



City of Katy, KISD finalize election results

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

Both the city of Katy and Katy ISD voted to approve the results of the Nov. 3 city council and board of trustees elections, respectively, Tuesday evening. The elections for both entities saw changes in one or more seats on their respective governing bodies.

Katy seat changes hands

Katy swore in two familiar faces and one new council member Tuesday evening.

In total 4,692 votes were cast in the Nov. 3 city council election, said City Secretary Becky McGrew, 1,300 of which were undervotes. An undervote is a vote that is not counted due to the ballot not being marked legibly.

Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris, who holds the city's At Large seat on the council kept his seat and was sworn in Tuesday after running unopposed in the election.

In the Ward A race, 4,482 votes were

cast of which 1,125 were undervotes. Incumbent and winner Janet Corte garnered 1,960 votes while Diane Robichaux Walker secured 924 votes and the third candidate, Dharminder Dargan receiving 527 votes.

For Ward B, the most contested race with four candidates, Rory Robertson won against incumbent Durran Dowdle as well as candidates Steve Pierson and Sam Pearson. Of the 5,629 votes cast in the Ward B election, 1,036 were undervotes and Robertson received 2,370 nods of support from voters. Robertson was followed by Pearson with 761 votes, Dowdle with 877 votes and Pierson with 585 votes.

Canvassing of the votes was approved unanimously by council members, after which Dowdle was presented with a plaque for his service to the city on various boards and council, including serving as Mayor Pro Tem prior to Harris being appointed to that role.

Dowdle congratulated Robertson for the election win and offered his assistance



CITY OF KATY/ZOOM

Newly-elected Ward B Katy City Council Member Rory Robertson is sworn in by City of Katy Municipal Court Judge Jeffrey Brashear during the semi-virtual Katy City Council meeting held Nov. 17. Incumbent council members Chris Harris and Janet Corte were sworn in during separate ceremonies earlier in the day in order to limit the number of people in council chambers due to COVID-19 concerns.

See **RESULTS**, page A5

Katy PD arrests two suspects in catalytic converter thefts

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

Two men are being held in the Harris County Jail after high-speed chases the morning of Nov. 10. Adarius Jackson, 31, and Christopher Fuller, 27, were arrested after a Katy Police Department officer noticed two suspicious vehicles at a business in the 5,300 block of East Fifth Street.

"Due to recent theft incidents at this location where suspects have cut off the catalytic convertor from vehicles, the officer exited his vehicle and attempted to make contact with the drivers of the two vehicles. Both vehicles fled the scene at a high rate of speed, which initiated two separate vehicle pursuits," a Katy PD press release read.

The first vehicle sped toward Houston according to the press release. It later crashed into a tree in the 8,900 block of Veteran's Memorial Drive. The driver, Jackson, was arrested at the scene of the accident where KPD officers also located a catalytic converter next to the wrecked vehicle and tools inside of the vehicle.

The second pursuit led law enforcement to the 25,400 block of Katy Mills Parkway which also ended with the suspect's vehicle – this time Fuller was the driver – crashing into



Christopher Fuller (left) and Adarius Jackson have both been charged with aggregated theft, felon in possession of a firearm and evading law enforcement in a motor vehicle after two Nov. 10 pursuits by Katy Police Department officers with assistance from other area law enforcement agencies.

a tree. Fuller was apprehended after a brief foot chase, the statement said. Officers again found two catalytic converters and tools to cut or remove the converters in the vehicle.

Officers were able to determine that the catalytic converters had been stolen from vehicles in the 5,300 block of East Fifth Street as well as from a U-Haul truck within close proximity.

Catalytic converter thefts have caught KPD's attention recently after the busses at The Arc of Katy, a local nonprofit that assists those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, had the catalytic converters stolen from its four program busses in late October.

Catalytic converters are part of a vehicle's exhaust system that convert harmful pollutants and convert them into

less harmful emissions prior to exhaust being pushed from the exhaust system, according to Edmunds, an automotive industry watchdog that tracks a variety of trends associated with motor vehicles. According to their website, stolen converters are often taken to metal recycling plants and sold as scrap for between \$20 and \$200 because they use valuable metals such as rhodium, platinum, palladium and gold in the process to convert exhaust fumes. Replacing catalytic converters can often cost \$1,000 or more.

As of Nov. 16, Jackson was still being held at the Harris County Jail and has been charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, aggregated theft and evading

See **THEFTS**, page A5



COURTESY PHOTO BY MARK GOODMAN | KATY TIMES

Katy High senior running back Jalen Davis rushed for 124 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries to help the Tigers to a 41-13 rout of Taylor on Nov. 12 at Rhodes Stadium.

Katy rebounds from rare loss, routs Taylor

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy High senior defensive end Cal Varner said last week's practices leading up to the game against Taylor on Thursday, Nov. 12, were the most focused he'd ever seen from the Tigers.

Senior running back Jalen Davis said the Tigers felt disrespected but added they "didn't live up to the legacy" in their loss to Tompkins the

previous week on Nov. 5 that snapped a 75-game district winning streak.

"A lot of people wrote us off after that game and acted like we were nothing," Davis said. "It was a wake-up call."

So, Katy refocused. Retooled. Rebounded.

While No. 10 state-ranked Katy's 41-13 win over Taylor at Rhodes Stadium wasn't perfect, it was a considerable

See **KATY**, page B5

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November 19, 2020
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Texas Central lacks permits for rail project

By JUAN PABLO GARNHAM
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Less than two months before the Texas Legislature begins its next session, the yearslong battle over a controversial high-speed rail project is expected to spark more legislative skirmishes.

And after years of public skepticism, Gov. Greg Abbott recently signaled his support for the project in a letter to Japan's prime minister, although his spokesperson later said that Abbott's office will "re-evaluate this matter."

Last month, Abbott sent a letter to Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga saying: "This venture has my full support as Governor of Texas, and I am hopeful that final negotiations of this project with Japan can be concluded so that construction can begin. Public support and momentum are on our side, and this project can be completed swiftly."

The Oct. 2 letter also included a significant error. Abbott told Suga that the company developing the high-speed rail line had "all the necessary permits to begin construction."

The Texas Tribune found that Texas Central, the Dallas- and Houston-based company in charge of the project, is far from receiving all permits needed to build the 240-mile line, which would stretch from Dallas to Houston and cost around \$20 billion, according to the company.



MICHAEL STRAVATO FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The data on this screen was presented at a public meeting on the Dallas-to-Houston high speed rail project hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration in Houston on Oct. 29, 2014.

When contacted by the Tribune with this information, Abbott's office said it would review the matter.

"From the beginning of this project, the Governor made clear that he could support this project if, and only if, the private property rights of Texans are fully respected," Abbott spokesman John Wittman told the Tribune on Oct. 7.

"The Governor's team has learned that the information it was provided was incomplete. As a result, the Governor's Office

will re-evaluate this matter after gathering additional information from all affected parties," Wittman added.

The governor's office has not responded to multiple follow-up questions about the results of its review and has not explained why Abbott didn't know the project lacked permits or who Abbott was relying upon for information about the project.

Abbott's office also has declined to say whether he has sent subsequent correspondence to

Suga. Texas Central plans to use Japanese technology similar to that used for the famous Shinkansen bullet train and the company could receive a loan from a Japanese public financial institution.

During a September 2019 trip to Japan, Abbott rode the bullet train and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation that would promote collaboration between the two regions. The bank had signed an agreement with Texas Central in August 2018 that would provide a loan of up to \$300 million to the company.

Abbott had previously preached caution about the project. In 2016, at a Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce gathering, Abbott said that these kinds of projects cannot be a "money-losing proposition." During the 2017 legislative session, he signed a bill prohibiting the state from funding high-speed rail projects.

But his October letter to the Japanese prime minister alarmed some lawmakers whose districts are in the path of the proposed rail line.

"Naturally, I was disappointed to see the letter because it expressed support for the project based on what I knew to be inaccurate information," state Rep. Ben Leman, R-Anderson, said in an interview last month. Abbott "clarified that and I'm extremely appreciative of that."

See **RAIL**, page A5

Scholars and Scoundrels serves up fun

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

Anthony Petronella and Chad Craig, owners at Scholars and Scoundrels Bar and Grill at 1251 Pin Oak Road in Katy, said 2020 has been challenging, but focusing on staff, quality food and fun are what they credit with helping them place in or win 17 categories in this year's *Katy Times* Best of Katy competition.

"You don't want to go in and work and not have fun and not be able to joke and laugh and have a good time," Petronella said.

The pair said they want that fun to be something even diners can participate in. Rather than having the kitchen, where the joking and laughter in most restaurants happen, closed off and away from the customers, they designed the restaurant with an open kitchen so diners can catch the mirth and have a fun experience while eating good food and enjoying time out.

To have opened Dec. 5, 2018 is something the two expressed satisfaction with because that is the anniversary of the end of prohibition in the U.S. which goes with the theme they had in mind when they opened the restaurant.

"The whole thing is always in Scholars and Scoundrels is, it was truly founded on things like hard work gets rewarded," Craig said. "You know, you put in your effort and you get those things (you're working for)." You know, you put in your effort and you get those things (you're working for). And we're also - you work hard, you play hard. We work all day, and then we're going to have some cocktails."

The pair have "done it all" in the restaurant industry over the years, Craig, a U.S. Navy Veteran said. They've worked at other restaurants and even owned a food truck together before opening the storefront restaurant two years ago. The trick they've found, they said, is not focusing just on money but also on a goal that's more important.

"We're not just two dudes that had money and decided to open a restaurant," Craig said. "We're two guys that truly were embedded in the industry over 20 years in one shape, form or another, and we were tired of making money for other people, so that's kind of where the whole concept came from."

It helps that the pair are very close friends that can bust each other's chops regularly and come away from it laughing. Throughout their interview with the *Katy Times*, the two exchanged barbs with one another that only the best of friends can get away with. From Petronella's cracks about Craig having half a heart due to a heart surgery some time ago, to joking around about the menu.

"Our menu is like a comedy show," Craig said. "It's hilarious to see people actually read the entire menu instead of just scanning the menu and laugh at this or laugh at that."

SCHOLARS AND SCOUNDRELS BAR & GRILL

ADDRESS: 1251 Pin Oak Road, Ste. 141, Katy, TX 77494
PHONE: 346-307-7434

WEBSITE: www.scholarsandsoundrelsbarandgrill.com

HOURS: Kitchen open daily
11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Craig and Petronella said they focus on choosing staff that can comprehend that idea and blend into the culture of fun and hard work. Looking at that factor throughout the hiring process helps them create a good customer experience and minimize employee turnover in an industry that can often see staff spin through different restaurants like a series of revolving doors. They're pleased with their staff and are glad they've been able to not only hire great staff from day one, but to retain many of their staff for well beyond the restaurant industry's average.

Petronella said the pair has an agreement with the staff similar to Mike Rowe on his show, "Dirty Jobs" where the owners agree to a "sweat pledge."

"It's a lot of, before I even hire you is learning - what are the things that you can control coming into your performance? And we also say that - this is what I'm asking of you, but this is what we're going to give you," Petronella said. "This is a two-way street. We pick you as our employee, but you can pick us as your employer - this is two ways."

The restaurant isn't actively hiring now but are always accepting applications and Craig said he was always willing to refer promising people to other restaurant owners that are hiring and reputable. It isn't a competition, he said. It's about taking care of people.

Again though, Craig took the conversation back to having fun while you work isn't just a way of making customers happy, but also about developing staff - whether that be through developing new skills in the kitchen or promoting from within when someone shows potential - especially a potential to maintain the "Cheers" feel they hope their customers and staff feel throughout each day.

"I just think that, you know, life is too short to be overly serious. And, we take the time to do things right, but we're going to have fun while we're doing it," Craig said.

Editor's Note: To see what categories Scholars and Scoundrels performed well in for the Best of Katy 2020 competition, check out the Best of Katy 2020 publication included with this edition of the Katy Times.



R. HANS MILLER

Scholars and Scoundrels staff pose outside the front door of the establishment - masks removed just long enough to take a quick photo before going back on. Throughout the photo shoot, staff had a hard time posing for a shot with jokes flying back and forth among the whole crew.



R. HANS MILLER

One popular menu item at Scholars and Scoundrels is the Scoundrel Fries, a dish made with chili and green chile queso, fajita beef and scoundrel sauce - which tastes like the love-child between ketchup and an amazing barbeque sauce - piled on a bed of crisp-fried French fries.



R. HANS MILLER

The I Do What I Want tacos keep it simple with plenty of coarse-ground beef, red and yellow bell peppers, onions and slathered with a tomato salsa. Shown pictured here on corn tortillas which were served warm and half crispy which kept the tomato salsa from escaping.



COURTESY SCHOLARS AND SCOUNDRELS

Anthony Petronella (left) and Chad Craig (right) are the proprietors of Scholars and Scoundrels Bar and Grill in Katy. The pair aren't just business partners, they're close friends who put an emphasis on having fun with their work - something they hope their customers can see.

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Katy Times

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| | 5 | | 8 | 2 | | | 4 | |
| 9 | | | 4 | | | | 1 | 8 |
| 7 | | | | 5 | | 2 | | |

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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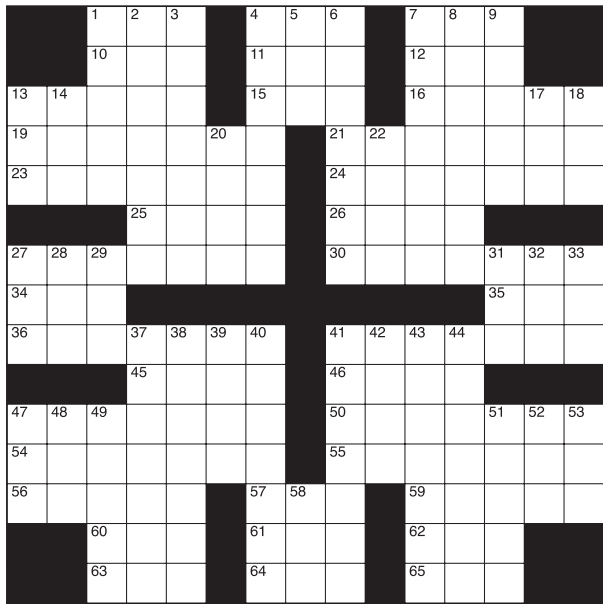
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- Autonomic nervous system
- At or near the stern
- Adenosine triphosphate
- Polynesian garland of flowers
- Chinese revolutionary
- Green veggie
- Large group
- Swiss river
- Semiaquatic mammal
- Wrongdoers
- Home to Disney World
- Spanish doctors
- Newborn child
- Absence of difficulty
- Large, stocky lizard
- Earned top billing
- A long wandering and eventful journey
- Water (French)
- Brew
- Winged horse
- A usually malignant tumor
- Alfred __, American actor
- Austrian river
- A reminder of past events
- Connected with
- Status
- Dean residence
- Egyptian city
- Boxing's GOAT
- Straits along the Red Sea
- "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
- Get some color
- Facilitates hearing
- Commercials
- A team's best pitcher
- Patti Hearst's captors

CLUES DOWN

- Speak up



- More informative
- Tall deciduous tree
- Where passengers sit
- Affirmative
- Notified of danger
- NFL game days
- Home of the Blue Jays
- Archaic term for "to"
- Public statement of regret
- Plant pores
- Canned fish
- Patriots' Newton
- Connects with
- Of the skull
- Time zone (abbr.)
- When you hope to get there
- Hindu goddess
- Pitching stat
- Field force unit
- Lakers' crosstown rivals

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

P.O. Box 678, Katy, TX 77492-0678
979-885-3562

Carroll resigns from Katy City Council

By **R. HANS MILLER**
NEWS EDITOR

Katy City Council Member Frank Carroll III who represented Ward A confirmed today that he has resigned from the city's governing body due to a family issue.

"Yes, I resigned effective today," Carroll said. "We are buying the family farm from the estate of (my wife, April Carroll's) grandfather, who passed away suddenly from cancer."



FRANK CARROLL III

Carroll had said earlier this year that a family issue would likely cause him to move out of the city and that he would resign when the details of that situation were finalized.

Carroll was unanimously appointed to his seat in September 2018 after former Council Member J. Gary Jones resigned due to a private matter. Carroll was then reelected in May of 2019 when he ran unopposed for reelection. Prior to serving on

council, he was a member of the Katy Board of Adjustment, according to the city's website.

Mayor Bill Hastings has nominated William H. "Dusty" Thiele to fill the Carroll's now-vacant Ward A seat. Acceptance of Carroll's resignation and Thiele's appointment are on the agenda for a special meeting of city council set for Nov. 19 at 4:30 p.m.

Katy City Council also met Nov. 17 to canvass the results of the city's Nov. 3 elections in a special meeting for that purpose (see our story on page A1). The regular city council meeting scheduled for Nov. 23 has been

cancelled due to the Thanksgiving holiday and the next regular city council meeting is set for Dec. 14.

Carroll's wife was born and raised in Hempstead and Carroll said he hopes to continue to serve the Waller County community in some form now that the family has moved outside of city limits.

"While I will no longer be in the City of Katy, we will still be living in Waller County, and I look forward to the new opportunities ahead to serve the residents of this great county," Carroll said.

OBITUARY

Gregory "Dale" Hoyt, 59, originally from Katy, Texas passed away on October 27, 2020 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Dale was born November 6, 1960 at a hospital in Houston, Texas. He grew up in Katy, Texas.

After high school he became an electrician and carpenter. He lived in Rockport, Texas for a while. During that time, his Aunt Gladys wanted to build a house. Dale used his talents to build it for her. He was very skilled at wood working. One of his favorite hobbies was turning discarded trees into the most beautiful tables, cabinets and other furniture. Dale loved anything that would make him laugh. His laugh was very boisterous and jovial. He fought a courageous battle with cancer.

Dale is preceded in death by his dad, Fredrick D. Hoyt, paternal grandparents: Fred A. and Ada L. Hoyt; aunts: Maurice Hoyt Phillip and Gladys E. Hoyt; uncle, Charles F. Hoyt; Fraternal grandparents: Bud B. and Lovinia P. Babcock; aunt, Eula Mae Miller, uncles: John R. Babcock and Bud E. Babcock;

Dale is survived by his daughter, Ashley Reynolds; grandsons: Jameson Reynolds and Aiden Reynolds; mother, Joyce Babcock Korn, and close friend, David; sister, Debra Savell and husband Bengie; brother, Ben Hoyt; his half-brothers: Rick Hoyt and wife Trish, Rex Hoyt and wife Bernie; aunt, Elizabeth Hoyt, close uncle, Marvin Babcock; aunt, Carol Wimberley and husband Turney; along with numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, great cousins, great nieces, great nephews and many friends.

Visitation was held at Butler-Stumpff & Dyer Funeral Home in Tulsa on Sunday, November 1, 2020 with memorial services officiated by Reverend Bill McIntyre.

Graveside services were held at Katy Magnolia Cemetery in Katy, Texas on Saturday, November 7, 2020 with Brother Joshua Crutchfield officiating. Schmidt Funeral Home was director over the graveside service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Jude's Children Research Hospital or your favorite charity.



GREGORY DALE HOYT
1960-2020

Writer on mission to help veterans

By **JOE SOUTHERN**
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

From helpless to helpful, Curtis Brown is a man on a mission to help fellow veterans who are struggling with all kinds of physical, mental, emotional, and addictive problems.

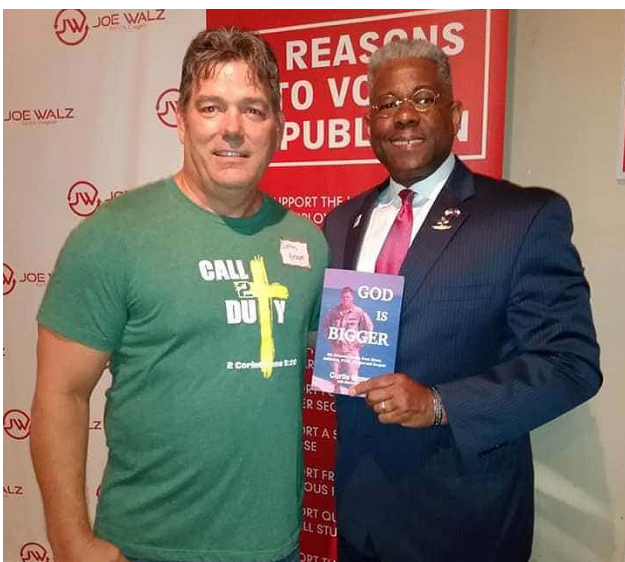
They're problems that he is very familiar with, having experienced most of them himself since being medically discharged from the Army after the Persian Gulf War.

"My neck is 98% titanium," Brown said.

Brown left the Army with post-traumatic stress disorder, severe neck and spinal injuries, and health issues associated with chemical exposure while serving in Iraq. Over the years, Brown endured 19 surgeries, debilitating chronic pain, depression, and severe addiction to prescription drugs. He also fought a Veterans Administration hospital system seemingly intent on denying the existence of his injuries, much less healing them. He made endless poor choices and had a string of broken relationships culminating in a divorce from his first wife.

"I was also highly addicted to psych meds and opiates for nearly 20 years that the VA prescribed me," he said.

Today, he is healed and is sharing his path to recovery and hope for a better future with comrades enduring his same struggles. In 2017 he wrote a book called "PTSD: Programmed to Self-Destruct." That started him on his journey of helping other veterans get the help they need. The book was re-writ-



COURTESY PHOTO

Retired Army Lt. Col. Allen West, right, holds a copy of "God is Bigger," co-written by Curtis Brown, left. Brown is on a mission to help veterans with jobs, health care, counseling, and other needs.

ten by best-selling author David Gregory and re-titled "God is Bigger."

The book is just one tool in his war chest of programs designed to reach and support veterans and their families.

"I started the Curtis Brown Foundation to help veterans get the health care, counseling and spiritual healing to help them and their families heal," he said.

He also has a weekly radio program called "Battlefield Connections" on KKHT FM 100.7 and a weekly YouTube video called "Beyond The Battlefield." In addition he is a public speaker and has appeared at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C.

"I am excited to say that Memorial Hermann has teamed up with my founda-

tion as well as numerous doctors, acupuncturists, chiropractors and counselors to help our veterans and their families overcome their daily struggles," he said.

Brown is a man of faith and prayer and his belief in Christ are key components to his recovery. His outreach to veterans, however, does not hinge on conversion, it's focused on hope.

"I have a vision to show them there's another way," he said.

Quoting pastor David Moss, he said "love 'em until they ask why."

Brown, 53, knows how hard it can be for anyone, especially someone from the military, to ask for help.

"When you're struggling the last thing you want to do is ask for help," he said. "We've

got to get them to let their guard down."

Always looking for new ways to expand his ministry, Brown want to find land where he can set up a retreat for veterans.

"I'm raising money for a property ... where they can come out with their family at no cost," he said.

For employment Brown serves as the athletic director and leads chapel services at Berean Christian Academy in Katy. He and his wife Heather have a 14-year-old son and they reside in Pecan Grove in Richmond. His mission, however, is not constrained by borders. He has the support and endorsement of several politicians and celebrities, including retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Allen West, who is now chairman of the Republican Party of Texas, Congressmen Pete Olson and Louie Gohmert, and Miss Texas USA Taylor Kessler.

"He is quite an inspiration for people that have PTSD," Gohmert said in a recent story in the Tyler Morning Telegraph. "God has used him in a powerful way to help others."

While dealing with his own drug addiction and struggles with PTSD, Brown determined to make the most out of his life.

"My life isn't a tragedy, I look at it as an opportunity," he said.

He does so by serving God and serving others.

"I've learned that the prize without the process is invalid," he said. "I'm continually going through the process."

To learn more or to contact Brown, visit www.curtisbrown.org.

How to approach hosting Thanksgiving during the pandemic

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Much like the holidays that preceded it in 2020, Thanksgiving figures to be different this year. An ongoing pandemic has changed the way much of the world lives their lives, including how holidays are celebrated.

As the novel coronavirus COVID-19 spread across the globe beginning in the winter of 2019, the World Health Organization recommended a host of behaviors designed to prevent the spread of the virus and protect those who are most vulnerable to it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also noted

the importance of keeping distance from others, especially for those who are most likely to get seriously ill if they're exposed to COVID-19, such as the elderly and people with underlying medical conditions.

The WHO and the CDC continue to recommend social distancing, which means Thanksgiving in 2020 will be unlike any other. Families must make their own decisions about getting together this holiday season but hosts who intend to welcome guests into their homes this Thanksgiving can take certain steps to keep everyone as safe as possible:

- Scale back the guest list. Families accustomed to large Thanksgiving gatherings can scale the festivities

back this year in an effort to keep everyone safe. Consider hosting a meal for immediate family members only, as the Environmental Protection Agency notes that COVID-19 may spread more easily in indoor environments via airborne particles. Extended family members can visit each other over the long holiday weekend to ensure everyone still sees each other, but keep such visits outdoors when possible.

- Consider eating Thanksgiving dinner outside. If the weather permits, consider eating Thanksgiving dinner outside this year. Doing so may limit everyone's exposure to the respiratory droplets that researchers say can spread the virus when

inhaled. If necessary, serve the meal earlier than you normally would so everyone can eat in midday when it's still warm outside. Hosts also can consider serving something more convenient than turkey, which takes a long time to cook, and limiting side dishes to one or two items.

- Assign seats. If the meal will be served indoors, then hosts can assign seats to protect those most vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19. Instead of cramming everyone in at one table, set up temporary tables and have guests sit in every other seat rather than next to one another. Isolate the vulnerable as much as possible while still ensuring they can engage in conversation.

- Discourage guests from attending if they feel sick. A list of COVID-19 symptoms can be found at www.cdc.gov. In the days prior to Thanksgiving, hosts can share that list with guests via email or social media and discourage guests who are feeling ill on or around the holiday from attending the festivities. If necessary, make a to-go plate for ill relatives and drop it off at their homes so they can still enjoy Thanksgiving dinner.

- Stock up on hand soap and hand sanitizer. Hosts should make sure hand soap and sanitizer is readily available throughout their homes. When guests arrive, make sure everyone washes their hands.

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Bottom line....

If it is not toilet paper, then it shouldn't be flushed.

Save your pipes and your pocketbook.

The cost to remove blockages and clean up any sewage spills is a hefty cost to all of us.

INTERSTATE MUD

Defenseless driving

My eldest and most expensive child recently reached one of those teen milestones that parents often consider with a combination of dread and hopefulness.No, I’m not referring to her first solo trip to a beauty salon, from which she might return either lovelier than ever, or looking like an adolescent version of Pennywise the clown.I’m talking about earning her learner license to operate our largest and most embarrassing family vehicle while at least one parent develops advanced gluteal clenching skills in the front passenger seat.

Although we have several driving academies in town, my daughter chose to complete her driver’s education through an online program (in between taking kissy face selfies).Then the idea was for me to “teach” the driving portion of the curriculum since I already provide an after-school shuttle service to her various extra-curricular activities that always require more than one expensive outfit.And having gone through driver’s ed myself many years ago, I figured I could do at least as well as my own instructor – a friendly football coach who mostly read the paper and warned me against swerving to dodge roadkill.

When the fateful day arrived, and I had devoured enough TUMS tablets to bring peace to the Middle East, my daughter suggested we travel to a Texas DPS office in a smaller nearby town in hopes of a shorter wait – and minimal likelihood of being seen in the same zip code as her dad by someone she knows.Unfortunately, when we reached the office, it looked like Cow Appreciation Day at Chick-fil-A, only instead of wearing bovine costumes, the throngs of customers were dressed like surly teenagers and their beleaguered parents.Once we squeezed our way in, the clerk told us to fill out some lengthy forms and take a number. (You know you’re in trouble when they’re up to exponents.)

After I’d reached retirement age and written down every possible piece of personal information about my daughter and the rest of our family, including the medical history of our pets, the clerk finally called our number. Since my own driver’s license was due for renewal, I decided



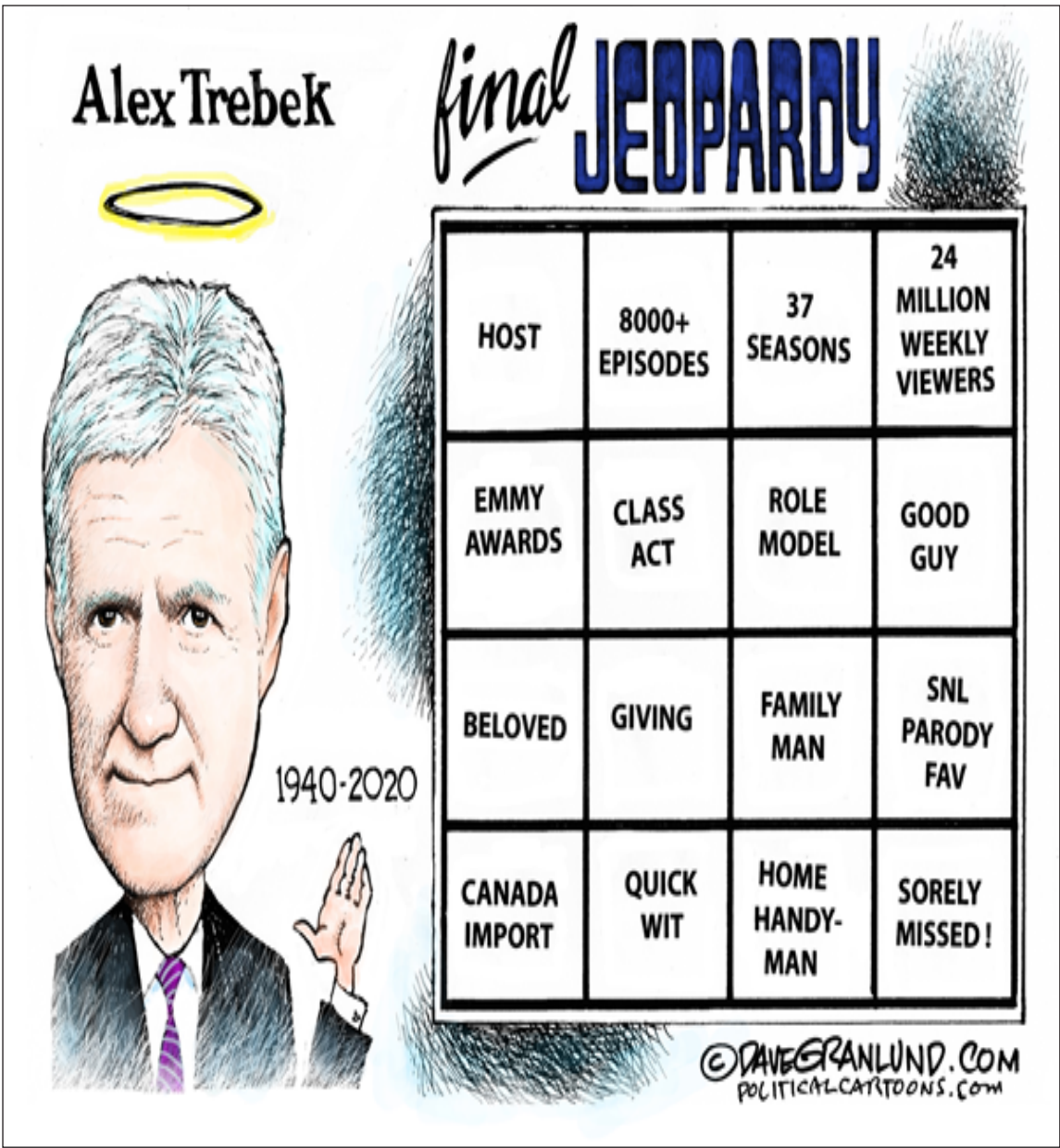
to share in the joy by forking over \$25 for a charming portrait of myself that looks like the love child of Shrek and a smoked ham. Learner permit in hand, my daughter was anxious to begin her training right away and asked for the keys.With trembling fingers, I handed them over, prayed that we would arrive home safely with clean underwear, and assumed my position in the passenger seat.I’m pretty sure I could’ve operated a lug wrench with my buns at that point.

To make the experience even more terrifying, what began as a beautiful spring day suddenly turned into a good ol’ East Texas frog strangler as soon as we pulled out on the highway. At first, I was worried about the zero-visibility, but then I decided it was better this way. At least I wouldn’t have to shield my eyes with my hands and could use my left arm as my daughter’s emergency surrogate parental seat belt while keeping a firm grip on the “OH, SHICKIWAD!!! WE’RE GONNA DIE!!!” handle with my right.

To my pleasant surprise, though, my daughter demonstrated solid multitasking skills throughout the entire ordeal.She was able to simultaneously navigate the treacherous road conditions, chronically roll her eyes in my general direction, and completely ignore my recommendation that she maintain her speed at a steady two mph.She even managed to park the car in our garage without producing an enormous cavern in the sheetrock, which is more that I can say about my first few tries.

So far, I’m happy to say that my daughter has turned out to be a terrific driver, thanks to my guidance on dealing with roadkill. In fact, when my middle daughter turns fifteen next year, I’m looking forward to teaching her to drive, as well.

(In lieu of flowers, please send TUMS.)



Ready to carve the Thanksgiving trivia?

As your host, I have gathered a cornucopia of genuine Thanksgiving trivia, thanks to “Good Housekeeping” magazine and other sources.

(Granted, “Good Housekeeping” reached its peak of relevance in the June Cleaver era. Today’s over-scheduled families would be just as well served with subscriptions to “Adequate Housekeeping” or “Turn Out the Lights and Pretend Nobody’s Home” or “Anybody Got the Energy to Activate the Roomba?” magazines.)

For starters, President Thomas Jefferson refused to celebrate Thanksgiving as a national holiday, citing concerns about separation of church and state. Coincidentally, Jefferson was the only chief executive to greet sneezing dignitaries with sympathetic comments of, not “Bless you,” but “We hold these truths to be self-evident: it must suck to be you.”

The day after Thanksgiving is the busiest day of the year for PLUMBERS. I keep reassuring myself. “It’s because people wanted a vanity just like the one they saw at their cousin’s house, it’s because people wanted a vanity just like the one they saw at their cousin’s house...”

At the end of the annual Detroit Thanksgiving Parade, Santa Claus always receives the



key to the city. He then tosses the key and just steps through the broken storefront windows. (“To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Or it’s a 9-1-1 call!”)

Only male turkeys can gobble. So, no, turkey hens aren’t staring up at the rain; they’re sizing up that @%&\$ GLASS CEILING.

It gets lost in the shuffle, but Native American History Day is the same day as Black Friday. Shoppers do give a nod to the commemoration, when they growl, “Why CAN’T I get that 219-inch widescreen TV for \$24 worth of trinkets? Hey, a John Wayne commemorative magazine in the checkout lane...”

California consumes the most turkey at Thanksgiving. On the other hand, the Golden State’s use of wishbones ranks near the bottom, because of onerous regulations. (“If wishes were horses...then beggars might get trampled, so no wishbones without a license.”)

The actual title of the song we think of as “Over the River

and Through the Woods” is “The New-England Boy’s Song About Thanksgiving Day.” (Some whippersnapper just chimed in, “Oh, there’s a song about over the river and through the woods?” *Sigh* I think I’ll write a song called “The Tennessee Boy’s Song About Youth Being Wasted on the Wrong People.”)

Although George H.W. Bush was the first president to initiate a CUSTOM of pardoning a turkey before Thanksgiving, John F. Kennedy had granted a one-off pardon in 1963. Rumor attributes this to JFK being convinced that the turkey was singing “Happy birthday, Mr. President.” (After this, the Secret Service began checking the eggnog more closely.)

The Butterball Turkey Talk Line answers almost 100,000 calls each season. Big deal. I get almost that many calls while I’m trying to sit down to my pumpkin pie. And most of them are either “We’d like to talk to you about the extended warranty on your Kleenex” or “I know the election is over, but I thought of a few more things I’d like to say about that commie who was running against me for dog catcher.”

Eighty percent of Americans prefer LEFTOVERS to the initial meal. Remember that next year when I work off my 4,500 calories with something other than writing a brand-new column!

Katy Times

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear editor,
Many thanks to you and the Katy Times for the November 12, 2020 issue recognizing our fellow veterans and American Legion Post 164. The article of our Katy Post was a great invitation to all our veterans to visit, join, practice Americanism, and utilize the Legion’s expertise in helping members and all our fellow citizens alike.
Regarding the veteran photo gallery, it was great!

It is always good to see photos of our brothers and sisters who joined to serve our great county.
Finally, I wanted to commend you for your personal thoughts regarding your service, its value and opportunities it provided and continues to provide you to this day.
Thank you for your service!
Stephen Brady
Member, American Legion Post 164

CONSTITUTION CORNER

14th Amendment: Section 1

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

HOLIDAY EVENTS

With the holidays coming and the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, people are looking at different ways to celebrate the holiday season this year. Here are four events that allow Katy area residents to have some fun while social distancing:

Home for the Holidays Gift Market

Organizers of the Home for the Holidays Gift Market have moved about half of the event outside and spread the booths apart to create more space and allow for social distancing this year. Proceeds for the event go to support local charities including Hope Impacts and Katy Christian ministries. The craft fair takes place at The Bowery House & Gardens at 24902 Franz Road in Katy on Nov. 20 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per individual. For more info visit homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com.

MKT Christmas Tree Lighting

The folks at MKT Distillery, housed in the rice dryers in downtown Katy, will host their third annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, lighting up the tree set up atop the silos so that it can be seen for miles on Nov. 28. Food will be available and the distillery has plenty of outdoor, family-friendly space to avoid crowding. Lighting is expected to happen at about 6:45 p.m. at 5373 First Street in Katy.

Christmas Crew Cruise-Thru

Rather than their traditional Christmas tree lighting ceremony, the city of Katy has opted for a drive-thru celebration the night the city's tree is lit for the first time at City Hall. Santa will be on hand and children can bring their Christmas wish lists to mail. City officials will also be collecting new, unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots while Santa passes out goodie bags (while supplies last). Event runs from 6-8 p.m. at 901 Ave. C in Katy this Dec. 4.

John Wolfe at The Wildcatter Saloon

The Wildcatter is back open and has set up their venue to be safe for patrons. Country musician John Wolfe will be playing at the Wildcatter on Dec. 12. Tickets run \$15 for general admission or \$25 for reserved seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show ends at 11 p.m. Visit the Wildcatter's event on Facebook to purchase tickets for the show to be held at 26913 Katy Freeway.

PHOTO COURTESY
MKT DISTILLERY

Local MUD launches campaign to prevent damage to sewer systems

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Sewer system blockages can be a major expense for municipal utility districts – often known as water districts. Users flushing inappropriate things down the toilet cost MUDS – and subsequently taxpayers – thousands of dollars each year. Interstate MUD has launched a campaign to try to mitigate those costs and educate consumers in the Katy area.

“Since the inception of people being able to put water down pipes, people also have been throwing other items down the drain,” said Account Manager Chris Townsend of Inframark, which provides water and wastewater services to Interstate MUD. “The problem is that wastewater systems are designed to handle human waste and that’s it. Treatment plants are not equipped to break down any other material.”

The list of items sent down drainage pipes is long: fats, oils and grease (known as FOG to industry folks). Tissues and paper towels. Feminine hygiene products and cotton swabs. And the problem was made worse with the invention of so-called “flushable” wipes. “Those wipes are made of strong cotton fibers and fabric,” Townsend said. “What happens is that the FOG gets stuck to the inside of the pipes, and then all the other debris gets stuck there too.”

If you’re wondering why you should care about this problem, the answer is simple: it’s costly, and those costs will eventually be passed on to customers.

When wastewater leaves your house or a place of business, it flows downhill to the treatment plant’s lift station. Pumps lift the water into the treatment plant. Those pumps can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$25,000, and they are breaking down at record rates these days.

“Constantly cleaning and repairing the pumps is a very expensive proposition, and it shouldn’t be happening,” said Todd Burrer, vice president of Texas MUDs for Inframark. “In some cases, we have to unbolt them, use a crane to lift them out, and then use knives and saws to cut away balls of debris.”

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Interstate Municipal Utility District is launching a campaign in November to educate its customers with the message of “It’s a toilet, not a trash can.” Interstate MUD, which worked on the promotion with Inframark, serves nearly 200 retail customers in the Katy area. Interstate MUD is placing ads in newspapers and on its website, hanging door tags on apartments and duplexes, and conducting a social media campaign.

RESULTS

from page A1

as Robertson moves into the role of city council member.

“Rory, congratulations. We’ll (I’d like to meet with you). We’ll get together and talk and chat about whatever you want to talk about,” Dowdle said. “I’m here to help and mentor and assist.”

Dowdle also thanked city staff for their assistance during his tenure with the city and praised city staff for their hard work and service to the community.

Robertson returned the sentiment in his acceptance remarks.

“I truly appreciate all that (Dowdle has) done,” Robertson said. “This group (of council members) is really a great team and represents so much of what the city of Katy (offers). I know that we have big goals and we are working hard to achieve ... and I’m very excited to start working with Mayor (Bill) Hastings and council.”

Katy ISD confirms canvass

Katy ISD Counsel Justin Graham spoke briefly during the meeting where he reviewed the final tallies for the Katy ISD Board of Trustees elections which took place Nov. 3.

Position 3 candidate Ashley Vann was declared winner in her election because she ran unopposed, Graham said. Leah Wilson took the Position 4 seat on the trustees’ dais against opponent Michael Dillard, who garnered 47,099 votes for that place, Graham said. Finally, incumbent and KSID Board of Trustees Vice President Bill Lacy lost his bid to hold onto the Position 5 seat to Greg Schulte. Graham said Schulte was able to pull in 63,150 votes to Lacy’s 45,659.

Lacy motioned to accept the results of the election canvassing and



CITY OF KATY/ZOOM

Katy Mayor Bill Hastings (left) presents a plaque to former council member Durran Dowdle who has served the city for more than a decade through various boards and as a council member and Mayor Pro Tem. Dowdle served on council during the terms of three mayors, Fabol Hughs, Chuck Brawner and Hastings.



CITY OF KATY/ZOOM

Former Council Member Durran Dowdle attached a fake mustache to his mask during Tuesday night’s Katy City Council meeting. Dowdle is often recognized for his handlebar mustache which is hidden by a mask while in public these days.

to certify the results of the election, with both measures approved unanimously.

KISD was set to meet Nov. 18 at 5:30 p.m. after Katy Times’ press time to swear in Schulte and Wilson during the district’s regular trustees meeting. Other items on the agenda for that evening included appointment of new officers for the Board of Trustees, naming an executive director for secondary curriculum and instruction, naming the former L.D. Robinson Pavilion near the district’s Education Support Complex, discussing

course additions for the 2021-22 school year and discussing items donated to the district.

Graham praised Ellen Hebert, a legal assistant with the district, whom he said did the bulk of the work coordinating election activities with the three counties.

Graham said the district would try to get some sort of reimbursements for the additional election costs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic but did not clarify exactly where that recovery of funds would come from.

Graham said expenses for the election were much higher than normal due to the election being postponed from May to November, forcing the district to contract with Fort Bend, Harris and Waller counties’ elections departments for the election which is usually run internally. He said that, while final figures are not in, the estimated cost is \$450,000 or more.

“Compare that to a traditional May board election where we have anywhere from 6,000 to 8,000 people vote, that normally costs us anywhere from \$94,000 to \$120,000 to run,” Graham said.

THEFT

from page A1

arrest in a motor vehicle. Jail records show a bond set at \$20,000 for Jackson.

Harris County Jail records did not show Fuller in custody as of Monday, though he has been charged with evading arrest or detention in a motor vehicle, aggregated theft and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff’s Office aided in the two arrests, the press release said.



COURTESY KATY PD

Jackson and Fuller were arrested after their respective vehicles crashed into trees in different locations. Catalytic converters and tools to remove them were found in both of their possession at the time they were arrested.

RAIL

from page A1

Other lawmakers plan to file legislation to slam the brakes on the project.

State Rep. Steve Toth, R-The Woodlands, has filed a bill that would forbid state agencies, like the Texas Department of Transportation, from giving permits to high-speed rail projects if the federal approvals and permits have not been secured yet.

“What we’re saying is that until Texas high speed rail gets all of its approvals from the federal government, TxDOT can’t waste any time, energy, attention, manpower, money,” Toth said.

Kyle Workman, president of Texans Against High-Speed Rail, said that he expects to see similar bills filed as well.

“I can’t disclose all of our game plans,” Workman said. “But the reality of it is that we are prepared... to propose legislation to protect the citizens of the state of Texas, both in terms of their private property rights and the taxpayer subsidy that is inevitable and protect their tax dollars.”

Texas Central declined to respond to questions from the Tribune, but CEO Carlos Aguilar issued a statement saying the company is “now focused on finalizing financing and getting ready for execution.”

Company still lacks key permits

The Texas Central high-speed rail project has been in the works for more than eight years, and the company has promised to

“From the beginning of this project, the Governor made clear that he could support this project if, and only if, the private property rights of Texans are fully respected.”

— JOHN WITTMAN, SPOKESMAN FOR TEX. GOV. GREG ABBOTT

fund the project with the support of private investors and without public funds. But critics have said that the cost will be higher than \$20 billion and that it can’t be built without public support.

The project has received support from leaders of urban areas, like the mayors of Dallas and Houston, but has encountered hard resistance in the rural counties on its path. Landowners, rancher associations and local elected officials have criticized the project and said they oppose the use of eminent domain to take private land for the project.

Texas Central has said that it plans to start construction by the first half of 2021 and that it has already secured sites for stations in Dallas, Houston and the Brazos Valley.

But the Tribune found that Texas Central still hasn’t applied for a key permit from the federal Surface Transportation Board, which regulates transportation projects, for the construction and operation of the proposed rail line, according to an STB spokesperson.

And two Texas agencies, the

Texas General Land Office and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said they haven’t received all the necessary permit applications from the company, including the route proposal and a permit to discharge stormwater during the construction process.

A third agency, the Texas Department of Transportation, must approve permits for the rail line to cross state roads during construction, but a spokesperson said the agency would consider any proposals from the company only after the STB approves the project.

The company did receive two key approvals in September from the Federal Railway Administration, which provided the regulatory framework and the environmental review for the high-speed train. The railway administration explained that these rulings covered several of the permits needed by the project in areas like railroad safety, protection of parkland and protection of cultural resources.

Meanwhile, Texas Central is still trying to secure the land along the proposed route. Texas Central

says it has secured more than 600 parcels covering about 40% of the lots — not the land — it needs for the project.

The company has said it could use eminent domain to take the land it needs for the rail line, but a Leon County landowner has sued the company, claiming Texas Central is not an “operating railroad” and that would be a “critical limitation on the eminent domain authority.”

After losing in the Leon County district court, the company won in the 13th Court of Appeals in May. The Texas Supreme Court is expected to decide whether to hear the case in the next few months.

Leman, who has been one of the main elected officials leading opposition to the project, said that when eminent domain is used in other ways in Texas, such as for pipelines, electrical transmission lines or roads, a state agency regulates whether eminent domain authority is needed. But that’s not the case with high-speed rail, he said.

When other companies tried to bring high-speed rail to Texas in the 1980s, Texas created a regulatory agency, the Texas High-Speed Rail Authority. But that agency was ultimately dissolved after those projects failed.

“There is no state agency authorized by statute to have general regulatory authority over the high speed rail in Texas,” Leman said. “So landowners have no one to turn to, no one, no agency.”

“This is not about being against eminent domain,” Leman added. “This is about having an appropriate process where landowners are treated fairly.”

More bills focused on project are expected

For the last four legislative sessions, Texas lawmakers have been trying to pass laws to regulate high-speed rail projects.

In the 2019 session, at least seven bills were filed including measures to limit surveying land for high-speed rail until funding for the project is secured, allow landowners to repurchase land taken under eminent domain if the project fails, and give county governments authority to stop construction of a high-speed rail project in their jurisdiction until they approve any necessary county road alterations needed.

None of them got to Abbott’s desk. But legislators expect a new batch of rail-related bills to be filed when lawmakers return to session in January, including some of the same measures that died two years ago.

Toth, the only lawmaker who has filed a bill focused on high-speed rail so far for 2021, said that as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, he is going to be watching to ensure that no state money is spent on the project.

State Rep. Terry Canales, D-Edinburg, who is the chair of the Transportation Committee in the House, said that there are “a lot of legitimate concerns surrounding this project.”

“Protections for Texas landowners is a high priority for a lot of legislators, including me, and I am sure there is more we can continue to do to protect property owner rights,” Canales said. “As the project moves forward, it is essential that Texans are given the truth and that the entity involved is transparent at every step of the way.”

Inmates work in morgue as deaths rise in El Paso

By ALANA ROCHA
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The morgue in El Paso is so overwhelmed by the number of people dying from COVID-19 that inmates from the county's detention facility are being brought in to assist with the overflow of bodies awaiting autopsy.

While the work these inmates do in the community typically goes unpaid, Chris Acosta, a spokesperson for the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, said "trustees refused to work unless they were compensated." They're making \$2 per hour.

Between four and eight inmates from the detention

facility's trustee program are volunteering daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The inmates doing the work are misdemeanors or offenders and those in minimum custody. The shifts started Monday, Acosta said.

Acosta said she couldn't speak to the exact nature of the work the inmates are doing at the morgues, but she said that the inmates, one deputy and two detention officers are given personal protective equipment and are required to wear it.

It's a temporary assignment, Acosta said, while the county awaits the arrival of the National Guard.

The number of hospitalized coronavirus patients in

the far West Texas city has shot up nearly tenfold since the start of September. Earlier this month, the Department of Defense sent medical teams to help and local funeral homes are readying extra refrigerated storage space.

El Paso County recorded a total of 45 new deaths Thursday and Friday caused by the virus. About 1,105 people are hospitalized, including 319 in intensive care, according to the latest city statistics.

Attempts by city and county officials to shut down nonessential businesses to try to slow the spread of the virus have bounced around in the courts, sowing confusion, Acosta said.

"A lot of the businesses have been calling my office, 'Do I shutdown or not shutdown?' The people are very confused. We're just trying to follow the judge's ruling and follow the law," she said.

Late Friday, a state appeals court again blocked El Paso County's shutdown of non-essential businesses that was scheduled to last until Dec. 1. El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego issued the shutdown order Oct. 29 in an effort to slow the latest outbreak of COVID-19 here, but a group of local restaurants and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton quickly sued to block it.

Ivan Pierre Aguirre contributed to this report.



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

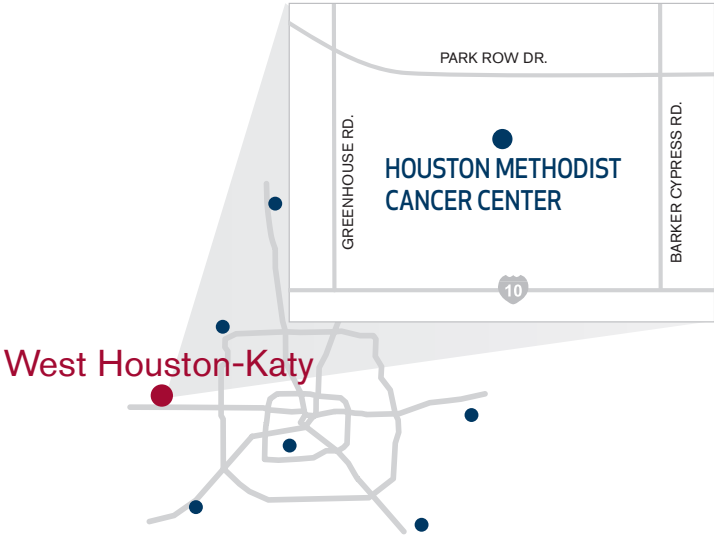
El Paso County detention inmates, also known as "trustees" who are low-level offenders, help move bodies to mobile morgue units outside the Medical Examiner's Office in El Paso on Nov. 14, 2020.



OUTSMARTING CANCER in West Houston & Katy

Our nationally recognized specialists are finding new ways to outsmart cancer.

From screenings and diagnosis to the most advanced treatments, our leading cancer care is available in West Houston and Katy. During the coronavirus outbreak, we are taking every necessary precaution to keep you safe — so you can focus on healing, surviving and thriving.



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schedules, email dennis.
silva@katytimes.com***THURSDAY, NOV. 12
FOOTBALL**

- Morton Ranch 31, Cinco Ranch 24 (OT)
- Katy 41, Taylor 13

**FRIDAY, NOV. 13
VOLLEYBALL**

- Seven Lakes 3, Taylor 0
- College Station 3, Paetow 0
- Katy 3, Pearland Dawson 0
- Morton Ranch at Clear Falls, 5:30 p.m.
- Brenham 3, Rudder 0
- Magnolia West 3, Waller 0
- Magnolia 3, A&M Consolidated 1

FOOTBALL

- Seven Lakes 38, Mayde Creek 26

**SATURDAY, NOV. 14
VOLLEYBALL**

- Tompkins 3, Seven Lakes 1

**THURSDAY, NOV. 19
FOOTBALL**

- Mayde Creek at Tompkins, at Legacy Stadium, 6 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Morton Ranch at Fort Bend Austin, 7 p.m.

**FRIDAY, NOV. 20
FOOTBALL**

- Morton Ranch at Katy, at Legacy Stadium, 6:30 p.m.
- Cinco Ranch at Seven Lakes, at Rhodes Stadium, 7:30 p.m.
- Paetow at Angleton, at Wildcat Stadium, 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Morton Ranch at Paetow, 5:30 p.m.
- Spring Woods at Mayde Creek, 5:30 p.m.
- Cy-Lakes at Seven Lakes, 7 p.m.
- Clear Creek at Katy, 7 p.m.
- Tompkins at Spring, 7 p.m.
- Taylor at Fort Bend Travis, 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Paetow at Tompkins, 7 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Memorial, 7 p.m.
- Katy at Stafford, 7 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Cy-Lakes, 7 p.m.

**SATURDAY, NOV. 21
GIRLS BASKETBALL**

- Summer Creek at Morton Ranch, 1 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Alief Taylor at Katy, 1 p.m.
- Elkins at Morton Ranch, 7 p.m.
- Seven Lakes at Fort Bend Austin, 1 p.m.
- Paetow at Clements, 1 p.m.
- Mayde Creek at Baytown Sterling, 5 p.m.
- Taylor at Stratford, 1 p.m.

**MONDAY, NOV. 23
GIRLS BASKETBALL**

- Tomball Memorial at Cinco Ranch, 11:30 a.m.
- Clear Brook at Tompkins, 1 p.m.
- Bridgeland at Seven Lakes, 1:30 p.m.
- Humble at Taylor, TBA
- Paetow at Montgomery, noon
- Mayde Creek at Willowridge, 1 p.m.
- Morton Ranch at Stafford, 6:30 p.m.
- Katy at Stratford, 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Aldine Nimitz at Mayde Creek, 2 p.m.
- Paetow at Ridge Point, 1:30 p.m.

‘JUST GLAD TO BE ALIVE’

Heart issue sidelines Mustangs captain Ivey



FILE PHOTO BY MARK GOODMAN

After three games this season, Taylor High senior cornerback and captain Cecil Ivey II's football career is over due to a heart problem.

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

After breaking up a pass late during the fourth quarter of Taylor's 31-14 win over Morton Ranch on Oct. 10, Mustangs senior cornerback Cecil Ivey II jumped around in celebratory fashion and ran off the field.

"I felt dizzy, light-headed, and thought I just needed some water, so I ran off," Ivey said.

And then ... darkness.

"All of a sudden, everything slowly around me goes black," Ivey said. "I don't even remember what happened. I woke up to (defensive coordinator) Coach (J) Jensen and (Head) Coach (Chad) Simmons and everybody around me."

When Ivey came to, he remembered his mom hustling from the stands, trying to get onto the field. He guessed he was passed out at least 30 seconds. He was taken to ER Katy, diagnosed with high troponin levels (which increase when the heart is damaged) and eventually transferred to Texas Children's Hospital downtown to see a cardiology specialist.

"Heart rate off the charts, blood pressure up. Yeah, it was scary, especially at that age," Simmons said. "He seemed to be perfectly healthy before."

In addition to high troponin

levels, Ivey had heart palpitations (bothersome sensations of the heart) throughout this week-and-a-half stay at Texas Children's. A few days after the Morton Ranch game, he was told by doctors his senior season was done.

On Oct. 15, Ivey, elected by teammates as a team captain this season, tweeted that his senior year ended shorter than he expected due to unknown heart problems.

"There were definitely tears," Ivey said. "I was crying for a while."

There was a slight possibility Ivey could have returned this season should Taylor, which has realistic state championship aspirations, make it to the third or fourth round of the playoffs in January. Ivey and doctors were optimistic rest would help alleviate the issue with his heart.

But on Oct. 30, a genetic test showed Ivey had arrhythmic cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle. Another visit to the cardiologist on Nov. 9 showed a gene mutation had created that disease.

Ivey was told that his football career was over.

"No more athletic stuff for the rest of my life," Ivey said. "Can't run or anything."

Ivey said the cardiologist told him

See **IVEY**, page B5

Atkinson, Nielson fuel Cougars' run to state

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Not long before the first race of the season, Cinco Ranch senior Heidi Nielson called a team meeting.

Ever since they were freshmen—heralded as two of the top runners in the state even then—Nielson and senior Sophie Atkinson talked about goals, expectations and standards for the Cougars' cross country program. Now that they were seniors, they weren't about to let their final campaigns go for naught.

"We made a poster board, and we said we were going to win district, we were going to win regionals and then we're going to go to state," Nielson said. "I've known these girls for years. I know we've had the potential. It's been about getting everybody on board and ready to work. It was on us to get these girls to want this as badly as us seniors do. It worked."

Cinco Ranch, led by University of Virginia signee Atkinson and University of Arkansas signee Nielson, is back at state for the first time since 2017. The Cougars

INSIDE

- Saacke carrying on legacy for Falcons, **PAGE B6.**
- See who's representing Katy ISD at the state cross country meet Nov. 24, **PAGE B6.**

finished sixth overall as a team that year.

"The last two years have kind of been disappointing," Atkinson said. "We'd do real well and just weren't able to make it past district. This year, we just decided we didn't want that to be the case. We wanted to make change. We had an opportunity with the delay with the coronavirus to kind of use that to our advantage, as time for us to reset and focus on doing better. Everybody got on the same page and we really used each other to gain momentum and continue to stay excited."

See **COUGARS**, page B6



COURTESY

Cinco Ranch seniors Sophie Atkinson, left, and Heidi Nielson have finished 1-2 in five cross country meets this season, including the district and regional meets, and have the Cougars back at the state meet for the first time since 2017.



COLE MCNANNA | SEALY NEWS

Seven Lakes junior receiver Grayson Medford (13) celebrates following his first-half touchdown during the Spartans' 38-26 win over Mayde Creek on Nov. 13 at Legacy Stadium.

Spartans control destiny with win

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Seven Lakes coach Jimmy Hamon was concerned his team would be rusty for its Friday, Nov. 13, game against Mayde Creek following a 20-day layoff.

The Spartans had not played since an Oct. 23 overtime win over Morton Ranch. Since then, a scheduled open week followed by a week of suspended play due to a rash of COVID-19 cases on campus sidelined the Spartans.

Hamon was wary, nervous. And then his players went out and showed he had nothing to worry about.

Seven Lakes got ahead early on a Scott Stanford touchdown off a scoop of a blocked punt by senior Emilio Ramos deep in Mayde Creek territory 55 seconds into the game, and the Spartans never looked back for a crucial 38-26 win over the Rams at Legacy Stadium.

"To have something like

that to happen early, it's a gift," Hamon said of the special teams score. "We took advantage of it."

At 2-2 in District 19-6A, the win puts the Spartans (2-4 overall) in the driver's seat for the fourth and final playoff spot. A win against Cinco Ranch this week secures Seven Lakes' fifth playoff berth since it started varsity play in 2006.

"It feels amazing," senior linebacker Adam North said. "To work this hard all summer and to go through the virus and the unexpected break ... to be one win away from the playoffs is amazing."

Mayde Creek and Seven Lakes each entered the game tied in district play at 1-2. Mayde Creek (1-3 19-6A, 4-3 overall), Morton Ranch (1-4, 2-5) and Cinco Ranch (1-4, 1-6) are still in postseason contention but need help.

Seven Lakes, meanwhile, controls its own destiny.

See **SPARTANS**, page B4



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**November 12
Puzzle Answers**

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

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Bids will be received by the Waller County Auditor, Alan Younts, until 2:00 p.m., December 8, 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. December 9, 2020, in the Waller County Courtroom, Hempstead, Texas 77445. The Court shall award the contract on January 6, 2021, 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.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

ROYAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S
State Financial Accountability Rating

Royal Independent School District
will hold a public meeting
at 6:30 pm, Monday, December 14, 2020
via Zoom Video Conference at www.royal-isd.net.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss
Royal Independent School District's rating on the state's
financial accountability system.

NOTICE

THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, IS CONDUCTING THE REGULAR REVIEW OF THE CITY OF KATY HOME RULE CHARTER THAT IS ORDERED TO BE HELD EVERY FOUR YEARS. PUBLIC INPUT IS WELCOME. COMMENTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE COMMISSION IN WRITING PRIOR TO DECEMBER 1, 2020 AND SENT TO THE CITY SECRETARY AT P. O. BOX 617, KATY, TEXAS 77492.

BY ORDER OF CHAIRMAN
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
CITY OF KATY, TEXAS
October 12, 2020

NOTICE

The Monday, November 23, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting Of The City Of Katy, Texas, Has Been Cancelled In Observance Of Thanksgiving Holidays.

By Order Of Mayor And City Council
City Of Katy, Texas
October 26, 2020

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Owner: Mason Creek Utility District
Owner's Office: 847 Dominion, Katy, TX 77450
Project (the Work): Kingsland Blvd. & Prince Creek Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation, including slip-lining, pipe-bursting and other goods and services.
Project location: In Western Harris County, Texas generally between Fry Road and Westgreen Blvd. along and south of Kingsland Blvd.

Owner proposes to let a contract for the Project and seeks bids. Generally, bids must be signed, sealed and physically submitted at Owners Office by **December 4, 2020 at 11:00 AM**, when they will be opened and publicly read, all in accordance with the Contract Documents, which are: (i) on file at the Owner's Office where all bidders may examine them and get copies; (ii) incorporated herein by reference, including prevailing wages; and (iii) posted on civcastusa.com. A pre-bid conference is set for November 20, 2020 at 11:00 AM at Owners Office. /s/ Len Forsyth, Project Officer.

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AUCTIONS
Huge Estate Auction - Online & On-Site: Tues., Nov. 24, starts @ 9:07 a.m., 1901 S 81st West Ave., Tulsa, OK 74127. Excavators, copper chopper, roll off truck, skidsteer, forklifts, semi-trailers, trailers, Intimidator truck, scales, dumpsters, classic cars & much more. Online & on-site bidding on lots 1-22 will be offered on simulcast at 12:47 p.m. Chupps Auction Co., (918) 630-0495. For full terms, photos and directions visit www.chuppsauction.com.

EVENTS
Pleasanton - Merry on Main, Dec. 4-5. Two-day annual Christmas event in historic downtown Main St. in Pleasanton, TX (30 min. south of San Antonio) includes local craft and retail vendors, food vendors and food trucks, live music, carolers, children events and more. www.merryonmain.org.

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SPORTS

FALCONS MAKE HISTORY AS REGIONAL FINALISTS



COURTESY

The Tompkins team tennis program enjoyed a historic run this season. The Falcons broke through their barrier of the area round of the playoffs, making it all the way to the Class 6A regional finals, where they fell to No. 2 state-ranked and defending state champion Memorial. Along the way, Tompkins defeated Fort Bend Austin, Jersey Village, No. 13 Fort Bend Clements and No. 24 Clear Lake. Tompkins finished 14-1 and ranked No. 7 in Class 6A in the state. The Falcons' team includes Santiago Muhala, Mihir Amte, Patrick Chen, Arjun Kumar, Austin Xu, Gavin Gibson, Ava Melaerts, Nathalia Ciliberto, Nathalia Fernandez, Kristina Vasylichuk, Chloe Mason, Natalie Kha, Grace Hunter, Gabriella Salyards, Keira Mason, Navya Kayuri, Isabella Ospina, Charlie Kuchler, Bryce Skaryva, Rishi Khot and Justin Xu. The Falcons' coach is Josh Martinez.

FINAL VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

DISTRICT 19-6A

| | DISTRICT | | OVERALL | |
|---------------------------|----------|----|---------|----|
| | W | L | W | L |
| xy-Seven Lakes | 11 | 1 | 17 | 1 |
| x-Katy | 10 | 2 | 15 | 3 |
| x-Tompkins | 8 | 4 | 14 | 6 |
| x-Cinco Ranch | 7 | 5 | 8 | 8 |
| Taylor | 3 | 9 | 5 | 14 |
| Mayde Creek | 3 | 9 | 5 | 12 |
| Morton Ranch | 0 | 12 | 3 | 16 |
| x-clinched playoff berth | | | | |
| y-clinched district title | | | | |

DISTRICT 19-5A

| | DISTRICT | | OVERALL | |
|---------------------------|----------|----|---------|----|
| | W | L | W | L |
| xy-Magnolia | 12 | 2 | 15 | 6 |
| x-Magnolia West | 11 | 3 | 18 | 4 |
| x-College Station | 11 | 3 | 16 | 4 |
| x-Brenham | 10 | 4 | 17 | 4 |
| Bryan Rudder | 6 | 8 | 13 | 10 |
| A&M Consolidated | 4 | 10 | 8 | 13 |
| Waller | 1 | 13 | 4 | 16 |
| Paetow | 1 | 13 | 2 | 19 |
| x-clinched playoff berth | | | | |
| y-clinched district title | | | | |

H.S. FOOTBALL STANDINGS

AS OF NOV. 18

DISTRICT 19-6A

| | DISTRICT | | OVERALL | | SCORING | |
|---------------------------|----------|---|---------|---|---------|-----|
| | W | L | W | L | PF | PA |
| x-Tompkins | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 189 | 47 |
| x-Katy | 3 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 303 | 81 |
| x-Taylor | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 263 | 184 |
| Seven Lakes | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 129 | 209 |
| Mayde Creek | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 213 | 178 |
| Morton Ranch | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 152 | 210 |
| Cinco Ranch | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 93 | 239 |
| x-clinched playoff berth | | | | | | |
| y-clinched district title | | | | | | |

DISTRICT 10-5A, D1

| | OVERALL | | ZONE | | PLAY | | SCORING | |
|---------------------------|---------|---|------|---|------|-----|---------|--|
| | W | L | W | L | PF | PA | | |
| x-Richmond Foster | 6 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 262 | 131 | | |
| Paetow | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 220 | 90 | | |
| Terry | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 155 | 184 | | |
| Kempner | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 133 | 144 | | |
| Wisdom* | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 14 | 171 | | |
| x-Manvel | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 266 | 176 | | |
| x-Hightower | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 256 | 235 | | |
| Angleton | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 158 | 157 | | |
| Milby | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 7 | | |
| x-clinched playoff berth | | | | | | | | |
| y-clinched district title | | | | | | | | |
| *-forfeits rest of season | | | | | | | | |

KATY ISD FOOTBALL TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL STATISTICAL LEADERS

AS OF NOV. 18

TEAM OFFENSE

| | GP | RUSHING | PASSING | TOTAL | AVERAGE |
|--------------|----|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| Mayde Creek | 7 | 1490 | 1426 | 2916 | 416.6 |
| Katy | 7 | 1782 | 1012 | 2794 | 399.1 |
| Tompkins | 6 | 1385 | 873 | 2258 | 376.3 |
| Taylor | 8 | 1544 | 1325 | 2869 | 358.6 |
| Paetow | 6 | 1275 | 845 | 2120 | 353.3 |
| Morton Ranch | 7 | 1413 | 602 | 2015 | 287.9 |
| Seven Lakes | 6 | 697 | 864 | 1561 | 260.2 |
| Cinco Ranch | 7 | 208 | 1322 | 1530 | 218.6 |

TEAM DEFENSE

| | GP | RUSHING | PASSING | TOTAL | AVERAGE |
|--------------|----|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| Katy | 7 | 506 | 909 | 1415 | 202.1 |
| Tompkins | 6 | 571 | 669 | 1240 | 206.7 |
| Paetow | 6 | 799 | 447 | 1246 | 207.7 |
| Mayde Creek | 7 | 816 | 1016 | 1832 | 261.7 |
| Taylor | 8 | 1487 | 1066 | 2553 | 319.1 |
| Morton Ranch | 7 | 1182 | 1201 | 2383 | 340.4 |
| Cinco Ranch | 7 | 1303 | 1406 | 2709 | 387.0 |
| Seven Lakes | 6 | 1572 | 768 | 2340 | 390.0 |

TURNOVER DIFFERENTIAL

| | GP | TAKEAWAYS | GIVEAWAYS | DIFF. |
|--------------|----|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Taylor | 8 | 18 | 8 | +10 |
| Tompkins | 6 | 12 | 7 | +5 |
| Katy | 7 | 12 | 7 | +5 |
| Paetow | 6 | 10 | 7 | +3 |
| Mayde Creek | 7 | 15 | 16 | -1 |
| Seven Lakes | 6 | 3 | 6 | -3 |
| Morton Ranch | 7 | 8 | 12 | -4 |
| Cinco Ranch | 7 | 9 | 14 | -5 |

INDIVIDUAL RUSHING

| | CARRIES | YARDS | AVG. | TD |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|------|----|
| Loughridge, Mayde Creek | 151 | 1212 | 8.0 | 18 |
| Bankston, Paetow | 110 | 886 | 8.1 | 8 |
| J. Davis, Katy | 96 | 732 | 7.6 | 11 |
| S. Davis, Katy | 92 | 729 | 7.9 | 7 |
| Whitaker III, Taylor | 105 | 676 | 6.4 | 8 |
| Shoulders, Tompkins | 77 | 617 | 8.0 | 9 |
| Christopher, Mrtn Ranch | 90 | 463 | 5.1 | 3 |
| Smith, Tompkins | 58 | 391 | 6.7 | 5 |

INDIVIDUAL PASSING

| | P-A-INT | YARDS | PCT. | TDs |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-----|
| Wilson, Mayde Creek | 101-184-6 | 1426 | 54.9 | 6 |
| Jensen III, Taylor | 103-158-3 | 1285 | 65.2 | 12 |
| Rutherford, Cinco Ranch | 82-178-6 | 1118 | 46.1 | 9 |
| Milroe, Tompkins | 55-89-1 | 865 | 61.8 | 7 |
| Koger, Katy | 49-85-2 | 854 | 57.6 | 13 |
| Dumas Jr., Paetow | 54-102-2 | 775 | 52.9 | 7 |
| Beltran, Seven Lakes | 64-106-2 | 753 | 60.4 | 5 |
| Wilson, Morton Ranch | 24-44-2 | 421 | 54.5 | 3 |

INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING

| | CATCHES | YARDS | AVG. | TD |
|------------------------|---------|-------|------|----|
| Skinner, Mayde Creek | 38 | 658 | 17.3 | 1 |
| Irving III, Taylor | 31 | 611 | 19.7 | 3 |
| Abboud, Cinco Ranch | 31 | 467 | 15.1 | 5 |
| Salverino, Cinco Ranch | 21 | 415 | 19.8 | 2 |
| McMillan II, Tompkins | 18 | 336 | 18.7 | 4 |
| Medford, Seven Lakes | 29 | 323 | 11.1 | 2 |
| Anderson, Katy | 19 | 317 | 16.7 | 3 |
| Saulsberry, Katy | 12 | 301 | 25.1 | 6 |

INTERCEPTIONS

| | INT. | YARDS | AVG. | TD |
|--------------------|------|-------|------|----|
| Khan, Mayde Creek | 3 | 55 | 18.3 | 0 |
| Earls, Mayde Creek | 2 | 23 | 11.5 | 0 |
| Truehill, Paetow | 2 | 20 | 10.0 | 0 |
| Huerter, Tompkins | 2 | 13 | 6.5 | 0 |
| Rodriguez, Katy | 2 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 |

PUNTING

| | NO. | YARDS | AVG. | LK |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|------|----|
| Stanford, Seven Lakes | 33 | 1451 | 44.0 | 82 |
| Shurtz, Katy | 26 | 995 | 38.3 | 54 |
| Huckaby, Tompkins | 23 | 784 | 34.1 | 60 |
| Woods, Taylor | 19 | 642 | 33.8 | 45 |
| Moore, Cinco Ranch | 41 | 1328 | 32.4 | 48 |

PUNT RETURNS

| | NO. | YARDS | AVG. | LK |
|----------------------|-----|-------|------|----|
| Woods, Taylor | 10 | 258 | 25.8 | 64 |
| Medford, Seven Lakes | 4 | 74 | 18.5 | 45 |
| Schneider, Katy | 2 | 31 | 15.5 | 7 |
| Huerter, Tompkins | 10 | 111 | 11.1 | 21 |
| Taylor, Katy | 14 | 143 | 10.2 | 25 |

KICK RETURNS

| | NO. | YARDS | AVG. | LK |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|------|----|
| Khan, Mayde Creek | 7 | 213 | 30.4 | 95 |
| Woods, Taylor | 5 | 149 | 29.8 | 41 |
| Jer. Johnson, Mrtn Rnch | 2 | 122 | 61.0 | 80 |
| Tolbert, Seven Lakes | 8 | 111 | 13.9 | 35 |
| Christopher, Mrtn Ranch | 5 | 107 | 21.4 | 35 |

SCORING BY KICKING

| | PAT | FG | POINTS |
|-----------------------|-----|----|--------|
| Lazic, Katy | 39 | 6 | 57 |
| Baeta, Taylor | 28 | 9 | 55 |
| Fuentes, Paetow | 28 | 4 | 40 |
| Huckaby, Tompkins | 20 | 5 | 35 |
| Arriaga, Morton Ranch | 20 | 2 | 26 |
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| Mares, Mayde Creek | 16 | 1 | 19 |

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Tompkins' Milroe a semifinalist for state award

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins senior quarterback Jalen Milroe is one of 25 semifinalists for Dave Campbell's Texas Football's Mr. Texas Football High School Player of the Year award.

The award recognizes the most outstanding high school football player in the state of Texas. At the end of the regular season, 10 finalists will be named. Fans can then cast their vote as to who should be named Mr. Texas Football. The winner will be decided by the fan vote and a Dave Campbell's Texas Football panel vote.

The winner of the award will be announced prior to the 2020 Texas Bowl, which will be played December 31 at NRG Stadium.

Past award winners include Kyler Murray (2013, 2014), Johnny Manziel (2010) and Garrett Gilbert (2008). Oklahoma receiver Marvin Mims won the award last season.

Milroe, an Alabama commit, has completed 55 of 89 passes this season (61.8 percent) for 865 yards and seven touchdowns to one interception for the 6-0 Falcons, who are ranked No. 7 in the state and No. 25 nationally. His signature win of the season so far came Nov. 5 against Katy, when he completed 17 of 23 passes for 209 yards and three touchdowns to no interceptions. It was Katy's first district loss since Nov. 8, 2008.

Milroe has not thrown an interception



COLE MCNANNA | SEAILY NEWS

Tompkins senior quarterback and Alabama commit Jalen Milroe is one of 25 semifinalists for Dave Campbell's Texas Football's Mr. Texas Football High School Player of the Year award.

since the Falcons' Week 1 win at Magnolia on Sept. 25. He has completed passes of 45, 49, 50 and 58 yards this season.

"Experience is the best teacher," said Milroe, a three-year varsity starter. "I've been around the game now, so I know it well. From being on the field and in the film room, that all builds. Now the talk on our

team is how we get past that third round. The Houston area has great competition and we keep learning. We're trying to figure that out as a program, and it continues with preparation now. We're fighting for that state championship."

The other 24 semifinalists are:
>> JoJo Earle, Aledo ATH

- >> Conner Weigman, Bridgeland QB
- >> Cash Jones, Brock RB
- >> Ryder Hernandez, Cedar Park QB
- >> Andrew Body, Corpus Christi Miller QB
- >> JaTavion Sanders, Denton Ryan ATH
- >> Behren Morton, Eastland QB
- >> Garrett Nussmeier, Flower Mound Marcus QB
- >> Demetrius Davis, North Shore QB
- >> Dane Jentsch, Grandview QB
- >> Ed Bobino, Huntsville DT
- >> Cole Andrus, Jourdanton QB
- >> Ace Whitehead, Lampasas QB
- >> Jordan Jenkins, Lindale RB
- >> Kolt Schuckers, Lindsay QB
- >> Sawyer Robertson, Lubbock Coronado QB
- >> Roddrell Freeman, Mart ATH
- >> Steve Johnson, Port Lavaca Calhoun RB
- >> De'shon Goodley, Rankin RB
- >> Braedyn Locke, Rockwall QB
- >> Eddie Lee Marburger, Sharyland Pioneer QB
- >> Quinn Ewers, Southlake Carroll QB
- >> Clayton Smith, Texarkana Texas High LB
- >> Zach Hrbacek, Troy RB

Milroe is one of three semifinalists to be named from the Greater Houston area.

"It's a blessing," Milroe said. "All thanks to God throughout this journey. Through the process, it's a lot of hard work, grit and want-to. Commitment to the grind is important. Get one percent better each and every day and you'll get to that 100 percent, and that 100 percent is your long-term goals."

SPARTANS

from page B1

"We've been talking about play-offs all summer," said senior running back Nick David-West, who had 79 rushing yards and 68 receiving yards and a touchdown. "This was our one goal. It's good to see all that hard work we put in is coming together."

The Spartans jumped out to a 21-7 lead thanks in large part to senior quarterback Cristian Beltran.

Beltran's first two pass completions went for touchdowns—a 26-yarder to junior receiver Grayson Medford and a short screen throw under heavy pressure to David-West for a 68-yard catch-and-run scamper—and he finished the game completing seven of nine passes for 161 yards and three touchdowns to no interceptions.

Hamon credited Beltran and the play-calling of offensive coordinator Matt Hoelscher for an offense that looked more explosive than it had all year, specifically noting Beltran's read of a wide-open Beau Clewett for a 38-yard scoring strike with 7:58 left in the second quarter that put the Spartans ahead 28-14 at the half.

With assassin-like proficiency, Beltran exploited the Rams' aggressiveness and horde pursuit blitzing along the defensive front, making quick reads and quicker throws to open receivers that often resulted in big plays.

Beltran averaged an impressive 17.9 yards per pass attempt, a welcomed dynamic to the Spartans' typically potent ground game that produced 183 yards on 37 carries behind David-West, junior Michael Amico (71 yards) and senior Milton Jones (55 yards).

"We saw a lot of things we could expose from when they played Morton Ranch," said Beltran, referring to the Rams' 41-35 win over the Mavericks on Nov. 6. "Morton exposed a lot of weaknesses they had. They're a good team, but we came in here confident and felt like we could get the job done."

"Running was there, passing was there. It was a great team effort."

That, it was. While Beltran was directing a practically flawless offense, the defense kept the Rams at bay.

Mayde Creek senior running

back Julius Loughridge, the district's No. 1 back, compiled 193 yards and two touchdowns on 20 carries. But other than his jaw-dropping scoring runs of 66 and 90 yards, respectively, Loughridge managed just 37 yards on 18 carries.

"Compared to past games, we definitely swarmed better to the ball," North said. "That was the biggest difference in our play. Our pursuit. (Loughridge) is a good back, so getting all 11 hats to him was the biggest part of our game-plan."

Mayde Creek scored two touchdowns, each via 18-yard catches by senior receiver Alpha Khan from senior quarterback Jace Wilson, in the final three minutes to make the game closer than it actually was.

The Rams outgained the Spartans 389-344 in total yards, but 13 penalties for 95 yards doomed them. Mayde Creek got little going in the passing game, averaging 6.1 yards per pass attempt, and after he compiled 163 yards on his first seven carries, Loughridge's biggest run over his final 13 totes was eight yards.

"Overall, we forced them to make drives, we got them into third down a lot," senior defensive lineman Hayden Pratt said. "We could've converted a bit more, but other than that I thought we played great."

While the 20-day hiatus wasn't ideal, the Spartans did the best they could with it. Every day of practice was fast and hard. Conditioning was a heavy point of emphasis. Focus did not wane; if anything, it was stronger.

"For two weeks, they had to wait to play," Hamon said. "I was real nervous if we could come out and execute, and we showed in the first half we were going to do that. I was worried if they were going to be able to handle the speed of the game, and I thought they handled that just fine."

Pratt said the team handled adversity well.

"We were able to get some practices in that were real important in this win," he said. "We had a lot of time to work and we had a lot of time to get healthy. We had a lot of guys hurt and I think it helped getting people rested."

And now, Seven Lakes holds its fate in its own hands.

"I couldn't ask for much better," Hamon said. "I feel good that we're where we need to be."




COLE MCNANNA | SEAILY NEWS

Seven Lakes junior Scott Stanford (10) upends Mayde Creek quarterback Jace Wilson during the Spartans' 38-26 win over Mayde Creek on Nov. 13 at Legacy Stadium.



COLE MCNANNA | SEAILY NEWS

Seven Lakes senior running back Nick David-West gains yardage on a run during the Spartans' 38-26 win over Mayde Creek on Nov. 13 at Legacy Stadium.



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SPORTS

Falcons deal Spartans 1st loss as playoffs beckon

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins' fifth consecutive win on Saturday, Nov. 14, was rewarded with a popsicle party on Monday, a program tradition whenever a win streak hits a handful.

That the win came against previously undefeated district rival and No. 4 state-ranked Seven Lakes, though, will hopefully mean much more than a sweet treat when the volleyball playoffs start Nov. 19.

The Falcons beat the Spartans in impressive fashion, winning 3-1 (25-23, 25-14, 17-25 and 25-23) in each team's district season finale. The win pushed Tompkins to 14-6 overall and a third-place finish in District 19-6A at 8-4. Seven Lakes, which had dropped just six sets all season entering the game, suffered its first loss of the season, falling to 17-1, but still easily secured its third district championship in the last five seasons by finishing 11-1 in 19-6A.

"It was a rival match, so obviously we're mentally preparing for it all week," Tompkins junior outside hitter Paris Herrman said. "They have amazing players that we were ready to face. We found holes in their defense. We served really well, finding the weakest spots, and we took advantage of that."

For the Spartans, the game wrapped up an exhaustive five-game makeup schedule that started Nov. 7. Seven Lakes had missed the previous 2 1/2 weeks suspended from play due to a rash of COVID-19 cases on campus. Then the Spartans made up five postponed district games over eight days.

"It was difficult," Seven Lakes



DENNIS SILVA II

Though they easily secured their third district championship in five years, the Seven Lakes Spartans enter the playoffs this week coming off their first loss of the season due to a 3-1 Tompkins win on Nov. 14 at Tompkins High.

coach Amy Cataline said. "There were moments when it felt like pre-season, after being off for 2 1/2 weeks without a ball in our hands. I felt we've been inconsistent with our level of play, compared to when we left off prior to the COVID situation, we had a bunch of momentum and we were coming together and gelled."

The Falcons, meanwhile, have struck a nice rhythm. Coach Allison Merrell, whose program dealt with its own COVID-19 adversity earlier this season, said her team is beginning to forge an identity.

"It took time for us to figure out

who needed to play where and how we were going to play certain positions," Merrell said. "Without a dedicated preseason and no tournaments, it's taken us longer than usual to figure out what we need to do and what works well."

Against Seven Lakes, Tompkins had a strong balance of playmaking in its attack and on defense. When Herrman, junior middle hitter Natassia Baptiste and sophomore outside hitter Ella Folse weren't finding gaps in the Spartans' defense with strategic hitting, senior libero Gabby Gregorski, junior Madison Gundry,

junior Cassidy Karonka and sophomore Presley Powell ignited a hustling, all-out defensive effort against a powerful-swinging Spartans team.

"There was a sense of calm with them," Merrell said of her girls. "There was no panic. They came in and did their jobs. They were excited, but calm, and that's a good combination for us."

Cataline said her team needs to come into games more focused. It showed early, as the Falcons were clearly the more inspired team.

"Tompkins did a really good job playing with a lot of heart,"

Cataline said. "There were balls that I thought were dead that they kept alive. I felt we could've done a better job of being faster on defense and keeping the ball off the ground."

Aside from star senior outside hitter and Nebraska signee Ally Batenhorst, the Spartans got little going offensively.

"We did everything right, but we were just slow," Batenhorst said. "And they were super scrappy and executed everything right. They did everything well."

Cataline said her team simply needs more time on the court together to right some issues. Batenhorst is optimistic a sour loss can be turned into a positive.

"It was hard having two weeks off, and it can be hard to recover from when you're playing or practicing every day," Batenhorst said. "It was tough and challenging, and it's a process. Having a loss sucks, but I think it will make us want to work harder. We do have things to improve on. We know we can't just beat everybody. We'll go into practice, work harder and I think this loss can help us."

For the Falcons, their confidence is sky-high. Herrman was most impressed with her team's "winning mentality" through all four sets, never letting up and countering almost every rally the Spartans threw at them.

Tompkins is right where Merrell would like it to be at the right time of the season.

"This is huge," Merrell said of the win. "I don't think it's sunk in for them and I don't think it's sunk in for me. It's a really good feeling, though."

IVEY

from page B1

he was really lucky to wake back up during the Morton Ranch game.

"If they wouldn't have caught this, I could have ended up in cardiac arrest in one of my games or died at an early age," Ivey said.

Ivey has mixed reactions to it all. In a little more than a month, he went from invaluable contributor to a strong Taylor team to being told he'd have to hang up his cleats for good.

"At first, I didn't know how to take it," he said. "Like, I still can't believe all of this is happening to me. But I'm just glad I'm alive."

Doctors initially told Ivey he put so much stress on his heart from overworking it. He admits he did, training "10 times harder" this season than he ever had before.

His unrelenting work ethic caught up to him. Ivey's typical days, flexible because of his participation in the district's Katy Virtual Academy schooling, were consumed with training.

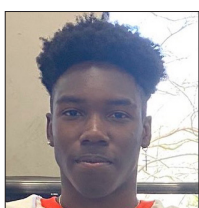
Mornings consisted of body workouts (sit-ups, pushups, jumping jacks, and jump rope work). Practice was held in the afternoon into the late evening. Then Ivey had another workout session with a personal trainer that emphasized lifting weights and defensive back drills.

Finally, before he went to bed, Ivey did a final set of body workouts.

"I was really pushing myself," Ivey said. "I was upset I wasn't at least second team all-district last year and I wanted to prove to everybody that, even though I'm small, I'm a big dog. I wanted to be first team all-district. I knew I had to

work 10 times as much as other DBs in the district."

At 5-foot-6, 165 pounds, Ivey, who was offered a scholarship to play at NCAA Division II Eastern New Mexico a few months ago, played with a considerable chip on his shoulder during his three years of varsity.



CECIL IVEY II

"You feel so bad for him and what he's having to go through," Jensen said. "We know the hard work he's put in to be successful. He's been one of our hardest-working guys who brightens up any room he's in."

Ivey, affectionately nicknamed "the X-Factor" by his coaches, played everywhere for the Mustangs. As a freshman, he was a cornerback and receiver. As a sophomore, he added kick returner and punt returner to his duties. As a junior last season, he played cornerback, safety and some spot receiver.

Last season, Ivey, appreciated for his technique and competitiveness in coverage, averaged 3.2 tackles per game to go with four interceptions, eight pass breakups and two fumble recoveries for a state semifinalist team. This season, he was averaging 3.7 tackles and allowed the Mustangs the luxury of putting him on an opponent's top receiver without any help.

Ivey said he recently earned his real estate and insurance adjuster licenses. He still plans to be around the team at practices and games.

"Coach Jensen would always tell me to never take anything for granted," Ivey said. "It could be taken from you at any moment, and I always took that to heart."

"The coaches have always been there for me and are still here for me. I'm just grateful to have coaches like them."

KATY

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step back in the right direction as the Tigers improved to 6-1 overall, 3-1 in District 19-6A, and secured a playoff berth. The offense looked healthier, more efficient. The defense was more violent, livelier.

All in all, the Tigers were spirited, energetic. It made all the difference.

"That Tompkins loss was fuel," Varner said. "We had to work. We knew we weren't on top anymore and we have to get back there."

It started during practices. The Tigers were laser-focused, which is saying something considering how no-nonsense they generally are.

"Nobody was slacking," Varner said. "Everyone ran to the ball. Everyone hustled. It was amazing. I loved it. Against Tompkins, we were just walking around. We weren't hustling. That's what disappointed us."

That effort and energy carried over against Taylor.

The Tigers outgained the Mustangs 430-250 in total yards. They only committed two penalties for 10 yards. Five different players scored touchdowns: Davis, sophomore running back Seth Davis, senior receiver Fuller Shurtz, senior receiver Taylor Saulsberry and junior receiver Antonio Silva.

Senior linebacker Shepherd Bowling and senior defensive back Jayden Rodriguez teamed up to block a 50-yard field goal attempt. Sophomore Brady Englett blocked a punt.

"We know who we are," Saulsberry said. "We know what we can accomplish. We just played to the best of our ability."

Sophomore quarterback Caleb Koger, who struggled mightily against Tompkins, was cool, calm and collected in running a machine-like offense that averaged 7.3 yards per play. Koger completed just 8 of 18 passes, with a few dropped balls hurting his completion percentage, but threw for 172 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions.

The 172 yards were the second-most Koger has thrown for this season and the three touchdowns tied his single-game best.

Koger ran Katy's play-action scheme to perfection, deftly fooling linebackers and helping open up receivers. When he wasn't handing the ball off to the bruising Jalen Davis, who rushed for 124 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries, he connected with five different receivers.

"In practice, he didn't seem bothered," Davis said. "He didn't seem shook. He put his head down, went to work and did all the little things right. He played with poise. He had everything in control. He looked comfortable."

Coach Gary Joseph was pleased with his young signal-caller. The same plays that were successful against Taylor were also open against Tompkins, Joseph said, but this time around Koger did not rush throws. He was patient and took what the Mustangs' defense gave him.

"He's going to be a good football player," Joseph said. "There are growing pains when it's your first time playing in a big game like (Tompkins). We had a couple of sophomores like that. It's part of growing up."

Joseph said he was proud of his team. The Tigers are short-handed with the absences of a pair of three-year varsity starters in senior tight end

Fernando Garza and senior defensive lineman Cohen Dearman because of injury. More players went down during the Taylor game, but others stepped up.

Junior Dylan Bennett played well in Dearman's stead. Senior Emilio Silva has performed admirably in place of Garza.

Against Taylor, senior linebacker Axel Hernandez and junior defensive back JaKorien Haynes came in as reserves and helped steady the defense in place of injured starters.

"It's good to be competitive when the other kids can come in, and I was proud of them," said Joseph, who hopes to get Dearman back soon while Garza's status is more unclear.

After the game, Joseph told his team that now is the time to start ascending. It is a formidable task. The Tigers must play with better consistency while dealing with the ebbs and flows dealt by a pandemic that makes things uncertain week to week.

Katy continues to learn, mature and improve. The Tigers faced adversity with the Tompkins loss. They resiliently rallied and regained footing against a Taylor team that has only lost to Tompkins and Katy this season and figures to be a legitimate threat in the postseason.

Now Katy must sustain that momentum and play to even greater heights as only two district games remain.

"We learned that even if you lose, you have to come back ready to play," Varner said. "We have to learn how to lose. If we didn't learn how to lose, we would've been stuck. We came out here and did what we were supposed to do."

"We're still Katy. Our season's not over. We want state. We're going to state this year. We're ready."

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Saacke sustaining tradition for Falcons

By DENNIS SILVA II
SPORTS EDITOR

Gavin Saacke is carrying on the vast legacy for the Tompkins' boys cross country program.

Following the dominance of former Falcons Daniel Figueroa and Cole Lindhorst in recent years, Saacke has added his name to that distinguished list with a stellar senior campaign.

After four second-place finishes to start the season, Saacke broke through by winning the District 19-6A championship on Oct. 30. His efforts helped coach Walt Yarrow's program sustain a dynastic run with its third district team title in four years.

Saacke also made it four consecutive seasons that a Falcon has won the boys individual district title, following Lindhorst's back-to-back titles in 2019 and 2018 and Figueroa's title in 2017. Like his predecessors, Saacke will run at the next level. He is signed to compete in cross country and track and field at Alabama.

"Gavin's had good role models and mentors and he's kind of seen what it takes to do it," Yarrow said. "One of his strengths is he's always focused on the big picture. He's finished second this year in really close meets, but he understands that we want to be our fastest at the end of the year."

Yarrow's training regimen for the Falcons is structured to where his boys are running their best toward the end of a season. They will sacrifice wins and times early on for personal bests and medal-finishes in the postseason.

Saacke is a good example of that. He is running his best when it matters most. He finished second at the Region III-6A meet on Nov. 10 and has a legitimate shot at winning the Class 6A state meet on Tuesday, Nov. 24, in Round Rock.

Saacke finished sixth at state last season with a personal-record time of 14-minutes, 57.57 seconds. That result buoyed his motivation this season.

"It gave me a reputation to uphold," Saacke said. "Because I did it last year, I have to do it again. It boosts my confidence, for sure. Not many people can beat you when you finish sixth at state."

Saacke started running when he was seven years old. He credits his parents for his passion for athletics. His mom ran at Emory University and his dad played tennis.

"I loved the feeling of being on the track and being able to run fast," Saacke said.

He has always embraced the premier meets. He has competed with USA Track & Field since he was 12 and has been a varsity runner since his sophomore year.

"I just know what it takes when

I'm at the front of a race to take a win or top three," Saacke said. "A lot of it just has to do with experience. I'm used to running big meets. So, I've learned to stay with guys in the front and understand when to make my moves to pull ahead."

Saacke has a strong closing kick to races, so he knows if he can hang with the front guys at the end of a race, he has the skill to pull out in front and gain separation.

"He's got this quiet confidence in knowing he's going to be ready at the right time," Yarrow said. "He steps up in the big meets. He has really good racing instincts, as far as when to go and when not to go. He focuses on the work. He keeps his eye on the prize, never too up or too down. He's a gamer."

But it's not his ability on the course that has shaped Saacke's growth as a competitor. It's his leadership.

Saacke said he enjoys that this year's team is his, just like previous teams were under Lindhorst's and Figueroa's guidance. It's why he was so excited when Tompkins qualified for state as a team by finishing third at the regional meet.

In an individual sport, Saacke takes great pride in team.

"It's been me kind of leading the guys and being in charge and see to it to help everyone in this group succeed," Saacke said. "I'm really excited to be with this group of guys."



COURTESY

Tompkins senior Gavin Saacke has helped sustain a legacy in the sport established by past Falcon greats like Daniel Figueroa and Cole Lindhorst.

COUGARS

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Indeed, the Cougars are true contenders to win the UIL Class 6A state meet on Tuesday, Nov. 24, at Old Settlers Park in Round Rock. They won Region III by 18 points over second-place Kingwood. Atkinson and Nielson finished first and second, respectively, just as they have four other times this season: the Brenham Hillacious Invitational, the Klein ISD Invitational, the

Seven Lakes Showcase, and the District 19-6A meet.

"It's amazing how dominant they are," Cinco Ranch coach Dana Mathis said.

"You think back to when they were young freshmen, little and tiny, and they were beasts. They haven't peaked. They've continued to grow and work hard and be super dedicated to everything they're doing and their team."

"Sometimes you see people who are that dominant and they think, 'What team?' But these two are the complete opposite. They're amazing."

Atkinson credits rigorous offseason training for her success this season. She has not lost any of the six races she's competed in. She ran a 17-minute, 0.40-second time to win the Nike South Invitational on Oct. 3, setting a meet record. Then she set a personal record with a time of 16:40.90 to win the district meet Oct. 30.

"She put a lot of work in this summer, coming into this season running better than she ever has before," Mathis said. "She's continued to chip away at her time."

RUNNING TO ROUND ROCK

Katy ISD team and individual state cross country qualifiers.

TEAM QUALIFIERS

- >> Region III-6A champ Cinco Ranch girls: Senior Sophie Atkinson, senior Heidi Nielson, junior Alison Mueller, sophomore Helen Ulrich, senior Camila Corser, sophomore Lindsay Krippner, junior Natalia Corser.
- >> Region III-6A bronze medalists Tompkins boys: Senior Gavin Saacke, senior Ben Smith, junior Noah Howard, junior Connor Augustine, junior Jackson Torti, junior Omar El Miloudi, junior Colton Howard.

GIRLS INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS (with regional place finish and regional time)

- 3. Isabella Rubio, Katy jr., 18:17.1
- 4. Addison Stevenson, Tompkins sr., 18:32.8
- 8. Katie Fitzpatrick, Seven Lakes jr., 18:47.9
- 10. Maddy Hunter, Katy fr., 19:02.0
- 17. Hayden Gold, Tompkins sr., 19:22.5

BOYS INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS (with regional place finish and regional time)

- 4. Ruben Rojas, Seven Lakes jr., 15:15.8
- 8. Ethan Boyd, Cinco Ranch sr., 15:38.1
- 11. Adrian Hahn Vadstein, Cinco Ranch so., 15:55.7

Atkinson said it seems "full circle" that things are coming together for the Cougars during her senior year. Atkinson finished 34th at state last season, ninth in 2018 and 27th in 2017.

"Obviously, there's some pressure with it being the last high school race," Atkinson said. "But it's also exciting because things are really taking place for all of us. It's nice to have one last chance to run for my school and with my teammates on the line. I've only ever been at this meet with teammates one time, so it's exciting that they'll be with me this year."

Nielson, who competed

at state in 2018 and 2017 and finished fourth both times, did not compete in the district, regional or state meets last season because of a femur injury. She also suffered a quad injury during the summer. And though she is running well, Nielson is still coping with trying to return to full health.

"It's weird getting back to normal and understanding racing again," Nielson said. "It's hard for me to remember what it was like before the injury. The hardest part is mental, getting your confidence back and wanting to be competitive again when

for so long it was about just trying to run without pain again."

Mathis said Nielson's work rehabbing and getting stronger so she can be her best self for her team has been admirable. And though Nielson may not be pleased with her racing, the results this season are hard to be dissatisfied with: one first-place finish and five second-place finishes.

"I can't complain," Nielson said. "I just want more for myself. I love this team. I feel I've done a good job wearing the Cinco jersey. Hopefully this last season can be the best."

Mathis said she has a team that works hard for each other, and it starts with Atkinson and Nielson. Their selflessness is infectious.

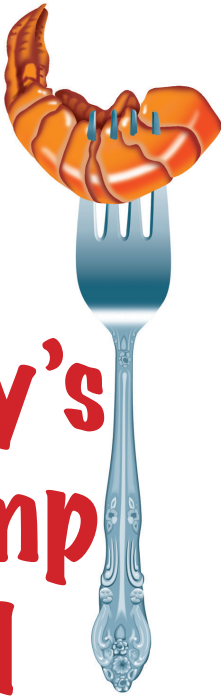
Aside from the dynamic duo, two other Cougars—junior Alison Mueller and sophomore Helen Ulrich—have performed impressively this postseason. Both finished in the top 20 at the regional meet. Sophomore Lindsay Krippner has been a welcomed addition of the same ilk as Atkinson and Nielson, working tirelessly to help make the team better.

Add veteran senior Camila Corser and junior Natalia Corser, and the Cougars are optimistic they can cap off the illustrious careers of Atkinson and Nielson in state championship fashion.

"We're all going in with a mentality to attack the course," Atkinson said. "That's what we've done the whole season. We run with a purpose and go for it and be intense. As long as we all go out there and do our best, good results will come. But we're going to go for it, for sure."

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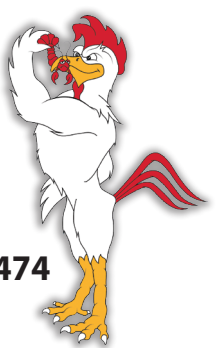


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