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FOUR POINTS NEWS

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Signs, signs, everywhere are signs



Campaign signs remained at Quinlan Crossing last week, after the state's primary election. LESLEE BASSMAN

Rules on election signs in Four Points

By LESLEE BASSMAN
Four Points News

With the March 6 primary election over but the upcoming May 5 election campaign in full swing, Four Points' lawns and thoroughfares are dotted with candidate signs.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, "during campaign season, the landscape blooms with a special kind of flower—the political sign. Unlike wildflowers that are welcome anywhere, putting campaign signs on public lands is illegal."

So, what rights do local homeowners and com-

munities have with regard to election signage?

The rules and regulations governing these types of signs are complex in western Travis County, a region that includes the city of Austin proper, such as River Place; the jurisdiction surrounding the city but without voting rights or a tax requirement, such as Steiner Ranch; and other unincorporated sections.

Sign wars

"Disputes over political signs are often referred to as 'sign wars,'" Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir said. "If you feel like you've been inundated with signs, you are not alone."

TxDOT regulates signs along the state's high-

ways pursuant to the Highway Beautification Act as well as highways and roads in unincorporated areas of Travis County, under the State Rural Roads Act.

TxDOT, on its website, cautions residents to know their rights before "planting" a sign because it is illegal to place any signs on or within a public right of way, including signs on telephone poles or trees that are located in a right of way.

"TxDOT can pick up those signs anytime and throw them away, including more than political signs, even a garage sale sign," DeBeauvoir said of signs in rights of way or easements.

Campaign signs along a Texas road can be

SIGNS, 5

New flood warning site to give Central Texans closer look at risks

By MOSE BUCHELE
Austin Monitor

A website that warns Central Texans about road flooding is getting an overhaul this month. The designers of the new site say the changes should give visitors more detail about flooding near them.

ATXfloods.com is basically a map that shows which low-water crossings are underwater. On a sunny day, it should be full of green circles to say the

crossings are Okay. During heavy rains, those green circles turn to red.

The site was launched by the city of Austin in 2012 and has been visited 9 million times, a number that makes sense when you consider how many floods the area has had since then.

Matt Porcher, a systems administrator with the city's Flood Early Warning System team, says the website has been due for an upgrade for awhile.

One reason? The old site had maxed out on the amount of data it could share. That meant crossings in parts of Central Texas couldn't be added.

"I think kind of the neatest thing (about the new website) is that we'll be able to add more jurisdictions in the Central Texas area," Porcher said.

At some point this year, people will be able to sign up for text and email notifications about specific crossings. Plus, you'll be able to take a look at images from more cameras set up at many more spots.

The idea is to provide a view of "what's happening on the ground right now," said Sean Richardson with Beholder Technology, the tech company hired by the city to work

FLOOD, 5

Local marinas take statewide awards



The Allen family of Volente — Steve, Jodi, Steven and Taylor as seen in this photo from 2011 — earn top honors for the two, Lake Travis marinas they own and operate with Steve's mom, Janet Caylor.

Dual "Marina of the Year" honors

By LYNETTE HAALAND
Four Points News

Two, family-owned Lake Travis marinas were awarded top, Marina of the Year honors by the Marina Association of Texas, but the accolades have not come without challenges.

The recognition comes after both local businesses have weathered and survived many storms and a historic drought.

"During the five-year drought, which was the worst in Lake Travis history, we had to move the marina docks further into the deeper areas of the lake and out of our protected cove home-base," said Jodi Allen, manager of Lakeway Marina.

"Of course, occupancy went down from the minor shuttling inconveniences, but we never stopped providing great customer service," she said. "And the bond with customers, that saw us striving to keep serving our customers, grew stronger."

Volente resident Janet Caylor and her son,

Steve Allen, purchased Riviera Marina in 1998 and Lakeway Marina later in 2008. Allen manages and oversees operations at Riviera, while his wife, Jodi, manages Lakeway Marina a few mile markers away. Lance Looper, Jodi's brother, also helps manage Riviera.

The Allens have lived near the marinas in Volente for more than 25 years and their children have enjoyed working in the family business. Both of their children, Taylor and Steven, went to Vandegrift and their daughter was part of the first VHS freshman class, and both have now graduated from college. The family has supported local soccer and football teams through the years.

Now these local families are celebrating the top industry recognition for their steadfast work over the years.

Recently Lakeway Marina received the Outstanding Small Marina of the Year award, based on 350 boat slips or less, and Riviera Marina, on the north side of Lake Travis, took the Large Marina of the Year award, having more

than 350 slips.

The competition is open to 150 marinas across the state of Texas and is based on overall appearance, quality of facilities and services including launch facilities, food service, ship's store, gas dock, service and repair area, docks, recreation areas, and special awards for service, promotions, civic affairs, employee recognition, as well as unique community service or educational programs.

"Both of these marinas are an example of what should become the standard for both customer service and cleanliness of the facility," said Bill Gauspohl, chairman for the annual awards.

Having a fully staffed maintenance and service department is no small feat for a marina. From responding to "distress" calls for customers' crafts and rental boats to keeping regular moored boats running year-round, having an onsite repair facility is vital. The marinas also offer protection gear, preventative care, regular winterizing and detail pro-

MARINAS, 4

Dog therapy helps students de-stress at Vandegrift

By JENNIFER WALKER
Vandegrift Voice

After 80 percent of Vandegrift students reported feeling "often or always stressed by schoolwork" on the Stanford Survey of Adolescent Experiences, VHS counselors knew they needed to find a way to combat this complicated issue. The solution? Furry friends. Dogs trained by The Dog Alliance and Hounds for Heroes visited students a few weeks ago during lunch breaks.

"This whole year is basically in response to the survey we did last year and trying to help our students find a little more balance,"

counselor Amy Rodriguez said. "We're also trying to provide tools for (students) to use to just feel like they have a chance to take a breath during the day, and so what better way than to pet a puppy and hug them."

At the end of the grading cycle, students feel overwhelmed when trying to balance their schedules. According to the Stanford Survey, 33 percent of students reported spending 10 or more hours in extra-curricular activities just on weekdays. On top of that, students spend on average about three hours working on homework every night.

"I think the dogs help relieve the stress with

the kids and it just makes everyone smile and feel better throughout the day," senior Karsen Leavell said. "I think it's a great idea."

Students expressed in the Stanford Survey that they felt signs of stress such as sweating, exhaustion, headaches and weight gain. Counselors hoped they could bring relief for students, even if it was just for a lunch period. PTSA also helped make it possible for the dogs to come visit the school.

"The dogs are able to spread a little bit of peace and love," Rodriguez said. "It makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside. And if I

DOGS, 4



Hounds for Heroes dog Lexi rolls over for a belly rub from Vandegrift senior Karsen Leavell.

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Local Girl Scouts sell 25,678 packages of cookies

Like a newly opened box of Thin Mints, another Girl Scout cookie season is gone, just like that. Scout in the Lake Austin Service Unit — the collection of Girl Scout troops based in Steiner Ranch, Grandview Hills, and River Place — pounded the pavement, worked booths, and managed online orders to achieve a grand sales total of 25,678 packages sold over the course of the six weeks from mid January to the end of February.

That is about a 30

percent increase from last year, and includes over 800 packages that will be donated to local Helping Heroes (i.e. first responders) and overseas military personnel. Girl Scouts sell cookies to generate funds for things like camping trips, service projects, troop supplies, badge activities, or other troop projects/goals. Along the way, scouts are also able to hone their skills at goal setting, decision-making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. It's a fun yet multifaceted learning

experience. Alisa McCutcheon's 2nd grade Brownie Troop #2357 were first-time sellers and reportedly "had so much fun and such a great experience with all of the kind customers" at a booth they did in Randalls at Steiner. Brownie, Makenna Fojtik, sold 589 boxes in her rookie year, including more than 40 boxes for Operation Cookie/Helping Hero's. "She was super excited to sell," said Annie Fojtik. "She went door to door to

GIRL SCOUTS, 3



Sierra Mickler and Addisen Werland of Troop 1441 at Wag A Bag booth in Steiner Ranch



Makenna Fojtik of Troop 624 at booth in Randalls Steiner Ranch



Carys Werland of Troop 40702



Georgia Giamona (Troop 40702) and Addisen Werland (Troop 1441) at Randalls booth in Steiner Ranch

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Local Boy Scouts earn Eagle Scout rank

Three members of the local Boy Scout Troop 201 have recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Alex Carter, John Kemper, and Garrett Moore now hold the highest rank attainable by the Boy Scouts of America. Each member must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges while also planning, leading, and managing an extensive service project.

Carter's project involved the design and construction of 'barn owl condos' at the Community First! Village, which operates on a self-sufficient basis with community gardens. The project was designed to help with the rodent problem in a way that would not involve pesticides.

Kemper built wooden play boxes for the Helping Hand Home. The facilities

provide treatment services, therapeutic foster and adoption services, and an onsite school for children who had suffered abuse. The project created more play spaces for the children to use.

For Moore's project he worked with Community First! Village and planted a number of fruit trees and installed an irrigation system around the new pavilion. These trees provide both a source of food for residents in addition to job opportunities.

Boy Scout Troop 201 is chartered by St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church, and its membership consists primarily of youths from the Four Points area. For more information on the Troop and its activities, visit www.troop-201.org.



Assistant Scoutmaster Jim Roberts, Eagle Scout Alex Carter, and Assistant Scoutmaster Brian Smith.



Craig Kemper and his son, Eagle Scout John Kemper.



Assistant Scoutmaster David Peterman, Eagle Scout Garrett Moore, mother Laurie Moore, Troop Committee Chair John Tyler.

Visit by an owl



An owl perched on a porch one recent night in Hudson Bend.

Jo Ann Rogers of Hudson Bend posted on the Nextdoor social media site that she was visited by an owl in late February. The bird had been found resting on the porch about 9 p.m. one night. Roger's nephew, Travis, and his dachshund went to investigate around the front door, leading to the discovery of the small owl. "It did not move as Travis approached it, and he wanted to get some pictures of it so he could research it," Roger said. After some online research Travis believes that it may have been an eastern screech owl.

GIRL SCOUTS, FROM 2

door, even in the freezing temperatures, worked many booths and took orders online. Makenna learned money management skills, entrepreneurship, customer service skills and the importance of giving back."

Addisen Werland and Sierra Mickler, 4th grade Juniors with Troop #1441, said one of their favorite moments was when their last customer at a

booth bought four whole cases (that's 48 packages) of Caramel deLites to stock up for the year, his annual tradition.

Melissa Luppino's 3rd grade Brownie Troop #2287 is looking forward to donating a portion of their cookie sale profits to the Austin-based charity "Water To Thrive" that builds water wells in Africa, which they learned about at a recent troop meeting.

"LASU would like

to express a sincere 'thank you' to the generous Four Points community, neighbors, friends, family and booth hosts for all you've done to support these young ladies," said Jennifer Werland, scout volunteer. "You've snapped up a whole lot of those yummy cookies, made a ton of donations, and helped strengthen the skills and confidence of each scout. We'll see you all again next January for s' more!"



Troop 624 at Valentine's booth in Randalls Steiner Ranch L-R: Liberty Benfield, Makenna Fojtik. It was their 1st booth of the year.



Troop 1463 at Tomlinson's Pet Supply Store L-R: Kenna Olson, Bridget Guy, Kara Stewart, Paige Radloff, Klarissa Marniweck



Troop 2357 booth at Randalls Steiner Ranch left to right: Audrey McCutcheon, Audrey Hunter



Left: Troop 475 Holding posters at Randalls L-R: Caroline Hunter, Laurel Brown



Troop 475 holding cookies L-R: Caroline Hunter, Emma Banse

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Spring Break: Staff, students, families time to recharge, refocus



DAN TROXELL
LISD Superintendent

I do not know about you, but Christmas seems like a long time ago.

The first two months of 2018 have been full of incredible student accomplishments, as well as a great deal of spirited engagement with our families and community. It is a challenging, yet inspiring time in education right now, and I am grateful to work in a district that so clearly values partnerships in growing the next generation of leaders of our state and nation.

Our students continue to learn and excel in so many different ways throughout our 42 schools.

By the end of February, LISD students had

notched signature accomplishments from fine arts (all-state choir and band performances) to athletics (numerous state finalists swimmers and wrestlers), from student government (YMCA Youth Government Conference) to Destination Imagination (16 state-qualifying teams). Every time I visit a campus, I am cheered by the smiling, curious faces I see there, and I know they are in good hands with our incredible faculty and supportive families.

These opportunities give students a chance to shine and for our staff to solidify relationships. Through these bonds, kids know they have someone in their school who cares about them.

As I have written previously in this space, there is no greater concern for any public educator than the safety of our children. I have heard from many families how affected they have been by the tragic events in Parkland, Fla., last month.

Our students, teachers and staff have been similarly impacted. We do not work in isolation, nor do young people learn in a vacuum. This tragedy and its aftermath places even more stress on our students and those charged with their learning. We can always, however, take a lesson in resilience from our children.

Now, more than ever, we need to be ready to strengthen our relationships with students and our partnerships with our families.

During this Spring Break, it is my earnest hope that our teachers, staff and students can recharge and refocus for the stretch run of our school year. Spring Break is always well-timed and much needed, but perhaps especially so this year. I wish each of you a relaxing, peaceful week away from school, and I hope you will join me in renewed excitement when you return for a successful conclusion to a wonderful academic year.

8th Bartlett Blood Drive helps saves lives

The Bartlett Real Estate Group of Keller Williams Realty hosted its 8th annual community blood drive, and this year it was held at its new River Place offices at 6618 Sitio Del Rio.

"We have so many regular blood donors in the Four Points area and knowing that makes it one of the most gratifying community events that I look forward to hosting each year," said Shannon Kramer, Bartlett agent and event coordinator.

As little as three teaspoons can save a baby's life and this year Bartlett event was able to collect



Sherri Smetana enough donations to save over 350 baby's lives.

To be included in the next blood drive, con-

tact Kramer at (512) 658-0720.

DOGS, FROM 1

can give the students warm and fuzzy moments with



Two Austin Dog Alliance dog therapy teams helped create a stress-reducing experience at Vandegrift.

everything that's going on in this world as well as just the craziness of life then I'm

happy to do that." Students hurried over to see the dogs as soon as their lunch period started.

"I was so shocked, but super excited," Leavell said. "My first reaction was to come and pet all of them because I was just so happy they were here."

Hounds for Heroes is a service dog organization by The Dog Alliance that trains dogs to be able to help veterans deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and depression. Their goal is to help veterans find a "normal" again.

"My favorite part about visiting everybody is the joy that the dogs bring everybody," Hounds for Heroes trainer Jerry Coffman said. "The dogs enjoy it too."

Breastfeeding support group has benefits



LINDSEY MOORE
Lactation Consultant

We have all heard the adage "It takes a village to raise a child," and this is perhaps even truer for families who choose to breastfeed their babies. In times past, breastfeeding was an art that was passed down from woman to woman in families; however, many of us do not live near extended family members or were not breastfed as children, making learning this natural, but learned art, difficult. Now, more than ever, families are in need of a strong village to help them meet their infant feeding goals.

The World Health Organization recommends mothers worldwide to exclusively breastfeed infants for their first six months of life and to continue breastfeeding along with nutritious, complementary foods up to the age of 2 years or beyond, if mutually desired, to achieve optimal growth and development.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, takes a similarly strong position, and recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the infant's first six months of life followed by the continuation of breastfeeding in combination with the introduction of complementary foods until at least 1 year of age.

According to the CDC's most recent Breastfeeding Report Card, 81 percent of mothers in the U.S. initiate breastfeed-

ing, 22 percent exclusively breastfeed for six months, and 31 percent breastfeed for at least one year of life.

The far-reaching benefits of breastfeeding for both mom and baby are well-known. Babies who are breastfed have improved resistance to disease and infection early in life, improved brain and nervous system development, decreased risk for the development of diseases such as diabetes and heart disease later in life, and reduced risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Mothers who breastfeed their infants enjoy a reduced risk of osteoporosis, breast and ovarian cancer, and postpartum depression, as well as a quicker return to pre-pregnancy weight and valuable bonding time with their babies. Financially, families who chose to breastfeed their babies have significant cost savings - formula costs for one year can cost over \$1,000.

However, distance from extended family, pressure to return to work, ill-guided advice from loved ones and medical professionals, and general lack of knowledge regarding breastfeeding conspire against modern day breastfeeding relationships.

There are many ways to make sure that a child's village is well-equipped for the journey of breastfeeding. Taking prenatal and breastfeeding classes before baby arrives can help families set feeding goals and can serve as inspiration and founts of knowledge for the months to come. The information gleaned from these classes can also empower families to discuss their feeding

goals with extended family and friends, adding an additional layer of support.

Delivering at a breastfeeding-friendly hospital and having an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) evaluate the breastfeeding latch shortly after delivery can help make sure that the breastfeeding relationship gets off to a solid start.

Choosing a pediatrician that supports and encourages breastfeeding and either works closely with an IBCLC or has one on staff can serve as a significant source of guidance and information.

Finally, attending a breastfeeding support group can help encourage the continuation of nursing during difficult times and can allow seasoned breastfeeding families to encourage and advise families who are just starting on their own nursing journey.

For something that is "natural," breastfeeding is not always easy, especially in the beginning. Having a village of support made up of family, friends, physicians including Obstetricians and Pediatricians, International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, and support groups made up of individuals with similar goals can help breastfeeding families overcome difficulties that may arise and aid in achieving nursing success.

Lindsey Moore, MD is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and oversees the Lactation Center and Lactation Support Group at Cedar Park Pediatric and Family Medicine. The support group meets the third Wednesday of every month. For more information, visit cedarparkdoctors.com.

Nonprofit seeks host families for foreign exchange students

Greenheart Exchange, an international exchange student nonprofit, is searching for families to host high school exchange students for the 2018/2019 school year. They are eager, highly motivated students from over 60 countries whose goal is to learn about American family life and education, and while doing so, to become fluent in English.

Host families are only asked to provide the following:

- A separate bed, which can be in a shared room with a child close in age

and same gender, or their own bedroom and a quiet place to study,

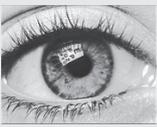
- Three daily meals,
- Local transportation (students are not permitted to drive during the program),
- Treatment as a member of the family, so they have household rules, responsibilities and privileges.

While host families are not compensated, the Internal Revenue Service has authorized families to claim a \$50 per month charitable contribution deduction on their itemized

tax returns.

Students are screened thoroughly before they leave their country and have all documents necessary to enroll into Texas high schools effortlessly. They also have their own accident and health insurance and bring their own spending money.

Students are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities, community service and environmental programs. Contact local coordinator Donna Nielsen for more information at Donnan-nielsen0314@gmail.com.



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MARINAS, FROM 1

grams.

Caylor's and the Allen family's hard work and attention to detail shows.

"Over the years, we have strived to make these marinas the best ones on the lake," said Caylor. "We want to bring happiness to all the families that frequent or visit our businesses. It has been a great challenge as well as a joy to expand the marinas, and make them high-quality operations."

There are also many regulatory rules and laws that marinas have to follow including those with

the Lower Colorado River Authority.

Additionally, the sister marinas are supporters of Central Texas Water Coalition, which helps ensure that the lake levels remain viable to provide drinking water for the surrounding area, and to have sustainable drinking water for the future.

Owning a marina fits Caylor's passion for being near water.

"I have been a water baby since my parents took me to the beach when we lived on Guam," she said. "My son (Steve) learned to swim before he could walk. It was so cute to see that little guy hold his breath and swim like a frog."

Lakeway Marina was the first of its kind on Lake Travis in 1963. For generations, it has been a beloved stop for people visiting the Texas Hill Country, and the recent accolades will ensure it will continue to be a beloved stop for years to come.

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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 case of driving while intoxicated, accidents and vehicle burglaries.

113XX FOUR POINTS DR BURGLARY/VEHICLE	03/06/2018 08:13 AM	32XX UNIVERSITY CLUB FAILURE TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE
03/02/2018 04:45 PM 73XX FM 620 DISTURBANCE	03/07/2018 06:17 AM	117XX HUNTERS GREEN THEFT
03/04/2018 09:17 PM 42XX QUINLAN PARK DWI	03/07/2018 04:06 PM	73XX NAVAJO PASS FRAUD
03/05/2018 03:51 AM 55XX STEINER RANCH COLLISION	03/08/2018 07:01 AM	65XX FM 620 INJURY ACCIDENT
03/05/2018 12:13 PM 103XX FM 2222 BURGLARY/VEHICLE	03/08/2018 09:19 AM	48XX QUINLAN PARK RD IMPOUND VEHICLE
03/05/2018 03:34 PM 73XX FM 620 PUBLIC INTOXICATION	03/08/2018 01:24 PM	60XX N FM 620 INJURY ACCIDENT
03/06/2018 04:19 AM 110XX FOUR POINTS DR ASSAULT W/INJURY		
03/06/2018 07:11 AM 32XX UNIVERSITY CLUB STRIKE ROAD FIXTURE		

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

Live oaks drop leaves in early spring

By KEVIN ONG
Urban Plant Pathologist

Live oaks start looking pretty rough every January and can look even worse in March until their new leaves grow.

Live oaks, also known as evergreen oaks, are beautiful and stately trees in the landscape but they are not true evergreens. They do drop their old leaves as new leaves emerge in the spring. This is normal and not a disease problem.

These trees may appear sickly when temperatures begin to rise a little, typically in late January and in February. Symptoms that are observed typically include yellowing. In many cases, the leaves may have spots or blotches that are brown or black. Quite often, they discolor in a relatively short time. These leaves are

senescing (aka dying off).

The spots may be due to secondary infections by pathogens. Sometimes, these leaves may even have veins that turn brown while interveinal areas remain green. This particular symptom might be confused with a disease called "oak wilt". Although the oak wilt fungus may attack the tree in the late winter and early spring, oak wilt symptoms are most often observed in the summer.

Look closely at the senescing leaves, particularly for new buds that are found at the base of the leaf petiole. This bud may be very small early on, but they become more prominent as the older leaves begin to die. Shortly after the old leaf drops, you should see new tiny leaves from those new buds. If these buds are present, your tree is most likely

experiencing its normal yearly leaf cycle.

If you do not see any buds, check to see if the branches are brittle (snaps when you bend it) and are brown on the inside instead of greenish-white. That branch is most likely dead. In a normal tree, there will usually be some dead branches. However, you may have a problem if you find more than 10 percent of the branches on your tree are dead. In this case, it is recommended that you talk to a certified arborist or contact your local Texas AgriLife Extension Service office for assistance.

Dr. Kevin Ong is an assistant professor and urban plant pathologist for Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System.

FLOOD, FROM 1

Richardson said the cameras should help reduce the need to send first responders out to check on crossings and help people understand the magnitude of the danger floods pose.

One good example of the power of flood images? During a recent storm, Richardson said, a camera took pictures as the water rose to submerge it, then suddenly began taking images of the sky and trees as it was swept away.

"If you show an image you can be like, 'Wow, that water is really rising!'" Richardson said. "It's hard to understand that if you haven't seen it firsthand." Other features of the new website include: different shapes to indicate whether

a crossing's status is closed, open or unknown, to help people who are colorblind, and a new symbol to tell users if a crossing's status has not been updated for several days.

In the future, Richardson hopes to create

a map like ATXfloods.com to cover the entire state of Texas and integrate it with navigation platforms like Waze and Google Maps.

"How powerful would it be if not only did your navigation software tell you, 'Hey, there's con-

gestion,' but it goes, 'Hey, actually, this water crossing is closed?'"

The new site should launch sometime later in March, with some of the new features rolling out in the following months.

SIGNS, FROM 1

put on private property with the owner's permission, the website states. City ordinances apply if the sign site selected is within a city's limits, such as Austin.

However, the city of Austin does not have a specific code or ordinance covering electoral signs, City of Austin Code Supervisor Michael Reeves said.

"We have ordinances that state electoral signs are not allowed to be posted in the right of way or on utility poles, light poles, things like that," he said. "If [the sign] is in the right of way, it's a violation."

Rights of way—areas prohibited from containing signage—include medians, intersection corners, traffic islands as well as areas between the street and the sidewalk; the street and utility poles; the street and the first expansion joint in a driveway, according to Austin City Code.

Residents can place large electoral signs on private property, Reeves said. The city has enforcement rights for signage within its extraterritorial jurisdiction, or ETJ, meaning an area adjacent to its borders such as Steiner Ranch, he said.

Homeowners associations

Local Four Points communities—including River Place, Steiner Ranch and The Parke at Grandview Hills—are governed by homeowners associations. Although these groups may have more restrictive covenants pertaining to signage than the city or county, state property code laws prevent an HOA from prohibiting political signage on its residents' lawns.

"It does matter where you live (when it comes to signage)," DeBeauvoir said. "An HOA can set rules and tell (residents) what they can do with their property while living there."

For instance, a Riv-

er Place Homeowners Association regulation "limits a property owner to displaying only one sign for each candidate or ballot item" and signage cannot be larger than four feet by six feet in size. These signs must also be ground mounted pursuant to the HOA rules.

The HOA covenants governing The Parke at Grandview Hills sections 1-3 specifically allows "signs advocating the support of political candidates or issues erected prior to the election to which they pertain" but does not contain further restrictions on the size of a political sign other than general sign restrictions within the community.

On the residential side, the Steiner Ranch Community Associations follow Texas Property Code ordinances, Architectural and Community Standards coordinator Robin Kasper said.

"We can ask that

residents locate the signs close to the home and if possible in a flower bed so that homes with signs look more uniform," Kasper said.

There are no relevant code restrictions on sign removal, DeBeauvoir said.

"The rule of thumb is (a sign owner) has 10 days to pick up the sign," she said.

"There's been talk about trying to pass a rule about it but it's one of those good conduct, good manners sorts of things."

Reeves said HOAs can enforce their own restrictive covenants pertaining to signage removal but "when it comes to (city of Austin) enforcing, we have to stick strictly to the code itself."

He said there is a practical aspect to removing signs after an election.

"If a complaint comes in about a sign (lingering), I don't believe those signs will stay because the code inspector will remove the signs," Reeves said. "When I was an inspector, I would normally allow 30

days afterwards (to remove the signs) as long as it wasn't a danger. If they didn't, I then went through my district and removed them myself."

He said code enforcement must respond to complaints within five days but the issue of signage is not a high priority.

"The way our response and priorities for (code) violations are prioritized, signs are about the lowest priority that we have, unless they create a traffic or pedestrian hazard," Reeves said. "And that would bump them up to a higher priority to take care of."

Penalties for sign violations can vary, depending on the judge or prosecutor setting the fine amount but fees "could be \$50 on up to \$200 per sign," he said.

"When it gets down to setting the fines and the fees, electoral signs may not be as hard to identify who put them up or who they are tied to," Reeves said. "But a lot of the other signs—'we buy houses' and things like that—the difficulty we have is actually determining who owns the

sign."

Once a sign owner has been notified of a violation, he or she has 14 days to comply or remove the sign from the time the notice is received, he said.

Homeowners associations, by state law, can regulate the amount of time an election sign can be posted within the community.

Political signs in River Place and Steiner Ranch, pursuant to the neighborhoods' regulations, can be erected within 90 days before the election but must be removed within 10 days after the election.

TxDOT, on its website, states that it will remove a sign on a property if it is posing a traffic hazard, with the costs associated with the sign removal to be paid by the sign's owner.

The city of Austin recycles campaign signs for free through Austin Resource Recovery. For more information on this program, see <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/austin-resource-recovery>.

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Leslee@FourPointsNews.com

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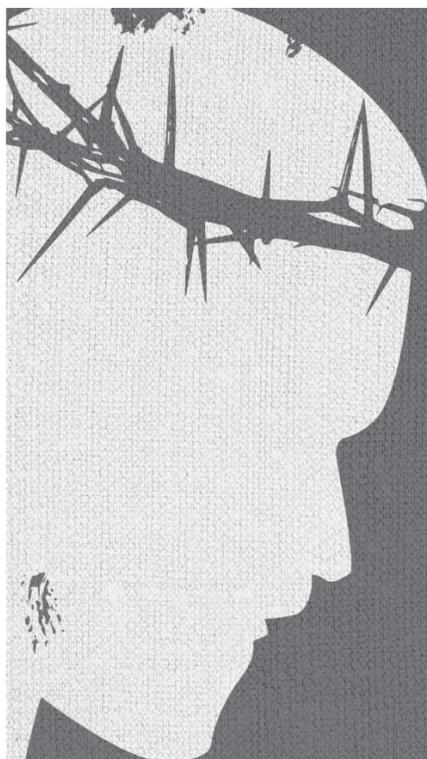
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113 Vipers become Microsoft Office Specialist certified

One hundred and thirteen Vandegrift business information management students made a huge leap toward career readiness at the end of January as they passed the Microsoft Office Word 2016 Core exam and earned a Microsoft Office Specialist certification, said Kari Michalek, VHS business education teacher.

Microsoft certifications are an incredible asset to these students as Microsoft Office is the No. 4 in-demand job skill, according to a 2016 IDC publication.

The 5th period class of Michalek students (pictured) represents some of the newly certified Vipers.



Aaron Gurbuxani
Aiden Wachnin
Alexander Smith
Allena Gallagher
Alyssa Sanfratello
Andrew Mena
Austin Jordan
Ava Anz
Blaine Sparks
Brandon Haley
Brock Latuff
Caterine Munoz Montero
Celine Maniwang
Chloe Barborak
Christian Haney
Christopher Hehman
Colby Phillips
Cole Walther
Connor Verna

Conor Hoff
Cooper Harris
Daniel Avitia
Daniel Sacasa
Dylan Essad
Dylan Johnson
Dylan Maraist
Dylan Morrissey
Eesha Patel
Elena Aventa
Emma Marshall
Eoin McDaid
Ethan Gross
Ethan Muirhead
Ethan Wade
Ezra Garces
Gabriella Cusano
Genevieve Betancourt
Grant Shaffer

Grayson Peck
Ignacio Baralt
Iris Perez
Israel Ramirez
Jack Doczy
Jack Uhl
Jack Wehman
Jacob Kintzle
Jake Decker
Jakob Newton
Jared Faulkner
Jed Wills
JJ Parker
John Conlon
Jonathon Munoz
Jordan Jee
Jorja Smitherman
Joshua Sharp
Judith Roberts

Julia Jones
Justin Lang
Kailey Chase
Kayalin Bell
Kayla Clark
Kaylee Marquez*
Kevin Murphy
Kianna Nelder
Kyana Calvo
Kyle Wood
Logan Schmidt
Louis Schoonmaker
Lukas Jasinski
Luke Schmidt
Madeline Ward
Madison Mccauley
Maria Gleason
Marissa Gilbert
Mason Tyler

Matthew Garvey
Max Child
Mick Smith
Natalie Ohlsen
Natalia Richtermeyer
Neil Rathod*
Nidhi Vedire
Nolan Stahl
Omar Azad
Parker Fannin
Peyton Chandler
Riley Zito
Robey Gressett
Ross Cooley
Ryan Brown
Ryan Harris
Sabrina Muir
Sage Farmer
Sam Leonard

Samuel Abitzen
Seena Sadat Gousheh
Shaan Patel
Shaylee Covill
Sierra Yoder
Sonya Mccann
Sophia Choat*
Spencer Bassett
Spencer Cain
Spencer Stearns
Suzanna Dees
Svenja Markley
Thomas Choplin
Thomas Marks
Will Jimmerson
Xander Starzmann
Zachary Keck
Zachary Skelton

VHS softball gets new coach

By MICHELLE LAMB
Contributor

This is the inaugural year for Travis Hejl to coach the Vandegrift Lady Vipers softball team. Hejl is a graduate from Cedar Park High School and Texas State University.

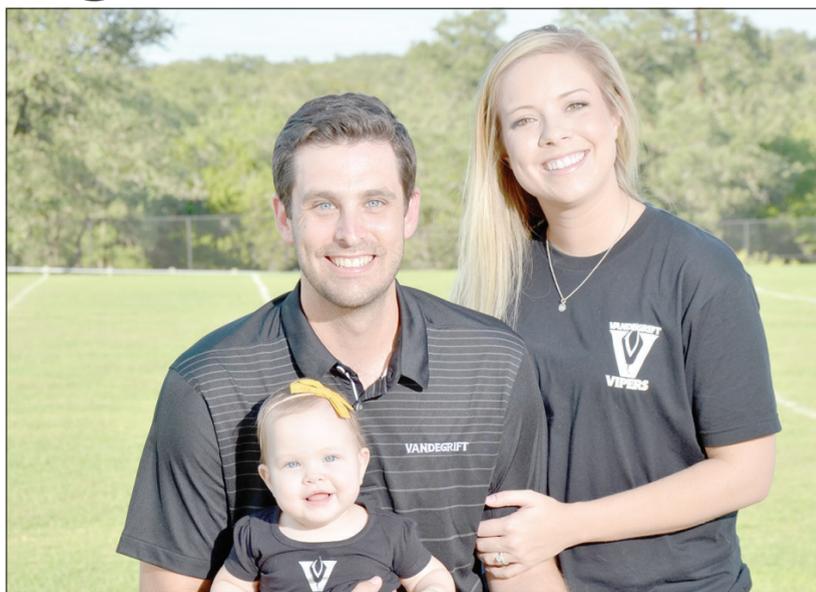
In school he ran track, played football and baseball. Hejl was asked to coach softball when he first started at Fredericksburg High School four years ago and says he instantly fell in love with the sport. He successfully coached softball there until becoming a Viper. At Vandegrift, he stays busy as the head softball coach, assistant football coach and teaching US history. When he isn't on cam-

pus he values the time spent with his family.

Hejl always aspired to be a teacher and coach. His mother worked for Leander ISD for over 20 years, recently retiring as a principal and his father was his coach.

Hejl's approach to coaching is to create a positive culture where the athletes are encouraged to push themselves to not just being better athletes, but better people. His goal for this season is to make it to playoffs.

The first home game was March 6 vs Lehman. For a complete listing of all games for the Lady Viper softball season please visit VHSsoftballBooster.com.



New Vandegrift softball coach Travis Hejl with his wife, Taylor, and daughter, Maddie (now 18 months). Their second daughter was set to arrive March 13.

All-district basketball

Vandegrift and Leander each had six athletes named on the girls' basketball All-District lists. Cedar Park, Rouse and Vista Ridge led the way for Leander ISD schools with seven students honored on the first, second and honorable mention lists.

LISD girls All-District:

DISTRICT 19-5A

First Team
Alex Maresca, Cedar Park, Jr.
Ashley Thompson, Rouse, Sr.
Brittney Martin, Rouse, Sr.
Taylor Douthitt, Rouse, Sr.
Second Team
Chloe Austin, Rouse, Jr.

Pujita Shukla, Cedar Park, Jr.
Zaiah Jackson, Rouse, Sr.
Honorable Mention
Annie Callahan, Cedar Park, Sr.
Callie Copeland, Cedar Park, Jr.
Emily Schaible, Rouse, Sr.
Kilee West, Cedar Park, Sr.

DISTRICT 25-6A

First Team
Victoria Baker, Vista Ridge, So.
Bee Gonzales, Vandegrift, Sr.
A.J. Marotte, Vista Ridge, Fr.
Jen Moore, Vandegrift, Jr.
Mikaela Noe, Leander, Sr.
Kassadie Sanders, Leander, Sr.

Second Team

Ella Drablos, Vandegrift, Jr.
Autumn Howell, Vandegrift, Jr.
Zion Neat, Vista Ridge, So.
Kaya Pehrson, Vandegrift, Fr.
Julie Shalkowski, Vista Ridge, Sr.
Peighton Smith, Leander, So.
Briyaun Stewart, Vista Ridge, Jr.
Honorable Mention
Alice Pienda, Leander, Sr.
Grace Dickson, Leander, Jr.
Morgan Worthy, Leander, Sr.
Jane Stevens, Vandegrift, Sr.
Ansley Herrin, Vista Ridge, Jr.
Jazz Williams, Vista Ridge, Fr.

Viper Soccer



The Vandegrift boys soccer season is winding down. This photo shows the Feb. 13 home game versus Lake Travis where the Vipers lost 2-0. The team celebrated senior night last week, March 6, and played its final district game against Lake Travis on Friday. Photo by Jill Collins

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Future Health Professionals compete at area

Biomedical debate team places 2nd

By ELENA AVENTA, JENNIFER WALKER, MEGAN MESSER
Vandegrift Voice

Vandegrift participated in a new competition this month as students in the Future Health Professionals group, or HOSA, took part in the Texas Area HOSA Competition at Georgetown High School on March 2. In addition to the 17 Vipers who competed, a number of students took medical career-related tests.

Formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America, the group is a national career and technical student organization.

"It was pretty cool that we had teams that did that well," HOSA sponsor Karen Pearce said. "And of those teams, these were all

their first-time competing. Next year we'll really know what we're doing and we can prepare better."

Students competed in the biomedical debate, creative problem solving, public service announcement, medical art poster, health career poster, clinical specialty and medical innovation contests.

The biomedical debate team placed 2nd and advances to state. Several other students placed well enough to be alternates to go to state.

"We're a different kind of HOSA club compared to some of the others," Pearce said. "It was started when our school had a nursing program, but we don't have that anymore. Usually the schools that compete have a health skills class but we don't have that."

HOSA teams started practicing for this competition in November. Each event is unique, so teams

have to prepare for their competition in different ways.

"This was all student-led," Pearce said. "The big focus this year was the National Alliance of Mental Health Issues."

Sophomore Khanh Le and her group competed in the creative problem solving event where students are given an issue and then have 30 minutes to prep for a presentation, describing possible solutions to that issue. After prepping, students give an eight-minute presentation to a panel of judges.

"We studied off of a Quizlet... We also watched videos of other people presenting from past years, to



Seventeen Vandegrift Future Health Professionals, or HOSA students, competed in Georgetown on March 2.

plan out what we should do," Le said.

Le's group had to come up with a solution to combat increasing inactivity in teenagers.

"I'm a problem solver myself and I really like stimulating problems where I'm presented with something I didn't know

about before," Le said. "It kind of has a surprise element to it. I really like that."

Le also enjoys working together as a team.

HOSA officer Caroline Risner, a VHS senior, and her group competed in the PSA event with their video about "Prediabetes". The group had to research

risk factors and prevention for type two diabetes and then present their 30-second video to a panel of judges.

"We ended up not advancing to the next round, but honestly my friends and I just do it for the experience," Risner said.

Girls golf takes 3rd, 9th at Viper Classic

The Lady Viper team competed at Viper Classic March 2-3 at Falconhead/Flintrock and won 3rd and 9th place this year. The two teams, Vandegrift Silver and Vandegrift Black, played at two different golf courses and ended with rounds of 347-363 and 313-312. The Silver team will go on to play at the Burnet Invitational in March 19 at Delaware Springs and the Black team will next play at the Tournament of Champions, the regional preview, on March 29 at the Republic.

- Viper Classic**
 Jensen Jalufka 78-73
 Sarah Lucido 87-82
 Hailey Derrickson 77-78
 Sarah Beamer 84-88
 Kaylee Vesely 78-80
 Halle Huang 86-97
 Kesley Fuess 80-81
 Scout Shaw 90-96
 Abby Zoller 89-91



Boys golf 4th at Leander Invite

The Vandegrift Vipers JV boys golf team competed in the Leander Invitational at Crystal Falls Golf Club on March 6 - 7. Out of 22 competing schools, the Vipers won 4th place, with Myles Lesh leading the team with a score of 81. This is the last tournament for the JV team this season.

VHS boys varsity golf participated in the March 9 Mustang Invitational and will be part of the Tournament of Champions March 23-24 at the Republic.

- JV Leander Invitational**
 Myles Lesh 81
 Zach Fashenpour 83
 Eoin Mcdaid 84
 Travis Rider 88
 Colby Phillips 91



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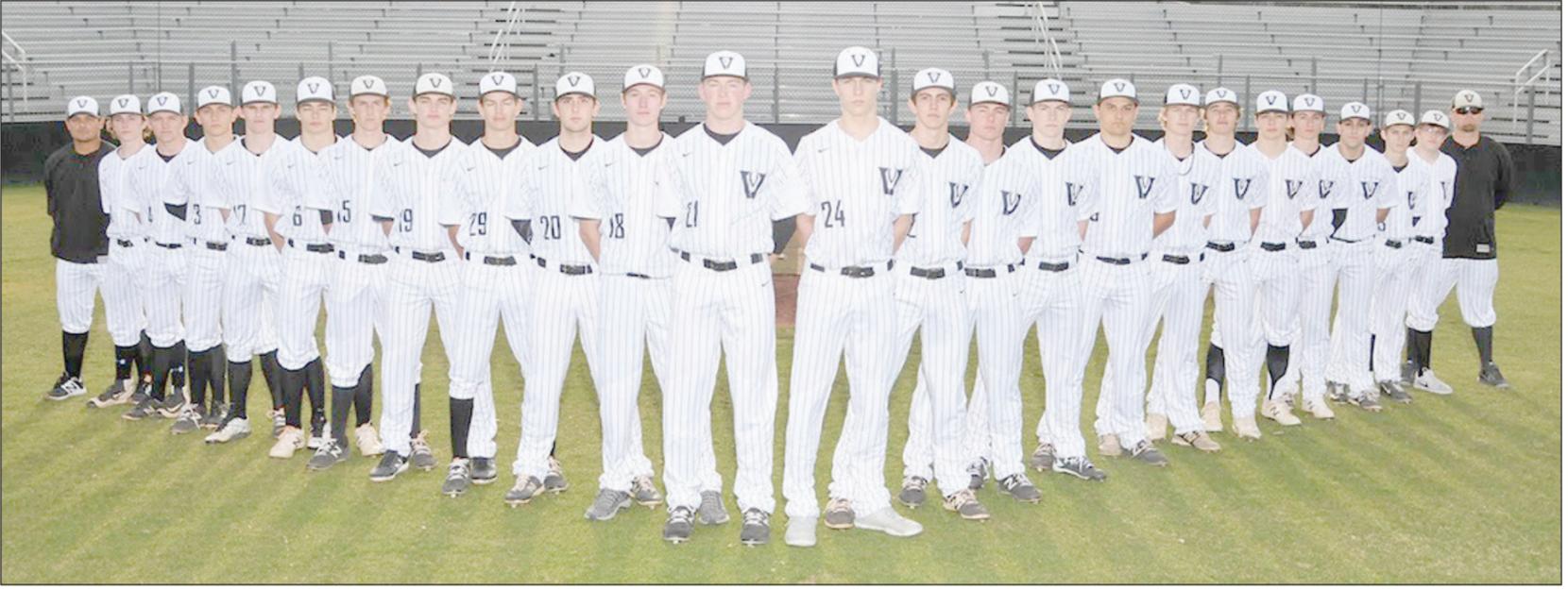
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VHS baseball rebuilds this season



By ZACH SMITH
Hill Country News

Fresh off the first playoff appearance in school history, the Vandegrift baseball team wants to make it two years in a row.

Seventeen seniors from the record-setting team are gone and this year they're figuring out what combination works best. "We're still trying to find the right

pieces and put them where to go," Vandegrift coach Allen McGee said. "We've got some good ball players, we've just got gel as a team and that's our job as coaches."

Vandegrift won one game at the Leander ISD tournament on March 3, dominating Marble Falls 15-1 behind five RBIs from Drew Nelson. Early in the season, the Vipers beat McNeil 4-3. The team also had major wins vs. LBJ, Hutto and Manor so far. The Vipers hosted Westlake on Fri-

day at Venom Field and continue the series vs the Chaparrals through March 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Westlake. Then spring break action continues against the Lehman Logos March 14-15 and 20. (Go to vhsbaseball.com for the complete schedule and results.)

McGee said the Vipers lost seven starters and the first two guys off the bench that they would normally go to. Justin Moore is the only returning player that was named to the All-District list last season,

earning first-team honors as a third baseman. He was also a key figure for the Vipers' basketball and football teams this year.

"This team has bought into us being aggressive on the bases," McGee said. "We've done better on the bases than we were last year, we've just got to capitalize when we get runners in scoring position and we've got to bring them home."

Roster

- 1 CHAD HERRERA
- 2 LUKE ALLEN
- 3 DREW NELSON
- 4 ZACH SAGEBIEL
- 5 CADEN EDWARDS
- 6 TREY MONGAUZY
- 7 CONNOR LOGEMAN
- 8 PEYTON KLAM
- 9 CHRIS LUCIDO
- 10 MATTHEW KLASSEN
- 11 TYLER MONGAUZY
- 12 KYLE MAYSONAVE
- 13 CLAY COFFMAN
- 15 ROBERT BRACKENRIDGE
- 17 JOEY HATCH
- 18 ETHAN GROSS
- 19 JAKE MILLER
- 20 CONNOR KORIOTH
- 21 COLE NAUERT
- 22 ALEX MAATZ
- 24 JUSTIN MOORE
- 25 COLEMAN GAMBLE
- 29 JOSH UPP
- 31 GARRETT MOORE



Vandegrift varsity baseball played several preseason games in February.



Viper JV tennis wins varsity tournament

The Vandegrift JV tennis team competed in San Antonio in a varsity tournament, the Cecil Vasquez Invitational, on March 2.

Daniel White, VHS head tennis coach, felt that the JV team was up to the challenge of playing in this varsity tournament. His confidence in the team was well placed, and the JV team competed so well, the team actually won the tournament.

The JV team is looking forward to more success and fun on the courts with the Westwood Tournament later this month, followed by the District Tournament at Lehman High School on April 9. **Cecil Vasquez Invitational results**

- Boy's doubles 1st place: Jake Wadsley/Mason Rumaner
- Boy's singles semi-finals: Matthew Mills, Jayden Ung
- Girl's doubles 1st place: Cat Johnson/Sarah Lum
- 2nd place: Kat Troyer/Noel Atwood
- Girl's singles 2nd place: Aoi Nishimura
- Semi-finals: Sarah Schaal



L-R: Cat Johnson, Sarah Lum, Kat Troyer, Noel Atwood

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