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FOUR POINTS NEWS

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Wednesday, February 28, 2018 • 50 cents

LISD clarifies new cyberbullying laws, prevention

By SARAH DOOLITTLE
Four Points News

On June 9, 2017, the State of Texas passed "David's Law," legislation meant to address cyberbullying.

The law was inspired by the death of David Molak, a San Antonio sophomore, who took his own life as the result of relentless cyberbullying according to his family.

Motivated by grief and the desire to prevent more undue suffering, the family lobbied countless lawmakers, resulting in the new law.

The legislation makes a number of changes to existing bullying laws, and includes a laundry list of new reporting, prevention and mediation requirements for school districts. (See sidebar.)

As school began in the fall of 2017, Leander Independent School District sent an email to parents making them aware of the new law and its impact on students.

LISD teachers and counselors were educated about the law's new requirements during back-to-school training in August 2017.

Steve Clark, direc-



tor of counseling services for LISD, does not think that the law will significantly impact LISD students and staff, due especially to an existing emphasis on good citizenship.

"In our guiding documents, many of the topics they discuss are not about academics.

BULLYING, 5

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Leander ISD	62	32	36	28	34	23
VHS	1	0	0	0	0	0
CRMS	2	2	2	3	1	1
FPMS	4	0	0	2	3	3
Bush	2	1	2	1	0	1
Grandview	0	0	1	1	0	0
River Place	3	0	0	0	0	2
River Ridge	4	1	3	1	0	0
Steiner	3	1	0	0	0	0

Student bullying cases from Leander ISD and the schools in Four Points.

RP teen places in Miss Texas Teen USA top 15

By SARAH DOOLITTLE
Four Points News

River Place 16-year-old Sydney Palmieri placed in the top 15 in the Miss Texas Teen USA pageant recently, following in the footsteps of her mom, who was crowned Miss Georgia USA in 1996 and Mrs. Texas America in 2004.

As a junior at Hyde Park High School and one of 104 girls competing for the title of Miss Texas Teen USA in Houston Nov. 25-26, Sydney was thrilled for the opportunity to participate in the pageant — her first — despite initial reservations.

"I actually used to be against (pageants)... Why would you put yourself through that?... It's something you have to go through yourself to understand it really," said Sydney.

The pageant world is one Sydney grew up familiar with through her mom, Jenny, who is originally from Atlanta.

Rather than participate in a smaller, local pageant for the chance to attend the Miss Texas Teen pageant, Sydney applied "at large" to the statewide pageant and competed under



Jenny Palmieri with her husband (then boyfriend) Cosmo after winning Miss Georgia in 1996.

the title Miss Travis County Teen USA 2017.

"Having some practice... would have benefited me," explained Sydney. She decided, though, to skip the local pageant and to enter at the state level. Or as Sydney put it, "Just jump right in."

Jumping right in is Sydney's strength, one she's cultivated through her other passion, singing.

"She's been singing for as long as she could make sound," Jenny said.

"The guys that I sing with are dads," she said of the band for which Sydney is the lead singer. They perform at the Steiner Ranch Steakhouse one night a week and are, "really cool and have really good insights for me." (One member of the band is the songwriter of "God Bless the Broken Road" and plans to use Sydney to record new songs this spring.)

Performing live

MS TEEN, 2



The whole family was thrilled with Sydney's placement in the top 15 even though it was her first time to compete. From left: Jenny, Sydney, Ryan and Cosmo Palmieri.

Entrepreneur has a new plan for Champion tract

By JO CLIFTON
Austin Monitor

Lake Austin Collective, the neighborhood group that has fought, threatened and sued over the fate of the Champion tract on RM 2222, may have finally found a hero in entrepreneur Jonathan Coon, the founder of 1-800 Con-



Entrepreneur Jonathan Coon may be able to offer a solution, which will result in less traffic, for the Champion tract at 6409 City Park Rd. off of RM 2222.

acts. Coon has taken an option on the tract and promised far less development, far less traffic and considerably greater environmental protection than offered under the plan City Council approved on Feb. 15.

Coon is the owner of a nearby area of land known as the Camelback tract, a 145-acre tract on Lake Austin. The Austin Business Journal reported last summer that the property had been appraised for tax purposes at \$33.7 million.

He told the Austin Monitor on Feb. 19 that he signed an option on the

Champion tract on the night of Feb. 14, the night before Council voted to allow the development sought by the current owner, Slate Real Estate Partners. Council approved the zoning on a vote of 6-5 the next day.

On the day Coon signed the option, the Lake Austin Collective sent a letter to Council urging it to reject the proposed zoning that has been the subject of so much debate, bitterness and legal bills, and to move quickly on what is called the

Camelback compromise.

On Feb. 1, the day Council postponed action on the Champion tract, which is located at 6409 City Park Rd., Mark Stevenson of Slate Real Estate Partners urged Council to stand by the decision it made in 2016 granting the zoning and variances that would allow development of approximately 300,000 square feet. He said the only reason Council had an opportunity to vote on the matter again

CHAMPION, 5

River Place OB/GYN named in Austin's Top Doctors

By MADISON PHARIS
Four Points News

Dr. John Thoppil of River Place OB/GYN has been named one of Austin Monthly's Top Austin Doctors 2018.

"It is very validating to be recognized for what you do," Thoppil said.

This annual recognition is an effort to let locals know who they can trust to handle their health needs. The doctors chosen are selected by Castle

Connolly Medical Ltd., a healthcare research and information company. They look at how well the doctors perform their practices and how they treat their patients, choosing those who exceed in both.

"I was shocked when they asked me to do the cover," he said.

Following in the footsteps of his parents, Thoppil, who is from Killeen, chose to pursue a career in medicine. Becoming a board certified obste-

trician gynecologist, he already has quite a number of academic, professional and patient-drive awards.

Originally Thoppil worked in Cedar Park as a hospital employed doctor, but felt that there needed to be more done in the terms of women's health services. He started River Place OB/GYN three years ago with a goal of helping the community and caring for others. He wishes to provide a more personal experience


DOCTOR, 4



Dr. John Thoppil, resident of Steiner Ranch and founder of River Place OB/GYN, has been named one of Austin Monthly's Top Austin Doctors 2018.

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Local art teacher works with textiles



Vandegrift art teacher Thao Phan in front of her textile art.

By ALAINA MALONE
Vandegrift Voice

Vandegrift art teacher Thao Phan creates original masterpieces using fabrics and thread.

She worked with artists Emily Bolt and Kate Robertson to display their work in gallery space at the Big Medium's East Austin Studio Tour in November. The event is a free, annual, self-guided art event which provides opportunities for the public to meet the artists and artisans of Austin in their creative spaces.

Phan has been pursuing art professionally since her sophomore year in high school, a turning point in her life where she realized she wanted to teach and create art as a career.

"The most significant display I've ever had was my first show ever," Phan said. "My art was displayed at the Contemporary Art Museum in downtown Austin. I had entered into a contest and was selected

to be shown. I remember it was such an awesome experience where I realized, I knew I wanted to do this for a living."

VHS co-worker and engineering teacher Martin Wiedenmeier said his favorite piece of Phan's was her large textile quilt hanging from the ceiling, located at the front of the studio.

"I really liked the different colors she includes, the texture and how it was three dimensional coming off of the wall," Wiedenmeier said.

"Because my mom is in her 80's and she quilts a lot," he said. "I see how quilting and the way the textiles reminds me of my mother. I see the sentimentality in her work just as others do."

Phan declared her work with fabric to be the most individual. She explained that the use of fabric was inspired by her mother, a local seamstress.

"I work with a lot

of fiber, which are like fabrics." Phan said. "Sitting in front of a sewing machine, the thread. This is familiar. Paints are honestly the most intimidating to use for me."

Phan's mother was the one who taught her to sew, as well as actively provided her with the material to use. Phan enjoys to go into the process unprepared for what she may end up with once completed.

"I have an unlimited supply to fabric and thread and it's a medium that not a lot of artists are working with," Phan said.

Phan's work was brought together by the repeating theme of using a teardrop shape in most of her work. She calls her work a textured conjunction of fabric hanging on a wall.

"It's such a familiar shape. There's a lot of interpretation in it," Phan said. "It fits really well together. It continues on, like a puzzle. I like to challenge myself. No one expects this stuff out of fabric."

MS TEEN, FROM 1

has taught Sydney a lot about self-confidence. "For me, if you have a fear and you conquer it, it's the best feeling ever."

Going into the statewide pageant, Sydney knew she would be facing some stiff competition. "(The other girls) are not just pretty; they're valedictorians, They're class presidents. I think there's a common misconception that it's just a beauty pageant."

Her mindset entering the pageant: Hope to win. Still, she had no real expectation of winning, "because it's a very unreasonable goal to go into your first pageant and win."

Instead she focused on the benefits of the in-depth process. "You really learn a lot more about yourself," said Sydney, in addition to working with, "an interview coach, a walking coach, a makeup coach."

"One of the hardest things for me," she said wasn't applying perfect eyeliner, or walking in six inch heels. "It was learning the dance. I am so uncoordinated!"

Still, she said, she had a secret weapon. "Even if you're not confident at all and you are freaking out inside, which was me the majority of the time at this pageant... I just acted like I knew what I was doing. The girls all thought I had done it before."

Former Miss Georgia and Mrs. Texas, Jenny, watched her daughter blossom before her eyes during the process. She is also someone who had judged pageants herself.

"I can tell you from my perspective the growth that I saw in her, that she's too young to appreciate probably right now," said Jenny.

Mom and daughter both relished their newfound shared connec-



Sydney Palmieri on stage at the 2017 Miss Teen Texas pageant in Houston. Sydney placed in the top 15 out of 104 girls. (Photo credit: Select Studios)

tion: pageants. During the competition Sydney wore a crystal crown pin and ring that her mom received from winning Miss Georgia. "It was the total mother-daughter moment, because she passed that on to me."

Theirs is a family of many accomplishments. Besides her mom's titles, Sydney's dad Cosmo played football for the University of Texas and sister Ryan, a senior at Vandegrift, has a volleyball scholarship to Southern Methodist University.

Though she did not win the title — this time — Sydney maintains a healthy perspective.

"There's only one winner... The girl who won, her name is Brenna Flynn, she deserved it. It shouldn't have gone to anyone else. It was her year... I was so happy for her."

She celebrates instead the opportunity for personal growth. "Even if

it sounds super clichéd, the statement 'Everyone's a winner' totally applies in this situation."

After all, "Different judges like different things... you can't take it too personally."

While landing in the top 15 did not come with any prizes, it did include what Sydney's mom laughingly calls "bragging rights," as well as "confirmation that your hard work has paid off a little bit."

"Because if you lose," said Sydney, "here's what you gain: You just learn so much about yourself. You just made all these new, amazing friends. (And) you're in shape."

Her mom Jenny, looking to the future, dared to make a prediction for Sydney. "My take on it is that if she stays with this, she will win this... I'm 100 percent sure."

CRMS Eagles attend No Place for Hate

The Canyon Ridge Middle School 7th and 8th grade students attended No Place for Hate Youth Summit. The Anti-Defamation League Austin hosted the 10th annual, one-day workshop on Jan. 31. Both students and educators used the day to learn

about the impact of bias, how to build more inclusive campuses, and how to become an ally. The goal of the event was to teach attendees the dangers of bigotry and how to increase equality on campus.

Submitted by Cheryl Kleffner.



Students work together in order to spread equality and lower biases at schools.

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River Place Student Theatre presents "Wizard of Oz"



The curtain opens for River Place Student Theatre's "The Wizard of Oz" at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 2 and at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 3 at the Church at Canyon Creek located at 9001 N RM 620.

"Although our actors are comprised of elementary age students, this is not your average elementary play," said Ivonne Mercado, RPST president. "Audiences can expect a Broadway-caliber show, and because this is our 11th production, we have worked hard to raise the bar even higher than ever before. Trust me, you don't want to miss this show!"

By purchasing tickets, patrons help support RPST's mission of enriching the lives of young children through the art of musical theatre.

Additionally, RPST is honored to have RJ Orthodontics as the presenting sponsor, part of a 10-year commitment.

Tickets are \$12 dollars for adults and \$10 dollars for children when purchased in advance online at www.riverplacestudenttheatre.org. Prices at the door are \$15 for all ages. ASL performance interpretation is available Friday.

"The Wizard of Oz" cast & crew

Ellie	Kim	Anders	Wiley	Olivia	Mason
Giana	Cantu	Cooper	Sigler	Caoimhe	McDaid
Amber	Gemperle	Addison	Bandelier	Christopher	Mireles
Kain	Gray	Sydney	Byrd	Maya	Mireles
Alexa	Gage	Sofia	Carpenter	Navya	Modi
Kenzie	Kudrick	Rachel	Chon	Sovie Rose	Nance
Adrian	Dholakia	Faith	Chon	Jacqueline	O'Shaughnessy
Avery	Gemperle	Charley	Clark	Kaelyn	Owens
Jillian	Hunter	Reese	Davis	Emma	Pierson
Brynley	Gage	Kelsey	Elliott	Haylee	Pottichen
Powell	Jacob	Drew	Fieleke	Baran	Shafaei
Lindsey	Saunders	Hannah	Fogel	Lily Moon	Smith-Franks
Myla	Cabello	Margaret	Fontana	Devyani	Uribe
Amelia	Galian	Benjamin	Fournier	Ainsley	Walker
Caroline	Doss	Isabella	Fournier	Justin	Weaver
Alex	Martin	Katelyn	Gage	Ava	Weaver
Morgan	Jennings	Grace	Garrett	Joseph	Werkheiser
Maritza	Tomlinson	Kloe	Garrett	Milagro	Wilson
Sarah	Jurist	Katie	Goldsworth		
Bela	Iglesias	Addyson	Hadley	Backstage crew	
Trishna	Uribe	Olivia	Jacob	Magnus Gaunt	
Aynalem	Rehling	Samar	Khan	Leyla Talu	
Cadie	Cantu	Milana	Kudrick	Ashley Risch	
Amberley	Dorling	Harper	Land	Lilly Nolan	
Grayson	Smith	Norah	Linton	Quinlan Jones	
Diego	Willebeek-LeMair	Lucy	Luppino	Haley Walls	
Francisco	Ardila	Madison	Maguregui	Alina Armstrong	

Leander ISD focused on campus security, student safety



DAN TROXELL
LISD Superintendent

There is no greater priority as a superintendent, public educator or parent than the safety of our students. We work hard every day to ensure that our young people learn in secure, welcoming environments that meet their emotional and

educational needs.

We constantly review our safety and communications protocols to verify that we are keeping families informed of any disruption or threat to our community. To that end, I want to mention just a few of the ways that LISD is being proactive in school safety and security.

LISD conducted an extensive safety audit in 2014 and 2015, which resulted in recommendations that this district has implemented or is implementing. For example, the report identified a need to

have secure, single-point entrances at all schools, which the Board of Trustees funded for all elementary schools in the summers of 2016 and 2017 and voters approved for all middle and high schools in the Nov. 2017 bond election.

LISD partners with law enforcement agencies to cover all schools, including school resource officers at all high schools. Our SROs work with the Texas School Safety Center in San Marcos for up-to-date practices and training in school safety. LISD staff and students engage in continuous safety

drills, and we utilize extensive camera systems in our schools.

LISD hired six additional counselors last year to meet the academic and emotional needs of our children. Our district also employs a behavior specialist and licensed specialists in school psychology to work with students experiencing difficult times in their lives.

Ultimately, our families and students are the best partners in keeping

our schools safe. Our principals and school administrators investigate every reported tip or threat. We work with law enforcement and take quick and appropriate action, including notifying families, if there is a valid danger on campus. We ask all of our families and students to please share any information regarding school or student safety by either directly contacting a school staff member or by using our anonymous alert

system at www.anonymoussalerts.com/leanderisd.

Relationships are critical to successful schools. As we continue to grow, we thank you for your input and ideas. LISD will continue to collaborate with law enforcement, other school districts and our community partners in exploring new ways to improve safety and security for our campuses.

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Letter to the Editor

Steiner community manager & HOA situation

Dear Ms. Haaland,

After reading your front page story on the Steiner Community Manager, Heather Hood, resigning I felt it was disingenuous of Naren Chilukuri of the SRMA board to claim "we are getting close to a solution".

This mess was CAUSED by Mr. Chilukuri by pushing his unpopular agenda to force a 3rd Party For Profit Management company to take over the HOA management, against the wishes of the majority of the community.

You report him saying "I have been conducting interviews with multiple candidates over the last three weeks", but how exactly can he interview someone for a role he wants to eliminate?

It has been very unfair on our HOA team and I don't blame so many of them resigning in the year Mr. Chilukuri has been board President.

How can we expect to recruit competent HOA team members for jobs that could be eliminated if Mr. Chilukuri gets his way?

I suspect that is his plan of course, to create as much disruption in the current HOA team to make his 3rd party for profit scheme look more attractive. However, it's unfair to the majority of Steiner Ranch who just want a stable HOA team that is run for the community's benefit and not for someone else's profit.

Yours sincerely,
Ben Walls

LISD 2018-19 school calendar begins mid Aug

By JOHN GREELEY
Hill Country News

Leander ISD Board of Trustees chose an alternative 2018-19 school calendar at its Feb. 15 meeting that will have classes starting Aug. 16 and summer break starting May 31. The early start date was made possible through adopting a District of Innovation plan to provide more choices on calendar dates.

Christmas break will have two weekends from Dec. 24 through Jan. 4 and Spring Break is aligned with the University of Texas, March 18-22.

In order to do this, the district gained an okay from the state's education commissioner to have more options on the calendar after trustees voted first to designate Leander ISD as a District of Innovation. Trustees said greater flexibility for the calendar was the sole reason for becoming a District of Innovation, but parents, teachers and students told trustees at the meeting they weren't so sure about the wider implications of attaining DOI status.

Tina Ritzema, third grade teacher at River Place Elementary, said she was concerned about how DOI status could allow future school boards to eliminate teacher certification requirements and classroom size limits.

"I trust that I can talk to every one of you," Ritzema said. "My concern is, what if you're not here?"

Bana Curr, a booster club member and substitute teacher, said she opposed the "Option B" school calendar because it extends the school year beyond Memorial Day.

"The school board pushed for the District of Innovation under the pretense that you wanted to fix the calendar," Curr said. "But today you're here,

you're about to vote and the calendar is not fixed."

Randy Houchins, a parent of a Leander ISD student, told the board that placing limits on the DOI designation to only concern the school calendar could easily be changed by a vote of the committee that endorsed the plan or by a two-thirds majority vote of the board of trustees.

The school district has a Districtwide Educational Improvement Council comprised of parents, community members and business representatives that meets seven times a year. On Feb. 8, a group of randomly selected committee members voted 57-14 to endorse the DOI plan.

District spokesman Corey Ryan said the board of trustees has tried to be clear that the DOI status was pursued only to allow more flexibility in setting the school calendar. Ryan said the district could not

start classes sooner than the fourth Monday in August without the designation.

Trustees Aaron Johnson, Will Streit and Trish Bode discussed putting strict limits on changes to the District of Innovation in the future. Johnson said he didn't see how seeking the District of Innovation status would harm the district.

"Having a District of Innovation plan that authorizes specific things and nothing else doesn't put a district any closer to adopting the bad things that nobody wants," he said.

The board voted for Bode's motion to approve the DOI with the understanding that it could not be altered without restarting an approval process including a new board resolution, a public hearing and a 30-day comment period.

VHS band and Vision sells mulch

The Vandegrift band and Vision Dance Company has kicked off its 6th annual mulch sale to raise funds including travel, maintenance of the 53-foot trailer, costumes, uniform repair and cleaning, show design, music arrangement, drill preparation and props expenses.

Prices are discounted for cash and check: 5 to 26 bags \$4.75/bag (\$4.90/bag online); 27-51 bags \$4.50/bag (\$4.65/bag online); and 52 bags/pallet \$230/pallet (\$240/pallet online).

The deadline to order is March 4 and free, Four Points delivery will be March 31 and April 1. For more information, visit mulch@vhsband.com

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Groundbreaking in Rough Hollow

The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new community of Westridge Landing in Rough Hollow took place on Feb. 18 at 500 Peninsula Way. The lakeside site now hosts 41 homes adjacent from the Peninsula and is within minutes of local farmers markets and activities such as biking trails and waterskiing.



L-R: Cass Brewer, Legacy partner, Haythem Dawlett, Legend president and CEO, Philip Jalufka, Legacy partner, Mandy Myers, Myers Financial Corp., and Joe Bain, City of Lakeway mayor.

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DOCTOR, FROM 1
for his patients, rather than just

treating them as another client. Thoppil is a strong advocate for women's health issues and currently serves as the section chair for the American College of Obstetrician Gynecologists.

Thoppil is an active member of the Austin community, and his wife, Nimmi, works as a pediatrician in Travis County. The couple lives in Steiner Ranch and their son, John Jr. is a student at River Ridge Elementary.

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SpotCrime: sheriff's, police reports

Recent Travis County Sheriff's Office and Austin Police Department SpotCrime reports in the Four Points area include a traffic fatality, multiple collisions and burglaries.

02/19/2018 08:09 AM & 09:11 AM
8XX LAKEWOOD HILLS FRAUD & THEFT
02/19/2018 08:43 AM
22XX UNIVERSITY CLUB BURGLARY
02/19/2018 11:37 AM
14XX SHOREVIEW CV RUNAWAY CHIL
02/19/2018 04:06 PM
72XX COMANCHE TRL THEFT
02/20/2018 07:42 AM
43XX N QUINLAN PARK COLLISION
02/20/2018 AROUND 2 PM
113XX FOUR POINTS DR THEFT/LICENSE PLATE
02/20/2018 02:39 PM
134XX BULLICK HOLLOW COLLISION

02/20/2018 AROUND 3 PM
77XX FM 620
AUTO THEFT

02/20/2018 AROUND 10 PM
96XX SOLANA VISTA
AGG ROBBERY
02/21/2018 04:13 AM
76XX FM 620
FAMILY DISTURBANCE
02/21/2018 03:45 PM
51XX FM 620
SHOPLIFTING
02/21/2018 05:04 PM
47XX FM 620
COLLISION
02/21/2018 09:24 PM
119XX SELMA HUGHES
POSS MARIJUANA
02/22/2018 01:09 AM
43XX QUINLAN PARK
ASSAULT
02/22/2018 10:01 AM
& 11:11 AM
44XX FM 620
Accident
02/22/2018 01:39 PM
FM 620/COMANCHE
INJURY ACCIDENT
02/22/2018 06:00 PM

131XX ZEN GARDENS COLLISION
02/22/2018 07:11 PM
QUINLAN PARK/RM 620 COLLISION
02/23/2018 07:46 AM
QUINLAN/LAKEWOOD COLLISION
02/23/2018 08:04 PM
47XX FM 620
TRAFFIC FATALITY
02/23/2018 09:48 PM
47XX FM 620
ACCIDENT
02/24/2018 07:57 AM
2XX MEDITERRA PT
AUTO THEFT
02/24/2018 09:23 AM
119XX MONTCLAIR BND
BURGLARY/VEHICLE
02/24/2018 11:20 AM
45XX STEINER RANCH
THEFT
02/25/2018 09:32 AM
51XX FM 620
THEFT

Madison Pharis compiled this report with a large portion of the data gathered by SpotCrime at www.spotcrime.com.

CHAMPION, FROM 1

was because the city had made a mistake.

"We can't believe we're in this predicament," he said, noting that his firm had already spent more than \$2 million preparing plans for the development since Council's prior approval.

But now, Coon said, everyone is on the same page - both the neighbors and Stevenson agree that the best way to proceed is to combine consideration of the Camelback project and the Champion tract.

Instead of 300,000-square-feet of mostly apartments, Coon said he and his wife, Kirsten, are offering approximately 120,000-square feet of senior living facilities on the western portion of the land. The eastern portion of the property "will be dedicated as a true conservation easement," according to the neighborhood's letter.

In addition, Coon said with less development and with senior citizens living on the property, the number of trips each day

would be reduced by approximately 75 percent. And according to the Lake Austin Collective letter, the controversial primary driveway would be moved from City Park Road to RM 2222. "Overall," the group concluded, "the impact on the environment and traffic will be significantly less."

As for the Camelback property, Coon said, "It's an iconic location, and we're planning to turn half of the lakefront property - 1,500 of 3,000 feet - into a park and have it open to the public, and provide access and a trail up to the overlook next to the bridge. The only current access point is next to the highway and Loop 360 Bridge, and it's covered with multiple no-parking signs from (the Texas Department of Transportation). This is a solution that helps TxDOT solve the traffic at the intersection and still keep access open to the overlook."

Coon recognizes that moving through the city process at the rapid clip

that he envisions is a daunting task. However, he said he wants to be the point person because "we plan to live in this neighborhood. We want it to be nice." But he has also hired a team that includes attorneys at McLean & Howard, engineers at Kimley-Horn, land planner Stefan Pharis and San Antonio architecture firm Overland Partners.

"Lots of people say it's going to be almost impossible to do this within six months," he said. But individually, Coon said, each member of his team claims, "We won't be the reason you can't get it done."

"This is an unusual situation, where everybody should unanimously support this, ... because no matter how (Council members) voted (Feb. 15), they should be in support of this plan," he concluded.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



BULLYING, FROM 1

They're more about citizenship and creating good post-secondary citizens," said Clark.

Starting early, "we try to teach, in a proactive way, to build citizenship beginning in our elementary and on through high school," including digital communications as part of the district's BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) initiative.

In order to adhere to the law's reporting requirements, LISD now participates in the Anonymous Alerts program, which allows parents, students or members of the community to report any concerning behaviour anonymously. Reports can be made at www.anonymoualerts.com/leanderisd.

In 2017, the district also purchased a K-5 program called Second Step, a social skills learning curriculum that helps to teach empathy. While recognizing the importance of teaching these skills at a young age, LISD is also working to identify similar middle and high school programs.

The good news is,

LISD as a whole has seen a substantial drop in the number of reported bullying cases, down to 23 in the 2016-17 school year versus 62 in 2011-12.

There were, however, seven reported cases of bullying, nearly a third of the district's total, at Four Points area schools during the 2016-17 school year. (LISD does not track cyberbullying events separate from bullying.)

Clark sees the new law as beneficial to both students and counselors in one unexpected way. "I think the good thing about this new law, it really removed (counselors) from dealing with the crime aspect of it... The counselor would not be the person to report it to law enforcement... They can just be neutral so they can provide services to either party," whether the one being bullied or the one bullying.

Rather than thinking of kids engaging in bullying behaviors as problem students, Clark reminds parents that these can also simply be students with problems.

"Student behavior is often, to me, a function of

What is David's Law?

David's Law provides a number of new requirements for school districts when students report cyberbullying, including potential criminal charges. Below is a summary of the law, taken from www.DavidsLegacy.org, founded by David Molak's family after his suicide reportedly due to cyberbullying.

Education code:

Under David's Law, Texas public schools will have the authority to address cyberbullying that occurs off-campus. Schools will be required to notify a bullying victim's parents of a bullying incident within three business days after the incident is reported and must notify the parents of an aggressor within a reasonable amount of time. School procedures for reporting bullying incidents must include anonymous reporting for students. Schools will be able to expel students who engage in very serious bullying. This includes bullying that (i) encourages

another student to commit suicide (i.e., suicide baiting), (ii) incites violence against another student, or (iii) involves releasing indecent photos of another student. Strong protections from civil or criminal liabilities will be given to schools and school personnel who report criminal bullying to law enforcement officials. There will be new provisions in the law to promote mental health education, including education about the effects of grief and trauma on a student's mental health and learning. The role of school counselors will be expanded to include mediating interpersonal conflicts among students, including accusations of bullying.

How does LISD define bullying?

"Bullying" means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related-activity, or

a need. We try to be preventative... and serve all of our students," Clark said.

He also knows that technology creates many opportunities for misunderstanding.

"Many times, all of us - adults, students and kids - we're behind a screen and it's often interpreted the wrong way... which may end up upsetting the person. Because they read it in a tone that's not conveyed through this text," Clark said.

"Devices are not going away... We try to teach (students) the proper way to use them," he added.

Still he acknowledges that bullying can happen, and hopes parents will work with schools to work toward the best possible solutions for everyone involved.

"I always encourage parents to work with the campus as much as possible. Reach out and try to talk or meet in person if possible... I think once you start that open dialogue at the campus level, most issues can be resolved at the campus level," Clark said.

in a vehicle operated by the district and that: 1.) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or 2.) is sufficiently severe, persistent and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described in the definition of "bullying" is considered bullying if the conduct: 1.) exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and 2.) interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school. This definition applies to student-on-student behavior only.

Submitted by Sarah Doolittle.

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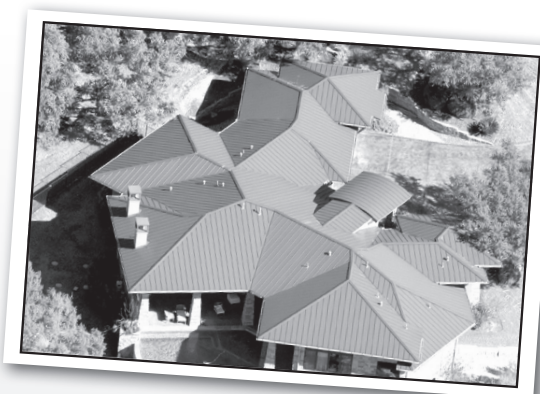
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Bee Gonzales led Vandegrift with quiet confidence



Vandegrift Vipers point guard Bee Gonzales (2) wrestles a rebound away from a group of Cedar Park players during a game vs. Cedar Park Timberwolves at VHS on Nov. 14, 2017.

Gonzales was the only returning starter, averaged 12 points a game

By ZACH SMITH
HCN Sports Editor

Vandegrift girls basketball coach Jonathan Jones knew Bee Gonzales was going to be a special player the first time she cracked the starting lineup more than two seasons ago.

Once the starters were announced and the teams were ready to jump, Gonzales approached her coach and asked how she could communicate orders to the team. Many times, the coaches are the ones barking out instructions. This time, it was a sophomore.

This season the shy senior increased and rejuvenated her role on a team that made the playoffs for the second straight season.

"She's so laser-focused all the time and it goes from there," Jones said. The team had some other personalities on the team that would step up and say something, but everybody still looked to their captain Gonzales. When she would say something, everybody

would turn and look right at her.

Vandegrift lost 80 percent of its scoring from the previous season. Gonzales had an increased scoring role this year and while she wasn't always the highest on the scoresheet, more often than not, she was near the top this past season.

Gonzales was the only returning starter from last season. Through the first two games of her varsity career, she averaged eight points and seven assists. Her scoring was up to 12 points a game this past season with her expanded scoring role.

She tried to create more scoring opportunities for herself and her teammates.

"My teammates (would) look to me to show them what's what," she said. "I'm a super shy person, so they kind of teased me about it."

Jones said Gonzales was a very unselfish player and always had a pass-first mentality. The only thing he did to get her to score more points was by encouraging her and telling her to take what the defense was giving her.

"She has surprised

me with how much she's stepped up with her leadership. When kids can do that, it takes the team to another level," Jones said.

Gonzales isn't the first of her family to play girls basketball at Vandegrift. Her sister, Sam, also suited up for the Lady Vipers and Bee always just did what she did with a little coaching from her dad. Her mom has been the official team photographer.

After high school, she plans to stay in the game and around it for sure. She is helping Vandegrift improve.

"(The Lady Vipers) can focus on defense a lot more which is where we start our offense from," Gonzales said.

Since Jones took over the Lady Vipers three seasons ago, he's been building a solid program that had made the playoffs twice now including this year. Vandegrift's season came to an end with a 58-57 loss to San Antonio Johnson on Feb. 12.

"The focus that (Gonzales) brings from that quiet leadership is really cool to see. She's part of the building blocks of what we're trying to do," Jones said.

7th grade district BB champs

The Canyon Ridge Middle School 7th grade A basketball team won the Leander ISD 7th grade district championship a couple of weeks ago. Standing L-R: Conner Freeman, Charlie Oliver, Cruz Orta, Joey

Petrocelli, Andrew Scott, Mason Anderson, Charlie Stanton, Lucas Jackson, Coach Drew Rigney, Front row L-R: Brayden Buchanan, Beck Ormond, Charlie Hatch



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Sunday School

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Viper golf wins the NEISD Shootout

4th & 10th place at Mike Brent

The Vandegrift Viper varsity boys golf team played a weather-shortened Mike Brent Invitational tournament on Feb. 23 at Legacy Hills Golf Club in Georgetown.

Out of 21 teams, the Vipers black and silver teams finished in 4th and 10th respectively. Luke Dossey finished with a T6 individually, shooting the Vipers low round of 71 (-1).

The Viper boys varsity golf team brought home the victory at the 2-day, 54-hole NEISD Shootout at the TPC San Antonio Canyons course Feb. 16-17. The Vipers beat out 16 teams from across Texas including district rivals, Westlake High School.

Sophomore Cole Sherwood posted consecutive rounds of 69 on Friday to finish at 138 (-6) for the day. Vandegrift headed into the final round on Saturday in 2nd

place, just 4 strokes back from tournament host, Johnson High School. Sophomore Jack Wehman's final round 72 (E) combined with solid scores from senior Brandon Hoff (74) and sophomore Colin Slater (75) led the Vipers to a 2-stroke victory over Johnson. Dallas's Highland Park took third.

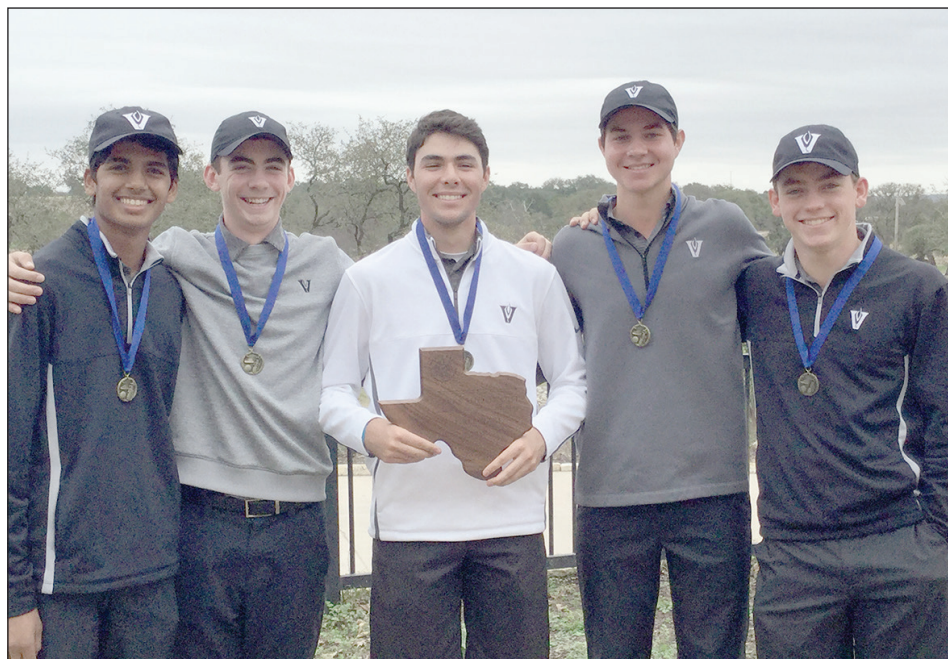
"Saturday's final round saw a couple different guys step up and lead the way," said head coach, Matt Wernecke. "This was a great team win and it was nice to have everyone in the lineup step up and contribute."

Sherwood (T4), Hoff (T8), and Wehman (T10) all placed inside the Top 10 individually in the 90+ player tournament field. Taft High School's Isaiah Henderson posted the top Individual score with a 3-day total of 211 (-5).

Legacy Hills will serve as the host course for the 2017-2018 6A Texas State Championship in May.



Vandegrift golfer Jack Wehman at TPC San Antonio.



Vandegrift varsity boys golf wins at TPC San Antonio Feb. 16-17: L-R Prayaag Oruganti (freshman), Colin Slater (sophomore), Brandon Hoff (senior), Cole Sherwood (sophomore) and Jack Wehman (sophomore).

Band students at TMEA



Two Vandegrift band students — Nicole Parmelee on flute and Connor Koriotoh on tuba — performed in the Texas All-State Band at the recent Texas Music Educators Association Convention in San Antonio. This is the highest honor/rank a Texas high school band student can reach.

VHS boys basketball ends season 24-11

The Vandegrift Vipers bowed out of the post-season last week, falling in overtime to San Antonio Johnson.

Playing at Dripping Springs High School, the Vipers pushed the Jaguars to a 34-34 tie at the half. With just 2.9 seconds left in regulation, Johnson hit a free throw to tie the score at 68 and force overtime.

The Jaguars scored the first eight points in overtime and held on for the victory, ending Vandegrift's season with an overall record of 24-11.

Leander's boys basketball team lost to San Antonio Madison and Glenn's varsity squad lost to Navasota. Rouse beat Tomball in the opening round but fell to Bryan in the second round last Friday night.

The Cedar Park girls advanced to the regional tournament before falling to Crosby in the regional semifinals on Friday, wrapping up basketball play for all Leander ISD schools.



Rivals.com has Vandegrift varsity basketball player sophomore Greg Brown III ranked the #6 small forward in the country. ESPN lists Brown as a power forward and ranks him #3 overall in the state, and #13 overall nationally.

Photo by Scott W. Coleman

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Viper wrestling places 9th at state, Freshman won individual title

By CHRIS TAYLOR
Contributor

Vandegrift placed ninth out of 81 6A teams at the state wrestling tournament held in Houston on Feb. 23-24. Freshman Noah Gochberg won the state title at 113 lbs.

Gochberg had the toughest path to the championship in his bracket, beating the second, third, and fourth place wrestlers in head-to-head matches. Gochberg's state championship is the first in school history for both a freshman and in 6A competition. He finished the season with a record of 49-3.

Sophomore Luke Sloan placed fourth place at state in the 126 lbs. weight class. Sloan won four matches at the state meet, including over the third and the fifth state-ranked wrestlers. He finished the season with a record of 55-5.

The other Viper state qualifiers competed well at the state tournament, ending successful seasons: senior and team captain Grant Riddle (152 lbs.) ended with a season record of 44-13, senior Dakota Kleffner (170 lbs.) finished with a record of 48-10, and freshman Remy Jacobs (106 lbs.) had a record of 43-10.

Photos by Jim Kleffner



Luke Sloan placed 4th at state tournament.



The Vandegrift wrestling team won its third consecutive regional championship Feb. 17: top row (L-R): Jon Jording, Kendall Holmes, Grant Riddle, Luke Sloan, Charlie Trujillo, Remy Jacobs; Middle row (L-R): Head Coach Paul Muck, Dawson Taylor, Justin Orlando, Dakota Kleffner, Matt Sanders, Noah Gochberg, Jayelen Gray, Asst. Coach Andy Peterson, Asst. Coach Steve Fanara; Bottom row: (L-R): Ted Waugh, Cole Waters. Not pictured: Wesley Holmes (Sr., 220 lbs., injured).



Freshman Noah Gochberg won first place at state.

VHS soccer recap



The Vandegrift Lady Viper varsity soccer team beat Leander 1-0 at LHS on Feb. 23.

By SCOTT W. COLEMAN
Four Points News

The Lady Vipers won both their matches last week, beating Lehman 4-0 and Leander 1-0 to improve to 6-1-2 in District 25-6A ahead of this week's action.

The Lady Vipers were set to host Vista Ridge (5-2-1) on Tuesday before taking a short break this weekend. A win over the Lady Rangers will keep Vandegrift in second place in the district standings behind Westlake (5-0-4). Lake Travis (4-2-2) is also vying for playoff seeding.

The VHS girls will return to action on March 6 at Hays.

The VHS boys snapped a three-game losing streak with a 2-1 win at Lehman on Feb. 20. The Vipers then played Leander to a scoreless tie last Friday to settle their record at 3-5-1 in 25-6A play. District leaders Lake Travis and Westlake have five wins and one loss each, while Vista Ridge enters this week at 5-3. The Vipers are still in playoff contention, battling against Leander and Lehman for the fourth postseason berth.

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