

MARCH 22, 2024

THE AUSTIN

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FREE
BUT NOT CHEAP

CHRONICLE

GREAT ZOOM!

NICE!



NICE!

If You Can Read This...

BY BRANT BINGAMON

The pandemic took a toll on Austin ISD students, and now too few can read at grade level.

How do we get out of this ditch?

PAGE 20

PAGE 20



thank you teachers (and thank you every!)

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FEEDBACK

»»»»»»» LETTERS + COMMENTS

MISSING THE LISTINGS

Dear Editor,

I look forward to Tom Tomorrow, The Luv Doc, Mr. Smarty Pants, the cartoons, and the regular electoral recommendations. In fact I send them on by snail mail to a relative, compulsively.

I understand recent exigencies have required you to gird your loins. Haven't we all, even when a new I-35 tunnel is not being built beside us?

Despite declining sight, I can even adapt to the smaller font, up to a point, and with difficulty and a large magnifier. What I don't understand is the abandonment of the perpetually impoverished performing artists' listings. I really miss these chronicles of rep theatre, classical and not-so-ancient music performance groups, art happenings, and diverse cultural creations. They gave me a sense of the real Austin, from real Austin sources from real writers, reporters, and scribes. I realise these starving artists don't keep the AC afloat financially, but they were a small column inch expenditure, for a large albeit hidden community gain. Isn't there some way to restore the arts listings, and keep the AI bots at bay?

Thanks for your efforts.

Barbara Chiarello

John P. Brown

RAVE REVIEW

Dear Editor,

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater turned Bass Concert Hall into a sacred space earlier this month.

The transformation began with a superb move. Dazzling colors leaping off the dancers' costumes. Bursts of feeling shooting like electric currents from performer to audience.

The barrier between stage and seats disappeared; stereotypes melted; everyone joined together in striving, hoping, loving.

After the show, one patron said, "I never experienced this at a ballet." Another said, "I want them to do it again."

Alvin Ailey, whose mother was raped by four white men when he was 5, who saw Ku Klux Klan members in his hometown of Rogers, Texas, said, "I am trying to show the world we are all human beings, that color is not important, that what is important is the quality of our work."

"Revelations" closed the program. During an encore, the entire house, clapping, rocked their souls "in de bosom of Abraham."

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



A DIFFERENT KIND OF DOCTOR

A local Doctor provides truly compassionate care and proven solutions for chronic pain and complicated conditions.

Care Rooted in Empathy & Experience

Do you ever wonder why some Doctors are so incredibly compassionate while others have a bedside manner better suited for the DMV?

In the case of Dr. Lucas Brown, DAOM, LAC of Rosedale Acupuncture & Wellness Center it is a case of true empathy. "In my 20's I was dealing with crippling anxiety and insomnia. It was the type of chronic suffering not visible to the naked eye. Experiencing how isolating it was to endure in silence set me on a path to look for a better solution to chronic health issues."

Dr. Brown's options were limited to two things. Prescription medications that often did not work and had come with a host of side effects, or to make lifestyle changes to attempt to limit the symptoms. "It was no way to live," he shares "I was young and should've been living a bright, vibrant life. Instead I was hesitant to leave the house, tired all the time and felt very alone. The only thing doctors were able to offer was another pill." It wasn't until he went to an acupuncturist that he found real relief.

This is why I often refer to my practice as "The Last Resort With The Best Results," You've been everywhere else and been given the same disheartening prognosis, prescribed the same medications and told, "this is just something you're going to have to learn to live with."

Soon after his incredible experience with the healing arts he made the life changing decision to pursue his doctorate in acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine. On that journey, he found solutions that worked for him and were also able to help so many others.

"Acupuncture quite literally changed my life and I want to share that with the world," he proclaims.

Your Golden Years Should Be Golden

While in school he watched as his aunt began to suffer from Peripheral Neuropathy. "Your golden years should be golden, not plagued with insufferable pain while doctors and specialists tell you there is nothing they can do." Understanding that Eastern Medicine excels where Western Medicine fails, Dr. Brown set forth to develop treatment protocols for all variations of Peripheral Neuropathy (including diabetic and chemotherapy-induced) and now has a 90% success rate in treating this once difficult to manage condition.

"I was tired of seeing the older generation suffer unnecessarily," shares Dr. Brown. "Diagnosing them as just getting older and giving them a treatment plan of 'you're just going to have to get used to it has never sat well with me so I wanted to offer them a real option for treatment and care."

Dr. Brown has designed similar treatment protocols for other complicated, chronic conditions including fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, post-shingles pain, and even macular degeneration. While each patient plan is tailored specifically to the patient's concern and goals, all of his treatments are based on a framework that's over fourteen years in the making.

In addition Dr. Brown isn't opposed to more modern medical solutions. "It's in blending the time-tested science of acupuncture with recent innovations in medicine that get me the best results."

One of those advancements is ATP Resonance Bio Therapy, originally developed by NASA, it aids nerves in regeneration by providing them the nutrients they need to repair and renew, "very similar to what water does for a plant!"

The Magic of Compassionate Care

And what do those in his care have to say? "Dr. Brown looked me in my eyes and wanted to know about me, not just my condition. I feel like a person, not just a patient," shares Joan. "In fact I don't think he's ever used the word patient." Others proclaim "he saved my life", "his neuropathy treatments gave me my life back, and "it's a miracle he treated my fibromyalgia, I don't know how else to explain it."

Dr. Brown has a long personal history in complicated, difficult to understand conditions and understands how tragic it can all be if left untreated. "I have sat where my patients sit. I've experienced their pain and suffering on an intimate level. It's why I practice the brand of medicine I do and why I've made it my life's mission to treat the "untreatable." It brings me such incredible joy when I get to say, "I can help you!"

Furthermore, Dr. Brown has surrounded himself with staff that embraces this same approach to patient care. "You can ask any one of my patients and they will tell you that their favorite part about Rosedale Acupuncture & Wellness Center is my staff."



Dr. Brown and his staff specialize in treating chronic pain, complicated neurological conditions and autoimmune diseases that leave other professionals scratching their heads. Dr. Lucas Brown, DAOM, LAC has won 'Best Acupuncturist' in Austin for 6 years running.

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OPINION >>>>>>>>>>>> VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Don't Knock It 'Til You Rot It

College can be a lot. Wake up, go to classes, study for said classes, org events, socializing, and repeat. In this fast-paced world, every moment counts. From sunrise to sunset, our days are filled, leaving little time for ourselves. The pressure to keep up can feel overwhelming, but amidst the chaos and buzz of campus life, finding moments of solitude is essential.

Enter the concept of “bed rot,” a Gen Z term for indulging in extended periods of time bingeing Netflix or simply chilling in bed. While some may view it as unproductive, I’ve fully embraced this practice since starting college. Spending a day in bed, scrolling through TikToks and enjoying Jeni’s ice cream serves as a necessary break from the stresses of college life. Today, I urge you to embrace the opportunity to rot in bed.

As a college student, I understand firsthand the constant juggling act of academic and social obligations. My schedule is packed from morning to night, leaving little room for spontaneity or relaxation. But amidst the hustle and bustle, taking time to recharge is crucial for our mental and emotional well-being. As someone who struggles with social anxiety, my social battery does not last very long. I have come to realize that this practice of being alone is more than it seems. It’s about honoring one’s own needs and recognizing when to take a step back and recharge. In a society that often glorifies busyness and productivity, it’s important to remember the importance of rest and relaxation. Bed rotting is a form of self-care – a chance to prioritize one’s mental and emotional health.

With that said, the one thing that’s true of any UT student is that everyone is ambitious and high-achieving. The idea of spending a whole day being unproductive can feel counterintuitive, given the drive to excel, and the term “rotting” itself can be seen as stigmatizing.

However, the beauty of alone time and staying in bed lies in its adaptability to different student lifestyles. It’s more than okay to mix in a bit of productivity if that’s what suits you. Personally, I like to journal about my thoughts. The key is to tailor your practice to what brings you peace and relaxation, whatever that may entail.

Spending time alone in bed gives you the chance to let your imagination roam freely and nurture your creativity. With no distractions or interruptions from others, you can tune out external influences and concentrate on your own thoughts and ideas.

It also provides an opportunity for self-reflection. Whether you’re pondering the events of the day or contemplating your future aspirations, this solitude allows you to explore your thoughts, emotions, and mental health without any outside judgment.

In a bustling college environment, it’s easy to get caught up in the opinions and actions of others, but carving out moments for yourself enables you to reconnect with

your true self and stay authentic to your own values and aspirations.

Research actually suggests that being alone can lead to changes in the brain that help fuel the creative process. In a 2020 study published in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers found that perceived social isolation (aka loneliness) led to increased activity in the neural circuits related to imagination. When left with a lack of social stimulation, the brain ramps up its creative networks to help fill the void.

So let’s challenge the notion that self-care is one-size-fits-all. That it is limited to bubble baths and exercising. Let’s embrace the power of alone time in bed to nourish our creativity, foster self-reflection, and ultimately, thrive in the hectic world of college. ■

While some may view it as unproductive, I’ve fully embraced the practice of “bed rotting” – a Gen Z term for indulging in extended periods of time bingeing Netflix or simply chilling in bed – since starting college.

BY ARSHIA THOTA

Arshia Thota is a student at the University of Texas.

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“The rats are eating our marijuana. They’re all high.”

– NEW ORLEANS POLICE CHIEF ANNE KIRKPATRICK ON HOW RATS ARE GETTING INTO THE EVIDENCE ROOM AND EATING CONFISCATED DRUGS AT NOPD HEADQUARTERS



GETTY IMAGES

HEADLINES

WHIPLASH RULINGS LEAVE US IN SUSPENSE OVER SB 4: The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday gave Texas permission to enforce Senate Bill 4, the highly controversial new law that allows state and local police to arrest people they suspect of entering the country illegally. But shortly thereafter, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans temporarily blocked it again. The 5th Circuit held a hearing over it Wednesday morning and did not say when they will rule.



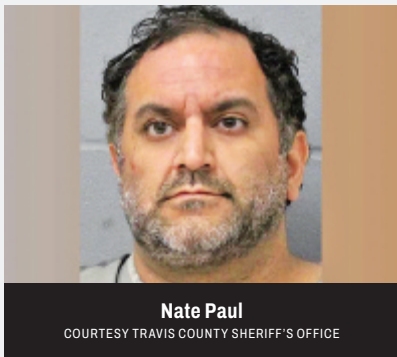
Lyle Lovett on *Austin City Limits* in 2010
JOHN ANDERSON

DIGITIZING AUSTIN CITY LIMITS:

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, Austin PBS announced Wednesday that it will digitize all 50 seasons of *Austin City Limits* through a partnership with Google Fiber.

Hundreds of hours of concert footage will be preserved and, they hoped, shared at an unspecified later date.

MO' MONEY MO' PROBLEMS: Shady Austin real estate developer Nate Paul – whose reported bribing of A.G. Ken Paxton was at the heart of Paxton's impeachment – will soon serve a 10-day jail sentence for contempt of court, the *Austin Business Journal* reported. It's just one episode in a long legal saga over money the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation claims Paul owes the charity.



Nate Paul
COURTESY TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CONTINUED ON P.10



Texas cities don't have to have contracts with police, but they create an opportunity for higher pay for officers and stronger oversight for civilians

JOHN ANDERSON

Police Association Signals Willingness to Comply With Oversight Act

Second day's negotiations spark hope of agreement **BY AUSTIN SANDERS**

In the week since negotiations between the city of Austin and the **Austin Police Association** over a new labor contract resumed, the prospects of the two parties reaching a deal that complies with the **Austin Police Oversight Act** went from “fat chance” to possibly attainable.

During the first day of bargaining, March 13, the APA's bargaining team made it explicitly clear that they had no intention of bargaining over key provisions within the Oversight Act, including one that requires the city to eliminate the **Austin Police Department's** use of a **G file** (confidential

police misconduct records). Another provision they opposed doubles the amount of time the chief of police has to discipline an officer once a complaint is filed or allegations of misconduct become known. “If you want to try to comply with [the Oversight Act], go

CONTINUED ON P.10

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GRASSROOTS HARVEST

HEADLINES CONTINUED

JUST TROLLING: Speaking of greedy trolls, Pease Park welcomed an 18-foot troll last week. The statue is the latest of artist Thomas Dambo's 129 across the world. It's made of local, recycled, and repurposed wood and was built by Dambo and several dozen local volunteers, the Austin Monitor reported.

TAX TIME, BABY: The IRS launched a new, free Direct File program (directfile.irs.gov) available in 12 states including Texas. (Fun fact: Texan Dixie Warden was the first-ever user of Direct File, and she saved \$400.) The Direct File website doesn't work for gig income, but works for people with W-2s, unemployment income, Social Security income, or \$1,500 or less in interest income, U.S. savings bonds, or Treasury obligations.

APD LOOKS FOR 911 CALL TAKERS:

A special report from the Office of the City Auditor revealed Austin Police Department lacks a regular process for taking 911 calls when the volume reaches high levels. The national standard says 90% of calls should be answered within 15 seconds. In 2022 and 2023, roughly a quarter of 911 calls took longer than 15 seconds to answer, the Austin Monitor reported.

LARGEST WILDFIRE CONTAINED:

Firefighters were finally able to contain the Smokehouse Creek fire in Hutchinson County last week after nearly three weeks. The wildfire is the largest in Texas history and burned over 1 million acres. Relief efforts are ongoing, The Texas Tribune reported.

ABORTION IS NOT MURDER: A Texas prosecutor has been fined and suspended for allowing a murder charge against a woman who self-induced an abortion in 2022. The attorney reached a settlement with the State Bar of Texas to pay a \$1,250 fine. His license will be suspended for one year, The Texas Tribune reported.



Plaintiffs and representatives from The Center for Reproductive Rights hold a press conference in 2023

JANA BIRCHUM

CONTINUED ON P.12



City staff and representatives of the Austin Police Association negotiate March 20

SCREENSHOT VIA ATXN

POLICE CONTRACTS CONTINUED FROM P.8

ahead," said Ron DeLord, the longtime lead negotiating attorney for the APA (and other police unions throughout Texas). "We don't care. We're not here to bargain over [it]."

That hard line would have posed a major problem for the city. But as of the second bargaining session, held March 20, the APA's position has shifted. At that brief meeting, DeLord said the APA was willing to "work on what's in the personnel file" – a reference to records currently made confidential by the G file but that the Oversight Act makes accessible to staff within the Office of Police Oversight and, in some cases, to people requesting records through the **Texas Public Information Act**. He also said they're willing to bend on the 365-day rule (how long the chief has to discipline an officer after misconduct is alleged). "I think all of them have a path we can reach for," DeLord said. "I'm just not prepared today to do that."

APA changing their tune will come as a relief to the city staff sitting across from DeLord at the bargaining table. Austin voters delivered a clear mandate to the city by approving Proposition A, known as the Oversight Act, with nearly 80% support. The act established the legal framework allowing the city to launch what likely would be the most robust, transparent system of civilian police oversight in any American city. A provision requires the city attorney to certify that any police labor contract complies with the Oversight Act before Council can approve it.

All but one City Council member (Mackenzie Kelly being the lone dissenter) support this mandate. Mayor Kirk Watson has publicly

endorsed a provision of the Oversight Act that the APA views as most burdensome. In light of this overwhelming support among the public and elected officials, the city's negotiating team says they intend to fulfill that mandate. "The contract is not being negotiated Article-by-Article but as a whole with the backdrop of Prop A," a city spokesperson told the *Chronicle*. "Mayor [Watson] and City Council have made it clear that any agreement must comply with Prop A."

But whether or not that mandate is actually fulfilled will come down to the exact contract language agreed to by the city and APA. Thanks to new ground rules for this contract negotiation, it will be difficult for the pub-

"Mayor and City Council have made it clear that any agreement must comply with Prop A."

CITY OF AUSTIN SPOKESPERSON

lic to track how hard the city is fighting to hold the negotiating line established by the Oversight Act, because APA insisted on an unprecedented level of secrecy around the process and the city acquiesced. For most of the bargaining sessions that have unfolded during the 20 years that the city and APA have bargained police contracts, the city has made language under negotiation available to anyone interested in reading it. During the actual bargaining sessions, they have also projected contract language on a screen so in-person observers could more closely follow negotiations.

Neither will happen during this negotiation, though the sessions will remain open to the public and streamed on YouTube. The APA made ensuring secrecy around the contract

language a condition of their return to the bargaining table – a condition that Council offices did not learn about until one day before negotiations were set to resume. APA President Michael Bullock says the secrecy is required under state law, though the city and APA have not interpreted state law that way for two decades. "I believe it was a statute neither side was really aware of or that was discussed," Bullock told us. "New leadership, new reviews, and this was found."

Instead, the specific contract language will be made available to the public after the city and APA agree to a deal, in principle, but before Council votes on it. A city spokesperson said "there are too many unknown factors to definitively say at this time how far in advance" the language will be made public. Several CMs shared their concerns with Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills over the



city's decision to reverse course on transparency around the contract language, but without the secrecy APA has demanded, contract negotiations wouldn't be happening at all.

The secrecy is a red flag for advocates like **Kathy Mitchell**, a senior adviser to Equity Action (the justice advocacy organization that wrote the Oversight Act and campaigned in support of it). She responded to the APA's pivot with cautious optimism, but noted the "words on the pages" of the contract carry even more importance. "What comes next is critically important," she added. "We don't need to see a G file under another name created by a contract that preempts local and state law."

The next bargaining session has not been scheduled but could be held in mid-April. ■



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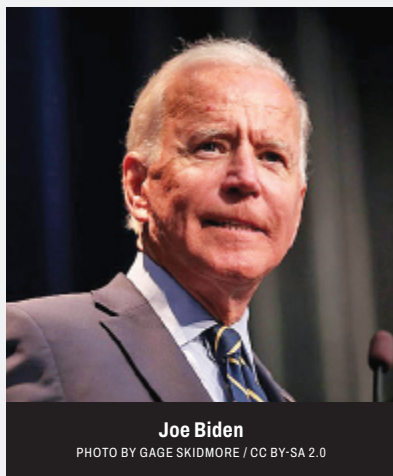
HEADLINES CONTINUED

BUT WHEN EXACTLY CAN WE ABORT?:

The Texas Medical Board will begin a 30-day rulemaking process on Friday to clarify the kinds of emergency exceptions that may allow a legal abortion to be performed in Texas, the *Statesman* reported. The decision comes after two years of requests from pregnant women, doctors, and even Gov. Greg Abbott that the board issue guidelines. TMP is one of the defendants in *Zurawski v. Texas*, a lawsuit asking the state to clarify the scope of the exceptions brought by Texas women who were denied abortions despite facing severe pregnancy complications.

THAT'S A DRAG: In a not-surprising move, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to issue an injunction to prevent the president of West Texas A&M from canceling a drag show organized by students in the Panhandle town of Canyon. With the court's refusal to validate the drag artists' First Amendment rights, president Walter Wendler canceled the performance for the second time in a year, calling drag "a slapstick sideshow that erodes the worth of women." According to *The Texas Tribune*, West Texas A&M faculty have previously condemned Wendler for "divisive, misogynistic, homophobic and non-inclusive rhetoric."

BIDEN IN H TOWN: Guess who's in Texas this week? After private campaign events in Dallas, President Joe Biden was set to hold a campaign reception in Houston Thursday. Earlier this week, he was campaigning in Nevada and Arizona, key presidential battlegrounds this election, *The Dallas Morning News* reported.



Joe Biden

PHOTO BY GAGE SKIDMORE / CC BY-SA 2.0

CONTINUED ON P.14



Ricky Smith at age 19 shortly before he was first incarcerated

COURTESY OF THE SMITH FAMILY

Ricky Smith Tried to Escape Prison Three Times. Is 30 Years In Solitary Confinement Enough?

His last attempt was in 1993 **BY BRANT BINGAMON**

Ricky Smith has a simple request. He wants to be allowed to reenter general population somewhere in the **Texas Department of Criminal Justice** prison system, where he's been held in solitary confinement for over 30 years.

Smith, now 56, has been incarcerated since the age of 19, when he was convicted of assaulting a police officer in Harris County. He has been held in solitary confinement since 1993, after he attempted a series of prison escapes over a five-year period. "I escaped from the Wynne Unit in January of '88," Smith told us. "I was scheduled for parole and release that October, but I caught a disciplinary case and lost my good conduct time. I was so angry over it all – I had lost my girl and I was stressed about that – that I went over the gate."

Smith was sentenced to 35 years for the Wynne escape and then was caught planning an escape from the Walls Unit, receiving an additional 50-year sentence. In May of 1993,

he escaped from the Coffield Unit, stealing a truck from the prison parking lot and evading officers in a high-speed chase before being apprehended two days later. Smith received a 99-year sentence for the Coffield escape. He was taken out of general population and placed in a cell by himself, where he is confined for 23 out of 24 hours each day.

This kind of incarceration is usually called solitary confinement. But TDCJ told us it does not practice solitary confinement – they practice "security detention." According to the department, it reserves security detention for "an inmate who is a current escape risk; threat to the physical safety of other inmates or staff, to include volunteers and contract employees; threat to the order and security of the prison as evidenced by repetitive serious disciplinary

violations; or a confirmed member of specific security threat groups."

Smith said he has had no serious disciplinary cases for 30 years, is not a threat to other inmates, and does not belong to a hate group. He described how he decided to give up his breakouts after the third failed attempt. "I just sat down and reconsidered my whole situation. I was like, 'I'm spinning my wheels – every time I get away something screws up and they find a way to catch me.' So after '93, I figured I'd just stay put. I haven't done anything since then but sit back here, slowly rotting. Right now, the only thing that's a justification for keeping me here is that I'm an escape risk."

Smith said that over the years he's been incarcerated in the same high-security pod as other inmates with escape histories who were eventually released back into general population. The TDCJ reviews his case every six months but has never released him from security detention. Smith told us he's been denied parole by the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles four times, with the explanation, "The record indicates that the offender has repeatedly committed criminal episodes that indicate a predisposition to commit criminal acts upon release."

"They keep using that over and over again to justify keeping me here," Smith said. "There's no way I can erase that history. And they don't ask, 'Well, why did it happen? How did it happen?'"

For many years, solitary confinement (called security detention or administrative segregation depending on the year) has been described as a form of torture that can lead to insanity. In 2011, the **United Nations** recommended a worldwide ban on the practice in most cases, saying it causes mental and physical health problems in a significant percentage of those who experience it. TDCJ seems to understand that the practice should be discouraged. TDCJ spokesperson Amanda Hernandez said the department has reduced the security detention population by 65% in the last 17 years, from 9,180 in 2007 to 3,141 in 2023. At these reduced numbers, approximately one out of every 40 inmates is held alone in a cell about the size of a bathroom for almost the whole day, every day.

Smith told us he has kept his sanity, but the isolation has had its effect. "Humans aren't really designed for this sort of environment," he said. "It's kind of a torture. Just cooped up all day. Can't do nothing. And then your family members, over the years, they slowly die off. Can't go to the funeral. My little girl got raised without me. Didn't really know me." ■

"There's no way I can erase that history."

RICKY SMITH, 56



T.C. Broadnax (left) and Sara Hensley

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CITY OF AUSTIN

CITY MANAGER SEARCH DOWN TO TWO CANDIDATES

Finalists will address public at March 25 forum

BY AUSTIN SANDERS

More than a year after City Council fired former City Manager **Spencer Cronk** and hired **Jesús Garza** to do the job on an interim basis, the search for a permanent manager is coming to a close.

Selecting the city manager is perhaps the single most important duty our elected Council members have, as is the case in any city operating under a Council-manager form of government. Under this structure, Council sets policy and passes ordinances, but it is the manager – who is hired by Council to oversee the city’s thousands of employees and multibillion-dollar budget – who is tasked with implementing that policy and honoring ordinances. Working with two city managers so far, this City Council has learned that the person sitting in the manager’s chair can have a huge impact on how policy goals are achieved or left to wither. They went from Cronk, who was an indecisive and hands-off leader, to Garza, who has acted swiftly and decisively, sometimes without Council input.

This Council has shown deference to the interim manager and, at times, has seemingly operated out of fear, worrying that pushing too hard for transparency and accountability could scare off quality applicants for the permanent job. But now the search is done and Council members will decide between two candidates. One is

outgoing Dallas City Manager **T.C. Broadnax**, who was reportedly pushed to resign by Dallas City Council members over growing tensions with the city’s Democrat-turned-Republican mayor, **Eric Johnson**. The other is **Sara Hensley**, city manager in Denton – which has a population about one-tenth the size of Austin’s – who previously served here as the director of Austin’s **Parks and Recreation Department** and as an interim assistant city manager. Brian Platt, the city manager of Kansas City, Mo., was announced alongside Broadnax and Hensley as a third finalist for the job on March 5, but he has since removed himself from consideration for the position so that he can pursue a new contract with his current employer.

Broadnax and Hensley will take the stage at a forum held by the city next Monday, March 25, to address the public and answer questions about how they would approach the job. The next day, the two finalists will participate in a closed-door interview with Council members. Mayor Kirk Watson hopes Council can take a vote directing staff to negotiate a contract with the body’s preferred candidate at Council’s April 4 meeting. ■

The public forum will be held March 25 from 6-7:30pm at the city’s Permitting and Development Center, 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Dr. The forum will also be streamed live on ATXN.

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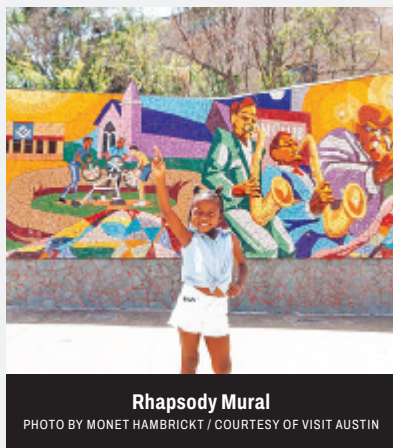
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HEADLINES CONTINUED

BANANAS BALLOT COUNTING: Swayed by conspiracy theories about the unreliability of voting machines, Republicans in Gillespie County (county seat: Fredericksburg) counted ballots by hand in the March 5 primary. Now, according to reporting by The Texas Tribune, party officials are acknowledging that they had to fix errors in the reported and finalized results in almost every precinct, though the new numbers did not change the results in any races. “We took something that worked and now broke it,” election judge Scott Netherland told the Tribune. “What we just did is evidence that this hand count was not accurate.”

LESS PARKING, MORE APARTMENTS: Dallas may soon toss out its parking requirements, after Austin became the largest city in the country to do so last year. According to The Texas Tribune, a subcommittee of the Dallas City Plan Commission approved a proposal to end minimum parking requirements in new developments. Portland, Minneapolis, and San Jose have also recently ended parking minimums in an effort to mitigate the housing affordability crisis. Letting developers, rather than the city, decide how much parking to build into their projects can speed development and makes more room for housing units, experts say.

CAN WE GET A BLACK CULTURE DISTRICT?: The nonprofit East Austin Creative Coalition is organizing creatives for job opportunities and attempting to put pressure on the city to build an African American Culture and Heritage District. The plan for the district was approved by the City Council in 2021 but the district has yet to be officially recognized.



Rhapsody Mural

PHOTO BY MONET HAMBRICKT / COURTESY OF VISIT AUSTIN

CONTINUED ON P.16



Austin ISD administrators Angel Wilson, Creslond Fannin, and Dillon Finan

SCREENSHOT VIA AUSTIN ISD

Not Enough Austin ISD Seniors Are Ready for College, Per Recent Test Scores

Credentials post-high school are crucial **BY BRANT BINGAMON**

There's a disturbing statistic the Austin ISD Board of Trustees is all too aware of. Research shows young adults without a post-secondary credential have just a 12% chance of earning a living wage within six years of leaving high school. In Travis County, a graduate with no kids needs to make about \$24 an hour to earn a living wage.

Creslond Fannin, Austin ISD's executive director of **Early College High School**, cited the statistic at the March 7 school board meeting. She continued, “It really focuses in on why TSI is so important.”

TSI stands for **Texas Success Initiative**, a state program mandating that Texas institutions of higher education assess prospective students for college readiness – specifically, whether they are prepared for college-level courses in English and mathematics. The test that makes the determination is called the TSIA 2, but students can be exempted from taking it if they score well on the SAT or ACT. Austin ISD has several goals associated with these assessments. Among them, they aim to raise the percentage of graduates who meet the TSI criteria in English and math from 52% in August 2021 to 56% by the end of this school year.

Dillon Finan, an Austin ISD data analyst, said February testing data shows 51.7% of

tested high schoolers have met the criteria so far this year. That's 4.3% (or 190 students) shy of the goal. But he said the percentage is likely to go up in the next two months. In February of last school year, only 43% of tested seniors had met TSI criteria, but the number was 53% by the end of the year. “If we see similar trends in this academic school year, we are on track to meet and possibly exceed our end-of-the-year goal of 56 percent,” Finan said.

It was one of the only glimmers of positivity to be found in recent test results. But even if test scores do improve this spring, Finan said that 12th grade Black and Hispanic students, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged, are underperforming compared to other student groups, and there is a continuing decline in meeting TSI criteria for emergent bilingual 12th graders.

“When we say we're ‘on track,’ we're ignoring half the population of our school district, that is actually not on track.”

AUSTIN ISD BOARD PRESIDENT ARATI SINGH

The administrators identified several root causes for the low performance. Fannin stressed the district needs a comprehensive case management system to intervene for students at the appropriate time. She said the schools' curriculum resources are limited and misaligned, noting that “we're teaching one thing and then we're testing on something different.” And she said that some kids are arriving in high school with pronounced deficits in reading and math, which teachers in the higher grades aren't trained to address. On top of case management, she urged partnerships with groups like Communities in Schools, which runs the Male Student Achievement Program.

In the discussion that followed, Trustee David Kauffman homed in on the data showing that some kids are arriving in high school with reading deficits. “When a student doesn't meet the TSIA score cutoff for reading, does that mean they can't read?” Kauffman asked. “I mean, is this test truly an indicator that our kids are lacking the basic literacy that we owe them, or are there other factors that lead to students not passing the reading test?”

Angel Wilson, assistant superintendent of secondary schools, did not offer a yes or no answer but said the challenges for Black and emergent bilingual students are very real. She said the district is working to implement small group instruction and revising instruction methods by updating curricula in Bowie, Webb, and Burnet middle schools, where 34% of the district's roughly 4,600 emergent bilingual middle-schoolers are concentrated.

At the end of the discussion, Board President **Arati Singh** questioned the assertion that the district is on track to reach 56% TSI compliance by the end of the school year. “I think we have to be really careful about the words we use, because when we say we're ‘on track,’ we're ignoring half the population of our school district, that is actually not on track,” Singh said. “I'm super-excited about the things I heard but I just want to be really, really careful because I've been on this board when we've patted ourselves on the back and there were vast groups of children that were failing, and so we were failing. And I don't want to get back into that old pattern.”

Singh proposed that the board accept the report on TSI progress but strike the “on track” language. The board approved unanimously. ■

Austin Gets Federal Funding to Cover I-35 With Public-Access Land

Council set to consider another loan this week **BY LINA FISHER**

Since the **Texas Department of Transportation's** massively unpopular I-35 expansion became inevitable, City Council has been scrambling on a tight timeline to find a way to mitigate its worst effects in Austin. One of the best ways to do that is to build caps and stitches – land bridges – over the highway, so that people can walk and bike over it. Unfortunately, that would cost upward of \$800 million. TxDOT refuses to pay for those improvements, but will build them if the city finalizes its plans by December 2024. Council has floated many ideas to fund the project – asking voters to pass a bond using property taxes, taking the money from past bonds – but the best path forward is federal funds, \$105 million of which U.S. Rep. **Lloyd Doggett** helped secure for Austin last week.

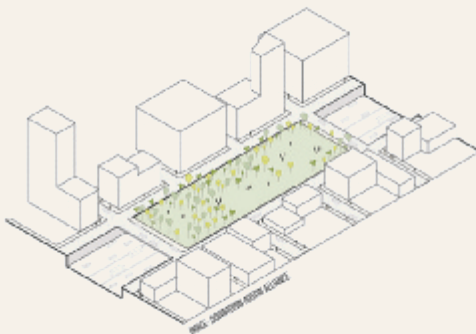
The U.S. Department of Transportation's Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program, funded by the **Inflation Reduction Act**, will be used to construct a 5.3-acre cap over I-35 between Cesar Chavez and Fourth Street. Council will put up a \$45 million local match and coordinate with TxDOT on the engineering and design of the cap. They also expect a public engagement process to determine the amenities that will go on top of it once constructed (those could range from benches and pocket parks to actual buildings). The location was chosen to connect the East Cesar Chavez neighborhood to Downtown, as it's currently bisected by the highway. The rest of the caps, if funded, would stretch from

Cesar Chavez to Seventh Street, 11th to 12th, and 38th ½ Street to Airport Boulevard. Stitches – widened bridges with landscaping for biking and pedestrians – would be installed at Holly Street, 32nd Street, and 51st Street. Altogether, they would create around 27 acres of public space across and atop the highway.

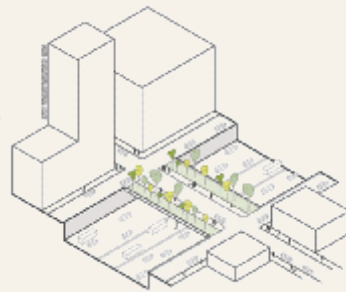
"A primary goal of pushing and pushing to get I-35 lowered was so that we could have the potential for not only reducing the divide it created and continues to perpetuate, but so that we might have caps and stitches that allow for far better connections," Mayor **Kirk Watson** said in a press release about the grant last week. Though this is a significant step in that direction, several hundred million more is still needed to fund the rest of the improvements. At its meeting this week, Council will consider applying for a \$193 million loan from the State Infrastructure Bank, a fund managed by TxDOT. And two recently completed regional climate plans – CAMPO's Regional Mobile Emission Reduction Plan and the Austin MSA Climate Plan – could make the region eligible for \$4.3 billion in federal Climate Pollution Reduction grants in 2024. Those applications must be submitted by April 1.

For now, Doggett described these funds as "a very hopeful development regarding a troubling highway expansion. These are the first three blocks of what could eventually be additional benefits through additional capping along I-35 with help from UT, the city and other interested parties." ■

WHAT ARE CAPS AND STITCHES, ANYWAY?



Caps are large decks that can be used as park space or even include buildings.



Stitches are widened bridges with landscaping and pedestrian access.

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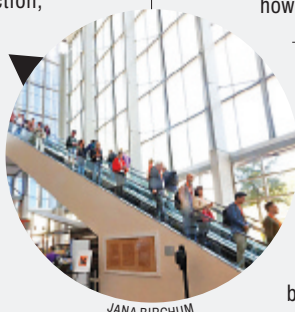
PROTESTERS DISRUPT SXSW PANEL:

Activists disrupted a SXSW panel that featured Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens last week to protest Atlanta's planned public safety training center. The panel was focused on how local officials have navigated conflicting views on policy issues including police funding and election results, Fox 5 Atlanta reported.

CONVENTION CENTER COPING:

In anticipation of the Austin Convention Center's four-year reconstruction,

Visit Austin staff plan to aggressively market the city as part of a strategy to support the hotel and convention industry during that construction period. The strategy includes communication about space available outside the convention center and prioritizing sports business bookings, the Austin Monitor reported.



JANA BIRCHUM

BIG CITY BUSINESS: New-York based global real estate company Related Companies is planning three high-profile projects along and near South Congress Avenue, the *Statesman* reported. The privately owned company has over \$60 billion in assets and major projects in cities across America. This project includes 800 housing units, a 225-room hotel and office, restaurant, retail, and grocery space.

POPULATION DE-BOOM: For the first time in over 20 years, more people are leaving Travis County than moving here. According to census data reviewed by KUT News, the county lost 2,500 residents between July 2022 and July 2023. However, neighboring Williamson and Hays counties recorded large increases in population over the same study period – 20,000 for Williamson, 11,000 for Hays. City of Austin demographer Lila Valencia said Austin's changing job landscape may be driving the trend – tech companies that fueled the job market since the early Aughts announced layoffs over the past couple of years, although we don't know yet how many Austin tech jobs were affected.

AUSTIN MARKET COOLS ENOUGH TO CAPTURE NATIONAL ATTENTION:

The Wall Street Journal this week turned an eye to Austin's cooling housing market. *WSJ* described Austin as the "Sunbelt city that came to symbolize the pandemic housing boom," pointing out that home prices and rents have fallen "more than anywhere else in the country, after a period of overbuilding and a slowdown in job and population growth."

NOBODY'S MARKET: *Texas Standard* took a look at the cooling housing market this week, too. Despite lower prices, high interest rates are hurting buyers with high monthly payments. So while Austin used to be a seller's market, now *Texas Standard* describes the city as "no one's market." KUT's Audrey McGlinchy told *Texas Standard*, "It's kind of this impasse, if you will, that we're at. ... I think people are getting used to these higher mortgage interest rates. They're recognizing that this may be the new reality."



Austin's housing market is cooling so much it's making national headlines. Here's one cold house.

JANA BIRCHUM



Mortensen in China

COURTESY OF ANDREW MORTENSEN

Austin Cyclist Becomes First Openly Gay Man to Bike Around the World

He wheelie did it **BY HANNAH UEBELE**

After 280 days, **Andrew Mortensen**, a UT-Austin alum, has completed an epic bicycling odyssey, spanning 27,461 miles across 37 different countries. The 32-year-old is the first openly gay man to officially cycle around the world.

The journey unfolded in two distinct phases. The first segment began in August 2020, when Mortensen pushed off from the Pacific Ocean, in Neah Bay, Washington. He traveled eastward and greeted the Atlantic Ocean, on the opposite side of the country, 43 days later in Yorktown, Va. The adventure, of course, didn't end there. Venturing further, Mortensen pedaled down the coast to Key West, Florida, where he decided to continue on and complete the entire continent. So he biked back up into the Bible Belt, through Texas, and then down into Mexico. From there, he pushed onward through Central America and South America, until he rolled into the southernmost point of the Americas – Patagonia, Chile – eight months later and 17,000 miles from where he began.

But remember, that's just the first phase of his globe-spinning journey. Before starting the second phase, Mortensen took a pause on the pedals to go to grad school in Austin. In July 2023, he was back on the bike to begin the second phase – a **10,400-mile** jaunt from Spain to Singapore.

Mortensen kicked off from Pamplona, Spain, and traversed across Europe the mountainous way, pedaling up and over the Pyrenees, West Alps, Dolomites, and Dinaric Alps. After cycling through Turkey, he continued on through Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and eventually into western China. From China, he went onward into Pakistan and India. He pushed into the last remaining countries of the journey – Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia – and then, at long last,

the journey was completed in January of this year, when he pulled into Marina Bay, Singapore.

Throughout the journey, Mortensen raised nearly \$19,000 for the **Trevor Project**, an LGBTQ+ suicide prevention nonprofit. The organization's mission has always been close to Mortensen's heart, especially following the loss of two friends to suicide. "I've seen many of the difficulties coming out, both with myself and with some of my close friends, so it just felt right."

Mortensen says he experienced an incredible amount of hospitality through his journey but also reflected on the weight of riding around the world as an openly gay man. "As I got to the end, I thought back on all of the challenges that I faced that someone who was straight wouldn't have had to face. I had a lot of fear and anxiety over my well-being and safety because of who I was." Nonetheless, he met countless strangers who quickly became allies. He spent over 60 nights in the homes of folks he'd just met, and experienced an overwhelming amount of support and acts of kindness from people along the way.

Back in Austin since completing his world tour, Mortensen finds himself surrounded by a vibrant community of cyclists. "I've met more cyclists here than I've ever met in my life," he said. "They're all affirming of travel, adventure, and biking far, so this environment is the best place to incubate another cool trip."

His message to aspiring globe-trotters (or, rather, globe-pedalers): "The typical cliché. It's not about the destination, it's about the journey," he says. "You have to be really content with just enjoying every day as its own distinct adventure." Sage advice for cyclists and non-cyclists alike.

To learn more about Andrew's travels, you can read his ride log at t.ly/UD4QR.



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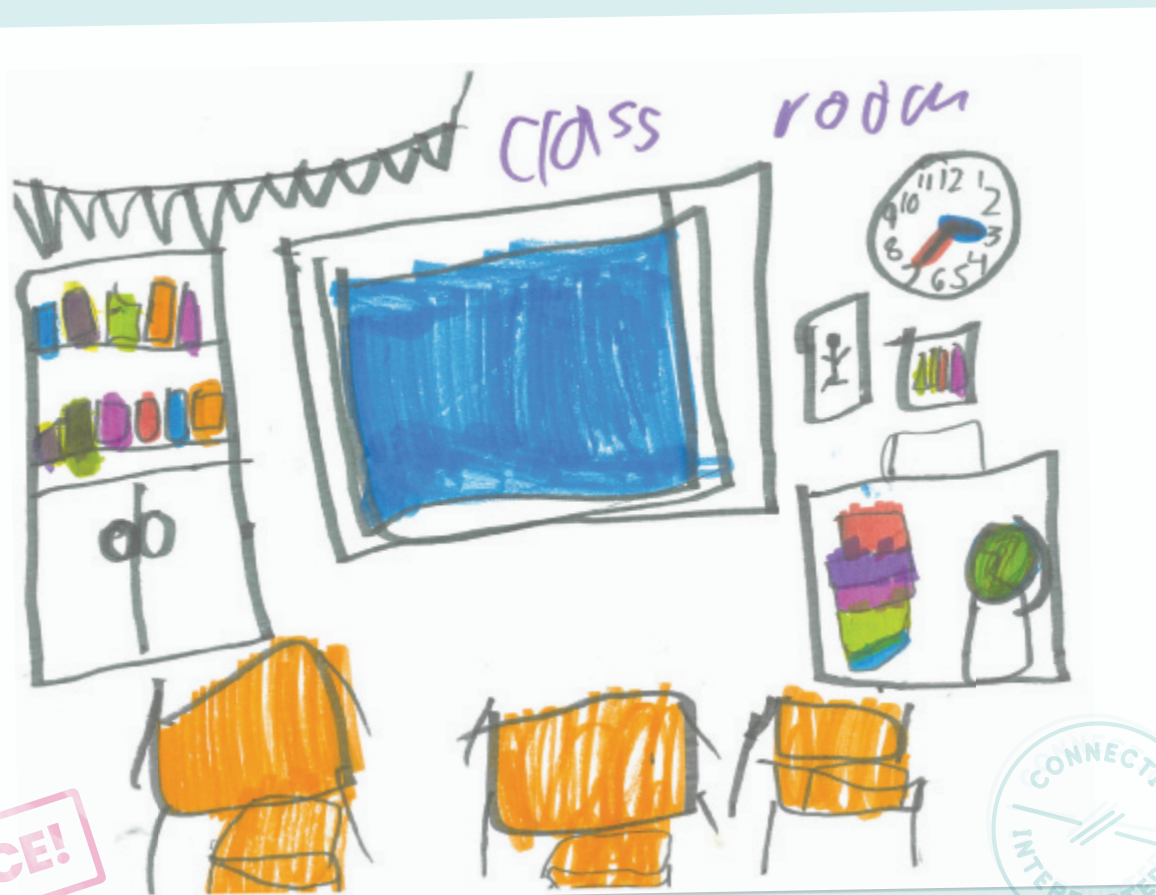
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If You Can Read This...

The pandemic took a toll on Austin ISD students, and now too few can read at grade level. How do we get out of this ditch? **BY BRANT BINGAMON**

“Imagine a Zoom meeting with 12 4-year-olds.” That’s how Justin Douglas remembers his son Holden’s first year of preschool in the 2020-21 school year. “Imagine being a 4-year-old who doesn’t even know how to behave in class. They’re just learning that stuff and they were having to learn Zoom etiquette, too.”

Holden is one of 35,000 public elementary school kids in Austin whose first years of education have involved at least some remote learning. And it’s been hard. In 2021, the Texas Education Agency wrote that the pandemic’s impacts “erased years of improvement in reading and math.” Standardized test scores show that six in 10 Austin ISD elementary students aren’t reading at grade level – in other words, 22,000 young Austinites face a risk of reduced literacy or even illiteracy.

That’s a problem because all subsequent learning, including subjects like math and science, is dependent on reading. Research also shows literacy is associated with better health outcomes,

higher self-esteem, the development of empathy, stronger moral reasoning, and better memory in late life. Those who don’t read well are less likely to earn a living wage, more likely to be incarcerated, and have a reduced life expectancy.

Teachers begin reading instruction early in our public schools. Ideally, a teacher will be able to sit beside a student, place their finger on a word in a book, and help them sound out the letters.

But that’s not what kids like Holden received. When he returned to in-person classes in the fall of 2021 as a kindergartner, he and his teacher were masked and socially distanced, reducing the personal connection so important to reading instruction. Holden’s parents believe the experience slowed down his early literacy.

“Holden’s in second grade this year and he is catching up to where he needs to be,” Holden’s mother, Lindsay Douglas, said. But test scores show many kids are struggling to catch up. How can Austin’s public schools bridge the COVID gap?

THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

In the months leading up to the COVID-19 shutdown, Meghan Buchanan was at work on BLEND, the Austin school district’s online learning platform. She was a member of the district’s Technology Design Team, which was bringing “blended learning,” an approach to teaching that mixes online and in-person instruction, to classrooms across the district.

“I remember it was in January of 2020 and our boss, Erin Bown-Anderson, started talking about what might happen if COVID-19 was a real thing,” Buchanan said. “Like, what this might mean for us, how we needed to be ready to pivot, and how important our work might be. We were already thinking, ‘How can we position ourselves to be ready?’”

Two months later, on March 4, Texas’ first case of COVID was announced. Things quickly fell apart. On March 6, the city of Austin declared an emergency and South by Southwest was canceled. On March 13, the last day of school before spring break, Austin ISD canceled classes.

“Immediately – I think this was the same day they made that decision – we started talking about an online hub for resources,” Buchanan said.

The Technology Design Team worked through spring break, changing a blended learning conference that had been planned for March 25 from in-person to online. Two thousand educators attended the conference to see how remote learning works, how to create identity-safe classes online, and how to reach students who aren’t connected to Wi-Fi.

A few weeks later, the district launched the Learning At-Home website. It provided links to curriculum, COVID guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, and support for remote learning and mental health. Each page included a video walkthrough narrated by a district administrator, teacher, or student. “A lot of it was led by teachers, who were like, ‘We can do this,’” Buchanan said.

FLIPPED UPSIDE DOWN

By April, the reopening of the schools had been postponed repeatedly. Thousands of people across the country were on ventilators and dying. More than a million Texans had lost their jobs. No one knew what would happen next. Educators like Patrick Salinas, then the vice principal of Norman-Sims Elementary, were taking it day by day.

“Education was completely flipped upside down,” Salinas said. “For the moment, it wasn’t about teaching anymore. It was about survival for the majority of our families. It was about making sure that we knew where our students were. I remember thinking, ‘We don’t know who is being

affected.’ So our number one job was to make sure we were just contacting families and staying engaged.”

Norman-Sims is one of many schools in Austin’s Eastern Crescent that for years has been designated by the state as low-performing. Norman-Sims students are 50% Hispanic, 40% Black, 4% Asian, and 2% white. Ninety-six percent of them qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch. As Salinas made plain to us, Norman-Sims does more than educate students. It helps stabilize their lives. It feeds them.

“We do breakfast and lunch. If the kids stay after school we give them dinner. And when they go home, I know that they’re in multi-generational households. We’ve got families that live in shelters. We’ve got families that, I know for a fact, the parents are working long hours or double shifts. So at that point we were just making sure that basic needs were being met.”

With the kids no longer able to come to school, Norman-Sims began delivering curbside meals. And it wasn’t the only school doing so. Austin ISD’s food services team prepared and delivered over a million meals to students and their caregivers from May through December 2020. As the Learning At-Home website went up, the district also delivered the hardware necessary to make online instruction possible – Chromebooks, iPads, Wi-Fi. It placed wireless routers on 261 of its school buses and parked them in neighborhoods with internet connectivity issues.

“We had a big technology drive-through,” Salinas remembered. “We all talked about how we wanted to be like Chick-fil-A. We put together backpacks, we put together nine-week kits for the kids, we put together their technology, so they had a whole system. They came through the drive-through during their designated time, and we made sure they had everything for online learning. At the same time, we were doing a social media campaign, telling them how to set up their environment so that it’s conducive to learning.”

“I LOST A LOT ONLINE”

The Texas Education Agency made plans to reopen schools in August 2020, and some schools did reopen. Others reopened in September. Austin ISD was one of the last to let students return. It opened on Oct. 4 but at only 25% capacity. Most kids stayed home.

For many students and teachers, that year – when classes were split between in-person and online learners – was the most difficult of the pandemic. Veronica Burke, who works as a dyslexia interventionist in grades two through five at Annie Webb Blanton Elementary, remembers how she prepped before the year began,

spending the summer re-creating her lesson plans online, recording videos modeling word sounds, scanning the pages of her lessons, and uploading everything.

But when she started teaching, Burke found that remote learning bogged down the lesson. Kids couldn’t maintain the same level of attention they did in person. She had to take breaks every 10 minutes. She couldn’t sit beside her students to see how they held their pencils or put her finger on the page to help them follow along.

“You had the kids who were at the kitchen table being watched by a grandparent. Or the kids who sometimes were like, ‘My mom had to go to work,’ and they’re there – by themselves.”

AUSTIN ISD’S VERONICA BURKE

“I lost a lot online,” Burke said. “I had to get creative. I used the annotation tool on Zoom to model how to write the letters, and I would have my students watch that. It was like, ‘Okay, we’re practicing these letters today. Here’s how you’re writing your letters. And now you try it. And now, take a picture of it, or have a parent take a picture of it and send it to me.’”

For those at home, success depended to some degree on how comfortable they were with technology. Jillian Griffin’s daughter began third grade remotely in the fall of 2020, never having had much experience with computers.

“She hated it,” Griffin said. “She dreaded it. She was miserable the whole time. She eventually got used to it but, at the beginning, I was having to get up from my desk every five minutes and help her. And it was really isolating. She was not really interacting with the other children.”

Some students did better online than in person, and certainly it was crucial to have the option available – many would have had no instruction at all without it. But most of the parents we spoke with were frustrated by the experience. It was difficult for young students to focus. Renee Sanders’ daughter entered Norman-Sims in the fall of 2020. Sanders would sit beside her to help her through the lesson.

“I work overnight as a nurse and I would stay up and watch the poor teacher that was trying to teach through the screen,” Sanders said. “There would be 23 little faces in 23 little boxes and she had to gather all of their attention, all at one

time. You’d have kids that were asleep. You had some that weren’t trying to pay attention. You had some students just looking at a TV. She’d say, ‘Let’s take a break, we’ll come back in the afternoon.’ Everybody comes back and it’s turned to 17 boxes, 15 boxes. It was obvious it was going to be a setback for all of them.”

Burke estimates that only one out of five of her students had a parent beside them for the lessons. She saw that it was harder for those without one. Many of these were from eco-

nomically disadvantaged households, where parents weren’t able to take time off work.

“When we started out virtually that year we put out messaging: Make sure the kids have a dedicated space, that they’re not working in bed all the time, they’re not in the living room with the TV on,” Burke said. “You could tell the parents who took the time to create a space for them and had their materials. And then you had the kids who were at the kitchen table being watched by a grandparent. Or the kids who sometimes were like, ‘My mom had to go to work,’ and they’re there – by themselves.”

THE COVID GAP AND MAP

One of the first things Gov. Greg Abbott did when COVID hit was lift the requirement that schools administer the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness test, known as STAAR, which had been scheduled to begin in April of 2020. For the next two years, educators and lawmakers in both parties asked the governor to continue allowing schools to skip the STAAR. He made it mandatory again in 2021.

When the STAAR results came out that summer, they showed that the pandemic had reversed years of improvement in reading and math. The kids who had attended classes remotely performed the worst. The Texas Education Agency and educators on the ground acknowledged the reality – COVID had hurt learning across all student groups. More particularly, it had deepened a learning disparity that had existed in economically disadvantaged communities for decades. The COVID gap had arrived.

Meanwhile, another test, different from STAAR, was appearing in schools. It had been approved by the Texas Legislature in 2019 as part of a landmark education bill – House Bill 3 – that emphasized the importance of early literacy. HB 3 required, among other things, that schools across Texas screen children for dyslexia in kindergarten and first grade. The test to administer the screening was called Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP Growth.

CONTINUED ON P.22



ALL OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THIS STORY WERE PROVIDED BY THE AMAZING AVERY KLEPPE, 6

(ADDITIONAL DESIGN BY ZEKE BARBARO)



If You Can Read This...
CONTINUED

STAAR and MAP are sometimes conflated, but they're quite dissimilar. STAAR is administered at the end of each school year, takes a whole day to complete, and is meant to determine how well students have learned that year's lessons – or, in educator parlance, whether kids are on grade level. STAAR is a high-stakes test for students, teachers, and entire school districts. If a school's STAAR results are poor multiple years in a row, it can be forced to shut down. It is criticized in some quarters as poorly designed and biased, and as encouraging educators to abandon a well-rounded curriculum to instead teach to the test.

MAP is different. It's a test taken by 11 million kids across the country at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year and is meant to be completed in under an hour. MAP uses adaptive technology – like a video game – to make questions progressively harder or easier, depending on whether a student gets an answer right or wrong. Kids can't ace the test. Half of its 50 questions will be answered incorrectly by every child, regardless of their aptitude.

Susan Diaz and Jennifer Abramson of AISD's Academics Department told us that MAP can provide information on many things in great detail: where an individual student is in relation to their peers, what knowledge they've gained and lack,

how teachers compare to one another, how schools and districts are doing. The data can be broken down – disaggregated – to examine the performance of kids from different demographic groups.

"The beauty of it is that we can get a much better pulse throughout the course of the year as to whether our instruction is sticking – and how can we tweak it," Abramson said. "There's a lot of implications that spin off of it at a programmatic level. How are our dual language students doing? What does it say about our students that are receiving special education?"

When AISD began testing with MAP in 2021, it set goals for students from the earliest grades through high school. For third-graders, the district vowed to raise the percentage of students able to read at grade level from 35% in June of 2021 to 50% at the end of the current school year, and 60% by August of 2026. The goal was similar for math: to raise the percentage of students performing at grade level from 43% in June of 2022 to 50% this year, and 60% by June of 2026.

However, MAP results over the last two years demonstrate that the progress of third-graders in both subjects has been stagnant. The most recent results, released in January, show that 44% of AISD third-graders, who entered kindergarten at the start of the pandemic, are reading at grade level or above. That's just 1% better than the beginning of the

year. The numbers in math are similarly bad. MAP shows that only 35% of third-graders are performing on grade level in math, up from 33% at the beginning of the year.

When the test results were released, district leaders identified three general takeaways. First, obviously, third-graders are not learning fast enough to reach the district's goals. Second, students experiencing poverty are doing worse than their peers across the board. Third, African American students are doing worse regardless of their economic status.

OVERSERVING THE UNDERSERVED KIDS

Austin ISD has, for the last two years, reemphasized early literacy throughout the district, as has Texas as a whole. District leaders had nurtured a modest hope that doing so would bump up MAP scores. So December 2023's results shocked the system. After taking them in, administrators announced what they described as an intensive intervention in 20 of the district's 78 elementary schools, most of them in the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of the Eastern Crescent.

A big part of the intervention is the simplification of the district's teaching and math curricula, to make it easier for kids who have fallen behind to grasp and for less-experienced teachers to teach. A team of executive directors, coaching specialists, and early learning specialists has visited the priority schools one to three times per week since the beginning of the year, training principals on the new curricula, mentoring teachers, and establishing open lines of communication.

Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Academics Mary Ann Maxwell told us the goal is to put the district's weight behind the priority schools. And she provided a handy mantra for the plan. "What we want to do here is to overserve our traditionally underserved students," Maxwell said. "What we're talking about is not exact equality of services for everybody, but differentiated support. It's equity, not equality."

Maxwell described a recent training session at Josephine Houston Elementary in Southeast Austin: "All the teachers were there, the administrators were there, any instructional staff on the campus was there. We provided the training and it was very active. The teachers practiced the strategies in this low-risk environment so that they were ready to take them back into the classroom. And you know, sometimes meetings like these from the district can, for a teacher, seem like an imposition. But they said it felt supportive. We're hearing that the teachers really appreciate the engagement."

As part of the intervention, AISD is ensuring that each priority campus uses the same curricula and instruction methods, so the MAP

data that comes at the end of the year will be more reliable. Assistant Superintendent LaKesha Drinks said they've adopted an easy-to-teach early literacy curriculum called "Talk, Read, Talk, Write." The curriculum uses phonics, an instruction method for beginning readers that teaches the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent.

Drinks said "Talk, Read, Talk, Write" has been shown to work well for emerging bilingual students and those from economically disadvantaged households. She knows the curriculum from her years as the principal of Guerrero Thompson Elementary but has learned in meetings with teachers that many are unfamiliar with it. To her, this demonstrates a root cause of the COVID gap – the replacement of veteran teachers during the pandemic with inexperienced ones. Over the 2020-21 school year, AISD records show the district lost 762 of its teachers. The next year the number was 1,254. Many who left had taught in low-performing schools.

"We have mostly novice teachers at our most struggling campuses now," Drinks told us in a conversation at Houston Elementary in February. "Here at Houston, they have 15 new teachers this year, out of 47, with 13 of them in their first year. As a former principal, if I had two new teachers I'd have three veteran teachers that would kind of adopt the new teacher. But a lot of our older teachers that had health concerns retired during the pandemic. That means that we just don't have some of the peer leaders that you normally would have at these grade levels."

Along with training principals and teachers on the simplified curricula, the district is seeking a deeper connection with the families of struggling students through its network of parent support specialists. There are approximately 70 parent support specialists in the district who help coordinate a huge number of services – food assistance, mental health care, tutoring, and financial help with rent and utilities among them. Research shows these kinds of support have a direct impact on students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged households.

Melinda Zamora has worked as a parent support specialist at St. Elmo Elementary for the last five years. She said her first goal is to make parents comfortable receiving services, so that collaborations with teachers can begin. "We want to make sure that parents know that at any time they are welcome to share any kind of story that they may have," Zamora said. "And once we build on those relationships, on that foundation, it encourages them to keep wanting to come back. And every story is going to be different. I have a parent and she just told me today that she has applied for her citizenship and now she's looking forward to taking the ESL class to learn more."

Deputy Superintendent Patricia Rodriguez told us that the district wants to take a holistic approach to the kids it serves. “It’s the whole child, right?” Rodriguez said. “It’s their attendance, it’s how they feel welcomed in the school, how they’re part of a family in the classroom – all of that. And that exists in some of our schools, but we want to duplicate it so it’s not just a culture somewhere in the district but it’s a culture across the entire district.”

IS IT WORKING?

District administrators believe the MAP test scores from the end of the school year will demonstrate how well the intervention is working. They are cautiously optimistic after seeing midyear results from second-graders that demonstrate improvements in reading, though not math. Regardless of what the scores will show, educators like Patrick Salinas, who was hired as principal of Norman-Sims last year, are thankful for the support. “I’ve got counselors, I’ve got parent support specialists, I’ve got mentors, I’ve got reading buddies. Everyone’s working in unison. And I am seeing that we are moving to the right place. I feel like it’s happening.”

Salinas is known for constantly emphasizing the importance of early literacy. “My teachers know that building a culture of literacy and making sure that every kid is reading on grade level is our main thing,” he said. “We need to be hyper-aligned as a campus when it comes to early literacy. And the biggest thing for that is phonics – getting reading comprehension early.”

Lindsay and Justin Douglas’ son Holden entered Norman-Sims as a second-grader this year. They say that his beginning-of-year MAP scores showed he was behind on reading, but that the results from January seem

to demonstrate that the phonics instruction is working. “We are just one sample kid, but he has responded to the phonics big time,” Justin Douglas said. “They’re doing a ton of that at Sims, where they’re breaking the words apart, and using their fingers to count the syllables, and stretching the words.”

Lindsay Douglas speculates that some of the improvement may have come from a shift in how their son was given the middle-of-year test. “The first time he took it, he was on a computer and there was a whole class full of kids, and they all do it independently – there’s not a teacher sitting beside them. The second time, they pulled some of the kids who scored low into a small group with a teacher that was sitting right there,

watching to see if they didn’t take their time or didn’t take the test seriously.”

Testing remains a fraught issue among parents and educators, especially after the TEA recently redesigned the STAAR test and moved it online, something that experts say will lower the scores of economically disadvantaged students who are less familiar with computers. However, many of the other disruptions connected to the COVID era seem to have abated. Teacher turnover is decreasing after AISD handed out raises at the beginning of this school year. And, of course, the kids are back in class.

“Up until last year, we were still saying, ‘Oh, are these COVID kids? Did they do kindergarten at home?’” Veronica Burke said. “But now, since the kids came back, it’s easier. They do better. They learn faster. I feel like the gap is getting smaller.”

For many of those we spoke with, it took an effort to dive into the memories of the COVID years, recent as they are. It was as though they had put them out of their minds. When they returned to speaking about the present, they expressed astonishment that Austin’s public schools made it through the pandemic. For parents, the experience has produced a renewed reverence for teachers, schools, and public education in general.

“I couldn’t express the gratitude I feel for how well the staff at Norman-Sims has adjusted,” Renee Sanders said. “They’ve done a really, really good job. And I’m glad the kids are back in school, but you know what? COVID allowed me to open up my eyes to what really happens, and the struggles that the teachers and the students have.”

The sense of a break with the past, of renewal and recommitment, was also palpable in our conversations with administrators. “We’re at the beginning of a new era,” Susan Diaz said. “Our superintendent is new, a lot of the leadership team is new, and many of the teachers are new. So we’re just coming together and thinking about ways to improve. How do you change an entire system? Part of it is about belief and behaviors. We have to believe that our kids can meet the goals.”

Diaz and Jennifer Abramson have spent their entire adult lives in education. They are at the tail ends of their careers and could, if they wanted, be making plans to retire. “And yet, here we are,” Abramson said. “And here we will continue to be. Because we are very much determined to help stabilize this district and prevent the constant upheaval. The kids deserve some consistency.” ■

“She hated it. She dreaded it. She was miserable the whole time.”

JILLIAN GRIFFIN,
WHOSE DAUGHTER
STARTED THIRD GRADE
REMOTELY IN 2020

CALENDAR

MAR. 21-28

Creekbed Carter Hogan MUSIC

THURSDAY 21, SAGEBRUSH

In a 2023 *Chron* interview with Laiken Neumann, local queergrass artist Creekbed Carter Hogan said of lyrical endeavors, "To me, [music is] so forgiving and generous and expansive." This Thursday, long-awaited fruit falls from Hogan's talented tree as they celebrate a new self-titled album with Arkansas-originating Gar Hole Records. Album release party festivities go down at hipster's-choice honky-tonk Sagebrush featuring backing band Middle Sattre, who come fresh from February release *Tendencies*. Also on the lineup are indie-folk folks the Hushabys and "dreamy" rockers Tearjerk. Prepare for generous and expansive forgiveness through music.

— JAMES SCOTT

The Boyz of Austin Present: NuMetal vs. Ska QUEER

THURSDAY 21, ELYSIUM

Oh, the Boyz: They are back and have brought the spirit of Nineties scung with 'em. Whether you chose the bad boys of the brass section or the boys who've been brought back to life, the local gender-diverse drag troupe's array of performances will highlight however you pick it up, pick it up. Worried about all that black hair dye wafting harsh chemicals into the air? Fear not: Local air purifier providers Clear the Air, who've made it their mission to "[create] access to cleaner air for artists, musicians, and organizers in the Austin area," will be keeping you from getting down with the sickness. You know, the one that starts with C and never actually ends?

— JAMES SCOTT



Baldie Loxx and Lucy Fur at Total DOMination

PHOTO BY JAY YBARRA

Queer Film Theory 101: Road Trips FILM QUEER

THURSDAY 21, BARREL O' FUN

Who among us hasn't taken a cross-country car journey that taught us a little about life, a little about love, and a lot about ourselves? Okay, most of us haven't, but damn if movies don't over-represent this experience. This month, the cinematic-minded queer "professors" of Queer Film Theory 101 feature films about adventures on the gay ol' gravel way and present on how these influenced their LGBTQ lives. And before you ask, no, not everyone can talk about sleepover staple *Crossroads*, but I'm sure someone will speak on this important work.

— JAMES SCOTT

Total DOMination Rodeo

QUEER SPORTS

FRIDAY 22, COME AND TAKE IT LIVE

When you consider both entertainment forms, there's very little separating drag from wrestling. I mean, what is kayfabe if not a drag queen in full face and padding? Host and Austin drag girlie-about-town Lucy Fur removes all separation with her drag wrestling show that boasts a real-ass wrestling ring courtesy of those dimension dropkickers Slam Portal. Within the squared circle, performers like Gothess Jasmine, Eva Inez, and MK Ultra deliver drag as well as lip sync slams. For this month's rodeo-themed show, there'll be comedy from Roxy Castillo, vogue by Legendary Natalie Lepore, Baldie Loxx as the night's ring girl, and rodeo clownery via Fou Fou Ha.

— JAMES SCOTT

A Gore-Met Feast FILM

FRIDAY 22, EASTSIDE CINEMA

All over Austin since 2016, horror cinema showcase Bat City Cinema brings the word of 16mm film. Their latest collaboration with the American Genre Film Archive bleeds true bad-taste bona fides for this blood-and-guts presentation: Screening on Austin's "last single-screen cinema" will be two deep-cut AGFA schlock specials. *The Undertaker and His Pals* from director T.L.P. Swicegood features a murderous medical student biker chopping up bodies for his "studies," and, according to the American Film Institute entry on it, had a print confiscated in 1967 by Louisville, Ky., police due to its "publication of materials dealing with bloodshed, lust or crime." The other film, aptly titled *The Corpse Grinders*, deals in a sketchy cat-food company utilizing the local graveyard for their meat, which of course makes all cats hunger for human flesh. Yum!

— JAMES SCOTT

David Spade COMEDY

FRIDAY 22, PARAMOUNT THEATRE

David Spade was a key member of one of the best casts in *Saturday Night Live* history, starting as a writer in 1990 and becoming a beloved cast member along with Chris Farley, his co-star in Nineties buddy comedies *Tommy Boy* and *Black Sheep*. Many may know Spade best for *Joe Dirt* or his Emmy-nominated role as Dennis on long-running sitcom *Just Shoot Me!*, which leaned heavily on his self-deprecating humor and deadpan delivery dripping with sarcasm. New stand-up show "Catch Me Inside" brings his trademark wry humor to the stage with new material built on a decades-long career.

— KAT MCNEVINS





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Poe: A Tale of Madness THEATRE

FRIDAY 22 - SUNDAY 24, LONG CENTER

This world premiere won't be a *danse macabre*, per se, but we're dying to see what Ballet Austin's Artistic Director Stephen Mills has conjured by way of exploring the life and works of that darkling prince of American letters, Edgar Allan Poe. Mills' choreography, gracefully (and eldritchly) embodied by the company's finest at the Long Center, doesn't take place in any grave silence, of course – the kinetic biography is powered by a musical score from composer Graham Reynolds, performed live by the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and features a thrilling libretto penned by the Rude Mechs' appropriately raven-haired Shawn Sides.

– WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

Holy American Burnout! With Sean Enfield and Diamond Braxton

BOOKS CONVERSATIONS

FRIDAY 22, ALIENATED MAJESTY BOOKS

Burnout! I, a free alt-weekly employee, obviously know nothing about the concept. But author and Dallas native Sean Enfield brings a hefty education on the subject to his recent essay collection *Holy American Burnout!* from Split/Lip Press. Essays woven together with cultural critique into a larger tapestry of Black & biracial identity makes for fertile conversation (Enfield also identifies as a gardener), which this day will be had with local writer/editor/founder of anti-racist publisher Abode Press Diamond Braxton. Topics include “the collection, the many forces that lead to our collective burnout, and of course, Frank Ocean.”

– JAMES SCOTT

CONTINUED ON P.28



Sean Enfield

COURTESY OF ALIENATED MAJESTY BOOKS

QUEER COMMUNITY



Scruff's owner Timothy Durant

JANA BIRCHUM

SCRUFF'S BARBERSHOP GROWS OUT ITS ROOTS IN NEW SOUTH AUSTIN DIGS

As its fifth birthday approached on February 27, Austin's queer-owned Scruff's Barbershop experienced a growth spurt, aka a second South Austin location. Scruff's owner Timothy Durant said after five years on the Eastside, he felt ready to expand farther into Austin and create another space that captures the inclusive spirit of the original location. “The biggest thing for me is that it's a safe space for anyone to get a great haircut and amazing service being completely themselves,” Durant said.

Scruff's isn't your typical Texas barbershop: Durant trains all his stylists in both cosmetology and barbering, ensuring clients get a personalized cut with scissors or clippers. “It's not all about the amount of clients we see,” Durant said. “It's about developing each particular relationship.” The shop's success, he said, comes from years of building relationships with clients and tailoring the service to their needs and routines.

Looking forward, Durant plans to develop a line of simple, approachable hair products. Instead of a miracle product that claims to cure all hair-related ills, he hopes to create products that say what they do and do what they say. “There's a lot of

products out there that promise to do A, B, and C, but they're so close to every other product that they don't really deliver,” Durant said. “I'm looking for a line that someone could come in and be like, ‘I want my hair to be textured like this,’ and it's one product that does exactly that.”

Eventually, Durant hopes to open a third location, but for now, he's focused on building relationships with both clientele and the community. Scruff's is partnering with Out Youth, a local charity supporting LGBTQ+ youth “to further our message as well as to just give back to the community,” Durant said. There are

no concrete plans yet, but Durant said he's excited to help fundraise and increase the reach of the nonprofit.

In a February 2023 profile of Durant and his, at the time, singular shop, Qmmunity Editor James Scott noted Durant “seeks to make the barbershop a community environment that can stand beside gay bars as a space where queer people happily congregate.” Five years into Scruff's business lifetime, his mission is the same, just a little bigger.

– MADELINE DUNCAN

Scruff's Barbershop

Tue.-Fri., 10am-7pm, Sat. 10am-5pm,
1632 S. First & 1601 E. Fifth
scruffsbarbershop.com



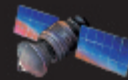
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ECLIPSE

AXEL THESLEFF • BARCLAY CRENSHAW • BOOGIE T • BWOY DE BHAJAN • CLOZEE (SUNSET SET) • COSMIC TRIGGER • DIRT MONKEY • DUFFREY • FLORET LORET FLOWDAN (SUNSET SET) • JORDN MOODY • LEVEL UP • LSDREAM • MEGAN HAMILTON • OF THE TREES • OPIUO • SAKA • SKREAM (DUBSTEP SET) • SOMATOAST SUBTRONICS • TIPPER (TWILIGHT SET) • TRIPP ST. • TRUTH • ZEDS DEAD • ZINGARA

SKY

ARDALAN • ATA • ATISH • BIGREDMACHINE • BOB MOSES (CLUB SET) • BRITTA ARNOLD • CHARLOTTE de WITTE • CHRISTIAN MARTIN • DANA NADA & DANDAN DESERT HEARTS (MIKEY LON, LEE REYNOLDS, MARIE, FORKYS) • DJ THREE • DJ YAZI • EITAN REITER • EJÉ • GALEN • GIZ • HALSTEADY • HEIMLICH KNULLER • HENRY POPE JOHN 'OO' FLEMING • JUSTIN SHAFFER • KENERGY • KOJIRO • KONSTANTIN • LEE BURRIDGE • LOTTE AHOI • LP GIOBBI • MAAYAN NIDAM • MAGUPI MAJITOPE • MARK FARINA • MARTHA VAN STRAATEN • MATT CAINES • MAYA JANE COLES • MIMI LOVE • MIRA • m.O.N.R.O.E. • DONA DAHL PATRICIO • PAUL OAKENFOLD • PETER BLICK • PILOCKA KRACH • RIRI • SETH TROXLER • SHAWNA • SWAYLO • TIGA • TONYINORBIT • TOOKER TREVOR MOONTRIBE • TURMSPRINGER • YULI FERSHTAT • ZENTI

SUN

1200 MICS BY RIKTAM • AJJA • AMPLIFY • ANIMALIEN • ATMOS • AVALON • BARAKUDA • BRIAN SENTIENT • CAPTAIN HOOK • DAIJIRO • DAKSINAMURTI DIGITAL HIPPIE • DIGOA • DYLAALIEN • EGON'S EMBRACE • FREEDOM FIGHTERS • GMS • GU • HATTA • HORIZON BY AVALON & MAD MAXX • JOSSIE TELCH KABAYUN • KASEY TAYLOR • KHROMATA • KLEIMAN • KROMAGON • LOOPUS IN FABULA • MAD TRIBE • MAGIK • MODUS • OUT OF ORBIT • PARADIGM PARUS • PENTA • PERFECT STRANGER • POLI • QUANTALOOP • REGAN • RISING DUST • ROB FRACTALTRIBE • RYOOKY • SCHROTT • SHOVE • SPEC SPYROS • STEREOXIDE • STRANGER THAN FICTION • SUPERLUMINAL • SWAMI HARAMI • TREVOR MOONTRIBE • TRON • TSUYOSHI SUZUKI UNCHARTED TERRITORY • XOMPAX

MOON

ADAM MEOW • AHEE • ALL:LO COLLECTIVE (PARKBREEZY, PHEEL, TF MARZ, THOUGHT PROCESS) • ANNA MORGAN (2 SETS) • ASHEZ (2 SETS) • ATYYA • AAYA • BEING BEAT KITTY • BOGL • CANNABASS • CHLL SMTH • CHRISTIAN MARTIN (DNB) • CHMURA • DABIS • DEEP DARK AND DANGEROUS (TRUTH, ABSTRAKT SONANCE, DISTINCT MOTIVE, KHIVA) DIMOND SAINTS • DOV1 • DRRTY WULVZ • EL PAPA CHANGO • EPROM • ESSEKS • HANDSOME TIGER • HAMD1 • IRIEYES • ITERATE • IVY LAB • JOSH TEED JUJU • KHIVA (2 SETS) • K + LAB • KLL SMTH • K.L.O • LEO BURNSIDE • MOOD SWING & CHEVY BASS • MONTY • NAHLITH • OLD GOLD • POTIONS SAINT SINNER (SUNSET SET) • SAKA • SICARIA • SKELER • SPEKTRUM & NAS JA • SPOONBILL • SYLPH • THE LIBRARIAN • VISAGES • X3BUTTERFLY YOHN • ZEN SELEKTA • ZIV

EARTH

AJJA & TANINA • ATASH • BALKAN BUMP • CAPTAIN HOOK BASS • COUPE DVILLE • DANNI G • DAVID STARFIRE • DESERT DWELLERS • DRAGONFLY • ELEPHANT HEART EPHCTO JAGUARTIVIST • EQUANIMOUS • EVAN HATFIELD • FANNA-FI-ALLAH (2 SETS) • GOLDEN DAWN ARKESTRA • GOVINDA • HIDEYO BLACKMOON • HIGH STEP SOCIETY JOAQOPELLI • KR3TURE • LAMA DORJE • LEMONELLA • LIS • LIQUID BLOOM • LOGIE • M.RUX • MAH ZE TAR • MANYNAMES • MARK FARINA (MUSHROOM JAZZ SET) • MARTHA VAN STRAATEN MOSE • PLXMTREES • RED GIANT PROJECT • RENEGADE OPERA • RUBY CHASE • SAVEJ • SHAMANI • SKYSIA • SOOHAN • SOULEYE • SPOONBILL • TEMPLE STEP TOOKER & WAZOO • TRAVELER • TV BROKEN FT KATIE SKENE • VINCENT ANTONE

SPACE

DEARMOON ASTRONAUT: BRENDAN HALL • DR. CHRIS BOSHUIZEN • VIRGIN GALACTIC ASTRONAUT: CHRISTOPHER HUIE • INSPIRATION ASTRONAUT: CHRIS SEMBROSKI • VIRGIN GALACTIC ASTRONAUT: LORETTA HIDALGO WHITESIDES SPACE PERSPECTIVE ASTRONAUT: RAVÉ MEHTA • NASA ASTRONAUT: RON GARAN • INSPIRATION ASTRONAUT: DR. SIÂN PROCTOR • NASA ASTRONAUT: NICOLE STOTT • DEARMOON ASTRONAUT: EVERYDAY ASTRONAUT • DEARMOON ASTRONAUT: YEMI A.D. AMY IMHOFF • ANNU • ARI EISENSTAT • ASHLEY ZELINSKIE • BARBARA BELVISI • BEN HALDEMAN • CHRIS STOTT • CHRISTINA KORP • CONRAD CHALLENGE • COSMIC PERSPECTIVE • DR CHRISPY • GUY REID HENK ROGERS • HIP HOP MD, MAYNARD OKEREKE • INARA TABIR • JAKE GARAN • DR. JANCY MCPHEE • JIM SHEETS • JUNAID MIAN • KATIE CAROLAN • KIKO DONTCHEV • KIM MACHARIA • LAMBERT HOGENHOUT MARYLIZ BENDER • DR. NOUR SKAF • OREN WHYCHE-SHAW • DR. SHAWNA PANDYA • RACHEL LYONS • RICK TUMLINSON • ROBERTO CARLINO (NASA ENGINEER) • DR. ROBIN NEWHOUSE • SEAN GRAHAM DR. STEVEN VANCE • DR. TATYANA TARNOWSKI • TEST SHOT STARFISH • ZEPHANII SMITH EISENSTAT

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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YOGA, MOVEMENT & MINDFULNESS

HANNAH MUSE • JAI DEV • MICHAEL BRIAN BAKER • ROD STRYKER PARAYOGA • SHIVA REA • SIANNA SHERMAN & MASOOD • SUZANNE STERLING • YOGI ZAIN ADRIAN LOBO • ALYSSA DECARO • AMPLIFIED YOGA • AMY CONTE • ANNA WHIRLING & DERVISH AZIZ • B-MARISTAN • BLOOMURIAN BRITTANY GREER • CLOUD PEOPLE • CISCO • DEMETRI VELISARIUS DRAGONFLY • GYPSY • JACQUI MATEO & SOULAND • JANA ROEMER • JASMINE ROSE • JASON NEMER (ACROYOGA) • JORDAN REMAR • KATY BOHINC • LUCIAN TARNOWSKI • MAYSIE BAKER MEREDITH SLOANE • NEPTUNE • PATRICK NIKISH • REBEKAH HILLEBRAND & ALAJA VALENTINA • THE SACRED C'S • SHAWNI • SWAHE • TINA RODRIGUEZ • UNTETHERED MOVEMENT • VO VERA

CONSCIOUSNESS, HEALTH & WELLNESS

ADRIAN GRENIER • DR. ANDREW WEIL • JAMIE WHEAL • LAMA DORJE • 30TH ANNIVERSARY: MAPS • PAUL STAMETS & DR. PAMELA KRYSKOW • GLOBAL MEDITATION: UNIFY AMY EMERSON • ART OF ARETE • BASELINE HAPPINESS PROJECT • DR. BERRA YAZAR-KLOSINSKI • CHELSEA ROSE PIRES (ZENDO PROJECT) • COSMIC HEARTS' CHAKRA VILLAGE • DR. GÜL DÖLEN ERIK DAVIS • ISMAIL L. ALI • JENNIFER DUMPERT • JORDAN REMAR • JULIA TAO & SAM WILENSKY (THREE JEWELS) • DR. MANU DOSS • MARCELA OT'ALORA G & BRUCE POULTER • MINDS • MIKE ZUCKERMAN DR. NANDA MEISTER • RICK DOBLIN, PH.D. • SACRED SONS • SUTTON KING

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DAY TRIPS

BY GERALD E. MCLEOD



GERALD E. MCLEOD

By a rough estimate, I have visited at least 65 barbecue joints in Texas in the last five years. These are some of my favorites.

Austin's BBQ Eagle Lake is a little town southwest of Houston best known for being near the entrance to Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. The old-fashioned barbecue joint in a converted gas station landed on the *Texas Monthly* Top 50 BBQ Joints list in 1988, 2000, and 2008. It's still really good. Pro tip: The banana pudding is top notch.

515 E. Main St., Eagle Lake, 979/234-5250, Wed.-Sat., 9am until sold out, facebook.com/AustinsBBQ.

Brick Vault Brewery & BBQ It's usually a pretty good sign when a restaurant is surrounded by cop cars at lunchtime. When I visited on a Saturday there were at least three law enforcement agencies represented in the line. The brisket was a bit fatty for my taste, but the turkey was smoked to perfection. Pro tip: The locally crafted beers are as delicious as the food.

102 U.S. 90 W., Marathon, Thu.-Fri., 5-8:30pm; Sat., noon-8:30pm; Sun., noon-3pm, 432/386-7538, brickvaultbreweryandbbq.com.

LaVaca BBQ Pitmaster Kelli Navarez cooks the delicious briskets and other smoked meats at the award-winning Port Lavaca location and delivers it daily to the northern outpost. The Navarez family plans to move the kitchen operation to the much larger former tire shop in Victoria. Pro tip: The sun-dried tomato bread alone is worth the trip.

2001 N. Navarro, Victoria, Thu.-Sat., 11am-7pm; Sun., 10am-3pm, 361/212-4860, lavacabbq.com.

Tony DeMaria's Bar-B-Q This family-owned joint has been cranking out great barbecue since 1946. Fourth-generation pitmaster Blake DeMaria can often be seen at the butcher block. Get there early because they often sell out by 1pm. Pro tip: Try the smoked bologna.

1000 Elm St., Waco, Mon.-Sat., 9am-2pm or sold out, 254/755-8888, tonysbarbque.com.

1,695th in a series. Everywhere is a day trip from somewhere: Follow "Day Trips & Beyond," a travel blog, at austinchronicle.com/daily/travel.

"The Stars at Night" FILM

SATURDAY 23, VISTA BREWING

Located about 24 miles southwest of all-lit-up Austin, small-town Driftwood offers a better opportunity to admire the stars at night. Vista Brewing hosts a screening of documentarian Betty Buckley's 55-minute ode to the night sky and its influence on millennia of storytellers – a creative spark in danger of being snuffed out by encroaching light pollution. A post-screening Q&A will be followed by an hour of informal stargazing with telescopes. – **KIMBERLEY JONES**

"Circular Body" VISUALARTS

SATURDAY 23, WOMEN & THEIR WORK

Alejandra Almuelle has been responsible for some of the most compelling works of clay sculpture ever created in this city, many of them predicated on the human body and its potential as a record of experience. This latest exhibition of her artistry, a solo show at Women & Their Work, brings the human form front and center, clayborne with additions of graphite, beeswax, paper, resin, and gold and silver leaf. Adorned, embellished, emboldened, the flesh created from clay comes full circle, a cycle of memory and magic powered by beauty, the viewing of it an experience we recommend recording via your own wonder-hungry rods and cones. – **WAYNE ALAN BRENNER**

Earth Hour COMMUNITY

SATURDAY 23, YOUR HOUSE

At 8:30pm local time, Earth Hour will return for its 17th annual request that people around the world turn off their lights. It's also a call to recognize the precarious position that our planet is in. The Earth Hour website has ideas for power-divested activities in case your addiction to electronics is that overwhelming. We're not gonna pretend it won't be difficult for our toddler-like attention spans. But it's the least we can do for, ya know, the survival of our species. – **JAMES RENOVITCH**

Cowan Spring Carnival FAMILY

SATURDAY 23, COWAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A day of family fun at a classic carnival raises funds for the Cowan Elementary PTA, which has gathered some fabulous prize packages for raffle: "Waterslide Palooza" includes a one-night stay at the Kalahari in Round Rock; "Austin Family Fun" comes with tix to an Austin FC game, the Austin Zoo, and \$100 at Pinthouse; and "Adult Staycation" offers a stay at Colton House, brunch at Ciclo, and massages at Mantis. Bonus prizes will also be awarded at the carnival featuring games, bounce houses, a petting zoo, food trucks, and more.

– **KAT MCNEVINS**



Alejandra Almuelle's "Circular Body"

COURTESY OF WOMEN AND THEIR WORK



Estrella Acosta

PHOTO BY BRENDA LADO

Estrella Acosta & Esquina 25

MUSIC

SATURDAY 23, BATES RECITAL HALL

Some of you may remember when Estrella Acosta was a vital part of the Austin music scene. The Cuban-born singer-songwriter long ago relocated to Amsterdam, where her career has flourished. She'll be returning to Austin with her amazing band, Esquina 25, to play a free show at one of UT's most sonically rich venues. Acosta's current album, *Tierra* – *Songs by Cuban Women*, is a joyous affair melding adventurous arrangements and sparkling improvisation with traditional Cuban rhythms. The album was nominated for a 2023 Latin Grammy. This is her lone local appearance, so don't miss out on this rare treat.

– JAY TRACHTENBERG

Fareground Crawfish Festival

FOOD MARKET

SATURDAY 23, FAREGROUND HALL

Fareground, Downtown's upscale food hall situation, is making the most of mudbug season with a festival dedicated to the humble crawfish and its regular boil companions, corn and potatoes: Price of admission guarantees you a pound of food plus one Lone Star tallboy. Expect live music, cornhole, and a vendor market at the on-site Ellis craft cocktail bar; we bet one of their cherry lime daiquiris would pair nicely with a spicy crawdad.

– KIMBERLEY JONES

Sarah Sudhoff: Not a Drill

VISUAL ARTS

SATURDAY 23, GRAYDUCK GALLERY

Jill Schroeder's grayDUCK Gallery presents a powerful new solo show by Sarah Sudhoff, and we should preface this listing with a trigger warning – but that very term, in context, lands much too hideously: Sudhoff's exhibition "explores our increased exposure to gun violence and the alarming lack of measurable gun reform in the United States." Which is provocative enough, but: "My project is attuned to focus on K-12 shootings," says the artist, "and includes community involvement with schools devastated by shootings in Uvalde, Texas, at Robb Elementary, and the 2018 shooting in Santa Fe High School."

– WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

Saltburn Rave

QUEER

SATURDAY 23, CHEER UP CHARLIES

Where better to celebrate Miss Emerald's latest controversial creation – what some have called "The Untalented Mr. Ripley" – than in the sweat-soaked premises of the elegant Chups' estate? Partnered up with Texas Emo Club, CUC brings dance-floor murder for all enjoyers of Jacob "Oh Lordy" Elordi and Barry "Little Freak" Keoghan. Burn it down via busting moves to tunes spun by DJs BB Ding, Claudia Alexandra, and Dragonqueen as they'll be boosting dance, indie sleaze, and electric all night. Venue event descriptions promise bathwater shots, but here's my question: Who's providing that extra special "sauce"? Further investigation required.

– JAMES SCOTT

CONTINUED ON P.30



POSTER ART BY IVAN ALVARADO

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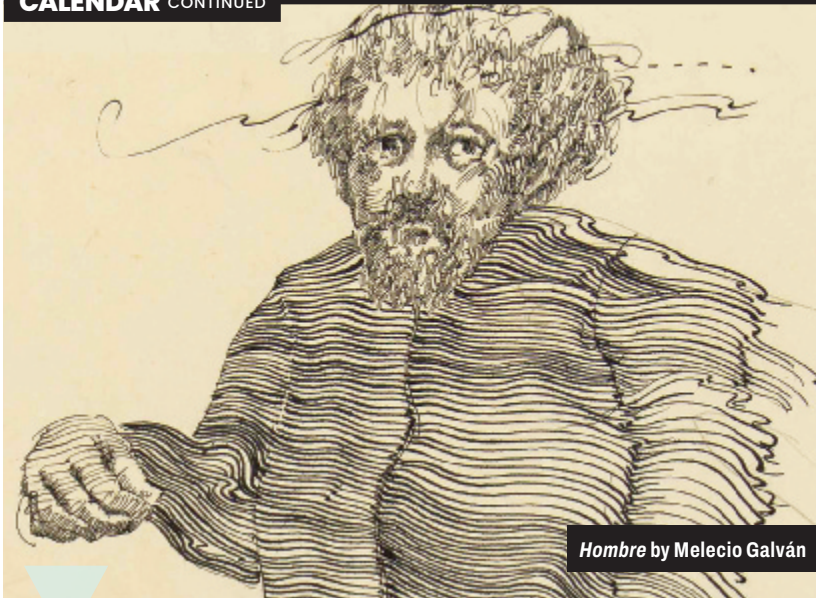


PHOTO BY MELECIO GALVÁN COURTESY OF BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

Meet Melecio Galván: The Secret Artist & His Mexican Contemporaries

VISUAL ARTS

SATURDAY 23, BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

Melecio Galván died in 1982, but there's a reason the Blanton Museum of Art titled its new retrospective "Meet Melecio Galván": The Mexican draftsman didn't receive the kind of attention he deserved in his lifetime. A recent acquisition distinguishes the Blanton as the U.S. museum with the largest collection of Galván works, now numbering 47 drawings in total – making Blanton the obvious place to offer art lovers an overdue introduction to the undersung artist. The exhibition, curated by Vanessa Davidson and on display through Aug. 25, is rounded out with works by his Mexican contemporaries, including Arnold Belkin, Rafael Coronel, Elvira Gascón, Silvia Pardo, Arturo Pastraña Vásquez, Rufino Tamayo, and José Luis Cuevas.

– KIMBERLEY JONES

"Decade of Pride"

FAMILY COMMUNITY QUEER

SATURDAY 23,
AUSTIN ISD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Showing support for queer youth when they need it most is essential to building a better tomorrow. March 18-23, Austin Independent School District celebrates Pride Week as a way to "highlight the district's commitment to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment." Celebrations of LGBTQIA students, families, and staff include AISD Pride stickers, campus activities, and, as the week's big capper, an all-are-welcome event featuring food trucks, a special performance, and a student dance and social.

– JAMES SCOTT

Varta Fest

FAMILY LEARNING

SATURDAY 23,
HAMPTON BRANCH LIBRARY

Here comes a global fest for families predicated on introducing South Asian storytelling traditions to a wider audience. Kiddos and grownups can learn about South Asia's rich cultural history through folk art, dance, music, and literature presented by South Asian artists and writers. That includes hands-on activities like painting, a moving exhibit throughout the library that features audio elements, an immersive Desi storytelling performance, a Likhawat creative storytelling panel, and much more. Fest founders Peerbagh state their aim in creating events like Varta Fest is both to build creative confidence in kids but also "find a balance between preserving cultural authenticity and adapting narratives for the modern world."

– JAMES SCOTT

Fix-It Clinic

COMMUNITY LEARNING

SATURDAY 23,
WINDSOR PARK BRANCH LIBRARY

Do your favorite pants have a fallen hem or missing button? Got a broken blender gathering dust? Keep those items in rotation and out of the landfill with this free clinic from the amazing folks at the public library. Skilled coaches will guide you through your repair journey, to which you must only bring up to two items, parts you might need to make the fix, and a curious mind. They'll have sewing machines and some tools on hand if you need, and they'll even accept drop-offs for volunteers to try their hand at fixing. Get all the details online.

– KAT MCNEVINS

CONTINUED ON P.32



PHOTO BY JULIE MOLLIVER VIA UNSPLASH



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The other week, I got my blood taken to test my testosterone levels. We love a bloodletting, don't we folks? Well, not me! Getting my blood drawn feels, in my creative opinion, a little like fitting a straw into another straw. My veins: a straw; the needle: another straw; you get the picture.



I'm afflicted by blood test blues

PHOTO BY HUSHM NAIDOO JADE PHOTOGRAPHY VIA UNSPLASH

While my humors were sucked from my body, I tried to make small talk – a coping mechanism I have against intense freak-outs. To the nurse administering the blood draw, I mentioned a Tumblr poll I saw (and yes I continue to use Tumblr, otherwise where will I find gay little pictures of L Death Note) posing the question of whether you'd want to get a nose swab or a blood draw. I picked nose swab, since I've had both and swabs just make me have to blow my nose after. The nurse, thoughtfully, said nose swabs hurt a lot. Okay, sure, but getting my blood drawn makes me gag and my blood pressure spike.

Rather than respond with "To each their own," the nurse told me what they tell all their trans patients getting hormone treatments: That getting blood drawn is now part of my identity as a trans person. It's something I'll have to do as long as I'm on HRT. I didn't know what to say 1) because ugh, gross, just had a needle in my arm and now I could see a vial full of my blood, and 2) because I'm sorry, what? It's my identity that I get a blood test every few months? Oy vey.

I tell this story not to be a whiner – although, honestly, if I'm nothing else, I'm a fuckin' whiner – but to highlight an experience that actually has become part of my trans identity. Since the moment I came out, people have just said weird shit to me for the sole reason that I'm transgender and they have An Opinion. Is it all cis people? No, there exists a variety in folks saying goofy stuff about me being trans or just about the overall concept of transness. Whatever the case, it has become a part of me to quickly calculate whether or not what they're saying is fucked enough to call out or, like in the case of the blood draw, I can just go "Uh, okay."

It's an experience most trans people face – being told who you are by someone who thinks transness is the same the community over. The intent isn't always malevolent, but the experience deals psychic damage anyway.

It'd be easier if my transness were confined to a standard experience, one that I could schedule like a blood test. But that's the binary baby brain talking: Identity is complex, hard to pin down, and predicated on more than just what others project on you. On this gender journey, the real challenge is maintaining that sense of self in the face of a world that'd prefer I follow the constantly shifting goalposts of what a Real Trans Person is. As trans ally Popeye once said, I yam who I yam.

Body Mechanics

Friday 22, 301 Chicon

Unofficial Austin Music Awards "Worst Rave," as titled by Body Mechanics' own meme, this party blows out the stereo with sets from Rosei City (SATX), Kowboy (DTX), and locals Vitalik and Lucia Beyond. Fetish attire encouraged, but touching without consent? Kick bricks, creep!

BIPOC Queer Speed Friending

Saturday 23, Limestone Rooftop at the Cambria

You got a friend in Austin, and they're waiting for you at this event thrown by Queer Black Women Alliance! Connections vibes will be boosted by Find Your Bestie Bingo, supplied questions, and raffle prizes – plus tasty drinks and bites.

Sensational SaturGAY

Saturday 23, Industry

Hosted by Maxine LaQueene, this brunch benefits Austin Pets Alive! with a pet runway walk-off, prizes, and, of course, a pup-tastic food spread. Featuring performances by Xtra, Joselyn Breezy, Jayden Daniels, and all the way from ATL, JayBella Banks.

SIZE MATTERS

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GETTY IMAGES



COURTESY OF BILLY JOE MILLER

Billy Joe Miller Art Reveal VISUAL ARTS

SATURDAY 23, UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Billy Joe Miller is a queer, interdisciplinary artist who creates public art in response to the natural world. University Christian Church is a dynamic, inclusive community, serving Austin without exception – regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or disability. OK, how about they join forces for more beauty? Done – with a large, arched sculpture made from powder-coated aluminum, redolent of sanctuary and transformation, set within a landscape design of native plants. Witness this work revealed tonight in a ceremony that features live music from Jordan O’Jordan, Bo Ray, and Thor and Friends. WWJD? He’d be right there.

– WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

ESB-MACC Day of Wellness COMMUNITY

SUNDAY 24, SUNSET VALLEY COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center is temporarily closed for construction, but their excellent programming continues at other sites. This third annual day celebrating wellness in all its forms begins at 9am with an hourlong nature walk guided by Latino Outdoors, complemented by complimentary tacos and pan dulce. Then Jesus Garcia will bless the garden at 10am before it gets a little beautification for spring. At 11 there’ll be live guitar music, a craft activity, nature painting demo, and Aneika Perez leading yoga and meditation. A live cooking demo with Common Threads at 11:15 covers healthy and tasty bases with cookie dough hummus and fruit skewers. Get more info and RSVP online.

– KAT MCNEVINS

Borderless: Together Outside VISUAL ARTS

SUNDAY 24, DIMENSION SCULPTURE PARK

Artists talking about art and the planet on which it’s made – yes, that would be Earth, citizen – is the focus of this new environmental series led by folks from the local LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and refugee communities. This inaugural event is a panel discussion moderated by Paloma Mayorga, featuring artists Jamal Hussain, Kill Joy, and Mueni Loko Rudd, and takes place on the awe-inspiring grounds of the Eastside’s Dimension Sculpture Park, along with an interactive art exhibition by Darcie Book. Pro tip: Bring picnic blankets for sitting on the lawn!

– WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

EchoPark Automotive Grand Prix SPORTS

SUNDAY 24, CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS

NASCAR drivers do make right turns. Well, sometimes at least. The NASCAR Cup Series goes to the first of five road/street courses on its 2024 schedule when it tackles Circuit of the Americas’ full 20-turn layout. Road courses still continue to draw intriguing part-timers despite becoming more common for NASCAR in recent years. Special entrants at COTA include sports car ace Kamui Kobayashi and three-time Supercars champion Shane van Gisbergen. Van Gisbergen impressively won his Cup debut last year and currently competes full-time in the Xfinity Series (NASCAR’s second-tier national division). Tyler Reddick is this event’s defending winner.

– DEREK UDENSI



2023 EchoPark Grand Prix winner Tyler Reddick

PHOTO BY HAROLD HINSON PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY OF NASCAR AT COTA

You'll be a star like Pearl during Get It Games Horror Trivia



Horror Movie Trivia

FILM COMMUNITY

MONDAY 25, CAPTAIN QUACKENBUSH'S COFFEEHOUSE

Quick: Tell me who the killer was in the first *Friday the 13th* movie! If you've just shouted at your newspaper with an answer – correct or not – then you oughta be sittin' in Captain Quack's this coming Monday. Get It Games scares up tons of terrifying trivia about the horror genre that'll puzzle you and friends over about two hours. No cost to play, fun prizes, and you'll be right beside the tempting pastry cases of Quack's: What's better than that? All you gotta do is make it out ... alive!

– JAMES SCOTT

Eclipse Talk

COMMUNITY LEARNING

MONDAY 25, BARTON SPRINGS POOL

As we approach the April 8 total eclipse, have you considered what kind of eclipse watcher you want to be? One who abstractly marvels at the sight, or one who has a rock-solid scientific grasp on the cosmic forces at work? If you're leaning toward the latter, consider this evening of eclipse-oriented edutainment: hands-on, family friendly activities (6:30pm), an eclipse presentation by led by Hill Country Alliance's Night Sky Program Manager Dawn Davies (7:30pm), and night sky viewing with a telescope (8pm). Hop in the pool for a full moon swim to complete the communion with nature. – KIMBERLEY JONES

Amplify Book Club

BOOKS CONVERSATIONS

MONDAY 25, COFFEEPEOPLE

Located within our Bat City's big ol' independent BookPeople is a book club dedicated to elevating authors of color like the writer of this month's selection, Akwaeke Emezi. Nigeria-born and Brooklyn-based, Emezi's work is "deeply rooted in the metaphysics of Black spirit, using the lens of indigenous ontologies to focus on embodiment, ritual, and rememory" according to their author bio. Amplify's pick for March, *Pet*, was Emezi's first young adult venture and received a Stonewall Honor. Its plot follows a young girl whose mother's art comes to life in the form of Pet, "a creature made of horns and colors and claws."

– JAMES SCOTT

Bat City Bingo

COMMUNITY

TUESDAY 26, DOUBLE TROUBLE

Mamma mia: Did you know the game we call bingo originated in Italy? Descended from the Italian lotto game, bingo has been delighting young and old – okay, mostly old – since the 1500s. Enjoy boffo bingo from your friends at Bat City Bingo, who bring free "beano" to patios all over town, every Tuesday at North Loop bar & kitchen Double Trouble. Advisable drink pairings with your bingo card: for the sober, a hot choc, and for the spirited, an Aperol Spritz. Foodwise, I mean, a taco goes with everything – this writer suggests the vegan picadillo.

– JAMES SCOTT

CONTINUED ON P.34

★ FREE COMMUNITY SHOW ★

FEATURING

Jay's Jazz: The TMM House Band

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PHOTO BY CLAY SHORKEY, TEXAS MUSIC MUSEUM

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Kids Create: Louise Bourgeois-Inspired Wire Spider Sculptures

VISUAL ARTS FAMILY LEARNING

TUESDAY 26, LITTLE WALNUT CREEK BRANCH LIBRARY

French-American artist Louise Bourgeois once said her art “deals with problems that are pre-gender.” Indeed, a big spider made of bronze, steel, and marble is absent most gendered markers – except, of course, the sculpture’s title: *Maman*. But what else would Bourgeois call an ode to her own mother, who passed when the artist was only 21? In an interview with the Tate Modern, who commissioned the piece, Bourgeois listed many reasons spiders reminded her of her mom: “Like a spider, my mother was a weaver ... Like spiders, my mother was very clever ... spiders are helpful and protective, just like my mother.” Kiddos can this week replicate this ode to Bourgeois’ mother in this Women’s History Month workshop. After all, who wouldn’t want a little wire spider to help, protect, and weave? It’s what all good mothers should do.

– JAMES SCOTT



Maman by Louise Bourgeois

PHOTO BY PIXELILLO VIA WIKICOMMONS

Myra Melford Fire & Water Quintet

MUSIC

TUESDAY 26, DRAYLEN MASON STUDIO AT KMFA

Guggenheim Fellowship and Doris Duke Artist Award recipient Myra Melford mesmerizes audiences by herself. Backed by the Fire & Water Quintet, which includes MacArthur Fellowship recipient Mary Halvorson on guitar, cellist Tomeka Reid, saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock, and drummer Lesley Mok (all bandleaders themselves), the pianist’s music becomes part of the fabric of reality. With tunes inspired by the paintings of Cy Twombly, Melford and her all-stars envision free jazz as a composer’s medium, bringing visual art to life in a controlled flurry of improvisation (cf. their second LP *Hear the Light Singing*). Melford’s first Texas appearance arrives via the redoubtable Epistrophy Arts.

– MICHAEL TOLAND



COURTESY OF EPISTROPHY ARTS

Brad Mehldau

MUSIC

TUESDAY 26, PARAMOUNT THEATRE

Pianist Brad Mehldau is a contemporary jazz superstar, best known for his visionary reworkings of standards, pop, rock, classical, and original tunes with his hardworking trio. But he’s equally renowned for his solo piano works, which could encompass anything: progressive rock, jazz classics, Bach, and/or the Beatles. On that note, last year’s *Your Mother Should Know: Brad Mehldau Plays the Beatles* garnered wide acclaim, and his upcoming albums *After Bach II* (a sequel to 2018’s eponymous release) and *Après Fauré*, both straining classical pieces through a jazz filter, should provide the backbone of this likely stunning solo performance.

– MICHAEL TOLAND



COURTESY OF BRAD MEHLDAU

Science on Screen: *The Birds*

FILM LEARNING

TUESDAY 26, AFS CINEMA

“C’mon, James,” you say to me. “I like movies, but science? That’s for the birds!” Yes, I agree: Science is for *The Birds*, Alfred Hitchcock’s iconic 1963 thriller about avian aggression. Austin Film Society pairs this screening with an expert panel to talk bird behavior and evolution. That includes associate professor in UT-Austin’s integrative biology department Carlos A. Botero, Ph.D., and research associate Dr. Lucas Legendre from UT-Austin’s Earth and planetary sciences department. Fun fact: In her memoir, Tippi Hedren says she experienced real injuries during *The Birds*’ filming due to a glass pane shattering on her when a mechanical crow hit it. Unsafe film set practices? Now that really is for the birds.

– JAMES SCOTT

Texas Relays

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY 27-SATURDAY 30, MIKE A. MYERS STADIUM

The University of Texas once again hosts the Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays, for the 96th time, in fact. Thousands of college track and field athletes and spectators will alight on the UT campus for races and skills trials of all kinds. And this year’s prestigious competition has a special honorary referee in Chris Plonsky, Longhorn chief of staff and executive senior associate athletics director, recognized on the last day of competition after 36 years working for UT. All-meet tickets are on sale now for \$25, and Friday/Saturday meet tickets become available March 25.

– KAT MCNEVINS

CONTINUED ON P.36

THE VERDE REPORT BY ERIC GOODMAN

Relax, Austin FC's First Month Isn't as Bad as It Looks

From a strictly numerical, results-oriented standpoint, Austin FC is off to the worst four-game start in franchise history. Zero wins, one loss, and three draws trails even the club's 2021 expansion season, in which two of its eventual nine wins came in during the first month. So why am I left feeling *better* about the club's playoff prospects now than I did coming into this season? Well, for some pretty good reasons, actually.

To be clear, there is absolutely no positive spin to be gleaned from the Verde and Black's dreary, disappointing 2-1 loss to Minnesota United at home to open the year. That poor performance earned a deserved loss against a team coming off almost as bad of a season as Austin's. (That said, in this week's installment of *MLS Is Really Weird*, Minnesota currently leads the Western Conference with 10 points through four games.)

But since then, Austin has faced off against three of the toughest opponents the league can throw its way, and held its own rather admirably. A trio of draws against the likes of the Seattle Sounders, St. Louis City, and the Philadelphia Union has me feeling bullish that wins will start to head El Tree's way as the club looks to make a return to postseason play in the fall.

Over the weekend, ATXFC shook off another lousy first half – something that's become a bit of a nasty habit through the early season – against Philadelphia and eventually responded with its best display of attacking soccer thus far in 2024. Austin reversed a 1-0 halftime deficit into a 2-1 second-half lead thanks to well-worked goals from Diego Rubio and Jon Gallagher, and *should* have closed out its first win of the season against a club that's made the MLS Cup Playoffs each of the past six years.

Instead, some lax defending and a rare mistake by goalkeeper Brad Stuver (who has otherwise been tremendous this season and leads MLS in saves with 21) allowed the Union to escape with a draw. But those paying attention could clearly see improvements Austin has made since the season opener. Perhaps more importantly, the players can see it too.

"We've played three or four of the best teams in the league right now," Gallagher



Austin FC captain Sebastián Driussi played his first minutes of the 2024 regular season against the Philadelphia Union last Saturday

COURTESY OF AUSTIN FC

said after the Philly draw. "We're putting in performances against really good teams and really good opposition. It's not like we're behind the curve. We're right there.

"We see the progress. We see what we've been working on. We see that it's right there for us to take. We just have to go and take it," Gallagher added.

Saturday's match also provided the massive boost Austin FC had been desperately awaiting since the regular season began: the return of Sebastián Driussi. The ATX captain made his 2024 debut in the 71st minute and looked fully engaged – if a little rusty with his finishing – coming off of a hamstring injury. His importance to the club has been well documented over three seasons, and his return could be the change Austin needs to turn some of those draws into wins.

The next four matches will reveal exactly where Austin is, relative to its rivals. Road matches against Orlando and St. Louis bookend a pair of home contests against Dallas and San Jose. There's points to be earned over that stretch. At least two wins should be more than manageable, but, of course, attempting to predict Major League Soccer is usually an exercise in futility. ■

Austin FC faces Orlando City on Saturday, March 23, at Orlando's Inter&Co Stadium, broadcast on Apple TV.

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PHOTO BY ANGELLA CHOE

L'Inferno With Live Score by Montopolis

MUSIC FILM

WEDNESDAY 27, EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM

Before *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, before *The Exorcist*, there was *L'Inferno*. Adapted from the first canticle of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the 1911 film claims first feature film of world cinema rights, according to Dante chronicler Vittoria Colonnese Benni in their essay "The Helios-Psiche Dante Trilogy." Lucky us that we might enjoy the seminal silent film with backing band Montopolis, whose previous efforts include towering environmental soundtrack *Music for Enchanted Rock*. Their score will, as screen provider Rocket Cinema states, "[bring] new life to this horror classic with a mix of psych rock, dark wave and terrifying sound effects performed live." — JAMES SCOTT

Just Dance: Lady Gaga's Birthday Ball

COMMUNITY QUEER

WEDNESDAY 27, VOLSTEAD LOUNGE

Paws up, little monsters! Oh yes, I'm well aware you're still out there. While Stefani may be jazzing up her image lately — like, she's literally rebranding as a jazz singer — we all went Gaga for her first while she rocked heelless Alexander McQueens and Kermit couture. This party takes it back to the Lady's beginnings with a custom cocktail menu, a "Paparazzi" photo booth, drag pop-ups by the Vixens of Volstead, and DJ Boyfriend spinning Mama Monster music all night long. Don't think too much, girl, just bust that kick: Tonight we're all taking rides on Gaga's disco stick — metaphorically. — JAMES SCOTT

Indigo de Souza

MUSIC

THURSDAY 28, MOHAWK

Asheville, North Carolina-based artist Indigo de Souza's impactful run at last year's March music mega-week arrived just in time to preview her April 2023 album, *All of This Will End*. The Saddle Creek-supported expansion of the singer-songwriter's fearless, frank, and sensitive-then-snarky indie rock realm covered maturation ("Younger & Dumber") and toxic relationship dynamics ("You Can Be Mean"). Hailing from Minnesota, Siri Undlin's folk and Americana project Humbird opens, after reaching meditative rebellion on recent singles previewing upcoming record *Right On*.

— RACHEL RASCOE

Youth Chess Night

FAMILY

THURSDAY 28, CARVER MUSEUM

Did you know the number of unique chess games possible is greater than the number of electrons in the universe, and the longest game theoretically includes almost 6,000 moves? With its seemingly infinite possibilities, chess has occupied our time and attention for 1,500 years. Kids ages 8-17 can learn about the game and develop cognitive and social skills at this monthly chess night presented by nonprofit Joyous Tutoring, whose mission is to "improve the literacy of striving youth through chess, rap, African American history, and more." — KAT MCNEVINS

Spring Carnival

COMMUNITY

THURSDAY 28, PINBALLZ KINGDOM

There's nothing like a classic parking lot carnival, with the slightly rickety rides, the bright lights, the decadent foods best enjoyed in this setting — corndogs, funnel cakes, cotton candy, caramel apples. Pinballz Arcade in Buda hosts the Mighty Thomas Carnival through April 8, with rides for thrill-seekers and midway games to test your skill and agility. There's no admission fee but wristbands and tickets for games and rides are available on-site.

— KAT MCNEVINS

Music Notes

BY DEREK UDENSI

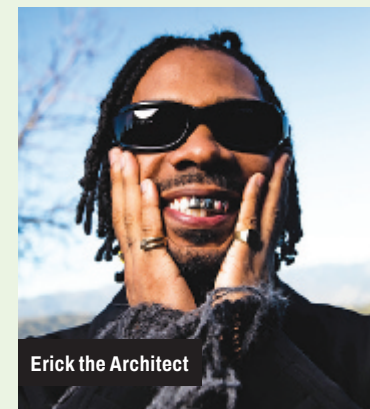


PHOTO BY CAM ERICKSON

Erick the Architect

Tony22

Thursday 21, Mohawk

The TikTok-friendly rapper returns to Austin after moving away last year. He tours in support of his new album, *Divine Order*. Openers include previous collaborator and locally based R&B singer Moody Bank\$ ("Don't Waste My Time").

KUTX & Mueller Rock the Park

Friday 22, Mueller Lake Park Outdoor Amphitheater

98.9 FM's free, family-friendly concert series continues with Monterrey-born, Austin-based Latin pop singer Lesly Reynaga.

Marcia Ball's 75th Birthday Blowout

Friday 22 - Sunday 24, various venues

Ball rings in year 75 with a three-show weekend. Tickets remain for the Sagebrush (Friday) and Antone's (Sunday) shows.

Erick the Architect

Monday 25, Come & Take It Live

Debut solo studio LP *I've Never Been Here Before* sees the Flatbush Zombies member fully step into the limelight on tracks like the James Blake-produced "2-3 Zone."

3forThursday

Thursday 28, Empire Control Room

Booker/UT-Austin student moonbby (Cristina Mauri) ventures from West Campus to launch a new concept at Empire. Three's a crowd: The event packs \$3 cover, three live bands, three DJs spinning 1s and 2s, \$3 drink specials, and three local vendors. Performers and DJs include StaleFish, Witches Exist, and loveyourgerms.



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THE DURAN EXPERIENCE
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» This Weekend

MAR 21
Josh Rouse

FRI MAR 22
The Rocket Summer

SAT MAR 23
LILLY HIATT WITH
NATHAN GRAHAM

MAR 24
MIKE DOUGHTY & GHOST OF VROOM

REVIEWS



Fish and chips from Murray's Tavern

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONSUMABLE CONTENT



The bar at Murray's

Tipplés, Not Nibbles FOOD

Murray's Tavern is a great hangout, maybe not a great restaurant **BY MELANIE HAUPT**

Depending on where and when you grew up, when you think of a tavern, you might think of wooden-toothed men in colonial wigs hoisting pewter mugs and talkin' 'bout a revolution. Or maybe you think of Bennigan's at the mall, where you and your best friends gossiped about boys while splitting a Monte Cristo sandwich, paid for with babysitting money. Both perceptions are correct, in that taverns have always been gathering places first and eating houses second. Murray's is no exception to this rule.

Murray's Tavern is barman Travis Tober's (the mastermind behind beloved Eastside

bar Nickel City, among other joints) love letter to his grandmother, meant to evoke the taverns he imagines she was hanging out in as a youth; the menu was developed by Nic Yanes (Uncle Nicky's), while the cocktail program is the brainchild of managing partner Brett Esler (Hestia/Kalimotxo).

We made our first visit to Murray's on a Saturday night; it was simply seething with people. There were people at high-top tables, nestled into private booths, sitting and standing three-deep at the 50-foot-long bar, seated at tables in the back dining room, and just milling about.

I was only a few sips into my Paper Plane, a citrusy Aperol-and-bourbon concoction, when the hostess offered us a high-top table. Our waitress, tiny and friendly, greeted us promptly and took our orders, shouted over the din of humans and music.

We received our entrées not too long after the arrival of our spinach artichoke dip starter, which was runny and vinegary and served with thin tortilla chips that weren't up to the task of conveying a heavy dip from point A to point B. My goulash almost filled the entire plate on which it was served, and it was lukewarm. The dish is simple: thick, corkscrew

cavatappi noodles and finely minced ground beef in a tomato-based sauce spiced with paprika. It's not a dish to inspire or ignite nostalgia – it's just a huge plate of noodles and ground beef in sauce.

I wish I could have captured the look of awe on my kid's face when her plate of fish and chips arrived, a huge baton of battered cod resting atop a generous portion of french fries, with a wee wedge of lemon on the side. While it was clearly freshly made, the batter was thick and greasy. Maybe the fish hadn't been drained thoroughly, or the oil wasn't hot enough, causing the batter to absorb oil while the fish cooked. It's a shame that a gorgeous, high-quality piece of fish was undermined by the greasy batter. The fries were fantastic, though, crisp and salty and addictive.

My spouse's beef and cheddar sandwich was the big loser of the night. While the bun on which it was served was soft and delicious, the Irish cheddar sauce that overwhelmed the roast beef was grainy and strangely sweet. Another disappointing triple-digit dinner in the rearview mirror, we trudged back to our car, stopping to visit the front yard geese on the corner and leave a small donation for their upkeep.

My spouse and I returned for an earlyish weeknight dinner a couple of weeks later and scored a ludicrously capacious table in the quieter, swanky back dining room, which would be a great space for an adult birthday gathering or post-work meetup. The walls are covered in an elegant floral wallpaper and adorned with photographs of everyone from Sex-era Madonna to Jackie O and Biggie Smalls (not together). A bookcase with a textured glass door showcases vintage pulp novels and ancient trinkets, giving the room a very



Murray's beef and cheddar sandwich

COURTESY OF CONSUMABLE CONTENT

“elegant grandma’s living room” vibe. Slightly lower lighting would have made the space feel even more exclusive and mysterious.

We ordered our drinks – a New York Sour for me (I really wanted to try the signature cocktail, the whiskey-heavy Grandma Murray’s Rob Roy, but reminded myself that I had a 5am wake-up call and responsibilities the next day) and an Emperor’s New Groove (similar to a tequila sunrise) for him – plus a Murray’s Charcuterie to share.

“This is like an adult Lunchable,” my spouse grouched of the charcuterie plate, comprising corned beef, Irish cheddar, fried Saltines, and a garnish of pickled onions and mustard. I’m not 100% sure I agree. Is this a charcuterie plate? Definitely not. Taxonomically, this plate has more in common with a Lunchable than a charcuterie plate in that they both offer a combo of protein, cheese, and carbohydrate. But a Lunchable is a sad solo meal of convenience, while this plate is meant to be shared with friends. Yes, the cheese was unremarkable (I suspect it is not that far off from the block of Tillamook in my fridge) and the corned beef was extremely mildly flavored (is that a whiff of star anise in the rub?), but I kind of dug those fried Saltines. (Why aren’t these served with the spinach artichoke dip?)

“Of the signature fish and chips, it’s a shame that a gorgeous, high-quality piece of fish was undermined by the greasy batter. The fries were fantastic, though, crisp and salty and addictive.”

Semantics aside, we made quick work of the “charcuterie” plate, just in time for our fish and chips to arrive. I insisted that we try it again because this seems to be Murray’s signature dish and maybe the greasiness on our prior visit was a fluke due to it being a busy Saturday night. Sadly, the greasy battered cod wasn’t a fluke, but neither were the excellent fries. At least they’re consistent, right?

Would I come back to Murray’s? Actually, yes, I would, but not for dinner. As a bar and a local hangout, Murray’s is a success. The cocktails are excellent – the lemony, bourbon-y New York Sour may be my new favorite drink – the service is friendly, and the space is conducive to a great hang with friends (albeit extremely loud). I hesitate to recommend it as a dining destination, especially when dining out is such an expensive proposition.

At a place like Murray’s, you don’t need a full meal to have a good time. Split a plate of fries with your pals (or your grandma, if she’s cool and not too hard of hearing) over drinks as you plan your next adventure – or revolution. ■

Murray’s Tavern

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WESTGATE 4477 S. LAMAR

FRI. MAR 22 6:30 - 9 PM

COPA KINGS | Swing

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CIENFUEGOS | Latin/Salsa

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Sydney Sweeney in *Immaculate*

PHOTOGRAPH BY FABIA LAVINO / COURTESY OF NEON

Bow Down to a New Scream Queen

FILM

Immaculate has its ups and downs, but Sydney Sweeney is a knockout as a knocked-up nun **BY ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ**

The imagery of Roman Catholicism is ripe with the melancholy and macabre. The bones of dead saints make the rounds for adoration, suffering is held up as a paragon of love, blessed flesh is consumed at mass.

Neon horror *Immaculate* understands this on a basic level. Mining such rich material, director Michael Mohan and screenwriter Andrew Lobel deliver sometimes great, sometimes goofy scares during a tight 89-minute runtime. There's an admirable commitment to big swings here, but it can sometimes feel like the film gets in its own way with odd pacing and quiet reservation where there should be a chaotic clamor.

Cecilia (played by Sydney Sweeney, who also produced) is an American nun who makes her way to a convent in Italy after her parish shuttered due to low attendance. She's looking for a new family in her Italian sisters, and although she might be shy she's firm in her devotion. Her new home, what is basically a hospice convent for elderly nuns, is beautiful but unsettling. It's full of romantic architecture and centuries-old traditions, but sinister secrets as well. When she finds herself suddenly, miraculously pregnant, the convent is convinced it's the second coming of Christ. Cecilia's not so sure.

Immaculate shines when it leans into its bonkers premise. From nuns being buried alive to gasp-worthy gross-out moments and jump scares galore, its heart is in the right, rotten place. Chief among the highlights is Sweeney's performance as Cecilia. Sweeney leads with a timidity that conceals something smarter and cements herself as a true scream queen here. Also, although the film took 10 or so years to come to fruition, there is a certain urgency to a horror film about unexpected pregnancy and autonomy in a post-*Roe v. Wade* landscape that is hard to ignore, especially watching the film in Texas.

There are light suggestions here of nun-sploitation films past and giallo (whispers of *The Devils* and *Suspiria* hang in each scene), but *Immaculate* never reaches the zealous heights of its influences. This is evident in even just the basic look of the film: beautiful but austere, muted

cinematography renders Cecilia's convent as a haunting place but without the deep colors or compelling compositions that could express religious hysteria with a single frame. Pacing is the biggest issue the film faces, though – in its meandering first section, then a ramped-up end of the film that feels rushed. It's deranged, but also at times curiously defanged. At least it's still a fun, bloody watch, even if it frustrates along the way. ■

ALSO OPENING

Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire (PG-13, 115 min.)

We're not in Oklahoma anymore: This sequel to 2021's *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* relocates the action to the original's iconic setting – the Big Apple, baby – and casts a mix of franchise stalwarts (Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson), returning new-gen players (Paul Rudd, Finn Wolfhard), and new-new faces (Patton Oswalt, Kumail Nanjiani), with *Afterlife* co-writer Gil Kenan hopping into the director's chair. **R**

Late Night With the Devil (R, 93 min.)

Seventies-set supernatural satire shows the hellish price of success. **R**

Luca (PG, 95 min.) Concluding Pixar's belated theatrical runs for pandemic releases, this 2021 animated film follows an Italian tweenage sea monster; Kimberley Jones says the "gentle, don't-make-any-waves" film could stand to be weirder. **R**

Problemista (R, 98 min.) Julio Torres (*Los Espookys*) writes, directs, and stars in this immigration comedy, and, Jenny Nulf writes, "his witty, charming whimsy feels as ingenious as ever." **R**

Riddle of Fire (PG-13, 114 min.) Three misfit kids go on an epic quest to steal their mom's password for the TV in this homage to *Goonies*-era moviemaking.

Shayda (NR, 118 min.) Drawing from her own childhood experiences, writer-director Noora Niasari tells the story of a mother and daughter who finds refuge from family violence in a Melbourne women's shelter. **R**

Scan here to find showtimes and more reviews online

R INDICATES WE HAVE A FULL-LENGTH REVIEW



Immaculate

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MOHAN.
STARRING SYDNEY SWEENEY, SIMONA
TABASCO, BENEDETTA PORCAROLI,
ÁLVARO MORTE, NICCOLÒ SENNI.
(R, 89 MIN.)

★★★

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THE STILL LIFE

NEW WORK BY 10 STUFFED ANIMAL ARTISTS

COURTESY OF STUFFED ANIMAL RESCUE FOUNDATION



Above: Stuffed animal artists Annie (the snow leopard) and Lin (the dinosaur)
At left: Lin's artwork, titled *Flow*

PHOTOS BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

"The Still Life" Will Move You in the Softest Ways

VISUALARTS

The artists of SARF display their works for the public **BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER**

First, you've got to know that there's a Stuffed Animal Rescue Foundation in Austin. A rescue shelter, but for stuffies – for soft, humanly fabricated creatures of all kinds – that have been neglected, dismissed, forgotten, discarded, and need a home.

Located in a funky little strip mall in the Hancock neighborhood west of Burnet Road, the SARF is owned and run by artist, web designer, and general polymath Wendy Mitchell, who also stages a Stuffed Animal Petting Zoo on 37th Street's legendary DIY trail of lights during the Christmas season. (Last year's iteration was styled as the Big Stuffed Animal Pharmaceutical Expo; Mitchell's inaugural stuffie petting zoo at that location, back in 2009, garnered so much attention and brought her so many stuffies that it led her to create the SARF.)

The Stuffed Animal Rescue Foundation is where Mitchell accepts and houses donated stuffed animals, where she cleans them up, wields her prodigious sewing skills to repair them, and gives each squishy creature a lovingly crafted backstory, readying them for adoption at the petting zoos. These days, most of the SARF's donating and adopting process is handled by appointments scheduled far in advance online – there are, it turns out, so many stuffies needing both temporary and forever homes! – but the headquarters at 2825 Hancock is open to the public on Saturdays, noon-4pm, steady as the needle in a top-of-the-line sewing machine.

And that's where you can see the current exhibition, "The Still Life," of artworks by the resident stuffies. Yes, *the stuffies themselves* are the artists in this show, which has been on

display since last year's Austin Studio Tour, and they're posed by the works they've created with paint and fabric and photography and more, the works appropriately "inspired by their own journeys of rehabilitation and redemption."

The artist Lin, for instance, is a chonky chartreuse dinosaur of a stuffie who sits proudly next to her work called *Flow*: a rectilinear vertical of folded cerulean fabric, like a cubist waterfall captured in cloth. Says Lin's artist statement, "I received my MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2010. Since then, I have been working with folded and pleated fabric to create dynamic pieces that convey movement, balance, and flow." *Flow's* blue tint perfectly complements the green hues of the artist's own soft pelt, seeming to soften the sculpture's edges through a sort of chromatic wizardry.

“Current exhibition “The Still Life” features artwork by the resident stuffies. Yes, *the stuffies themselves* are the artists in this show.

Annie, an adorable snow leopard, has addressed both the human/stuffie dichotomy of physiology and the big upcoming astronomical event in Austin with her *Eclipse* composition of stuffed animal eyes and enamel on board, letting us know, “I use common stuffed animal parts to create my art. This piece is a representation of an eclipse. Ironically, stuffies can look directly at an eclipse, whereas humans cannot. This piece serves as a dual-illustration of a stuffie's experience of the cosmological event.”

The gorilla known as Kaz (who often collaborates with elephant Denise) raised many an eyebrow (and provoked whispers of visual plagiarism) with his fabric-based *Off-White*, a piece that, at the very least, is an homage to human artist Kazimir Malevich's 1918 work *White on White*. “Yes, of course my allusions to Malevich are quite evident,” stated Kaz in an interview on the SARF website. “I'm obviously not hiding that fact! But those who call it derivative are simply missing [the point] entirely.”

These stuffie artists and their several associates, these works and others, are arranged in the venue's main gallery, punctuating an intimate, welcoming space that's lined floor to ceiling with stuffies and stuffed animal paraphernalia, with a repair clinic in the back and a niche off to one side that displays a (giggle-inducing and endearing) corporate cube farm tableau. This place, Wendy Mitchell's Stuffed Animal Rescue Foundation, is an ever-shifting work of art and heart that makes the liminal space between childhood fantasies and grownup responsibilities warmly accessible. ■

“The Still Life”

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ANDREW SCHULZ

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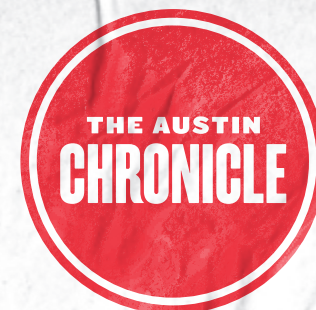
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FUN + GAMES

PARK & HOMER puzzles

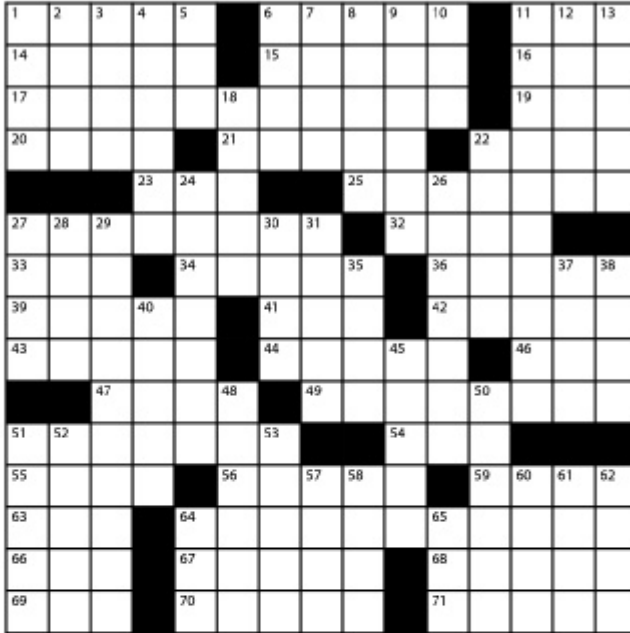
In other words

Puzzle by J. Reynolds

No. 833

Across

1. Spot in the ocean
6. Guns N' Roses guitarist
11. Arrest
14. Bullwinkle, e.g.
15. Use inefficiently
16. ___-Wan Kenobi
17. Finish second - Thriller
19. Used a bench
20. Scotch go-with
21. Middle Eastern leader
22. Fly, e.g.
23. The "p" in r.p.m.
25. Loaded
27. Lacking pizzazz
32. Ancient gathering spot
33. Hockey's Bobby
34. Dye-yielding shrubs
36. Stretchy stuff
39. Sorority members
41. Wrangler rival
42. Sought answers
43. Like some gases
44. Rimes of country music
46. Young fellow
47. Mayflower mover
49. Graph makers
51. Trolley
54. Calendar abbr.
55. Living room seat
56. Activist's focus
59. Latin 101 verb
63. Senate vote
64. Seeking office - Front's opposite
66. Snitch



67. Reversed the effects of
68. Pool problem
69. Hard to catch
70. Have a sample of
71. Santa Claus feature

Down

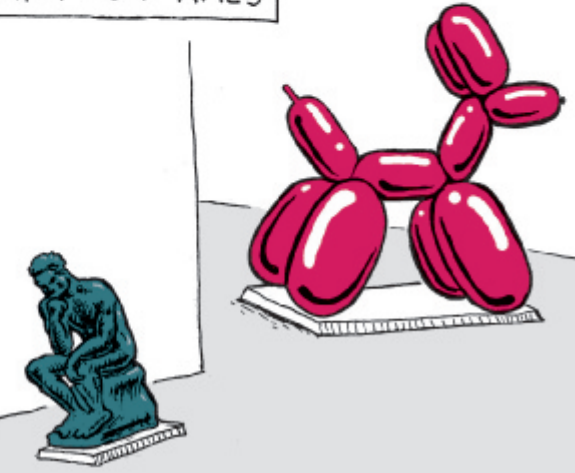
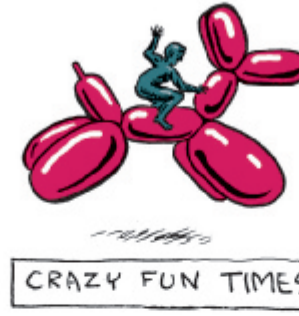
1. Little terrors
2. Fly alone
3. Put bullets in
4. Ford model
5. Athletic supporter?
6. Dog-paddle, say
7. Valentine decoration
8. Out of kilter
9. Firewood units

10. Part of H.M.S.
11. It smells - Fishing gear
12. Put to shame
13. Teensy-weensy
18. Singing Carpenter
22. Devious moves
24. Like a bungee cord
26. Falcon's home
27. Centers of activity
28. Tiger's selection
29. On the house - Gun mechanism
30. Window ledge
31. Sheep counter's quest
35. Elite Navy diver
37. Kind of admiral
38. Performs basic arithmetic
40. Many an Arthur Miller work
45. Latin name
48. Gap
50. Clef designation
51. Romanov rulers
52. Fit for a king
53. Ayn and Sally
57. Military group
58. Slaw or fries, e.g.
60. Heroic tale
61. Mark for life
62. Managed, with "out"
64. Tiresome routine
65. Go on and on

EYEBEAM



by Sam Hurt



3-22-2024

PEPPERMINT TEARS

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How'd you do? See this week's puzzle solution here:
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The Luv Doc

Luv Doc,

I just got into a fight (argument) with my roommate about whether it is wrong for me to use AI to create my profile on [a dating site]. He says I am cheating and that it's dishonest. Is it cheating if I use AI to create my (dating site) profile? Even if I agree with what it says in my profile? I don't see the problem because I am only using AI to help me describe myself in a way that women will find attractive. My roommate says it is deceptive because what people are seeing is AI's writing and not my own. What do you think? Is this wrong or is my roommate just jealous I thought of it before he did?

— AI Casanova



"AI Casanova"

Well, you won't catch me throwing stones. Single men have been fronting pretty much since prehistoric times when, according to the most accurate cartoons we have available, they used to club potential breeding partners over the head and drag them home by their hair. Now, I can imagine the one or two enlightened millennials who read this column are thinking that such brutish behavior is a preposterous anthropological supposition — especially given the high degree of respect modern men have for female autonomy, other than the obvious exception of the Supreme Court — so why would cartoonists make something like that up? Could it be possible that cartoonists might create inaccurate depictions of prehistoric human behaviors as a means of visual allegory? That seems insane. Surely Alley Oop is the spitting image of an enlightened Bone Age caveman residing in the Kingdom of Moo and not some club-wielding, hairy-knuckled, rapist ancestor we would like to scratch off our family tree.

Anyway, the point is that men have probably been peacocking since shortly after the first pee came out of a cock. Women too. Pretty much all genders are guilty of this grift. The sizzle sells the steak, so to speak, but once that sizzle starts to fizzle, things get rizzle. At some point, those women you've attracted with the flawless prose of your profile will perhaps read an errant email and discover that maybe you're not the Cyrano de Bergerac that reeled them in. They might, you can imagine, feel a bit deceived. Is that immoral? I don't know. Fake titties are still titties. A nose job nose is still a nose. A rose is a rose is a rose. Are contact lens wearers condemned to the pits of hell for not being honest enough to wear glasses? If Jesus had strong feelings about the subtle deceit of modern optometry, he kept them to himself. Similarly, you would think ol' J-Dawg and Pops would have weighed in on National Socialism, the atomic bomb, napalm, Kanye, and, of course, our future robot overlords, but basically ... bupkis. Same for Allah, Buddha, Vishnu, and L. Ron Hubbard. If you ask me, that's some seriously shoddy omnipotence for an all-knowing, eternal being. Sure, that walking on water thing was pretty cool, but it would really be great to know if your sentient robot life partner/fuck buddy is going to be condemned to the eternal fires of hell because she wasn't baptized in the blood of the lamb. I don't know, dude. Make something up. Our asses are flapping in the wind.

Please don't mistake my ambivalence in this matter as some sort of "all's fair in love and war" moral cop out. It isn't. I believe that what you're doing is wrong — but I don't believe it with a deep conviction or a sense of moral outrage. I myself am wearing some wonderful-smelling cologne. It's not how I naturally smell. It's much nicer. At some point if I forget to wear it, someone is going to feel like I have been deceiving them — and they will be right. Does that mean I should smell like a sweaty old man? I don't think so. Anyway, who am I hurting? I just know that at some point I may have to answer for this deception — just like Jesus.

Need some advice from the Luv Doc? Send your questions to luvdoc@austinchronicle.com.



Mr. Smarty Pants Knows

Before it was called Manhattan, the island was designated by the Lenape tribe as the place where they got their bows.

If you ever get attacked by monkeys, primate behaviorists say, it's because they're over-habituated — they've lost their fear of humans. They may also want your food. Another example of over-habituation is when squirrels approach people to get handouts.

In their standard configuration, 1964 Chevrolet Corvette Stingrays had four taillights, yet in the 1964 song "Deadman's Curve" by Jan and Dean, the lyrics went, "And all the Jag could see were my six tail lights." Turns out one could ask the dealership to equip the cars with six taillights.

Some scallops have dozens of bright, iridescent blue eyes that may appear like neon blueberries.

James Buchanan, the 15th U.S. president, remained unmarried his entire life, and chose his niece, Harriet Lane, to serve as first lady.

Above is information that Mr. Smarty Pants read in a book, a magazine, or the newspaper; heard on the radio; saw on television; or overheard at a party. Got facts? Write to Mr. Smarty Pants at the *Chronicle*, or email mrpants@austinchronicle.com.

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY MAR. 22 - MAR. 28

by Rob Brezsky

ARIES (March 21-April 19): I suspect you will soon have far more beginners' luck than you ever thought possible. For best results — to generate even more wildly abundant torrents of good luck — you could adopt what Zen Buddhists called "beginner's mind." That means gazing upon everyone and everything as if encountering it for the first time. Here are other qualities I expect to be flowing freely through you in the coming weeks: spontaneity, curiosity, innocence, candor, and unpredictability. To the degree that you cultivate these states, you will invite even more beginner's luck into your life.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus artist Salvador Dalí was prone to exaggerate for dramatic effect. We should remember that as we read his quote: "Mistakes are almost always of a sacred nature. Never try to correct them. On the contrary: Rationalize them; understand them thoroughly." While that eccentric advice may not always be 100% accurate or useful, I think it will be true and helpful for you in the coming weeks. Have maximum fun making sacred mistakes, Taurus! Learn all you can from them. Use them to improve your life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The professional fun advisors here at Free Will Astrology International Headquarters have concluded that your Party Hardy Potential Rating for the coming weeks is 9.8 (out of 10). In fact, this may be the Party Hardy Phase of the Year for you. You could gather the benefits of maximum revelry and conviviality with minimal side effects. Here's a meditation to get you in the right mood: Imagine mixing business and pleasure with such panache that they blend into a gleeful, fruitful synergy.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Cancerian author and psychotherapist Virginia Satir (1916–1988) was renowned as the "Mother of Family Therapy." Her research led her to conclude, "We need four hugs a day for survival. We need eight hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth." That 12-hug recommendation seems daunting to achieve, but I hope you will strive for it in the coming weeks. You are in a phase when maximum growth is possible — and pushing to the frontiers of hugging will help you activate the full potential. (p.s. Don't force anyone to hug you. Make sure it's consensual.)

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Have you been genuinely amazed anytime recently? Have you done something truly amazing? If not, it's time to play catch-up. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you need and deserve exciting adventures that boggle your soul in all the best ways. You should be wandering out on the frontiers and tracking down provocative mysteries. You could grow even smarter than you already are if you expose yourself to challenges that will amaze you and inspire you to be amazing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I invite you to perform a magic spell that will help prepare you for the rich, slippery soul work you have ahead of you. I'll offer a suggestion, but feel free to compose your own ritual. First, go outside where it's raining or misting, or find a waterfall. Stand with your legs apart and arms spread out as you turn your face up toward the falling moisture. As you drink it in, tell yourself you will be extra fluid and flowing in the coming weeks. Promise yourself you will stimulate and treasure succulent feelings. You will cultivate the sensation that everything you need is streaming in your direction.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You are gliding into the climax of your re-education about togetherness, intimacy, and collaboration. The lessons you've been learning have deepened your reservoir of wisdom about the nature of love. And in the coming weeks, even further teachings will arrive; even more openings and invitations will be available. You will be offered the chance to earn what could in effect be a master's degree in relationships. It'll be challenging work, but rewarding and interesting. Do as best as you can. Don't demand perfection from yourself or anyone else.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Now is not a favorable phase to gamble on unknown entities. Nor should you allow seemingly well-meaning people to transgress your boundaries. Another Big No: Don't heed the advice of fear-mongers or nagging scolds, whether they're inside or outside your head. On the other hand, dear Scorpio, the coming weeks will be an excellent time for the following actions. 1) Phase out attachments to alliances and love interests that have exhausted their possibilities. 2) Seek the necessary resources to transform or outgrow a frustrating fact about your life. 3) Name truths that other people seem intent on ignoring and avoiding. 4) Conjure simple, small, slow, practical magic to make simple, small, slow, practical progress.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Falling in love is fun! It's also exciting, enriching, inspiring, transformative, world-shaking, and educational. Wouldn't it be fabulous if we could keep falling in love anew three or four times a year for as long as we live? We might always be our best selves, showing our most creative and generous sides, continually expanding our power to express our soulful intelligence. Alas, it's not practical or realistic to always be falling in love with another new person. Here's a possible alternative: What if we enlarged our understanding of what we could fall in love with? Maybe we would become perpetually infatuated with brilliant teachings, magical places, high adventures, and great art and music. The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to cultivate this skill.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I'm perplexed by spiritual teachers who fanatically preach the doctrine that we should BE HERE NOW as much as possible. Living with full enjoyment in the present moment is a valuable practice, but dismissing or demeaning the past is shortsighted. Our lives are forged from our histories. We should revere the stories we are made of, visit them regularly, and keep learning from them. Keep this in mind, Capricorn. It's an excellent time to heal your memories and to be healed by them. Cultivate deep gratitude for your past as you give the old days all your love. Enjoy this quote from novelist Gregory Maguire: "Memory is part of the present. It builds us up inside; it knits our bones to our muscles and keeps our heart pumping. It is memory that reminds our bodies to work, and memory that reminds our spirits to work, too: it keeps us who we are."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Controversial author William S. Burroughs was a rough, tough troublemaker. But he had some wisdom that will soon be extra useful for you. He said that love is the best natural painkiller available. I bring this to your attention not because I believe you will experience more pain than the rest of us in the coming months. Rather, I am predicting you will have extra power to alleviate your pain — especially when you raise your capacity to give and receive love.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The planet Saturn entered Pisces in March 2023 and won't depart for good until February 2026. Is that a bad thing or good thing for you Pisceans? Some astrologers might say you are in a challenging time when you must make cutbacks and take on increased responsibility. I have a different perspective. I believe this is a phase when you can get closer than ever before to knowing exactly what you want and how to accomplish what you want. In my view, you are being called to shed secondary wishes that distract you from your life's central goals. I see this period as a homecoming — your invitation to glide into robust alignment with your soul's code.

Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Brezsky's **EXPANDED WEEKLY AUDIO HOROSCOPES** and **DAILY TEXT MESSAGE HOROSCOPES**. The audio horoscopes are also available by phone at 877/873-4888 or 900/950-7700.

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ENGINEERING

Applied Materials, Inc. in Austin, TX seeks: Tech Proj/Program Mgmt Engr (Req #W5838): Assist in prepping proj plan & coordinate proj from planning to implementation. Domestic/int'l travel req 25%. Salary: \$126,672-\$152,000/yr. Tech Proj/Program Mgmt Engr (Req #M7102): Prep prjct plans & drive the prjct from conception & planning to implmntn. Salary: \$126,672-\$164,574/yr. Email resume to Applied Materials Inc. at applied_resumes_Team@amat.com. Must include REQ# in Subject Line to be considered.

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Arm Physical IP Inc / Arm., a leading provider of intellectual property (IP) components, has openings in Austin, TX for Staff Engineer (ENG83): Lead the CPU verification efforts on FPGAs for high performance CPUs by creating and presenting high-level and detailed test plans and sharing them with CPU stakeholders and ensuring high stimulus quality; and Staff Design Engineer (SDE21): Contribute in all parts of Advance Product Memory development flow, starting at design specification. Ref. job

code and email resume to ARM-RecruitAd@arm.com.

ENGINEERS 4

(Austin, TX): Provide engineering and 3D Revit support for multiple projects that include HVAC, piping, plumbing and fire protection. Perform HVAC load calculations, ductwork static pressure calculations, and pump head calculations. Send resumes to SSOE Inc., Attn: Kimberly Robertson, Sr. Leader HR Talent and Culture, 1001 Madison Ave., Toledo, OH 43604, krobertson@ssoe.com. Reference job number #BM147421.

IT PROFESSIONALS:

Ent. Lvl to Sen. Lvl SW. Engrs. Sys. Admins., Comp. Sys. Analysts, & QA Analysts are needed for our Austin, TX Office. May req. traveling. Pls send resume, Cvr Ltr., & Sal. Req. to Zonestra Technologies, LLC 814 San Jacinto Blvd, Ste 400, Austin, TX 78701.

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ment lifecycle and understand the automation tools used to create the CI/CD (continuous integration/continuous delivery) pipeline. *Travel may be required up to 10%. **Technical Manager of Data Analytics (Job# 8223).** Primary role is to maintain, optimize, and manage all technical support across the Analytical function. *International travel may be required up to 10%. To apply, please submit resume referencing the Job# to megan_harper@ezcorp.com. Texas EZPAWN, L.P. is an EOE.

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SR SOFTWARE ENGINEER

H-E-B seeks Sr Software Eng. in Austin, TX to develop internal and external digital tools. E-Mail resumes to: [Marisa Alcorta](mailto:MarisaAlcorta), at Recruiting10@heb.com

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LEGAL NOTICES

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An application has been made for a Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's Off-Premise Permit for 7-Eleven Beverage Company Inc., Texas Corporations, d/b/a 7-Eleven Convenience Store #41632H, located at 7800 N. IH 35 SVRD SB, Austin, Travis County, TX. 78752.

Said application made to the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code.

7-Eleven Beverage Company Inc. officers: Brian Smith - VP David Seltzer - VP/Treasurer Douglas Rosencrans -

Director Keith Jones - President/Secretary Kyle Johnson - VP Lillian Kirstein - Director Randy Quinn - Director Rory King - VP Timothy Hall - VP

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Package Store Permit by Urban Smoke and Liquor LLC DBA Urban Smoke and Liquor to be located at 3424 Greystone Dr, Suite 102, Austin, Travis County Texas. Members of said LLC are Nabbil Ali- Member, Ruhan Lakhani- Member and Zainul Ali- Member

Application has been

made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit (MB) by Pickleland LLC dba Pickleland, to be located at 21427 Martin Ln, Pflugerville, Travis, Texas 78660. Officers of said corporation are Marcelo Rioja, Member.

Application has been made with the TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION for a MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT (MB PERMIT) by 5100 BURNET RD LLC dba RED APPLE SMOKE SHOP, to be located at 5100 BURNET RD AUSTIN (TRAVIS COUNTY), TX 78756. The principal

of said Company are VENKATA SURI, MANAGING MEMBER; RIZWAN SHUIJA, MANAGING MEMBER; MOHAMMAD OVAIS, MANAGING MEMBER; MUBEEN ANWER, MANAGING MEMBER; MUHAMMAD W. KHAN, MANAGING MEMBER.

Application has been made with the TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION for a MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT (MB PERMIT) by 2820 GUADALUPE ST LLC dba RED APPLE SMOKE SHOP 11, to be located at 6401 S 1ST ST AUSTIN (TRAVIS COUNTY), TX 78745. The principal of said Company are VENKATA SURI, MANAGING MANAGER; MUHAMMAD

W. KHAN, MANAGING MANAGER; SHARATH K VADDEPALLI, MANAGING MANAGER.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit and Food & Beverage Certificate by 512 Crestview Group, LLC dba Black Gold Craft Meats & Cocktails to be located at 1521 W. Anderson Lane,, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Manuel Davila III, Richard Rocha, Eloy Alderete, Jr., Managers.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit and Food &

Beverage Certificate by C & G Restaurant Holdings, Inc. dba Toastique to be located at 2620 Perseverance Dr., Austin, Travis County, Texas. Carrie Carretta, President and Richard Giambastini, Secretary.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit by Big Kids Playground, LLC dba Wild Hare Bar & Grill located at 7301 Maritime Pass Jonestown, Travis County, Texas. Matt Morcher and Sandra Cleveland, Managers.

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT BY OL BEVERAGE HOLDINGS LLC DBA OJOS LOCOS TO BE LOCATED AT 901 LITTLE TEXAS LN, STE C, AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO, TEXAS. MANAGER: RICHARD HICKS.

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT BY LAS ISLAS AUSTIN LLC DBA LAS ISLAS MEXICAN SEAFOOD AND GRILL TO BE LOCATED AT 2237 E RIVERSIDE DR, SUITE 101 A, AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO, TEXAS. JOSE RAMIREZ, MANAGER.

Application has been

made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Package Store Permit (P) by SRF UNITED ENTERPRISES INC, Inc dba DUKE'S LIQUOR, to be located at 9021 Goodnight Ranch Blvd, Bldg 1, STE 1120, Austin, Travis county, Texas 78747. Officers of said corporation are FAISAL MOMIN - MANAGER

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's Permit by Emma Tejada Valdez dba Tahir ATX, to be located at 214 E Anderson Ln, Austin, Travis, Texas 78753. Emma Valdez-Manager

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Malt Beverage Retail Dealer's On-Premise Permit and Food & Beverage Certificate by Espisa Beverage Co., LLC dba La Montana Tacos to be located at 11212 North Interstate 35, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Jessie Contreras, Manager.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a winery permit to be held by C.L. Butaud Wines L.L.C. d/b/a C.L. Butaud Wines, to be located at 415 E. St. Elmo Road, Suites 4B, 4C, and 4F, Travis County, Texas 78745. The Managing Members of Applicant are Brooke Hester and Randall Hester.

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
TO: ADRIEN NARVITA, Respondent,
"STATE OF TEXAS
"You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Williamson County, Texas, on the 28th day of October, 2022, against Adrien Narvita, Respondent, numbered 22-0072-CPSC1, and entitled 'In the Interest of Nathaniel Walker, Adyn Tobey-Marsh, Ryleigh Tobey-Marsh, Karson Tobey-Marsh, Logan Tobey-Marsh, and Savannah Tobey-Marsh, Minor Children'. The suit requests termination of the parent-child relationship. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of this suit: Savannah Tobey-Marsh, (Born April 28, 2022, in Round Rock, Texas). The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child's/children's interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the Parent-child Relationship, the determination of paternity and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's/children's adoption. The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child's interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's adoption. **ISSUED AND GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF SAID COURT** at Williamson County, Texas on this the 8th day of March, 2024.
Attorney for Party requesting citation:
Doyle Dee Hobbs, Jr.
05 M.L.L.K. Street #7
Georgetown, Texas 78626
Lisa David, District Clerk
PO Box 24, Georgetown, TX 78627
Williamson County, Texas (512) 943-1212
BY: Heather Frazier
Heather Frazier, Deputy

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-21-004243
TO: MIGUEL ANGEL SANDOVAL
and to all who it may concern, Respondent(s); GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. Find out more at [TexasLawHelp.org](https://www.texaslawhelp.org)." YOU ARE HEREBY COM-MANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 419TH DISTRICT COURT, Travis County, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of the Monday next after expiration of Twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the ORIGINAL PETITION IN SUIT AFFECTING PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP. Filed by: INGRY YANETH RODRIGUEZ BELLOSO filed in said court of Travis County, on JULY 12, 2021, against, UNKNOWN FATHER and said suit being number D-1-FM-21-004243 on the docket of said Court, and entitled "IN THE INTEREST OF F. R. CHILD(REN)". The nature of said suit is a request to ORIGINAL PETITION IN SUIT AFFECTING PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP of the parties, appoint managing and possessory conservators, and divide the estate of the parties in a manner that the court deems just and right. The date and place of birth of the child (children) who is (are) the subject of the suit: FLORENS YUDITH RODRIGUEZ BELLOSO, 11/28/2007
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the CHILD's interest which will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the CHILD's adoption. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court at Austin, Texas, MARCH 15, 2024.
Velva L. Price
Travis County District Clerk
Civil Family Court Facility (CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 679003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
Aurora Olivares Jennings, Deputy
REQUESTED BY: VICTORIA MORA RAICES
P.O. BOX 41359
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704

(CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 679003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
Aurora Olivares Jennings, Deputy
REQUESTED BY: VICTORIA MORA RAICES
P.O. BOX 41359
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-21-004243
TO: UNKNOWN FATHER
and to all who it may concern, Respondent(s); GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. Find out more at [TexasLawHelp.org](https://www.texaslawhelp.org)." YOU ARE HEREBY COM-MANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 419TH DISTRICT COURT, Travis County, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of the Monday next after expiration of Twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the ORIGINAL PETITION IN SUIT AFFECTING PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP. Filed by: INGRY YANETH RODRIGUEZ BELLOSO filed in said court of Travis County, on JULY 12, 2021, against, UNKNOWN FATHER and said suit being number D-1-FM-21-004243 on the docket of said Court, and entitled "IN THE INTEREST OF F. R. CHILD(REN)". The nature of said suit is a request to ORIGINAL PETITION IN SUIT AFFECTING PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP of the parties, appoint managing and possessory conservators, and divide the estate of the parties in a manner that the court deems just and right. The date and place of birth of the child (children) who is (are) the subject of the suit: FLORENS YUDITH RODRIGUEZ BELLOSO, 11/28/2007
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the CHILD's interest which will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the CHILD's adoption. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court at Austin, Texas, MARCH 15, 2024.
Velva L. Price
Travis County District Clerk
Civil Family Court Facility (CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 679003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
Aurora Olivares Jennings, Deputy
REQUESTED BY: VICTORIA MORA RAICES
P.O. BOX 41359
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-23-006609
TO: BRITTANY PERKINS, the Respondent Mother of the subject child, SAMANTHA PERKINS, and to all whom it may concern, Respondents; GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10.00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. YOU ARE HEREBY COM-MANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 261st Judicial District, Travis County, Texas, at the Civil and Family Courts Facility of said County in Austin, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock a.m. of the Monday next after expiration of twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the Original Petition in Suit Affecting the Parent Child Relationship. Term, filed in said court on the 1ST day of SEPTEMBER, 2023 and the Affidavit of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, filed in said Court on the 5TH day of SEPTEMBER, 2023, against the Respondent Mother, BRITTANY PERKINS, and said suit being number D-1-FM-23-006609, on the docket of said Court, and entitled "In the Interest of SAMANTHA PERKINS, a Child," the nature of which suit is a request to name the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, or a suitable, competent adult recommended by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, or an authorized agency recommended by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services as Managing Conservator of the child, whose name, date and place of birth are as follows: SAMANTHA PERKINS
DOB: JULY 12, 2023
Place of Birth: AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the Child's interest, which will be binding upon you, including the appointment of a managing conservator. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at Austin, Texas, this the 14TH day of March, 2024.
REQUESTED BY: NIKKI DARTER ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
P.O. BOX 1748
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767
(512) 599-1867
State Bar No. 24061944
FOR TRAVIS COUNTY CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
ATTN: Paralegal Amanda Rando
VELVA L. PRICE
Travis County District Clerk
1700 Guadalupe, P.O. Box 679 Austin, Texas 78767
Ashley Brown, Deputy

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-23-006610
TO: EDUARDO ROGEL NO KNOWN ADDRESS
and to all who it may concern, Respondent(s); GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. YOU ARE HEREBY COM-MANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 261st Judicial District, Travis County, Texas, at the Civil and Family Courts Facility of said County in Austin, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock a.m. of the Monday next after expiration of twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the Original Petition in Suit Affecting the Parent Child Relationship. Term, filed in said court on the 1ST day of SEPTEMBER, 2023 and the Affidavit of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, filed in said Court on the 5TH day of SEPTEMBER, 2023, against the Respondent Mother, BRITTANY PERKINS, and said suit being number D-1-FM-23-006609, on the docket of said Court, and entitled "In the Interest of SAMANTHA PERKINS, a Child," the nature of which suit is a request to name the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, or a suitable, competent adult recommended by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services as Managing Conservator of the child, whose name, date and place of birth are as follows: SAMANTHA PERKINS
DOB: JULY 12, 2023
Place of Birth: AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the Child's interest, which will be binding upon you, including the appointment of a managing conservator. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at Austin, Texas, this the 14TH day of March, 2024.
REQUESTED BY: NIKKI DARTER ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
P.O. BOX 1748
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767
(512) 599-1867
State Bar No. 24061944
FOR TRAVIS COUNTY CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
ATTN: Paralegal Amanda Rando
VELVA L. PRICE
Travis County District Clerk
1700 Guadalupe, P.O. Box 679 Austin, Texas 78767
Ashley Brown, Deputy

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-23-009004
TO: YOVANI DE LA SANCHASTORELS
and to all who it may concern, Respondent(s); GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. Find out more at [TexasLawHelp.org](https://www.texaslawhelp.org)." YOU ARE HEREBY COM-MANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 126th District Court, Travis County, Texas, at the Civil Family Court Facility of said County in Austin, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of the Monday next after expiration of twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the ORIGINAL PETITION FOR DIVORCE, filed by, PETITIONER, JENNIFER VAZQUEZ, filed in said court of Travis County, on DECEMBER 11, 2023, against, YOVANI DE LA SANCHASTORELS and said suit being number D-1-FM-23-009004 on the docket of said Court, and entitled "IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE OF JENNIFER VAZQUEZ VS. YOVANI DE LA SANCHASTORELS AND IN THE INTEREST OF

L.V.D.L.S.-V, A CHILD". The nature of said suit is a request to ORIGINAL PETITION FOR DIVORCE of the parties, appoint managing and possessory conservators, and divide the estate of the parties in a manner that the court deems just and right. The date and place of birth of the child (children) who is (are) the subject of the suit: LESLIE VIVIANA DE LA SANCHASTORELS, DOB: JULY 20, 2017
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the CHILD's interest which will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the CHILD's adoption. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court at Austin, Texas, MARCH 13, 2024.
Velva L. Price
Travis County District Clerk
Civil Family Court Facility (CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 679003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
REQUESTED BY: BIANCA FLORES 2800 SOUTH IH-35 STE. #135
AUSTIN, TX 78704
Gift Alonge, Deputy

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-GN-20-002419
TO: DARRY KAY MURRY Defendant(s), in the hereinafter styled and numbered cause: YOU (AND EACH OF YOU) HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance hereof, that is to say or before 10 o'clock A.M. of Monday the April 01, 2024, and answer the PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT & FOR PARTITION OF REAL PROPERTY of Plaintiff(s), filed in the 459th District Court of Travis County, Texas, on August 17, 2021, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at [TexasLawHelp.org](https://www.texaslawhelp.org).
Said suit being number D-1-GN-20-002419, in which WALTER THOMAS ALEXANDER REGISTER, ANTHONY WAYNE ALEXANDER REGISTER Plaintiff(s), vs. CAROL INEZ FARRAR; OLIVER FARRAR; DAVID RAY JOHNSON; PEGGY ANN JOHNSON; PAUL RAY JOHNSON; BRENDIA LEE REED; JEANIE WATKINS; NANCY SUE RUSH; BECKY FARRAR; JOE FARRAR; MARIA FARRAR; DARRY KAY MURRY; SHELLY MAY FARRAR; JACKIE KAY FARRAR Defendant(s), and the nature of which said suit is as follows: **THIS IS A PARTITION SUIT, THE PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS ARE CO-OWNERS (TENANTS-IN-COMMON) OF THE RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS, CONSISTING OF A HOME ON A LOT: 6107 RICHARDSON LANE, AUSTIN, TEXAS, 78741.**
ALL OF WHICH MORE FULLY APPEARS FROM: PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT & FOR PARTITION OF REAL PROPERTY ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE, AND WHICH REFERENCE IS HERE MADE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court at Austin, Texas, MARCH 7, 2024.
Velva L. Price
Travis County District Clerk
Civil Family Court Facility (CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 67003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
Jose Garcia, Deputy
REQUESTED BY: MAEGAN L. WHELCHER 901 S, MOPAC BUILDING V, SUITE 200 AUSTIN, TX 78746

CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CAUSE NO: D-1-GN-20-002419
TO: DAVID RAY JOHNSON Defendant(s), in the hereinafter styled and numbered cause: YOU (AND EACH OF YOU) HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance hereof, that is to say or before 10 o'clock A.M. of Monday the April 01, 2024, and answer the PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT & FOR PARTITION OF REAL PROPERTY of Plaintiff(s), filed in the 459th District Court of Travis County, Texas, on August 17, 2021, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at [TexasLawHelp.org](https://www.texaslawhelp.org).
Said suit being number D-1-GN-20-002419, in which WALTER THOMAS ALEXANDER REGISTER, ANTHONY WAYNE ALEXANDER REGISTER Plaintiff(s), vs. CAROL INEZ FARRAR; OLIVER FARRAR; DAVID RAY JOHNSON; PEGGY ANN JOHNSON; PAUL RAY JOHNSON; BRENDIA LEE REED; JEANIE WATKINS; NANCY SUE RUSH; BECKY FARRAR; JOE FARRAR; MARIA FARRAR; DARRY KAY MURRY; SHELLY MAY FARRAR; JACKIE KAY FARRAR Defendant(s), and the nature of which said suit is as follows: **THIS IS A PARTITION SUIT, THE PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS ARE CO-OWNERS (TENANTS-IN-COMMON) OF THE RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS, CONSISTING OF A HOME ON A LOT: 6107 RICHARDSON LANE, AUSTIN, TEXAS, 78741.**
ALL OF WHICH MORE FULLY APPEARS FROM: PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT & FOR PARTITION OF REAL PROPERTY ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE, AND WHICH REFERENCE IS HERE MADE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court at Austin, Texas, MARCH 7, 2024.
Velva L. Price
Travis County District Clerk
Civil Family Court Facility (CFCF)
1700 Guadalupe Street P.O. Box 67003 (78767)
Austin, TX 78701
Jose Garcia, Deputy
REQUESTED BY: MAEGAN L. WHELCHER 901 S, MOPAC BUILDING V, SUITE 200 AUSTIN, TX 78746

CONTINUED
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