said. "Many communities in Texas have faced repeated flooding, including the 2015 and 2016 floods. With this action plan, the GLO will prioritize large-scale projects to maximize available infrastructure funding to improve the resiliency of Texas homes, businesses and infrastructure from future storms."

The plan has been published for public comment on the GLO's recovery website at recovery.texas.gov/public-notice/index.html.

Abbott extends declaration

Gov. Abbott on Nov. 27 extended his Aug. 23, 2017, disaster proclamation and subsequent amendments to it, certifying that Hurricane Harvey still poses a threat of imminent disaster for 60 counties.

The proclamation states that due to catastrophic damage caused by the hurricane, a state of disaster continues to exist in those counties, and it authorizes use of all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with the disaster.



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EXPANDING

from page A1

local sites around the world which manufacture more than 17 million pumps each year. The company has about 19,000 employees worldwide.

Brookshire Mayor Darrell Branch said he looked forward to the economic boost the expansion will bring to the city of Brookshire. The jobs and revenue brought to the city by the expanded plant should help the city prepare for the urban sprawl headed Brookshire's way as Greater Houston continues to grow, he said.

Boutot said he expects the plant's expansion to bring significant growth to Brookshire - so much growth that he said Grundfos may sponsor the development of a new high-end hotel to support business travelers coming to the plant.

Brookshire beat out Indianapolis, Indiana as the choice for Grundfos' new regional headquarters.



Eric Boutot announces the expansion of Brookshire's Grundfos pump manufacturing plant into the company's Americas headquarters at the Brookshire Economic Development Corporation's business expansion program Dec. 7.



JANET BULLER, BULLER PHOTOGRAPHY

COUNCIL

from page A1

the concerns of residents and city officials which were mostly related to drainage at the time.

Drainage was not the downfall of the updated plan though. Council members Frank Carroll III, Janet Corte, Durran Dowdle and Chris Harris all voted in favor of a motion to deny the zoning change, citing concerns that if they were to approve the commercial space in the proposal, the creep of commercial zoning could spread west along Morton Road.

"If you turn that spigot on you cannot turn it back off," said Carroll. "When you start zoning things commercial then it becomes easier to zone things commercial."

Council Member Jennifer Stockdick was not present at the meeting.

Rezoning of the roughly 46-acre development has been under review for some time now after a February 2018 public hearing where residents living near the development site expressed concern about drainage, lighting and having commercial property directly neighboring residential space in Heritage Park West which lies north of the property. City officials said the PDD application may be resubmitted after more modifications are made to address concerns expressed by residents and council members.

"I would expect them to come back to council with a revised plan after talking with the neighbors and citizens in the area," Harris said. "We do have to be very careful that we don't allow commercial creep down Morton Road which is a big factor in our decision tonight."

The proposal called for single-family homesites to take up about 16 acres of the property, while commercial development was to be about 11.5 acres, according to documents provided by the city. Residential lot sizes were set to be a minimum of 9,660 square feet - or 84 feet by 115 feet for a rectangular lot. Slightly more than 5 acres of the site were slated for recreation areas and about 4.5 acres for drainage and detention. The proposal called for water to drain out of the development to the east along Morton Road, outside of city limits.

"I truly believe this property is actually going to pull water away from [Heritage Park West] and help them in that regard," Lawler said of the proposed PDD's drainage plan.



R. HANS MILLER

Matt Stoops of LJA Engineering responds to questions from Katy City Council members Monday evening. Stoops has been working with city officials, Costello, Inc. and others to develop a zoning plan that will satisfy his client, JPS Development and the city of Katy.

To ensure privacy, six to eight-foot concrete or wood fences were included in the plan. The fence was to be concrete around the edges abutting a roadway and wooden where the development abuts residential neighbors.

The PDD proposal included property use restrictions, according to city documents. Permitted uses in the commercial portions of the PDD would have included office complexes, commercial or service centers, shopping centers, medical offices, recreation and fitness centers, retail centers, convenience stores, pharmacies, restaurants, daycare centers. Agricultural use would have been allowed for up to three years while planning and permitting were underway, Stoops said.

Tattoo shops, smoke shops, storage facilities, vehicle sales and liquor stores were not allowed in the proposed PDD, per city documents.

Residents have expressed concern on social media and at related public hearings that the city will be unable to enforce the restrictions in the PDD. However, City Planner Anas Garfaoui said the PDD requirements are enforceable through the platting and permitting processes. Had the PDD been approved, JPS would still have had to submit a plat and building designs for approval through the city's permitting office.

"That's when you take a look at it and say, 'No. This won't work

here because of the use or this won't work here because [building elevations] are too high, or you're missing X-Y-Z," Garfaoui said. "So, those permits won't be issued until [the developer] meet[s] all the city rules and ordinances."

The city's permitting office then inspects the work to ensure it matches what was submitted to the city, Garfaoui said.

Katy resident Rory Robertson said he was concerned about the project after seeing progress on the Village at Katy project, which is being built at the intersection of Pin Oak Road and I-10. Robertson said he feels many city residents had expected a development similar to nearby LaCenterra would be put in at the Village at Katy development and were surprised when a large warehouse-style store began to take shape in recent months. He is concerned that something similar might happen with the 25K Morton Ranch development.

"I did not necessarily object to the commercial zoning change," Robertson said. "But I did object to not knowing and in the [Village at Katy] project I did not know what was going on and we got this huge furniture store which is hugely unpopular, and I don't want another store like that."

Robertson said he thinks developers view zoning approvals as a process, while residents look at overall effects put on the community.

Failure to pass the PDD does



Detailed plans in the rejected zoning proposal included more than 55 residential homesites and four commercial zones totaling almost 13 acres. Two detention ponds, a park and walking paths were also part of the proposal. Some City Planning and Zoning Commission members had proposed removing about two acres of commercial space on the northern portion of the commercial area.



The proposed zoning change would have split the property in the northwest corner of the intersection of Katy Hockley Cut Off and Morton Roads into residential (in yellow) and commercial (in red) zones.

not mean the property in question will be left undeveloped, Garfaoui said. It remains an R-1 residential zone and the developer may submit another revision of the PDD application for approval, he said. If JPS chooses not to resubmit, the property would be left as an R-1 zone and the developer could simply choose to build residential structures under the base city requirements.

The lot size for residential plots under the PDD is 12% larger than what would ordinarily be required under R-1 restrictions, Garfaoui said. The required lot size for an R-1 zone is 8,625 square feet.

Had the plan been approved, Lawler said that Lee and Associates might have acted as the agency to select builders for homes in the residential portion of the district.

Lawler estimated that homes, had they been built under the rejected PDD application, would have cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

JPS may need to appeal to residents' concerns as much as Katy City Council's concerns and desire to maintain Katy's small-town feel and visual appeal if the company chooses to reapply for the PDD.

"It's aesthetic for me," Robertson said. "I want the buildings to be small. I don't want them to be enormous. I want them to be something nice and appealing to drive by. I want there to be traffic studies because traffic is already getting to be worse and worse on Morton [Road] and I drive down Morton [Road] east and west every day going to work and coming home."



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(ad revised: 11/22/2019; previous ads are null and void)



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 P.W.R. 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.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

Holiday gift ideas for furry friends

FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season is meant for spending time with your friends and family, including those of the four-legged variety. Whether you have a dog, cat, fish or other small pet, Christmas can serve as the perfect time to show your affection by showering him or her with thoughtful gifts.

When searching for the right gift for your furry friend, consider his or her likes and dislikes when it comes to treats, toys and bedding, among other things, and look for gifts that align with favorite hobbies, such as fetch or taking walks, or things that can be easily personalized like leashes, beds and food bowls. Check with your local pet store, such as PetSmart, and inquire about some of its seasonal bestsellers like bedding or sweaters, for example, or recommendations for gifts that might be most appropriate for your dog or cat's breed.

Regardless of whether you're looking for something wearable, playful or maybe a little of both, you can find more gift ideas for the four-legged loved ones in your life at petsmart.com.

Optimal comfort for your furry friend

Make the holidays special, and extra comfortable, for your pet this season and beyond by giving him or her a warm place to rest with this cozy Merry & Bright Tree Hut Bed. The festive hut-style pet bed, which comes in the form of a colorful Christmas tree, provides plenty of seasonal cheer and features a removable pillow that can easily be washed or used as a separate resting spot.

Warm, stylish pet attire

Keep your pet warm when the weather turns cold, and do so in style, with this Top Paw Red Buffalo Checkered Fleece pet sweater. Available in sizes to fit large and small dogs alike, the hooded fleece slips on and off easily and offers optimal comfort, warmth and fashion with a fabric fastener strap at the neck to ensure it stays in place.

Sweet and festive holiday fun

FAMILY FEATURES

Holiday celebrations call for recipes of all kinds, but perhaps the most popular area at many parties is the dessert table. Add flavor to your get-togethers with a festive treat like these Peppermint Shortbread Cookies, which call for the seasonal taste of peppermint and the versatility of dairy for a sweet bite after a holiday meal.

Find more recipes for the holidays at milkmeansmore.org.

Peppermint Shortbread Cookies

Prep time: 15 minutes, plus 30 minutes freeze time

Cook time: 15 minutes

Servings: 40

- 2-2 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup peppermint crunch baking chips

In stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter, powdered sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth. Gradually add flour and mix on low until combined. Add baking chips and continue mixing on low until fully combined.

On wax paper or parchment paper, form dough into 12-14-inch log and freeze at least 30 minutes, or until firm.

Heat oven to 350° F. Cut shortbread dough into 1/4-inch slices; bake 13-15 minutes on parchment-lined baking sheets.

— Recipe courtesy of Rachel Gurk of "Rachel Cooks" on behalf of Milk Means More



Protect the world's children this holiday season

FAMILY FEATURES

The holidays signal a time for family gatherings, traditions and the spirit of giving. Make this holiday season even more meaningful by giving gifts that help children in need around the globe.

According to UNICEF, around 15,000 children die every day from preventable diseases. In over 190 countries, the organization's staffers are in the field working through war zones, natural disasters and disease outbreaks, doing whatever it takes to save children's lives. This holiday season, you can join the charge by choosing gifts that give back.

With Inspired Gifts, you can provide supplies in the name of a loved one that get delivered directly to children who need it most. Just \$19 can provide polio vaccines to protect 100 children from the deadly disease. Additional life-saving and life-changing options including food packets, educational materials and menstrual hygiene kits can be found at unicefusa.org/HolidayInspired.

If you are looking for stocking stuffers and unique finds, UNICEF Market has a vast collection of handcrafted items made by artisans from around the world. From blankets woven in India to recycled glass pitchers crafted in Mexico and more, these gifts help support the artisans and their



families, keep traditional skills alive and give back to essential programs for children. Start checking off your wish lists at unicefusa.org/HolidayMarket.

As part of Louis Vuitton's #MakeAPromise pledge, a specially de-

signed product line of Silver Lockits is available, helping to protect children who have been exposed to diseases, natural disasters and other conflicts that threaten their safety and well-being. \$100-\$250 of each purchase go to programs that help children most in

need. Find out more at louisvuitton.com/lvforunicef.

This year, Garnier USA will donate \$1 to UNICEF USA for every Whole Blends Holiday Kit sold through Dec. 31 with a minimum donation of \$300,000. Each kit purchased helps educate a child for up to one week, as it costs around 15 cents to help educate one child per day. Learn more at garnierusa.com/unicef.

Vitamin A is important for strengthening the immune system and preventing childhood blindness. Through Dec. 31, L'OCITANE will donate \$3.95 for each Solidarity Soap purchased to support UNICEF's Vitamin A supplementation programs around the world. Available in stores or at loccitane.com/en-us/solidaritysoap.

A holiday favorite since 1950, UNICEF Greeting Cards can be purchased at IKEA, select Hallmark Gold Crown® stores and online at hallmark.com and unicefusa.org/HolidayCards2019. One hundred percent of the purchase price of each pack from IKEA will go to support the world's most vulnerable children.

UNICEF does not endorse any brand, company, product, or service.

*No part of the purchase price is tax deductible.



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Katy Old Fashioned Christmas Festival celebrates 10 years

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Katy area residents and visitors to the region kicked off the holidays at the tenth annual Katy Old-Fashioned Christmas Festival in downtown Katy. The free event was sponsored by The Limited Edition Art & Antiques, Katy Market Day and No Label Brewing Company.

Betsy Proctor, owner of The Limited Edition Art & Antiques and operator of Katy Market Day said the event was the most successful to date.

"I mean, we're thinking probably between 10,000 and 12,000 people, maybe more [attended]," Proctor said.

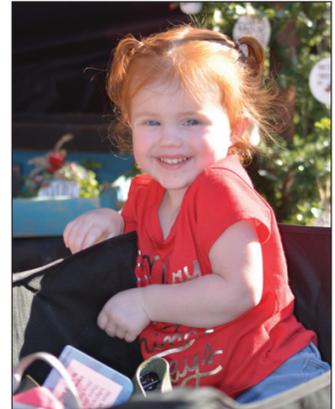
Attendees were able to spend a little time with Santa while enjoying food trucks and holiday shopping at vendor booths. Children and adults enjoyed a snow park with 50,000 pounds of artificial snow and those 21 years old and older were able to enjoy a beer garden.

Over the last ten years, setup has become easier, Proctor said. Volunteers from the community help set up everything from the booths to the artificial snow and being more organized has been very helpful, she said.

"We had [vendors] coming in - one group between 7 and 8 a.m. and one group between 8 and 9 a.m. and that made it so setup went much more smoothly than it has in the past," Proctor said.

Nearby antique stores and boutiques said the event provides a significant boost to the business they do each year as the holiday season begins.

Proceeds from the Katy Old-Fashioned Christmas Festival are donated to Katy Christian Ministries, Proctor said. The event raised about \$2,500 in 2018 and while Proctor has not finalized the numbers for this year's events, she estimated that a similar donation will be provided this year.



PHOTOS BY
KAREN LOPEZ

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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids in duplicate will be received by Woodmere Development Company on behalf of Harris County M.U.D. No. 432 in the office of KGA/DeForest Design, L.L.C. (L.A. License No. 1387, Texas), 24275 Katy Freeway, Suite 300, Katy, Texas, 77494 until 2:30 P.M. on January 9th, 2020 for **Morton Creek Ranch South - Section 22 Landscape Improvements**.

All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud for construction of improvements including sidewalks, irrigation, planting, fine grading, hydromulch, and sod.

Bidders shall submit two (2) copies of the Bid on exact copies of the Bid Form provided.

Bid Documents may be examined without charge in the offices of KGA/DeForest Design, LLC, 24275 Katy Freeway, Suite 300, Katy, Texas, 77494, or may be obtained upon deposit of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) for each set. **This sum is non-refundable** and checks should be made payable to KGA/DeForest Design, LLC. Only check or money order will be accepted.

A Cashier's Check or Bidder's Bond Payable to Woodmere Dev. Co., Ltd. on behalf of Harris County M.U.D. No. 432 in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid submitted, outlined in the Contract Documents, must accompany the Bid.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting is scheduled for December 20th, 2019, at 2:00 P.M. at the office of KGA/DeForest Design, LLC.

Bidders must have at least five years of confirmed experience on comparable size projects of a similar scope in the Houston Area.

The successful bidder receiving contract award must furnish Performance, Payment, and Maintenance Bonds in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) each of the total Contract price. Each such bond shall be executed by a corporate surety duly authorized to do business in the State of Texas.

The winning bid is decided not by low price but by this standard:

"The responsible person or persons that, in the Board's judgment, will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the District's proposed improvements."

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive bidding informalities.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed proposals for **Aeration Blower for Wastewater Plant** will be received at City of Katy Municipal Building, 901 Avenue C, Katy, Texas 77493, until **2:00 p.m., Thursday, December 19, 2019**.

The Owner is the City of Katy, Texas

The successful bidder will be required to enter into a contract with the Owner.

A Cashier's Check or Certified Check payable, without recourse, to the Owner or an acceptable Surety Proposal Bond, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the largest possible total bid, including consideration of alternates, must accompany each bid as a guarantee that, if awarded the contract, the Bidder will promptly enter into a contract as outlined in the Contract Documents.

When installation of equipment is included in the bid, not less than the minimum wage rates as prescribed in the General Conditions must be paid to workers who are involved in the installation work.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids, and to waive any informalities in bids.

Bidders may obtain one set of bid documents for this project at the office of the Engineer, Clay & Leyendecker, Inc., 1350 Avenue D, Katy, Texas 77493, (281) 391-0173.

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Transatlantic turnaround

My husband, Peter, and I are returning from Spain by boat. The whole idea started when Peter read a book about the sinking of the Lusitania.

"That sounds like fun!" Peter told me, as he read.

"Death at sea?" I asked.

"No, the part before that!" Peter clarified.

Peter thought the idea of a cross-Atlantic ship sounded fun and romantic. He began investigating transatlantic trips and once Peter starts investigating a thing, it's as good as done.

Peter discovered that a number of cruise lines reposition their boats from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean in the fall and back again in the spring. Some of these trips are quite reasonably priced. As the boat has to be moved anyway, the cruise line would rather the boat was filled with paying customers. Besides, they figure they'll make it up during the long days at sea when passengers have nothing better to do than gamble and shop. In our case, they figured wrong.

Peter and I are generally opposed to organized activities. Peter falls asleep immediately at anything that seems intended to be educational. We both dislike gambling. We don't participate in raffles, shop on a whim, or willingly pile into vans with strangers. Our idea of a perfect day is spent doing a lot of reading, a little exercising, and eating too much. The best part is simply watching the vast ocean as it passes.

Peter is due for a little pampering after spending a month in our historic little house in Frigiliana. Peter has had his fill of "historic" and "little," particularly since he discovered the two so frequently go hand-in-hand. Peter spent a month getting his head banged on historically

ceilings and climbing up steep little antique stairs to get to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Peter is ready for a major dose of modern convenience after all that historic charm.

"Look!" Peter says, on our first night here, "a bathroom on the same floor as our bed!"

"Yes, dear," I reply.

"And doorways tall enough so I don't need to stoop!"

The boat is nothing if not easily accessible. It stands to reason, I guess, but folks who have nothing to do but cross the ocean by sea are not a young crowd. They settle into their rooms for two weeks and don't need to move their luggage for the duration. Some of them look as if they are staying for good. They decorate the outside of their doors with magnetic falling leaves or Christmas decorations or their name accompanied by cheerful greetings. It reminds me a bit of a retirement home—which, given the age of the clientele, is not far from the truth.

At some point—in the middle of the Atlantic, more than 1,200 miles from land in all directions, the ship will do a full 360-degree turn. They do this, the captain informed us, to check and adjust the accuracy of the ship's compasses. This seems quaint to me in an era of computer navigation and GPS, but apparently it is still done, and I can see why it might be a good idea.

I know there are times when a slow, 360-degree turnaround is the very thing I need to check my own internal compass. To do this slowly, deliberately, when the conditions are ideal—this strikes me as an important bit of housekeeping for both transatlantic boats and lives.

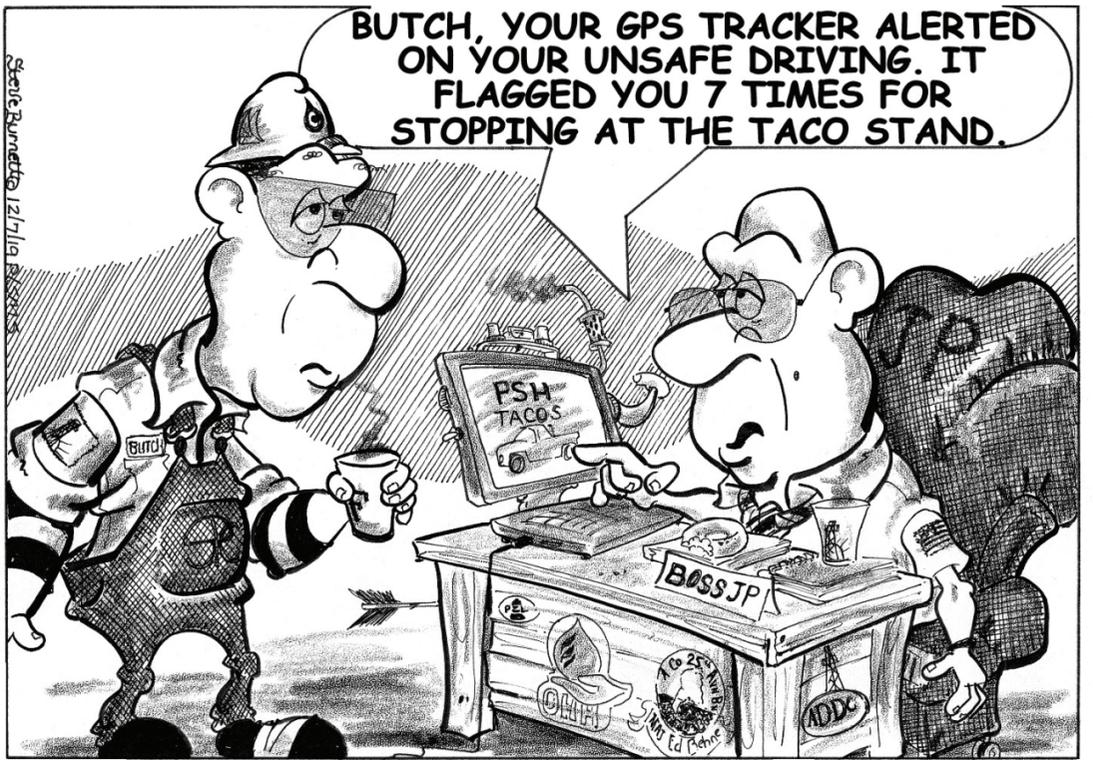
It might not be strictly necessary. But it's always nice to know with some degree of certainty that I am headed in the right direction.

Until next time,
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir, "Blue Yarn," was released earlier this year. Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

CARRIE
CLASSON

THE
POSTSCRIPT



It's time to attempt to define slang

Let's face it—the trajectory of our language is trending slangular (a word I'm confident I just invented). With the proliferation and pervasiveness of internet culture, slang is everywhere. You know this is true when your grandma comments that your new shoes are "on fleek." What is slang, and how should we properly utilize it in our communication?

It's time to load up our slangshots to attempt to define slang. Slang is informal language spoken by a specific group of people. These words and phrases incubate among particular groups—whether they be teenagers, minority groups or certain geographical regions. Slang starts conversationally, whether or not it ever translates into written language. Using slang is a way for individuals to communicate with their own set of words that help them to identify as part of a group.

Slang isn't jargon. Jargon is language that applies to a particular professional group. So, for instance, you'll hear tons of medical jargon in a tv hospital drama: "The patient has a localized, sub-therapeutic, idiopathic, epidermal pathogen that needs to be stabilized, stat!" To be honest, I have no idea what any of that



CURTIS
HONEYCUTT
GRAMMAR GUY

means; however, since these seemingly foreign terms are specific to the medical community, they count as jargon, not slang.

Let's walk through an incomplete recent history of slang with examples. In the '20s, if you called your sandwich the "bee's knees" or cat's pajamas, you'd be saying that it was a particularly good sandwich. In the 1950s, if you had a shiner (black eye), you might want to cover it up with a pair of shades (sunglasses). In the 1960s, you'd be bummed out (depressed) if a choice babe (pretty girl) rejected your advances. If you're still telling people to "talk to the hand," the 1990s called from their gigantic cell phone; they want their slang term for a scornful rejection of what someone has said back.

Use slang in informal situations: in conversations, at parties, online and when communicating with people with whom you already have

a well-developed rapport. Don't use slang on your resume, in a job interview, in a Nobel prize acceptance speech, or in any kind of formal writing—which includes business emails.

Although I'm a fan of slang, you need to exercise caution when using it, especially in writing; a misplaced

use of "off the chain" in the wrong context will not only lose you style points, but it could also hurt your chances of getting ahead at work.

Curtis Honeycutt is an award-winning syndicated humor columnist. Connect with him on Twitter (@curtishoneycutt) or at curtishoneycutt.com.

PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE B3

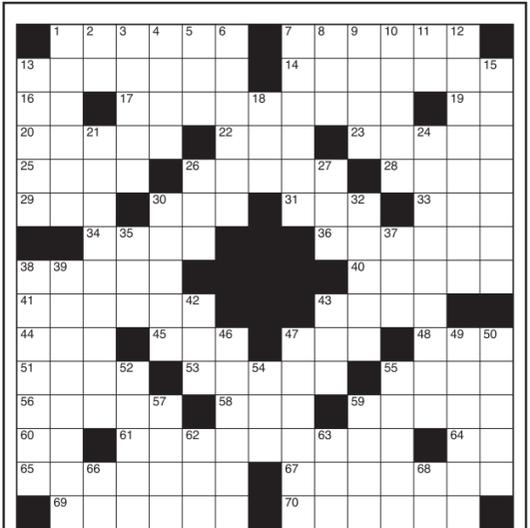
SUDOKU

4	8					9		3
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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!

Level: Intermediate



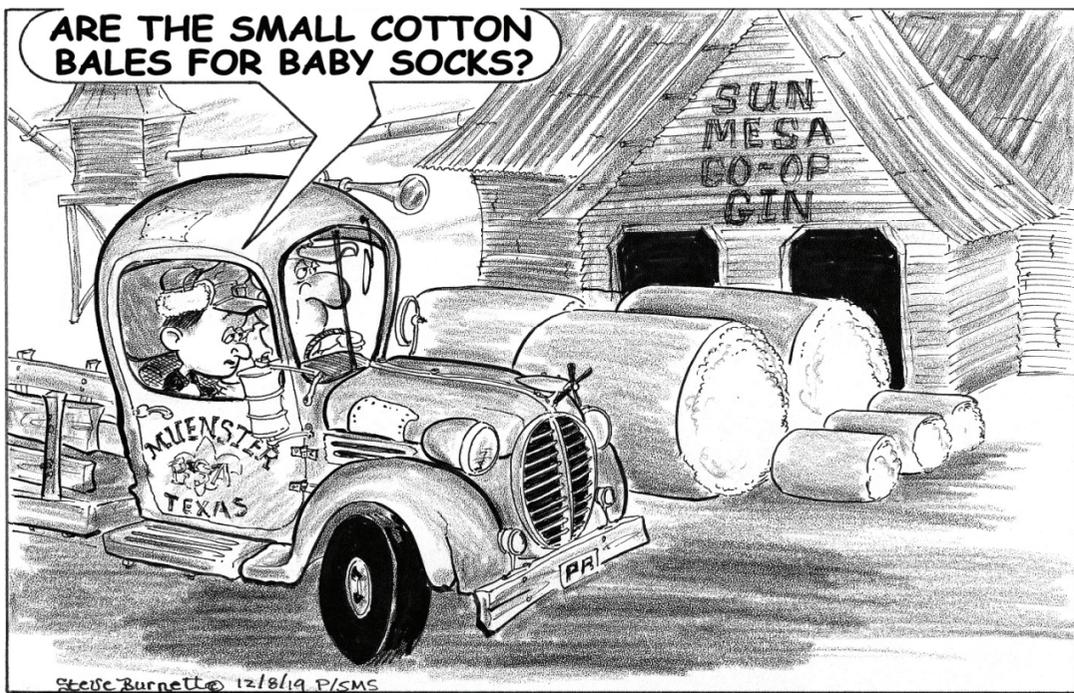
CLUES ACROSS

- Rope used as a lasso
- Lomb's partner
- North African nation
- Rounds up cattle
- Densest naturally occurring element
- Home of the Brewers
- Atomic #44
- Vetches
- Moved earth with a tool
- Cavalry sword
- Supplements with difficulty
- Encouraged
- Speech defect
- Periodical (abbr.)
- Very cold
- Paulo, city
- Former OSS
- Approves food
- Cars need them
- Sweden's dominant phone company
- Long lock of a woman's hair
- North American natives
- Fly high
- One type is fire
- Nocturnal bird
- More than one male
- LOTR actor McKellen
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Tony-winning actress Daisy
- Tennis star Kournikova
- Pulitzer-winning composer
- The opposite to pro
- Safecrackers
- Denotes past
- Parrots
- One quintillion bytes (abbr.)
- Reduce the importance of
- Stiffly
- In a sensible way
- Signs

- Country star LeAnn
- Egyptian goddess
- Afflict in mind or body
- Showy but cheap
- Belgian urban center
- Short-winged diving seabird
- Deploys
- Ballplayers can legally do it
- Centiliter
- Contrary beliefs
- Type of pole
- Distinguish oneself
- 8th month of the year (abbr.)
- One who monitors
- Petty quarreling
- Fiddler crabs
- Touch lightly
- American state
- Pro wrestler Randy
- Indicates spelling mistake
- Macaws
- Gradually narrowed
- Installments
- Female sheep
- Politician
- Servant
- Said to facilitate concentration
- California ballplayers
- Once Toledo's tallest building
- A type of pie
- State of southwestern India
- Principal member of Norse religion
- Conspiracy
- Wellness practice
- Culture
- de-sac: dead end street
- Used to cook
- Type of hospital
- Direct message

CLUES DOWN

- Capital of Zambia
- Article



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Texas Central continues planning

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

While it will be a few years before passengers board Texas Central's high speed train that will carry riders from Greater Houston to Dallas in less than two hours, progress is happening. Texas Central announced Nov. 21 that it had secured an agreement with Mass. Electric Construction Co., a subsidiary of Kiewit Corporation to build various pieces of the railway between two of Texas' largest metropolitan areas.

"Building the TX High Speed Train is radically different than any other train project that has been undertaken anywhere in the United States today," said Holly Reed, Texas Central's managing director of external affairs.

Mass. Electric is just one of many vendors that have signed on for the much-discussed project. Salini Impregiolo, Citi Financial, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and Matthews Southwest, among others.

The concept for the high-speed train is radically different than other train systems in the United States, Reed said. Texas Central chose Texas to develop the passenger-only train service is due to a variety of factors, she added. Factors included a demand for the service, easy geographic features to build on and major cities that are large distances apart, she said.

The project's total investment is expected to be approximately \$20 billion with the civil works estimated at \$14 billion according to a Sept. 13 press release from Texas Central.

Texas Central expects demand for its transportation services to be present immediately and to grow, Reed said. A recent study by L.E.K. Consulting International shows that trips between Houston and Dallas have increased by about 10 percent since 2012. Texas Central expects that number to increase based on population growth and commerce between the two population hubs.

The terrain in Texas allows the train to follow an elevated route rather than one at ground level, reducing the on-ground footprint of the railway and minimizing impacts to landowners, Reed said.

The Houston train station will be located near the Northwest Mall close to the intersection of I-610 and Highway 290, while the Dallas location will be located near the Dallas Convention



COURTESY TEXAS CENTRAL

Texas Central is developing a railway to carry passengers between Houston and Dallas in less than two hours. The company hopes to begin construction in 2020 and open the high-speed railway, which is based on a Japanese rail system, by 2026. The artwork above shows the concept for the train as it travels along its route between two of Texas' largest population centers.

Center or near Lamar Boulevard on the south side of the city, according to a Texas Central press release.

"We are excited to work in an area with so much potential for vibrancy, including transit-oriented development," said Matthews Southwest President Jack Matthews.

Financing for this project is unique in the United States, Reed said. Texas Central is funded by private investors rather than the government which has been the norm in the past.

Texas Central's train will be based on similar Japanese railways, Reed said. She said that 10 billion passengers have ridden Japan's trains with no fatalities or accidents since 1964.

Matthews Southwest is developing the Houston station according to documents provided by Texas Central.

Reed said Texas Central is still in the process of obtaining all of the land and rights of way necessary to build the railway. The route the railway is set to take, which has one stop near College Station, was determined by an 5,000-plus page environmental impact study mandated by the federal government. That report put forth one preferred route for the project that Texas Central is sticking to, she said. Thus far, the company has set in place about half of the agreements necessary for construction, especially in Grimes and Madison counties, she said.

"Every single day we are talking with landowners and working with landowners to come to an agreement on how we can build this alignment in the least impactful way," Reed said.

Social media commentary from residents affected by the railways development are mixed though. Some rural residents are concerned with eminent domain issues and whether the height of the railway will be sufficient for vehicles to pass under.

While Texas Central is talking with landowners, Texas Central is aware that it may be necessary to file for eminent domain through the courts, Reed said.

"Our goal is to never have to go through the court system, and we are hopeful that will be the case," Reed said. "We understand that if that's not possible, then we will go that route as a last resort."

Obtaining land rights, permitting and other challenges take time, but Reed said the company hopes to break ground in 2020 and it is possible that riders may begin zipping between Houston and Dallas on the train as early as 2026, if all goes well.

"The biggest challenges in a project like this is timing," Reed said. "We have to make sure that all of the technical elements like the civil construction plan and the technology and the operator are in place with their plans."

What are you doing for CHRISTMAS?



PHOTOS BY R. HANS MILLER

"It's my daughter's birthday two days before Christmas, so it's always a big deal. I love seeing the kids open presents Christmas Morning – it's my most favorite thing." — Tonya Bonilla, Willy Burger assistant manager



"Well, first I'm going back to Santa Fe, New Mexico with my mom to look at my childhood home. Then when I get back, I've got a big gift exchange planned out with my friends. Other than that – nothing much. Just some wholesome family and friends time." — Tushar Dharam, Barista at Serene Beans



Nana: "We're just excited about being a family – I'm a widow for about twenty years – so I've been blessed with my three grown children and my four grandchildren and I've been blessed with one great-grandchild. We're just going to get together and be thankful for the things on Christmas that God allows – and we're just going to be eating and thank God for life and for all of us having an opportunity to just see the end of this decade."

Travian: "I can't reiterate it any more than that. We're going to go to my mom's house. We're going to eat some good food. My mom's going to do her magic work – weave her magic over the food. We're going to eat and enjoy some fellowship and share some love on each other and just enjoy the holidays. Just thank God for all of us being together and for – like my mom said – making it through another year and another decade."

— Debra "Nana" Patrick and Travian Patrick

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