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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021

## Kolkhorst delivers state of region address

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

RICHMOND — Lois Kolkhorst may have less to do with the Katy area now with this year's redistricting, but that doesn't mean she is going away.

The Texas State Senator was redistricted to cover more of Sugar Land while Senator Joan Huffman will take on the Katy and Cinco Ranch, but she still plans to be involved in the Katy community.

"Senator Huffman is a very senior senator and she's going to do a great job," Kolkhorst said. "But I will also tell you that I nev-

er go away. Once I represent you, I keep you. That's true of my old house districts and I look forward to working with all of the officials all over Fort Bend County."

Kolkhorst talked about the accomplishments of the Texas Senate and how the Katy and Fulshear area during Friday's State of our Region speech at the Safari Texas Ranch in Richmond.

The State Senator laid out what she thought were the most important bills that came through the senate and passed in the last year, including ARPA funding, where 7.2 billion dollars was put into a compensation fund so local companies won't

get charge backs.

"At the time when we passed our funding bill, we were the only state in the nation that actually met all of the funding needed. Some complained that it was too much and wanted companies to pay for part of it, but the number one thing that drives our economy and the number one thing for all of us is to have a job and

See **KOLKHORST**, page A3

TYLER TYRE

Texas State Senator Lois Kolkhorst speaks during the State of our Region address on Friday.



The City of Katy lit up the Christmas Tree, along with the Historic Downtown Katy Plaza, on Thursday night to kick off the holiday season. Juleigh Holley's School of Dance performed and Mrs. Claus read 'The Night Before Christmas' while families waited for Santa to arrive -- escorted by the Katy Fire Department on their high-water rescue truck. Also making a surprise appearance was the Grinch and his friends from the Katy Police Department who handed out stuffed animals to the children. Other activities included letters to Santa, cookie decorating, ornament making, and pictures with Santa.

COURTESY OF THE CITY OF KATY

## Project Barker seeking public partners and investment

BY GEORGE SLAUGHTER  
NEWS EDITOR

Willow Fork Drainage District officials are seeking public investment for a \$24 million drainage improvement and community park project.

District officials said that the proposed Project Barker would increase flood storage capacity in the Barker Reservoir. They discussed the project at a town hall meeting Monday at the Cinco Ranch Golf Club, 23030 Cinco Ranch Blvd.

Harry Holmes Thompson, an attorney with Allan Boone Humphreys Robinson, said district officials met with officials in 24 local municipal utility districts near the reservoir. The law firm is general counsel to the district.

"We've been doing the dog and pony show," Thompson said, adding that the district will soon approach the entities again.

"We're gonna start bringing our hat around and say, let's fill 'er up," Thompson said.

Wendy Duncan, Willow Fork Drainage District president, said discussions have also taken place with both Fort Bend and Harris counties. She said Harris County officials have expressed interest in expanding the project and talks remain active with both counties.

Thompson said district officials have spoken with the Harris County Flood Control District, and the Katy Independent School District. Two school board

See **PROJECT**, page A3

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## Katy approves Riceland Terrace drainage project change

BY R. HANS MILLER  
NEWS EDITOR

Katy City Council members met in a special meeting for about eight minutes Monday evening to take care of city business before the holiday break.

During the meeting, council members approved all items on their agenda unanimously, including a nearly \$8,000 change to the Riceland Terrace drainage project.

"This change order is for the switching of a concrete roadway surface at the intersection of Caloro (Lane) and Patna (Drive) to an asphalt roadway surface," said Joshua Natarus of Costello Engineering, the city's drainage planning consultant. "This came about with a field meeting I had with a former project manager who is no longer here and the engineer for the Fortuna (Drive) project."

The change order was implemented to allow for the installation of a new water line at the



GOOGLE MAPS

The work underway at the intersection of Patna Drive and Caloro Lane will see the temporary installation of an asphalt roadway to allow for easier installation of a water line that will be placed under the roadway. Once that is completed, a cement surface will be installed.

intersection of Patna Drive and Caloro Lane where water will be directed from the subdivision into the city's drainage system that flows through the Town Park Detention Pond. The asphalt

surface will be installed on the eastern side of the intersection temporarily until the water line is ready to be installed. Once that is completed, a concrete roadway will replace the asphalt, Natarus

said. He added that using asphalt will allow the roadway to be used in the interim and that the asphalt will save money because

See **INTERSECTION**, page A3

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## KATY OLD FASHIONED Christmas



The Katy Old Fashioned Christmas was in full swing in downtown Katy on Saturday morning, as shoppers strolled through a variety of booths featuring crafts and holiday merchandise. Pictured is Anastasiya Vetluzhskikh of V's Tees and Crafts, with special cookie plates for Santa. Families also posed for holiday photos at the lighted display near The Cottage Door. This year's event also featured live music on several stages, including a performance by Brazos County Line.



## HISTORY & HERITAGE



SUSAN ROVEGNO

The Texas Heritage Festival, held Saturday at Central Green in LaCenterra, featured booths saluting the diverse cultural influences in the state. Shown is Chance L. Landry (above), curator of the Southern Apache Museum and member of the Native American Alliance of Greater Houston, who said that there are over 68,000 Native Americans living in the Houston area. Also shown is Kevin Malcolm (right), Lead Interpreter, Independence Hall/Fanthorp Inn at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site.



## Veterans groups, volunteers unite for Wreaths Across America event

Members of local American Legion Jonathan D. Rozier Post 164 and Veterans of Foreign War Post 9182 will team up with community volunteers on Saturday, December 18 to place over 475 remembrance wreaths on veterans' graves at Katy Magnolia Cemetery. The ceremony will take place from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at 6801 Franz Road in Katy. The keynote speaker at the event will be Brett Watson, Department



BRET WATSON

Commander of the American Legion Department of Texas. Other speakers, as well as presentation of colors, a 21-gun salute and taps ceremony, are planned. "We remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom by laying remembrance wreaths on each veteran's grave for the holidays," said Andy Valadez, public relations officer for the American Legion.

- KATY, TEXAS -

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**Katy Times**

### GIFT WRAPPERS NEEDED!

**Could YOU please help?**

Sunshine thru the Rain, a local Katy nonprofit which is dedicated to helping children that have lost one or both of their parents, NEEDS YOUR HELP with their annual fundraiser – wrapping gifts at Katy Mills Mall during the holiday season.

COVID has taken a toll on our staff, leaving us short-handed. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS to help wrap packages during normal business hours at Katy Mills Mall.

To volunteer – or for more information – please contact Maureen Guzman at maureen@ohanagaragedoorrepair.com

**Sunshine thru the Rain**

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Polish city
- Very eager
- Identifies a specific person or thing
- Tennis great Naomi
- One concerned by professional advancement
- PGA Championship reward
- A fashionable hotel
- Norse mythology afterlife location
- Stood up
- Car mechanics group
- Weather forecasters use it (abbr.)
- Broken branch
- Astronomy unit
- East Asian nursemaid
- "Airplane!" actor
- Exclamation that denotes disgust
- "Batman" villain
- Downfalls
- Philippine province
- Once-vital TV part
- Valley
- Tax
- Classic Scorsese film
- Subway dwellers
- Book part
- Taxi
- Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
- Swiss river
- Founder of Babism
- Have surgery
- Withdrawal from a larger entity
- Lot's father
- Greek war god
- 2,000 lbs.
- Lemur

**CLUES DOWN**

- Quarrels
- Right away
- Comedian Carvey
- Egyptian unit of weight
- A Brit's mother
- Tropical tree
- One who speaks Gaelic
- NHL legend Bobby
- Vacation spots
- Military personnel
- Shakira's don't lie
- Wimbledon champ
- Teletypewriter
- Mistakes
- Whale ship captain
- Thus
- From end to end
- Kids love him
- One and only
- Fencing swords
- Taxis
- Basics
- Refuse of grapes
- Go quickly
- French ballet dynasty
- Most open
- Popular soap ingredient
- US time zone (abbr.)
- Items of food
- Backbones
- Infrequent
- Blood type
- "Let It Snow!" songwriter
- Dutch colonist
- Pike
- Egyptian sun god
- A cardinal is one
- From a distance
- Bolivian river
- N. American student organization (abbr.)
- River (Spanish)
- Chinese life force
- Chinese surname

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

## SUDOKU

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

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Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

## KOLKHORST

from page A1

have our business thrive. So coming out of COVID, that's the least that we can do."

Kolkhorst also spent time talking about other bills, including a bill for funding broadband in rural areas and HB18, which helps uninsured people with prescriptions and life saving biologics such as insulin. She also spoke about a law that guarantees no child in the Child Protective Services System will have to sleep in CPS offices.

"We're better than that as a state, not only is it in statute that no child will have to sleep in a CPS office, but we have increased the rates and were working right now. Those children that have to be removed from their homes, it's very difficult, but we have to get them to the right place, and we have to get them the help they need. It's not something we are ever going to solve, but we have to manage it, so we're working every day to try and help the children that need us most."

One of the most important bills to pass through the Texas senate this year according to Kolkhorst is one that increased funding for mental health services and hospitals. The state has invested nearly \$2 billion in mental health hospitals.

A central part of Kolkhorst's speech was mental health, and she hopes the area continues to grow throughout the state and hopes that people can come together.

"We've had mental health issues and post COVID, we are seeing a lot more. This last session we funded more mental health services and hospitals than we ever have. We are actively pursuing this. It's not something everyone needs but we have to continue to work on this because we have seen the damages that are going on with that. We have to keep getting better."

## INTERSECTION

from page A1

it is easier to remove and replace than concrete.

The total cost for the project as of this most recent change order is slightly more than \$4 million.

Council also authorized the mayor to sign an extension with Cooley Construction, LLC., the contractor doing the work on the Rice-land Terrace Downstream Channel Improvement project. The extension will not cost any additional city money but will provide 61 additional days to the construction team to finish the project after delays caused by inclement weather accumulated over the course of the project.

Council members also:

- Approved a plat for the new Katy ISD elementary school being built in the Cane Island subdivision. The district has previously indicated that the new campus will help prevent overcrowding at Katy and Bryant elementary schools.
- Approved multiple plats for the Cane Island and Katy Court subdivisions.

The next Katy City Council regular meeting is set for Dec. 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Katy City Hall - 901 Avenue C, Katy.

## CHRISTMAS AT THE PARK



COURTESY KATY HERITAGE SOCIETY

Santa, Mrs. Claus and The Grinch all appeared at the Katy Heritage Society's "Christmas at the Park" event on Saturday. In addition to a Christmas movie, the event at George Bush Park also featured live Christmas carols, tours of the historic homes, vintage tractor photo opportunities and tractor hay rides around city hall with a Christmas cookie decorating stop at Salt and Sugar. "I feel like I am in a Hallmark movie," was the overall feedback we heard after our Christmas at The Park event Saturday evening," said Katy Heritage Society President Adrienne Davitz.



Mary Anne Piacentini, president and CEO of the Katy Prairie Conservancy, welcomes Chris Harris to the organization's advisory board. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Harris named to KPC board

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Katy City Council member and Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris was elected to the Katy Prairie Conservancy Advisory Board on November 16. Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) CEO Mary Ann Piacentini leads the land trust that protects approximately 24,500 acres of the Katy Prairie, including: Nelson Rice Farm, Warren Cattle Ranch and thousands of acres of wetlands for migratory birds and wildlife.

Since 1992, the Katy Prairie Conservancy has been working to preserve the Prairie for people and wildlife, and is one of the largest local land conservation organizations by acreage in southeast Texas. Long-term goals are to protect additional acreage on the Katy Prairie and lower watershed and restoring land for upland and wetland wildlife.

"I am honored to serve on the Katy Prairie Conservancy Advisory Board," Harris said. "My family and I have volunteered for several years at KPC and I know the positive importance of the organization with the Katy area."

## PROJECT

from page A1

trustees, Rebecca Fox and Dawn Champagne, were at Monday's meeting.

Despite the discussions and "very good, positive feedback," Duncan said no other entities have made financial commitments.

Of the \$24 million, the state has issued a \$1.9 million grant and a \$22.1 million flood infrastructure fund loan with a 30-year term. Willow Fork Drainage District has committed to providing \$10 million against that loan. The district is asking the other entities to contribute to cover the remaining \$12 million.

Thompson said district wanted to think big.

"We wanted to do the biggest project possible," Thompson said, adding that the \$22.1 million figure represents the extent of authority from which the district can issue bonds.

"It's sized based on bonding capacity," Thompson said.

Duncan said entities can contribute through a single payment or an installment plan that the district would finance.

The plan is for construction to begin in 2023 and end by 2024.

Monday's presentation featured remarks from Duncan, Craig Kalkomey, and Stephen Robinson. Kalkomey is a senior project manager with LJA Engineering of Katy. Robinson is a partner with Allen Boone Humphries Robinson.

In the presentation, they showed a map of Houston, circa 1940, with two projects that were to help with floodwaters but



GEORGE SLAUGHTER

Stephen M. Robinson, left, addresses a town hall meeting about Project Barker, a \$24 million drainage and community park project. Willow Fork Drainage District president Wendy Duncan, right, listens.

were never built. One project was building a levee north of Katy, near Cypress Creek. The other was a diversion channel that would move floodwaters from north of Katy to around Houston and through Fort Bend County before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico.

District officials envision Project Barker as a "first domino." The idea is that successful implementation makes it easier for similar flood mitigation projects to happen in the future.

"This project started as a pilot project," Duncan said. "Its purpose is to go through all the process and identify what must be done."

Duncan said Project Barker, by itself, creates a localized effect, with a regional effect happening as more projects are completed.

According to materials distributed by the district, if Project Barker were in place, the Barker Reservoir flood pool following 2017's Hurricane Harvey would be 0.8 inches deeper. With a full

set of reservoir projects implemented, the district said the flood pool would be 6.5 feet lower.

According to the Texas Water Development Board website, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed both the Barker and Addicks reservoirs to prevent downstream flooding of Buffalo Bayou. Construction of the Barker Dam began in 1942 and ended in 1945. Barker Dam is a rolled earthen embankment of 71,900 feet long. Its greatest height of 36.5 feet above the streambed.

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## So long, farewell and thanks for all the rice

As I write this, I'm on a Southwest Airlines flight from Spokane, Wash. to Denver, Col. The mountains below me are dusted with snow — a significant change from my end destination in Katy.

Well — end destination for now. After nearly 24 years in Texas, my wife and I are moving to Washington state to be closer to my family there and in Western Montana.

Katy has been good to me over the last four years. I've met amazing people, covered two natural disasters and seen a community rally together to support its own on countless occasions.

If you need help in Katy, it's there for the asking.

That community feel is what's calling me home to the Inland Northwest. Old friends and blood relatives that I treasure await.

That said, I want to thank the Katy community for accepting me as one of their own. The public information officers who have been quick to respond, the elected officials who answered challenging questions and other community leaders who have taught me a great deal during my time in Katy serving at two local publications.

It has been an absolute privilege and an honor to work with the journalists and newspaper administrators that serve the Katy area. I've learned what to do, what not to do and when to just sit back and shut up — well, mostly.

I encourage anyone reading this to make sure that community feel remains alive in the Katy area. Volunteer at local nonprofits, check in on your neighbors, pick up that wrapper blowing around in the parking lot and chuck it in the dumpster — whatever it takes to preserve that magic which is Katy, and Brookshire, and Pattison, and Fulshear.

This is your home where all the people you treasure are, so make it the best place it can be. Nurture those you care about and grab a drink at MKT Distillery with a friend, a bite at Snappy's to chew on the mayor's ear and rock out to a free concert at Central Green at LaCenterra while your kiddos play.

As for me, I'll come back to visit when I can, but I'll be going on new adventures at a newspaper in Moses Lake, Wash. where I'll be covering the local government, education and crime beats.

I'll also be making it a point to spend time with my younger sister who lives just a short drive away, my mom who lives near her and family in Trout Creek, Mont. where I grew up.

R. HANS MILLER

NEWS EDITOR



I'll also be making it a point to enjoy those things that make my hometown a community — the annual Huckleberry Festival (yes, it's a real thing and huckleberry ice cream is DELICIOUS), bass fishing on the Clark Fork River, camping at the lake where we spread my father's ashes and eating my favorite candy bar, the Idaho Spud — chocolate marshmallow wrapped in a dark chocolate and coconut shell. YUM!

I'll also find new things to treasure as I explore Moses Lake, which is surprisingly similar to Katy in many ways. The school district is under the magnifying glass over choices related to a bond package, the county jail is too small to fit the need, the growth rate in the community is through the roof and homes just can't be built quickly enough to meet demand. You know, the usual small-but-growing-town stuff.

But it's also got a lot of places and events to explore. I hear there's an annual downtown festival, a variety of live music options, kayaking, hiking, mom-and-pop stores and even a comic book shop (not having a comic book shop might have been a deal-breaker for me...).

I'm leaving you in good hands. The Katy Times team will continue to provide a valuable, locally-focused paper each week. Susan Rovegno, our publisher, will help with all your advertising needs. Debbie Prejean, my work sister and our bookkeeper, will make sure classified ads are taken care of and the mail gets handled. Tyler Tyre, our sports editor, will continue to keep you up-to-date with all of the exciting action at Katy High, Paetow, Cinco Ranch and the other schools in the region. Bringing it all together, Marissa Ferreira will keep pulling all the content together and working to give you a beautifully laid-out product every week.

And please welcome my replacement, George Slaughter to the Katy Times. He'll be stepping into the role it has been my privilege to hold for the last two years. He's a good man with integrity, heart and a deep love of history and community. I have faith in him and I know his integrity will honor Katy's small-town feel.

Be well, and as Keanu Reeves once said, "Be excellent to each other."



## 0 Christmas tree shortage

Over the past few weeks, media outlets have reported that holiday consumers should expect a shortage of Christmas trees this year due to the supply-chain crisis, climate change and the trees themselves refusing to re-enter the workforce after becoming addicted to Netflix and Flamin' Hot Cheetos during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although I believe the reports (along with everything else I read on Facebook), I haven't felt the impact of the shortage myself. In fact, I just recently upgraded to a 9 ft. artificial Christmas tree from Hobby Lobby for 50% off — and I only ruptured two major organs (and an air bag) cramming it into my wife's compact vehicle because she drove our SUV to work that day.

My family has always decorated with artificial Christmas trees. In fact, we've been displaying the same artificial pencil-style Christmas trees in our home for the past decade or so because we're all about sustainability — and, according to Facebook, buyers in past years have brought home real trees that are accidentally accessorized with live woodland animals like hawks, owls, snakes and raccoons.

A family in Australia even found a live koala in their Christmas tree — and not the stuffed version with the Velcro paws.

Although it might actually be kind of neat to find one of these critters in a Christmas tree, I'm pretty sure that my three teen

JASE GRAVES

SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES



daughters would insist on trying to keep the stowaway wildlife as pets — and I would (as usual) somehow be placed in charge of dropping removal.

Seriously, though, I was raised on artificial Christmas trees. My earliest memories from childhood in the 1970s are of a solid white tree in the family living room. It was decorated with bright red balls, matching tinsel, and ornaments shaped like candy that I couldn't resist sampling — repeatedly hoping that the next bite might taste like something other than asbestos.

We also occasionally trimmed a tree with ornaments that my big brother and I had made — when he didn't have me in a headlock. Several of these decorations were the kind that displayed our elementary school portraits, most of mine featuring a hairstyle from my embarrassing chili-bowl period.

My grandmother had one of those state-of-the-art silver aluminum trees decked out with metallic blue decorations. It looked like it either belonged in Studio 54 or with Mr. Spock on the main bridge of the Starship Enterprise, which — for fledgling

geeks like my brother and me — made Christmas at her house even more "fascinating." (See what I did there?)

So, this holiday season we'll carry on our tradition with a brand new discounted artificial Christmas tree that I'll dread taking down sometime in late February.

I do feel a little sad that I won't be making my yearly death-defying trip up the attic ladder to retrieve our old pencil trees in their boxes — if you could even call them boxes anymore. They're really just geological formations of petrified duct tape holding together what once could have been described as cardboard. I think I might just leave them up there permanently for my three daughters to discover someday when I'm gone — and give them one last reason to be annoyed with me.

Despite the possible Christmas tree shortage, my hope is that you and your family are able to enjoy this wonderful holiday season when we share gifts with our loved ones to celebrate the Lord's most miraculous gift to us all.

And if you do manage to bring home a live tree this year, may you enjoy its natural beauty, revel in its fresh scent, and check under it periodically for koala droppings.

Graves is an award-winning humor columnist from East Texas. His columns have been featured in *Texas Escapes* magazine, *The Shreveport Times*, *The Longview News Journal*, and *The Kilgore News Herald*. Contact Graves at [susanjase@sbcglobal.net](mailto:susanjase@sbcglobal.net).



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pictured left to right (front row): Caitlin Knight, Katherine Dial, Emma Shugart, Morgan Lane, and Ashley Daiker. Pictured left to right (second row): Ada Shaffer, Grace Mabray, Kristin Tuttle. Pictured left to right (third row): Sarah Savage, Abigail Roup, Ava Conroy, Brooklyn Matthews, Zoe Pickard, Sage Araya, Emilia Pickard, and Peyton York. Pictured left to right (back row): Jordan Angel, Lara Adams, and Riley Severin

## Local charity league honors Class of 2022

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Azalea Chapter of the National Charity League will honor its graduating seniors at its upcoming annual senior presentation in early January at the Marriott Sugarland.

Chapter members will celebrate the accomplishments of each of the 19 girls in the Azalea Class of 2022 and recognize her contributions to the community during her years of service. The seniors are students at four area high schools, including Cinco

Ranch, Katy, Seven Lakes, and Taylor. The Azalea Class of 2022 members have served over 4,600 volunteer hours in support of 25 charitable organizations in Katy such as Katy Christian Ministries, Krause Center, The Ballard House and Kidz Club.

## Katy Business Association to vote on 2022 board

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The nominating process for Katy Business Association Board of Directors has begun, according to a November 29th email from current KBA president Mathew David. The organization's by-laws call

for directors to be elected annually from the members of the association. The current Vice-President, Jennifer Pierce, will move up to the position of President per the by-laws. Nominations for the 2022 Board of Directors are: Vice-President, Olivia Martin; Secretary, Sandra

Ross; Treasurer, Myriam Slingerland; Membership Director, Carrie Swinsinski; Marketing Director, Bill Lacy; and Technology Director, Tony Modora. Voting will take place on Thursday, December 9, at KBA's monthly meeting. Board members will be installed at the group's January meeting.

## TRIBUTE

### JOAN MARIE BIGHOUSE BURLESON 1957 - 2021

Joan Marie Bighouse Burleson passed away at her home in Katy, on Friday, December 3, 2021, at the age of 64 years. Joannie, as she was commonly known, was born on April 7, 1957 in Charleston, West Virginia, to Robert Leo "Bob" Bighouse and Elizabeth Jane Rieger Bighouse. She was a loyal fan of the Katy Tigers, and with her kind heart she helped the team on different occasions. She was well-loved and is still thought highly of by past teammates of the Tiger football team. Joannie could also frequently be found quenching her sweet tooth with brownies, or quenching her thirst with an ice-cold Dr. Pepper. Above all, she loved her family dearly and held a special place in her heart for her grandchildren.

She is survived by her loving husband, Sidney Burleson; children, Jennifer (Brad) Barnes, Brittany Burleson and Kayla Burleson; grandchildren, Emily Hope, Maison, Evan, Lany, and Riley; father, Robert Leo "Bob" Bighouse; siblings, Bobby Bighouse, Julie (Linda) Bighouse, and William (Gail) Bighouse; and nieces, Erin, Heather, Alyssa and Lauren. She was preceded in death by her mother, Elizabeth Bighouse; brother, Jimmy Bighouse; sister, Beth Geiger; and granddaughter, Gracie.

The family will receive friends from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at the Schmidt Funeral Home Grand Parkway, where funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, with Pastor Jeff Reynolds officiating. Condolences may be expressed at [www.Schmidt-FuneralHome.net](http://www.Schmidt-FuneralHome.net)

Funeral services held under the direction of Schmidt Funeral Home  
1344 W. Grand Parkway South - Katy, Texas 77494  
(281) 391-2424

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Psalms 94:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Clay's</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;">IN YOUR FAMILY'S TIME OF NEED... 3923 Fifth Street Brookshire, TX 77423 281-CLAY-WAY (281.252.9929) ClaysMortuary.com</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Your Ad Here!</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;">Call Debbie for more information 281-391-3141</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;"><b>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> <b>EL SHADDAI ASAMBLEA DE DIOS</b> 5610 LILAC STREET • 281-391-8339 PASTORS, PETER &amp; ESTELA PINON <b>FAMILY LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> 24911 ROESNER ROAD • 281-392-0637 ALBERT CORTEZ, PASTOR • WWW.FLAG.CHURCH <b>RIVERS OF OIL CHURCH</b> 541 PIN OAK ROAD, KATY • 832-782-7370 LEAD PASTOR: MR. 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## Bill limiting how history is taught in Texas becomes law

BY BRIAN LOPEZ  
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A more restrictive law designed to keep “critical race theory” out of Texas public schools became law on Dec. 2.

Under the new law, a “teacher may not be compelled to discuss a widely debated and currently controversial issue of public policy or social affairs.” The law doesn’t define what a controversial issue is. If a teacher does discuss these topics, they must “explore that topic objectively and in a manner free from political bias.”

It also requires at least one teacher and one campus administrator at each school district to attend a civics training program that will teach educators how race and racism should be taught in Texas schools.

There are more than 1,200 school districts in Texas. The cost to develop and implement the training program alone would be about \$14.6 million annually, according to the Legislative Budget Board.

Senate Bill 3, passed during the Texas Legislature’s second special session ending Sept. 2, replaces House Bill 3979, which Gov. Greg Abbott signed over the summer. At the time, Abbott said more needed to be done to “abolish” critical race theory in Texas classrooms and lawmakers went to work to craft a more restrictive measure. The result was SB 3.

“It’s not just about what a teacher may or may not say,” said Chloe Latham Sikes, deputy di-



JORDAN VONDERHAAR FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A new Texas law requires at least one teacher and one campus administrator at each school to undergo civics training that must be implemented no later than the 2025-26 school year. The so-called “critical race theory” law prohibits teachers from discussing “a widely debated and currently controversial issue of public policy or social affairs.”

rector of policy at the Intercultural Development Research Association. “It’s also how they go about their class, how they design the class — how they might address really sensitive issues of race and gender and identity and sexism in their classrooms.”

Critical race theory is the idea that racism is embedded in legal systems and not limited to individuals. It’s an academic discipline taught at the university

level. But it has become a common phrase used by conservatives to include anything about race taught or discussed in public secondary schools.

The new civics training mandated by the new law that requires attendance by at least one teacher and one campus administrator from each district will be created by the Texas Education Agency and it must be implemented no later than the 2025-2026 school

year.

The state education agency has not yet released what this civics training program will look like. The law also requires the TEA to set up an advisory board for the training program.

The earlier attempt at a law to restrict what is taught in school caused so much confusion among educators that a North Texas administrator informed teachers at a training session in October that

they had to provide materials that presented an “opposing” perspective of the Holocaust.

In records obtained by The Texas Tribune, the TEA has been advising school administrators that teachers should just continue teaching the current curriculum until the State Board of Education revises the social studies curriculum over the next year.

The new law also zeroed in on the New York Times’ Pulitzer Prize-winning 1619 Project, a collection of essays that centered on how slavery and the contributions of Black Americans shaped the United States. With this law, students cannot be required to read the 1619 Project essays. It also bars students from receiving credit for working as a volunteer with a political campaign or interning for companies or organizations where they will be lobbying. Also, any school district that uses an online portal to assign learning material has to give parents access.

“All of this is really about routing out any acknowledgement of the salience of sex, race, gender and silencing those conversations, which, in the end, ultimately hurt students of color and students in the LGBTQ community,” Sikes said.

*This article originally appeared in The Texas Tribune at <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/12/02/texas-critical-race-theory-law/>. The Texas Tribune is a member-supported, nonpartisan newsroom informing and engaging Texans on state politics and policy. Learn more at [texastribune.org](https://www.texastribune.org).*



MICHAEL GONZALEZ/THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Texas lawmakers illegally discriminated against voters of color by drawing new political districts that give white voters more political power despite rapid growth of Hispanic and Black populations, according to a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Justice. Redistricting voter precincts has been a controversial issue from the city to the federal level in the wake of the 2020 Census results. The U.S. Constitution requires generally equally populated voting districts to ensure fair representation. The practice of mapping districts in a way that favors a political party or disenfranchises a particular group is referred to as gerrymandering.

## U.S. Department of Justice sues Texas over political maps

BY ALEXA URA  
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The U.S. Department of Justice is throwing its weight into the legal fight over Texas’ newly drawn maps for Congress and the state House, filing a lawsuit Monday that claims Texas lawmakers discriminated against voters of color by denying Latino and Black voters equal opportunities to participate in the voting process and elect their preferred candidates.

The Biden administration filed its lawsuit in federal court in Texas, joining what’s expected to be a protracted fight over the political boundaries the state will use for elections to come. It joins a collection of individual voters and organizations representing voters of color that have already sued the state over maps that help solidify the GOP’s dominance while weakening the influence of voters of color.

The justice department suit also asks the federal court to block the state from conducting the upcoming March primaries under the challenged maps.

U.S. Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta said the maps passed into law by the Republican-controlled Legislature showed an “overall disregard for the massive minority population growth” the state experienced over the last decade.

“Our investigation determined that Texas’ redistricting plans will dilute the increased minority voting strength that should have developed from these significant demographic shifts,” Gupta said.

Texas lawmakers this year took on the work of redistricting to incorporate a decade of population growth into the state’s maps and equalize the population of districts. But their work, signed into law by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, was largely not reflective of the state’s growth, 95% of which was attributable to people of color.

Republicans opted to give white voters effective control of the two new congressional districts the state gained because of its explosive population

growth, even though the state’s white population has remained relatively stagnant. The state’s new congressional map also reduces the number of districts with a Hispanic voting majority from eight to seven, while the number of districts with Black residents as the majority of eligible voters drops from one to zero. Half of the 4 million residents the state gained in the past 10 years were Hispanic.

In its complaint, the DOJ takes specific aim at the redrawing of the 23rd Congressional District in West Texas, a long fought-over district, which it argues was reconfigured by switching out voters and splitting precincts so that the final product would “eliminate a Latino electoral opportunity.” The DOJ also points to the configuration of districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where it argues the map “effectively turns back a decade of rapid Latino population growth and preserves Anglo control of most remaining districts.”

Republicans redrew congressional districts in the area with almost surgical precision, stranding urban and suburban voters of color in vast rural districts.

The department is also challenging Texas’ new state House map where it argues lawmakers eliminated Latino electoral opportunities “through manipulation or outright elimination of districts where Latino communities previously had elected their preferred candidates.”

The map drops the number of districts in which Hispanics make up the majority of eligible voters from 33 to 30.

Throughout the redistricting process, Republicans argued their maps comply with federal laws protecting voters of color from discrimination, though they declined to offer specifics about their legal analysis.

“The Department of Justice’s absurd lawsuit against our state is the Biden Administration’s latest ploy to control Texas voters,” Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said in a post on Twitter. “I am confident that our legislature’s redistricting decisions will be proven lawful, and this preposterous attempt to sway democracy will fail.”

## CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

BY GARY BORDERS  
TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

The state’s Public Utility Commission last week lowered the maximum allowable wholesale price for electricity by almost half, from \$9,000 per megawatt hour to \$5,000.

The move came after prices soared to the maximum during last February’s deadly freeze, causing financial havoc along with the widespread power outages. A number of electric providers declared bankruptcy after being faced with enormous bills, including Brazos Electric Power Cooperative and Griddy Energy.

As the Austin American-Statesman reported, the state’s largely deregulated electricity market provides financial incentives to prompt power generators to deliver more electricity to the grid during peak demand. But those incentives came with steep prices, and some Griddy customers received electric bills of nearly \$10,000. Those bills were ultimately forgiven under an agreement negotiated by the attorney general’s office.

Peter Lake, chairman of the PUC, said lowering the price ceiling will “make sure the people of Texas are not exposed to those extraordinary high prices” again, the Statesman reported.

However, the CEO of the state’s largest power generator worries the state has not done enough to insulate itself against another deadly freeze. Curt Morgan of Vistra Corp. said that while his company has spent \$50 million this year weatherizing more than a dozen plants, the state still hasn’t ensured a reliable supply of natural gas. The Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates the natural gas industry, is still working to finalize rules that would set weatherization mandates. However, those rules would not go into effect until early 2023, the Texas Tribune reported.

Morgan told legislators that Vistra’s plants couldn’t get enough natural gas to run anywhere near full capacity during the freeze.

“Why couldn’t we get it?” Morgan said. “Because the gas system was not weatherized. And so we had natural gas producers that weren’t producing.”

## State lowers power price cap and 4 other Texas-sized issues

### 1 State to get \$35 billion in infrastructure funds

In the next five years Texas will get more than \$35 billion in federal funding for roads, public transportation and water system improvements, The Dallas Morning News reported. The funding is part of the massive infrastructure bill Congress passed in November to provide \$548 billion in new investments across the country over five years.

The state’s road system got a “D+” in a 2021 report card from the American Society of Civil Engineers. “Current funding levels and resources from the state’s gas tax are inadequate to keep up with Texas’ projected growth, leaving a \$15 billion annual gap through 2040,” the engineering report said.

The federal funding also includes \$1.2 billion for Texas airports, \$537 million to replace and repair bridges and at least \$100 million for broadband expansion, according to The Morning News.

### 2 Webinars explain tuition fund

The Texas Tuition Promise Fund is offering a series of webinars to provide an overview of the state’s pre-paid college tuition plan. In addition, the webinars will explain scholarship opportunities that are available.

“Upcoming webinars provide an overview of the Texas Tuition Promise Fund and information on different tuition unit types, tuition redemption values and payment options,” according to a press release. “The webinars also offer information about matching scholarships and tuition unit grants available through the Texas Match the Promise Foundation.”

Anyone interested can sign up for a webinar at [www.texastuitionpromisefund.com/events/](http://www.texastuitionpromisefund.com/events/).

### 3 New COVID-19 cases, deaths increase

While the appearance of the omicron variant of COVID-19 dominates the news, no cases of the variant

had been reported in Texas as of Sunday. Health officials say it’s a matter of time, but they don’t yet know how severe and how contagious it will be.

What is known is that the number of new cases of COVID-19 in Texas in the past week rose to 30,201, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University — the highest level since late October. A total of 564 deaths were reported. The delta variant continues to be the dominant strain, infecting mostly unvaccinated Texans.

Lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations in the state was largely unchanged, with 2,886 reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services as of Sunday. The state crossed the 16 million mark of fully vaccinated people, with 3.175 million people also receiving an additional dose, according to DSHS. To date, 55% of the state’s total population is fully vaccinated.

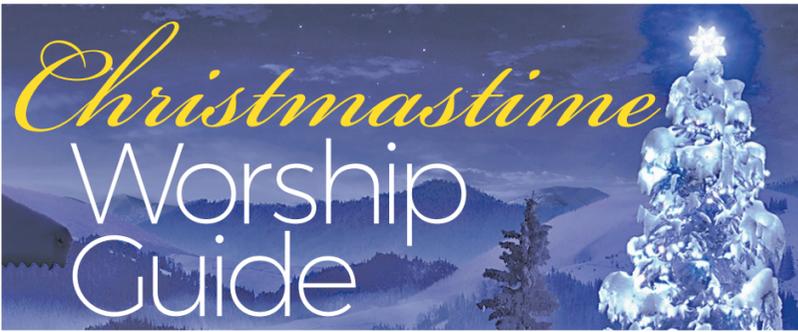
### 4 Judge blocks social media censorship law

A federal judge in Austin last week blocked the state’s social media censorship law before it took effect, the Houston Chronicle reported. House Bill 20, signed by Gov. Greg Abbott on Sept. 9, prohibited social media sites like Facebook and Twitter from censoring users “based on their political viewpoints.”

U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman wrote in his ruling that the bill violates the sites’ First Amendment right to moderate content disseminated on their platforms. Abbott had pushed for the bill, saying in a Twitter video, “Freedom of speech is under attack in Texas. There is a dangerous movement by some social media companies to silence conservative ideas and values.”

The state is expected to appeal Pitman’s ruling.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: [gborders@texaspress.com](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).



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SUSAN ROVEGNO  
In a unique turn, two backhoes were used for the ceremonial groundbreaking for Dig World.

# Dig World adventure park celebrates groundbreaking

BY GEORGE SLAUGHTER  
NEWS EDITOR

A groundbreaking-themed park first requires a groundbreaking for its construction. Dig World, the adventure park under construction at Katy Mills Mall, celebrated its groundbreaking Nov. 19.

Dig World is unique in that patrons will be able to operate excavating equipment.

Dig World will be at 5000 Katy Mills Circle, on the north side of the shopping mall and east of the Bass Pro Shops in the mall. Company officials expect the park to open in March.

City Administrator Byron Hebert said the groundbreaking was unique in that the company used two backhoes for the ceremony.

"It's the first time I've seen that," Hebert said.

Hebert said city and company officials met at one time about developing the park. Hebert said the company was looking at a different location, along Highway 90. Then, Hebert said, city officials heard that the company might develop the park at Katy Mills.

"When that came about, it was like, perfect," Hebert said. "It was entertainment, and it works well with the other things they're trying to do out there for entertainment. It's nice to bring in attractions such as the park because it helps to increase mall traffic."

Lisa Connolly, Katy Mills director of marketing and business development, said the mall was committed to growing, evolving, and supporting what the community needs.

"Dig World will surely enhance the family-friendly offerings of Katy Mills, providing a fun place for families to spend time together during their visit to the center," Connolly said.

Like many patrons the park hopes to attract, Hebert has not operated any of the heavy equipment that will be at Dig World. But he's not going to let that stop him.

"I do plan on going out there and giving it my try," Hebert said, adding that he would begin with the smaller equipment first.

The company has partnered with



SUSAN ROVEGNO  
Jacob Robinson, one of the founders of Dig World, speaks at the November 19th groundbreaking.

Mustang Cat for the excavation equipment. Mustang Cat is a Houston-based construction supply company which has a retail outlet on the Katy Freeway.

Sam Tucker, Mustang Cat president and chief operating officer, said the company looks forward to partnering with Dig World as it showcases Mustang Cat equipment in a hands-on experience for the family.

Hebert praised Mustang Cat and its equipment.

"You're on legitimate equipment," Hebert said. "It should be fun to go out and play in the dirt."

Park patrons must be of a certain height to use the equipment. Most equipment requires the operator to be at least 3½ feet (or 42 inches) tall.

"They've got a kid version of some of the equipment," Hebert said. "It's all good."

The equipment will be the featured attraction of the park. Yet, the company intends for it to be a site for parties and corporate events. Towards that end, a pavilion is being built and outdoor games will be available for patrons to enjoy. Season passes are now available on the Dig World website and bookings are being accepted for birthday parties and corporate events. Individual tickets will go on sale prior to the grand opening, slated for early 2022.

The company has partnered with the Texas A&M University Department of Construction Science for educational materials.

Dig World is hiring staff, including a hospitality manager and an operations director. The company said it is set to expand operations over the next 24 months to various locations across the country. Robinson confirmed via phone Tuesday that the Katy location is the first of 10 sites planned over the next five years for Dig World.

Box T Construction will build the park. Trivium Advisors will develop the park.

Hebert said Dig World is one of several projects in development at the mall. He said an announcement is expected next week on some of those projects.

"They've got some other things almost done," Hebert said.



SUSAN ROVEGNO  
Katy City Administrator Byron Hebert visits with Heidi MacMillan, Katy Mills Mall general manager, at the Dig World groundbreaking.

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# **An Open Letter to the Katy Independent School District Board of Trustees**

December 9, 2021

Katy Independent School District  
6301 S. Stadium Lane - Katy TX 77494

Dear School Board Members

Greg Schulte, Lance Redmon, Dawn Champagne, Rebecca Fox, Donald Keller, Ashley Vann, Leah Wilson

It has come to my attention the schools within the Katy Independent School District are purchasing and making available explicit sexual fiction books with explicit content and books which encourage gender questioning and alternative lifestyles.

Out of concern for the students, especially the young, I implore you to remove and not allow these books which are meant to remove their self-worth. These books do not educate about the true meaning of our sexuality given by God, which is love through our bodies through a committed relationship in marriage between a man and woman. Instead these books treat the body as an object to be exploited casually and deprive its true meaning. This type of thinking has led to many horrible consequences such as disease, unwanted pregnancies, depression from the realization of being used (especially young girls), trauma inflicted on loved ones, sexual addiction, premarital sex could be a thorn in marriage and even the taking of innocent life.

The District should be neutral and not have books that portray the marital act, something so dignified and beautiful as being profane and meaningless and only about pleasure. Many cultures, not just Christian or Jewish, would find these books deplorable. Please do not teach values contrary to the majority of human tradition for eons. This includes not having books which encourage children to question their gender at an age when they are insecure as it is. This could contribute to late onset gender dysphoria which is not based on feelings from early childhood but mostly from peer pressure, their own insecurity and the influence of things they read in books like this or see on the internet.

Please use your authority to urgently and permanently remove these books and put in place a policy to not allow books containing this type of misleading, harmful and immoral content.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
David Feigleson  
Katy Resident

Please consider attending the next school board meeting respectfully and peaceably on Monday December 13, 2021 and support the permanent removal of these types of books.

ATTACHED LINK TO LAST MEETING: <https://katyisdtx.swagit.com/play/11162021-676>  
Please go to Item 5 (Open Meeting) to listen to concerned mothers read from selected books within the KISD Library system. Viewer discretion advised.



Paetow's Jacob Brown rushes for his third TD during the first half of the Class 5A-Division I regional final playoff game between Paetow and Fort Bend Hightower at Rice Stadium in Houston.  
MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

## Brown, defense lead Paetow to first state semifinal berth

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Jacob Brown is still working his way back to full health. Soft tissue injuries to his knee threatened to end his senior season, but the running back went to work rehabbing and made it back to play for Paetow in the playoffs.

Brown's workload has continued to grow and he has gotten better every week he has played. That showed head Paetow coach BJ Gotte what he needed to give Brown the full workload at running back heading into Friday's Class 5A, Division I Region III Final against Fort Bend Hightower. "I'm just proud of him. I'm proud of his effort and I'm proud of his ability to come

back," Gotte said. "When he was injured and he got the news that there was a potential that he may not play again this, it was a pretty bad deal. But he put his head down, went to work, rehabbed and really committed to being his best self. To see him come back and have this success is just really cool."

See **PAETOW**, page B7

## Katy holds on for win over Summer Creek

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

It had been months since Katy was truly tested. The Tigers had gone through district and the playoffs without playing a game that ended closely, as their closest game was a 41-24 playoff win over C.E. King. But the Tigers knew that they would face one of their toughest tests against Summer Creek in the Class 6A-Division II Region III

See **KATY**, page B7



MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES  
Katy's Malik Sylla gets the sack on King Panthers QB Nehemiah Broussard during the Class 6A-Division II regional semifinal playoff game between Katy Tigers and King Panthers at Legacy Stadium in Katy.

## SCORES & SCHEDULES

### FOOTBALL

**Scores**  
• Katy 34, Summer Creek 31  
• Paetow 35, Hightower 12

**Friday**  
**Class 5A-Division I**  
• Paetow vs. Flour Bluff, 7 p.m., Heroes Stadium, San Antonio

**Saturday**  
• Katy vs. Austin Westlake, 2 p.m., McLane Stadium, Waco



### BOYS BASKETBALL

**Scores**  
**Katy ISD Tournament**  
**Gold Bracket**  
• Paetow 58, Klein Forest 46  
• Seven Lakes 63, Jersey Village 56  
• Mayde Creek 74, Cy-Park 69  
• Seven Lakes 65, Paetow 63  
• Westfield 64, Seven Lakes 58

**Friday**  
• Cinco Ranch at Alief Taylor, 6 p.m.  
• Katy vs. North Shore, 7 p.m.  
• Mayde Creek vs. Channelview, 7 p.m.

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

**Scores**  
**Katy ISD Tournament**  
• Cinco Ranch 74, Aldine Davis 30  
• Klein Collins 54, Paetow 34  
• Tompkins 80, Westfield 35  
• Bridgeland 50, Morton Ranch 25  
• Ellison 50, Mayde Creek 37  
• North Shore 71, Cy-Falls 25  
• Seven Lakes 68, The Woodlands 33  
• Katy 42, Hastings 30  
• Conroe 50, Taylor 40  
• Colleyville Heritage 61, Jordan 28  
• Taylor 46, Jordan 22  
• Cy-Falls 47, Mayde Creek 37  
• Morton Ranch 33, Dekaney 25  
• Paetow 46, Bryan 32  
• Bush 45, Paetow 43  
• Westfield 53, Morton Ranch 32  
• Cy-Woods 50, Taylor 29  
• Cinco Ranch 60, Mansfield 51  
• SA Central 46, Tompkins 30  
• Seven Lakes 60, Channelview 36  
• Katy 41, Oak Ridge 38  
• Katy 42, Colleyville Heritage 28  
• Seven Lakes 47, Ellison 44  
• Cinco Ranch 62, Klein Collins 49  
• Allen 66, Cinco Ranch 34  
• Cinco Ranch 46, Katy 38  
• Seven Lakes 37, Katy 25  
• Seven Lakes 44, Allen 36

**Friday**  
• Jordan at Bryan Rudder, 6:30 p.m.  
• Tompkins vs. Cinco Ranch, 7 p.m.  
• Seven Lakes vs. Katy, 7 p.m.  
• Morton Ranch vs. Taylor, 7 p.m.

## Katy ISD athletes put pen to paper on national signing day

### STAFF REPORT

Over 40 Katy ISD athletes signed to continue their athletic careers at the next level earlier this month on national signing day. Signees included the following:

**Cinco Ranch**  
• **Blake Hansen**, Baseball, Texas

A&M University  
• **Rickelle Henderson**, Acrobatics and Tumbling, University of Oregon  
• **Mark Henderson**, Baseball, Abilene Christian University  
• **Shelby Hodge**, Softball, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
• **T.J. Hughes**, Baseball, Texas A&M University-Texarkana

• **Catalina Martinez**, Volleyball, University of Memphis  
• **Emily Presley**, Volleyball, University of Arkansas at Monticello  
• **Zach Royse**, Baseball, University of Texas at San Antonio

**Katy**  
• **Jada Campos**, Track, Arizona

State University  
• **Jordan Gamble**, Volleyball, Northwestern State University  
• **Chandler Lee**, Volleyball, University of New Orleans  
• **Rebecca Partyka**, Soccer, Northeastern State University  
• **Maddie Waak**, Volleyball, Louisiana State University

**Mayde Creek**  
• **Simone Ballard**, Track, Baylor University  
• **Carlos Barrera**, Cross Country/Track, St. Edward's University  
• **Mecca Freeman**, Volleyball, Bethune-Cookman University

See **SIGNING**, page B5



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A Paetow defender gets the sack on Hightower quarterback Kendron Penson, Jr. during the Class 5A-Division I regional final playoff game between Paetow and Fort Bend Hightower at Rice Stadium in Houston.

MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

# Paetow prepared for biggest game in school's history

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Paetow's players are playing for more than for just themselves this year.

This season has been about not just leaving a legacy for themselves, but for leaving a legacy for last year's seniors as well.

"Being so close with a lot of the seniors from last year. People like Damon (Bankston), Jamin (Goodwin) and Agumba (Otuonye) just to name a few," said senior quarterback CJ Dumas. "it's great to go out there and prove to everyone what we could have done last year. We're doing it for those guys too."

Paetow's season was cut short last season when they were told the day before their area round matchup that they wouldn't be able to play due to a number of positive COVID-19 tests within the school.

That has motivated the team all year and this group wants to leave their own legacy.

"It was a deal where we got told we couldn't play about 45 minutes after a practice that Thursday and most of the kids had already gone home or were sent home because of COVID-19 tests. So I stood in the team room and told about a third of the team that we couldn't play anymore," said Paetow head coach BJ Gotte. "It was kind of a picture of the whole year. It was broken up and inconsistent and just rough."

"It was pretty cool because when we played Cedar Park, a lot of those seniors from last year



Paetow's Jacob Brown celebrates a touchdown with teammate Kole Wilson during the Class 5A-Division I regional final playoff game between Paetow and Fort Bend Hightower at Rice Stadium in Houston.

came back and watched our kids play. It was a really cool moment. They're motivated by those seniors from last year but they want to leave a legacy too."

That motivation has led Paetow into the state semifinals for the first time in school history, where they'll be faced with a matchup against Flour Bluff at 7 p.m. Friday at Heroes Stadium in San Antonio. Flour Bluff will also be making its first ever state semifinal appear-

ance. Paetow has dominated on defense all season and will look to continue that on Friday. The group has allowed just one opponent to score over 20 points and has beaten every playoff opponent by over 20 points.

"I think what's made us so successful is our tenacity," said senior linebacker Luke Fitch. "We're not afraid of anyone or anything in front of us. It doesn't matter who

## CLASS 5A-DIVISION I STATE SEMIFINALS

**Paetow (13-1)  
vs. Flour Bluff (12-2)**  
7 p.m. Friday  
Heroes Stadium, San Antonio

you put in front of us, we're going to ball out. We're an aggressive and fast defense and it makes us special."

That defense will need to continue to be on top of their game against the Hornets.

Flour Bluff comes off a 13-12 win over Corpus Christi Veterans Memorial last week in their regional final.

It was a defensive battle on both sides. The Hornets had 255 yards of total offense and only 85 passing yards, but they held Veterans Memorial to 211 total yards and under 100 rushing yards.

Flour Bluff goes as quarterback Nash Villegas goes. The senior led Flour Bluff to a regional final last season and has gone a step further this year, getting to the state semifinals and passing for over 2000 yards and 20 touchdowns so far this season.

"We have to get pressure on him," Gotte said. "That's one of the things I've noticed watching video is that the offensive line does a really good job of giving him time to throw the ball. So we have to pressure him and then also we

have to stop the run game and put them in down and distances where they have to drop back. They do a really good job and have a solid RPO game. They block well and their quarterback has an extremely quick release and is accurate. If we allow them to stay on schedule, it's going to be hard."

Flour Bluff is big up front on the offensive line with two division I commits, and they also use Virginia Tech offensive line commit Johnny Dickson as a very big wildcard. They are a team that uses the run and play action and despite a number of injuries in the backfield, the Hornets will still try to establish the ground game against Paetow.

The Flour Bluff defense has been a huge factor in their success this year. Over their four playoff games they are giving up an average of 18 points and have held teams to two scores or less in three of their four playoff games.

The Hornets are riding an 8-game winning streak heading into the matchup, with their last loss coming in October to Gregory-Portland.

"We've played against big lines before, it will be a challenge with them having a Virginia Tech commit, but I have faith in our offensive line," Dumas said. "I think our offensive line is the best in the state. They're well prepared for the challenge and then we have a back who can make plays when you don't think plays are going to be there. I feel like we're going to be good as long as we play as one."

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Katy's Caleb Koger delivers a pass during the Class 6A-Division II regional semifinal playoff game between Katy Tigers and King Panthers at Legacy Stadium in Katy.  
MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

# Katy faces Westlake in battle of state's top teams

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Every player and coach on Katy knows they will have to play their best game of the season this week.

The Tigers have been able to overwhelm opponents ever since district play started, but each of the past two weeks things have gotten closer as they have faced tougher tests in the playoffs.

"These teams we've been facing they've been really good," said senior defensive end Malick Sylla. "But we have to be ready to go against teams like these. There's always going to be more athletic kids, but you cannot let them work you. You can't let them get the best of you."

The Tigers have let their last two opponents hang in games but responded when things got close each time.

Against C.E. King, the Panthers made things a game until midway through the fourth quarter and against Summer Creek it took a last second stand from the Tigers defense to win. The Katy players believe those tests have prepared them for whatever they will face the rest of the way.

"We know how to respond, we know how to respond to adversity. That's what we practice all the time," said senior linebacker Ty Kana. "It starts in the offseason, when things get hard, we don't put our head down and we go to work. Successful things happen when you put your head down and go to work."

Katy jumped out to big leads in both games just like they have against every opponent since

## CLASS 6A-DIVISION II STATE SEMIFINAL

**Katy (14-0) vs.  
Austin Westlake (14-0)**  
2 p.m. Saturday  
McLane Stadium, Waco

district play started, but in both games they allowed the teams to come back in the second half.

C.E. King scored 21 points in the second half against Katy while Summer Creek scored 24. Katy allowed 35 points combined in the third quarters to those teams.

"Summer Creek played well, but we made them look better than what they probably were," said Katy head coach Gary Joseph. "That's a credit to coach (Kenny) Harrison, he's done a great job of turning that program around and that's hard to do. They play in a tough district. This is the type of game we were supposed to play in the quarterfinals and that's a credit to them."

Katy will have to improve in their second half performances this week, as they play the No. 1 ranked team in Texas in Austin Westlake.

The Chaparrals are in the midst of a 38-game winning streak and like the Tigers, won a state championship last season.

They're led by the No. 1 prospect in the nation in senior quarterback Cade Klubnik. The Clemson recruit has already thrown for 2619 yards and 34 touchdowns to just two interceptions so far this year. His favorite target is Jaden



Katy's Brady Englert knocks the ball loose from King receiver Britt McKinney in the end zone during the UIL regional playoff game between Katy Tigers and King Panthers at Legacy Stadium in Katy.  
MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Greathouse, a six foot-three inch junior wide receiver, Greathouse has 952 yards receiving and 15 touchdowns so far this season.

But Westlake can run the ball too, the team has totaled 3477 yards on the ground so far this season and are led by Jack Kayser, who has rushed for 936 yards and 19 touchdowns. Hunter Henault and Christian Edgar both have over 500 yards rushing and Klubnik has 405 yards rushing and 12 rushing

touchdowns so far this year.

The Chaparrals have yet to allow an opponent to reach double digit scoring in the playoffs and are on average giving up under six points per game.

"We have to get our fitting on point," Sylla said. "We just have to get to practice and deal with that and once we do we'll be good. "It was just little mistakes that we had against Summer Creek and we have to correct those."

Katy finished the season as the No. 2 ranked team in the state in Class 6A, leading to a matchup between the two top ranked teams in the state.

While both teams are feeling the pressure, the Tigers are excited for the challenge and the opportunity to prove themselves.

"I'm looking forward to competition," Kana said. "It's going to be No. 1 vs. No. 2 in Texas, so I'm just looking forward to it."



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**950 PUBLIC NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
WALLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT  
January 12, 2021 @ 9:00 A.M.  
COMMISSIONERS' COURTROOM,  
WALLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Waller County Commissioners' Court will conduct a Public Hearing under the Authority of Chapter 251.152, Transportation Code, to consider the establishment of a No Thru Truck Zone at the following roads:

Rochen Road - FM 362 to Mathis Road (Pct 3)

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

**950 PUBLIC NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
WALLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT  
January 12, 2021 @ 9:00 A.M.  
COMMISSIONERS' COURTROOM,  
WALLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Waller County Commissioners' Court will conduct a Public Hearing under the Authority of Chapter 251.152, Transportation Code, to consider the establishment of a Controlled Intersection and the installation of Stop Signs at the following location:

Morton Road at Pitts Road (South within Cane Island) - Will become an All Way Stop

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

**950 PUBLIC NOTICES**

**HARRIS-WALLER COUNTIES MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 4 NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF RULES AND PENALTIES**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of Harris-Waller Counties Municipal Utility District No. 4 (the "District"), at a meeting held on December 2, 2021, adopted:

1. Regulations Governing Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines and Connections, which provides rules and regulations for connection to the District's sewer system; and
2. a Rate Order providing rules and regulations for connection to the District's water, sewer and drainage system as well as charges for these services.

Violation of any of the rules contained in the District's Rate Order and Regulations Governing Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines and Connections will subject the violator to penalties, which includes a fine of up to \$5,000 per breach and/or day, disconnection of water and sewer service, payment of any costs or damages resulting from the violation, and civil and criminal legal action.

Copies of the Rate Order and Regulations Governing Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines and Connections are on file at the principal office of the District, Allen Boone Humphries Robinson LLP, 3200 Southwest Freeway, Suite 2600, Houston, Texas 77027, where they may be read in full.

*/s/ Rhonda Patterson*  
President, Board of Directors

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

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			A	P	E					T	A	C	H	
			P	A	I	N					G	U	I	
			C	A	H	N				A	T	H	A	R
G	R	I	E	G			S	E	A	S	H	O	R	E
A	U	L	D				P	A	N	C	R	E	A	S
D	D	S					A	R	T	H	U	R		

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# Finally at full health, Katy's receivers making a difference

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy has rarely had its full array of receivers available this season.

The Tigers wide receivers have faced a number of injuries which has limited who is on the field and healthy. But that finally changed in the bi-district round, as Nic Anderson, Antonio Silva, Ronnie Schneider and JR Ceyanes all saw game action and caught passes in the same game for one of the first times all season.

"Getting all our receivers back is such a big thing for us," said Katy head coach Gary Joseph. "Now we have all of them and it helps. It keeps them fresh. Antonio (Silva) is really good at what he does, Nic (Anderson) getting back helps us so much because of his length and they also play in our return game. It's big having those kids back and having them all out there."

Anderson was limited to only five games in the regular season while Schneider has played in four, Silva has also missed time due to injury during the district schedule.

Having the entire receiving core back and fully healthy has Katy quarterback Caleb Koger extremely excited.

"They're just all so good and do so much," Koger said. "I feel bad when one of them has a big game and the other doesn't because I want to get all of them the ball and be proud of themselves. They're huge for this team and extremely important to our success."

Anderson is the big name in the group, as he is committed to play at the University of Oklahoma, but it was Silva who that carried the group in the regular season, leading the team in receptions, yards and touchdowns going into the postseason.

But Anderson is fully healthy and making an impact in the playoffs, over the four playoff games, Anderson has 264 receiving yards, 40 rushing yards and five touchdowns.

"I feel really good right now," Anderson said. "I'm almost at 100% and I really don't feel the ankle or the hamstring. It's just good to be back out here with my brothers and be able to play 100% with them."

But playoff teams have yet to be able to key in on Anderson, because it would leave the Tigers other options in the pass and run game open.

"We're all great receivers," Anderson said. The defense is wrong with whoever they double or whoever they cover. If they double or key in

on me then one of the other guys is going to be wide open. They do it to them then I'll be wide open. We really just work off each other."

That type of talk is spread throughout the receivers room. Personal success doesn't matter to the Katy receiving core, or the "rec squad" as they call themselves, it's about what's best for the team.

"We take the blocking part of our jobs really seriously," Silva said. "I know everyone thinks receivers are all about catching the ball, but at Katy, the run game is really important. We have to get our blocks in and we take pride in that and it opens up our routes when we do that as well."

The Tigers have pounded the ball on the ground all season which is the Katy way, but Anderson, Silva, Schneider and Ceyanes and the rest of the receivers and tight ends are making their own mark as the Tigers push further into the postseason.

"The best part about the 'rec squad' is that we bring everything," Ceyanes said. "We can block if you want us to block, we can catch if you want us to catch. We probably will catch a few balls that maybe we weren't supposed to. That's just what gives the 'rec squad' its name."



MARK GOODMAN | SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Ronnie Schneider carries the ball during a District 19-6A game between Katy and Morton Ranch at Legacy Stadium in Katy.



PHOTOS COURTESY KATY ISD

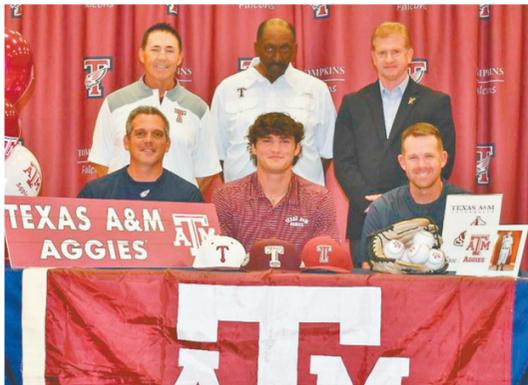
Mayde Creek's Simone Ballard signed to compete in track and field at Baylor.



Cinco Ranch's Catalina Martinez signed to play volleyball at the University of Memphis.



Seven Lakes' Ruben Rojas Betanzos signed to run cross country at Syracuse.



Tompkins' Jace LaViolette signed to play baseball at Texas A&M.



Seven Lake's Haley Tate will compete in track and field at the University of Georgia.



Katy's Maddie Waak signed to play volleyball at Louisiana State University.

## SIGNING

from page B1

### Morton Ranch

- **Tori Ruvalcaba**, Soccer, Northwestern Oklahoma State University

### Paetow

- **Trevor Frank**, Basketball, Dallas Baptist University
- **Zanya Walker**, Wrestling, Texas Woman's University
- **Layne Wierzbicki**, Basketball, Ottawa University

### Seven Lakes

- **Casey Batenhorst**, Volleyball, Southern Methodist University
- **Ruben Rojas Betanzos**, Cross Country/Track, Syracuse University
- **Alva Bjelland**, Swimming, Pace University
- **Cade Climie**, Baseball, Texas A&M University
- **Jack Coultas**, Baseball, University of Texas at Dallas
- **Katie Fitzpatrick**, Soccer, St. Edward's University

- **Ryan Franden**, Baseball, Sam Houston State University
- **Tygun Koc**, Soccer, University of South Carolina
- **Liska Knight**, Tennis, Westmont College
- **Matthew Rueff**, Track, Auburn University
- **Haley Tate**, Track, University of Georgia

### Taylor

- **Alexa Blake**, Soccer, University of Illinois-Springfield

- **Sophie Jenkins**, Softball, University of North Texas

### Tompkins

- **Tauryn Alexander**, Softball, Southwestern University
- **Kennedy Bourque**, Softball, Navarro College
- **Trevor Esparza**, Baseball, Tyler Junior College
- **Madison Gundry**, Volleyball, Blinn Junior College
- **Blakely Haynie**, Softball, Navarro College

- **B.B. Knight**, Basketball, Louisiana Tech
- **Jace LaViolette**, Baseball, Texas A&M University
- **Jack Little**, Baseball, Wichita State University
- **Haven Nail**, Soccer, Spring Hill College
- **Makinlee Poole**, Soccer, Mississippi College
- **Gabriela Rodriguez**, Soccer, Colorado School of Mines
- **Solomon Rotberg**, Baseball, Erskine College

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SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Indianapolis Colts wide receiver Michael Pittman Jr. (11) is tackled after a reception during an NFL game between the Texans and the Colts on December 5, 2021 in Houston, Texas. The Colts won, 31-0.

# Texans shut out in 31-0 loss to Indianapolis

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

It may have been the worst way possible that the Texans started Sunday's game.

Coming off a loss to the Jets, the team was looking for some momentum early, but they ended up doing the opposite of that.

Houston got the ball first but on the opening play from scrimmage, Tyrod Taylor threw an interception, setting up a long day for Houston.

The Texans' offense never got going, fumbling on their next drive and gaining just 48 yards of offense in the first half en route to a 31-0 loss to the Indianapolis Colts. The loss dropped the Texans' record to 2-10.

The Texans did not even pass midfield in the first half, punting or turning it over each of their first seven drives and only gaining three first downs in the first half.

"We're not good enough," said Texans head coach David Culley. "We're not coaching well enough, we're not playing well enough. We made a few changes to some things we had been doing but it didn't get done today. We are going to keep evaluating and figure out the best way to do what we need to do and do it the right way."

The Colts immediately made the Texans pay after the interception, going 29 yards on six plays and scoring on a 1-yard run from Jonathan Taylor.

Despite being put in bad field position situations the rest of the half, the Texans' defense fared well, holding Indianapolis without a point for most of the remainder of the first half, but eventually the Colts broke through again, going on an 11-play, 54-yard drive late in the second quarter. Carson Wentz threw a 3-yard touchdown to Ashton Dulin, putting the Colts up two scores at halftime.

"We have to figure out a way to score points, stay on the field and keep our defense off the field," said center Justin Britt. "The defense played really hard and fought for most of the game against a really good running team. But if we leave them on the field then we aren't doing them any justice. We just have to look at the film, figure out what happened and try to get better day after day. The goal is to go 1-0 so we have to do what we can to get ready for next week."

The Colts continued to dominate in the third, taking their opening possession 75 yards on nine plays before Taylor scored his second touchdown on a 3-yard run.

The day went from bad to worse for the Texans when Tyrod Taylor was forced out with an injury to his left hand and Davis Mills had to come on in his place, but the Texans found signs of life with Mills under center.

The team gained three first downs on Mills' first drive, tying what they had the entire first half, but still failed to come away with any points.

Taylor was evaluated for a wrist injury and it was determined he was available to play, but the Texans stuck with Mills the rest of the way.

**"When you don't score any points in the game, you evaluate everything. We are going to evaluate everything, including (quarterback)."**

—David Culley, Texans head coach

"The one thing he has to do, which he didn't do today, is first play of the game (Taylor) threw an interception, and you have to take care of the ball," Culley said. "Then we had a fumble on our next play on offense. The job for our quarterback is to get us in the endzone and (Taylor) didn't do that today."

Culley wouldn't say if Taylor would be the starter next week.

"When you don't score any points in the game, you evaluate everything," Culley said. "We are going to evaluate everything, including (quarterback)."

The Colts extended their lead in the fourth quarter with a 23-yard field goal by Michael Badgley.

For the second time this season, a team sent in their backup quarterback to finish things off against the Texans, as Sam Ehlinger came in during the fourth quarter for the Colts. The Colts capped the game off with a 3-yard touchdown run from Deon Jackson.

It's the second time this season that the Texans were shut out; they also failed to score against the Bills.

The lone bright spot from the game for the Texans was linebacker Kamu Grugier-Hill, who finished the game with 19 tackles, breaking a team single-game record.

"It's a honor, I can't even lie," Grugier-Hill said. "I think my whole career I've been pigeonholed a little bit as a special teams guy and this franchise has given me a chance to prove to everyone be a real starter and player in this league. We still didn't win, so you can't celebrate the individual accomplishments too much, but it's definitely an honor."

The Texans will be back at NRG at noon Sunday to take on the Seahawks.

"We have to execute better," Mills said. "We had some opportunities today where we messed up things and we have to get that corrected. We just have to put together a full game and go out there and make plays."



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Indianapolis Colts defensive end Al-Quadin Muhammad (97) knocks the ball loose during a sack of Houston Texans quarterback Tyrod Taylor (5) during an NFL game between the Texans and the Colts on December 5, 2021 in Houston, Texas.

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**KATY**

from page B1

Final.  
“We knew we were going to get their best game,” said senior defensive end Malik Sylla. “We took a punch in the mouth and had to fight adversity but we got the win. We have to go back to practice and get to work though. What we did today, it was a good win, but we have some stuff to make up.”

Katy took an early lead and dominated the first half before Summer Creek made a late charge at a comeback, but the Tigers narrowly escaped with a 34-31 victory.

The win was Katy’s closest game of the season and a game fitting of a regional final.

“They handled the adversity well, they knew that it wasn’t their best game but it was good enough to get to the semifinals,” said Katy head coach Gary Joseph. “I told them that we’ll worry about correcting some things later on, right now, we need to enjoy the win. When you get to the point where you don’t enjoy the win and don’t enjoy winning, then what are you playing for?”

It took a last second sack for Katy to come away with the victory.

Down three, Summer Creek got the ball and drove to near Katy territory with just over a minute remaining. But Katy stopped the Bulldogs on three straight plays, setting up a fourth and 15 that would decide the game.

Jahrik Jones scrambled on the fourth down and tried to make a play, but the pocket collapsed and Brockerick Johnson and Sylla took Jones down to seal the Katy victory.

“I knew the game was on the line and that we had to make a play,” Sylla said. “I just put my everything into that play and I just knew I had to make the sack. I just went in there

knowing I would do it.”

Katy (14-0) took a 27-7 lead going into halftime, but all of the momentum shifted in the second half. Summer Creek (10-4) scored on its opening possession of the half on a 19-yard run from Torrie Curry and on Katy’s first play of the half Caleb Koger was intercepted by Darien Hargrove who returned it 15 yards for another touchdown.

From there, the teams had a crazy back and forth where they fumbled it on three straight plays. Neither team was able to score as they traded punts after that until Dallas Glass gave Katy much needed breathing room by running in a 51-yard score.

Seth Davis got Katy to that point in the first half, rushing for touchdown runs of 12, eight and 68 and ending the half with 218 yards, while Caleb Koger also threw an eight yard touchdown pass to Nic Anderson in the first half.

But Davis was held in check in the second half, finishing the day with 234 yards rushing while the Tigers only mustered 103 yards of offense in the second half.

“They got a little momentum and got a big run and that got us on our heels,” Joseph said. “We can’t turn the ball over and can’t give them good field position like we did. That’s the thing we got away from. You can’t beat yourself. But I’m proud of the kids for hanging in there. We had to fight and scratch and that’s what sometimes you have to do.”

Summer Creek trimmed the Katy lead to six with seconds remaining in the third quarter on a 6-yard run from Cory Nichols, then made it a three point game with six minutes remaining in the fourth.

Katy’s offense continued to be stymied, leading to the last minute Summer Creek drive that the Tigers stopped.

Katy’s defense spent lots of time on the field in the second half and got worn down, but Sylla and the rest of the defense were ready for the challenge.

“It’s engraved in us,” Sylla said. “Katy football is about finding that second gear, playing tough and finding a way to win. That’s what we had to do today to come out with the win.”

Katy advances to play Austin Westlake (14-0). The Chaparrals come off a 70-7 win over Vandergrift in its regional final.

The two will meet 2 p.m. Saturday at McClane Stadium in Waco.

“We’re going to enjoy this and then we are going to go and get it corrected next week in practice,” Joseph said. “We’re going to have to, we’re playing the No. 2 team in the nation. It’s going to be good, we’re going to go out and compete.”

**Katy 34, Summer Creek 31**

Summer Creek	7	0	21	3	--	31
Katy	13	14	7	0	--	34

**First quarter**

Katy: Seth Davis 12 run (Axel Robertson kick) 9:20

Katy: Davis 8 run, 3:47

Summer Creek: Jahrik Jones 10 pass to Cory Nichols (Alfonso Gonzalez kick) 0:22

**Second quarter**

Katy: Caleb Koger 8 pass to Nic Anderson (Robertson kick) 11:40

Katy: Davis 68 run (Robertson kick) 4:41

**Third quarter**

Summer Creek: Torrie Curry 19 run (Gonzalez kick) 7:47

Summer Creek: Darien Hargrove 15 interception return (Gonzalez kick) 7:35

Katy: Dallas Glass 51 run (Robertson kick)

Summer Creek: Cory Nichols 6 run (Gonzalez kick) 0:07

**Fourth quarter**

Summer Creek: Gonzalez 36 field goal, 6:08

**Team stats**

	S. Creek	Katy
First downs	16	13
Yards rushing	46-227	29-371
Yards passing	146	90
Passes	12-20-1-0	5-11-1-1
Punts	4-33	5-40
Fumbles-lost	2-1	2-2
Penalty-yards	2-10	6-53

**Individual Statistics**

Rushing – Katy: Seth Davis, 15-234-1; Dallas Glass, 8-82-1; Isaiah Smith, 5-61; Summer: Lloyd Avant, 20-141; Torrie Curry, 13-59-1; Cory Nichols, 7-30-1; Jahrik Jones, 6-(-3)

Passing – Katy: Caleb Koger, 5-11-90-1-1; Summer: Jahrik Jones, 12-19-146-1-0; Cory Nichols, 0-1-0-0-0

Receiving – Katy: Michael Dante, 1-54; Nic Anderson, 3-27; JR Ceyanes, 1-9; Summer: Andrew Alexander, 3-65; Cory Nichols, 5-48-1; Roiyon Richardson, 4-33

**PAETOW**

from page B1

Brown says he only feels about 85% healthy, but even at 85% the running back responded to his team’s need. Brown dominated Hightower, rushing for 346 yards and a school record — breaking five touchdowns to lead Paetow to a 35-12 win at Rice Stadium.

It was a huge performance for the senior, who accounted for all but 23 yards of Paetow’s offense as the team continues to push further than they ever have been before.

“It feels amazing to be able to do what I did tonight for my brothers and my family around me and for everyone that’s sacrificed all year and supported me when I was hurt. It was amazing,” Brown said. “It just feels so good to be able to do this with my teammates.”

It was a defensive battle early on, as Paetow and Hightower traded punts and jockeyed for field position.

That changed late in the first quarter, as Brown took a handoff and shrugged off tacklers before breaking free for a 75-yard run for his first touchdown of the night.

But Brown was just getting started at that point.

Hightower and Paetow threw interceptions on back to back plays early in the second quarter, but Brown steadied the Panthers ship, breaking off another run of over 70 yards for a touchdown, and Brown tacked on a third score from 17-yards out shortly before halftime.

But it wasn’t just Brown making a difference for the Panthers. The team’s defense was flying around like it has done all season. In the first half, Paetow held Hightower to -11 yards rushing and 35 total yards and Hightower ended the game with just 249 total yards.

“Really we just had to contain them, that was the biggest thing,” said senior cornerback K.J. Truehill. “We followed the same formula we did the first time we played them and shut them down. The defensive line was getting after it, the linebackers were getting after it and it really helped us out and on the back end we got after it too.”

Brown ran in two more touchdowns in the third quarter on runs of nine and 27 yards sandwiched around two scores from Hightower. But the Panthers defense adjusted

from there and didn’t allow a score in the fourth quarter.

“We got caught on a couple of trick plays and we knew we had to adjust,” Truehill said. “We knew they’d try new stuff and they came out in a diamond formation they were trying. It was just about adjusting to that stuff and then once we did playing how we normally play.”

It was the second time the two teams faced off this year and Paetow knew that Hightower wanted revenge and came prepared.

“It’s extremely tough to beat a team twice,” Gotte said. “Coach (Cornelius) Anthony does a tremendous job with those guys and they were prepared. They had a good plan and I’m proud of our kids for responding to the challenge. Hats off to them, they’ve have a great year and he’s done a good job, I’m just really proud of the way our kids responded.”

Paetow advances to the state semifinals, where they will take on Flour Bluff, which comes off a 13-7 win over Corpus Christi Veterans Memorial in its regional final.

It’s the first time either school

has made it to the state semifinals. The two will play at 7 p.m. Friday at Heroes Stadium in San Antonio.

“We’ve known this team is special since the first game,” Brown said. “I could tell the difference since the first game in the way we rallied behind each other to win. The way our teamwork is and the way we leaned on each other through the mistakes and the progress we made on good plays. From that first game I knew it and I could tell we were special.”

**Paetow 35, Fort Bend Hightower 12**

Hightower	0	0	12	0	--	12
Paetow	7	14	14	0	--	41

**First quarter**

Paetow: Jacob Brown 75 run (Anthony Fuentes kick) 2:25

**Second quarter**

Paetow: Brown 73 run (Fuentes kick) 8:54

Paetow: Brown 17 run (Fuentes kick) 0:32

**Third quarter**

Hightower: Kendron Penson Jr. 55 pass to Jeremy Payne (pass failed) 10:55

Paetow: Brown 9 run (Fuentes kick) 7:59

Hightower: Penson 66 pass to Kaleb Johnson (pass failed) 6:53

Paetow: Brown 27 run (Fuentes kick) 2:34

**Team stats**

	Hightower	Paetow
First downs	12	17
Yards rushing	27-24	37-369
Yards passing	249	30
Passes	14-34-2-1	3-14-0-3
Punts	4-30	4-40
Fumbles-lost	0-0	3-1
Penalty-yards	0-0	0-0

**Individual Statistics**

Rushing – Paetow: Jacob Brown: 30-346-5; C.J. Dumas, 3-9; Kole Wilson, 1-6; Hightower: Jeremy Payne, 17-45; Kendron Penson Jr., 10-(-21)

Passing – Paetow: CJ Dumas 3-14-30-0-3; Hightower: Kendron Penson Jr., 13-33-230-2-1; Jaden Adams, 1-1-19-0-0

Receiving – Paetow: Kole Wilson, 2-14; Cason Blue, 1-16; Hightower: Kaleb Johnson, 4-89-1; Jeremy Payne, 3-81-1; Caleb Douglas, 4-56; Zion Kearney, 3-23

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# Houston to play Auburn in Birmingham Bowl

BY TYLER TYRE  
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Houston will make its 29th bowl appearance when the Cougars face off against the Auburn Tigers in the Birmingham Bowl at 11 a.m. CT on Tuesday, Dec. 28, from Protective Stadium.

Houston (11-2) finished second in the American Athletic Conference and comes off a 35-20 loss to the University of Cincinnati in the AAC Championship game. Auburn (6-6) finished tied for sixth in the Southeastern Conference West and comes off a 34-22 loss to Alabama.

Houston is making its 14th bowl appearance in the last 17 seasons. The Cougars won

11 straight games during the regular season, highlighted by an 8-0 mark in American Athletic Conference play and appearance in The American Championship Game.

Auburn is making its 44th bowl appearance and is appearing in a bowl for the ninth consecutive year. The Tigers won six of their first eight games in 2021 before dropping four straight, including a quadruple overtime loss to No. 3 Alabama in the regular season finale.

The matchup will be the first between Houston and Auburn since 1973. The Cougars defeated the Tigers, 36-7, in the lone bowl matchup between the programs, coming in the Bluebonnet Bowl on Dec. 31, 1969.



The Houston Cougars band performs as Clayton Turne waits for a snap during agame between Memphis and Houston on November 19, 2021 in Houston, Texas.

SCOTT W. COLEMAN

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