

Katy Times



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PAGE B4

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THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020

Texas declared major disaster

BY ED STERLING

CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

President Trump on March 25 issued a major disaster declaration for the state of Texas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump's action came at the request of Gov. Greg Abbott, who is seeking additional federal assistance to combat the disease. In recent days Abbott issued multiple waivers of state laws to remove barriers limiting the response to the pandemic. He also activated the Texas National Guard to be prepared to assist with response efforts.

Abbott said the president's declaration "opens up new sources of funding for individual and public assistance that will help Texas respond to this public health emergency and protect public health and safety."

Federal aid is earmarked to overcome current and prospective shortages of personal protective gear, medical equipment, testing supplies, hospital beds and medical personnel.

Meanwhile, Abbott has ordered the temporary closure of in-person school operations and prohibited non-critical visits to nursing homes, retirement or long-term care facilities. He also has mandated that Texans avoid:

- Social gatherings of more than 10 people;
- Dine-in eating and drinking at bars or restaurants; and
- Gyms or massage establishments.

On March 28 the Texas Department of State Health Services reported 25,483 people had been tested so far for COVID-19 in Texas. Of those, 2,552 tests were reported as positive and there had been 34 deaths.

Quarantine orders issued

Gov. Abbott on March 26 issued an executive order mandating a self-quarantine for individuals traveling to Texas as their final destination through an airport from the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area or from the city of New Orleans.

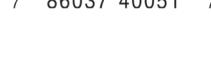
See DISASTER, page A3

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April 2, 2020
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Stay home order extended

Order also issued to release nonviolent jail inmates

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

In a March 31 press conference, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said she was extending the county's "Stay Home, Work Safe" order to April 30 and would be issuing an order after the press conference to release nonviolent inmates from the Harris County Jail. Both measures were taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the Novel Coronavirus.

"It is not the time right now to scale back

in our containment measures – if anything, it's the time to double down because our rates continue to grow very, very rapidly, and we've not yet gotten to a point of flattening the curve," Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo said she was proud of the community for coming together to mitigate the spread of COVID-19



LINA HIDALGO

and would continue to seek the advice of medical professionals and monitor the disease's progress in other communities for information that would help her and other community leaders make decisions regarding how to move forward.

Tracking trends

At the time of the press conference, Harris County's Public Health Department re-

See ORDER, page A3

KISD approves pavilion renovation

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

The Katy ISD Board of Trustees approved renovation of the old L.D. Robinson Pavilion facility near the Katy ISD Education Support Complex in downtown Katy at their March 30 regular meeting. The board also postponed the district's regular trustee election to Nov. 3 in light of concerns regarding safely conducting the election in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both decisions were passed unanimously by trustees that participated in the online meeting. Trustee Bill Lacy was absent from the meeting.

Pavilion remake

The renovations would cost about \$5 million and would create a new home for the district's Early Childhood Intervention program – known as Project Tyke – as well as meeting and professional development space for the district.

"Though the program has been housed at various locations throughout the years, to see the approval of a new home for our families and children will be a great opportunity to continue providing early intervention services to our future Katy ISD students," said ECI Program Director Martha Aki.

The program is currently housed in portable buildings just west of the Katy ISD Opportunity Awareness Center on the Raines High School campus. Between 300 and 400 children are served through the Project Tyke program each year for a total of about 15,000 children since the program's initiation more than 30 years ago, Katy ISD staff said.

Renovations to the facility have been designed by VLK Architects, Inc. which is headquartered in Houston. Changes to the 25,000-square-foot facility will include refacing the building and adding four classrooms, a meeting space that can provide up to six rooms depending on how it is configured, two therapy rooms and office space for staff that will work in the facility. About 14,000 square feet will be utilized for Project Tyke and about 10,000 square feet for meeting and professional development space. The



KATY ISD/VLK ARCHITECTS, INC.

The Katy ISD Board of Trustees has approved renovations for the old L.D. Robinson Pavilion site in downtown Katy and postponed the district's May trustee election to November.

remaining 1,000 square feet would be utilized for maintenance, mechanical and other general spaces according to drawings shown during the district's meeting.

No construction company has been identified for the project, however, the KISD Board of Trustees approved a competitive sealed bid methodology to allow construction vendors to bid on the project. This method allows bids to be submitted in sealed packages then be opened during a public opening on a scheduled date, according to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website. The Comptrollers office regulates purchasing in Texas for all governmental entities. Once opened, bids and proposals are scored to determine best value and an award is made. Award of the resulting contract will need to be approved by the KISD Board of Trustees after staff have evaluated the bids.

The ECI program assists children of pre-kindergarten age with developmental disabilities to prepare to enter school with

tools already in place to be successful, according to the district's website. Assistance is provided for a variety of developmental concerns including Autism Spectrum Disorders, mobility impairments, speech difficulties and other health impairments that could negatively impact a student's scholastic success.

"ECI Project TYKE is one program that serves children from birth to 36 months of age with developmental delays. There are 46 ECI programs in the state of Texas serving every square inch to provide services to the smallest of Texans," said Maria DiPetta, KISD spokesperson.

Election postponed

The KISD Board of Trustees also pushed the May 2 trustee election to Nov. 3 as was permitted by an executive order from Texas Governor Greg Abbott that allows local

See RENOVATION, page A3

Abbott: Schools to stay closed until May 4

By PATRICK SVITEK
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Schools in Texas will remain closed until at least early May as part of an executive order that Gov. Greg Abbott announced Tuesday to continue to stem the spread of the new coronavirus.

A previous executive order from Abbott shuttered schools until midnight Friday, but his most recent order extends the shutdown until May 4. The latest order could also be extended.

Abbott announced the executive order at a news conference at the Texas Capitol, saying it would bring the state in line with federal guidance urging social distancing, which President Donald Trump announced Monday would now

run through the end of the month. The order also says Texans "shall ... minimize social gatherings and minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household."

"In short, what this provides is that Texans are expected to limit personal interactions that can lead to the spread of COVID-19 while also still having the freedom to conduct daily activities such as going to the grocery stores, so long as you are following the presidential standard of good distance practices," Abbott said.

Abbott made clear he did not consider the executive order a shelter-in-place or stay-at-home order, taking

See SCHOOLS, page A3



JORDAN VONDERHAAR/POOL VIA THE TEXAS TRIBUNE
A previous executive order from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott shuttered schools until midnight Friday, but his most recent order extends the shutdown until May 4.

YOU CAN KEEP YOUR COUGH AT HOME

with Houston Methodist Virtual Urgent Care



houstonmethodist.org/virtual-care



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



ENTERTAINMENT

10 games to keep you sane while at home

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

Maybe there's something serendipitous about the timing of the board and card game golden age that has been occurring for the last few years. As families have been looking for ways to step away from small screens and look each other in the eye, dozens of games have been released each of the last few years to meet the growing demand. Here are ten that are easy to learn and can help pass the time with family and friends – whether you're social distancing or not.

Kingdomino

Inspired by the classic Dominoes game and resource-gathering strategy games, this game has players place tiles in a certain order to maximize the resources they have once all of the tiles are used. Simply put – whomever has the most crowns in the land at the end of the day wins. Published by Blue Orange, this game is appropriate for ages 8 and up and accommodates two to four players. Retail cost without expansion is under \$20 plus tax.

Quiddler

This simple word game uses hands of cards that increase in size over eight consecutive rounds. Players take the cards which have calligraphy letters and point values for each letter to form words, similar to scrabble. The first hand starts with three cards while the eighth hand has ten cards. Whomever has the highest point total at the end of the game, wins it and can be declared the biggest word nerd – optional rule, there. Set Game publishes this card game which can support two to ten players and games take about 35 minutes. Cost is \$9-\$14 plus tax depending on the vendor.

Fox in the Forest

This card strategy game has players collecting tricks similarly to Bridge or Boston and players get points for the number of tricks one, but be careful – if a player gets too many tricks, they may lose points. Cards are illustrated and have special effects such as whenever someone loses a trick, they may be able to play a card that allows them to play first in the next round. This game is published by Foxtrot Games and Renegade Game Studios and retails for about \$15 plus tax. Fox in the forest takes about 30 minutes to play on average and supports two players.

Exploding Kittens

This game is very similar to uno with perhaps a bit more sense of humor. Players take turns drawing cards hoping not to draw the Exploding Kitten card. The cards they draw allow them to keep the kitten from exploding or transferring the explosion to another player. Parents are warned that there are two versions of this game – one is family-friendly while the other has some adult humor that parents may find inappropriate. This game, published by Exploding Kittens, Inc. and



MARK PALOMBO

Between social distancing and stay home orders, now is the perfect time to try a new board or card game.

Author's Note: Please be aware that some online retailers are indicating significant delays for delivery of some games. However, many game publishers offer direct purchasing and local game shops in the Katy area are also offering shipping for their game inventory.

supports two to five players. Games take about 15 minutes to play. This game retails for about \$16 plus tax.

Dungeon Mayhem

This strategy card game – inspired by the fifth edition of the "Dungeons and Dragons" roleplaying game – lets players take on the role of a barbarian, wizard, paladin or rogue in a free for all mock combat. Players start with ten hit points and use cards to attack, defend, cast spells and find treasures such as healing potions. Published by Wizards of the Coast, this game can support two to four players and each game lasts about 15 minutes. The game retails for about \$15 plus tax.

Blockus

This game features a grid with tiles that players fill with their own brightly-colored pieces. The object is to place as many pieces of the player's color on the board as possible

while blocking opponent's placement of their pieces. Each player's color must only touch at the corner of another like color. The game ends when no more pieces can be placed and the player with the fewest number of pieces in-hand wins. Blockus is published by Mattel Games and retails for about \$25 plus tax depending on the edition purchased. Games often take less than ten minutes. This game is recommended for ages seven and up.

Bananagrams

Imagine if "Scrabble" were a race and instead of counting points, players counted the number of words they could make before any player ran out of tiles. That's "Bananagrams". Once a player uses all of their tiles, they shout "peel" and all the players draw new letters. A fun, educational game for one to eight players ages seven and older, this game is published by Imagination Gaming and takes about 15 to 30 minutes to play, depending on group size. The game retails for about \$18 plus tax.

Mysterium

This title has two to seven players working together to solve a mystery. Everyone wins if the mystery is solved – but everyone loses if the bad guys get away. One player tries to lead the others – all psychic investigators – to the culprit. Clues are revealed each night, but will that lead to the murder weapon and the location and identity of the

killer? Only the players will find out. This game is recommended for two to seven players ages ten and older. Games take about 45 minutes and the game is published by Libellud.

Adrenaline

Having a hard time getting the kids away from the video games? Maybe try this first-person shooter board game. The same fun of picking up weapons and equipment and blasting opponents, but with friends and family in-person rather than a glowing monitor. The game takes about 15 minutes to learn and games last about an hour. Expansions for the game are available and the core game costs about \$43 plus tax. The core game, which is published by Czech Games Edition, supports three to five players ages 14 and older.

Dungeon

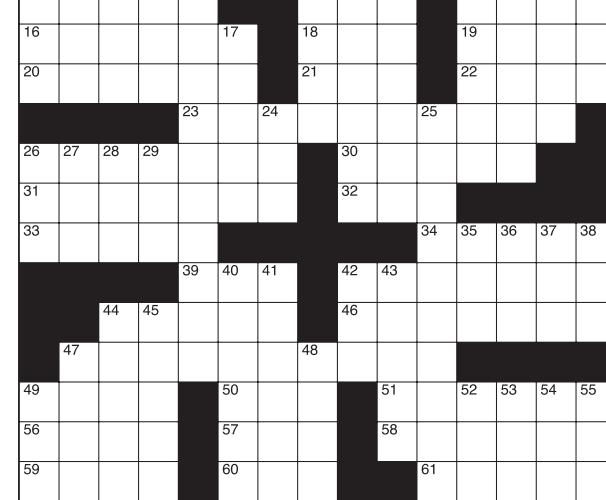
Want to play "Dungeons and Dragons" but don't have the time? This board game version allows players to go dungeon crawling. Players move their character tokens throughout the dungeon to fight monsters and take their treasure. Once a player collects a certain amount of treasure based upon their character's class – that player wins. This game, published by Wizards of the Coast, a Hasbro company, is appropriate for ages 13 and older and takes 45 minutes to an hour to play.

This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- CLUES ACROSS
1. Bond villain Mikkelsen
5. A team's best pitcher
8. French river
12. Mountain nymph (Greek)
14. City of Angels airport
15. Military force
16. Scrawny
18. Value
19. One billionth of a second (abbr.)
20. Highly seasoned sausage
21. Trouble
22. Prong
23. Showing varying colors
26. Cloaked
30. Renters sign one
31. Acquires
32. Type of language (abbr.)
33. Partner to pains
34. Third portion of the small intestine
39. Excessively theatrical actor
42. Infraction
44. Classical music for the stage
46. Slogged
47. One who terminates
49. Breakfast is an important one
50. Moved earth
51. Medical procedures
56. Genus of clams
57. Not well
58. Comparative figure of speech
59. Covered thinly with gold
60. Principle underlying the universe
61. A parent's sisters
62. Professional engineering group
63. Coniferous tree
64. Impudence

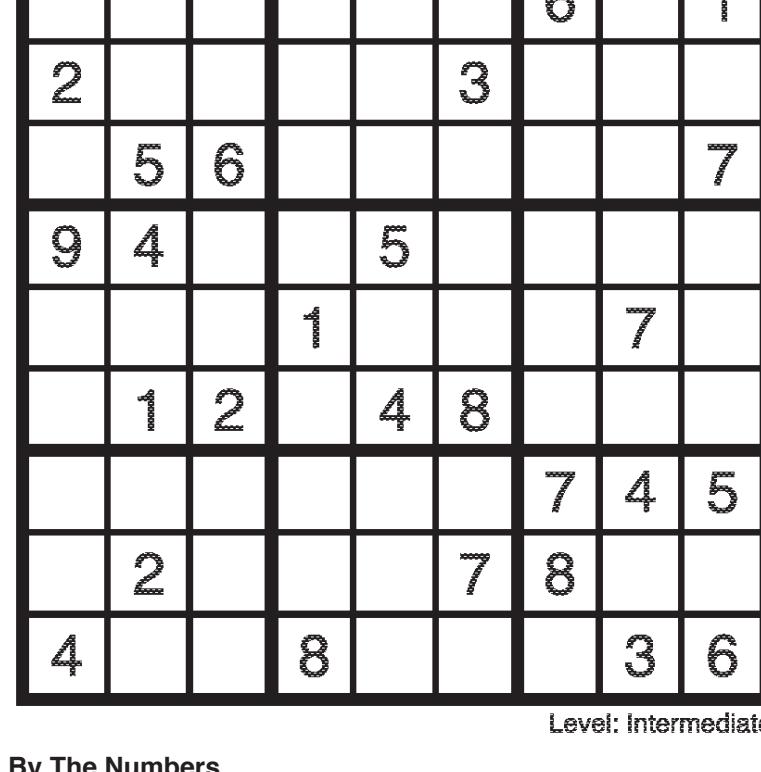


- CLUES DOWN
1. Female parents
2. Region
3. Transaction
4. Heroic tale
5. Of algae
6. Luminous intensity unit
7. Uncovers
8. French commune name
9. Poisonous gas
10. Pearl Jam's bassist
11. Horse groom in India
13. Destroyed
17. A way to alter
24. Promotional materials
25. American state
26. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand
27. "Modern Family" network
28. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
29. Exercise system _-bo
35. Type of bulb
36. Opposite of beginning
37. Utilize
38. Type of student
40. Deficiency of moisture
41. Areas of the eye
42. Select
43. Sheets of floating ice
44. Priests who act as mediums
45. Roof of the mouth
47. Unnatural
48. Illuminated
49. There are three famous ones
52. Large, fast Australian birds
53. "Dracula" heroine Harker
54. Substitutes (abbr.)
55. Tax

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

SUDOKU

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test.

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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ORDER

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ported a total of 680 cases countywide, including those in the city of Houston. Of those, 377 were in the city of Houston while 303 were in other parts of the county. About 49% of patients infected were male and 51% female with patients over 60 being the largest age group affected. A total of six people had died countywide, including in the city of Houston.

"I always want to qualify these numbers because we recognize that whatever number we give you, there are more cases that are out there that we have yet to identify because of the lack of testing," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said.

The Greater Houston area has struggled along with the rest of the country in obtaining enough testing supplies and protective equipment for medical staff, Hidalgo said. Shipments from the federal government continue to come, Hidalgo said. That allows the county's two testing centers to test 250 people per day.

Houston has been able to open two testing facilities within the city, Turner said. The centers at Butler and Delmar stadiums have about the same testing capacity as the county centers and Turner said the city has been able to procure additional equipment recently.

The Harris County Commissioners court approved expedited purchasing of medical supplies to address the COVID-19 pandemic during its March 19 meeting. The approval allows a \$15 million fund set aside for land purchases to be temporarily used to purchase medical supplies and authorized policy makers within county government to develop processes for fast payment for medical supplies,

including N95 medical masks which have been difficult to find nationwide.

"As everyone knows, the N95s are the largest items that we cannot find or locate. We have found some, but we haven't been able to negotiate with all these vendors because they want their money up front," said County Purchasing Agent DeWight Dopslauf.

Dr. Mark Boom, CEO and president of Houston Methodist hospital, said the hospitals at the Texas Medical Center have been monitoring data related to the spread of Novel Coronavirus in the area and they show concern if the community does not take measures to reduce the spread of the illness.

"When we look at modeling and we look at our own internal data - which shows significant increases in the number of patients we're caring for - those models really are tracking along with the New York City models," Boom said.

Greater Houston has advantages that New York City did not, Boom said. The region has instituted orders to reduce community spread earlier in the process, and that can have a significant impact on whether the spread of the disease continues to be manageable, he said.

"Ticking time bomb"

Hidalgo said one way the county is working to ensure the disease is managed is by releasing nonviolent inmates from the Harris County Jail. The release will allow about 1,000 of the jail's inmates - totaling about 8,000 - from the jail.

"We know that the Harris County Jail is a ticking time bomb. We already have a case in the jail; we're likely to see more in the coming days," Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo said releasing the inmates from jail would minimize

CASE BY CASE	
Around the globe, Johns Hopkins University has tracked 850,583 cases of COVID-19 as of March 31. Of those, 41,654 patients have died from the disease or associated complications and 174,714 have recovered. That leaves 632,215 cases ongoing. These case counts do not include cases that did not receive an official diagnosis, which is the same for the case counts below. Please note that all local cases are reported to be hospitalized or in self-quarantine per the respective counties' reports.	
HARRIS COUNTY (NOT INCLUDING HOUSTON)	WALLER COUNTY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 240 total cases • 2 deaths • 61 recovered • 177 cases ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 total cases • No deaths • 3 cases ongoing
FORT BEND COUNTY	CITY OF HOUSTON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 163 total cases • 2 deaths • 9 recovered • 152 cases ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 377 total cases • 4 deaths • Unknown recovered • Unknown cases ongoing

the number of inmates that might contract COVID-19 - about two dozen already have symptoms - and would save intensive care unit beds for patients. Keeping inmates in close quarters where it is not possible to socially isolate them to keep them from getting sick also puts about 3,000 staff that guard, feed and treat inmates at higher risk, and subsequently those employee's families, she added.

Those with prior violent crime convictions, are accused of crimes that involve violence, are accused of burglary of a homestead or a third driving while intoxicated charge will not be released, Hidalgo said.

CEO of Harris Health System CEO Dr. Esmaeil Porsa said jails are historically the epicenter of health disasters, including the AIDS epidemic in the 1970s and 1980s. Releasing nonviolent

prisoners would allow the county to minimize the impact the poor social distancing conditions in the jail would have on the general population as workers get sick and inmates unnecessarily take up ICU beds.

The Harris County Sheriff's Department's Pretrial Services group will screen inmates to verify that they are nonviolent, Hidalgo said. Those released will have ankle monitors and other monitoring implemented as needed to ensure they keep their court dates and face justice, she added.

"I want to make a few points here, first of which is those being released are not being absolved of their alleged nonviolent crimes - of course everybody has not been convicted, these are folks who've been accused of crimes - but if found guilty once they face a judge ... those who have been found

guilty of those nonviolent crimes will still face justice, will still face time [in jail] if necessary. Second, is that the order is consistent with the governor's executive order that says no violent criminals should be released and that's the point of this [order]," Hidalgo said.

(See page A5 for more information regarding the governor's order.)

Hidalgo said she expects the case reviews needed to identify those eligible for release may take about three or four days.

"I don't feel that we can wait any longer to outline exactly who needs to be out," Hidalgo said.

About 4,000 ICU beds are available across the region, Turner said.

Keeping measures in place and adding more orders to mitigate the spread is the best way to mitigate the spread of the disease, Hidalgo said.

Turner said that he had been told by Dr. Peter Hotez of the Baylor College of Medicine that Hotez expects the peak of the virus to hit Texas around May 2. However, if social distancing and adherence to the orders are not consistent by the public, that date could be pushed back as much as another four weeks, Turner said.

"The singular goal is to block this virus such that it does not overwhelm our health care delivery system," Turner said.

The doctors present at the press conference supported Hidalgo and Turner in their decision to continue with methods to reduce the spread of the virus. They also expressed appreciation for the community's support of medical professionals working to address the pandemic.

"We stand fully behind [Hidalgo and Turner] in supporting this action of extending the order to the end of the month [of April]," Boom said.

RENOVATION

from page A1

municipalities such as school districts and cities to postpone their elections. The order was issued March 18 and allows small governments in Texas to postpone elections to the next regularly scheduled election date - Nov. 3.

"I strongly encourage local election officials to take advantage of these waivers and postpone their elections until November," Abbott said in a press release at the time. "Right now, the state's focus is responding to COVID-19 — including social distancing and avoiding large gatherings. By delaying this election, our local election officials can assist in that effort."

The board voted in favor of the measure after discussing the details with the district's attorney, Justin Graham. Graham explained that the delay in the election would extend the current office holders' that are up for reelection in their roles for an additional six months. Additionally, the candidates and places on the ballots are locked in place through to the Nov. 3 election. The delay does not open the ballot for additional applicants to run for available trustee seats, he added.

Graham said incumbents and other candidates should be aware that, since the Nov. 3 election date will also include a presidential election, voter turnout will be much higher than May election dates usually are.

Board President Courtney Doyle - who is currently up for re-election - said she felt delaying the election to November was the only way to be fair to candidates given the social distancing requirements set forth by Abbott and President Donald Trump through April 30. The social distancing requirements prevent candidates from properly campaigning in the district, including distributing yard signs and having conversations with voters.

Trustees Bill Lacy and Ashley Vann also have terms ending in 2020. With the delayed election, Lacy's faceoff with Greg Schulte at the polls will be delayed. Doyle is not running for reelection and her seat will be filled by either Leah Wilson or Michael Dillard. Vann is now running unopposed after the withdrawal of R.C. Simmons from the race in late February.

"All this does is put a pause button on the timeline, there will not be any changes to the ballot or additional candidates allowed to enter the election," Graham said.

SCHOOLS

from page A1

issue with that terminology. Instead, "this is a standard that's based upon essential services and essential activities," Abbott said.

For over a week, Abbott has resisted calls for a statewide shelter-in-place

order, leaving the decision up to local officials. In recent days, they have acted to put most of the Texas population under stay-at-home orders.

Hours before Abbott's news conference, the leaders of the Texas Hospital Association and Texas Nurses Association released a letter to the governor saying the "time has come" for a statewide stay-at-home order.

"We urge you to implement this

DISASTER

from page A1

Abbott said the order, consistent with the guidance of Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, would be enforced by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Self-quarantine will last 14 days or for the duration of a person's presence in Texas, whichever is shorter.

Abbott said the executive order does not apply to people traveling in connection with military service, emergency response, health response or critical-infrastructure functions, as may be determined by the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

The executive order would remain in force until he modifies, amends, rescinds or supersedes it, Abbott said.

On March 29, Abbott issued another executive order that expands the quarantine mandate to include air travelers arriving from the states

of California, Louisiana and Washington and the cities of Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit and Miami.

A person in quarantine is prohibited from allowing visitors into or out of the designated quarantine location — other than a physician or healthcare provider — and is prohibited from visiting any public spaces.

Announcements, actions

The following are few of many announcements posted last week by the governor's office relating to actions to combat COVID-19:

- Texas received a \$16.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living to provide meals for older adults. The grant was part of a \$250 million outlay authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act signed into law by President Trump on March 18.
- Texas received \$36.9 million from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the state's initial allotment

• Gov. Abbott on March 24 directed the Texas Department of State Health Services

strict measure to prevent widespread illness in Texas," the letter said.

There are at least 3,266 coronavirus cases in Texas, including 41 deaths, according to the most recent figures from the Texas Department of State Health Services. The cases are spread across 122 of the state's 254 counties.

There have been 42,992 tests done in Texas, according to the latest numbers.

Agencies to stay on job

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on March 25 issued a letter explaining that political subdivisions may not restrict state agency personnel, agents and contractors from providing governmental services, including travel to and from work.

Paxton said the authoritative document is Gov. Abbott's Executive Order GA-08, which says, "all critical infrastructure will remain operational, and government entities and businesses will continue providing essential services."

Local government regulations must remain consistent with the state constitution and laws, Paxton added.

KATY TIMES PET OF THE WEEK**MEET KIT KAT**

Hi, my name is Kit Kat and I'm 1 year old. I make sure to stay beautiful by getting at least 10 hours of beauty sleep every single day! When you are home though, I want to spend time with you. I think that Special Pals rescued me from a kill shelter so that I could go home with you.

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

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OPINION

Amid pandemic, cyber scams are a growing threat

The dirty rotten crooks. While the rest of the world is doing its best to sacrifice to beat an unseen biological virus, cyber scammers are trying to attack us with a variety of digital viruses.

Before the start of 2020, I warned about the rapid increase in cyber attacks. The more we live our lives online, the more vulnerable we all are to email phishing attacks (fake emails), ransomware attacks (when bad guys gain illegal access to our computers and lock up our devices until we pay them a fee), scammers who pose as government representatives and many other schemes.

Last July, I warned about another worrisome cyber threat: attacks on the elderly. People 80 or older are especially at risk and reported a median loss of \$2,700 per scam — and there are many regrettable stories about older people who have been taken for their life savings.

But in the midst of our current crisis — as millions are working from home — scammers are busier than ever.

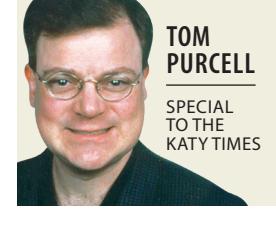
First of all, the “virtual private networks” companies use for remote workers are not set up to handle the massive number of people now working from home. The systems run so slowly, employees are avoiding them — opening up security gaps for the scammers to exploit.

Second of all, anyone with ill intent can become a scammer now. Even 10 years ago, one had to be highly skilled to run cyber scams, but today, any fool can purchase and operate an off-the-shelf digital scam.

Digital Shadows, a cyber threat intelligence firm, identified a “for-sale” email scam that mimics an actual Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering distribution map of the coronavirus’s outbreak. Click the link in the email and you will download malicious software.

The asking price for the sophisticated scam? A lousy 200 bucks.

Fear is the scammer’s most potent weapon. Scammers are peddling fake coronavirus test kits



TOM PURCELL
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

and cures. Some pretend to be from government agencies offering information on the number of people afflicted with COVID-19 in your city. Others set up fake charitable organizations.

Their goal? To “send emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites to trick victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities or causes,” says the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), which is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

It makes my blood boil to know that heartless cybercrooks are adding to the woes many are experiencing. We all need to understand that we must increase our ability to detect and thwart their scams to protect ourselves and our families — in particular, our elderly family members and neighbors.

There are steps we can take right now to get started.

CISA’s “Stop.Think.Connect.” program offers basic cyber tips that we can begin using today; tip sheets on detecting threats and protecting our computers, smartphones and other devices; and tips for protecting older Americans.

And for helpful videos, look to StaySafeOnline.org’s YouTube offerings. It’s regrettable that those of us who are staying at home to limit the spread of the coronavirus are at increasing risk as we conduct our daily business on our computers.

Let’s make it harder for those dirty rotten online crooks to exploit us.

Tom Purcell, author of “Misadventures of a 1970’s Childhood,” a humorous memoir available at amazon.com, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.

Send comments to Tom at Tom@TomPurcell.com.



Governors are in no rush to reopen

If you needed another reminder of the profound difference in messaging between state governors and the Trump White House, then look no further than the online news conference that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf held March 25.

Twenty-four hours after Trump brazenly disregarded the advice of actual scientists and public health experts with his announcement that he’d like to scrap social distancing requirements and reopen the country by Easter, Wolf went the other way by announcing he was putting two more counties under a stay-at-home order as infections soared past 1,000 confirmed cases.

Nor was Wolf in any hurry Wednesday to follow Trump’s lead. He deferred politely when he asked whether he’d defy the White House if it sent Americans back to work, saying he’s always had a “nice working relationship” with the federal government.

But Wolf’s intent was made clear when he said he was concentrating on giving the state the time it needed to contain the pandemic.

So, thanks, but no thanks, Mr. President.

With cases increasing in New York, California, Pennsylvania and other states, Trump walked back his stance some later in this week, acknowledging that



JOHN L. MICEK
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

some places might not be ready. He also pledged to consult with experts.

But Trump’s serial fabrications, soberly fact-checked on the fly by America’s new family physician, infectious disease specialist Dr. Anthony Fauci, have come to pose such a threat to public health that some media critics have cautioned networks against consulting networks against airing his remarks in real time.

That danger was reinforced by the death of an Arizona man after Trump wrongly touted the medical form of chloroquine as a possible treatment for the virus. The Arizona man reportedly took chloroquine phosphate, a chemical typically used to clean fish tanks.

In the absence of that leadership up top, and the White House’s insistence on subcontracting the heavy lifting of fighting the pandemic to the states by refusing to fully invoke the Defense Production Act, it’s been up to governors such as Wolf, New York’s Andrew Cuomo, and Washington’s Jay Inslee to step into the breach.

“We are working very, very hard for the people of New York,” Trump said after Cuomo’s blunt remarks about the ventilators. “We are working a lot with him. Then I watch him on this show complaining.”

It’s not only a Democratic phenomenon. Repub-

lican governors, such as Charlie Baker in Massachusetts, Mike DeWine in Ohio, and Larry Hogan in Maryland, have also stepped up, according to Stateline.org, a project of the Pew Center on the States.

“I do think that the governors moved out more efficiently than the federal government did, particularly the president and the administration,” Bob Griffin, dean of the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at the State University of New York Albany told Stateline. “Particularly Illinois and New York, and [California Gov. Gavin] Newsom did a decent job in California. Look at what you see even from Alabama, Washington – the states have taken the lead.”

So if Trump does carry through with his ill-considered decision to reopen the nation on Easter, expecting the resurrection of the country’s economic fortunes, don’t be surprised to see Wolf, Cuomo and other governors trying to roll the rock back into place as they seek to protect their own residents.

An award-winning political journalist, John L. Micek is Editor-in-Chief of The Pennsylvania Capital-Star in Harrisburg, Pa. Email him at jmicek@penncapital-star.com and follow him on Twitter @ByJohnLMicek.

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Release blocked for inmates who can't pay bail

By JOLIE McCULLOUGH
and EMMA PLATOFF
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

As the new coronavirus continues to spread in Texas' two biggest county jails, Gov. Greg Abbott has made it harder for thousands of inmates to get out of local lockups.

In an executive order Sunday, Abbott barred inmates accused or previously convicted of violent crimes from being released from jails without paying bail. Those with the same criminal history or the same charges can still walk free if they have access to cash — a distinction that bail reform attorneys argue makes the order unconstitutional.

The sweeping move — which suspends a swath of the state law on bail — comes as advocates and local governments across the country work to minimize population in lock-ups, where the risk of the new coronavirus is particularly high given poor sanitary conditions and close quarters. The virus has already reached the Harris and Dallas County jails, as well as Texas prisons and a juvenile detention center. Abbott's order came the same day that Harris County announced the first confirmed case in its jail, where some 30 inmates are showing symptoms of the virus and as many as 500 others may have been exposed.

Abbott said at a news conference Sunday that "releasing dangerous criminals makes the state even less safe... and slows our ability to respond to the disaster caused by COVID-19." The announcement comes as Harris County officials are working to release hundreds of inmates because of concerns about the virus in the county's jail — efforts that have drawn opposition from state leaders.

"I've heard from law enforcement officials as well as citizens alike who've raised concerns about releases that have already taken place or anticipated releases that could take place," Abbott said. "We want to reduce and contain COVID-19 in jails and in prisons for the benefit of both the inmates and the law enforcement officers of those facilities."

Some individual judges across Texas were already releasing more inmates on no-cost personal bonds because of COVID-19, handing a win to bail reform advocates who fight against systems that often rely on cash for release. Release on personal bonds often requires conditions like regular check-ins and drug testing. In some of the state's largest counties, jail populations have dropped by hundreds in weeks.



Inmates on a cell block in the Harris Co. jail.

CALEB BRYANT MILLER FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

But some jail releases have prompted concern. In Harris County, a murder suspect was released from jail after he said he was afraid of contracting COVID-19 there. A judge allowed him to pay just 3.5% of his \$60,000 bond up front, according to The Houston Chronicle — a fraction of what is normally required. Normally, a defendant can be released from jail after paying the full, refundable amount to the courts or paying a fee to a private bail bonds company, usually at 10%.

Abbott's order applies to inmates who have been accused or convicted of "a crime that involves physical violence or the threat of physical violence," which defense attorneys called a vague and subjective standard. Abbott's directive also appears to apply to inmates with any history of violent offenses — meaning a person arrested on a nonviolent drug charge last week could be held if he had a decades-old conviction of a violent offense.

Though the order bans release of inmates on no-cost, personal bonds, it does not set a standard for how high a bail amount must be. Presumably, judges could still release inmates on bonds of \$1, defense attorneys said.

Legal experts questioned the order's validity, and it drew immediate rebukes from Democrats and bail reform advocates, who argued the order discriminates against poor people. Several Texas counties, including Harris and Dallas, have in recent years had their bail practices deemed unconstitutional for discriminating against poor defendants.

"It is a dangerous, unprecedented, chaotic and flagrantly unconstitutional edict that if enforced would expose many people around the state of Texas to a public health catastrophe," said Alec Karakatsanis, executive director of the Civil Rights Corp, which has been at the helm of Harris County's federal bail lawsuits.

El Paso Democrat Joe Moody, a state representative and former prosecutor and defense attorney, said "If followed, this order will see jails bursting at the seams [with] minor drug offenders, homeless people whose most recent 'crime' was something like simple trespass & everyday citizens picked up on the flimsiest of allegations."

When someone files a lawsuit against enforcement of this order (which I assume will happen fairly soon), please reach out as I'd like to sign an amicus brief in support

of your position. THE END — Joe Moody (@moodyforelpaso) March 29, 2020

According to Abbott's order, a judge may consider a defendant's release for health or medical reasons, after the district attorney is notified and there is an opportunity for a hearing.

The order comes on the heels of a dispute between state and local leaders in Harris County, where advocates and officials are working on several efforts to limit the county jail population by releasing potentially thousands of inmates who have yet to be convicted of crimes and are being held only because they cannot pay. Health officials have warned that even a minor outbreak in the jail, one of the country's largest, could overwhelm the city's hospitals. An outbreak there would also pose a risk to the health of the jail's thousands of staff members.

The county's chief executive, Judge Lina Hidalgo, was reportedly mulling an executive order for compassionate releases of medically vulnerable, nonviolent inmates from the county jail — but shelved her plans in anticipation of a showdown with Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Separately, attorneys in a long-running federal lawsuit over the bail practices in Texas' largest county have asked a federal judge to consider a mass release of thousands of inmates who are being held in the jail only because they cannot pay bonds to get out. Paxton and Abbott on Sunday asked to intervene in that lawsuit, arguing that public safety is at stake and that a judge cannot allow a blanket release of hundreds or thousands of inmates.

"It is not just violent offenders that pose a threat," an attorney for the state wrote.

Attorneys for the inmates and for county officials including the sheriff had reached an agreement to release inmates accused of some nonviolent offenses, the Chronicle reported.

A criminal justice reform advocate in Harris County said Abbott's order was unwelcome and said there was never any intention to release inmates who were deemed dangerous to the community.

"This is truly a matter of life and death," said Devin Branch, lead organizer of the Texas Organizing Project's Right2Justice campaign. "It is bad enough that in normal times we punish people for being poor by forcing them to stay in jail until their trial when they are legally innocent, it's unconscionable to do it now when it could kill them."

Patrick Svitek contributed to this report.

EDC partners with local banks to offer business recovery loans

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

As Katy area businesses struggle to get by under orders to close down or limit services, the Katy Area Economic Development Council has partnered with local banks to offer fixed-rate loans to businesses.

"The program is based on a national loan program model developed by the Galveston Economic Development Partnership," Katy Area EDC President Lance LaCour said.

The program, which is currently offered

through Texas Dow Employees Credit Union, is providing short-term loans of up to 180 days with a fixed 3.25% annual percentage rate — also known as an APR, according to a Katy Area EDC press release. The rate will be offered through June 30 and is intended to provide gap financing for businesses awaiting insurance, Small Business Administration relief or other funding for long-term recovery.

Other banks are welcome to enroll in the program, LaCour said.

Those interested in the loan program should contact the lender directly.

FBCSO arrests alleged thief, again

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

Nelsin White, 33, who was arrested by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office Dec. 17 for stealing a tractor and has been arrested again after FBCSO's Auto Theft Division found him to be associated with a group responsible for a Feb. 24 tractor theft which led to two other people being arrested at a Shell station in Rosenberg.

"I want to stress that you can't commit



NELSON
WHITE

these kinds of crimes in Fort Bend County and expect to get away with it," said Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls.

In a press release, FBCSO officials said White was implied in the investigation into the Feb. 24 tractor theft which eventually led to his arrest. White is currently in jail in Fort Bend County with a \$100,000 bond and has been charged with theft.

FBCSO recommends that farmers and other area residents with heavy equipment take extra precautions to ensure their machinery is safe.

Harris County Tax Office grants 3-month extension on property tax payment plans

By R. HANS MILLER
TIMES SENIOR REPORTER

The Harris County Tax Office released a statement March 30 saying it is providing a three-month extension to all 12-month delinquent property tax payment plans in order to help ease stress for property owners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Due to our area's current health crisis and resulting economic uncertainties, property owners who are currently on 12-month property tax payment plans will not have to make payments for three months," said Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector and



Voter Registrar Ann Harris Bennett.

This means that Harris County property owners that are enrolled in a 12-month installment plan will not have to make their March, April or May 2020 payments, the release said. The next required payment

date would be on or before June 30 of this year and then would be ongoing each month after that.

Late fees must be assessed according to state law, the press release indicated. As a result, the final payments on the tax bills this decision impacts will change and property owners should contact the tax office at 713-274-8000 or via email at tax.office@hctx.net for final balances or other information regarding this measure.

"Unfortunately, state law mandates that the appropriate late fees must still be assessed. However, I hope this extension helps ease property owners' burdens during this critical time," Bennett said.

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TRIBUTES

Raymond Ronald Elko was born on March 18, 1942 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Andrew Albert Elko and Margaret Urda Elko. Ray was the youngest of five boys, John, Bernard, Andrew and Paul. Ray graduated in 1960 from Swissvale High School, in Swissvale, Pennsylvania. He served his country proudly in the U.S. Army. On July 18, 1964, he married Gloria Jean Evanchec in Swissvale, Pennsylvania and to this union, four children were born, Angela, Renee, Edmund and Nicholas. Ray retired as a slab mill roller from the US Steel Corporation in 1995. Ray was a loving husband, father and grandfather who loved children, as he fondly referred to as "the little people."

Raymond Ronald Elko passed away on Friday, March 27, 2020 at home in Katy, Texas where he resided with his Son Edmund, at the age of 78 years.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Gloria Jean Elko on June 21, 2010.

He is survived by his children, Angela Marks, Renee Delfrate, Edmund Elko and Nicholas Elko; and his eight grandchildren, Jason Paola, Corrina Marks, Alexander Elko, Demetrius Elko, Maximus Elko, Nicholas Elko, Elizabeth Elko, and Katherine Elko.

Private services will be held. Interment will be with his beloved wife, Gloria in the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.

To express condolences, please visit www.SchmidtFuneralHome.net.



RAYMOND RONALD ELKO
1942-2020

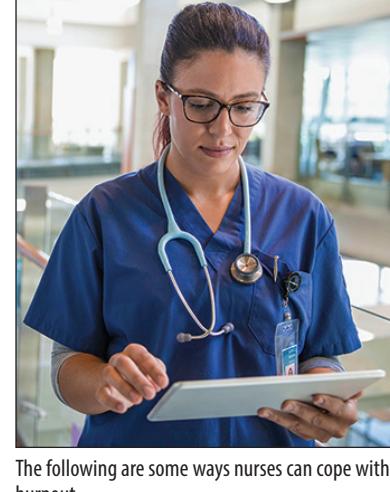
How to alleviate nurse burnout

Nursing is a rewarding career, and nurses figure to be in high demand in the coming decades.

As fulfilling as nursing can be, nurses routinely confront issues that other professionals may never encounter. Nurses are in high-demand, but a shortage of openings in nursing schools in recent years has led to a widening gap between the demand for skilled nurses and the supply, according to the nursing support resource Nursing.org. As a result, many nurses are taking on more work than they can handle. Couple this with the inherently demanding nature of nursing, and it's not surprising that nurses may experience fatigue, mental exhaustion and doubts about the value of their work.

Holly Blazey, MSN, ANP-BC, the Nursing Program Coordinator for Employee Wellness at the Cleveland Clinic, says burnout is "a big problem nationally for all kinds of caregivers, whether you work in an ICU or an ambulatory setting."

Long hours, rotating shifts and the stress of caring for ill patients are other factors that can contribute to nurse burnout. Many times, nurses muddle through and do not even realize burnout is occurring. However, if anxiety, exhaustion or the desire to skip work is cropping up more frequently, nurses should not hesitate to take action. The following



The following are some ways nurses can cope with burnout.

are some ways nurses can cope with burnout:

Identify your stressors

Write down the things that are stressing you out. Pinpointing circumstances that are causing you to feel overwhelmed is the first step in addressing them. Try tracking responsibilities for a few days and write down feelings after each activity. Then try to identify which are the biggest sources of your stress. Communicate your findings with a supervisor or colleague who may offer advice or work with you to confront your stress in a positive way.

Don't make new commitments

It's tempting to want to get involved in new projects, especially if job dissatisfaction has you looking for fulfillment elsewhere. But overextending yourself even further may only add to your existing stress.

Practice relaxation exercises

Engage in slow and meaningful breathing, set aside even a few moments to sit in quiet and take a break, and think about how you can approach the situation in a healthy way instead of giving in to your anxiety.

Delegate when possible

Find out which tasks can be taken off of your to-do list. Is there something a patient care nursing assistant can do at work? Can you rely on a friend or family member to help out at home? Lighten your load to give yourself time to recuperate.

Join a support network

Many employers offer employee assistance programs, such as access to a professional therapist. Connecting with other colleagues also can be a great way to build up your support network.

These tips can help nurses find the relief they need when burnout starts to set in. More resources can be found at www.nursing.org.

Devotional Page

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Psalms 94:19

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John 3:16

For God so
loved the world, that he
gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever
believeth in him should
not perish but have
everlasting life.

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END TO COLLEGE CAREER, SEE PAGE B4

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SPORTS

THE KATY TIMES
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020 **B1**

Coaches, athletes get creative with workouts

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Katy ISD coaches got busy on March 23 creating remote workouts for their student-athletes following a seven-day period, which seemed considerably longer, where they had no contact with their kids.

Just last week, the UIL permitted coaches of in-season sports a maximum of eight hours of instruction per week working with their athletes remotely. Out-of-season coaches are allowed a maximum of five hours per week.

Workouts vary in how they are created and executed per program for each school. But the foundation of establishing those plans goes above and beyond the norm.

"Our situation requires you to think outside the box and get a little creative," said Paetow High strength and conditioning coach Matthew Beeler. "In the end, I don't want to overthink things. The biggest thing is making sure the student-athletes are staying active, practicing social distance, and being safe, injury-free."

Because of precautions taken for the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, the UIL has suspended athletics since March 16. The earliest games may resume, for now, is May 4.

Until then, athletes have been working out on their own—many proudly broadcasting their efforts on social

media, using everything from free weights to ice coolers for exercise—while also following structured workouts organized by their high school coach.

"I don't know if we'll be able to keep them in shape," Katy football coach Gary Joseph said. "I think it's more about the knowledge of them getting out and doing something, understanding they have to take care of their bodies. They can't go for months without doing anything and expect to come back and be the same person they were when they left."

At Katy, Joseph said each head coach in each sport designs and coordinates workouts for their athletes. Coaches have benefited from ideas put out by the Texas High School Coaches Association, but

most have also sought input and suggestions from their peers via social media.

"It has been great to see the willingness to share ideas and workouts," Beeler said. "It has shown that there are a lot of great coaches out there that are in this business to improve athletes, even if they are not their own."

For his football kids, Joseph said, there is a strength coach that coordinates weight workouts, the head track coach helps coordinate the running aspect of exercises, and the Tigers also have a coach that works with flexibility and stretching.

See **WORKOUTS**, page B6



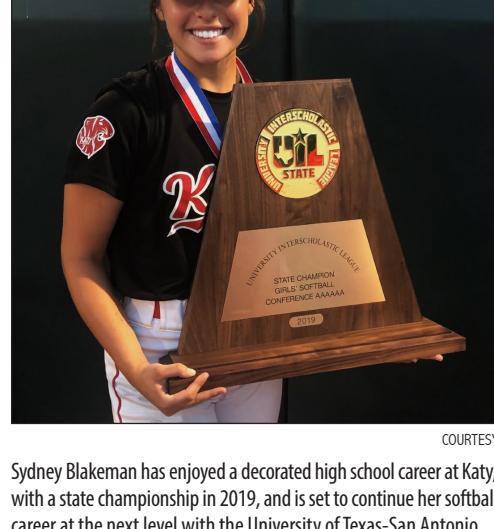
COURTESY

Brothers Aaron and Zach Session, offensive linemen at Morton Ranch High, lift weights together at their home.

Katy Times has a new feature called Senior Stars, where we highlight senior student-athletes and feature them during these uncertain times for their respective high school careers. Because of precautions for novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, the UIL has suspended athletic competition since March 16, with games not resuming until May 4 at the earliest. We want to give voices to senior student-athletes and recognize them and share their stories. For more information, email sports editor Dennis Silva II at densilva2@gmail.com or message on Twitter @densilva2.

SENIOR STARS

Katy's Blakeman all about Tigers, softball



Sydney Blakeman has enjoyed a decorated high school career at Katy, with a state championship in 2019, and is set to continue her softball career at the next level with the University of Texas-San Antonio.

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Sydney Blakeman found her way through the game of softball.

"I was good at it, and it gave me a confidence I never had," the Katy senior said.

Blakeman has produced an impressive career with the Tigers, one that has paved the opportunity to play at the next level with the University of Texas-San Antonio.

She was a valuable contributor to Katy's Class 6A state championship team last season, doing whatever it took to get on base. Blakeman led the team in hit-by-pitches and was also a team leader in stolen bases, earning a .400 on-base percentage.

Softball has been the biggest part of Blakeman's life, and playing for Katy has been "an honor," she said. No other coach has had the impact on her ath-

letic career like Katy head coach Kalum Haack.

It's why the possibility of the UIL canceling the rest of its spring sports season, due to precautions for novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, is unimaginable.

"Heartbreaking," Blakeman said. "I've been a part of some tough losses on the field. Games I'll never forget... but nothing in my softball career has been more heartbreaking than this. This will take a long time to get over."

Still, Blakeman is optimistic. The UIL has stated that, though the earliest games may resume is May 4, it intends to resume competitive seasons that have yet to be completed. That would include softball. Blakeman has worked through a lot of hitting drills in the family's garage to help pass the time by.

The hiatus caused by the UIL's suspension of athletics since March 16 has been just another obstacle for a young

lady that thrives against them. At 5-foot-3, Blakeman said she's always had to work harder than others to compete and keep up. Her drive and work ethic is considerable.

"Since I was nine years old, I played softball 10 out of 12 months, most every weekend," Blakeman said. "I never had time for much else."

Blakeman talked some more with The Katy Times about softball and life.

Q: How early of an age did you start playing softball? What was it that made you fall in love with the sport?

A: My first time playing softball was eight years old, with KGSA (Katy Girls Softball Association). I fell in love with it immediately. I played for the Stars, and my first teammate and friend was actually Kat Ibarra, who is a senior

See **BLAKEMAN**, page B3

Tompkins' Valasek inspired by Astros, Biggio

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins senior Weston Valasek started going to Houston Astros games as a young child. It's why he started playing baseball as a four-year-old.

Valasek sat excitedly in Minute Maid Park, his eyes glued to legendary second baseman Craig Biggio.

"I grew up watching him and noticed how hard he played and how much love and respect he had for the game," Valasek recalled.

Valasek had found his role model. He patterned his game after Biggio. He patterned his mannerisms after him. He was even in Cooperstown the week of Biggio's induction ceremony into the Hall of Fame in late July of 2015.

Valasek apparently learned well, because he's turned into a pretty solid ballplayer himself.

The 6-foot-1, 185-pounder is a

versatile outfielder and infielder for the Falcons. He has made an impact ever since he stepped onto the field as a varsity player as a sophomore.

"My proudest moment playing for (Tompkins) Coach (Kyle) Humphreys was in my sophomore year, playing Seven Lakes," Valasek said. "It was the bottom of the fifth (inning) and we were tied 0-0 when I hit the game-winning two-run home run."

"The feeling when I saw the ball go over the fence, and hearing my teammates and the crowd's reaction, was a sensation I will never forget."

With the UIL suspending athletics because of precautions for the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, Valasek is hoping those sensations come again sooner rather than never.

Games are expected to resume May 4, at the earliest. Valasek has used the hiatus to work out at his house, hang out with his family and girlfriend and

raid my pantry and watch TV."

"These times are crazy," Valasek said. "This virus was completely unexpected, and there is still more information coming out about its effects. I'm just trying my best not to go into public and risk putting my parents and others in danger. I have to admit, I've also spent time thinking about how our first district game against Cinco Ranch would have gone—a highly competitive, tough-fought victory for Tompkins, of course."

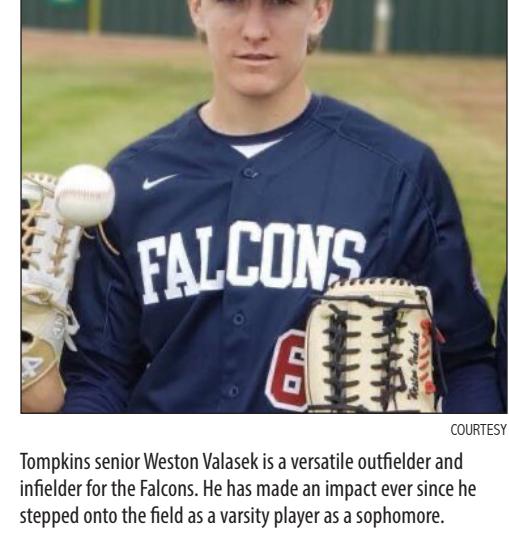
Though baseball dominates his time, Valasek enjoys playing frisbee with his dog, ping-pong and off-roading in his Jeep. If he's not watching reruns of "The Office," he's listening to the Zac Brown Band.

Valasek recently talked more with The Katy Times about baseball and life.

Q: What is the fondest memory

Q: you have of playing?

See **VALASEK**, page B3



Tompkins senior Weston Valasek is a versatile outfielder and infielder for the Falcons. He has made an impact ever since he stepped onto the field as a varsity player as a sophomore.

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Taylor coach dealing with adversity in 1st season

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Taylor boys soccer coach Julio Rivas was 19 games into his first season at the helm of the Mustangs when play was abruptly suspended, first by Katy ISD and then by the UIL, due to precautions for novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Taylor was 10-6-3 at the time and competing for a playoff spot in the intensely competitive District 19-6A, with a 4-5-1 district record and two games left despite five starters missing games because of injuries.

"We started off the year great," Rivas said. "We built a lot of confidence and we recognized that we had the ability to compete this year."

I can say that this is the toughest district I've ever competed in. You're playing against three top 10-teams in the state. Any given night, you can go out there and get demoralized.

"The boys have responded well and truly believe in themselves this year. When you have a group of guys that truly care for one another and believe in themselves, anything is possible."

But when the suspensions hit, Rivas admitted it was a blow to his team's momentum. Per the UIL, the earliest games may resume is May 4. The last game Taylor played was March 6.

Rivas was permitted to resume coaching his

players, albeit remotely, on March 23.

"The kids have been pretty down about it. They want to compete," Rivas said. "They were hungry to fight and try to compete for that fourth seed into the playoffs. Some of these seniors have wanted this since their freshman year."

"It's a heartbreaker, for sure, but we all understand that safety comes first. We need to make sure that the community and country are safe and playing conditions allow for us to continue. All we can do is hope and pray and let God handle the rest."

Rivas has his dream job. He is grateful to be back in Katy ISD, where he learned to speak English and earned his education. He attended Morton Ranch High School and played soccer for coach Fredy Sanguinetti, now the boys soccer coach at Cinco Ranch. Rivas was a member of the Mavericks' 2007 state qualifying team.

Rivas was a student teacher at Harlandale High in San Antonio and then taught for five years at Cypress Lakes, where he also coached as an assistant for Franklin Cartagena's boys soccer program.

When he got to Taylor for his first head coaching gig, Rivas inherited a group of kids eager to work.

"They make every day an incredible learning experience," he said.

His style of play changes based on the opponent, but, generally, Rivas likes his teams to keep the ball on the ground and focus on counters. He has incorporated a discipline-oriented coaching style, and it has paid dividends.

In the previous five seasons before Rivas' arrival, the Mustangs had won more than five games in a season only once. Now they are in good shape

to make their first playoff appearance since 2013.

"They're a group of boys who have gotten beat down pretty badly in district play during their high school years," Rivas said. "To see them come out fighting every game with no fear is something I can always be proud about. They know that nothing is given, and they have to go out there and earn it. They have matured immensely this year."

Rivas has as well.

"I learned that I walked into something special here at Taylor," Rivas said. "It's not about me, and it will never be about me. It's about the group and the boys. As long as we keep that mentality and fire and desire, we will be a competitive group. I am looking forward to being here for years to come."

For now, Rivas and his boys are taking this hiatus of uncertainty day by day.

"Unfortunately, there's not much they can do under the current situations," he said. "However, one thing we've worked on this year is discipline. I trust in them and believe in them. I know they will find a way to practice alone and get their touches in. They will run and workout on their own. If not, hopefully we will have time to get it back."

Rivas has used this abundance of free time and social distancing to go back and watch a lot of game tape from this season, hoping to learn from mistakes and misreads on his part. He knows a lot of his players have been watching film, something he encourages so they learn more about opponents and themselves.

"I have also been able to think about personnel changes for any upcoming games that may take place after this is over," Rivas said.



COURTESY

Coach Julio Rivas' Taylor Mustangs were 10-6-3 and in line for their first playoff appearance since 2013 before athletics were suspended due to precautions for novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

"Also, I've been watching games and reading articles

to learn."

And when it comes time to step back on the field and complete the season, should that time come, Rivas and his Mustangs will be ready.

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He has incorporated a discipline-oriented coaching style, and it has paid dividends.

In the previous five

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USC commit Campbell enrolls at Katy

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Junior running back Brandon Campbell enrolled at Katy High on March 26 with the intent of joining the Tigers' football program once school is permitted to resume.

The UIL has suspended athletics since March 16 due to precautions for the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. For the same reason, Katy ISD has postponed the opening of its schools until April 13, at the earliest.

"My mom wanted to get back to Katy," Campbell said. "After I graduate, she wanted to be back in a town she was comfortable with, so it wasn't really anything I could control. I couldn't really turn down the opportunity. I've been in Katy ISD previous-



BRANDON CAMPBELL

ly, since second grade, and I always liked it. She started me out over here because of the education."

Campbell said he has yet to talk with Katy coach Gary Joseph but is excited about the prospect of being a Tiger.

"I just want to contribute," he said. "I just want to help build myself mentally and physically, and build my character so I'll be ready for college and the next level by January."

Campbell said he will graduate in December to get a head start on his college career by enrolling early. He verbally committed to play at USC on March 28.

The 5-foot-10, 190-pound Campbell, a four-star recruit, played at Pearland High last season, where he racked up 879 rushing yards and 18 touchdowns with 280 receiving yards and three touchdowns. Campbell averaged 7.6 yards per carry. He left Pearland after last semester, enrolled at Lamar Consolidated High in Rosenberg, unenrolled from there before spring break, and officially enrolled at Katy last Thursday.

Campbell transferred to Pearland after

spending his sophomore varsity season at Taylor. As part of a three-man rotation in the backfield, Campbell rushed for 676 yards and five touchdowns for the Mustangs to go with 198 receiving yards and two touchdowns.

Campbell has 40 offers to play college football and chose the Trojans over Penn State in a Twitter announcement late last Saturday night.

"They didn't take a running back in 2020, and they told me the spring when I come in, I'll be competing with one guy for the starting spot," said Campbell, who plans to study criminal justice or sports marketing. "California is a big media town, but I'm going from one big city to another big city so it's not really going to be a hard adjustment for me. It'll be pretty smooth."

According to 247sports, Campbell runs the 40-yard dash in 4.58 seconds and has a 36.4-inch vertical jump. On the field, Campbell is highly regarded as an athletic playmaker who can be a three-down back because of his pass-catching ability.

He said he is a more mature player than two years ago when he last played in Katy.

"I'm more patient as a runner, I can set up my blocks a lot better," Campbell said. "I'm stronger. I'm smarter. I pick and choose my spots better."

Campbell grew up in Katy, attending Schmalz Elementary, McRoberts Elementary and Cardiff Junior High before starting his high school career at Mayde Creek and his varsity football career at Taylor. He recently returned to Katy because his mother, Angela Green, moved back within the district.

Katy High graduated its top running back from last season in Ron Hoff, who rushed for 1,473 yards and 16 touchdowns, but returns two backs with veteran experience in Sherman Smith and Jalen Davis, both of whom will be seniors next season. Smith, a two-year varsity letterman, rushed for 409 yards and five touchdowns last year, while Davis totaled 946 yards and 12 touchdowns in his first year of varsity play.

"I just want to step in and compete and give it all I've got," Campbell said. "It's cool to come back where everything started. I'm excited to get ready and prepare myself for college."

"I just feel like this is God reminding us of His power. We live in a world with so much hate and divide, and I feel like this is God telling us we need to be better people to our families and neighbors. The great thing is we are responding! I see so many awesome things happening. People helping others. It also brings us closer together as families. My family is super busy. I have four siblings, the three oldest of us play sports. We rarely get to be together for long periods, so this has been kind of nice. Social distancing stinks, but I get it. I miss my coaches and teammates."

— KATY SENIOR SYDNEY BLAKEMAN

BLAKEMAN

from page B1

at Tompkins. We will both play together at UTSA.

Q: What is the fondest memory that you have of playing?

A: It will always be winning a state championship with my teammates and best friends last year. That's a bond and experience that will last a lifetime.

Q: In your high school career, what has been the proudest moment?

A: The same. Nothing compares to the state championship.

Q: How has playing the sport and playing for Katy made you a better person?

A: Playing for Katy High School is an honor! I always dreamed about it as a kid and now it's almost gone, and never how I expected it. It hurts knowing I may never play a game again. Playing for Coach Haack has been tough but rewarding. I've known Coach Haack for over a decade. He was my first hitting coach. He pushes me to my limits, and when there are days I feel like

I'm going to break, I just remind myself he's doing it to get the best out of me and prepare me to be successful at UTSA. It's been trying, but a blessing.

Q: How are you handling these uncertain times regarding COVID-19? How are you spending your time?

A: The virus has been tough for me. I'm used to working, practice. Coach Haack pushing us every day. Life has been different.

Q: What are your thoughts in general about coronavirus and these times of social distancing? How has it affected you as a young person?

A: I just feel like this is God reminding us of His power. We live in a world with so much hate and divide, and I feel like this is God telling us we need to be better people to our families and neighbors. The great thing is we are responding! I see so many awesome things happening. People helping others. It also brings us closer together as families. My family is super busy. I have four siblings, the three oldest of us play sports. We rarely get to be together for long periods, so this has been kind of nice. Social distancing stinks, but I get it. I miss my coaches and teammates.

VALASEK

from page B1

A: My fondest memories of playing were for Tompkins baseball during the last games of all of my varsity seasons. Getting to be around and witness the emotions of all the seniors and remembering the relationships I had with them is truly special to me. Those times remind me of all of the team dinners, practices, and games that I played with guys who are like brothers to me.

Q: How has playing the sport and playing for Tompkins made you a better person?

A: Baseball has taught me a lot about being a good sportsman and leader. It also has taught me how to mentally face adversity through a sport that has tons of failure. My high school program has put me on teams with incredible role models, like Harrison Stovern and Logan Tennen, who showed me how to be a leader on a team and how to balance baseball with the classroom. My coaches have also taught me the importance of confidence when facing the challenges of the game.

Q: What are your thoughts about the UIL possibly canceling the rest of its spring sports season?

A: There isn't very much that us student-athletes can do to affect the decision of the UIL on our spring sports, but I'd feel very depressed to know that I, and all of my fellow teammates, especially seniors, didn't get to finish our last season the way we wanted to. We want the opportunity to end our high school careers the right way. There was a lot to look forward to this season. It's going to be very difficult for us to cope if we won't be able to compete and finish our senior season. We just have to stay strong and look forward to being able to compete again once this has passed.

Q: What are your thoughts in general about coronavirus and these times of social distancing? How has it affected you as a young person?

A: I think the coronavirus is really scary, because young people could contract the virus and not feel any of the symptoms and put our parents and other older family members and friends at risk. I like being around people, and social distancing is really an adjustment for me, but I think it is wise to distance ourselves as a precaution so we can best manage this crisis. I have never thought that I would ever experience a time when stores would be out of toilet paper, hand sanitizer and bottled water. This is definitely a time that I will never forget, and hopefully never have to experience again.

"My fondest memories of playing were for Tompkins baseball during the last games of all of my varsity seasons. Getting to be around and witness the emotions of all the seniors and remembering the relationships I had with them is truly special to me. Those times remind me of all of the team dinners, practices, and games that I played with guys who are like brothers to me."

— TOMPKINS SENIOR WESTON VALASEK

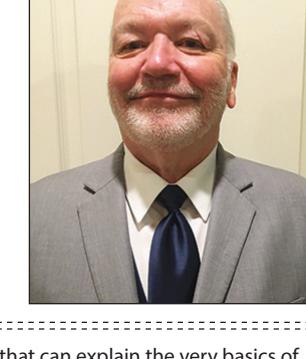
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There are still two major topics in life to be addressed, prior to publishing the new book. One is a major release of scientific information of the new theory across the U.S.A. The second is starting an evangelical ministry.

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

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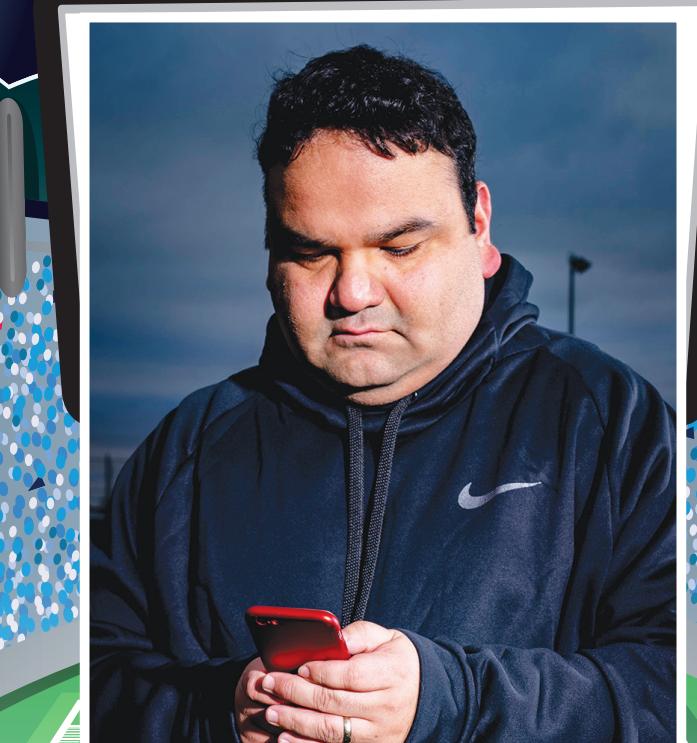
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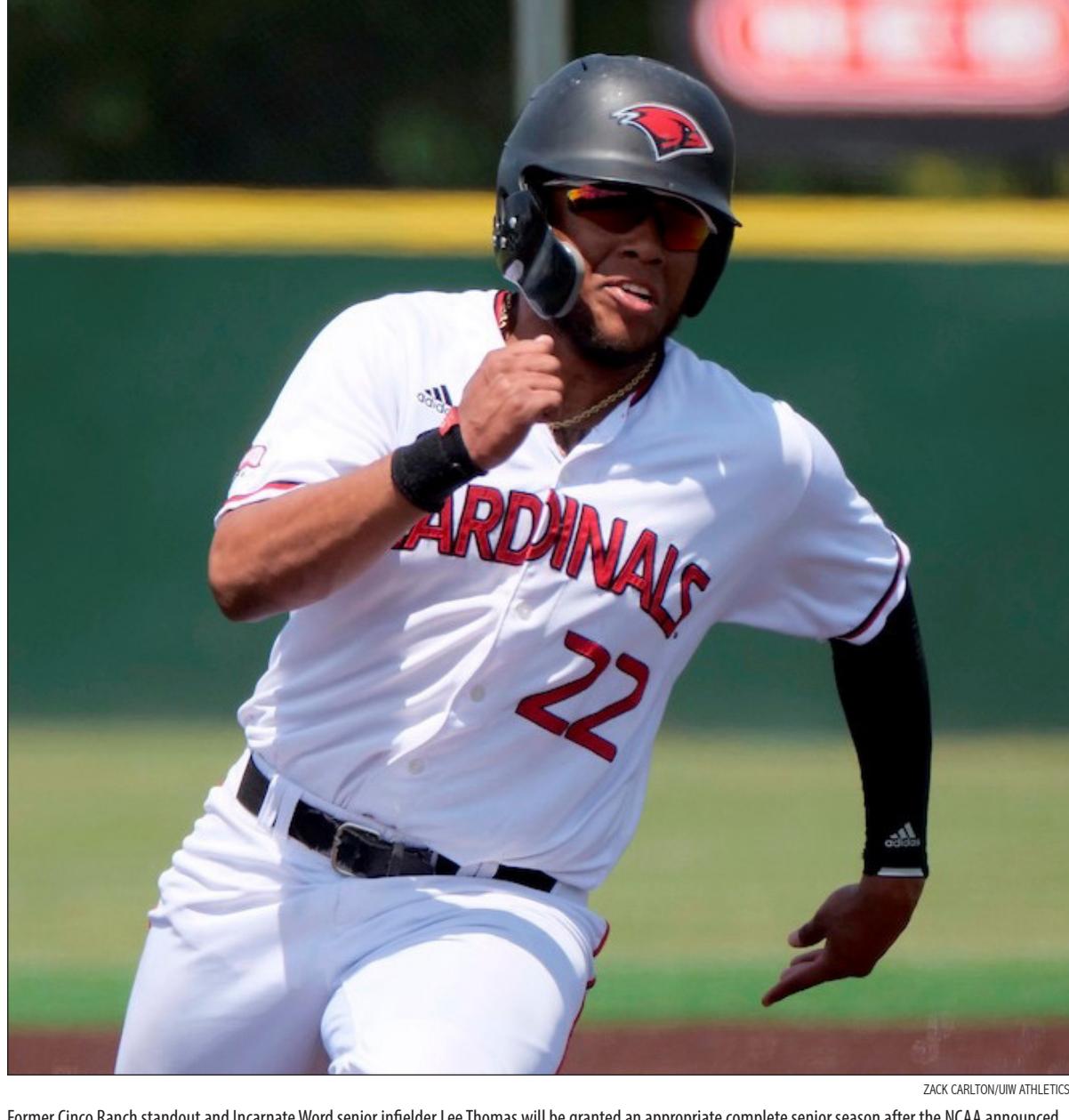



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Katy native Thomas grateful for ruling



the NCAA announced

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By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

There were frus-

tortuous days last month when Lee Thomas thought his college baseball career was over. Almost as quickly as his senior season had started, it was done away with.

The Katy native

The Katy native and University of Incarnate Word senior infielder remembers the Cardinals' home series against New Mexico being abruptly canceled on March 12. The next thing he knew, he was on his way home after the university requested all students to be out of their dorms by March 30.

"Everything started getting [cancel]ed," said Thomas, who

canceled," said Thomas, who starred at Cinco Ranch High. "The College World Series wasn't going to happen, and that's when it really hit. I was in denial. I had gone 0-for-5 in my last game, and I thought, 'No way in my final college baseball game did I go 0-for-5.' And then I got serious about it. Wow. That was my last time. That was the last time I'd lace up being a player for Incarnate Word. Then I got upset."

Precautions for the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, turned the sports world upside down last month, and it remains that way with no apparent return to normalcy on the horizon. Not long after the NCAA canceled March Madness and the College

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World Series, it canceled spring sports, entirely, for the rest of the season.

Thomas coped with the idea

He has coped with the idea that he had put on his UIW No. 22 jersey for the last time.
"For those



For those days, everything was really quiet," Thomas said. "Going into your senior year, your mindset is to go as hard as you can. Empty the tank. At least I'd do it my way. I'd have Senior Day. I could celebrate.

Senior Day. I could celebrate the moment with my family. I could enjoy and have my last AB (at-bat). It was upsetting. You have somebody who makes baseball their life for so long ... everybody has their way they want to walk out, you know? If they're going to leave their cleats on the field, they want to leave them their way.

My freshman year of high school, people tell you that you have eight years. How do you want to be remembered?

Everyone has that thought process, and when it goes a different way, it's not ideal."

Fortunately, those unsettling thoughts didn't last long. On March 30, the NCAA

long. On March 30, the NCAA announced it was permitting spring sport athletes who had their seasons shortened by COVID-19 to have an additional year of eligibility. The NCAA Division I Council voted to give baseball, softball and lacrosse athletes back their lost seasons

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

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

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A BEER RETAIL DEALER'S OFF-PREMISE LICENSE, A WINE ONLY PACKAGE STORE PERMIT AND A PACKAGE STORE TASTING PERMIT BY QUALITY LICENSING CORP. D/B/A QUALITY LICENSING CORP. (STORE #4111B) LOCATED AT 26824 F.M. 1093, RICHMOND, FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS 77406. OFFICERS OF SAID COMPANY ARE JOHN SCUDDER, PRESIDENT/CEO; MATTHEW W. ALLEN, VP; WAYNE HAMILTON, VP; ANDREA M. LAZENBY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY; DANIEL JOHN RICE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18, Attention: Doug Bergen, President, Board of Directors, will be received at the office of the Engineer, LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449, until 3:00 p.m., Local Time, Tuesday, April 14, 2020, and then publicly opened and read for "Construction of the Paving and Appurtenances to Serve Twinwood Business Park Phase 2 for Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18, Waller County, Texas". Bidders may elect to submit bids electronically via <https://bids.lja.com>.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: Construction of paving and appurtenances.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. Local Time, at the office of the Engineer, LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449.

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

Bidding documents may be examined at LJA Engineering, Inc., AGC of Texas, Construct Connect, and Amtek or may be obtained by prospective bidders or suppliers upon payment of one hundred Dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents at LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449 or at <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidders must register on this website to download bidding documents.

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

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and/or Contract and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18

Call 281-391-3141

or visit www.katytimes.com
to place your ad today!**DEADLINES**

Display Ads

Friday noon

Word Ads

Monday noon

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NOTICES****PUBLIC
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NOTICES****PUBLIC
NOTICES****PUBLIC
NOTICES****NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

WALLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT
APRIL 8, 2020 9:00 A.M.
COMMISSIONERS' COURTROOM,
WALLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Waller County Commissioners' Court will conduct a Public Hearing under the authority of Transportation Code Chapter 251, Subchapter E to consider the installation of No Thru Truck Signs at the following location:

Lazy Ridge Road – No Thru Trucks
Foxwood Drive – No Thru Trucks

All interested persons are encouraged to attend and participate in the Public Hearing.

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A BEER RETAIL DEALER'S OFF-PREMISE LICENSE, A WINE ONLY PACKAGE STORE PERMIT AND A PACKAGE STORE TASTING PERMIT BY QUALITY LICENSING CORP. D/B/A QUALITY LICENSING CORP. (STORE #4111W) LOCATED AT 26824 F.M. 1093, RICHMOND, FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS 77406. OFFICERS OF SAID COMPANY ARE JOHN SCUDDER, PRESIDENT/CEO; MATTHEW W. ALLEN, VP; WAYNE HAMILTON, VP; ANDREA M. LAZENBY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY; DANIEL JOHN RICE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

KATY ISD invites Private Non-Profit Schools to Public Meeting

Katy ISD will host a public meeting on Monday, April 20th at 1:00 pm in Room 1200 at the Educational Support Complex located at 6301 S. Stadium Lane Katy, TX 77494.

Private non-profit schools serving students who reside in Katy ISD attendance zones are asked to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of current Federal programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) and other services. Non-profit schools interested in participating in programs for the 2020-2021 school year will have the opportunity to receive information about eligibility. RSVP to Dotty Winski at 281-396-2243.

NOTICE

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

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

NOTICE

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

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids will be received by Fort Bend County M.U.D. No. 34 on CIVCAST until 2:00 P.M. on April 24, 2020 for Water Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant Perimeter Fence Improvements.

All bids will be publicly opened and distributed for construction of improvements including demolition, fencing and metal gate installation.

Bidders shall submit the Bid on exact copies of the Bid Form provided on CIVCAST. A Certificate of Interested Parties (HB Form 1295) must be returned with Bid. (Forms are provided with Spec Book)

Bid Documents are available through CIVCAST. Interested bidders should contact Bryan Malloch at bmalloch@kgadeforest.com.

A Cashier's Check or Bidder's Bond Payable to Fort Bend County M.U.D. No. 34 in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid submitted, outlined in the Contract Documents, must accompany the Bid.

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 and Payment 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 OF PUBLIC HEARING

WALLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT
APRIL 8, 2020 9:00 A.M.
COMMISSIONERS' COURTROOM,
WALLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Waller County Commissioners' Court will conduct a Public Hearing under the authority of Chapter 251.152, Transportation Code, to consider the establishment of speed limits and the installation of speed limit signs on the following roads:

COUNTRY LANE ESTATES – All roads within subdivision – 30 mph.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend and participate in the Public Hearing.

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18, Attention: Doug Bergen, President, Board of Directors, will be received at the office of the Engineer, LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449, until 3:00 p.m., Local Time, Wednesday, April 15, 2020, and then publicly opened and read for "Construction of the Paving and Appurtenances to Serve Twinwood Business Park Phase 3 for Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18, Waller County, Texas". Bidders may elect to submit bids electronically via <https://bids.lja.com>.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: Construction of paving and appurtenances.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. Local Time, at the office of the Engineer, LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449.

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

Bidding documents may be examined at LJA Engineering, Inc., AGC of Texas, Construct Connect, and Amtek or may be obtained by prospective bidders or suppliers upon payment of one hundred Dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents at LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449 or at <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidders must register on this website to download bidding documents.

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

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and/or Contract and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 18

COMPETITIVE BIDDING NOTICE INVITATION TO BID

The County of Waller proposes to purchase the following items on competitive bid:

CONSTRUCTION OF HEADWALLS ON BULLER ROAD AT DRY BRANCH

Bids will be received by the Waller County Auditor, Alan Younts, until 2:00 p.m., April 20, 2020 in the office of County Auditor at 836 Austin Street, Suite 221, Hempstead, Texas 77445. Bids shall be opened by Commissioners' Court at 9:00 a.m. April 22, 2020, in the Waller County Courtroom, Hempstead, Texas 77445. The Court shall award the contract on May 6, 2020, at 9:00 a.m., in the Waller County Courtroom, during open session of Commissioners' Court to the responsible bidder who submits the lowest and best bid.

A contract shall not be awarded to a bidder who is not the lowest dollar bidder meeting specifications unless, before the award, each lower bidder is given notice of the proposed award, and is given an opportunity to appear before the Commissioners' Court and present evidence concerning the lower bidder's responsibility.

Bid award shall be based on either unit price or lump sum as indicated on the BID SHEET.

Method of payment will be by check upon completion and acceptance of the work or the fulfillment of the purchase obligation to the County.

Bid Forms may be downloaded from the Waller County web site at www.co.waller.tx.us

ALAN YOUNTS
County Auditor
836 Austin Street, Suite 221
Hempstead, Texas 77445

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Honors keep coming for Mavs star Cryer



MARK GOODMAN

Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer was named to the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches' Class 6A all-state team on March 23 and as an honorable mention selection to the MaxPreps 2019-2020 All-American boys basketball team on March 25.

By DENNIS SILVA II
TIMES SPORTS EDITOR

Last week was another one of accolades and respect for Morton Ranch senior guard L.J. Cryer, as the Baylor signee was named to the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches' Class 6A all-state team on March 23 and as an honorable mention selection to the MaxPreps 2019-2020 All-American boys basketball team on March 25.

Cryer produced one of the best seasons in Texas high school basketball history for the 2019-2020 season, scoring 1,164 points in helping lead the Mavericks to their first regional semifinal appearance. The 6-foot-1, 181-pounder averaged 34.2 points, 5.3 assists, 2.6 rebounds and 2.4 steals per game. Cryer shot 55 percent overall, including 44 percent from 3-point range. He made 145 3-pointers, averaging 4.3 3s made per game.

Cryer scored 40 or more points 11 times this season, including a 50-point, 10-assist game in the regular season finale against Mayde Creek. He finished his career as the fifth-best all-time scorer in Texas high school boys basketball history, and No. 1 all-time in the Greater Houston area.

"I've been a scorer all my life," Cryer told The Katy Times in an interview in February. "I didn't know I'd be able to score the way I do now, but I put in the work. I feel it's expected out of me."

Cryer was one of 20 players named to the TABC all-state team, and just one of six players from the Greater Houston area. The other five players were Klein Forest's Daylan Hamilton, Fort Bend Travis' Justin Hill, Summer Creek's Javon Jackson, and Dickinson's Tramon Mark and Marcus Williams.

On the MaxPreps All-American team, Cryer was one of the top 50 performers in the nation recognized. The selection was based on team and individual success, and local, regional and state honors.

Cryer was one of three players from Texas to be named to the team. The others were Vandegrift High's Greg Brown III, out of Austin, who was named to the second team, and Dickinson High's Mark, who was an honorable mention pick.

Brown, a 6-foot-9 forward who is unsigned, averaged 26.1 points, 13.2 rebounds, 3.5 blocks and 2.1 assists for the Vipers while hitting 86 3-pointers at a 38-percent clip. Mark, a University of Houston signee, averaged 29.3 points, 6.4 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.2 steals for the Gators.

WORKOUTS

from page B1

How athletes attack those workout plans, depending on what is or isn't available at use in their homes, differs.

"There's things we can control and things we cannot control," Joseph said. "They might have no control over not having a weight set, so they have to find other things to do. People didn't always lift weights and were still physically strong; they used to go out and bail hay and they got stronger doing that. You have to find things to do, and a big part of it is appreciating the work you put in. They're going from a three-month offseason of workouts and now all of a sudden, they could be doing nothing. They have to be doing something to stay in shape."

Seven Lakes' football workouts last week emphasized strength training with weighted or air squats, reverse lunging, step-ups, pushups, pullups, curls, squat jumps and wall sits; core work with side planks, weighted crunches and weighted overhead sit-ups; sprint running; and plyometrics with squat and broad jumps.

Mayde Creek's workouts this week are based on the same principles, but also incorporated a yoga series for mobility. Rams softball coach Jill Voss sends her athletes at-home daily practices that emphasize hand-eye coordination skills and specific offensive and defensive drills.

"As challenging as it can



COURTESY

Taylor High's Hunter Flurry, a football player, does a workout in his garage.

be for athletes to train without equipment, each athlete received a practice program specific to hitting or fielding that allows them to use household items," Voss said. "These practice plans we implement make our athletes have higher quality discipline, focus and drive to improve in all areas."

Tompkins girls soccer coach Jarrett Shipman has his girls working with body weight (squat jumps, planks, sit-ups, et cetera), running (sprint and tempo runs) and

touching the ball as much as possible (1,000 juggles and wall touches).

"Also, importantly, we're telling them to enjoy a walk or bike ride with the family," Shipman said.

Paetow's workouts are centered around planking, chair dips, short-yard sprints, lateral lunges, form running, pushups, pullups, air squats and other forms of creative exercise, like overhead squats using a broom or mop.

"The biggest piece of

advice (for student-athletes) would be to stay active; sprint, jump, squat, do pushups," Beeler said.

"Sometimes the simplest things can be the most effective. If they were in-season, I would tell them to practice their sport-specific movements and conditioning, like throwing, running, explosive movements, et cetera. I would tell them to try and develop a routine, to the best of their ability, that modeled their sport practice plan and workout routine."

Create as much normalcy and familiarity as they can so they feel comfortable."

As Joseph alluded to, there is only so much that can be controlled when coaches can't physically be around athletes to gauge evaluation and campus resources are unavailable.

"During this time, you hope that you have had enough buy-in from the weight room that the athletes would take ownership of their development and want to maintain their

fitness and strength level over this break," Beeler said. "As hard as it is to let go, you have to trust that your athletes are handling their responsibilities and working out on their own."

The hiatus has an effect for out-of-season athletes, too.

The offseason is generally a good time for a program's athletes to build trust and bonds through the struggle and grind of workouts. Some players may even mature into team leaders. Coaches get to see who rises to the challenge when athletes are pushed to the brink, physically and mentally, during the monotony and rigidness of offseason work.

It's why Joseph's primary message to his coaches, as a campus athletic coordinator, has been to stay in touch with the kids, first and foremost.

"Take care of your kids. Keep up with your kids. I know a lot of them have different problems and things, and it's about reassurance," Joseph said. "The relationship between coaches and their kids is so important."

"The other thing I told our coaches the other day is this is a vital time, because some of these kids that were on the bubble may decide they don't want to come back. I think the program is important enough, not just from a football standpoint but from a character standpoint and growing up to be a man. It's important that kids are a part of this if they can. Not all will be the stud or a star, but every one of them can learn something and be good people from this."

THOMAS

from page B4

in 2020-2021, but financial aid is not guaranteed and how much scholarship money will be granted will be determined by the athlete's school. Roster limits will be adjusted to accommodate returning athletes with incoming recruits.

The vote was a godsend for Thomas, who said he plans to take advantage of the ruling and return to San Antonio for his senior season.

"I was already grateful, but I'm more grateful," Thomas said. "I had the game taken away from me, unexpectedly, and even though I knew it was my last season, it was a

lot. I'm going to continue to count my blessings and play as hard as I can for as long as I can."

The 6-foot-2, 215-pound Thomas was enjoying another stellar season this year, hitting .328 with 12 RBIs and a home run in 16 games. Thomas had a .480 on-base percentage and .466 slugging percentage.

It was right where he picked up from his 2019 junior season, when he hit .280 with 46 RBIs, 12 home runs and a .533 slugging percentage.

Thomas said he received a check-in call from UIW coach Ryan Shotzberger about a week ago. That's when it occurred to him that it was possible his days in the Cardinals' red and black were not over.

"My coach called me, and he goes, 'Look, if what it is true and you get a year back, there's no question that we want you.'

Instantly you start thinking about the what-ifs," Thomas said. "Reality is still that you're sitting at home, not playing, but then you start to think. I think he was giving me hope. He told me he wanted me back leading the ship. We were up to something. We were having a great year, and we were looking for another playoff run. Everything just happened so quick."

Thomas only started playing baseball when he was eight years old. It wasn't until his junior year at Cinco Ranch that he realized it was what he wanted to seriously pursue.

"I loved the work with baseball," Thomas said. "I loved the work ethic it built for me. I loved the process. I'd go out there with my dad and hit for hours out there at Cinco. He'd throw me pop flies or throw me scoops. I just grew a love for it."

Before the NCAA made its announcement on Monday, Thomas said he had received interest in playing professionally, either in independent baseball or the Mexican League. Though his UIW days might have been done, his career wasn't.

"It wasn't the fact that I ever thought I was done playing baseball," Thomas said. "I thought I was done playing baseball representing UIW. It was the end of an era. My

future was in question, and I just thought it was sad."

Thomas is unsure of the next step for being granted a waiver for extra eligibility. But he at least knows not all is lost.

"It's just work and preparation, going back to the drawing board and resetting the clock for February 14 (opening day next season)," said Thomas, who has a .285 average with 94 RBIs and 16 home runs with a .378 on-base percentage in 113 games for the Cardinals. "Take the long summer, work out, prepare, and make sure I'm the best Lee Thomas I can be by February 14. Work as hard as I can, trust my coaches and coach myself. This university gave me an opportunity that most didn't. I owe them all I've got."