

OCTOBER 9, 2020

THE AUSTIN

VOL. 40 • NO. 6

FREE  
BUT NOT CHEAP

# CHAMPAGNE

turn me loose, baby

P. 54

# STONE FREE

Former football star  
**JOE BARKSDALE**  
tackles music in Austin  
BY DEREK UDENSI

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ELECTION  
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Founded in 1981 and committed to a progressive point of view, *The Austin Chronicle* is an independent, locally owned and operated alternative newsweekly.

**ONLINE THIS WEEK**

**PERFORMERS FIND UNEXPECTED** side effect of the pandemic: attentive audiences. Kevin Curtin looks at the few live shows that are taking place and the impressively appreciative audiences that go to them. As Ben Ballinger put it: "The word 'reverence' comes to mind. I think we're all a little bit more reverent. Then again, I'm playing for my life right now, so who knows if I'm just playing better shows."



JOHN ANDERSON

**RUDE MECHS BRING** a Karaoke Christmas Carol into your home, and you're the star. It might be a little early, but if you've got a hankering for the season, download the app, open up the play, and choose your role. You'll be Scrooging it up in no time.

**WE CONTINUE TO** check in with local musicians to see how they're weathering the pandemic. This week features Future Museums producer Neil Lord, Holodeck Records CEO Adam Jones, and more on the way. See the entire back catalog of check-ins at [austinchronicle.com/checking-in](http://austinchronicle.com/checking-in).



Neil Lord and family

PHOTO BY OLIVIA VALE

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# **STOP THE MONEY TRAIN TO UNAFFORDABILITY**

**\$7 BILLION IS TOO MUCH FOR SOMETHING THAT DOES TOO LITTLE**

**THEY ARE TELLING YOU A FAIRY TALE:**

## **WHY SHOULD WE TRUST CAPMETRO TO MANAGE A MONUMENTALLY COMPLICATED AND EXPENSIVE PROJECT?**

They said the Leander-Convention Center line would cost \$60 million, but former Senator Kirk Watson said it wound up costing \$140 million, 133% more than was promised voters. They're asking you to vote on a marketing idea, just colored lines on a map, yet no significant engineering or environmental studies have been conducted. Plus, their plan includes a rail line in a tunnel under Congress Avenue, which they say will be very expensive, but they won't say how expensive **because they don't have a clue.**

**This suggests that Project Connect could wind up NOT costing \$7 billion but \$16 billion OR MORE.**

## **CAPMETRO HAS A DISMAL RECORD OF MANAGING MONEY AND CARING ABOUT SAFETY.**

A Texas State Legislature investigative staff reported that CapMetro mismanaged \$200 million in a reserve fund. They had to delay the opening of the Leander-Convention Center line for two years when federal safety regulators found an improper signal system, unsafe bridges, and other safety problems—all of which added \$30 million to the final cost of the line.

San Antonio's transit agency, VIA, moves 20% more riders than CapMetro in a service area that's twice as big, yet CapMetro spends 42% more per ride.

**From *The Washington Post* (August 10) on the D.C. rail system:  
'Officials use terms like 'catastrophic' and 'Armageddon' to describe the system's money woes.'**

## **CAPMETRO PROMISED VOTERS THAT A PORTION OF THE LEANDER-CONVENTION CENTER LINE'S COST WOULD BE PAID FOR BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THIS DID NOT HAPPEN.**

Now, CapMetro is making the exact same promise to voters for Project Connect. **This is a myth!** And if they don't get those federal dollars, they will still collect the taxes and do as much as they can—with no concrete completion plan.

## **WHO WILL RIDE THE MONEY TRAIN?**

The rail cars will be like all the empty buses we see every day. It will **NOT** increase the number of riders of public transportation. Too few people live close to the lines. An increasing number of people will be working remotely, and this kind of transport just won't be necessary. Downtown offices will no longer be a destination for as many workers as CapMetro is putting into its ridership estimates. **And don't forget our weather:** Would you walk a mile in Texas heat and cold and rain to a rail stop?

**PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns against being on crowded rail cars, such as the subways in New York City, which are seen as a principal cause of it being the epicenter of the global coronavirus pandemic. *The Washington Post*: "...They stand on station platforms and at bus stops, nervously waiting for rides in confined spaces with strangers—prime conditions for spreading the virus. They board thinking the virus could be lurking anywhere—on subway poles, bus seats or floating in the air around them from another passenger's uncovered cough or sneeze."**

Political ad paid for by Our Mobility Our Future PAC.

# VOTE NO FOR PROJECT CONNECT

IF PROPOSITION A WITH PROJECT CONNECT PASSES...

## A 25% PROPERTY TAX INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS MONEY TRAIN

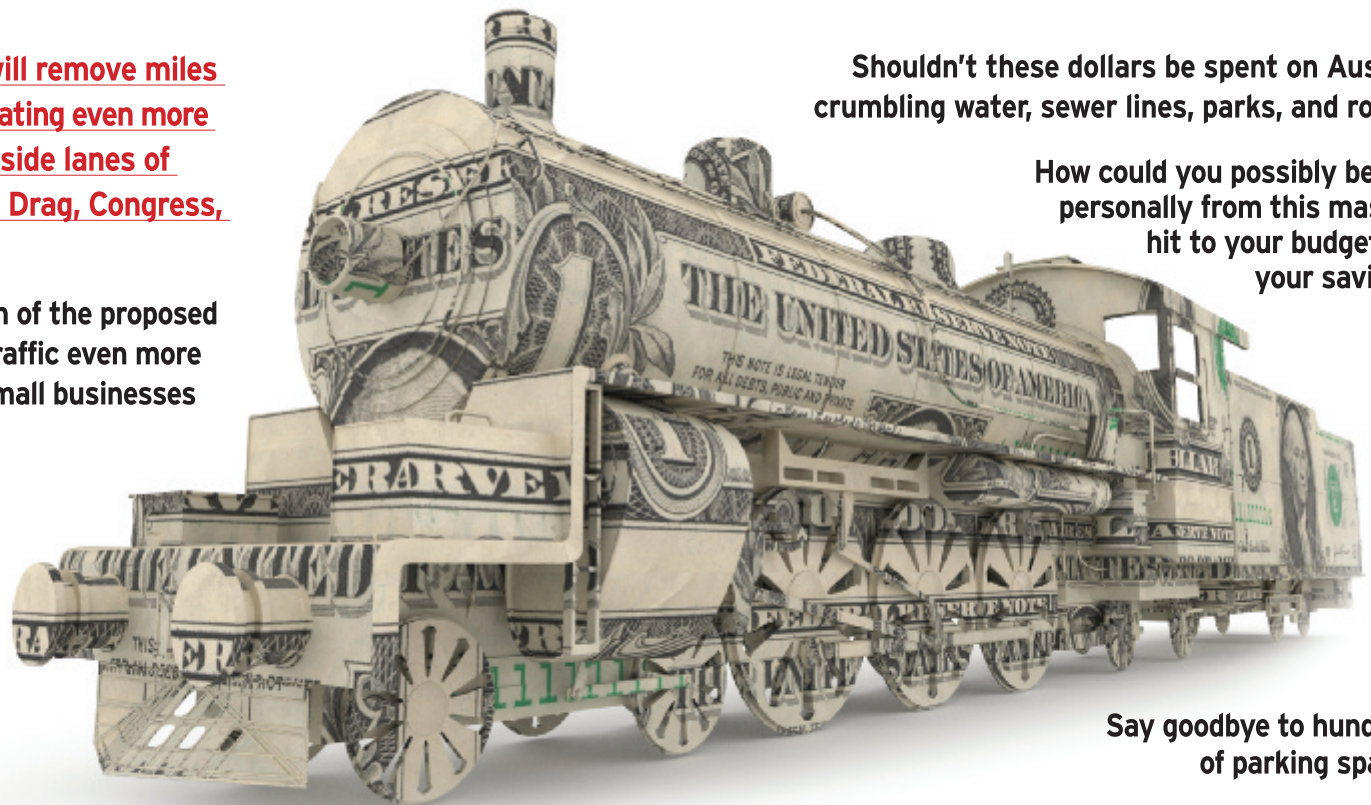
The \$460 million "Active Transportation" bond that's also on this ballot would cost even more. And taxes will yet again increase as property values inevitably rise. Landlords will raise rents to cover higher property taxes. This is all from the same mayor and council members who are "defunding" and "re-imagining" \$150 million of the APD budget, with a huge reduction in the number of officers on the streets. The mayor and council members obviously don't care about affordability or public safety.

Project Connect's rail lines will remove miles and miles of traffic lanes, creating even more congestion... Such as the outside lanes of North and South Lamar, The Drag, Congress, and South Congress.

The decades-long construction of the proposed rail lines would make Austin traffic even more of a nightmare and result in small businesses closing along the rail routes.

"This election will tell us how much BS Austin voters will believe and how much taxes they will pay to get it."

Retired Travis County Judge  
Bill Aleshire



Shouldn't these dollars be spent on Austin's crumbling water, sewer lines, parks, and roads?

How could you possibly benefit personally from this massive hit to your budget and your savings?

Say goodbye to hundreds of parking spaces.

Listening to developers and lobbyists, city staff, and small activist groups has put the mayor and council so out of touch with reality. They don't understand why it's wrong to raise property taxes by 25% in the middle of a pandemic when so many people are out of work, behind on their mortgage and rent payments, and struggling to meet their necessities. The mayor, a multi-millionaire, got elected promising affordability. Instead, he wants to slam the 65+, the disabled, the retired, and those living paycheck to paycheck with a 25% tax increase.

Political ad paid for by Our Mobility Our Future PAC.

# Feedback

## LETTERS & COMMENTS

### VOICE OF AUSTIN

Chronicle Editorial Staff,

This letter comes at the request of Mike Clark-Madison in his denial of our request for a correction to your article dated for September 25th on Project Connect that mentions Voices of Austin as well as Peck Young, Senator Gonzalo Barrientos, and Ora Houston.

In your article you allude that Voices of Austin is funded by "the Koch network." Voices of Austin is 100% locally funded by Austinites. The members of Voices of Austin are aware of who Koch Industries is, what it stands for, and their activity in transit campaigns, and Voices of Austin would never take a dime from them. Voices of Austin is comprised of Austinites fighting for Austin.

Additionally, please note that Voices of Austin is a nonpartisan organization. Our interest is not to represent one political agenda, it is to amplify the voices of Austinites, most of whom feel ignored by City Hall. You may reference the results of our most recent and scientifically conducted poll of Austinites on the issues here.

When speaking with Peck Young regarding your misrepresentation of Voices of Austin he feels that "frankly, this seems like nothing more than a cheap and dishonest attack by a desperate campaign that wants to tax people during a pandemic." It feels particularly desperate when one notices that your advertising funding has come from

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** must be signed with full name and include daytime phone number, full address, or email address. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Letters may not be edited, added to, or changed by sender once we receive them.

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PO Box 4189, Austin, TX 78765

some of the very engineering firms that are set to profit from building Project Connect.

To reiterate, Voices of Austin has never had any dealings with Koch Industries. Please add a correction to your article immediately.

Should you require any additional information or seek an informative and truthful interview regarding our organization please reach out to our press secretary directly.

Best,  
Voices of Austin Staff

**Editor-in-Chief Kimberley Jones responds:** *The passage in question reads: "There could yet be more actors entering the fray. In particular, transit supporters anticipate the involvement of the Koch network, which has spent heavily to oppose transit initiatives in cities across the country." The article does not state Voices of America is funded by the Koch network, therefore there is nothing to correct. Further, I strongly dispute the suggestion that advertisers have influenced the Chronicle's editorial coverage. Our advertising and editorial departments function independently, and the News staff knows who's bought an ad the same time our readers do -- when they open up the paper on Thursday morning.*

## OPINION VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

### WHY TEXAS IS GROUND ZERO FOR CHANGE

From the northern High Plains to the valleys in the Deep South and the 171 some-odd million acres in between, the Lone Star State possesses unmatched potential for progress and leadership. The vast area of Texas alone, which embodies the ability to lead the nation in climate justice and economic prosperity, coupled with the untapped voting power, presents more opportunities than challenges, so long as Texas is willing to modernize. To reclaim our place as a leader of the nation on multiple counts, Texas must be willing to spearhead the charge for true democracy and environmental justice.

The high volume of untapped voter potential in the state of Texas is enough to redefine America's core values to meet the true demands of its citizens. In 2018, we saw an almost 500% increase in voter turnout among young voters, and a 250% increase in voter turnout among the Texas Latino population during early voting. The rise in Latino voter turnout in the 2018 election is merely a foreshadowing of voter registration progress to come.

To further advance voter turnout among young voters and Latino voters, Texas must embrace the digital frontier alongside the majority of U.S. state governments by actively opposing voting suppression and enacting online voter registration. Elections that disenfranchise voting populations are, at their core, anti-democratic. The onus is on the state government to serve its constituents by investing in their power, potential, and providing them with the opportunity to voice their opinions.

As the fastest-growing population in the U.S., Latinos have raised an empowered collective of young, female political activists. Jolt Initiative's recent analysis, "We Are Texas," found that Latina women ages 18 to 24 not only outpaced their Latino male counterparts by nearly 24% in voter participation but are also the only age group to outpace their non-Latina female counterparts in voter turnout.

One in three Texans are either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants. Fully

aware their home state has become synonymous with family separation and detention centers, it's no wonder that Latino voters in Texas are motivated by immigration reform and health care for all. Modernization of Texas' political landscape calls for a humane immigration system, including accountability for lives lost in the hands of border patrol. Texas' racist legacy stands in the way of true progress, and in order to flourish as a state, we must be intentional about detaching Texas from the grips of its racist past.

Despite the challenges faced by Texas' political landscape, the Lone Star State is chock-full of change-making potential. In the next 10 years, America is destined to follow in the diverse footsteps of Houston, and our policies should follow suit. By investing in our diverse constituency, the state of Texas will reap overdue systematic changes.

On top of the valuable asset of diversity enjoyed by Texas, the state also harbors economic power and environmental potential en masse. Home to the second largest economy in the country and the 10th largest independent economy in the world, Texas is an enormous economic powerhouse. This level of economic security provides the state with the capacity to lead on a number of different fronts, one of

which is climate justice. As a state, we must rise to the occasion of tapping the potential of our wind and solar power capabilities. With a healthy investment of resources and a pledge to detach from toxic relationships with leading contributors to our current climate problems, Texas can house a grid of wind and solar energy to power the entire country.

Progressive momentum in Texas must be met with an unprecedented investment in modernizing established practices. We must match the innovative pace nationwide, as well as pave the way to a stronger, inclusive America. Progress is not defined by an "us against them" mentality. Instead, progress asks that each citizen look to themselves to build and uphold the standards of the Lone Star State. ■

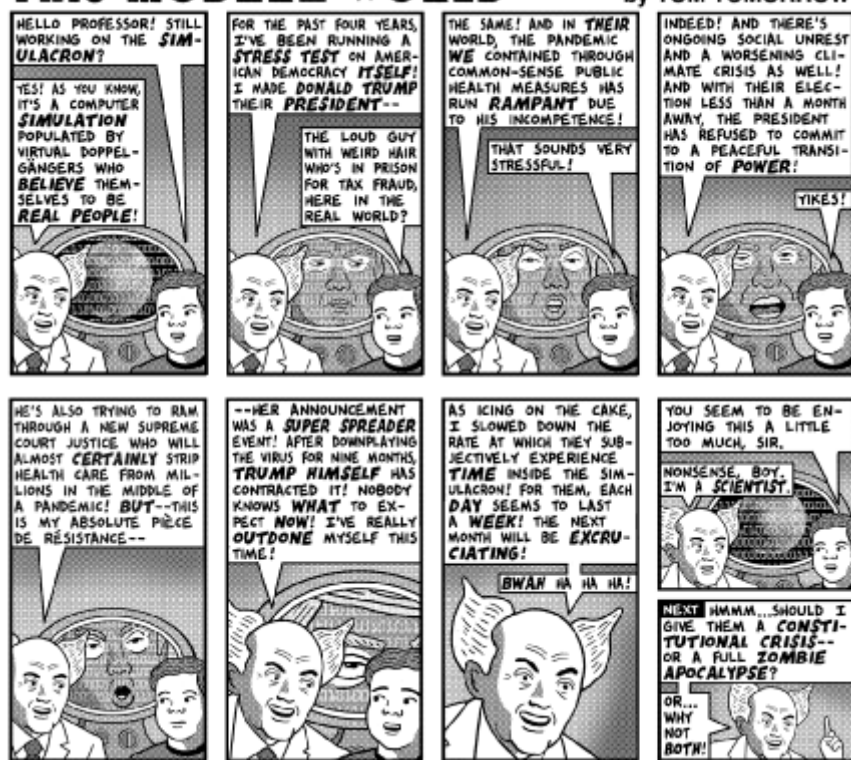
BY ANTONIO  
ARELLANO

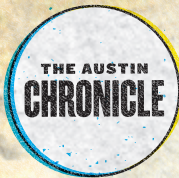
### Elections that disenfranchise voting populations are, at their core, anti-democratic.

Antonio Arellano is interim executive director of Jolt, a progressive civic engagement organization focused on building the political power and influence of young Latinos in Texas. He is a human rights advocate and is passionate about creating systemic change and is innovating civic engagement for a new generation. The Chronicle welcomes submissions of opinion pieces on any topic from the community. Find guidelines and tips at [austinchronicle.com/contact/opinion](http://austinchronicle.com/contact/opinion).

### THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW





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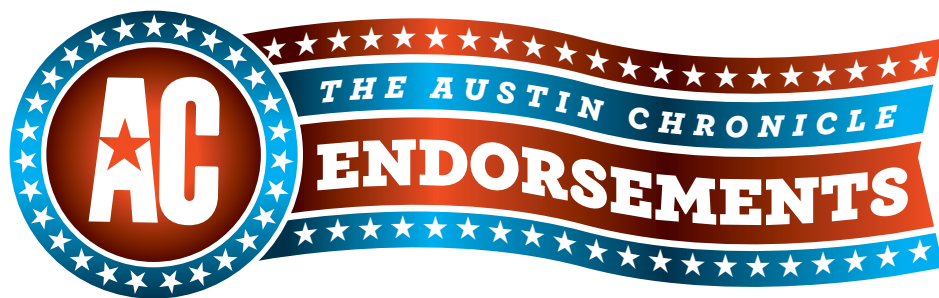
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## November General Election

Visit [austinchronicle.com/elections](http://austinchronicle.com/elections) for more information on the contests and on how – and when – you need to voice your choice, as well as a streamlined version of these endorsements.

## PARTISAN RACES

### The Democrats

Surprise! No, seriously, this needs to happen. If the court decision reviving straight-ticket voting (as of this writing stayed at the appellate level) becomes unstayed by the time you vote, you can save some time. But you need to do it.

In other election cycles, we've allowed that some GOP incumbents weren't that bad, or Democratic candidates weren't all that great, and been less adamant about the imperative to vote blue, no matter who. There aren't such choices on your ballot this year, and now is not the time for contemplating a pragmatic bipartisanship, let alone abstaining

from the vote, when our house is on fire. The decadent and depraved Republican regime, in D.C. and at our own Capitol, is actively destroying lives and communities and fortunes and futures for no good reason, and elevating juvenile posturing and bullshit; nothing it does can or should be used as a model for how we should govern ourselves.

With the stakes growing more existential with every passing WTF day, it's not going to get any better. Now is the time to call an end to this tragic travesty; no, Democratic power does not guarantee an end to the poverty and inequity and mistreatment and suffering and violence and death, but it's the only place to start.

## CITY COUNCIL

### District 2: David Chincanchan

Soon after Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza announced last November that she was stepping down from Council, David Chincanchan and Vanessa Fuentes began their campaigns; they remain the leaders in the four-way race to represent Southeast Austin's D2. They share many of Garza's progressive priorities, and both are focused on similar policy goals to address D2's most pressing issues: food insecurity, flooding, transportation infrastructure, displacement. But Chincanchan's extensive experience at City Hall, in local politics, and in the Southeast Austin neighborhoods where he was born and raised gives him a clear edge. A former aide to both U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett and D3 Council Member Pio Renteria, Chincanchan's institutional knowledge offers him a head start as he navigates the city's most vexing concerns and City Hall's most bureaucratic procedures.

### District 4: Greg Casar

Incumbent Greg Casar seeks a third term representing Northeast Austin, and as in his 2016 Council reelection, he enjoys a groundswell of well-earned support from across the community. He has led the fight on many of Austin's highest-profile issues since 2014 – mandatory paid sick leave, lifting Austin's camping ban, and "reimagining public safety."

### District 6: Jimmy Flannigan

Incumbent Flannigan is the clear choice for voters in Northwest Austin. Representing the purplest and most suburban Council district, Flannigan has shown his commitment to progressive principles by leading on issues like criminal justice reform. He's taken hard votes that he thinks reflect the views of many in his misunderstood district; those votes, to some degree, inspired all three of his challengers to run against him.

### District 7: Leslie Pool

We offer our endorsement to the incumbent for another term serving this Central and North Austin district. She's been most identified with her positions on land use, as one of the four members who has opposed proposed revisions to the Land Development Code and supported the right of homeowners to protest rezonings under the new LDC. But she's also been a solid council voice on issues that go hand-in-hand with LDC revision as tools for creating a more equitable and resilient city – environmental and resource management, public safety, and transportation.

### District 10: Alison Alter, Pooja Sethi (dual endorsement)

D10 in Central and West Austin includes a number of different communities of interest and has drawn the most contenders (seven) of the Council races on this year's ballot. Voters have two strong and distinct choices in the incumbent Alison Alter and Pooja Sethi.

CONTINUED ON P.10

## VOTING BY MAIL - ANSWERS TO YOUR VBM QUESTIONS

### Applying for a Ballot

**Q: What's the deadline for applying for a ballot? If I've applied for a ballot, when can I expect to receive it?**

A: For the November election, the last day to request a ballot by mail is Fri., Oct 23 (received at the clerk's office, not postmarked).

**Q: I've filled out my ballot application. How/where do I send it?**

A: You may submit your application by mail, email, or fax, but if you submit it by fax or email, it must also be sent by mail and received in the county clerk's office within four business days of your electronic submission.

Email: [ebbm@traviscountytx.gov](mailto:ebbm@traviscountytx.gov).

Fax: 512/854-3969.

Mail: Dana DeBeauvoir

Travis County Clerk – Elections Division

PO Box 149325

Austin, TX 78714-9325

**Q: How do I check the status of my ballot application?**

A: Visit [www.votetravis.com](http://www.votetravis.com), scroll to the bottom of the page, and choose the "BBM Status" button.

### Submitting Your Ballot

**Q: I've received my ballot and I've filled it out. What's the deadline for turning it in?**

A: The ballot must be postmarked by Nov. 3 and received by Nov. 4. Mail to the address above, or hand-deliver to the Travis Co. Clerk's Office, 5501 Airport Blvd., through Election Day, Nov. 3. (Last week, the governor issued a proclamation requiring Texas counties to limit ballot delivery sites to one location, forcing the closure of all but one ballot drop-off site in Travis County, a move that was interpreted by many as a voter suppression tactic and is now being challenged in courts. See p.18 for the story.)

**Q: If I apply for a ballot, can I still vote in person if I so decide? If so, what steps do I need to take?**

A: Yes. If you already received a ballot, you may bring it to an early voting polling location to surrender it to an early voting clerk. You'll sign a form requesting cancellation of the ballot by mail and then vote normally at the polls. If you don't bring the mail ballot, you'll have to sign an affidavit saying you didn't mark and mail in the ballot; you'll then vote provisionally.

**Q: How do I vote if I don't receive my ballot in time?**

A: You'll need to go to a polling location and fill out an affidavit (see above).

## November 2020 Election - EARLY VOTING OCTOBER 13-30

**TRAVIS COUNTY VOTERS** may vote at any "vote center" (where you see a "Vote Here/Aqui" sign).

**VOTER ID:** Texas law requires registered voters to show one of seven forms of photo ID (current or expired within 4 years) issued by the Texas Dept. of Public Safety or U.S. government. If a voter does not have photo ID, they may vote after signing a Reasonable Impediment Declaration and providing supporting documentation. Visit [www.traviscountyelections.org](http://www.traviscountyelections.org) for a list of acceptable forms of photo ID and supporting documentation. No photo ID is required when voting by mail.

### ADDITIONAL ELECTION INFO:

Travis Co.: [countyclerk.traviscountytx.gov/elections.html](http://countyclerk.traviscountytx.gov/elections.html) or 512/238-VOTE (8683)

Williamson Co.: [www.wilco.org/elections](http://www.wilco.org/elections) or 512/943-1630

Hays Co.: [www.hayscountytx.com](http://www.hayscountytx.com) or 512/393-7779

### EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS

Open Mon.-Sat., 7am-7pm; Sun., noon-6pm; \* Mega Centers will remain open until 9pm Wed.-Fri., Oct. 28-30

#### CENTRAL

\*Central Library, 710 W. Cesar Chavez  
Austin Rec Ctr., 1301 Shoal Creek Blvd.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4800 Manor Rd.  
Holiday Inn Midtown, 6000 Middle Fiskville  
UT Flawn Academic Ctr., 2304 Whitis  
UT Gregory Gym, 2101 Speedway  
Virginia L. Brown Rec Ctr., 7500 Blessing

#### NORTH

\*Pflugerville ISD Rock Gym, 702 W. Pecan  
Chinatown Center, 10901 N. Lamar  
Courtyard by Marriott Pflugerville,  
16100 Impact Way  
Disability Rights Texas, 2222 W. Braker  
Gus Garcia Rec Ctr., 1201 E. Rundberg  
Renaissance Hotel, 9721 Arboretum Blvd.  
RRISD Hartfield PAC, 5800 McNeil  
Shops at Arbor Walk, 10515 N. Mopac

#### EAST

\*Millennium Youth Ctr., 1156 Hargrave  
Carver Library, 1161 Angelina  
Community Ctr. at Del Valle, 3518 FM 973  
Dottie Jordan Rec Ctr., 2803 Loyola  
George Morales Dove Springs Rec Ctr.,  
5801 Ainez  
Manor ISD Admin, 10335 U.S. 290, Manor  
Parque Zaragoza Rec Ctr., 2608 Gonzales

#### SOUTH

\*Southpark Meadows, 9600 S. I-35 #500  
Austin Oaks Church, 4220 Monterey Oaks  
Dan Ruiz Library, 1600 Grove  
Dittmar Rec Ctr., 1009 W. Dittmar  
Shady Hollow Village Shopping Ctr.,  
9901 Brodie Ln. #170  
South Austin Rec Ctr., 1100 Cumberland

#### WEST

Ben Hur Shrine Ctr.,  
7811 Rockwood  
Bee Cave City Hall,  
4000 Galleria Pkwy.  
Christ Episcopal Church,  
3520 W. Whitestone  
Bldv., Cedar Park  
Lakeway Activity Ctr.,  
105 Cross Creek  
Northwest Rec Ctr.,  
2913 Northland  
Peace Lutheran Church,  
10625 FM 620 N.  
Rolling Hills Community  
Church, 6201 Lohman  
Ford Rd., Lago Vista  
Westlake United Methodist,  
1460 Redbud Trl.

FOR MORE INFO, GO TO [AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/ELECTIONS](http://AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/ELECTIONS)





“As your representative, I have worked hard every day to improve our neighborhoods and our city. I have led efforts to combat the climate crisis, reform our sexual assault response system, and provide support to those most affected by the pandemic. There is more work to do. Vote for me so that I can continue fighting for you at City Hall.”

*Alison B Alter*



— Proudly —  
**ENDORSED BY**

**THE AUSTIN  
CHRONICLE**

“Drawing on her academic background, Alter has proven to be a studious representative, coming to meetings and staff briefings prepared with probing questions.”

Pol. adv. paid by Alison Alter Campaign. This campaign has not agreed to comply with the contribution and expenditure limits of the Austin Fair Campaign Ordinance.

— Also Proudly —  
**ENDORSED BY**

- ELECTED OFFICIALS**
- The Austin Chronicle
  - Austin Firefighters Association
  - Austin Environmental Democrats
  - West Austin Democrats
  - Central Austin Democrats
  - NXNW Democrats
  - Capital Area Progressive Democrats
  - Austin Tejano Democrats
  - Liberal Austin Democrats
  - AFSCME Local 1624
  - Austin Central Labor Council
  - Austin EMS Association
  - Education Austin
  - Stonewall Democrats of Austin
  - Unite Here! Local 23
  - Congressman Lloyd Doggett
  - Commissioner Brigid Shea
  - Commissioner Jeff Travillion
  - Council Member Ann Kitchen
  - Council Member Kathie Tovo

- ELECTED OFFICIALS**
- Rep. Sheryl Cole
  - Rep. Donna Howard
  - Rep. Eddie Rodriguez
  - Hon. Nora Comstock
  - Hon. Cindy Anderson
  - Hon. Kristin Ashy
  - Hon. Ann Teich
  - Hon. Velva Price
- FORMER ELECTED OFFICIALS**
- Hon. Cecilia Burke
  - Hon. Frank Cooksey
  - Hon. Jackie Goodman
  - Hon. Sherri Greenberg
  - Hon. Beverly Griffith
  - Hon. Laura Morrison
  - Hon. Paul Saldaña
  - Hon. Max Sherman
  - Hon. Bill Spelman

**VOTE EARLY OCT. 13 - 30**

**ALISONALTER.COM**

**ELECTION DAY NOV. 3, 2020**

**ENDORSEMENTS** CONTINUED FROM P.8

Drawing on her academic background, Alter has proven to be a studious representative, coming to meetings and staff briefings prepared with probing questions. In 2019, she spearheaded an ongoing third-party audit of how the Austin Police Department has (mis) handled sexual assault cases, and in the fiscal year 2021 budget, she secured funding for two new ambulances for Austin-Travis County EMS, along with more medics to staff them. Alter voted against easing the ordinance prohibiting public camping in 2019, out of concern that the city did not have the strategies and services in place to reduce homelessness. She has focused on those efforts since, such as the city's purchasing motels to convert into supportive housing.

Sethi is the strongest challenger in any of the four Council races featuring incumbents, and we believe D10 voters would be well represented by her. An immigration attorney who has spent time during the pandemic organizing and delivering meals to people without homes, Sethi would bring perspective and experience that's currently not found on Council. Her work on the city task forces that examined systemic racism and envisioned the Office of Police Oversight would be an asset as Council "reimagines public safety." She has also served on the city's Asian

American Quality of Life Advisory Commission since 2015, where she recently helped shape the city's pandemic relief funding efforts. As only the second Asian American to serve on Council, Sethi would give voice to one of Austin's fastest-growing and increasingly politically active communities.

**CITY PROPOSITIONS**

**Proposition A (Project Connect): For**  
**Proposition B (Active Mobility): For**

For the decades since Capital Metro was formed in 1985, it's been trying to take Austin transit to a next level, and Austin has caddishly refused to commit. We've run out of time and excuses to keep pretending our mobility problems will solve themselves, or that alternatives to a clearly failed roads-first system would not be popular or successful. Many thousands of people who've made Austin their home are aghast that we had the chance 20 years ago to approve a rail system that would be a well-established fixture of urban life right now, and we biffed it. A handful of the exact same people who killed transit then are still trying to kill this much larger and more ambitious plan – one that's scaled to make up that lost 20 years – precisely because it's now So Big. And of course because they'd never use it, because they

see driving alone as a civil right rather than a privilege, let alone as the oppressive burden it actually is to many Central Texans. They're, if anything, even more averse to spending money on active mobility – sidewalks, bike infrastructure, trails, as well as important safety and environmental improvements – which they see as recreation rather than transportation. Our city's income segregation, inequitable distribution of infrastructure and access to public services, and still-much-too-large carbon footprint all tell a different story. It's time for us to get going.

**AISD BOARD**

**District 2: John Mckiernan-González**

Texas State professor Mckiernan-González is the "newcomer" among the three candidates in Southeast Austin's D2, but he brings a clarity of vision and specific policy ideas that we think will serve the district best. Inspired to run by his opposition to the "School Changes" process, Mckiernan-González has prioritized dual-language and special education in his campaign and spoken to the ways systemic racism has shaped Austin. His outspoken advocacy for the needs of Austin ISD's most vulnerable students and its most disadvantaged district would be a welcome addition to the board.

**District 3: Kevin Foster**

This UT-Austin professor and educational anthropologist is running unopposed for the seat currently held by Ann Teich.

**District 5: Lynn Boswell**

All three candidates in the race have similar policy goals – focusing on better communication and more equity in West Austin's District 5. However, Boswell combines time as an AISD volunteer and president of the Austin Council of PTAs with demonstrated success as an advocate for young people and education in other contexts. Her work to abolish the juvenile curfew, to eliminate Capital Metro fares for K-12 students, and to sway the Legislature with Just Fund It TX show she has the chops to raise AISD's issues – maybe even recapture reform – with those who can help make change happen.

**District 8: Noelita Lugo**

While all four of the candidates for the open districtwide seat being vacated by Cindy Anderson would be assets to the board and AISD, we're endorsing Lugo's combination of passionate advocacy for AISD families during the controversial School Changes process with professional policy expertise and commitment to equity and anti-racism.

**Elect!**



**D2 Parent - Teacher - Historian**

**John Mckiernan-González**

**for AISD District 2 Trustee**

**Con D2 Y Con Todos**

**Endorsed by:**



**Vote Early: October 13 - 30**

**Vote by Mail: October 23**

**Election Day: November 3**

**Find polling locations: [bit.ly/votetraviscounty](https://bit.ly/votetraviscounty)**

**[MckiernanGonzalez4D2.com](https://MckiernanGonzalez4D2.com)**

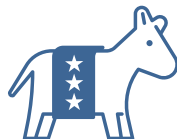
**@MckiernanGonzalez4D2 @johnmcg4aisd**



**SCAN ME**

- ✓ Fighting against school closures
- ✓ Making AISD a leader for Equity & Sustainability
- ✓ Pushing for stronger dual language & STEAHM curriculum
- ✓ Investment & training in Special Education & accessibility
- ✓ Valuing people over real estate

VOTE FOR THE POLITICAL PARTY  
REPRESENTED BY AN ASS,  
NOT AN A\$\$HOLE.



REPUBLICANS ELIMINATED STRAIGHT TICKET VOTING.  
VOTE FOR ALL THE DEMOCRATS DOWN THE BALLOT!

THE FOLLOWING DEMOCRATS HAVE OPPONENTS:

State Rep. District 47  
**Vikki Goodwin**

460th District Court Judge  
**Selena Alvarenga**

State Rep. District 48  
**Donna Howard**

District Attorney  
**José Garza**

State Rep. District 49  
**Gina Hinojosa**

County Judge  
**Andy Brown**

State Rep. District 50  
**Celia Israel**

County Court-at-Law #9  
**Kim Williams**

State Rep. District 51  
**Eddie Rodriguez**

Sheriff  
**Sally Hernandez**

State Rep. District 52  
**James Talarico**

Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Bruce Elfant**

State Rep. District 136  
**John Bucy III**

County Commissioner, Pct. 1  
**Jeff Travillion**

Third Court of Appeals, Chief Justice  
**Darlene Byrne**

County Commissioner, Pct. 3  
**Ann Howard**

WE ENDORSE THE FOLLOWING NON-PARTISAN CANDIDATES & PROPS:

Austin City Council District 2  
**David Chincanchan**

Austin City Council District 10  
**Alison Alter**

Austin City Council District 4  
**Greg Casar**

City of Austin Prop A  
**For**

Austin City Council District 6  
**Jimmy Flannigan**

City of Austin Prop B  
**For**

Austin City Council District 7  
**Leslie Pool**

AISD Trustee District 2  
**John Mckiernan-Gonzalez**

THE CAPITAL AREA PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS BELIEVE THAT  
BLACK LIVES MATTER, WEARING A MASK SAVES LIVES, CLIMATE  
CHANGE IS REAL, IMMIGRANTS MAKE OUR COUNTRY STRONGER,  
AND THAT WORKERS DESERVE A LIVING WAGE.

Pol Adv. paid for by CAPD PAC

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**FREE PRESS.** CHRONICLE

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AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/**SUPPORT**

## David Chincanchan for City Council District 2



**DAVID** was born and raised in the Dove Springs neighborhood of District 2. He is ready to serve this historically underrepresented area of the city and has the abilities to deliver the resources and create the equity that the residents of District 2 deserve.

With the support from **AFSCME 1624**,  
**Central Labor Council**, and **Democratic clubs**.  
**VOTE all the way to the bottom of the ballot!**

**ENDORSED BY:** AFSCME Local 1624 • Austin Tejano Democrats • Dove Springs Proud • South Austin Democrats • University Democrats • Austin Central Labor Council • IBEW Local 520 • Austin Firefighters Association Local 975 • UNITE HERE Local 23 • Workers Defense Action Fund • Education Austin • Communications Workers of America • OPEIU Local 277 • Liberal Austin Democrats • Black Austin Democrats • Capital Area Progressive Democrats • Austin Environmental Democrats • LIUNA! • Central Austin Democrats • AURA • Run for Something

Pol Adv. paid for by Austinites for Equity  
1812 Centre Creek Drive, Austin, Tx 78754  
Jack Kirfman, Treasurer | Top Donors: AFSCME 1624



Alison Alter



Jimmy Flannigan



Leslie Pool

**ACKNOWLEDGING** great governance during the most challenging events of our lifetimes. These progressive city council members have proven their leadership and deserve to be reelected to the Austin City Council.

With the support from **AFSCME 1624**, **Central Labor Council**, and **Democratic clubs**.

**VOTE all the way to the bottom of the ballot!**

Pol Adv. paid for by Austinites for Equity  
1812 Centre Creek Drive, Austin, Tx 78754  
Jack Kirfman, Treasurer  
Top Donors: AFSCME 1624

"I want to help our artists and restaurants as much as we possibly can, but can we say with a straight face, in front of a judge, that a thousand businesses across the city are Visitor Information Centers?"

— Mayor Steve Adler (see p.16)



JOHN ANDERSON

Following Governor Greg Abbott's Oct. 1 proclamation limiting ballot drop-off locations to just one per county, the Travis County Clerk's Office on Airport Blvd. is now the only site where voters may hand-deliver their ballots in Travis County. Abbott's order — which has been put on blast for blatant voter suppression — is now the subject of three separate lawsuits. See p.18 for more.



JANA BIRCHUM

## HEADLINES

**ABBOTT OK'S BARS REOPENING** Governor Greg Abbott announced Wednesday that bars can begin reopening at 50% indoor capacity on Oct. 14, but only with approval from county officials.

**GET READY TO REDISTRRICT** Last Thursday City Auditor Corrie Stokes randomly drew three Austinites for the Applicant Review Panel: James Christianson, Abigail McClean, and William Cooper will review more than 270 Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission applicants, 14 of whom will eventually be selected to serve on the commission responsible for redrawing Council district boundaries.

**POLICE OVERSIGHT PROJECT**, a new political action committee, is collecting petition signatures to repeal Chapter 143 of the Texas Local Government Code, which limits procedures on police officer discipline and oversight. In order to get it on the May 2021 ballot, the petition will need to collect around 60,000 signatures, according to the group's estimates.

**INKLING OF FRAUD** According to the Office of the City Auditor, Randall Whited, a former Austin Public Library employee, stole at least \$1.3 million from the city by purchasing printer toner with a city credit card and reselling it online.

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PROFESSOR** Mario Villarreal has been charged with five counts of possession of child pornography. According to university officials, Villarreal, who worked at the Salem Center for Policy at UT's McCombs School of Business, has been placed on agency investigation leave and removed from all teaching and administrative duties.

**EVICTON MORATORIUM** Mayor Steve Adler extended the city's ban on landlords issuing "notices to vacate" until December 31. Specifically, the new order bans evictions only against residential tenants whose monthly rent is no more than \$2,475.

**SLOW HEALTHY STREETS** Austin's Transportation Department has begun the process of phasing out segments of the Healthy Streets program, a city initiative that closed select streets to through traffic in an effort to provide space for outdoor recreation and safer commutes for nondrivers. The findings will help inform a new "slow streets" pilot addressing Austin's sidewalk network.

**CHOO, CHOO, WHO?** Austin Parks Foundation announced the seven finalists of the Zilker train naming competition, including "Edwina Justus," the first Black female engineer for Union Pacific Railroad, and "The Zilker Zanate" (Spanish for grackle), among others. Voting for the new name is open on [www.austinparks.org/zilker-train](http://www.austinparks.org/zilker-train) through Nov. 6.

## The Costly Pastime of Politics

The big bucks are rolling in to local candidates and PACs. Why, and for what?

Voices of Austin, the political nonprofit that advocates for undoing much of what the current City Council has done, does not take money from the Koch brothers. We never thought or said they did, because why would they, and why would the right-wing Koch network — which is already well-represented in Austin and Texas politics — need a new place to park its cash? We take VoA at its word that it is only funded by Real Austinites.

That's all we can do, because VoA is not organized as a political action committee that must disclose its donors. For most of its causes — re-funding the police, not revising the Land Development Code, etc. — that's legally fine; VoA has the same right to express its opin-

ions as I do. But for its biggest cause of the moment, opposing Project Connect and Proposition A, it certainly seems to me that VoA is expressly advocating defeat of the measure, not just raising questions and educating, and is spending money on advertising to that effect. So it really should form a PAC to do that. There are PACs formed both for and against Project Connect, and they, along with all the Council candidates and the backers of the Prop B active-transportation bond, had to file their 30-days-out campaign finance reports this week. Unsurprisingly, the transit measure is where the big money is being raised and spent, both for and against. The pro-Prop A PAC Mobility

for All raised nearly \$1 million; the antis at Our Mobility Our Future raked in more than \$275,000. Both have already spent a lot of money, but still have most of their haul available for the stretch run. Your mailboxes and screens will doubtlessly reflect this in the days ahead.

### THE CLEAR VOICE OF CASH

The 30-days-out reports provide the most informative snapshot of where the candidates and causes stand in any given local election cycle. Public polling is scarce and usually not very illuminating, since voters' views are much less formed than in the partisan races up-ballot. Endorsements matter as a signal, but not to sway outcomes all by themselves. But money talks with a very

CONTINUED ON P.14

**AUSTIN AT LARGE**  
BY MIKE CLARK-MADISON

# TELL THE MAYOR AND AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL TO SAVE THE "LIVE MUSIC" CAPITAL

**"IF THERE IS NO MONEY, THERE IS NO MUSIC"**

**DO NOT WASTE MONEY TO EXPAND THE CONVENTION CENTER**

**Ask them to reallocate Item 95's dollars & commit that funding to Item 62!**

Live music, funky retail shops, art events & hyperlocal restaurants drives Austin's tourism boom and is the main reason there is a \$230 million "convention center reserve" fund to begin with.

**6.3 million dollars was approved in a closed door meeting by City Council.** Item 95 is the first step of the planned multi-million dollar Convention Center expansion, an unnecessary expansion for a Convention Center that loses, roughly, \$1 million per major event and is responsible for only 2% of Austin tourists & 3% of annual hotel room stays.

**Don't let the bureaucrats waste the \$230 million stockpiled in City Tourism funds.  
Put up or Shut up Now!**

**Support local businesses that created and sustained the "Live Music" capital of the world!**

**Call the Mayor and City Council Members!**

Mayor	Steve Adler	steve.adler@austintexas.gov	512-978-2100
District 1 Council Member	Natasha Harper-Madison	natasha.madison@austintexas.gov	512-978-2101
District 2 Council Member	Delia Garza	delia.garza@austintexas.gov	512-978-2102
District 3 Council Member	Sabino "Pio" Renteria	sabino.renteria@austintexas.gov	512-978-2103
District 4 Council Member	Gregorio "Greg" Casar	gregorio.casar@austintexas.gov	512-978-2104
District 5 Council Member	Ann Kitchen	ann.kitchen@austintexas.gov	512-978-2105
District 6 Council Member	Jimmy Flannigan	jimmy.flannigan@austintexas.gov	512-978-2106
District 7 Council Member	Leslie Pool	leslie.pool@austintexas.gov	512-978-2107
District 8 Council Member	Paige Ellis	paige.ellis@austintexas.gov	512-978-2108
District 9 Council Member	Kathy Tovo	kathie.tovo@austintexas.gov	512-978-2109
District 10 Council Member	Alison Alter	Alison.Alter@austintexas.gov	512-978-2110

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<b>ROUND ROCK</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>COX PLAZA</b>	<b>RESEARCH</b>	<b>GUADALUPE</b>	<b>CESAR CHAVEZ</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>STASSNEY</b>	<b>ONION CREEK</b>	<b>TRADING POST</b>	<b>MANOR ROAD</b>
3227 S. IH35	9407 N. IH35	10938 RESEARCH	11657 RESEARCH	3700 GUADALUPE	3111 E. CESAR CHAVEZ	1516 S. LAMAR	727 W. STASSNEY	10730 S. IH35	12701 HWY 71 W	2409 MANOR RD
252-2080	832-8544	342-9088	502-9323	371-1920	247-2222	443-2292	707-9069	233-4300	263-9945	474-2010

**OPEN TIL MIDNIGHT 7 DAYS A WEEK - SINCE 1990**

**AUSTIN AT LARGE** CONTINUED FROM P.12  
clear voice, telling everyone who's serious and who's not, laying out the contours of support, and paying for the messaging that drives discourse on each race.

The next required filing is eight-days-out, which becomes less relevant with every cycle as more votes get cast earlier. This year, with pandemic-driven mail balloting and an extra week of early voting, many of these contests will have been decided before efforts to get out the Election Day vote even begin. So that raises the question: How much campaign cash is too much? Is it possible for the PACs and candidates to spend their money in meaningful ways?

For the candidates, this problem is somewhat self-limiting, since individual contributions are limited to \$400 per person. While PACs can make independent expenditures on behalf of a candidate, none has reported doing so yet (except for modest in-kind assistance from the Workers Defense Action PAC to D2's David Chincanchan, and \$400 for Jimmy Flannigan from the homebuilders). Some may still do so before the eight-day-out deadline; the public safety unions, particularly the firefighters, are worth watching. But PACs were more involved in more races at this point in 2018 than they are now.

Even with the \$400 limit, you can still raise a truckload of money for a Council race. Incumbents Flannigan and Leslie Pool have more than \$50,000 on hand, Greg Casar has \$67,000, and Alison Alter has an eye-popping \$150,000. None have large loans to themselves outstanding. The only challengers with that kind of money are up against Alter in D10: Pooja Sethi, Robert Thomas, and Jennifer Virden all have at least \$65,000 on hand, in Virden's case including a \$50,000 self-loan. Virden and Thomas both have sup-

port from conservatives, but in other races the right-leaning candidates (Louis Herrin in D4 and Mackenzie Kelly in D6) have less than half as much money to play with. And in D2, Chincanchan and Vanessa Fuentes are both in the \$30,000 range.

### THE RIGHT TO GRUMBLE

The relative surfeit of cash in D10, the wealthiest district with the highest voter turnout, is not shocking, but it would take some creativity for Alter to spend \$150K in the next three weeks. In D4, the poorest district with the lowest turnout, Casar has enough money to last for multiple election cycles. But with lots of small-dollar contributors, there's less interesting backstory as to why people contribute to one candidate (or more) over others.

That's totally not the case for the PACs, where people can give as much as they please. Naturally, many of the high rollers throwing in to support Prop A are people who stand to gain from its passage – real estate firms like Endeavor, engineering firms like HNTB, and both Austin FC and Brandywine (developers of Broadmoor), each of which gets a new Red Line station under the plan. Is this corrupt, as Voices of Austin charges? Or is it no big surprise that a \$7 billion investment package has a lot of friends with money who want it to succeed?

You probably have an opinion on this already. I find it more intriguing that people who don't want it to succeed, yet have no real stake in the outcome beyond their right to grumble, are willing to throw down equally big chunks of change. What does the fact that a bunch of retirees, "self-employed investors," and opaque real estate LLCs have contributed five-figure sums to the anti-Prop A campaign say about our democratic process and our discourse? I'm not sure it's all that flattering. ■

# The Voting Has Begun

Where it will end is anybody's guess

It's officially on. See p.8 for all the info you could want about mail voting and the early voting that starts Tuesday. But suffice to say, the national nightmare, the long, long wait to finally get to vote in this damnable election, is finally ending. I already received a ballot, put it back in the mail Tuesday (cheers to **USPS**), and for a little while at least, it felt good: Whatever else may happen, at least I got to exercise my democratic right to have a say in who gets to hold public office. The election we've been waiting for, for so long, will at last be over with.

Then I got to reading a report that came out a few weeks ago called "**Preventing a Disrupted Presidential Election and Transition**" – a project of the **Transition Integrity Project**, attempting to forecast the likely outcomes of the election, and that good feeling melted completely away.

Over the summer, TIP "convened a bipartisan group of over 100 current and former senior government and campaign leaders and other experts in a series of 2020 election crisis scenario planning exercises." Basically, they ran **war games**, predicting the various parties' reactions and likely actions, depending on four possible voting outcomes. And the results aren't pretty.

Under the first scenario – **Game One: Ambiguous Result** – the results are unclear on election night, with both sides claiming victory and many votes still to be counted. In turn one (Nov. 3-10), both sides claimed victory. GOP state officials "supported Trump's victory and claims of voter fraud but stopped short of [deploying] military forces." In turns two and three, the Trump campaign "again attempted to federalize the National Guard to end further vote counting," both sides called on supporters to rally at vote

counting sites, at least one state sent two competing delegate slates to the Electoral College, and with "no clear resolution of the conflict in the January 6 joint session of Congress; the partisans on both sides were still claiming victory, leading to the problem of two claims to Commander-in-Chief power (including access to the nuclear codes) at noon on January 20."

Okay. that's bad, but surely things get better in the other scenarios, right? Not so much.

**A clear Biden win** is the cleanest result:

After giving up on fraud claims, and pushing through a raft of judicial nominations and preemptive criminal pardons, Trump leaves office, after launching a new "MAGA TV" news

network. **A clear Trump win** is a less rosy prospect: Because Biden wins the popular vote, he and the Dems don't give up easily. Amid a popular outcry against the Electoral College, three Democratic governors ratify a competing slate of electors, and by

"the end of the first turn, the country was in the midst of a full-blown constitutional crisis." By turn three, the Democratic House has voted to award the election to Biden, Biden is encouraging the West Coast to secede, and again, Jan. 20 "arrived without a single president-elect entitled to be Commander-in-Chief after noon that day. It was unclear what the military would do in this situation." As you can imagine, game four, **a narrow Biden win**, is even messier, with competing electors, decisive intervention by the military and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Trump burning documents in the White House as he refuses to leave before being escorted out by the Secret Service.

And you thought this was all going to be over soon, didn't you? ■

See a link to the report with this column online.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

BY NICK BARBARO

## CIVICS 101

### BULLETIN BOARD

For the latest info, visit [www.austintexas.gov/covid19](http://www.austintexas.gov/covid19). Watch Austin's government access channel at [www.austintexas.gov/atxn](http://www.austintexas.gov/atxn) for live-streamed city meetings. **Uninsured Travis Co. residents experiencing COVID symptoms:** Call CommUnityCare's hotline at 512/978-8775.

### FRIDAY 10/9

**CAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** CAN is a collaboration of organizations who work to build a community of equity and opportunity. 1-3pm. Online. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** 5:30pm. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

**CITY'S NONPROFIT GRANT PROGRAM CLOSING** The city's Economic Development Department reopened the Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant fund to reach additional local nonprofits facing hardships due to the pandemic, and applications are due this week. This \$6.35 million fund provides grants of up to \$20,000. Through Oct. 9, 5pm. [www.abxrecovers.com](http://www.abxrecovers.com).

### SATURDAY 10/10

**I WISH I MISSED MY EX-PRESIDENT! VOTE-BY-MAIL PHONEBANK** The TCDP is calling voters to make sure they know if they're qualified to vote by mail this November. Saturdays, 1-4pm. [www.mobilize.us/traviscountydems](http://www.mobilize.us/traviscountydems).

### MONDAY 10/12

**CAPITAL AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD** CAMPO guides the region's long-range transportation policy and spending. 2pm. Online. [www.campotexas.org](http://www.campotexas.org).

**AISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES INFO SESSION** 5:30pm. AISD.TV; AISD FB page. [www.austinisd.org/board](http://www.austinisd.org/board).

**ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING** Update, discussion, and possible action regarding work group on Austin Animal Center's Shelter-Neuter-Return (SNR) Program. 6pm. Videoconference. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

### WEDNESDAY 10/14

**BIZOPEN: COMMERCIAL PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS WEBINAR** Learn how to identify which processes are relevant to your business location development and how to navigate the steps in a timely manner. 10-11am. Online. Free. [www.austintexas.gov/smallbiz](http://www.austintexas.gov/smallbiz).

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE** 2pm. Videoconference. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

**IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT POLICE** Austin Justice Coalition's weekly community conversation invites participants to challenge

their assumptions about public safety and the public good. 6pm. Facebook Live. [www.austinjustice.org](http://www.austinjustice.org).

**CALL LIKE YOU GIVE A DEM** Join the Blue Action Democrats to call and ID voters throughout Travis County. Wednesdays, 5-7pm. Online. [www.mobilize.us/traviscountydems](http://www.mobilize.us/traviscountydems).

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# It's HOT Again

Could hotel tax help save Austin's creative sector?

BY AUSTIN SANDERS

As City Hall continues to rifle through its coffers looking for any and all revenue that can be used to stabilize the **music venues, bars, and restaurants** that face imminent closure, a familiar argument has resurfaced: Why not use some of the **hotel occupancy tax** revenue visitors to Austin pay on their lodging?

Regular readers may be flashing back to last fall, when the same debate gripped City Hall ahead of a vote on the failed **Proposition B**, which would have derailed the Council-endorsed expansion of the **Austin Convention Center**. The argument put forth now by local attorneys **Bill Bunch** and **Fred Lewis** is basically the same as the pitch they made then: Council, guided by legal advice from city attorneys, simply has too narrow a view of the state statutes that regulate how HOT revenue can be used.

"The law is still the same, but the world has changed with the pandemic," Bunch told us this week. "The viability of expanding the Convention Center is out the window, and the need for spending the money to support cultural tourism and live music is undeniable and urgent."

Currently, Austin collects 11 cents on each dollar visitors spend on hotel stays. State statutes mandate that revenue be used in ways that specifically promote the tourism, hotel, and convention industries, including limited set-asides to support cultural arts and historic preservation. Here's how the city currently splits up HOT revenue:

- 4.5 cents goes to the **Convention Center Tax Fund**, which pays debt service and operating costs of the center, which does not pay for itself through event revenue.
- 2 cents goes to the **Venue Project Fund**, which pays off debt approved by voters in 1998 to expand the center.
- Another 2 cents goes to a **center expansion fund** approved by Council in 2019 – that vote also maxed out the state-allowed HOT rate the city can levy.
- 1.05 cents each go to **cultural arts** (the source of annual Cultural Contracts funding) and **historic preservation**.

**The Broken Spoke, to take one example, could install kiosks that provide visitors information about the city and upcoming events – making them ad hoc Visitor Information Centers eligible to receive HOT revenue.**

- 0.4 cents is used to fill a **Tourism & Promotion Fund**, which primarily goes to **Visit Austin** to attract events to the center.

Bunch and Lewis contend that the city could be using more HOT revenue to bolster the arts, especially live music, because Austin is known internationally as the **Live Music Capital of the World**, and its music industry is its largest tourism draw. The city is doing that already, to some extent; **Visit Austin** pays musicians to perform at parties intended to market the city and center to those looking for convention destinations. Last year, Council authorized creation of the **Live Music Fund**, which gets 15% of the 2-cent HOT increase approved for center expansion.

Over the past five years, HOT revenue has been transferred into the **Convention Center Capital Fund**, totaling more than \$139 million, which city financial policy reserves for capital and operational needs. The reserves are also viewed favorably by credit agencies, which can make financing future center expansion less expensive for the city. But from Bunch and Lewis' perspective, that's money that could be used to bolster the struggling creative sector.

In a legal memo co-authored by Bunch, Lewis, and **Bill Aleshire**, the three activist attorneys argue that the city could be doing more to innovatively attract tourists to Austin. Why not help pay for local bands to tour the country, so long as they advertise the city as a way to promote tourism? Or offer grants to local theatre companies to mount plays "that would have the effect of encouraging tourism," while avoiding purely being commercials for the city? One suggestion from the trio of City Hall antagonists has gained some traction at Council: the use of **Visitor Information Centers (VICs)**.

State law allows HOT revenue to be used for the "acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing, operation, and maintenance of" VICs as well as convention centers. Council Member **Ann Kitchen** is preparing a resolution for Council's Oct. 15 meeting that would set up a fund seeded by HOT revenue, along with a process created by



DAVID BRENDAN HALL

the newly established **Austin Economic Development Corporation**, for "iconic" businesses to apply for financial relief in one of the areas listed in the statute.

"We have in our community iconic venues that promote tourism," Kitchen told us. "The idea is an evolution of the VIC concept, making the centers a destination in and of themselves." The **Broken Spoke**, for example, could install kiosks that provide visitors information about the city and upcoming events – making them ad hoc VICs eligible to receive HOT revenue.

The city **Law Department** has a more narrow view of how the funds can be used. The statute defines a VIC as "a building or a portion of a building" that is used to promote tourism. So, if **James White**, owner of the Broken Spoke, installed an information kiosk in a corner of the Spoke, would only that part of the building be eligible for HOT revenue? What would the financial relief provided to a business in that scenario even look like? There is no case law on the question, but an opinion from Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** says that in order to satisfy the statute, HOT revenue "must directly benefit the building or portion of the building used to distribute or disseminate information to tourists."

As of now, city attorneys disagree with Bunch and Lewis' more expansive view of how HOT revenue can be used. "The city cannot use [HOT] for general relief," a city spokesperson wrote in a statement. "The city cannot use it to pay people's back taxes, or mortgages, rents, other expenses of running businesses, or maintaining a life during these difficult times." Referencing Kitchen's idea to designate qualified businesses as VICs, the spokesperson wrote: "If these visitor information centers operate

within the statutory framework, they are a designated use under the statute."

Mayor **Steve Adler** views the looser interpretation of VICs as a stretch as well, but as is often the case, the legal arguments must be viewed through the prism of politics. It's no secret that the mayor eyes expanding the center and transforming Downtown's southeast quadrant as an important part of his legacy, and thus he closely guards the HOT revenue needed to do that work. Testing the bounds of the law, Adler suggests, comes with political and legal risk, too. Business owners who view their establishments as "iconic" but are ineligible for VIC designation might sue, or Paxton might decide to take the city to court.

Or, more likely, the **Texas Legislature** would seize on another opportunity to beat up on Austin's leaders by amending the statute to close the VIC loophole (although state law has a number of carve-out provisions aimed at expanding the use of HOT revenue for specific cities). Of course, fear of lawsuits or Legislature reprisals hasn't stopped Council from moving on priorities it sees as important – such as mandatory paid sick days, for example.

Meanwhile, Adler points out, city and Council staff are searching everywhere they can for less contentious ways of propping up local businesses – a challenge that he says is far too great for local governments to do alone. "We just approved significant funding to go after places that are so tied to our culture that they are actually part of our civic infrastructure," the mayor told us. "I want to help our artists and restaurants as much as we possibly can, but can we say with a straight face, in front of a judge, that a thousand businesses across the city are Visitor Information Centers? I don't think a court would buy that argument." ■



## A WORLD-CLASS SCANDAL SNOWBALLS ON PAXTON

It makes some sense that ambitious, provocative, ethically questionable, and now embattled Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** would vibe well with ambitious, provocative, ethically questionable, and now embattled Austin real estate mogul **Nate Paul**. Just how well – and at what cost to the people of Texas – is now the subject of many, many questions, after an extraordinary mutiny last week within the A.G.'s Office.

As first reported by **Tony Plohetski** of the *Austin American-Statesman* and KVUE, seven of Paxton's top executives, including First Assistant Attorney General **Jeff Mateer**, informed the A.G. and agency on Sept. 30 that they had made a criminal complaint to "appropriate" law enforcement about Paxton's activities, including allegations of bribery and abuse of office. In doing so, they protected themselves under the state **whistleblower statute** (which also uses the term "appropriate") from retaliation by Paxton, though Mateer resigned on Friday. Later in the week, the *Houston Chronicle* reported on a text exchange between Mateer and Paxton that introduced Paul's name into the now-snowballing story.

Paxton has said that he knows Paul but has not described their relationship in detail as of press time; Paul has refused comment on the case. But the revelation added some context to curious events in one of the numerous legal matters facing Paul, whose **World Class Holdings** property empire has been unraveling in a chain of bankruptcies and whose home and offices were raided last year by the FBI. As has been reported most thoroughly by the *Austin Business Journal*, the



Ken Paxton

JOHN ANDERSON

**Mitte Foundation**, a modest but long-lived Austin philanthropy, had partnered with Paul on two of his Downtown deals and sued to protect its stakes as Paul's fortunes crumbled. After months of stonewalling by Paul's teams of many lawyers, and some adverse rulings and scoldings from the judge, the A.G.'s Office jumped into the case to help him – justified by Paxton as part of his agency's regulation of Texas charities, but confusing to everyone else. However, at a late September hearing on motions it had itself filed, Paxton's team announced it was walking away from the case.

Meanwhile, Paul had blustered for months about misconduct by the federal and state agents who raided his spots in 2019, and filed a complaint with the **Travis County District Attorney's Office**, which bounced it over to the A.G. Mateer and the other A.G. topsiders blew their whistle after learning that not only had Paxton appointed a special outside investigator – Houston attorney **Brandon Cammack** – to probe Paul's allegations, but that Cammack had issued grand jury subpoenas to figures in the case (which the A.G. Seven hurriedly got quashed). This week, Cammack told the *Dallas Morning News* he was proceeding with his inquiry and still had a contract with the A.G.'s Office.

Paxton, like Paul, believes the best defense is a good offense, and his own statements have implied that the A.G. Seven have gone rogue (perhaps taking part in, or covering up, the plot against Paul) and fear being exposed. This is hard for many GOP allies to swallow; the Seven are more respected as attorneys and administrators than is Paxton, whose energetic right-wing crusades take up more of his attention than does actually running the agency. Mateer has strong wing nut bona fides of his own – he turned out to be too far-right to be confirmed as a Trump judge – and was hand-picked by Paxton to be his No. 2. Mateer's predecessor at the A.G., now-U.S. Rep. **Chip Roy**, was the first GOP leader to join pretty much every Democrat in Texas and call for Paxton to resign. Gov. **Greg Abbott** – who, as A.G. before Paxton, managed to avoid major scandals and internal rebellions – and Lt. Gov. **Dan Patrick** both called the allegations "very concerning." Both men, and Roy and other GOP electeds, announced they'd return campaign contributions made by Paul, who also donated \$25,000 to Paxton's reelection campaign in 2018.

By the way, this is all unrelated, we think, to the felony securities-fraud charges on which Paxton was indicted way back in 2015, for which he has been dodging trial for five years through all means at his disposal, and which have spawned yet more accusations of misconduct. – Mike Clark-Madison

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# Running Un-scared

Austin's blue surge pushes Davis, Siegel toward D.C.

BY MIKE CLARK-MADISON

As of Wednesday, Oct. 7, the FiveThirtyEight polling average for Texas shows Donald Trump with a 1.4% lead over Joe Biden. That's not only far less than his 9-point win in 2016, but even less than Ted Cruz's 2.7% edge over Beto O'Rourke in the 2018 Senate race. In that cycle, Democrats flipped two seats in Congress and came within a hair of several more, including two that include large chunks of Austin. So you can imagine what an even weaker top-of-the-ticket performance for the GOP would lead to.

In both of those races, the GOP nominees – incumbent **Michael McCaul** in TX-10 and **Chip Roy** in the open TX-21 formerly held by **Lamar Smith** – ran ahead of Cruz, but close enough to make them instant targets this cycle. Though both districts are products of past gerrymanders to fracture the Austin vote, they're also both dominated by the exact sort of suburban voters who are fleeing the Republican Party in great haste, and who helped O'Rourke win outright in TX-10 and come within 0.1% of Cruz in TX-21.

McCaul's challenger, **Mike Siegel**, lost by less than 4 points in 2018 and has basically continued running ever since, and he tells the *Chronicle* his campaign feels “that we're on the cusp of a fantastic victory. There's just a lot more excitement and engagement around this race, and a lot of belief that Democrats can finally flip Texas. We have a tremendous amount of momentum.”

On paper, the race is a toss-up, or slightly

leaning the incumbent's way, based on polling and the race-ranking forecasts. Siegel is raising major money, is on TV in both Austin and Houston, and has made tens of thousands of voter calls to replace door-knocking in the age of COVID-19. The former teacher and Austin city staff attorney was seen, even as a returning candidate, as a somewhat risky choice by more centrist Dems who backed his two primary opponents, but his grassroots support from labor, enviros, and Sanders progressives is translating now into “a tremendous volunteer effort,” he says.

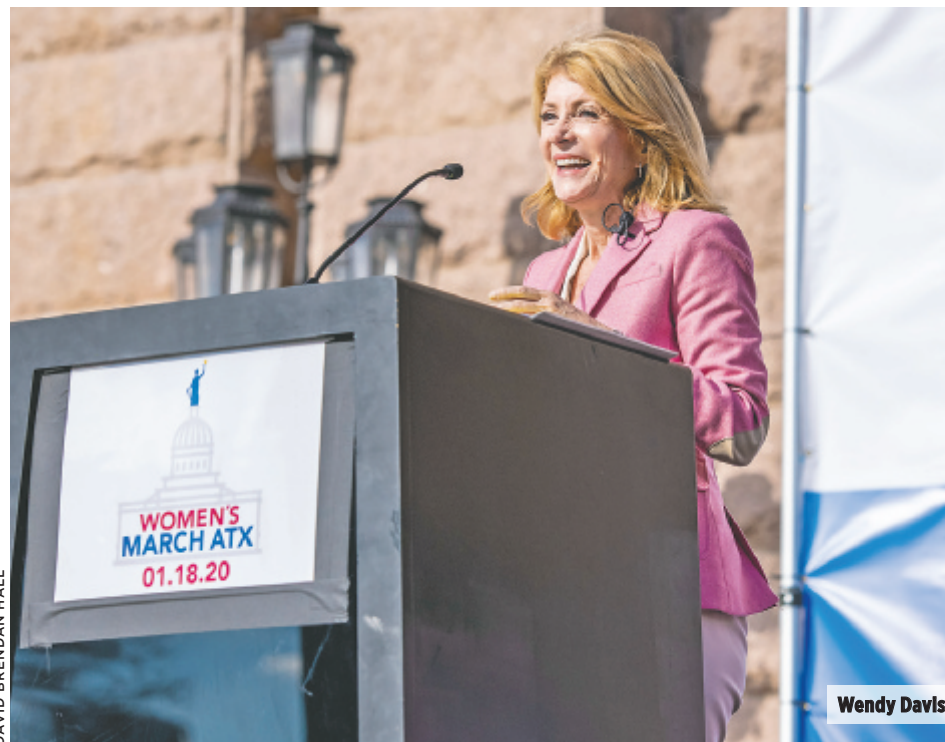
That includes in Harris County, where McCaul has usually blown away his Democratic opponents in Katy, Cypress, Tomball, and “historically some pretty conservative suburbs,” Siegel says. “But there has been a ton of demographic change even in the last three years, and a lot of work by Democrats in those areas.” That includes some of the closest Texas

Statehouse races last cycle and this, where Houston-area progressives, party groups, and unions are going full-bore to hold and flip seats and thus the chamber. “I think Austin will always have a stronger base of Democratic activists, but I'm very optimistic about all the work being done.”

Ever since his 2018 close call, McCaul has “made a big show of ‘taking the race seriously,’” in Siegel's view, and has been advertising since July to make sure voters

**“I'm a better candidate because I've had the blessing of both winning and losing elections.”**

WENDY DAVIS



Wendy Davis

know “that I'm a communist socialist [who's] dangerous for Texas. So we have to push back against that narrative.” Although Siegel sees the attention from McCaul as evidence that the race is truly competitive, he agrees that the district is more concerned with the mainstream issues defining the cycle nationwide – “health care and jobs. We need universal health care, and 50 million people have applied for unemployment, and we're not doing very much at all to make sure it's safe to go back to work.” He's also focused on climate – “how we can have this conversation in Texas about transitioning to a renewable economy, repurposing the Fayette coal plant” – but thinks the first priority of a new Democratic D.C. “has to be voting rights.”

McCaul is no moderate, but he's pretty establishment, one of the wealthiest members of Congress, and has focused on national security issues that are somewhat less polarizing. Chip Roy, on the other hand, is very much a culture warrior, who wants to be seen and heard and, almost certainly, to hold higher office, much like his former bosses Ted Cruz and Ken Paxton. Unfortunately for him, he now faces an opponent with all the clout he aspires to have: **Wendy Davis**.

Ever since the former state senator, iconic for her 2013 filibuster championing reproductive rights, and 2014 nominee for governor declared her interest in the TX-21 race, she's been a fundraising juggernaut, substantially outpacing Roy, and a magnet for attention from both state and national

## Lawsuits Flying as Abbott Curbs Ballot Boxes

The **Texas League of United Latin American Citizens**, **League of Women Voters of Texas**, and two Texas voters struck back at Texas officials in a lawsuit filed in a federal court in Austin Thursday, Oct. 1, after Governor **Greg Abbott** issued a proclamation requiring Texas counties to limit hand-delivery sites for mail-in ballots to one location per county.

The **Texas Alliance for Retired Americans**, GOTV group **BigTent Creative**, and 65-year-old Dallas County voter **Laurie Jo-Straty** followed LULAC and LWVTX on Friday by filing a separate federal lawsuit against Abbott and Texas Secretary of State **Ruth Hughs**. The suit challenges the constitutionality of Abbott's order, calling it “a ploy to suppress the vote ... thinly veiled as an attempt to ‘enhance ballot security.’” Yet another lawsuit, in state district court, was filed

Monday by the **Brennan Center for Justice** on behalf of **Common Cause Texas** and the **Texas ADL**.

“In the midst of an election that is already underway, forcing such new burdens on voters who relied on a different set of election rules to make their voting plan, is unreasonable, unfair, and unconstitutional,” the LULAC suit argues. “In-person voting is simply not an option for many absentee-eligible Texas LULAC and LWVTX members. Elderly, sick, and disabled members – the only categories of persons eligible to vote absentee by dropping off their ballot in person – simply cannot risk deadly exposure to COVID-19,” they write. “As such, absentee ballots are the only option for many eligible Texas LULAC and LWVTX members to exercise the franchise without jeopardizing their own health or the health of their families.”

Abbott issued last week's order, which also requires election officials to allow poll workers to oversee ballot delivery, to ostensibly “ensure greater transparency and ... help stop attempts at illegal voting,” he said in a statement. However, plaintiffs in the LULAC suit argue that Abbott hasn't in fact identified any “security benefit to restricting the number of properly staffed ballot drop-off locations in a county and indeed there is none.” Both federal suits point out how Abbott is making major changes to the election process only a month away from Election Day – a move Texas state officials argued was too late in a separate lawsuit over straight-ticket voting; Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** had said earlier that “last-minute changes to our voting process would do nothing but stir chaos.”

While the lawsuits play out, the Travis County Clerk's Office at 5501 Airport Blvd. is now the only location where Travis County voters may hand-deliver their ballots, Mon.-Fri., 8am-5pm, through Election Day, Nov. 3. – *Beth Sullivan*

Dems. The district, which connects Austin to San Antonio and includes much of the Hill Country, is slightly redder than TX-10, largely because it's older and wealthier, with lots of veterans and retirees. But that lines up well with Davis' and the Dems' focus on health care; voters "are looking for leaders who will listen to experts and get the virus under control, [and] fight to make sure they have access to insurance," she tells the *Chronicle* via email.

In this race, while Roy echoes McCaul in portraying his challenger as a communist and a handmaiden of antifa (most recently at a San Antonio debate Tuesday evening), it's the incumbent who most easily wears the mantle of an extremist – not just for being **anti-Affordable Care Act** and **anti-mask**, but for single-handedly holding up federal

disaster relief for Texas that had unanimous bipartisan support, in order to send Nancy Pelosi a message, or something. "Our campaign is working to make sure people know how dangerous Roy is," Davis says, "and then how and where they can vote him out."

Within the GOP bubble, Davis has a reputation not only as "Abortion Barbie" but also as a loser after her doomed-from-the-start 2014 challenge to now-Gov. **Greg Abbott**. Her strength in the current race has caught some off guard. "I'm a better candidate because I've had the blessing of both winning and losing elections," she says. "I've learned from both experiences how to listen, how to fight, and how to connect with ... Texans [who] need someone looking out for them and their interests. Chip Roy has failed in that regard." ■



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Protests in Downtown Austin on Aug. 1

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# After the Arrests

Local lawyers, activists come to the aid of protesters

BY BRANT BINGAMON

“I have a podium, so I guess that makes me the press secretary,” said **George Lobb**, one of the 30 or so attorneys who make up the **Austin Lawyers Guild**, which has been getting those arrested in anti-policing protests out of jail and providing representation to those who want it, free of charge. Lobb says ALG has helped 120 of the 200 or so arrested since late May; he has personally taken between 15 and 20 cases. “They’re doing something we can’t,” he said of the protesters, “because if I did something like that I might lose my law license. So [we’re] supporting the protests and sending a message to the government that the people are tired of getting fucked with.”

Lobb and others expect that most protesters will eventually have their charges dropped, but the process has just begun. Once a person is arrested for a misdemeanor, it usually takes the county attorney’s office at least two months to evaluate the evidence and decide whether to pursue the case. For those arrested for a felony, prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Office, the process takes longer. So far, only a handful have had their charges dropped.

Travis County Attorney **David Escamilla**, who’ll be replaced by **Delia Garza** in January, says each case is different and needs to be addressed individually. The most common charged offense has been obstructing a roadway, a class B misdemeanor. “Largely, we rely on dropping them

down to a class C misdemeanor,” Escamilla told the *Chronicle*. “Really, the more appropriate offense in those cases is ‘failure to obey an order from a law enforcement official.’ So it goes to JP [justice of the peace] court, and then you get a class C misdemeanor, where your liberty is not in jeopardy.” Class C charges are not punishable by jail time. “Then we use deferred disposition: Don’t get arrested again in the next three to six months for a class C, and the case ends up being never prosecuted and dismissed.”

But Lobb says even dismissed class C charges can be damaging to protesters’ lives if prosecutors don’t offer the chance to expunge the records. “Example: You get arrested for obstructing a highway because you’re protesting in the middle of a street, and for disorderly conduct because you’re shouting something obscene. And you happen to have a joint in your pocket; you get charged with three things. And they drop all of them except the obstruction of a highway and they give you a class C misdemeanor and you pay a \$100 fine on it. Well, none of those three charges can be expunged. Even though all of them were dismissed and one was dismissed under a reduction.”

Lobb says that in this scenario a person could be turned down for jobs and housing for something no more momentous, legally speaking, than a traffic ticket. “If someone were to ask you, ‘Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted?’ your answer

would have to be ‘yes,’ because you were arrested and the case wasn’t expunged. ... We’ve taken a position at Austin Lawyers Guild that if they’re gonna push us into a corner where we don’t get the expunction, then fuck it, we send all the cases to trial. Call your first witness, let’s go.”

Those whose cases have not yet been resolved face a similar situation, Lobb says, because questions about open criminal cases are common in applications for jobs and housing as well. Lobb said that with the pandemic having stalled jury trials, his clients may have to wait over a year to get their cases resolved. “So in other words, we here in Texas are charging you with a crime because we have a right to do it, but your right to a jury trial, no, fuck that, because we can’t manage that and we ignore scientists and pay attention to the politicians. So come back next year if you want a trial. And if you can’t get a job or can’t rent an apartment, that’s not our problem.”

Lobb is representing **Lisa Hogan**, who faces state jail felony charges for live-streaming the looting of the Capital Plaza Target on May 31. (Hogan was inaccurately identified in previous reporting, including by the *Chronicle*, as a member of the Mike Ramos Brigade. She’s never been a member of the group.) “As far as Lisa’s concerned, I’d be interested to see how the state of Texas is going to prove that someone reporting on an alleged looting is guilty of looting,” Lobb said. “Mere presence does not equate to guilt. ... If you want to record it, you can do that. Now, morally, are you responsible to Target? Well, that’s a discussion for you, Target, and the Flying Spaghetti Monster.”

Another group, the **Drop the Charges coalition**, has been recently organized to help arrestees, connecting them with attorneys from the ALG or elsewhere and offering money to those who want to use their own representation. “We also help emotionally, morally, and politically,” said **Olympia Garcia**, spokesperson for the group. “We want to make sure that these protesters know that if they get arrested, we’ll be waiting out there for them.” At their website, [www.dropthecharges2020.org](http://www.dropthecharges2020.org), people may make contributions, ask for help, and participate in pressure campaigns targeting Escamilla and District Attorney **Margaret Moore** (also being replaced in January, likely by **José Garza**).

The group also calls attention to Gov. **Greg Abbott**’s recent demagoguery to create new offenses for participating in a “riot.” Abbott’s proposal would also create felony charges for forming and participating in groups like ALG and Drop the Charges. “It’s a scare tactic and we understand that,” Garcia said. “[But] the increased repression is really important to talk about. Right-wingers want to go as far as criminalizing people who support protesters.”

Lobb has seen the proposal, too. “Reading it as it’s written, essentially myself and three other people [at ALG] would be guilty of a felony, third degree,” he said. Abbott “is basically going to outlaw the exercise of a constitutional right [that] goes back 800 years. Magna Carta-level shit, and he wants to outlaw it.” ■

Read our continuing coverage of Austin’s protests at [austinchronicle.com/black-lives-matter](http://austinchronicle.com/black-lives-matter).

**The protesters are “doing something we can’t, because if I did something like that I might lose my law license. So [we’re] supporting the protests and sending a message to the government that the people are tired of getting fucked with.”**

GEORGE LOBB, AUSTIN LAWYERS GUILD



JANA BIRCHUM



Leslie and State Rep. Celia Israel  
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Leslie with  
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# Council Put to the Test

An activist City Hall faces the verdict of Austin voters

BY AUSTIN SANDERS AND BETH SULLIVAN

Five City Council seats are up for election on Nov. 3; in four of them (Districts 4, 6, 7, and 10) incumbents face challengers who oppose their activist approaches to land use, public safety, mobility, and homelessness. In open D2, the leaders agree with Council's consensus and want to see change taken further. Except for D7, where there are only two candidates, all of these races could go to a December 15 run-off.

## D2: Young Progressives Square Off for Open Seat

As Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza departs for her new role as Travis County Attorney come January, the District 2 representative leaves behind a six-year legacy on the dais advocating for a district that historically has been underrepresented and underserved. Like Garza, none of the candidates to succeed her have held political office going into their Council bid. Leading the pack are David Chincanchan and Vanessa Fuentes, both young, progressive Democrats with the longest political résumés in the four-way race with Casey Ramos and Alex Strenger.

Ramos, who lost to Garza in her 2016 reelection bid, is a Dove Springs native and community activist whose priorities include flood mitigation infrastructure and protecting single-family home neighborhoods from high density. Strenger, who proposed building a dome around Austin in his unsuccessful 2018 mayoral campaign, strikes a less satirical tone this time around.

As a self-described entrepreneur who drives a pedicab, Strenger told us, "I am the working man that our so-called 'progressive' City Council claims to care so much about." He champions doubling the homestead tax exemption to 20% and creating more affordable housing for very low income households (30-50% of Austin's median income). He and Ramos both oppose Proposition A (Project Connect) and transferring funds away from the Austin Police Department, items with unanimous Council support that Ramos deemed "regressive."

Chincanchan, who served as chief of staff to District 3 Council Member Pio Renteria, and Fuentes, who until recently worked in health policy advocacy at the American Heart Association, both pledge to protect Austin's and D2's working-class families. In Dove Springs and Del Valle, Chincanchan told the *Chronicle*, "We have the opportunity to take the lessons that we've learned from the displacement [and] gentrification that we have seen in other parts of the Eastern Crescent and do things in a much better way." He advocates his vision for



Council Member Greg Casar

"equitable, transit-oriented development" – investing in more affordable and accessible housing in tandem with Project Connect buildout – as a way to alleviate displacement. "The people that we're trying to serve are actually able to remain, to thrive, and to take advantage of infrastructure improvements." Included in that is revising Austin's Land Development Code: "What we have seen under [the existing LDC] is sprawl, flooding, displacement, gentrification, and other kinds of environmental degradation, and so it's clear to me that we need to act," he said.

Fuentes' platform centers on improving community engagement, health equity, and housing protections for Southeast Austinites. She said she's committed to supporting a fully funded anti-displacement program, as well as expanding Austin's right-to-return and right-to-stay pilot program. Fuentes has positioned herself as a fierce advocate for Del Valle, a community that Fuentes calls "the most marginalized of the most marginalized." She said Del Valle residents have been "promised a lot of things from our leaders" regarding development and infrastructure that fail to materialize. A case-in-point is the long-promised H-E-B at the Velocity Crossing development: Though the grocery giant purchased the site in 2016, H-E-B reps have said recently there are no immediate plans to build a store in the area. H-E-B "told us that they're waiting on a certain number of rooftops to come into the area before they'll break ground," said Fuentes, who has organized for food security as a member of the Del Valle Community Coalition.

If elected, Fuentes promises to bring to the dais a perspective that's "not beholden

to powerful special interests or political interests." Chincanchan, touting a decade in local politics, argues it's not just his institutional knowledge of Council but relationships with City Hall players that position him to better advocate for policy change. He said, "At the end of the day, on Council, you can't do anything with one vote."

– Beth Sullivan

## D4: A Council Veteran Seeks Transformation

Earlier this year, Council Member Greg Casar was considering resigning to run for the open Texas Senate seat now held by Sarah Eckhardt. Ultimately, he elected to stay at City Hall. "I haven't second-guessed that or regretted it for a second," Casar said of his decision. Now the two-term incumbent seeks another four years representing Northeast Austin in a race that's drawn new and familiar challengers.

Ramesses II Setepenre is a political newcomer and self-described ecosocialist running on a "all-things-progressive" platform. In a recent candidate forum, Setepenre, citing a negative experience working as a contractor at City Hall, credited their candidacy to Casar failing to address their concerns. "I'm running and representing myself and challenging [Casar's] position," he said. "I don't need no man to represent me."

Louis Herrin III, an engineer, returns yet again to challenge Casar after losing to him in both 2014 and 2016. Chief among Herrin's priorities are reallocating funding to the Austin Police Department and reinstating Austin's camping ban – reversing two efforts Casar spearheaded in his current



Vanessa Fuentes



David Chincanchan



Council Member Jimmy Flannigan

JANA BIRCHUM

term. Despite the opposition, Casar's reelection campaign appears to face little threat; he's reported over \$100,000 in campaign contributions – almost quadrupling Herrin's approximate \$26,000 (Setepenre reported raising no money).

If reelected, Casar views another four years as an opportunity to pursue more systemic, transformative change, specifically in the realms of renewable energy; transitioning funds away from policing and mass incarceration and toward community-based safety; and a citywide anti-displacement plan. "We are swimming upstream, trying to push towards more economic and racial fairness, but we know that federal and state leaders are pushing really hard the other way," he said. Although proud of Council's work to end Austin's juvenile curfew and pass the city's Fair Chance hiring ordinance, he called such efforts important but incremental steps toward progress.

As Austin recovers from the COVID-19 crisis, Casar believes such foundational change is paramount in protecting Austin's most vulnerable. "When we come out the other side of the pandemic, we can become even more unequal," he said, emphasizing the need for stronger worker protections and job security. The city has a responsibility to create a public jobs program, said Casar, who sees the benefits of Project Connect (Proposition A) as twofold: A comprehensive mass transit system that could create thousands of public jobs. "We need to create a real pipeline from communities that have been hit by the pandemic and are now unemployed or underemployed into union training programs, and then directly putting folks to work in union jobs on these large public infrastructure projects." – B.S.

## D6: Flannigan Faulted for Progressive Positions

All three of the candidates challenging Council Member Jimmy Flannigan in the race to represent residents in Northwest Austin's District 6 are running to his right on the issues that have consumed City Hall.

Mackenzie Kelly, a former volunteer firefighter who ran unsuccessfully for the D6 seat in 2014, rose to renewed prominence in Austin's conservative circles as a vocal critic of the City Council votes to loosen restrictions on public camping, panhandling, and sitting and lying. Retired Texas Department of Criminal Justice employee Dee Harrison told us in August that allowing public camping and canceling police cadet classes were both "boneheaded" decisions. Dr. Jennifer Mushtaler, a practicing OB-GYN and president of the River Place neighborhood group, is less of a doctrinaire conservative but is likewise critical of Flannigan's votes on homelessness and police spending as well as on land use – particularly a controversial zoning case in her neighborhood from 2019.

Flannigan, meanwhile, stands alone as a progressive in what was, back in 2014, the new 10-1 council's reddest district, where he lost a close race to perennial GOP candidate Don Zimmerman. After prevailing in the 2016 rematch, Flannigan has seen D6, which includes all of Austin's portion of Williamson County, get progressively bluer; freshman state Reps. James Talarico, D-Round Rock, and John Bucy III, D-Cedar Park, both represent portions of the district.

Flannigan says his votes to decriminalize homelessness and to reallocate millions of

CONTINUED ON P.24

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## COUNCIL CONTINUED FROM P.23

public-safety dollars from the Austin Police Department reflect the shifting politics and priorities of his district – a premise now being put to the electoral test. In March, Kelly became president of Take Back Austin, one of several groups pressuring Council to reverse its changes to the camping and no-sit/no-lie ordinances. Though unsuccessful to date, those efforts have afforded Kelly a platform to court conservative voters and criticize the slow progress Austin is making in housing those now living under overpasses and in other public encampments.

Take Back Austin has dovetailed with Save Austin Now – the failed effort to put re-criminalizing homelessness on the ballot, led by Travis County Republican Party Chair Matt Mackowiak – and lobbying by the Austin Police Association. Those alliances strengthened in June after the killing of George Floyd sparked a summer of unrest across the country over police brutality. In August, Council approved a 2021 budget that immediately cut millions of dollars in police funding (mostly from canceling three cadet classes) and set in motion plans to reallocate up to \$150 million from APD into other departments, including Emergency Medical Services. “We need new ambulances and more medics,” Kelly said of Council’s plan, “but it shouldn’t be at the price of public safety of the community.”

While Kelly has criticized Flannigan’s support of Council’s votes on homelessness and police spending, Mushtaler (who also wants to reinstate the camping ban and fund the canceled cadet classes) has emerged as the candidate most willing to attack the incumbent directly. On her website, in interviews, and at forums, Mushtaler has pressed the case that Flannigan is out of touch with D6 voters. Her dissatisfaction is more personal, tied to an issue that’s closer to home.

Last year, River Place residents opposed a zoning case before Council that would allow for the construction of townhomes on a 42-acre lot in the area. The fight was bitter, with neighbors framing future development in the wildfire-prone area as a threat to their community. Ultimately, Council approved a compromise proposed by Flannigan allowing construction of 30 townhomes at the site. The developer will not be able to build to their full entitlement of 100 units until they build a secondary access road, meant to ease traffic should emergency evacuation be necessary in the future.

“It’s more complex than that,” Mushtaler told the *Chronicle* in September. “We have to really watch how we manage growth and development ... the question is how do you make it safe.” She criticized Flannigan for going against the staff recommendation which would have limited the number of townhomes allowed at the site to 45; allowing for more dense construction, she said, would put the current and future residents on the street in danger. “He went against his own constituents and you ask me why I have a problem with it? There’s your answer.”

Flannigan is confident that the time he’s spent learning the district during his first term has informed his work on Council, and that even his divisive votes reflect the interests of a fast-growing and fast-changing part of the city. He will know for sure on Nov. 3, or Dec. 15 if D6 heads to a run-off. “Correcting misrepresentations from the GOP is an incredibly frequent activity,” Flannigan told us recently. “But when folks talk through these issues and express their concerns, I think they walk away with a better understanding of how thoughtful and pragmatic these decisions are when described accurately.” – *Austin Sanders*

## D7: Land-Use Politics Take Center Stage

In the race for District 7 in Central and North Austin, incumbent Leslie Pool has drawn a sole challenger in Morgan Witt, an educator and first-time political candidate whose campaign prioritizes housing and land use – Austin’s perennial hotbed of divisiveness, both on and off the dais.

Overall, Witt’s views on land use remain rooted in updating the Land Development Code to allow for more compact and dense housing as a means to address Austin’s housing shortage. “We need to diversify housing options or we’re never going to stop the sprawl outside of our city limits,” she said. In order to make Austin more affordable for middle- and low-income families, Witt supports easing zoning restrictions in Central Austin’s single-family neighborhoods.

That point of contrast between the two candidates has put Pool, who has historically favored limiting upzoning, in the position to answer for her vote with the Council minority against proposed revisions to the LDC rewrite. Pool said her goal was to find a middle course in a battle where “the lines that were drawn ... have been really divisive.” Rather than making blanket uniform changes to zoning, Pool has voiced support of approaching land use through small area planning of groups of adjacent neighborhoods: “It’s not as granular as neighborhood plans,” she said, “but you bring all those folks in and they have literal, boots-on-the-ground knowledge about their neighborhoods; they know where the problems are, they know where the successes are.”

In response to questions about navigating zoning protests and distributing affordable housing citywide, Pool argues the city can only do so much when bound by state law. “The city is limited to implementing only voluntary bonus programs, so we can’t do anything other than incentivize, and we don’t have enough money,” she said. Witt acknowledges the limitations at the state level, but supports looking into other areas where the city might try to address affordable housing outside of the LDC, offering amending Imagine Austin, the city’s 30-year comprehensive plan, as a place to start.

If reelected, Pool said she’s committed to supporting a LDC revision in conformance with Imagine Austin, and “not the other way around.” She views efforts like small area planning as an opportunity for the city to begin to “build the trust back up” on how Austin approaches land use. “Because that’s what the city’s gonna have to do, as the city’s broken trust with the electorate.” – *B.S.*

## D10: In Seven-Car Race, Alter Finds Center Lane

With the most candidates (seven) of all the 2020 City Council races, the Central and West Austin District 10 appears most likely to end in a December run-off. Predicting who will make it past Nov. 3 is not easy.

Four of the six challengers to incumbent Council Member Alison Alter are on her right. Although Alter was one of two CMs to vote against loosening restrictions on public camping in June 2019 (D9’s Kathie Tovo was the other), she has not escaped the conservative backlash to that vote. Robert Thomas, Jennifer Virden, Ben Easton, and Belinda Greene have each said they would push to reinstate the camping ban.

Thomas, a longtime state official who finished third in the eight-way D10 race in 2014, has the best shot at making a run-off. He’s campaigned hard against the city’s strategy for ending homelessness. “Converting motels” into supportive housing facilities “is a fundamental abuse of taxpayer dollars and waste of time,” Thomas told the *Chronicle*. Like many conservatives, Thomas said the city should implement programs like the Community First! Village in Eastern Travis County, or the Haven for Hope in San Antonio to reduce the unsheltered homeless population. (City staff studied setting up authorized encampments as Haven for Hope has, but recommended that Council not do so; Gov. Greg Abbott on his own established such an encampment on state-owned land in Southeast Austin.)

Alter did join the unanimous Council vote to adopt a budget that cut \$21 million from the Austin Police Department – funds which the city will redirect to bolster other social services, including the Austin-Travis County EMS Community Health Paramedics team. Alter says she’s responding to growing calls from the community to change how public safety is achieved in Austin. “Some feel they’re not receiving the level of safety they expect and some feel their neighborhoods are overpoliced,” Alter told us. “We have tried the route of growing the system by adding police officers and it hasn’t worked. Now, with the help of public safety experts and community leaders, we are trying a new approach.”

Thomas, Virden, and Greene all support rescheduling the police cadet classes whose funding is now being reinvested in public safety alternatives. When asked how the city should increase funding for preventive health care or violence prevention – as Council has indicated is its plan – if cadet classes are reinstated, Virden wrote in an email that she “doesn’t believe” that’s why the classes were canceled and that additional



Morgan Witt

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Pooja Sethi

funding could come from the General Fund “as it always has for that purpose.”

Alter has earned respect from her constituents living in some of Austin’s wealthiest single-family neighborhoods for consistently voting against efforts to revise the city’s Land Development Code in ways intended to make it easier for developers to build smaller and denser housing. For Alter, the LDC revision, which is now tied up in court, had gone off course – shifting away from a simplified product that would allow for greater housing density in targeted areas and toward a code filled with complicated bonus programs intended to maximize the number of units (some of which would be income-restricted) that a property owner could build per lot in most parts of the city.

Instead, Alter thinks the code revision needs to be done in a way that more closely adheres to the vision laid out in Imagine Austin, the comprehensive vision plan approved by the last at-large Council in 2012. “We have to understand that there’s a certain amount of genius in having different nodes [for development] and building them out for a sustainable city,” Alter told the *Chronicle*. “We should be making decisions that support that and not try to build everywhere.”

Most of the candidates challenging Alter align with her on land use. But Pooja Sethi, Alter’s earliest and most prominent opponent, has positioned herself closer to the Council majority on the LDC, and has thus been embraced by the city’s urbanist advocates as their candidate of choice. (Easton is a self-described free-market capitalist who welcomes development in Austin, but he’s also a libertarian who doesn’t believe

systemic racism is real and said at a recent candidate forum, “You can consider me elitist, you can consider me privileged. I did grow up that way, but I work hard for my money; I pay taxes.”)

Sethi’s actual land use positions have been less clear. At a recent candidate forum, she expressed support for “transit-oriented development with affordable housing, diverse building types, and [accessory dwelling units] that align with” Project Connect. But she added in the same answer that she supports “density where it’s appropriate,” which is the same argument Alter has used to oppose increased entitlements.

Unlike the other challengers, Sethi agrees with Council’s moves on the APD budget. She served on both the Mayor’s Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities and the Office of Police Oversight Task Force, she’s a practicing immigration attorney, and she says her understanding of such injustices would be crucial as the city embarks on an effort to reimagine public safety. “I would fight to make sure whatever dollars we’re investing are hitting every Austinite in ways that are needed,” she told us in August.

Describing her plan to establish “community centers” throughout the city that would provide resources and information to people, Sethi said, “The program would bring health, educational, and preventive resources into community centers in different regions. It all works together. When we talk about these services and support systems, we need to invest in resources that are regionally based to get them into more communities.”

- A.S.

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JANA BIRCHUM

# Big Mess on Campus

AISD students can choose to keep learning from home. Their teachers have fewer options. **BY CLARA ENCE MORSE**

When Tania Tasneem first learned she had to return to campus this fall, she tried to put the news out of her mind. She had to – virtual class was about to start. So she closed the news article, which, for her and many fellow teachers, was the first confirmation that returning would be mandatory – not a notice from the Austin school district – and got to work.

Tasneem would be required to return to her classroom at Kealing Middle School on Monday, Oct. 5, less than three weeks after reading that article. But she went through her classes, teaching her newly digitized Earth science curriculum to 13-year-olds over Zoom, for two days. She put on a good face and put aside her worries about her co-workers, her students, her job, and her health. Then she logged into a Thursday staff meeting and broke down crying while trying to form her questions about returning to campus. Her principal had also not known about the policy before learning through the media earlier that week.

When English teacher Chloe Cardinale shared an article about the return with co-workers at Austin ISD's Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy magnet high school, many thought it could not be true. It seemed “unbelievable,” she said, after a summer consumed with preparation for online learning; after an eleventh hour delay – until after Labor Day – of the start of the school year; after hours of professional development to adapt to Zoom and BLEND and

online pedagogy; after two weeks of non-disastrous remote learning in September; and after surveys showed that only a third of AISD students would choose to return to campus, that teachers would be given three weeks notice that they *must* return for the first day of in-person learning.

But it was true.

The Texas Education Agency's COVID-19 guidelines require all school districts to give parents the option to send students to class in person for part of the fall. Although AISD will be limiting capacity on its campuses through Nov. 2, at least some – AISD is prioritizing the youngest, special education, and newcomer students – must return to campus for the district to receive its state funding. The district also hopes to increase enrollment after a decline of more than 5,000 students for the fall semester, with pre-K and kindergarten being especially impacted. That represents more than \$50 million in lost attendance-based state funding – a devastating blow to a district already shaken by the fiscal impact of the pandemic.

Publicly, AISD has portrayed its return to campus as an orderly, individualized, student-centered approach. Some teachers have a very different story to tell; in interviews with the *Chronicle*, 11 teachers across the district described a muddled, messy process, which seemed in constant flux.

All of these teachers described “absolute-ly no” guidance on returning to campus before last week, except through rumors

and the media. Some did not receive specific information about their campus protocols and logistics until Friday, Oct. 2. Several said they'd had nightmares or panic attacks about the return, supplanting the usual first-week-of-school anxiety.

“Part of what's so frustrating is that we still really don't know what to expect,” math teacher Andrew Stepek said in an interview a week before school began. “It's very tough not to know what ... my job is going to look like a week from now, or in two or three weeks from now.”

## HOW WOULD THINGS WORK?

Jenna Martin works at Kealing as a social studies teacher and an instructional coach, and specializes in educational leadership. The worst part of this fall for her, besides the lack of sleep, has been the inability to give input on the return and the sense that her voice is not valued.

“We were surveyed once, and it was on the eve of our contracts [in May]. Then after that, we have been not surveyed, not asked for creative solutions,” Martin said. “When I as a parent get five surveys, and me as a teacher get zero, that's bullshit. That is not a democratic transparent institution.”

In a press statement, AISD mentioned three teacher input meetings, and a task force which included teachers, at the beginning of summer. Although the reopening task force that worked throughout the summer contained no teachers, Superintendent Stephanie Elizalde announced on Sept. 28 that she had assembled a committee of 40 teachers, whom she spoke with last Wednesday and again this Tuesday.

Lack of communication makes logistical challenges more difficult. For instance, many middle and high schools are following the “pod” model, in which each classroom holds one small group of students, who attend their different classes on Zoom, while a teacher monitors them and teaches their classes virtually. Questions were raised: Will audio work with up to 10 people on Zoom calls in the same room? Will students be provided headphones? Who will aid students with technical problems? How will bathroom breaks work? What if students take their masks off? What about lunch?

Spotty communication from the district also heightened tensions about AISD's strict accommodations policy. Initially, exceptions from the mandatory return policy were only available for teachers who were themselves pregnant, immunocompromised, or of advancing age. “Third parties,” including

children, spouses, and parents, did not qualify – teachers who share a home with immunocompromised people were still expected to teach on campus.

One teacher, who asked to remain anonymous due to fear of repercussions from the district, told the *Chronicle* he had requested accommodations due to a partner with asthma and been denied. (He returned to campus on Monday.) “It has made me really angry,” he said. “The unit that we're going to start on October 5 in my class is ethics ... I'm teaching my students different ideas about how to make ethical choices, and I think that they're going to see some counterexamples to that with this idea of pushing everybody back [to campus]. It doesn't necessarily feel like the ethical choice.”

This teacher said the situation had made him seriously consider pursuing other career options. “It's hard thinking about different directions when I'm in a job that I love,” he said. “But at the same time, I'm feeling much less certain that I can trust the leadership in the district to make safe choices.”

By October 5, teachers had requested 998 accommodations, of which 713 had been granted, 65 were pending, 219 were “inactive,” and one had been denied, out of the district's 5,500+ classroom teachers. The Education Austin union announced that 850 teachers had committed to stay home and teach virtually on Monday, regardless of the policy.

Education Austin met with AISD leaders throughout last week about expanding options for teachers who didn't feel safe returning to campus. After these talks, Elizalde said she plans to give principals more flexibility in handling the return to their campuses,

and that teachers who did not take a sick day or show up on Monday will be handled on a case-by-case basis. “The district is continuing to work with Education Austin and we are looking forward to their proposal that would ensure all student needs are met,” Austin ISD said in an emailed statement. “All staff members are expected to return to work unless they have an approved leave or accommodation. Our campus principals are working closely with their teams to find creative solutions that support staff needs and the needs of the students on campus.”

## “IT'S GOING TO HURT KIDS”

Kealing theatre teacher Laurie Pena Brooks has wanted to be a teacher ever since she was in elementary school, toting an “I Love School” book bag. She's found a

CONTINUED ON P.28

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Austin Business Journal  
Sept. 28, 2020

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**AISD** CONTINUED FROM P.26

home teaching in AISD for the past 22 years. She's also the primary caretaker for her mother, who is over 70 and has cancer, and her brother, who is disabled. Pena Brooks says she has only left her house since March for doctors' visits, medication, and groceries. So when her accommodation request for her to stay home and take care of them was denied, she felt betrayed.

Teaching over Zoom is the hardest she's ever worked, she said, and although it's not perfect, there have been promising moments. Pena Brooks worries about a "severely diminished" quality of instruction when teachers must monitor in-person student pods in addition to instruction. But she hadn't been consulted by the district about returning protocols – none of the teachers had, at the time of our interviews – and she felt "left out of the conversation."

"I'm not going back. I can't go back," Pena Brooks said through sobs in a Sep. 23 interview. "I want a vaccine, I want to take the vaccine, and I want to eventually make it back into my classroom, yes. But to be in a free-for-all and risk it?" Although she couldn't get an accommodation to care for her family, Pena Brooks applied for and received a personal health accommodation last week; she'll be teaching at home for the rest of the semester.

Another teacher, who asked to remain anonymous, faced the same choice. This single mother, who has been in AISD for 23 years, requested an accommodation to look after the children she lives with, including an immunocompromised child, and was denied. This fall has been difficult: She has been pacing, losing her train of thought in the middle of sentences, shaking awake in the middle of the night with nightmares, and watching her son go through the same. In addition, she said, she's not usually one to speak out at work in staff meetings. So why did she raise her voice now?

"They don't care about our lives," she said, slowly and shakily, in an interview last week. "Our lives are just literally being

treated like they can just be disposed of. That's what pushed me over the edge."

This teacher also sent in a separate accommodation request for personal health reasons and got notice on Friday that she could continue teaching from her home. Teachers without those accommodations who live with immunocompromised people or are caring for their children face the difficult choice of returning, taking what leave they have available, or resigning.

"A lot of teachers are going to quit," said a different veteran educator, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "And it's the best teachers. ... It's the teachers that literally are doing it because they still enjoy it even if they don't necessarily have to teach anymore, and they're the ones that we're going to lose."

As of Oct. 6, AISD had 86 vacancies for classroom teachers (not including substitutes) and 120 for teaching assistants; more than 100 teachers have taken leave, and several schools have 10 or more open positions. Sarah Harrelson, a LASA math teacher who has two children, said she worries about the quality of her own children's education if long-time teachers are replaced with substitutes or, as Elizalde suggested to the board of trustees, with central office staff who are qualified to teach.

Although the return to campus is meant as a return to normalcy, the possibility remains that students' lives and education will be disrupted more as teachers choose to leave the profession. The veteran educator said of the aggressive return policy and increased stress on teachers, "At the end of the day, it's going to hurt kids. You take care of teachers because teachers are the ones that are taking care of the kids."

She continued, "Every scenario where teachers quit [or] take leave because they don't want to go in on October 5, they don't feel well emotionally to go in – every single one of those scenarios, kids are the ones that lose out. Every single one." ■



**Remember:  
Election Day is  
Tuesday, November 3.**

Stay informed with our ongoing election coverage, endorsements, and more.

**THE AUSTIN  
CHRONICLE**

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[Austintexas.gov/algae](https://austintexas.gov/algae)



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# Noelita LUGO

for AISD Trustee At-Large

**Early Voting**

October 13th-  
October 30th  
2020

**Election Day**

November  
3rd  
2020

**Noelita has over 20 years of experience in public service. She has served on the Pease Elementary PTA and is a co-founder of Save Austin Schools.**

**The Austin community supports our public schools and wants to feel pride in the work of AISD. Austin ISD can be a school district we can all feel proud of, once it reflects an alignment of our values and our educational practices.**

**VOTE Noelita Lugo!**

Learn more at  
[NoelitaForAISD.com](https://NoelitaForAISD.com)



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THERE ARE 8,000,000  
STORIES IN THE

## NAKED CITY

BY THE CHRONICLE  
EDITORIAL STAFF

PHOTO BY RYAN CONWAY, GENSLER

Getting Out and  
Getting Distanced With  
PARKSPACE

The Austin Foundation for Architecture, in collaboration with Austin Parks and Recreation, is bringing something big to local green spaces. PARKSPACE is a site-specific installation series that uses eco-friendly turf paint and aims to delineate spaces where people can come together to enjoy their favorite outdoor activities, from picnics to yoga to relaxing in the sun.

The initiative is designed with native Texas wildflowers in mind, along with their colors and patterns. PARKSPACE brings people together while reminding participants of social distancing guidelines. More than that, the design is meant to visualize social distancing guidelines by helping people stay 6 feet apart. But quite interestingly, it is initiatives like this that indeed bring the community together – because we could all use some downtime outside.

“We realized there was a need to help Austinites navigate this new normal safely,” says Gerardo Gandy of design think tank Gensler and one of the people behind the immersive artwork.

The initiative offers a refreshing change that proves creativity and innovation in design can make a difference. Each of the sites also has signage that’s educational, with some history of each wildflower and some fun facts. “Everybody, no matter what age, is looking for something stimulating to do. It was important for

us to keep that in mind as we created PARKSPACE,” says Gandy.

With six installations in total, Gandy says it wasn’t just about covering mainstream spots. “The first installation we did was at a spot in East Austin, which was actually the hardest hit by COVID.”

Proudly deemed “a COVID intervention” by its creators, PARKSPACE has already been put to use in various ways: from events for women’s suffrage to small (socially distanced) concerts. “Some of the groundskeepers at Republic Square even started coming up with new games you can play, like you stand in one of the squares and throw a ball or Frisbee as far as you can and make sure that it lands in another square. A bonus point if your dog fetches it and brings it back,” says Gandy with a smile.

“We plan to keep the two in Long Center and Bat Observation area maintained until mid-November, to coincide with Austin Design Week. We’ve also talked about certain communities taking ownership to maintain them,” says Ingrid Spencer, executive director for the Austin Foundation for Architecture and its sister organization, AIA Austin.

PARKSPACE offers something in high demand during the temperate months in Austin: a healthy, safe way to spend time outside. Whether you choose to play with your dog or read a book and soak up some vitamin D, take time to notice those around you, no matter how socially distanced they may be. Our needs to have social experiences can still be fulfilled; all it takes is an open mind, empathy, and some out-of-the-box (but literally in-the-box) thinking. – Niti Majethia

Young Entrepreneurs  
“Dream Like a Teen”

If there’s anything we need right now, it’s a little hope for the future. Saturday’s “Dream Like a Teen” virtual roundtable offered plenty of it.

Whole Kids Foundation’s Tristana Pirkl hosted “Best of Austin” winner Mikaila Ulmer, whom you may know from her lemonade brand, Me & the Bees (fka BeeSweet), in a discussion with three other young entrepreneurs to inspire and educate young people interested in their own business ventures. Me & the Bees started when Ulmer was only 4 years old and had been stung twice by bees, and her parents wanted young Mikaila to learn about bees to quell her fear. Fear became fascination as she learned how crucial bees are to the ecosystem, and drove her passion to educate others and save the bees. That coincided with her great-granny Helen passing along a cookbook with a flaxseed lemonade recipe, to which Mikaila added a twist of honey. Ulmer started out with youth business competitions Austin Lemonade Day and Acton Children’s Business Fair as a kindergartner and was featured on *Shark Tank*, and the business began to grow as local shops signed on to distribute the product. Now you can find her lemonade on grocery store shelves all over town.

“Dream Like a Teen” included two young entrepreneurs from the Minneapolis area, Michael Vang of Roots for the Home Team and Elicia Powell of Green Garden Bakery. Both ventures focus on healthy food, with Roots offering unique, nourishing salads and Green Garden providing veggie-based desserts like jalapeño chocolate chip cookies and green tomato cakes. Laura Martinez represented Philadelphia’s Rebel

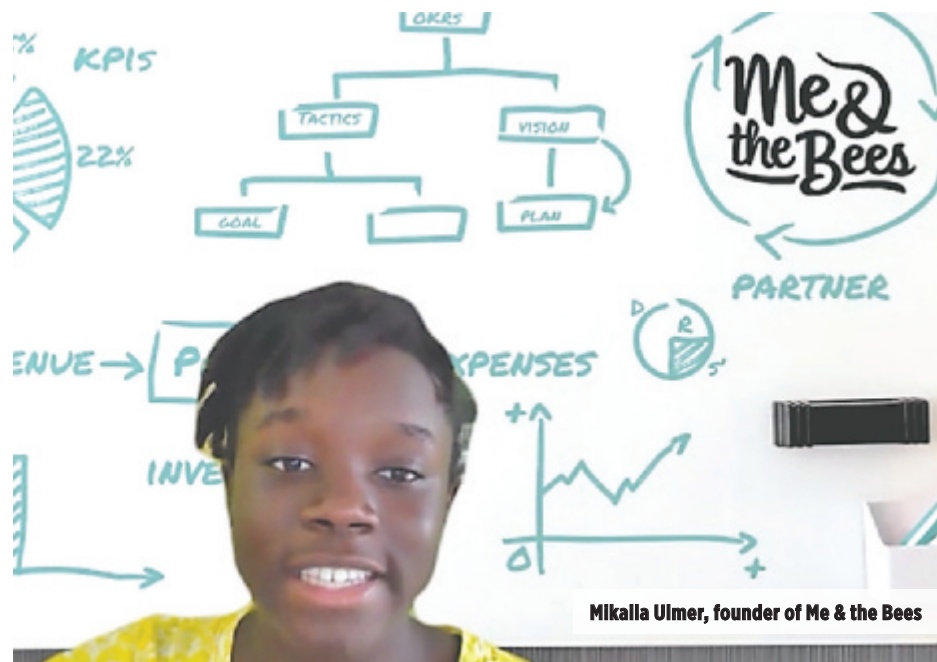
Ventures, whose goal is creating healthy food for schools, and their Rebel Crumbles is a complete nutritious breakfast in a bar that’s distributed in stores and schools all over the Philly area.

When asked if financial resources are crucial to starting a business, all agreed that intangible assets like passion, drive, and focus were most important. Ulmer pointed out that there are abundant free resources online, such as graphic design programs and informational YouTube videos, and she provided a portion of her new book, *Bee Fearless: Dream Like a Kid*, via email to every participant.

A common theme was resilience, which is another thing we could all use nowadays. Vang’s Roots for the Home Team pivoted during the pandemic from stadium concession sales to providing their salads to essential workers so that busy medical staff could grab a quick, nutritious meal, and Martinez’s Rebel Ventures began developing online resources to help families create healthy, delicious meals at home.

When asked what adults could do to help, the advice was to view kids as individuals and take them seriously. If your child approaches you with an idea, don’t dismiss it out of hand; do research with them. Adults are encouraged to do presentations or mentorships with youth organizations and simply support youth-run endeavors with donations or by purchasing the product.

It was inspiring to hear from a panel of articulate, passionate young people who are working toward a mission of giving back to their communities. With young leaders like these panelists, we can be confident that our world that feels like it’s falling apart sometimes will actually be just fine. – Katherine McNevins



Mikaila Ulmer, founder of Me &amp; the Bees

# COMMUNITY

BY BETH SULLIVAN



JANA BIRCHUM

**A PROUD HISTORY:** In honor of October being LGBTQIA History Month, we're throwing it (way) back to 1989's March on Austin for Lesbian/Gay Equal Rights. Organized by the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (now Equality Texas, the state's largest queer and trans rights advocacy org), the demonstration was the biggest march in Austin's history – *Chronicle* photographer Jana Birchum was one of the estimated 15,000-20,000 protesters who turned out at the Capitol in the fight against hate-filled attacks on the Lone Star State's community at that year's Texas legislative session.

## 2 TO DO

### Reflections

This year marks the 35th anniversary of allgo, Austin's rad grassroots org serving QTPOC Texans, and they're celebrating with a virtual evening of conversation with some of allgo's original and much beloved founders and visionaries, including playwright Sharon Bridgforth. *Mon., Oct. 12, 6-8pm. Online. Free. www.fb.com/allgoqpc.*

### Dungeons & Drag Kings

Dragons, dungeons, and drag kings, oh my. The Boiz pay tribute to their fave cosplays, fandoms, and galaxies far, far away. *Tue., Oct. 13, 7pm. Online. \$5 suggested donation. www.twitch.tv/papijinx.*

## Q'D UP

**CLASS TRANSITIONS** Build yer strength training skills – and community bonds – with co-trainers Erica Nix and Rocky Lane. *Thursdays, 6pm. Online. Price varies. www.patreon.com/workoutwithericanix.*

**SECOND THURSDAY OPEN MIC** Poet Jill Alexander Essbaum reads from her new book, *Would-Land*. *Thu., Oct. 8, 7:15-9pm. Online. www.fb.com/bookwomanaustin.*

**YOGA FOR AN OPEN HEART** With guided exercises to help reduce anxiety or depression. *Friday, 7-8pm. Online. \$7-20. www.austinbodycollective.com/openheart.*

**DAS MASCHINE NATION** Five hours of the newest industrial, futurepop, and goth sounds. *Sat., Oct. 10, 8pm-1am. Online. Free (tips encouraged). www.fb.com/elysiumaustin.*

**PFLAG AUSTIN SUPPORT GROUP** For community members and their family and friends. *Through Dec. 8. Second Tuesdays, 7-9pm. Online. Free. www.pflagaustin.org.*

**INTERFACES** A rad (and monthly) showcase centering POC, queer, trans, GNC, disabled, women, and otherwise marginalized writers and musicians. *Second Wednesdays, 7-9pm. Zoom. Free. www.fb.com/abxinterfaces.*

**LGBTQIA FERTILITY OPTIONS** There's more than one way to build a family; just ask a local doctor from Texas Fertility Center. *Thu., Oct. 15, 6:30pm. Online. Free. www.txfertility.com.*

For all Community listings see [austinchronicle.com/qmmunity](http://austinchronicle.com/qmmunity) and send yer queer'd events to [qmmunity@austinchronicle.com](mailto:qmmunity@austinchronicle.com).

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PHOTO: MAX MORISON & ANELLE HANUSE BY RICARDO ACEVEDO



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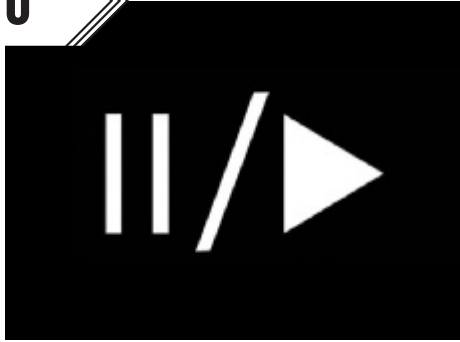
[AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM](http://AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM) / STORE

# CALENDAR

OCTOBER 8 >> OCTOBER 15



8 >> THURSDAY



## PAUSE/PLAY PODCAST

Online

The events of March 6, 2020, made Austin music history. A new podcast from KUT and KUTX, *Pause/Play*, unpacks the fateful day Mayor Steve Adler canceled South by Southwest, marking the end of live music for months during the COVID-19 pandemic.

See more music recommendations on p.56.

9 >> FRIDAY



## JOHN LENNON'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

KUTX, noon-4pm

Dr. Winston O. Boogie infamously expired following a crucial presidential election in 1980, but we'll need his immortality elixir to get us through this one and beyond. Fortunately, KUTX mix master and Beatles' archivist Jody Denberg watched our back on the Liverpoolian's actual birthday with four hours of life-giving love, peace, and nonconformity.

See more music recommendations on p.56.

10 >> SATURDAY



## SCREAM SHOCK THE VOTE ATX

Pioneer Farms, 8pm

Pull in to this drive-in experience with trivia for prizes, a special pre-show featuring a horror short from a local filmmaker, spooky surprises, and a socially distanced Ghostface. The best part: 80% of the proceeds will go to the org's six partner nonprofits.

See more community events on p.38.

11 >> SUNDAY



## DAZED AND CONFUSED VIRTUAL REUNION

Online, 6:30pm

Wooderson, O'Bannon, Darla, Mitch, et al. are gathering for a 27-year reunion to benefit Voto Latino Foundation and March for Science. Donating gets you access to a live virtual table read of the film and a Q&A moderated by Patton Oswalt, which sounds like a can't-miss event that happens to be for a great cause.

See more film recommendations on p.46.

12 >> MONDAY



## BUBBLES AND BULLDOZERS

Oct. 12-17, online and in person

This is a champagne tour and dining experience and the public's first opportunity to see behind the construction fencing at Kingsbury Commons, Pease Park Conservancy's \$15 million, 7-acre project to create a world-class public green space at the southern tip of Austin's oldest public park. This year's event spans six days and features multiple time slots each day.

See more community events on p.38.

13 >> TUESDAY



## EARLY VOTING BEGINS

Oct. 13-30

Make your voice heard! See our list of polling places on p.8 or, for a more digital experience, go to [austinchronicle.com/elections](http://austinchronicle.com/elections). You can also call 512/238-VOTE (8683). Whatever you do, VOTE!

See more community events on p.38.

14 >> WEDNESDAY



## GET OUT THE VOTE LETTER-WRITING PARTY

Online, 6:30pm

Join Swing Left ATX and Vote Forward for an entertaining night of music, community action, and getting out the vote! Volunteers will send heartfelt, handwritten letters to unregistered and low-propensity voters. Each Wednesday features a Texas House candidate and Texas musicians to entertain during the letter-writing.

See more community events on p.38.

15 >> THURSDAY



## YOUNG E: YOUR NEW FAVORITE RAPPER

Erick Norwood proudly hashtagged social media posts for nearly two years with a bold promise. Debut album *Your New Favorite Rapper* establishes a commendable first impression. Fellow Austin poet J Soulja designed the cover art for a gritty young ATX rhymers, who employs 11 messages meant to inspire hustlers and grinders.

See more music recommendations on p.56.

**CHRONEVENTS** EVERYWHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN AUSTIN  
[AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/EVENTS](http://AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/EVENTS)

**SUBMIT!**

For FAQs about submitting a listing, contact info, deadlines, and an online submission form, go to [austinchronicle.com/submit](http://austinchronicle.com/submit).



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**Math**  
*Happens*

Learn about Napier's bones!

Figure this out!

This is a calculator published by John Napier in 1617.  
If you study the set up you can see how it works.

## The Amazing Napier's Bones

	4	1	3	2	Cut out all the bones in vertical strips so you can make your own calcula- tions. Keep the frame to help you stay organized.	5	6	8	
1	0	4	0	1		0	3	0	2
2	0	8	0	2		0	6	0	4
3	1	2	0	3		0	9	0	6
4	1	6	0	4		1	2	0	8
5	2	0	0	5		1	5	1	0
6	2	4	0	6		1	8	1	2
7	2	8	0	7		2	1	1	4
8	3	2	0	8		2	4	1	6
9	3	6	0	9		2	7	1	8

Three "bones"

9	0	7
0	9	0
1	8	0
2	7	0
3	6	0
4	5	0
5	4	0
6	3	0
7	2	0
8	1	0



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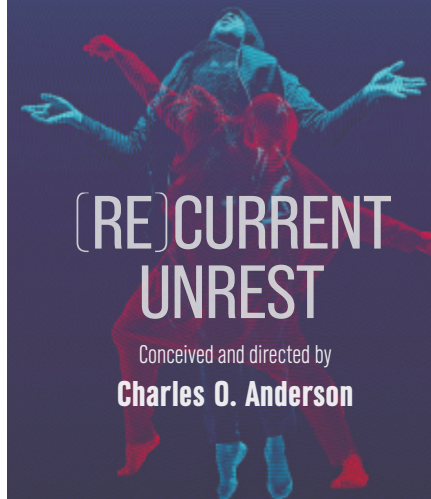
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**Charles O. Anderson**

Presented in partnership with Texas Performing Arts and Fusebox Festival

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nfa

# Arts & Culture

## The Game's Afoot, Mrs. Watson!

*Murder on Cold Street*, the fifth outing in the Lady Sherlock series, is as fascinating and feminist as ever **BY ROSALIND FAIRES**

Two men found dead in an unoccupied home. A Scotland Yard inspector found literally red-handed at the scene of the crime. Sherry Thomas' fifth entry in the Lady Sherlock series, *Murder on Cold Street*, picks up exactly where its predecessor, *The Art of Theft*, left off and the crime at its core proves to be just as compelling as it seemed when teased as a cliffhanger in book four.

There were plenty of puzzles in *Theft*, but it was much more a heist novel than a mystery. Here, however, Charlotte Holmes (our heroine, a so-called fallen woman who presents herself as a detective assistant to her brilliant but, unfortunately, invalid brother, Sherlock, who, incidentally, does not actually exist) is working on a good old-fashioned whodunit with a Christmas Eve deadline: If she and her friends don't find a culprit for the titular double homicide other than her sometimes-ally Inspector Treadles by that date, he very well may hang. (Having watched the

inspector spend significant time in the series wrestling with his own misogyny and now truly seeing his wife as an equal whose professional accomplishments are not a slight against his, we can't help but root for his exoneration and hard-earned marital happiness.)

In many ways, the delights of *Murder on Cold Street* derive from a sense of Thomas

coming through on promises to her readers. Charlotte's love for sweets and extravagant frippery remains passionate and produces alternately mouth-watering and deeply amusing prose.

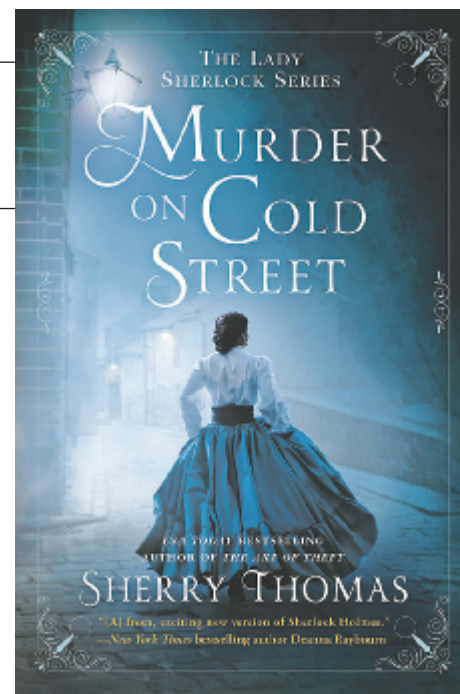
(The opening description of a Christmas-themed redingote is one to treasure.) Charlotte's inge-

nity continues to be celebrated without falling into the trap of the solitary, unknowable masculine genius. There's a lot of legwork involved in chasing down leads, and Charlotte, Mrs. Watson (patroness cum assistant to Charlotte, who's also a former actress and, therefore,

scandalous), Miss Redmayne (Mrs. Watson's illegitimate daughter and an on-leave medical student), and Lord Ingram embrace collective effort with a refreshing lack of ego.

The slow burn romance between Charlotte and her childhood friend, the aforementioned Lord Ingram, is smoldering with new possibilities. With many obstacles in their path removed over the last few installments, they're faced for the first time with a real choice of whether or not to pursue a relationship. It's a decision that is given the same weight and suspense as any of the crimes Charlotte set out to solve, and it feels right in line with the compassionate ethos that runs throughout the series – after all, sorting out your feelings and allowing yourself to be truly vulnerable before another person when there are no longer external impediments in the way is brave and difficult work.

That love is the product of work, not fantasies or happy accidents, is a philosophy that has become a more and more apparent undergirding of the series. Thomas doesn't elide the gross



iniquities of 1890s London or suggest a history full of consistent, linear improvements in the lives of women, people of color, queer people, colonized people, and the poor, but neither is she fatalistic. In romances, friendships, and interactions between our heroes and various witnesses and suspects, we see again and again how authentic connections can only be forged when you acknowledge with clear eyes the advantages society has given you solely based on the circumstances of your birth. It's a philosophy that has the added benefit of being timeless.

## ARTS LISTINGS

AC

### THEATRE

✦ **ROMEO AND KATRINA** Color Arc Productions and the Asian American Resource Center present the opening scene of a new musical set in post-Katrina New Orleans three years after the hurricane. *Romeo and Katrina* is a love story centered on Romeo Tran, a working-class Vietnamese American, and Katrina "Trina" Batiste, a Black upper-class woman. Bonus: This virtual viewing is followed by a live discussion with creators **Christine Hoang** and **Tyler Mabry**, director **Ya'Ke Smith**, the cast, and the audience. *Sat., Oct. 10, 7pm. Free. www.austintexas.gov/aarc.*

✦ **THE VORTEX ODYSSEY** This here's the main, aboveground, right-there-in-real-life manifestation of the **Vortex fundraising show** we've been telling you about. Follow in the footsteps of that Greek hero **Odysseus** – follow in your actual car, packed with your closest friends, guided by the voice of Athena, through the Manor Road neighborhood – and witness the **living tableaux of the ancient Odyssey**, now updated to confront societal challenges of our modern times, as **live performers** take over an array of **familiar urban spaces** and transform them into **theatrical phantasmagoria** for your fuck-this-pandemic pleasure. *Through Oct. 10. Thu.-Sat., 6-9pm. The Vortex, 2307 Manor Rd., 512/478-5282. \$125 per car. www.vortexrep.org.*

✦ **THE VORTEX ODYSSEY: UNDERGROUND** This *Underground* section – a virtual, livestreamed evocation of the underworld of gods and such that the ancient Greek

hero **Odysseus** had to deal with, but updated with modern concerns – is an accompaniment to the main *Vortex Odyssey* spectacle that you'll actually *drive your car through*. This online-only portion is riddled with can-you-solve-it puzzles, animations, and interactive performances – featuring appearances by the likes of sexologist **Annie Sprinkle**, commedia dell'arte troupe **La Fenice**, the improv savants **Parallelogramophonograph**, and more. *Through Oct. 10. Fri.-Sat., 8pm. \$33-1,000. www.vortexrep.org.*

### COMEDY

**Hideout Theatre** [www.hideouttheatre.com](http://www.hideouttheatre.com)

✦ **PUT YOUR LIPS TOGETHER AND BLOW** Listen, see – this is a **crime-noir flavor of comedy improv** comin' at ya, replete with fast-talkin' dames, wise-crackin' guys, and plots more convoluted than a Klein bottle's intestines. You think this caper's off the rails, you're probably right, and you'll be laughing your way to the nearest gin mill (probably your own self-isolated liquor cabinet, right?) as a special guest detective investigates the week's nefarious goings-on. *Fri., Oct. 9, 7:30pm. \$5-15.*

**MAESTRO** This is an all-improvised battle royal, featuring the most ornery cusses in the scene doing their damndest to emerge victorious from a mind-warping multiplayer fray. Imagine: a screen crowded with Zoomers, competing

in short improv games and wildass gambits to be crowned the one and only Maestro for the week. Sound good? Yeah – we like it, too. *Wednesdays, 8pm; Saturdays, 10pm. \$5.*

**PGRAPH** The fantastic foursome of improv fabulators returns for another week, bringing their arch spontaneity through Zoom and onto Twitch to make your minds zoom and your hearts twitch at what a talented local quartet can do, off-the-cuff, at the intersection of goofy and brilliant. *Wednesdays, 5pm; Saturdays, 7:30pm. \$5-15.*

**ColdTowne Theater** [www.coldtownetheater.com](http://www.coldtownetheater.com)

**FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS LIVE** The former stage on Airport Boulevard might be dark, citizen, but the stars of that laugh factory near Mrs. Johnson's Doughnuts are shining bright every Friday and Saturday night on ColdTowne TV! Tune in for this variety show format and drop a few bucks in the virtual tip jar to keep local comedy alive. *Fridays & Saturdays, 8pm. Donations accepted.*

**VICTROLA** ColdTowne's sketch comedy podcast goes online with guests from, well, it could really be from *anywhere*, right? Because internets? You wanna see these bright local zanies working the virtual thing for all it's worth, citizen, you'll catch every episode. *Mondays, 8pm. Donations accepted.*

**YEAH, BUT ARE YOU HAPPY?** Austin comedians **Katie Stone** and **Lane Ingram** invite you to an ongoing podcast that explores the intersection between creativity and mental health. *Wednesdays, 8pm. Donations accepted.*

### BUT WAIT – THERE'S MORE!

**ESTHER'S FOLLIES** You don't have to slog your way through Dirty Sixth anymore, citizen – you can catch the **arch antics and musical mayhem** of the Esther's crew on video as they unleash **fresh new sketches and songs** and more about the hottest topics of the day. And there's all sorts of **behind-the-scenes extras** now, too, and it's all available via their Patreon page. [www.estersfollies.com](http://www.estersfollies.com).

**COMEDY WHAM: ISOLATION COMEDY SHOWCASE** In which **Valerie Lopez**, who runs that online resource of stand-up-focused podcasts and profiles, presents a weekly livestreamed lineup of local stand-ups, hosted by **Colton Dowling**. *Fridays, 8pm. Donations accepted. www.comedywham.com.*

### DANCE

✦ **ISHIDA DANCE COMPANY: YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE** Here's a world premiere of two new works created during quarantine with dancers from **Houston Ballet**, **San Francisco Ballet**, **Hubbard Street**, and **USC Kaufman**. Along with this rare sneak preview, there will be a discussion on the creative process with **Brett Ishida**. *Sat., Oct. 10, 8pm. Free. www.ishidadance.org.*

**BALLET AUSTIN: CLASSES ONLINE** While you're home, wherever you are across the world, you can still take a dance,

## CHRON EVENTS

EVERYWHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN AUSTIN  
[AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/EVENTS](http://AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/EVENTS)

fitness, or Pilates class with Ballet Austin. Ballet, barre, contemporary dance, hip-hop, tap, cardio dance fitness, and Pilates out the wazoo, so to speak, because there are so many varieties to choose among, and all taught by professional instructors – and it's all available 24/7, just like the internets. *Ongoing. \$3-7 per class. www.balletaustin.org.*

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

**INVOKE IN PIECES** The mighty men of the eclectic quartet **Invoke** may be sheltering in place, but that's not keeping them from making music together on the interwebs. Listen to each member of Invoke play solo sets for each other, livestreamed on Twitch and YouTube. *Fridays, 7pm. Donations accepted. www.invokeand.com.*

## VISUAL ARTS

### EVENTS

**BIG MEDIUM: COFFEE CHATS** In addition to their regular artist features, the Big Medium folks offer virtual coffee-time convo, too – with leaders in the creative community sharing their personal and professional experiences to inspire others pursuing careers in art. Up next: **John Mulvany** (Oct. 8); **Manik Raj Nakra** (Oct. 16); **Daryl Howard** (Oct. 22); **SWG Productions** (Oct. 29). *Thursdays, 11am-noon. Free. www.bigmedium.org.*

**LANDMARKS: SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR** Well, it's always an event, isn't it? When you can take your smartphone to access self-guided tours of the outdoor public art sited by **UT's award-winning Landmarks program**? That's an affirmative, so do enjoy some sunshine along with **modern and contemporary art** that celebrates diverse perspectives and features commissioned projects in addition to sculptures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Ongoing. Free. www.landmarks.utexas.edu.*

**THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN'S JONES CENTER REOPENS** Yes – that Downtown epicenter of the best in contemporary art returns for in-person visits, now enhanced with pandemic-appropriate safety measures. Head on over to experience **"Nicole Eisenman: Sturm und Drang"** inside and you won't miss seeing **Deborah Roberts' Little man, little man** outdoor mural while you're there. Note: Advanced ticket reservations are required. *Fri.-Sun., noon-4pm. The Contemporary Austin, 700 Congress, 512/453-5312. \$10 (free for members, ages 18 and younger, military, and all essential workers). www.thecontemporaryaustin.org.*

### OPENING

**RECSPEC GALLERY: SUPERSTITIONS** The unstoppable **Recspec** presents a new virtual group show, curated by **Laurel Barickman** and **Katie Cowden**, featuring works by **Annalise Gratovich, Holly Bobisuthi, Cathy Rylander, Kevin Munoz, Kámy Dobi, Pake Stephens**, and more, addressing a theme of, well, listen: "In a year where it feels like Lady Luck has left us, jinxes abound, and a black cat has crossed our collective path, we've turned to rituals and superstitions to change our fortunes. Phrases, charms, and talismans – or numbers and actions to avoid – are deeply ingrained in our minds and habits, and we're looking forward to seeing how this group of artists influences our fate." As are we, reader – and how about you? *Opening: Tue., Oct. 13, 7pm. Through Nov. 7. www.recspec-gallery.com.*

### CLOSING

**BIG MEDIUM: PRESSURE** Utilizing visual language as action, Austin artist **Taylor Barnes** allows her figures to challenge patterns of complacency and grab hold of power, allowing the Black female form to exist as a mindset that rejects mindless strength and claims self-preservation. *Through Oct. 10. Thu.-Sat., noon-6pm. Big Medium, 916 Springdale #101, 512/939-6665. www.bigmedium.org.*

**CLOUD TREE: LUMINOUS MOMENTS** Here's a "visual refuge" provided by **Sarah Luna**, featuring the artist's spectral photographs that explore consciousness and perception through light, shadow, and form – or, more materially, through images of ordinary objects, mounted on maple panels and overlaid with wax. "My images invite the viewer to cross the threshold from the known into the unknown," says Luna, who will be in

the studio to greet you on Saturdays and Sundays, 11am-4pm. *Through Oct. 11. Cloud Tree, 3411 E. Fifth. Free, but reservations required. www.cloudtreestudiosandgallery.com.*

**PRIZER ARTS & LETTERS: THE PATH OF LIGHT** Who's chosen this path of light? It's Austin artist **Carl Smith**, his abstract landscapes exploring composition and texture through the use of **heavy impastos and aggressive brushwork**, spontaneously creating "personal paintings with a strong emphasis on form and emotion." And you can make a reservation to view the exhibition up-close and personal, or, listen: "Our front room will be lit up from 8pm-midnight each night to allow you to view the installation from outside the gallery." *Through Oct. 11. Prizer Gallery, 2023 E. Cesar Chavez. www.prizerartsandletters.org.*

### ONGOING

**MARTHA'S CONTEMPORARY: STILL HERE** Say, here's the inaugural show at Martha's new Guadalupe location – a powerful group exhibition featuring paintings, sculptures, and textiles by **Jenaro Goode, Payton McGowen, Adrian Armstrong, Christina Ballentyne, Siena Smith, Alfonzo Gonzales Jr, Erick Medel, Sam Keller, and Alex Nguyen**. *Through Nov. 2. Tue.-Thu., noon-7pm; Fri.-Sat., noon-9pm. 4115 Guadalupe.*

**WESTERN GALLERY: TEXAS WOMEN** This virtual art gallery curates **distinct perspectives of the American West** – abstract to photorealistic, classic to contemporary – and now reveals its new show that features work by **Felice House, Arielle Austin, Alice Leese, Debbie Carroll, Anna-Sophia Lagos, Elizabeth Dryden, Dana Falconberry, Vic Gilmore, Chanel Kreuzer, Katelyn Betsill, Sirena LaBurn**, and more. *Through Oct. 25. western.gallery.*

**ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION AusPop** presents a celebration of the legendary **Armadillo World Headquarters**, offering an impressive array of posters, photos, and newspaper clippings with which to immerse yourself in the venue's well-documented history. You can schedule a time in advance to visit the gallery (any Saturday or Sunday) and you've gotta wear a mask, citizen, because *this* long strange trip is something we're still in the confounding middle of, y'dig? *Through Dec. 13. Austin Museum of Popular Culture, 6416 N. Lamar, 512/440-8318. www.fb.com/auspopmuseum.*

**BALE CREEK ALLEN GALLERY: DELICATE DISORDERS** Los Angeles-based **Shelli Tollman's** paintings, informed by her upbringing during the apartheid era in South Africa, address **the complex subject of diversity within the personal and political landscape**. This exhibition of sinister fairy-tale works reflect Tollman's experience as an immigrant artist confronted with American culture. *Through Oct. 18. Bale Creek Allen Gallery, 916 Springdale #2. www.balecreekallengallery.com.*

**THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART: EXPANDING ABSTRACTION** Abstract art's practitioners experimented with **new materials and techniques** back in the day – dripping, pouring, staining, and even *slinging* their paint, using nontraditional media such as acrylic and industrial paints. Artists also ditched the flat, rectangular format to create sculptural texture and dimensionality. The Blanton's permanent collection is particularly strong in such paintings of the 1960s and Seventies, and you'll want to get an eyeful of this major new show, subtitled "Pushing the Boundaries of Painting in the Americas," organized by the venue's own **Carter E. Foster**. *Through Jan. 10. The Blanton Museum of Art, 200 E. MLK, 512/471-7324. www.blantonmuseum.org.*

**CAMIBA ART: DAYDREAMS** Dallas-based artist **Charlotte Smith** continues to explore the **physical boundaries of paint** as an artistic medium, rendering her pigmentations' progress as something wholly fresh and enticing, and the walls of Camiba are vibrant with these new works. *Through Oct. 17. Camiba Art, 6448 Hwy. 290 E. Ste. A-102. www.camibaart.com.*

**CONTRACOMMON: TRANSGURATION OF A BLACK GIRL'S MAGIC** This is a solo exhibition of works by **Danielle East**, inspired by **traditions of spirituality** found within Black womanhood, using **found objects and poetry** to emphasize the rituals and magic that Black women possess in times of pain and healing. *Through Oct. 18. ContraCommon Gallery, 12912 Hill Country Blvd. Ste. F-140, Bee Cave. www.contracommon.org.*

**DAVIS GALLERY: FULL CIRCLE** This retrospective exhibition, "Full Circle: 40 Years of Making Art," reveals four decades of **Caprice Pierucci's** prolific career as a visual

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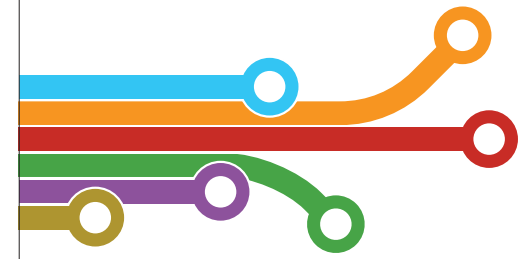
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# Project Connect from Capital Metro. A transit plan designed to connect Austin.



Artist rendering for illustrative purposes.

Project Connect from Capital Metro is a comprehensive transit plan. It will be on the ballot November 3. The plan includes a rail system that travels under downtown—separate from traffic—that could take passengers to communities in North, South and East Austin plus all-electric buses, 42 miles of new MetroRapid bus service and 9 new Park & Rides.

## Project Connect Initial Investment Plan



### New Rail System

Serving north, south and neighborhoods east of Austin with routes to the airport, downtown, Austin FC's Stadium, The Domain and Colony Park. Additional **27 miles, 31 stations**



### Downtown Transit Tunnel

Designed to separate light rail from traffic to improve schedule reliability.



### Expanded Bus Service

**4** new MetroRapid routes; high-frequency bus service with priority treatments  
Total: **42 miles, 65 stations**

**10** new stations, with planned conversion to Light Rail

**3** new MetroExpress commuter routes

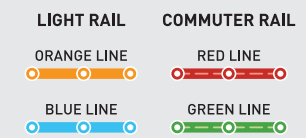


### 9 New Park & Rides and 1 New Transit Center

Residents of outlying parts of Austin and nearby cities could connect into the transit system.

The Initial Investment also includes \$300 million to finance transit-supportive anti-displacement strategies related to Project Connect, which includes neighborhood supportive affordable housing investments along transit corridors.

Visit [ProjectConnect.com](https://ProjectConnect.com) to learn more.



### All-Electric Bus Fleet



### 15 new Neighborhood Circulator Zones with on-demand pickup



### MetroBike Integration

All-electric bike fleet available for rent at transit hubs



### MetroAccess

On-demand services and system-wide accessibility



### Maintenance Facilities



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**LGBTQIA FERTILITY OPTIONS** There's more than one way to build a family. A local doctor from Texas Fertility Center will share information about the wealth of LGBTQIA fertility options during this free, interactive webinar. By the end of the session, you'll understand the basics of each family-building option and have an opportunity to get your questions answered. *Thu., Oct. 15, 6:30pm. Online. Free. www.bxfertility.com.*

**SCIENCE MILL VIRTUAL BENEFIT** The Science Mill's annual benefit, Navigating the In-Between: The Future of Science, is a virtual experience that promises a 360-degree museum tour, exclusive short video presentations by trailblazing scientists and visionaries, a behind-the-scenes look at the science of the museum's exhibits, and unique artworks for purchase. It's free, but all donations benefit the Science Mill's STEM programs for Texas youth. *Thu.-Sun., Oct. 15-18. Online. www.sciencemill.org/futureofscience.*

## SPORTS

### THE HOME TEAMS

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS Women's Volleyball** Vs. Iowa State. *Thu.-Fri., Oct. 8-9, 7pm. Erwin Center, 1701 Red River.*  
**Women's Soccer** Vs. Kansas State. *Fri., Oct. 9, 5pm. Myers Stadium, 707 Clyde Littlefield Dr. www.texasports.com.*

**UT FOOTBALL: RED RIVER SHOWDOWN** The Longhorns face off against the Oklahoma Sooners in Dallas, keeping the longstanding tradition alive despite the State Fair of Texas being canceled this year. *Sat., Oct. 10, 11am. Cotton Bowl, Dallas. www.texasports.com.*

**TEXAS STATE Women's Soccer** Vs. Arkansas State. *Sat., Oct. 10, noon. Bobcat Soccer Complex, Sessoms Drive, San Marcos. www.txstatebobcats.com.*

### RECREATION & FITNESS

**VINO VINYASA AT FALL CREEK VINEYARDS** A socially distanced outdoor class that brings together yoga and fun wine facts, ending with snacks and a wine tasting. *Sun., Oct. 11, 1pm. Fall Creek Vineyards Driftwood, 18059 FM 1826, Driftwood, 512/858-4050. \$30. www.vinovinayasa.com.*

**LIVESTRONG VIRTUAL CHALLENGE** A weeklong Strava challenge leading up to a live virtual *Zwift* broadcast on

the morning of Oct. 18. Participants can ride, run, walk, do yoga, or any form of physical fitness and earn digital badges. Register online to challenge other individuals and teams to out-fundraise one another. *Mon.-Sun., Oct. 12-18. Virtual. Free. www.livestrong.org.*

**OPEN SESSIONS WITH SWIFT FIT EVENTS** Virtually join free, instructor-led classes streaming on Instagram and Facebook, open for anyone and everyone. Participate in health and fitness activities such as yoga, kickboxing, dancing, bootcamp and more. *Mondays, noon-1pm. Via IG or FB @SwiftFitEvents. Free.*

### RUNS, WALKS, & RIDES

**WALK TO END EPILEPSY** This year's walk is a virtual walk week filled with activities, culminating in an awards ceremony at 10am on Saturday. *Sun.-Sat., Oct. 11-17. Virtual. \$15. www.walk2endepilepsy.com/austin.*

**VIRTUAL DAISY 5K** Run or walk any route you choose, and proceeds go to Marathon Kids, a nonprofit with a mission to introduce running to children at a young age so they remain active for life. *Mon.-Sun., Oct. 12-18. Virtual. \$10-20. www.austinrunners.org/events/daisy-5k.*

## KIDS

**ROBOT-BUILDING PARTY** Kindergartners through third-graders are invited to a party with Girl Scouts of Central Texas, where they'll learn all about robots and how to build one. *Sat., Oct. 10, 10:30-11:15am. Online. www.gsctx.org/en/join/robot-building-party.html.*

**SUPERHERO STORYTIME** Holy rusted rocks, Austin! The dynamic duo of Shock the Vote ATX and Bat City Comic Professionals invite you to join in for family-friendly fun during Superhero Storytime. Grab your cape, hop on the couch, and get ready to have some fun! *Sat., Oct. 10, 11am. Online. www.shockthevoteatx.com.*

**TEXAS HISTORY TUESDAYS** Kids can enjoy learning about the topic of "Mavericks, Dogies, and Dovers: Cattle Drives" with a museum educator and ask questions after the presentation. Extension activities for more educational fun are available online. *Tue., Oct. 13, 10am & 1pm. Online via Bullock Museum. Free. www.thestoryoftexas.com.*

# SOCCER WATCH BY NICK BARBARO

## Austin FC's Ambassadors Abroad

Austin FC's Paraguayan duo, their first two players to be put under contract, accounted for all the goals Thursday night as their current club, **Guarani**, clinched a spot in the Copa Libertadores knockout round. **Rodney Redes** had two assists, and **Cecilio Domínguez** scored the other in a 3-1 win over Argentine side Tigre.



**Gio Reyna (r) celebrating one of his record-breaking assists**

Meanwhile, **Gio Reyna**, 17-year-old son of AFC Sporting Director **Claudio Reyna**, is tearing up the Bundesliga, figuring in five of **Dortmund's** seven goals over the first three games of the German season. On Saturday, he left the field to a standing ovation after dealing out three assists, becoming the first teenager to notch that rare hat trick in Bundesliga history. One was an inch-perfect corner kick (really, just the fact that one of the biggest clubs in the world is entrusting corner kicks to a 17-year-old!), and the other two were real beauties – winning the ball, beating defenders, finding space, and delivering perfectly weighted passes for striker Erling Haaland to finish. See video highlights with this column online.

Just two more chances to see your 2020 **UT Longhorns** in action at Mike A. Myers Stadium in this strange, short season. They take on Kansas State at 5pm Friday (also on ESPN+), trying to bounce back from a tough loss at West Virginia last week.

The **Austin Bold** went out on a high note, with a 2-1 win over San Antonio closing out their disappointing 2020 campaign. No playoffs, but kudos to the team and COTA for fighting through the circumstances and putting on a good show to the end.

## OUT OF TOWN

**CANYON LAKE GORGE TOURS** In the summer of 2002, for the first time, floodwaters rushed over the spillway, carving a geological wonder exposing dinosaur tracks, creating waterfalls, and carving a new lagoon now a part of a three-hour tour. *Ongoing. Canyon Lake. \$10. www.gbra.org/canyonlakegorge.*

**KERRVILLE FOLK FESTIVAL VIRTUAL CONCERTS** We can't gather around the campfires this year, so the next best thing is the special concerts from afar by KFF regulars on your

electronic devices. *Sat.-Sun., Oct. 10-11 & 17-18. Online. Free, but donations appreciated. www.kerrvillefolkfestival.org.*

**MONARCH CELEBRATION** Monarch butterflies love the wildflowers at the farm, too, and staff will be tagging them beginning at 9:30am and releasing them at 11:30am and 2:15pm. *Sat., Oct. 10, 9:30am-2:30pm. Wildseed Farms, Fredericksburg. www.wildseedfarms.com.*

# DAY TRIPS BY GERALD E. MCLEOD

**Chief Duwali Bowles** led the **Texas Cherokees** until his death at the **Battle of the Neches** on July 16, 1839.

Born in North Carolina around 1756, Duwali was part of the forced migration of the Cherokee from the southeastern states, although he and his band came west of their own accord. By 1820, the group of 60 families had settled north of **Nacogdoches**.

The Cherokees tried repeatedly to get the title to the land from the Mexican government. Officials in Mexico City kept delaying the process.

Then in 1836, **Sam Houston** came calling. As a commissioner of the provisional Texas government and a former resident of the Cherokee settlement in Arkansas, Houston offered Duwali a peace treaty. If the Cherokee would stay neutral in the fight with Mexico, Texas would grant them land rights. A statue at 700 E. Main St. in Nacogdoches memorializes the treaty.

After the revolution the **Republic of Texas** rejected the treaty. Worse yet, President **Mirabeau B. Lamar** called for an "exterminating war" to drive the Cherokee from Texas.

In 1839, Lamar sent the Texas militia to expel the emigrant tribes from East Texas. After unsuccessful negotiations, the Texans attacked on July 15. The next day the tribes were defeated.

A granite monument stands on sacred land maintained by the **American Indian Cultural Society** 12 miles northwest of Tyler off SH 64 on Van Zandt County Road 4923 marking the spot where



GERALD E. MCLEOD

83-year-old Chief Duwali was killed. On the Saturday closest to July 16, the AICS holds a memorial ceremony at the site.

The sword Houston gave Duwali at the treaty signing resides at the **Masonic Lodge** in **Tahlequah, Oklahoma**, the capital of the Cherokee Nation.

**1,520th in a series. Follow "Day Trips & Beyond," a travel blog, at austinchronicle.com/daily/travel.**



**"THREE STOOGES SPOOKTACULAR" AND NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** Rocket Cinema presents this perfect start to the Halloween season, a drive-in double feature with "The Ghost Talks," "Spook Louder," and a host of other *Three Stooges* Halloween-themed episodes, followed by *George Romero's* classic zombie horror. *Fri., Oct. 9. Three Stooges, 7:45pm; Living Dead, 9:45pm. Pioneer Farms, 10621 Pioneer Farms Dr. www.rocketcinematemexas.com.*

**GEORGETOWN GHOST TOURS** Join costumed tour guides at the Williamson Museum telling the stories of ghosts who've haunted local establishments for over 100 years. *Fri.-Sat., Oct. 9-10, 7:30, 8, 9pm. 716 S. Austin Ave., Georgetown, 512/943-1670. \$15-20. www.williamsonmuseum.org.*

**HAPPY FALL Y'ALL** There's no better place to enjoy the season than at Natural Bridge Caverns. Enjoy daily attractions or one of the special weekend events, from live music to animal shows. Check out the Trail of Treats the last two weekends of October, which features special Halloween events for little ones. *Weekends through Nov. 1. Natural Bridge Caverns, New Braunfels, 210/651-6101. www.naturalbridgecaverns.com.*

# Food

## Feed Your Dog Tasty Crickets

New local dog food company promotes canine health and sustainability **BY JESSI CAPE**

What if your dog's food was healthy, delicious, and reduced harm to the planet? That's the mission of Neo Bites, a new local pet food company that utilizes the benefits of crickets as a sustainable and nutritious primary protein source for dogs.

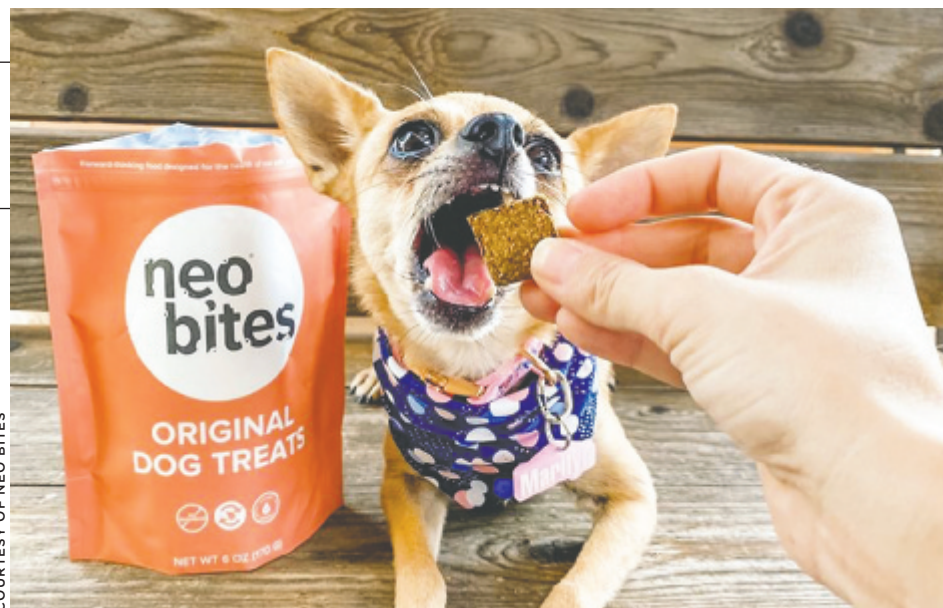
"Imagine eating a highly processed meal replacement bar for every meal – you wouldn't be the healthiest version of yourself. That's kibble," said Wesley Cooper, founder of Neo Bites and a native Austinite. He created the hypoallergenic gut-friendly food and treats after being laid off in New York City due to COVID-19 cutbacks and returning to his hometown. Working for CPG industry giants in NYC like Vita CoCo coconut water, RUNA, and Uptown Energy afforded Cooper substantial marketing expertise and fueled his self-described passion for sustainability. "I was paying a lot of attention to what our industry was doing to the environment – including single-use plastics," said Cooper. "As I learned more about the agricultural industry, I stumbled onto crickets. I had already known about some of the cricket players like Chapul [from *Shark Tank*], but once I found out 'why crickets' it became an itch I had to scratch."

Armed with extensive background knowledge, Cooper began research on healthy sustainable packaged foods for humans and

purchased some cricket powder online. After "playing around with recipes in [his] spare time," he developed a tasty nutritious cookie and launched a crowdfunding campaign in February of this year. "Five days into that Kickstarter, I was going to meet an adviser for coffee and saw an ad on the subway for fresh dog food with human-grade meats and I remember thinking, 'That's great, but pretty unsustainable.' I brought it up with my adviser, who thought it was really interesting. I started researching the pet food industry and realized it was very similar to the CPG world for humans in terms of trends and marketing." But the financial requirements are far less, so after the lay-off, Cooper shifted gears and sought the guidance of a board-certified veterinary nutritionist to develop a dog treat based around crickets that were not only safe, but met nutritional standards while reducing environmental impact.

His newly founded company, Neo Bites, quickly worked out a good recipe and began crowd-testing with friends' and co-workers' dogs. "With humans, you can get feedback on everything they did or didn't like – flavor and texture. With dogs, it's yes or no."

Neo Bites is made in small batches in a commercial kitchen, using whole-food, human-grade ingredients including the primary source of animal protein, crickets



COURTESY OF NEO BITES

(sourced from a family farm in Canada). Considered a "superfood" by many, crickets contain all 10 essential amino acids, as many omega-3s as salmon and more vitamin B12, more iron than spinach, more calcium than a glass of milk, and a prebiotic, chitin, found in the cricket's exoskeleton. In terms of sustainability, crickets use a fraction of water, land, and feed compared to traditional protein sources, such as cows, and emit far fewer greenhouse gases. "For edible weight, crickets are 80% and cows are 40%. And then there's emissions: Methane emissions have really one of the biggest impacts. They produce more than a third of the methane emissions in the United States, which is amazing in a bad way," Cooper explained. "Methane is 28 times more impactful at warming the planet than carbon dioxide. So it's more about reducing meat consumption, not eradicating it. We're trying to raise awareness of the impact of beef and push people to a more sustainable alternative that dogs still love."

"Dogs love the taste of both crickets and beef, so choose the one that's more sustainable and a superfood," he added. "I guess saying I'm waging a war with beef is a little harsh. We use eggs in the recipe, which basically has the same impact as chicken, so it's more about becoming aware of the agricultural environmental impacts and reducing consumption. Dogs don't need beef for every single meal – make it a treat."

Neo Bites is all about pet parent education, so they just launched a new 1-oz. bag of treats for \$5 in hopes curious customers and their dogs will give the cricket treats a chance. They're currently working toward an air-dried and more calorically dense version – it's currently fresh and refrigerated – which will be available soon. Products are available for nationwide shipping at their online shop ([www.eatneobites.com](http://www.eatneobites.com), subscriptions available), and locally at: Great Outdogs (1210 Barton Springs Rd.) and Prime Pet (2400 E. Cesar Chavez). ■

## FOOD EVENTS AC

**★ BUBBLES AND BULLDOZERS** Oh! This is a Champagne tour and dining experience (from **Gusto Italian Kitchen**) and the public's first opportunity to see behind the construction fencing at **Kingsbury Commons, Pease Park Conservancy's** \$15M 7-acre project to create a world-class public green space at the southern tip of **Austin's first and oldest public park**. This year's event spans six days and features multiple time slots each day. "This approach allows us to maintain the in-person energy of an event and the excitement of a private tour of

this inspiring project – all while maintaining social distance with groups of 10 or fewer." Yes, but those slots are filling up f-a-s-t, citizen! And you can do this in-person (\$125) or virtually (\$50), and the noms are always included. Serving suggestion: Click on over and grab yourself a time! Oct. 12-17. \$50-125. [www.peasepark.org](http://www.peasepark.org).

**SUERTE: TUESDAY TAQUERO TAKEOVER** It's no secret that Suerte is among our favorite restaurants ever, and maybe we even have a little shrine to chef **Fermin Núñez** in our cubicle because we stan

so hard for his culinary skills, but here the interior Mexican powerhouse invites guest chefs in each week to collaborate up a unique taco for Tuesday night. We just missed **Mark Buley** of **Odd Duck**, damn it, but look who's coming up: **Berty Richter** of **TLV** (Oct. 13), **Arianna Quant** of **Hai Hospitality** (Oct. 20), and **Beto Robledo** of **Cuantos Tacos** (Oct. 27). Not only that, but this month it's "Tacos for Votes," and half of all proceeds will go to the **Jolt Initiative**, and everybody is so gonna vote. Through Oct. 27. Suerte, 1800 E. Sixth, 512/953-0092. [www.suerteatx.com](http://www.suerteatx.com).

## FOOD NEWS BUFFET

BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

Here's your weekly Food News Buffet, culled from numerous PR releases, official posts, words on the digital street, and even the occasional (verified) IRL eavesdroppings.

We told you that **Maria's Taco Xpress** was sold to an investment company, and that the pandemic put a permanent kibosh on **Kyoten Sushiko**, but did you know that **Matthew Bolick** of **Holdout Brewing** and those local **Wright Brothers (Grady and Matt)** have opened a new coffeeshop on South Congress? Yes: **Little Brother**. *Small caffeinated mercies everywhere.*

And **Jane Ko**, the founder of Austin-based food and lifestyle blog **A Taste of Koko**, has teamed up with Airport Boulevard's **101 by Tea Haus** to host a pop-up featuring menu items inspired by Taiwanese night markets – starting Thu., Oct. 8, and running daily 11:30am-8pm. There'll be special flavors of boba milk tea, a variety of tasty snacks, and a selection of bubble waffles, too. Say, will this limited-time treat also feature Instagrammable moments on the store front? Oh, c'mon, you know it will.

Also, new Lakeway restaurant **The Gramercy** opens, grandly, this Friday at 4pm, bringing a touch of wood-and-leather class to the **Oaks at Lakeway** center ... you'll need to move that clicking-finger like lightning

to snag a spot at the **Pease Park Conservancy's** upcoming **Bubbles & Bulldozers** fête ... the folks behind the new chef-forward app **Zymmo** and that oenophilic crew at **House Wine** have joined forces to present a virtual **dinner collaboration** on Thu., Oct. 22, at 7pm, boasting a meal from chef **Chase Gintner** (formerly of **Odd Duck**, currently with **Nomadic Dining ATX**) with pairings by sommelier **Blake Ethridge**, and those two will informatively Zoom you through the meal as you indulge ... and, luckily, the **Wine & Food Foundation of Texas'** livestream-enhanced **Nourish the Soul** extravaganza of cuisine will run for two nights (albeit with a different lineup each night) on Oct. 22-23. So – bon appétit, and watch out for those 'ronas!



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(l-r) Johnny Jefferson, Jonathan Horstmann, and Larry Franklin

DAVID BRENDAN HALL

# Planting Seeds of Change

This zero waste, Black-owned startup is nurturing our community one plant at a time

BY VERONICA MEEWES

On a recent morning on East Austin farmland, a group of volunteers is bundling plants for pickup and Larry Franklin is demonstrating how he fortifies compost to make a potting soil blend he's tweaked through the years. "The soil is the foundation of a good vegetable," says Franklin, the proprietor of a new startup called Black Lives Veggies. "But we've made many mistakes throughout the process; We didn't wake up good."

When the pandemic hit, many sought solace and security in the natural world. Nurseries and garden centers saw an influx of sales as home gardeners bought up seeds, supplies, and starter plants for their modern-day "victory gardens."

"There's more people trying to grow a little food at home because they're scared about what's going on or they have more time," says Randy Jewart, who owns Resolution Gardens, a landscaping company focused on food gardens, with his wife Monica Asencio. They specialize in building raised bed gardens, which he says are necessary in areas of Austin where an impenetrable layer of limestone lurks below a very thin layer of topsoil. But the cost of such beds is prohibitive for most people, so he'd

been wanting to provide a more accessible way for people to start home gardens: by offering full-grown vegetables for sale in large black nursery containers that can thrive on even a small apartment balcony.

As the Black Lives Matter movement began sweeping the country, Jewart and Asencio decided to support a Black-owned business by offering business counsel and investing capital in one. "If we, as a community, value Black and minority-owned businesses, before we can support them as consumers, someone has to invest in these individuals to help them start the business," says Jewart. "Black Lives Veggies is a deceptively simple solution to a complex phenomenon that we've dedicated our lives to: environmental stewardship, healthy local food production, social justice, and community activism."

This summer Franklin and Johnny Jefferson launched Black Lives Veggies by planting seeds using donated pots and compost made from Resolution Gardens clients' recycled yard waste. Jefferson, a former Baylor football star, was a Resolution Gardens new hire on the landscaping team, but Jewart has known Franklin since he started Resolution Gardens in 2009, because

he was part of a Goodwill job-training program for at-risk youth.

"I used to be a drug dealer," says Franklin. "I went to the penitentiary and came home and had a monitor on my ankle. Part of the stipulation of getting it off was to get employment. I thought, 'Who the hell is going to hire me?' I thought of myself as one of the worst of the worst. Randy was like my mentor, taking me to every meeting and teaching me everything."

Franklin went on to manage veggie garden maintenance at 10 local senior centers. "That summer I met 80 kids who were all struggling with education, financial, mental health, and criminal record issues and trying to learn about working life," remembers Jewart. "Larry is one of the few I've kept in touch with and he's worked with Resolution Gardens off and on for 12 years. Our relationship is very

deep through working together and staying connected when he was incarcerated. He saved my life in December when I was crushed under steel beams that collapsed on me and he rallied my neighbors to come lift the weight so I could get out. We both feel like we're even now."

Franklin had always aspired to start his own business, but when he did establish his own lawn company called Urban Gardens, he was running into problems drumming up business. "At that time I really began to see America in a different light," says Franklin. "It's easy for someone to say Black Lives Matter, but what I began to see is the real challenge is not saying it but the encounter. Are you willing to encounter this skin color in an unbiased way? I realized we're not there yet in America. And so with that being said, my business was not self-sustainable. So I had to come back and work for Randy to manage it, which is what I did. We sat, we talked. He said, 'You've been a gardener for all of your life - let's do something.' And I said, 'Let's do it.'"

Zach Herigodt from YardFarm, another local garden installation company, donated East Austin farmland, greenhouse space, and pots to BLV's operation; Joe and Kasey Diffie of neighboring Joe's Organics, a food composting company, also joined forces. For \$25, the company can purchase 9,000 seeds. And with retail values ranging from \$1 for starts and \$5-10 for full-grown plants, the company expects revenues of over \$30,000. "The model is immaculate," says Franklin. "Everything is reused and recycled. It's not an individual effort. It has to have community wrapped around it. Nothing is bought except for seeds."

Just like they're demonstrating the ability to produce veggies with limited supplies and cost and space, BLV hopes to use the same model for pigs and pastured chickens raised at churches and schools. They also want this open-source business model to be replicated in every community in the country.

"This experiment needs to be able to create wealth in Black communities in order to be a success," says Jonathan Horstmann, who joined the team to help with web administration, digital marketing, and

design. "We want to create ways to connect potential micro-investors with potential business owners, and give a business model that can be followed step by step to create change in communities. This means we are

**"We hope others in Austin and around the country recognize that white people with a little expendable income can support Black-owned food production very simply."**

RANDY JEWART, OWNER OF RESOLUTION GARDENS

going to try something, see if it works, and document it.”

This winter Jewart hopes to identify three or four other cities to share training resources and assets with, likely starting with his hometown of Pittsburgh – and he’s already in talks with someone else interested in starting a BLV model in Durango, Colo. “We hope others in Austin and around the country recognize that white people with a little expendable income can support Black-owned food production very simply,” he says. “Anyone who knows about food deserts and the health crises in low-income communities, as well as the flip-side of the elitism of the sustainable/organic movement, can see the power of these guys making the foundation of health out of almost thin air,” says Jewart.

While business has been booming since they started in July, the road hasn’t been without obstacles. Franklin still struggles with alcohol addiction, and credits the patience and support of his team with his continued success; they nurture one another like the very seeds they cultivate. “The seed can teach you how to live – it really can!” says Franklin. “You have to eliminate your own way of thinking, your values, your principles, and adapt. That’s what nurturing is about. You meet it where it’s at and become a tool for the development of whatever you’re dealing with. And that’s what we lack in our society. We don’t attempt to meet people where they’re at. We don’t allow ourselves to become vulnerable. We don’t swallow our pride and become humble. Instead we hoard, we control, we demand, we manipulate. And the end results are a crushed society – a society that’s afraid of one another.”

Jewart says he’s learning to step back, listen, and let others take the reins, a challenge for this self-proclaimed “dictator” of a Virgo. “You get a room full of people and the white dude is going to be the one to mouth off and act like he knows everything,” he says. “And we as a culture have to unlearn that. I told them from the start, I’m going to mess up and they need to call me out and I’m going to do my best to listen. So these guys have been great teachers, trying to coach me into how I can help them in the best way.”

Together, the team is also figuring out how to maintain the delicate balance between increasing demand and production. After exclusively taking orders online, they started hosting plant pop-ups at Dia’s Market. And since demand is steady, they’re filling pots as soon as they get more.

“Right now we’re planting seeds,” Franklin says. “We’re never going to stop planting seeds, as a matter of a fact.” ■

To order plants, donate supplies, or find info on pop-up sales, visit [www.blacklivesveggies.com](http://www.blacklivesveggies.com) and follow @blacklivesveggies on Facebook and Instagram.




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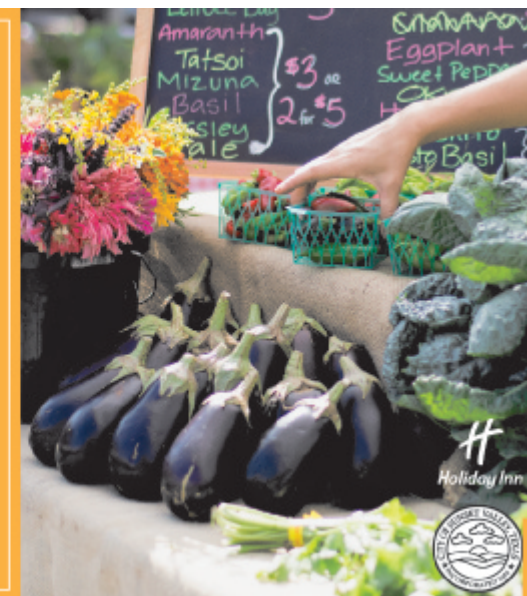
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# Screens

## A Yellow Rose Blooms in Texas

Diane Paragas gives a new face to country music in her new Austin-made drama **BY LILLI HIME**

Rose is about as Texan as they come. From her crimson red cowboy hat down to her faded blue jeans and a voice as vast as our sprawling Texas skies, she's got all the makings of a great country singer. The only thing she doesn't have is papers.

In her multi-award-winning feature *Yellow Rose*, director and UT alum Diane Paragas writes a love letter to the Lone Star State in the form of Rose Garcia (Eva Noblezada), an undocumented Filipina who follows her quintessentially Texan dream of leaving Lubbock to pursue country music in Austin. The film boasts an all-star cast – including Tony winner Lea Salonga, known best for originating the title role in *Miss Saigon* and her roles as beloved Disney princesses Mulan and Jasmine, and local favorite, country singer Dale Watson – to help Rose along her long and winding road in search for a place to call home.

As an Asian American immigrant myself who grew up with my own pair of red boots to match Rose's, I was glued to this film from the first moments of the trailer showing an Asian girl in a cowboy hat trying to pry her eyes wider. *Yellow Rose* rewrites the age-old story of the country singer in the vision of an immigrant finding harmonies between the Fifties and Sixties country hits that Rose loves and the quintessential Filipino love song, "Dahil Sa Lyo." The well-known song is interwoven throughout the film with "Square Peg, Round Hole," an equally soft and vulnerable song that Rose writes about not fitting in; these two motifs, a song from both of her homes, offer great musical insight into Rose's duality.

"It's just a song that every Filipino knows," Paragas said about "Dahil Sa Lyo." "It's this cultural baton that we pass on to each other. It means 'Because of you.' It's a very romantic song about love, of all these



The new Texas: Eva Noblezada in *Yellow Rose*

sacrifices I would make because of you. I also didn't want to translate that to just let the song have the meaning it has in the film." Paragas made the decision to not subtitle any of the few moments characters speak Tagalog in the film, because of her conviction that "the minute you subtitle, they become foreigners and it takes you out of the story."

This story at once rails against the typical country singer plot in that the protagonist is an undocumented immigrant, just as Amer-

ican as anyone else, and it rails against the typical immigration narrative in that Rose is Filipina, part of America's fastest growing ethnic group and yet still largely underrepresented in narratives about immigration.

Yet this isn't a pro-immigrant movie, or an anti-immigrant movie. It's not targeted at liberals or conservatives, politicians or the apolitical. There are no grand platitudes or bigoted villains in this film, no protest scenes or educational explanations of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

## Starring Dale Watson, as Himself

The honky-tonk hero lights up the screen in *Yellow Rose* **BY DOUG FREEMAN**

*Yellow Rose*  
opens Oct. 9.  
Read our review  
on p.49.



Eva Noblezada and Dale Watson in *Yellow Rose*

It's hard for Dale Watson to be anyone other than Dale Watson.

The songwriter's low rumbling drawl, waving quaff of silver hair, tattooed sleeves, and chiseled face have all become distinctive hallmarks of the outsized onstage personality. He's an auger to another time, steeped in a roughened honky-tonk independence upon which he's built his music career and the Ameripolitan genre.

In fact, Watson has cultivated that ingrained authenticity for so long it makes his inhabiting other personalities onscreen a somewhat uncanny experience for fans. The best option may be to simply cast the country singer as a version of himself, as Diane Paragas realized in offering Watson his first starring role with *Yellow Rose*. In the Austin-made film, Watson plays mentor to Eva Noblezada's young songwriter, Rose.

"The typecasting doesn't bother me," Watson laughed, taking a break from the recording studio in Memphis. "Originally it wasn't going to so much be me, and I was playing a character, but they decided to make it that because, well, the bus already had my name on it. It was easier just to take my character as

Even as this film chronicles the catastrophic effect of immigration policies on Rose's life at a time when anti-immigrant sentiment is as high and visible as ever, the film surprisingly evades politicization.

To add to this layer of the film is the fact that most of the characters help Rose look more like the political party trying to kick her out, especially in the notoriously conservative South. Calling the evil redneck trope "low hanging fruit," Paragas said she opted to intentionally show the face of sympathy on a person-to-person level. This choice to characterize with kindness rather than villainization was a heartwarming success, as characters like Watson or Broken Spoke owner Jolene (Libby Villari) give a face to what real Southern hospitality could look like. More than just offering Rose a place to sleep or food or even a job, they support her in chasing her dream. The only villain is Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Paragas said she intentionally does not show their faces, to emphasize the villain as a systemic problem.

While this choice to humanize the white Southerners ran the risk of looking through rose-colored glasses, it pays off in the ability to actually change some hearts. Paragas recounts an earlier screening that was unexpectedly and, to her initial fear, made up of mostly of Trump supporters. "Maybe one of the most passionate groups of people that have spoken to me after," Paragas said, "were white men. This one man who was a Trump supporter, [told me] 'First of all I haven't cried like that since John Wayne. I also think Trump should renew DACA.' They weren't villainized, so it gave them an

entry point to have sympathy for the immigrants in the film."

Yet Paragas assures us that this is still a love letter to the dichotomies of the U.S. as "the America that breaks your heart, the America that gives you hope." Paragas, an immigrant herself whose family left the Philippines to escape martial law, went through her share of setbacks to create *Yellow Rose*. Much like Rose's odyssey to find a new home, Paragas went on a 15-year journey to bring this film to fruition, enduring financial setbacks and countless rejections. She was on the brink of making a decision worse than giving up: allowing producers to whitewash her Filipino American story. Her turning point came at the Toronto International Film Festival, listening to Indian American filmmaker Mira Nair (*Mississippi Masala*, *Queen of Katwe*) talk about how she couldn't wait any longer for there to be a South Asian story in the mainstream, so she had to make one herself. "I remember at that moment, I [thought], I don't care how long it takes. I will make this movie. You really have one chance to make your first impression as a filmmaker. And that thing that you put out there better be who you are as a person, as a filmmaker, and what makes you unique. I hope this film does its small part in renewing the dignity of the immigrant in this country."

If audiences truly accept the duality of Rose as both Filipino and Texan, as both undocumented and American, then they won't dare narrowly confine *Yellow Rose* to the Asian American film canon. Rather, audiences should also consider it as a new contender to the canon of what it means to be Texan. ■

a real person and they could just mold it. Of course, as far as my personal life, the way I am as a person when I'm not onstage, is not really known, so I was pretty malleable as a character, even playing myself.

"I love acting, and it's something I keep working at," he continued. "It's just something I'm trying to get more into, and the fact that this was more music-oriented, that appealed to me because I was able to write songs for the movie too."

Watson's previous acting confined to brief cameos (*Friday Night Lights*) and local commercials in Austin before he moved to Memphis in 2018. *Yellow Rose* may not be far from the mark of Watson's character, but it allowed him to stretch into a role like he's never been able to before. "I don't consider myself a real actor where this is my craft. I'm more of a reactor than an actor," he admitted. "Eva, now she is a true actor, so when you work with people like that it's easier for people like me to just come in and react, because they're so good. So I've learned I'm at my best when I'm able to lean on somebody else being better. That's my big takeaway from this film. And not just the cast, but the entire team – the

director, the whole crew that makes it happen, and makes it comfortable enough [to] do the scene.

"It's always a learning process," Watson added. "Every time I get in front of the camera I learn something I didn't know. I think people have enough patience with me."

With the pandemic having shut down touring and his Memphis bar, The Hide-A-Way, Watson looks to pick more acting jobs. This month, he returns to Austin to film a pilot for a television series, where he'd play, unsurprisingly, a hardened honky-tonk musician. "It will probably be something similar, where I may not be really myself, but a guy like me in Austin. It might be a little different in that I think I'm giving bad advice this time," he chuckled.

"Whatever somebody thinks I can do, I'm OK with," he offered. "I'm not actively doing it all the time as far as going out and auditioning for things, but I'm certainly open to it, especially these days when I'm more in Memphis at the bar, and my touring is cut down. I don't think it's going to take over my career, but I'd love to have a regular TV series or something like that that I'm involved in."

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# MOVIE LISTINGS **AC**



## American Carnage

The raw and deadly ineptitude of the Trump coronavirus response eviscerated in *Totally Under Control*

**RICHARD WHITTAKER**

“This is their new hoax.”

Never forget these words. They were the infectious emission from President Donald Trump when he deliberately chose to politicize a virus. A virus! That’s like politicizing air or water, which the GOP has already done, throwing out accepted logic and the idea of a consensus reality. And, as the GOP has done for years, he skated on that delusional approach until it came around to him.

It takes a village to burn itself to the ground, and no one is better at contextualizing such huge events and structuring the information into a clear and transparent narrative than documentarian Alex Gibney (*The Armstrong Lie*, *Zero Days*). His latest documentary, co-directed with his longtime producer Ophelia Harutyunyan and *How to Fix an Election* director

Suzanne Hillinger, is an explosive, jaw-dropping, and enraging examination of the Trump administration’s woeful mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic. Its core, depressing, and unavoidable question is simple: How did one of the most advanced and wealthiest countries on the planet so completely fail in its response?

But even the most startlingly inept and ill-qualified president can’t sabotage and

woefully mishandle a nation’s response to a catastrophe. *Totally Under Control* puts the focus on glad-handing buffoons like Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, Ambassador Deborah Birk, and Centers for Disease Control Director Robert Redfield, who had no clue how to respond other than to mutter “the free market,” all enabled by the deliberate inaction of supposed pandemic response czar Vice President Mike Pence, all the way to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

flat-out lying about the existence of an Obama/Biden administration pandemic response document.

On the other side, there’s no single, valiant whistle-blower. Instead, the film lets a wide array of informed voices – front-line medics,

policy experts, White House correspondents – who endangered their careers to help put all the pieces that are lying in plain sight together. Interviewed with a COVID-resistant evolution of Errol Morris’ *Interrotron*, whereby the subject talks directly and intimately to the camera, *Totally Under Control* feels less like a documentary and more like grand jury testimony. Constructed in secrecy over months, and incredibly timely (wrapping with

Trump’s own positive diagnosis just last week), it’s a genuine October Surprise.

Gibney et al. lay out this impossibly huge story as a day-by-day narrative, showing how the spread in the U.S. wasn’t about a failed system. It was about a system working exactly how it was supposed to, because every decision the Trump team took had nothing to do with stopping the disease. It’s always been about Trump’s reelection.

Yes, that’s nothing new, and there’s nothing here that’s breaking news. However, what’s important about *Totally Under Control* is that it takes the firehose of information that’s been pummeling us in the face, day in, day out, since the potential for disaster became clear in February. It’s been easy to forget about the “lost month” of testing, or how the administration kept the cruise ship *Diamond Princess* off the coast so they could keep the infection numbers off the books, or the N95 production shortage, but it was impossible to see how these events were interconnected, or even keep them in mind as the latest cataclysm hit.

Not that the film places all the blame on the Trump administration. Instead, as always, it’s the system that failed, and had been failing for years, with Gibney’s old nemesis of the untrammelled free market as the long-term villain. Yet Team Trump is clearly the worst cabal in the worst place at the worst time. The emerging argument – that the administration put the market first and wasn’t afraid of a little price gouging and profiteering along the way – is indefatigably presented.

*Totally Under Control* will be released on demand on Oct. 13, and on Hulu Oct. 20.

BLUE STARLITE MUELLER II

## NEW REVIEWS

### ★ NATIVE SON

D: Pierre Chenal; with Richard Wright, Charles Cane, Jean Wallace. (NR, 108 min.)

Richard Wright wanted to make movies. After publishing his book *Native Son* in 1940, he yearned to see his words on the big screen, but his film couldn’t really be made at the time due to Hollywood codes and their blatant censorship of Black stories. He was either turned down by big studios or given insulting offers that stripped his novel of its importance, like replacing the Black lead with a “minority white” character. Eventually, he grew tired of American politics, realizing a Black man like himself would never have his voice valued and heard, and moved to Paris.

It was there that Wright met Pierre Chenal, a French director with a knack for the noir, who wanted to adapt *Native Son*. After a handful of blocks (both Italy and France would not give Chenal production permits to make the film), the pair found themselves in Argentina, and the screen adaptation of the film began.

*Native Son* is a shocking piece of literature, so Chenal’s noir background seemed like a fit for the adaptation. Wright’s story is about Bigger Thomas, a Black man who reads and dreams about machines and planes, but due to the color of his skin, he has to settle and finds a job as a chauffeur with a wealthy “liberal” white family. One evening, the daughter (Wallace) and her Communist boyfriend force Bigger to take them to a Black club, and the night continues to spiral downward, ending with Bigger accidentally murdering the daughter out of fear.

## OPENINGS

*Totally Under Control* (NR)

*Native Son* (NR)

*Over the Moon* (NR)

*The Trial of the Chicago 7* (NR)

*The War With Grandpa* (PG)

*The Wolf of Snow Hollow* (R)

*Yellow Rose* (PG-13)

## RATINGS

★★★★★ As perfect as a movie can be

★★★★ Slightly flawed, but excellent nonetheless

★★★ Has its good points, and its bad points

★★ Mediocre, but with one or two bright spots

★ Poor, without any saving graces

◉ La bomba

🍿 Recommended

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**The Wolf of Snow Hollow**

In the film, Wright plays Bigger, who was 40 to the character's 20, and it's the first of many stilted directional choices that feel amiss. The actors' performances don't feel natural, likely due to the language barrier between the lead cast, supporting cast (played by local Afro-Latino actors), and the director. The film's noir touches at times clash with the message, heightening thrills when the audience should be feeling empathy for Bigger.

The film is not without its inspired moments, though. Toward the end, during Bigger's big confession, a *Wizard of Oz*-style dream sequence plays out where Bigger walks through a cotton field toward his childhood home to meet with his deceased father, who then disturbingly morphs into the vile Detective Britten (Cane). His hazy dream emphasizes that he could never escape the fate of his father, who was also killed by white men at a young age. Except, in the case of Bigger, the American "justice" system is sentencing him to death.

But in 1951, *Native Son* was gutted. Slashed to bits by censors, the film was a shell of what it was supposed to be upon release, subtracting all nuance from the story and Bigger's motivations. While the finished, fully restored product is clunky, it still has the same meat of the novel. Without it, it's an exploitive film about a Black man killing a white woman.

*Native Son* is not polished, but its place in cinema history is significant. It further emphasizes how far Hollywood still has to go before

Black stories are given the same treatment as white stories.

*The restored Native Son is available now as a virtual cinema release.*

★★★

– Jenny Nulf  
AFS CINEMA

**OVER THE MOON**

**D: Glen Keane, John Kahrs; with the voices of Cathy Ang, Robert G. Chiu, Phillipa Soo, Ken Jeong, John Cho, Ruthie Ann Miles, Margaret Cho, Sandra Oh, Kimiko Glenn, Artt Butler. (NR, 99 min.)**

*Not reviewed at press time.* Disney animation legend Glen Keane (the artist responsible for giving Ariel legs and Beast his fangs) makes his feature directing debut with a reinvention of the Chinese legend of Chang'e the moon maiden, only this time she's visited by a modern girl trying to deal with the loss of her mother. Expect heartwarming emotion and tear-jerking sadness, as well as technicolor moon monsters and a bunch of pop songs.

IPIC

**★ THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7**

**D: Aaron Sorkin; with Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Sacha Baron Cohen, Daniel Flaherty, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Michael Keaton, Frank Langella, John Carroll Lynch, Eddie Redmayne, Noah Robbins, Mark Rylance, Alex Sharp, Jeremy Strong, John Doman. (NR, 129 min.)**

The radical left. It's a term that the American legal system and conservatives have applied to anyone that they want to write off as un-American.

That's the old game that U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell (Doman) pulled when he decided to stitch together a conspiracy trial against eight protestors attending anti-war demonstrations surrounding the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The result was an infamous show trial, given depressingly pertinent new life in this latest courtroom drama from Aaron Sorkin.

To say the defendants were a mixed bag is an understatement: Abbie Hoffman (Baron Cohen) and Jerry Rubin (Strong) of the Yippies, the counterculture in linen and a haze of smoke; representing the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, Tom Hayden (Redmayne, the future lawmaker constantly twitching at being so close to the grandstanding Hoffman) and Rennie Davis (Sharp); nonviolent pacifist David Dellinger (Lynch, suitably awkward as the literal boy scout leader among dissidents); and Black Panther President Bobby Seale (Abdul-Mateen) and protestors John Froines (Flaherty) and Lee Weiner (Robbins) who were seemingly lumped into the suit just to make up the numbers – or, as Seale describes himself, to scare the all-white jury.

For the fifth major re-creation of the trial, writer/director Aaron Sorkin diverges from 1970's *The Chicago Conspiracy Trial*, 1987's *Conspiracy: The Trial of the Chicago 8*, the theatrical *The Great Chicago Conspiracy Circus*, and the animated *Chicago 10* in structure, if not in intent. They all worked via reenactments of the trial, while here Sorkin intersperses witness box

testimony with flashback scenes of the Chicago protests. Those earlier versions told; he shows. Sometimes that works, and sometimes it feels like over-egging the cake. It's an almost impossible trap for him: Repeating what they had done would be redundant, but it's proven to be a strong approach. Instead, he lands the same blow by swinging a slightly more traditional haymaker: that this was a political show trial designed to discredit the fictional radical left. Unsurprisingly, *The West Wing's* chief architect finds new dramatic tensions – and some of the most thrilling scenes – in the back rooms that he understands so perfectly, and in the conversations and clashes between the defendants.

In a strong cast, Mark Rylance really binds the story together as defense attorney William Kunstler. As always, his intensity is in his quiet clarity, and one second of explosive anger against the egregious abuse of justice by Judge Julius Hoffman (Langella, pushing right up against the question of whether the man in charge of the court was malevolent, senile, or both) vents all the fury the audience needs. Among the intense accuracy of Sorkin's script, there is still some dramatic license. Prosecutor Richard Schultz (Gordon-Levitt) is painted as initially opposing the prosecution as a ridiculous stretch and almost soft-pedaling the case: but the real Schultz was the prosecution's pitbull. It's not the only questionable decision (setting the peaceful park demonstration that the cops turned into a riot against a dramatic rock track is a hell of a choice). But it all comes back to Sorkin's core idea, implicitly and expertly expressed: that the tactic of violence and provocation, then making the victims seem like thugs, is still performed in Portland and St. Louis and New York, just as it was in Chicago. It's also a reminder that there was no Chicago 7 until the establishment brought them together.

*The Trial of the Chicago 7 will be released on Netflix on Oct. 16.*

★★★

– Richard Whittaker  
FLIX BREWHOUSE, LAKE CREEK 7

**THE WAR WITH GRANDPA**

**D: Tim Hill; with Robert De Niro, Oakes Fegley, Uma Thurman, Rob Riggle, Christopher Walken, Cheech Marin, Jane Seymour, Laura Marano. (PG, 94 min.)**

The intergenerational pranksters in this family comedy based on Robert Kimmel Smith's award-winning book wage a turf war over a bedroom, laying tit-for-tat traps for each other in a bid for Hallmark household supremacy. You could winkingly call them domestic terrorists, but that might intimate this zingless movie is more interesting than it is.

Once again in grampster mode – remember his respectively uptight and lecherous granddads in the embarrassing *Little Fockers* and atrocious *Dirty Grandpa*? – De Niro significantly softens here as a recently widowed septuagenarian suffering the undignified slings and arrows of old age, cluelessly driving around without a license (revoked) and helplessly flailing at the



grocery store self-checkout. When Ed's concerned daughter (Thurman) demands that he move in with her family for his own well-being, the grumpy old man displaces his sixth-grader grandson Peter from his tween cave and into the attic, prompting the latter to formally declare war on the paterfamilias to rightfully regain his room. Pratfalls inevitably ensue. Foam sealant cans are disguised as shaving cream (De Niro as Papa Smurf!). Jordan sneakers are glue gun-decorated in pink. Golf clubs are rigged to dismantle, and so on. The ho-hum practical jokes the two inflict upon the other can be described as *Home Alone* lite: No concussion-inducing swinging paint cans or burn-inducing doorknobs inspired by *Looney Tunes* violence here. Which, of course, takes all the fun out of it.

Arguably, De Niro gives the blandest performance of his career in a movie better suited for the Disney streaming service rather than for what passes as a theatrical release today. Then again, there's little opportunity for anyone to bite into any juicy comic or dramatic meat here, except for (perhaps) the throwaway homily about the futility of war that is followed by an odd ending suggesting the truce between Ed and Peter is only temporary. Thankfully, the movie doesn't infantilize Ed and his two running buddies, played by Walken and Marin, too much, falling just short of lovable old coot *Going in Style* camaraderie. Walken's line readings, however, have only gotten weirder with age. Even weirder? Ed's inadvertent exposure of his unseen nether regions to his son-in-law (Riggie) not once, but twice, during the movie. Good luck explaining the humor in that to the kids.

★ ★ — Steve Davis  
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, AMC DINE-IN TECH RIDGE 10, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CINEMARK 20, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, EVO CINEMAS BELTERRA, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, IPIC, LAKELINE, MOVIEHOUSE, MOVIEHOUSE & EATERY LANTANA PLACE, LAKE CREEK 7

## ★ THE WOLF OF SNOW HOLLOW

**D: Jim Cummings; with Cummings, Riki Lindhome, Robert Forster, Chloe East, Jimmy Tatro, Skyler Bible, Kelsey Edwards, Annie Hamilton. (R, 83 min.)**

With his latest feature, *The Wolf of Snow Hollow*, writer/director Jim Cummings continues to mine a very specific vein of the male psyche. As he did in his 2018 debut, *Thunder Road*, Cummings casts himself as a law enforcement officer besieged by inner turmoils that place him on a razor's edge of falling into a nervous breakdown at any given moment. In other hands, watching these characters spin gloriously out of control as they attempt to keep the chaos at bay would be an exhaustive endeavor. But Cummings is so whip-smart in sustaining his manic energy with a layer of genuine pathsos that the effect transcends one-note cliché.

"My name's John, and I'm an alcoholic," is our introduction to John Marshall, a sheriff's deputy in the small Utah ski resort town of Snow Hollow. Along with his attempts at recovery, John has a laundry list of issues: His mother left when he was young; he's divorced from his wife

and estranged from his teenage daughter, Jenna (East); and his father, Sheriff Hadley (Forster), is seriously afflicted from a heart condition he continually denies. If that isn't enough to fray John's nerves, there appears to be a werewolf brutally slaughtering people with every full moon. John promises his father he's going to catch this maniac, but he and his fellow cops are clueless, and as the months (and the moons) go by, the bloody body count increases. Crawling into a bottle (at one point, mouthwash), John becomes unmoored, lashing out at his inept co-workers and vehemently denying that the murders are the handiwork of a werewolf, despite all evidence to the contrary. His attempts at repairing the relationship with Jenna, soon to leave for college, go disastrously wrong, their roles becoming inverted. When his father's illness takes a turn just as the case is breaking, John's struggles achieve a dizzying crescendo.

Part of the brilliance of Cummings' performance is how he can turn on a dime, baring his soul one second and throwing off a well-timed jab in the same breath. Thankfully, the actors around him are able to keep up with his pace. Forster, in his final role, is wonderfully cantankerous and endearing without being sentimental. Chloe East more than holds her own opposite John's hysterics; and Riki Lindhome, as John's put-upon partner on the case, is the perfect complement to John's self-will run riot. Genre fans will be more than sated by the high gore levels, and the cinematography by Natalie Kingston evokes eerie, chilly sparseness and noir shadows. And while the third act resolution is a bit pat, suggesting *Silence of the Lambs* mixed with *Scooby-Doo*, *The Wolf of Snow Hollow*

is only cursorily concerned with lycanthropic mayhem. The more interesting conflicts here involve personal surrender and letting go of the past. That is where real transformation lies.

Read our interview with writer/director/star Jim Cummings, "*Jim Cummings Hunts The Wolf of Snow Hollow*," *Screens*, Sept. 30.

★★★★

— Josh Kupecki

ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO S. LAMAR, FLIX BREWHOUSE, IPIC

## ★ YELLOW ROSE

**D: Diane Paragas; with Princess Punzalan, Lea Salonga, Gustavo Gomez, Kelsey Pribilski, Liam Booth, Eva Noblezada, Libby Villari, Dale Watson. (PG-13, 93 min.)**

Fifteen years in the making, UT alumna Diane Paragas' Austin-set *Yellow Rose* is a refreshing and strikingly original coming-of-age drama interwoven with an undocumented mother and daughter's perseverance amid the threat of deportation.

While a nod to the iconic folk song, the title also references the film's protagonist, 17-year-old Filipina Rose Garcia (Noblezada), who lives in a rinky-dink roadside motel just outside Austin. Her widowed mother, Priscilla (Punzalan), works the front desk and cleans rooms. With a deep love for Loretta Lynn and a knack for songwriting, Rose strums her own country songs on her acoustic guitar. Her songwriting is more serious than that of the average teenager just messing around with a guitar for summer-break kicks, but it's a side of herself she's reluctant to share with others, even with fellow classmate and guitar shop clerk Elliot (Booth).

Any dreams of Rose pursuing her honky-tonk dreams, however faint, are soon dashed when Immigration and Customs Enforcement take

Priscilla – who, like Rose, is undocumented – into custody after a raid on the motel. Rose's only option is her estranged aunt, Gail (Tony winner Salonga), who leads an upwardly mobile life in Austin – a sharp contrast to Rose and her mother's experience. What follows is a series of setbacks, confrontations, and revelations as Rose navigates the tumult of living and working undocumented, all while searching for her mother.

*Yellow Rose's* casting alone is memorable. Noblezada's resilient performance is a promising start to the film newcomer, who received a Tony Award nomination for her performance as Kim in the 2014 revival of *Miss Saigon*. Salonga (who coincidentally originated the part of Kim in the original West End production of *Miss Saigon*) is fleeting but memorable. Honky-tonk legend Dale Watson (as himself) is pitch-perfect as the gravelly voiced country outlaw coaxing Rose to pursue her music aspirations, and *Friday Night Lights'* Villari exudes comfort like an iced sweet tea on a blazing Texas afternoon in her portrayal of Broken Spoke owner Jolene.

If left in less deft hands, the film could've teetered into a too-on-the-nose commentary on America's current immigration debate. However, the lean screenplay and Paragas' focused creative vision makes for a singular directorial feature debut that feels like nothing else happening in film right now.

A version of this review ran as part of our *Austin Film Festival 2019* coverage.

★★★★

— Beth Sullivan

ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, ALAMO S. LAMAR, AMC DINE-IN TECH RIDGE 10, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CINEMARK 20, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, EVO CINEMAS BELTERRA, FLIX BREWHOUSE, IPIC, MOVIEHOUSE, LAKE CREEK 7





# SPECIAL SCREENINGS

BY KAT McNEVINS

## VIRTUAL SCREENINGS

**THE 24TH (2020)** D: Kevin Willmott; with Trai Byers, Bashir Salahuddin, Aja Naomi King. (NR, 101 min.) Join the Bullock Museum for a virtual screening and conversation about the powerful and timely true story of the all-Black 24th United States Infantry Regiment and the Houston Riot of 1917. *Thu., Oct. 8, 7pm.* [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com).

**AFS CINEMA** The quality programming you've come to expect is available virtually. [www.austinfilm.org/afs-cinema](http://www.austinfilm.org/afs-cinema).

**ALAMO ON DEMAND** Alamo Drafthouse-curated picks. [www.drafthouse.com](http://www.drafthouse.com).

**THE GOOD LORD BIRD SNEAK PREVIEW** Austin Film Society members can access a free sneak preview of two episodes of the new Showtime series, with introductions by star and executive producer Ethan Hawke and executive producer Ryan Hawke. *Thu., Oct. 8.* [www.austinfilm.org](http://www.austinfilm.org).

**SHITHOUSE SNEAK PREVIEW (2020)** D: Cooper Raiff; with Raiff, Dylan Gelula, Amy Landecker. (R, 100 min.) Austin Film Society members get access to a sneak peek at the SXSW Grand Jury prize-winning film and a director Q&A moderated by Andrew Bujalski. Register by *Fri., Oct. 9, noon*; Q&A *Tue., Oct. 13, 9:30pm.* [www.austinfilm.org](http://www.austinfilm.org).

**VIOLET CROWN** The arthouse cinema they're known for offered virtually, and ticket purchases benefit the theatre. [austin.violetcrown.com](http://austin.violetcrown.com).

## DRIVE-IN FEATURED

**THE FOG (1980)** D: John Carpenter; with Adrienne Barbeau, Jamie Lee Curtis, Janet Leigh. (R, 89 min.) A spooky showing in the woods with lots of fog. @Blue Starlite Mueller II; *Thu., Oct. 8, 10:50pm.*

**THE DRIVE-IN COMEDY TOUR** Blue Starlite teamed up with a long-running national series that pulls local comedians from all over the country to bring you live comedy at the drive-in. @Blue Starlite Round Rock: *Sat., Oct. 10, 5:45pm*; @Blue Starlite Downtown: *Sun., Oct. 11, 4:45pm.*

**NOSFERATU (1922)** D: F.W. Murnau; with Max Schreck. (NR, 84 min.) **With Live Score.** Live-scored by David DiDonato. @Blue Starlite Downtown; *Thu., Oct. 15, 10:55pm.*



## SPACES

**"THREE STOOGES SPOOKTACULAR" AND NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** Rocket Cinema presents this perfect start to the Halloween season, a drive-in double feature with "The Ghost Talks," "Spook Louder," and a host of other Three Stooges Halloween-themed episodes, followed by George Romero's classic zombie horror. @Pioneer Farms; *Fri., Oct. 9. Three Stooges, 7:45pm; Living Dead, 9:45pm.*

**SCREAM (1996)** D: Wes Craven; with Drew Barrymore, Neve Campbell, Courtney Cox. (R, 100 min.) Shock the Vote ATX presents a drive-in experience with trivia for prizes, a special pre-show featuring a horror short from a local filmmaker, spooky surprises, and a socially distanced Ghostface. The best part: 80% of the proceeds will go to the org's six partner nonprofits. @Pioneer Farms; *Sat., Oct. 10, 8pm.*

**BRIDESMAIDS (2011)** D: Paul Feig; with Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph, Rose Byrne. (R, 125 min.) Bring a buddy and a blanket for this snuggle-in screening in the park. (\*) @Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point; *Wed., Oct. 14, 6pm.*

**THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (1993)** D: Henry Selick; with the voices of Danny Elfman, Chris Sarandon, Catherine O'Hara. (PG, 75 min.) They've partnered with Chi'Lantro for this screening, so be sure to preorder your meal by midnight *Wed., Oct. 14.* Popcorn, candy, and drinks will be available at check-in. (\*) @Community First! Village; *Fri., Oct. 16, 6:30pm.*

## FESTIVALS

**AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE** For its 27th annual iteration, AFF is totally virtual and is packed with film screenings and events. There will be five days of panels and intimate roundtables with the world's biggest names in film and eight days of film premieres, screenings, and Q&As. Badges are available now, and exciting programming announcements are made regularly leading up to the fest, so sign up for the newsletter to stay updated. *Oct. 22-29.* [www.austinfilmfestival.com](http://www.austinfilmfestival.com).

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL FILM FESTIVAL** International DOTG is Oct. 11, but locally based nonprofit ConnectHER plans to celebrate and host virtual film screenings throughout October. The flagship event, with the theme "Centering the Voices of Black Women and Girls," is *Thu., Oct. 8, 4pm*, via Zoom. *Through Oct. 31.* [www.connecther.org/dotg](http://www.connecther.org/dotg).

## OFFSCREEN

**A CANTOR'S TALE PANEL PROGRAM: THE PAST PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF JEWISH CANTORIAL MUSIC** Austin Jewish Film Festival, Congregation Agudas Achim, and Temple Beth Shalom co-present this screening of *A Cantor's Tale* and *A Cantor's Head* and a panel discussion. Films available *Oct. 15-18*; panel *Sun., Oct. 18, 2pm.* [www.austijnff.org](http://www.austijnff.org).

**LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY** A night of laughs with Matt Sadler, Gabe Davis, and Steven Farmer. *Fri., Oct. 9, 7pm.* Flix Brewhouse, 2200 S. I-35, Round Rock. [www.flixbrewhouse.com/round-rock](http://www.flixbrewhouse.com/round-rock).

THE SYMBOL (\*) INDICATES FULL-LENGTH REVIEWS AVAILABLE ONLINE: [AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/FILM](http://AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/FILM)

**SUBMISSION INFORMATION:** *The Austin Chronicle* is published every Thursday. Info is due the Monday of the week prior to the issue date. **The deadline for the Oct. 23 issue is Monday, Oct. 12.** Include name of event, date, time, location, price, phone number(s), a description, and any available photos or artwork. Send submissions to the *Chronicle*, PO Box 4189, Austin, TX 78765; fax, 512/458-6910; or email. Contact Kat McNevins (Special Screenings): [specialscreenings@austinchronicle.com](mailto:specialscreenings@austinchronicle.com).

# THE HALLOWEEN ISSUE

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE



ON STANDS & ONLINE OCTOBER 22. UNTIL THEN...

## THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE IS HOSTING ITS FIRST-EVER READERS HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

SPONSORED BY ZIP LOST PINES

Participants can enter their most creatively spooky getups by sending photos to [HALLOWEEN@AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM](mailto:HALLOWEEN@AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM). The grand prize winner will receive a WEEKEND STAYCATION from SpringHill Suites by Marriott (San Antonio Northwest at The RIM) and have their photo featured in the October 30 issue of *The Austin Chronicle!* Runner ups and honorable mentions will also be eligible for special prizes.

ENTER BY OCTOBER 27



Not dressing up this year? Send us pics of your best HALLOWEEN HOME DISPLAYS and tell us how you're spooking up the neighborhood!



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# Music

## Jana Horn Is Cautiously Optimistic

**Jana Horn** considers her output carefully. After performing eponymously for years, the cerebral Austin singer-songwriter finally offers a debut statement. *Optimism* masters clear-eyed, sure-footed folk rock with subtlety, allowing space for each phrase to land.

Between thoughtful pauses and laughs, she explains that a long educational period of tour tapes and an entirely scrapped album preceded her official bow.

"My head was too far inside it," says Horn. "I needed to let it go completely. As a solo artist, you're always trying to figure out how you record with other people. In that process, I learned what I need to do and felt like I could do it better the second time around."

"Broken record" thus shelved, *Optimism* came together locally at **Hen House Recording** with guitarist **Aaron Blount** and bassist **Vince Delgado**, both bandmates of hers in **Knife in the Water**, as well as drummer **Ian Phillips**. Only the title track carried over, its somber, just-enough vocals holding down a buoyant pop chorus: "Baby, there ain't no clouds/ Baby, there ain't no crying." Flashes of levity like the dreamy piano gleam of "Man Meandering" and country lilt of the **Laura Marling**-like "Driving" balance sturdy basslines and literary lyricism throughout.

"For some reason that song, 'Optimism,' apart from all my others, felt really positive," says Horn. "I remember sharing it with my mom and telling her that I'd finally written something happy, and she did not think so, but I knew it should carry forward. Songs do have a weird power to them, and I followed that."

Horn wrote the album's central cut in the van returning from tour with college band

**Reservations**, launched out of her early songwriting while attending **St. Edward's**. The artist's preferred method of creation pivots on arrival rather than belaboring. The majority of her new material came together over a week after Horn graduated in 2015 and began playing solo – a time she calls "untethered."

"Most of my songwriting is just being available, and keeping a clear mind," she offers. "I don't sit down to write songs, or even really think about them. I try to be aware of them. I know this sounds very vague, but I feel like songs already exist, and I – or anyone else – happens to access them."

"Maybe they were always being written in the back of my head as I was living."

A prime example is the stark, intense "Jordan," where a biblical story channels Horn's emotions in an ending relationship. The 27-year-old's storybook songs often venture into brambles, caves, and locked doors. She suspects a religious upbringing in the small town of Glen Rose gave her the prophetic framework.

There, Horn says she became obsessed with **Leonard Cohen** but wore thick eyeliner to screamo shows in nearby Dallas.

"I had these competitions called bible drills," she remembers of her youth. "You have to locate verses very quickly then read it. Those things are buried in my subconscious."

Tapping the psyche, Horn embraces boredom. Her recent activity includes watching *Fleabag* and the release of two singles by her new band **American Friend** with partner **Adam Jones (Deep Time, Bill Callahan)** and **Sarah Beames (Chronophage)**. The group's debut LP prepped, Horn exerts full

**FASTER  
THAN  
SOUND**  
BY RACHEL  
RASCOE

### CROSSTALK

**JACKIE VENSON TAPED** her *Austin City Limits* debut last Thursday without an audience, a performance airing Nov. 14 on **PBS**. The lauded local guitarist's dress, designed by her sister, inscribed the names of Black Americans killed by police, with an armband reading "Say Their Names." Alongside selections from upcoming LP *Vintage Machine*, Venson invited **Tameca Jones** – whose blazer read "**Breonna Taylor**" – to take on state standard "Texas Flood." On Instagram, Venson wrote: "Black Lives Matter. It's not just a slogan or a hashtag, it's me, it's my family, it's my friends, it's real people, with real lives."

**GINA CHAVEZ RECEIVED** her first **Latin Grammy** nomination last Tuesday for May EP *La Que Manda*. The singer's only all-Spanish release will compete for Best Pop/Rock Album at the Nov. 19 award show. The Austin native honors survivors of domestic abuse in her new video "Ella," benefiting nonprofit **Survive2Thrive**. In a press release, Chavez says, "I toured the world and saw how women everywhere – from Nebraska to Uzbekistan to Argentina – know what it means to be silenced in the face of power. This album is for them... to show the world what we've known the whole time: We are La Que Manda."

Jana Horn

PHOTO BY ADAM JONES / COURTESY OF JANA HORN



focus to the task of graduate school at the **University of Virginia**.

There, the fiction writing program extends her longtime love for short stories and allows her to split time between Austin and Charlotte, Va. Although classes are virtual, she meets with her small group of classmates on front porches. Even with the structure of school, Horn tries not to force the process.

"When I really work on something, and there's too much of myself in it, it's not going to sound good," she furthers. "If I overthought things, they just wouldn't work."

### Progress in the Fight for Local Venues

Following the Sept. 28 rally of some 200 music industry workers, **Austin City Council** approved \$15 million for sectors especially hurt by COVID-19 that included a dedicated **Austin Music Venue Preservation Fund**. The relief package will be divided three ways: one-third to music venues, another third to child care providers, and the remaining \$5 million shared among "iconic" music venues, restaurants, and arts organizations.

Advocates consider the move, expediting the **SAVES Resolution** passed Sept. 17, an important initial step to sustain shuttered music spaces.

On the eve of the Council meeting, the **Austin Music Commission** hurried its own framework for at least \$12 million over 12 months for Austin clubs. To qualify, venues would agree to racial and gender equity guidelines including early proposals of staff training, paid internships for students, shows featuring "emerging artists of color," and marketing strategies such as a bilingual website. Commission Vice Chair **Jonathan "Chaka" Mahone** voted against the plan, which otherwise passed.

"I really don't see how these venues that have already had issues with equity are going to change just by giving them money and doing workshops," he said. "The resources need to be put in the hands of communities of color so they can directly engage these venues and come up with solutions."

For consultants to work with venues, he suggested the **Austin Urban League, Six Square, Austin Justice Coalition, and Diversity Awareness & Wellness in Action (DAWA)**, a fund launched by Mahone. Commissioner **Graham Reynolds** said their plan will prioritize applications from venue proprietors of color such as **Harold McMillan** of **Kenny Dorham's Backyard**. Commissioner **Paul Pinon** called it a "living document" to prioritize speedy funding for live music concerns.

"[Venues] will get turned into condos, and then this conversation doesn't really benefit anybody," he said. "But I do want to make sure we're not saying, 'Go back to how everything was.' We need to make sure we're using this as [an] opportunity to make venues better."

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## Ex-NFL star Joe Barksdale moves to Austin to make music

BY DEREK UDENSI

When we walk into the performance room of Austin's Orb Studios, Joseph Barksdale sits on a couch as his band Yours Truly readies a show for a benefit stream in his hometown of Detroit five days later. Group members come and go during the almost 90-minute in-person rendezvous. He stands up and introduces himself with, "Hi, my name is Joe Barksdale."

Maskless, he extends a firm handshake. The former NFL player sports a casual outfit. He grabs a guitar and clutches it during the entire interview.

**Austin Chronicle:** Google lists you at 6-foot-four, 325 pounds. What's your current size?

**Joe Barksdale:** 6-foot-5, 290.

**AC:** Did your size impact your ability to learn guitar?

**JB:** The hardest part is just having big hands and trying to figure out how to navigate an instrument with that. Between a lot of practice and some custom guitars, I got it together.

**AC:** What type of guitar are you holding right now?

**JB:** It's a Fender Custom Shop '69 Strat. John Cruz made it. It's a one-off. I call it

my Green Ranger Strat [picks at strings slightly]. It's a chambered mahogany body, green and yellow with the Tommy Oliver sticker on it.

### TAKE A KNEE

Detroit singers get more recognition than guitarists, but the Motor City produced its share of shredders, adept strummers highlighted by Wayne Kramer, Ted Nugent, Jack White.

"I would consider my music like if Marvin Gaye and Jimi Hendrix and Sly Stone were writing music together and Kanye West produced it," ventures the 31-year-old before adding Stevie Wonder, Drake, and Teddy Pendergrass to a wide-ranging list of inspirations.

Abuse helped foster a tough childhood, but he credits his city for teaching hard lessons about managing rejection and neglect, and for instilling in him resilience.

A four-star prospect coming out of Cass Technical High School, Barksdale chose to attend Louisiana State University. Not the University of Michigan or Michigan State, but LSU, thus becoming the first state of Michigan signee in program history. Why LSU?

"Cause people told me I couldn't play there," states the former offensive lineman sternly with direct eye contact. "Cause I started when I was 16. There's been kids playing since they were 4, so they said that I would never get on the field [at LSU]."

The experience didn't go smoothly despite netting him a 2008 BCS National Championship. Racial tension, along with an apparent lack of institutional concern for the discomfort he felt with his school selection, settled in. His lack of love for sports as a whole consequently worsened.

"I remember, vividly, a Black player and a white player having made the same infraction," he motions. "The white player got to go home, the Black player had to run after practice."

A third round selection in the 2011 NFL Draft followed.

Barksdale played in 106 games for four different teams during his eight-year NFL career, with 78 of those appearances coming as starts. According to ESPN, he parlayed an impressive 2015-16 campaign with the

San Diego Chargers into a four-year, \$22 million contract. The deal contained over \$10 million in guaranteed money.

The smoke and mirrors of the league, however, troubled him mightily.

"I heard the words 'nigger 72' [Barksdale's jersey number] from the stands in my eight years about 100 times, at least," he says calmly, describing the toxic bravado of sports fans.

Affairs didn't improve inside team facilities, either.

Barksdale describes an environment in which people care little about what's underneath the pads. He recalls coming out about his mental illness one offseason, yet no one in the building said a word. The unhappy lineman retired from football in June 2019.

"There were so many double standards in sports that I had to leave when I started feeling like a slave," he says. "[The league] lost the collusion lawsuit to Colin Kaepernick and I was coming off a suicide attempt, so I was like, 'What am I doing?' I just couldn't continue to do it.

"I never fit in with my teammates. I mean I hated most of them and I feel like they hated me," he says with a chuckle. "But that could be the mental illness, I don't know."

The former right tackle asserts no bitterness toward the NFL.

### THE WEDDING SINGER

In 2013, then playing for the St. Louis Rams, he found himself grieving. Charleston Fobbs had been killed that September in an automobile accident at the age of 47. The former assistant football coach at Cass Technical High (1994-2008) transformed an unsure teen fresh off getting kicked out of an engineering camp into an elite prospect in less than two years.

"He mentored me, helped me out," says Barksdale. "The only car I drove in college he got it for me. When I got drafted, he helped me with agents – all that kind of stuff. When he died, that was the first time I really felt like the NFL does not care about you."

He lowers his voice.

"Pretty much like if your dad died: 'Hey, that sucks, are you gonna come to work today?'"

St. Louis coach Jeff Fisher not only cared, he treated him "like a human." When a still-hurting Barksdale mentioned his intent to play video games and "do his thing" during an offseason meeting with Fisher, the coach offered a life-altering suggestion.

"You need something that you can focus on to help you process, maybe even a creative outlet," he remembers Fisher advising him. "You remind me a lot of my son in

**"There were so many double standards in sports that I had to leave when I started feeling like a slave."**

terms of your love of music. Have you ever thought of playing the guitar? He loves playing guitar.”

Names like Jimi Hendrix and Freddie Mercury meant little to Barksdale at the time.

“I started playing guitar and I immediately fell in love with it in terms of the things you can do with the strings, the sounds you can make,” he enthuses. “It was the voice that I never had. If it wasn’t for Jeff Fisher making that suggestion, I don’t know if I’d ever had it.”

Barksdale continues to unearth his sound. New release *Sincerely* molds blues, funk, R&B, rock, and soul into one. It feels smoother and more soulful than 2019 aggressor *Electric Soul*.

He whips out a small, navy blue notebook full of tidal tidbits and charts. He explains his training regimen on a typical day: 30 minutes of vocal exercises, an hour on guitar technique, and an hour creating beats plus guitar rhythm exercises. Nearly three hours a day go into perfecting his new craft.

“My first guitar teacher told me I would probably need someone to sing my songs,” he recalls about his initial guitar classes. “In 2015, he was right.”

Barksdale chuckles again. He mentions an apparently less-than-stellar vocal performance at his 2015 wedding reception. He’s still striving to improve.

In fact, there’s noticeable improvement all around on the singer-guitarist’s discography.

Vocally, he sounds more confident and tuned with each release. He unleashes his Green Ranger Strat with conviction during the taping after the interview. An aspiring beatmaker, he claims to have amassed over 400 demo tracks since March.

## THAT’S HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

Barksdale makes no excuses when pertaining to his career transition.

“I’m very hard on myself,” he admits. “Constantly, there’s this voice in my head telling me I’m nothing. I’m nobody. I’m wasting my time doing whatever I’m doing and I should just go die. I think that manifests itself in perfectionism sometimes.”

The cogent interviewee often stares into the distance, yet remains focused in spite of copious moving parts around him.

“It’s a mental illness. I’m sick and I have a handicap.”

Air quotations and mock sarcasm accompany the word “handicap.”

Visiting a therapist twice a week for the last three-and-a-half-years helps. Recently, he met with a specialist at the advice of his therapist and received a polarizing diagnosis: Autism spectrum disorder (ASD). He himself terms it as “functioning autism.”

Why discuss this now, so candidly?

“I planned on talking about it immediately after it happened [when I played foot-

ball], but then I realized, ‘Do I even know who I am?’ This has been me for 30-some-thing years, but it made a lot of things make sense. It explains my childhood. It’s the reason I played football.

“The reason I got kicked out of that engineering camp was because I was doing something where I thought we were playing around and we were not playing around. Then one thing led to another, but it answers a lot of questions. It explains why I was able to pick up the guitar and everything so quickly.

“It explains, also, why I’m able to get out of my bed on the worst days with a mental illness, because I’m so used to routines, being goal-oriented, and that sort of thing.”

He acknowledges that without mental illness, he’s not sure if his music-making would flourish as it has. He ponders how life would look without a constant struggle inside his mind.

“I do think sometimes how great life would be if I didn’t have to talk myself out of killing myself all of the time,” he utters, deep in thought. “Or if I could actually feel some sliver of self-respect, or confidence, or feeling like I belong anywhere. I have to remind myself that without rain, flowers don’t grow. If it’s not dark, lights can’t shine as bright.”

## DEGRASSI: THE NEXT GENERATION

An unlikely source of hope keeps our subject’s fire burning. Aubrey Graham first made waves as baby-faced Jimmy Brooks on Canadian teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, before morphing into swole superstar musician Drake. Barksdale didn’t watch *Degrassi* often due to Noggin’s *The N* (now *TeenNick*) receiving placement on premier tiers of cable his family didn’t have, but he remembers watching the show at friends’ houses a few times.

“I followed Drake from the beginning and because I followed Drake from the beginning, I know that this is not where I’m always going to be,” he maintains in reference to his athletic career prevailing over his current career in terms of coverage. “So, in a way, part of my career is owed to him, because he did it before I did.”

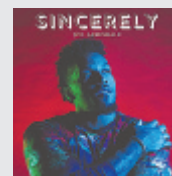
## 4 BARKSDALE SCORES The singer-guitarist’s victory dances so far

**“Dreams (Extended Cut)” (April 2019)** Several minutes of shredding give ample definition to album title *Electric Soul*.

**“Black Majik” (Feb. 2020)** Aggressive single from *Sincerely* doubles as JB’s personal “workout music.” A Hendrix-esque “look out” precedes the captivating solo.

**“Moonbeam” (June 2020)** Singer pines for a lover to stay by sweetly reassuring “you’re my moon-beam, my sweet moon-beam.” Emotions pour out between “Moonbeam”’s extended syllabic pause.

**“Beats Go On Virtual Show” (Sept. 2020)** Uncut, 40-minute virtual performance featuring Yours Truly that can be viewed via his YouTube (“Joe Barksdale”) or Instagram (@jbdale72).



PHOTOS BY DAVID BRENDAN HALL

He and his wife, Brionna, conducted research on several cities before moving to the Texas capital last year. He says Austin dominated categories such as ideals and education available to the couple’s two daughters. He sees himself as an eventual touring musician and wanted the best possible situation for his family.

In regard to finding a habitat where he feels at “home,” the *Star Wars* devotee sees himself in famed villain Anakin Skywalker due to the Jedi’s rough childhood turning him into the feared Darth Vader. Yet, Joe Barksdale yearns to write his story in his own image. He’s a gentle giant, a man striving to incite change.

“Music seems to be the easiest way for people to understand me,” he explains. “As human beings, we all want to be understood and loved. I spent my entire life trying to explain myself and I feel like I finally found an outlet, so I feel like a kid that just learned how to talk.” ■

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# THE Luv Doc



## "LIKING MUSIC"

Dear Luv Doc,

At first I didn't want to believe it, but nearly a year into our relationship, I am convinced that my boyfriend doesn't like music. He says he likes music, but every time I turn on the music in the car, or the kitchen when we're cooking or even when we're just hanging out in the backyard, he always tells me to turn it down or turn it off. He usually says it's too distracting or too loud, but I think he just doesn't like music. And it's not because of the music I listen to - I listen to everything - rock, pop, rap, country - it doesn't matter as long as it has a groove and an interesting melody. He just never wants to listen to music. There is never music on when I get into his car. I never catch him jamming out with his earbuds in. He is always listening to some podcast. Whenever I ask him what kind of music he likes, he gives the name of some band from when he was in high school like Green Day or Weezer. I don't think he can name any band that is currently on the radio. When I talk to my friends about it, they think it's weird but no big deal. I'm not sure I agree with them. What kind of psychopath says he likes music but never listens to music? I feel like I am being gaslighted. If he's lying to me about liking music, what else is he lying to me about?

- Player on Mute

Let me start out by saying that it's OK to not like music. There are plenty of people who get along just fine without listening to music on a regular basis. Some people even actively hate music - Red Hot Chili Peppers fans, for instance. And yet, somehow, they manage to hold down decent enough jobs to afford oversized Billabong shorts, skateboards with tiny wheels, lip piercings, and Walgreens hair dye kits. Who said a life unexamined isn't a life well lived? Not me. In fact, I like to imagine that there is a whole generation of kids conceived to the heart-rending strains of "Under the Bridge," and that someday soon those shirtless toddlers will be stunting around on their own tiny-wheeled skateboards listening to their own garbage. I have a dream.

I feel for you though. I can't imagine waking up every morning next to the cold, dead, predator eyes of someone who doesn't listen to music. They say there's a lid for every kettle and that even hyenas have mates, but the thought of having to make it through each day without a dope soundtrack is anathema to me. That said, I am not entirely sure that my family doesn't secretly want to murder me because I am incessantly whistling, humming, or outright bellowing songs - often songs I don't even like. Once I even caught myself humming "Under the Bridge" under my breath, and let me tell you: I don't ever wanna feel like I did that day.

There was a time when, a little bit ironically, I had "Eye of the Tiger" as my alarm clock wake up song. To say I am not a morning person is a gross understatement, but having those nine intro power chords jolt you out of a blissful slumber at high volume is something close to a religious experience. If you don't go into acute cardiac arrest, the rest of your day is going to be amazing.

I recommend that shit to everyone: nuns, Buddhist monks, sexy librarians, and people without souls ... like Ted Cruz or Dan Patrick. Seriously. There's a remote possibility that Ted Cruz and Dan Patrick actually enjoy music. It's equally possible both of them have matching Nickelback tramp stamps.

If the fact that your boyfriend never listens to music is really getting to you, I'd say it's time you had a talk. Just sit down across from him, hold his hands, look into his cold, dead, predator eyes and tell him that music means a lot to you and you're concerned that he doesn't want to share something you enjoy so much. Maybe have Eminem's "Lose Yourself" cued up and jam that shit at top volume to emphasize your point. If he isn't jumping up and down and singing the echo "go" by the second chorus, start packing your shit. It wasn't meant to be...

**NEED SOME ADVICE FROM THE LUV DOC?** Send your questions to [luvdoc@austinchronicle.com](mailto:luvdoc@austinchronicle.com).



## Mr. Smarty Pants Knows

According to *The Atlantic*, the U.S. feral pig population is currently about 9 million.

According to the Bible, Adam and Eve had a third son named Seth.

In the late 1700s, male dress was heavily influenced by Louis XIV. The Macaronis were a traveling group influenced by Louis XIV and known for their love of pasta and ornate wigs, on which they sometimes placed a little three-cornered hat. Macaroni meant fashionable, as in, "Those peacock green breeches are very macaroni." Hence the line from "Yankee Doodle."

**The king of Thailand, King Rama X, has a long full name: Vajiralongkorn Borommachakrayadison-santatiwong Thewetthamrongsuriboran Aphikhunuprakanmahitaladunladet Phumiphonnarretwarangkun Kittisirisombunsawangkhawat Borommakhattiyaratchakuman.**

The 2020 Buick Regal TourX is the last American-made station wagon.

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

## COMICS

### EREBEAMOR by Sam Hurt



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HR support and consultation to same, answers questions about HR programs, policies and other HR-related items (performance, compensation, career goals, etc.). Mail resume (must reference job code) to: Cypress Semiconductor Corp., Attn: AMMO, 198 Champion Court, M.S. 6.1, San Jose, CA 95134.



**SR BUSINESS ANALYST**  
for large data analysis, regular travel to San Antonio, TX required. Mail resumes to: Marisa Alcorta, 646 South Flores Street, San Antonio, TX 78204

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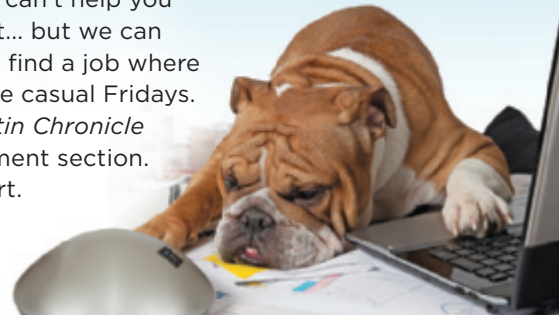
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### LEGAL NOTICES CALL TODAY 512/454-5767

Application has been made in accordance with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's Permit (BG) by Willow & Co LLC. dba Willow & Co to be located at 908 E 5th St Unit 107, Austin, Travis County, TX. Owner Valerie Williamson & Richard Kooris.

Application has been made with The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Beer Retail Dealer's Off-Premise License, Package Store Permit & Package Store Tasting Permit by Ferry Business LLC

DBA Captain Liquor to be located at 716 S. Pace Bend Rd, Ste. B, Spicewood, Travis Co., Texas. Managing Member of said LLC is Sultan K. Kadiwal - Managing Member

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a BG Wine & Beer Retailer's permit/license by Mi Celine Mercado LLC (Cere's Froyo) to be located at 51 Limmer Loop #500, Round Rock, Williamson County, TX 78665. Officers of said corporation are Firas J Abusaada.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Package Store Permit and Local Distributor's Permit by Manage Inn Cahoots dba Inn Cahoots to be located at 1221 E 6th Street, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Officers of said corporate are Kristen Carson, Brian Alford and Brent Hays.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine & Beer Retailer's Permit, Brewpub License, Private Carrier's Permit, Food & Beverage Certificate

and Local Cartage Permit by Renaissance Brewing, LLC dba Suds Monkey Brewing Company located at 12024 US 290 West, Austin, Hays County, Texas, Gregory C. Plummer and Susan Plummer, Managers.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's Permit by Texas Hills Culinary Imports, LLC dba Shorties Pizza, 7858 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Suite C, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Fardin Saïidi, Manager; Ali Hajmaleki, Manager;

Amir Hajmaleki, Manager.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's Off Premise Permit by Blanco Rio KG LLC, LLC. dba Blanco Rio KG LLC, 10925 Stonelake Boulevard, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Kenneth P. Thompson, Manager.

**CAUSE NO. C-1-PB-19-001706 NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE GUARDIANSHIP ESTATE OF VADA KAY STRAKER**  
Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Guardianship for the Estate of VADA KAY STRAKER, were issued on November 14, 2019, in Cause Number C-1-PB-19-001706, pending in the Probate Court Number One of Travis County, Texas, to: RANDY BERGER The address of such Guardian

is in Travis County, Texas. The address: RANDY BERGER c/o Law Office of Kathleen Macaulay P.O. Box 990611 Austin, Texas 78709 All persons having claims against this Guardianship Estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them to RANDY BERGER, Guardian of the Estate of VADA KAY STRAKER, at the Law Office of Kathleen L. Macaulay, P.O. Box 90611, Austin, Texas 78709. Dated October 5, 2020. By: Kathleen L. Macaulay Kathleen L. Macaulay Attorney RANDY BERGER

**CITATION BY PUBLICATION CAUSE NO: D-1-GN-19-000379**  
To: ALLISON CHURCHILL Defendant(s), in the hereinafter styled and numbered cause: YOU (AND EACH OF YOU) HAVE BEEN SUED. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance hereof, that is to say at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of Monday the NOVEMBER 2, 2020, and answer the PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL PETITION AND REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE of Plaintiff(s), filed in the 345TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT of Travis County, Texas, on JANUARY 22, 2019, a default judgment may be taken against you.

Said suit being number D-1-GN-19-000379, in which ALEXANDER WILLIAM KEATING Plaintiff(s), and ALLISON CHURCHILL Defendant(s), and the nature of which said suit is as follows: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED FOR A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT THAT OCCURRED ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2018 ON THE 600 BLOCK OF WEST NORTH LOOP IN TRAVIS COUNTY INVOLVING ALEXANDER WILLIAM KEATING. THIS CASE IS PRESENTLY PENDING BEFORE THE 345TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF TRAVIS COUNTY SITTING IN AUSTIN, TEXAS AND WAS FILED ON JANUARY 22, 2020 BEARING CAUSE NUMBER D-1-GN-19-000379 AND IS STYLED ALEXANDER WILLIAM KEATING VERSUS ALLISON CHURCHILL THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF OR PETITIONER IS: OMAR R. CHAUDHARY THE WEBSTER LAW FIRM 6200 SAVOY, SUITE 150 HOUSTON, TEXAS 77036 713-581-3900. ALL OF WHICH MORE FULLY APPEARS FROM PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL PETITION AND REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE, AND WHICH REFERENCE IS HERE MADE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES. Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said court

CONTINUED  
ON P.60







## NOTICE OF DIRECTOR ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that **North Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1** (the "District") will hold an election on November 3, 2020 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., at the polling place for each election precinct established by Travis County and Williamson County, Texas, for the purpose of electing a director to serve in Place 1, a director to service in Place 3, and a director to serve in Place 5, each of whom will serve a four-year term.

The ballots used in the election will have printed on them the names of all candidates for each of the three places for the office of director to have their names printed on the ballot at least 78 days before the election, and one blank space for write-in votes for any candidate for each of the three places for the office of director who has filed a declaration of write-in candidacy at least 74 days before the election.

The presiding judges, alternate presiding judges, and clerks for the election selected and appointed by Travis County and Williamson County in compliance with the requirements of State law are designated and appointed as election officers for the holding of the election. The presiding judges, alternate presiding judges, and clerks will perform the functions and duties of their respective positions that are provided by State law.

The District is divided into a total of five election precincts, one of which is in Travis County and four of which are in Williamson County. The respective Election Day polling places will be the polling places designated by Travis County for the election, as set forth on Exhibit "1", and the polling places designated by Williamson County for the election, as set forth on Exhibit "2".

The regular early voting clerk for Travis County is Dana DeBeauvoir, Travis County Elections Administrator. The regular early voting clerk for Williamson County is Christopher J. Davis, Williamson County Elections Administrator. Early voting by personal appearance will be conducted at the times, dates, and polling places established for early voting by Travis County and Williamson County, as set forth on Exhibits "3" and "4", respectively. The Travis County regular early voting clerk's official mailing address to which requests for applications for early voting ballots to be voted by mail may be sent is: Travis County Clerk – Elections Division, P.O. Box 149325, Austin, Texas 78714-9325. The email address is [ebbm@traviscountytexas.gov](mailto:ebbm@traviscountytexas.gov). The Williamson County regular early voting clerk's official address to which requests for applications for early voting ballots to be voted by mail may be sent is: Williamson County Elections, PO Box 209, Georgetown, Texas 78627-0209. The email address is [bbm@wilco.org](mailto:bbm@wilco.org).

## TRAVIS COUNTY

Main Early Voting Polling Place: Holiday Inn Austin Midtown – Elm Room, 6000 Middle Fiskville Rd, Austin, Texas 78752. Hours: Tuesday, October 13 – Friday, October 30, 7:00a.m. – 7:00p.m., Mondays – Saturdays; Sundays, October 18 and 25, 12:00 noon – 6:00p.m.

Any voter who is entitled to vote an early ballot by personal appearance in Travis County may do so at the Travis County Main Early Voting Polling Place listed above or any Travis County temporary branch site.

Applications for early voting ballots by mail for Travis County should be sent to:

If by US Mail:

Travis County Clerk – Elections Division  
P.O. Box 149325  
Austin, Texas 78714-9325

If by contract carrier:

Travis County Elections Division  
5501 Airport Boulevard, Suite #100  
Austin, Texas 78751-1410

Early voting ballots by mail for Travis County may be returned by in-person delivery to: (i) Travis County Clerk - Elections Division, 5501 Airport Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-1410; (ii) Travis County 700 Lavaca Parking Garage, 700 Lavaca Street, Austin, Texas 78701 (Lavaca or Guadalupe entrance); or (iii) Travis County 1010 Lavaca drive-through, 1010 Lavaca, Austin, Texas 78701 (enter from W. 11th St. between Guadalupe and Lavaca).

## WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Williamson County Main Early Voting Polling Place: Williamson County Georgetown Annex, 100 Wilco Way, HR108, Georgetown, Texas 78626. Hours: Tuesday, October 13 through Friday, October 30, 7:00a.m. - 7:00p.m. (except Sundays); Sundays, October 18 and 25, 1:00p.m. - 6:00p.m.

Any voter who is entitled to vote an early ballot by personal appearance in Williamson County may do so at the Williamson County Main Early Voting Polling Place listed above or any Williamson County temporary branch site.

Applications for early voting ballots by mail for Williamson County should be mailed to:

If by mail:

Williamson County Elections  
P.O. Box 209  
Georgetown, Texas 78627-0209

If by hand delivery:

Williamson County Elections Department  
Inner Loop Annex  
301 SE Inner Loop, Ste. 104  
Georgetown, Texas 78626

Applications for early voting ballots by mail for Travis County and Williamson County must be received by the close of business on Friday, October 23, 2020. Early voting ballots by mail for Travis County and Williamson County must be received no later than 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. In certain circumstances, the deadline to receive early voting ballots by mail may be different. Please refer to Texas Election Code, Sections 86.007, 101.057, and 101.001.

The election is being held pursuant to an order adopted by the Board of Directors of the District on July 15, 2020, as amended by the Board of Directors of the District on August 19, 2020.

## AVISO DE ELECCIÓN DE DIRECTOR

Se notifica por el presente que el **Districto Municipal de Servicios Públicos Numero 1** de North Austin (el "Districto") llevará a cabo una elección el día 3 de noviembre 2020, entre las horas de 7:00 a.m. a 7:00 p.m., en los lugares de votación establecidos por el Condado de Travis y el Condado de Williamson, para el propósito de elegir un director para servir en el Lugar número 1, y un director para servir en el Lugar número 3, y un director para servir en el Lugar número 5, cada uno de los cuales servirá un mandato de cuatro años.

Las boletas que se utilizarán en la elección tendrán los nombres impresos de todos los candidatos para cada uno de los tres puestos para la oficina de director a quienes hayan presentado aplicaciones para tener sus nombres impresos en las boletas por lo menos de 78 días antes de la elección, y un espacio en la boleta para añadir cualquier candidato por escrito a quien haya presentado una declaración de añadir un candidato por escrito para cada uno de los tres puestos para la oficina de director por lo menos 74 días antes de la elección.

Los jueces presidentes, los jueces presidentes alternos, y los funcionarios electorales para la elección son seleccionados y designados por el Condado de Travis y el Condado de Williamson en conformidad con los requisitos de la ley estatal y por este medio son los oficiales designados y nombrados para llevar a cabo la elección. Los jueces presidentes, los jueces presidentes alternos, y los funcionarios electorales para la elección realizarán las funciones y los deberes de sus posiciones respectivas en la manera prevista por la ley estatal.

El Distrito se divide en un total de cinco recintos, uno de los cuales está en el Condado de Travis y cuatro que están en el Condado de Williamson. Los respectivos lugares de votación para el día de la elección serán los lugares de votación designados por el Condado de Travis para la elección como se indica en el Anexo "1", y los lugares de votación designados por el Condado de Williamson para la elección como se indica en el Anexo "2".

El empleado regular de votación anticipada para el Condado de Travis es Dana DeBeauvoir, Administradora de Elecciones del Condado de Travis. El empleado regular de votación anticipada para el Condado de Williamson es Christopher J. Davis, Administrador de Elecciones del Condado de Williamson. La votación anticipada por apariencia personal se llevará a cabo en las horas, fechas y lugares de votación establecidos para la votación anticipada por el Condado de Travis y el Condado de Williamson, como se establece en las Anexo "3" y "4", respectivamente. La dirección postal oficial del secretario de votación anticipada del Condado de Travis a la que se pueden enviar las solicitudes de solicitudes de votación anticipada para ser votadas por correo es: Travis County Clerk - Elections Division, P.O. Box 149325, Austin, Texas 78714-9325. La dirección de correo electrónico es [ebbm@traviscountytexas.gov](mailto:ebbm@traviscountytexas.gov). La dirección oficial del secretario de votación anticipada del Condado de Williamson a la que se pueden enviar las solicitudes de solicitudes de votación anticipada para ser votadas por correo es: Williamson County Elections, PO Box 209, Georgetown, Texas 78627-0209. La dirección de correo electrónico es [bbm@wilco.org](mailto:bbm@wilco.org).

## EL CONDADO DE TRAVIS

Lugar principal de votación temprana: Holiday Inn Austin Midtown – Sala de "Elm", 6000 Middle Fiskville Rd, Austin, Texas 78752. Horario: el día Martes, 13 de octubre hasta el día Viernes, 30 de octubre, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. de lunes a sábado; los domingos el 18 de octubre y el 25 de octubre; 12:00 mediodía – 6:00 p.m.

Cualquier votante con derecho a votar durante la votación temprana en persona en el Condado de Travis puede hacerlo en cualquier sucursal provisional del Condado de Travis.

Una solicitud de boleta de votación temprana para votar en el Condado de Travis por correo debe ser enviada a:

Travis County Early Voting Clerk  
P.O. Box 149325  
Austin, Texas 78714-9325

## EL CONDADO DE WILLIAMSON

El lugar principal de votación temprana del Condado de Williamson: Williamson County Georgetown Ann, 100 Wilco Way HR108, Georgetown, Texas 78626. Horario: El día Martes, 13 de octubre hasta el día viernes, 30 de octubre, 7:00 am a 7:00 pm; el día domingo, 18 y 25 de octubre, 1:00 pm a 6:00 pm.

Cualquier votante con derecho a votar durante la votación temprana en persona puede hacerlo en la localidad principal de votación temprana del Condado de Williamson o en cualquier sucursal provisional del Condado de Williamson.

Una solicitud de boleta de votación temprana para votar en el Condado de Williamson por correo debe ser enviada a:

Si por el correo de U.S. Mail:

Williamson County Early Voting Clerk  
P.O. Box 209  
Georgetown, Texas 78627-0209

Si se entrega a mano:

Williamson County Election Department  
Inner Loop Annex  
301 SE Inner Loop, Ste. 104  
Georgetown, Texas 78626

Las solicitudes para las boletas de votación temprana por correo deben ser recibidas antes del cierre del día laborable el día viernes, 23 de octubre de 2020. Las boletas de votación temprana por correo deben ser recibidas antes de las 7:00 p.m., el día martes, 3 de noviembre de 2020. En ciertas circunstancias, la fecha límite para recibir las boletas de votación temprana por correo puede ser diferente. Por favor consulte el Código Electoral de Texas, Secciones 86.007, 101.057, and 101.001.

La elección se lleva a cabo en conformidad con la orden adoptada por la Junta Directiva del Distrito el día 15 de julio de 2020, modificada por la Junta Directiva del Distrito el 19 de agosto de 2020. .



Dana DeBeauvoir,  
County Clerk

## EXHIBIT "1" / ANEXO "1"

# Travis County Election Day Vote Centers Tuesday, November 3, 2020 (by precinct)

Sitios de Votación del Condado de Travis para el Día de Elección, martes 3 de noviembre, 2020 (por precinto)

**Polls are open 7 am - 7 pm; Horas de Servicio 7 am - 7 pm**

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sujeto a cambios

VOTE CENTER ELECTION Elección de Centros de Votación On Election Day, eligible Travis County VOTERS MAY VOTE AT ANY of the locations listed on this page. Voters are NOT limited to only voting in the precinct where they are registered to vote. En el día de elección votantes elegibles del Condado de Travis podrán votar en cualquier sitio indicado en esta página. Votantes tienen más opciones en dónde votar, sin limitarse al precinto en donde están registrados para votar.

Pct.	Polling Station	Address	City	Zip	Bus	Combined Precincts	Pct.	Polling Station	Address	City	Zip	Bus	Combined Precincts
Pct.	Lugar de votación	Dirección	Ciudad	Código postal		Recintos Combinados	Pct.	Lugar de votación	Dirección	Ciudad	Código postal		Recintos Combinados
101	Santa Barbara Catholic Church NEW	13713 FM 969	Hornsby Bend	78724		114, 115, 116, 119, 138	146	Pflugerville Public Library NEW	1008 Pflugger St. W	Pflugerville	78660		
105	Manor ISD Admin Building	10335 Hwy 290	Manor	78853			148	County Tax Office, Pflugerville	15822 Foothill Farms Loop	Pflugerville	78660		145; 160
105	Whisper Valley Discovery & Amenity Ctr NEW	9400 Petrichor Blvd	Manor	78853			148	Pflugerville ISD Rock Gym	702 W. Pecan St	Austin	78660		
106	Elgin High School	14000 County Line Rd	Elgin	78821			149	Sky-View Baptist Church NEW	211 W Koenig Ln	Austin	78751		
107	New Sweden Lutheran	12809 New Sweden Ch Rd	Manor	78853			151	Dottie Jordan Rec Center	2803 Loyola Ln	Austin	78723		
108	Our Savior Lutheran Church	1513 E Yager Ln	Austin	78753		102; 103	152	United Way of Greater Austin NEW	2000 E Martin Luther King Blvd	Austin	78702		
109	Austin Fire Station No. 28 NEW	2410 W Parmer Ln	Austin	78727			153	Jourdan Bachman Pioneer Farm NEW	10621 Pioneer Farms Dr	Austin	78754		
110	Stone Hill Apartments NEW	17900 Pflugger Farm Ln	Pflugerville	78660		150	154	Austin Fire Station No. 41 NEW	11205 Harris Branch Pkwy	Austin	78754		125; 127
111	Staybridge Suites Austin North Parmer Ln NEW	13000 N I-35, Bldg 9	Austin	78753			156	Modo Yoga Studios NEW	7010 Easy Wind Dr, Suite 130	Austin	78752		142
112	Mt Playmore NEW	13609 N Interstate Hwy 35	Austin	78753			156	Holiday Inn Austin Midtown NEW	6000 Middle Fiskville Rd	Austin	78752		
113	Bible Baptist Church of Pflugerville NEW	14400 Immanuel Rd	Pflugerville	78660			158	Virginia Brown Recreation Center	7500 Blessing Ave	Austin	78752		
117	Turner-Roberts Rec Center	7201 Colony Loop Dr	Austin	78724			200	Winters Building	701 W 51st St	Austin	78751		
120	Community First! Village	9301 Hog Eye Rd Suite 950	Austin	78724			202	Red River Church	4425 Red River St	Austin	78751		
121	Austin Achieve - Northeast Campus NEW	7424 E Hwy 290	Austin	78723		126; 131; 134	203	Courtyard by Marriott Austin Pflugerville NEW	16103 Impact Way	Pflugerville	78660		227
122	University Hills Branch Library NEW	4721 Loyola Ln	Austin	78723			205	Parmer Lane Baptist	12424 Scofield Farms Dr	Austin	78758		
123	Hendrickson High School PAC	19201 Colorado Sand Dr	Pflugerville	78660		183	208	UT Gregory Gymnasium NEW	2101 Speedway	Austin	78712		
124	Carver Branch Library	1161 Angelina St	Austin	78702			207	RRISD Hartfield Performing Arts Center	5800 McNeil Dr	Austin	78729		
124	Huston-Tillotson University	900 Chicon St	Austin	78702			208	UT Flawn Academic Center	2304 Whitis Ave, No 338	Austin	78712		
124	Millennium Youth Complex	1156 Hargrave St	Austin	78702			210	Lions Municipal Golf Course NEW	2901 Enfield Rd	Austin	78703		
126	Givens Recreation Center	3811 East 12th St	Austin	78721			211	Chinatown Center	10901 N Lamar Blvd	Austin	78753		226
129	Greater Mt Zion Baptist Church NEW	4301 Tannehill Ln	Austin	78721			211	St Mark United Methodist	601 W Braker Ln	Austin	78753		
130	Memorial United Methodist	6100 Berkman Dr	Austin	78723		118	215	Wells Branch Community Library	15001 Wells Port Drive	Austin	78728		
132	East Nineteenth St Missionary Baptist	3401 Rogge Ln	Austin	78723			217	Juan P. Navarro High School	1201 Payton Gin Rd	Austin	78758		
133	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas	4800 Manor Rd	Austin	78723			218	Disability Rights Texas	2222 W Braker Ln	Austin	78758		
133	Windsor Park Branch Library	5833 Westminister Dr	Austin	78723			218	Indeed at Domain NEW	10721 Domain Dr	Austin	78758		
135	AISD Performing Arts Center	1500 Barbara Jordan Blvd	Austin	78723			219	All Nations Church NEW	16804 Radholme Ct	Round Rock	78664		
136	Pflugger Hall and Conference Center	203 E Pecan St Site B	Austin	78660			221	Bridge Point Elementary	6401 Cedar St	Austin	78746		212
137	Avalon Pool and Amenity Center	19729 Jakes Hill Rd	Pflugerville	78660		161	223	CA Office NEW	7620 Guadalupe St	Austin	78752		
139	Asian American Resource Center	8401 Cameron Rd	Austin	78754		141; 164	224	YMCA North Austin	1000 W Rundberg Ln	Austin	78758		
140	Gus Garcia Recreation Center	1201 E Rundberg Ln	Pflugerville	78753		104	225	Wells Branch MUD Recreation Center	3000 Shoreline Dr	Austin	78728		





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## EXHIBIT "2" / ANEXO "2"

Attachment B  
Adjunto b

Williamson County

Joint General and Special Elections

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

Elecciones generales y Especiales Martes 3 de noviembre

Registered voters may vote at any location listed below

Los votantes registrados podrán votar en cualquiera de los lugares de votación listados abajo

Vote Center Locations

7:00 am - 7:00 pm

Locaciones de Centros de Votos

City (ciudad)	Location (ubicación)	Address (la dirección)	Zip
<b>AUSTIN</b>	Anderson Mill Limited District	11500 El Salido Parkway	78750
	Bethany United Methodist Church	10010 Anderson Mill Road	78750
	Gateway Church	7104 McNeil Drive	78729
	Hartfield Performing Arts Center	5800 McNeil Drive	78729
	Pinballz Lake Creek	13729 N US 183 Hwy	78750
	Kelly Reeves Athletic Complex	10211 W Parmer Lane	78717
	Lord of Life Lutheran Church	9700 Neenah Avenue	78717
	Rattan Creek Park Community Center	7617 Elkhorn Mountain Trail	78729
Spicewood Springs Library	8637 Spicewood Springs Rd	78759	
<b>BARTLETT</b>	Bartlett Town Hall	140 W Clark Street	76511
<b>CEDAR PARK</b>	Cedar Park High School	2150 Cypress Creek Road	78613
	Cedar Park Library	550 Discovery Boulevard	78613
	Cedar Park Randalls	1400 Cypress Creek Road	78613
	Cedar Park Recreation Center	1435 Main St- Town Center	78613
	Mason Elementary School	1501 N Lakeline Boulevard	78613
	Vista Ridge High School	200 S Vista Ridge Boulevard	78613
<b>COUPLAND</b>	St Peter's Church of Coupland	108 Wathen Street	78615
<b>FLORENCE</b>	Andice Community Center	6600 FM 970	76527
	Florence High School Gymnasium	401 FM 970	76527
<b>GEORGETOWN</b>	Cowan Creek Amenity Center	1433 Cool Spring Way	78633
	First Baptist Church-Georgetown	1333 W University Avenue	78628
	Georgetown Annex	100 Wilco Way HR108	78626
	Georgetown Housing Authority	210 W 18th Street, Building 1	78626
	Georgetown Randalls	5721 Williams Drive	78633
	GISD Technology and Nutrition Building	603 Lakeway Drive	78628
	Parks and Recreation Administration Building	1101 N College Street	78626
	Southwestern University- Robertson Center	930 Southwestern Boulevard	78626
The Worship Place	811 Sun City Boulevard	78633	
<b>GRANGER</b>	First Baptist Church	301 E. Mesquite	76530
<b>HUTTO</b>	Hutto Administration Building	200 College Street	78634
	Wilco Hutto Annex	321 Ed Schmidt Blvd. Suite 100	78634
<b>JARRELL</b>	Jarrell ISD Administration	108 E Avenue F	76537
<b>LEANDER</b>	Leander Church of Christ	300 Crystal Falls Parkway	78641
	Leander High School	3301 S Bagdad Road	78641
	Leander Public Library	1011 S Bagdad Road	78641
	Pat Bryson Municipal Hall	201 N Brushy Street	78641
	Rouse High School	1222 Raider Way	78641
The Crossover	1717 Scottsdale Drive	78641	

subject to change  
*suje to a cambio*

Attachment B  
*Adjunto b*

**Williamson County**  
**Joint General and Special Elections**  
**Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

<b>City (ciudad)</b>	<b>Location (ubicación)</b>	<b>Address (la dirección)</b>	<b>Zip</b>
<b>LIBERTY HILL</b>	Liberty Hill Municipal Court	2801 RR 1869	78642
	Liberty Hill High School	16500 W SH 29	78642
	Santa Rita Ranch House	175 Elizabeth Park Road	78642
<b>ROUND ROCK</b>	Baca Senior Center	301 W Bagdad Avenue Building 2	78664
	Brushy Creek Community Center	16318 Great Oaks Drive	78681
	Cedar Ridge High School	2801 Gattis School Road	78664
	Dell Diamond - Heritage Center	3400 Palm Valley Boulevard	78665
	Fern Bluff MUD Community Center	7320 Wyoming Springs Drive	78681
	Round Rock Presbyterian Church	4010 Sam Bass Road	78681
	Round Rock Randalls	2051 Gattis School Road	78664
	Round Rock Sports Center	2400 Chisholm Trail	78681
	Sleep Inn & Suites	1980 South IH 35	78681
	Teravista Community Center	4211 Teravista Club Drive	78665
	The Fellowship Church of Round Rock	3379 Gattis School Road	78664
	Williamson County Jester Annex	1801 E Old Settlers Boulevard	78664
<b>TAYLOR</b>	Main Street Events Center	3101 North Main Street	76574
	Taylor City Hall	400 Porter Street	76574
<b>THRALL</b>	St John Lutheran Church	409 S Main Street	76578
<b>WEIR</b>	First Baptist Church of Weir	315 FM 1105	78674

EXHIBIT "3" / ANEXO "3"



DANA DEBEAUVOIR,  
COUNTY CLERK

# Travis County Early Voting Locations November 3, 2020 General Election



Sitios de Votación Adelantada del Condado de Travis, para las Elecciones General del 3 de noviembre de 2020

Early Voting begins Tuesday, October 13 and ends on Friday, October 30

subject to change  
sujeto a cambios

La Votación Adelantada empieza el martes, 13 de octubre y termina el viernes, 30 de octubre

Monday—Saturday (7am - 7pm), Sunday (Noon - 6pm) \* except where noted  
lunes—sábado (7am - 7pm), domingo (mediodía - 6pm) \* excepto donde se indique

\* MEGA-CENTERS will remain open until 9pm on October 28, 29 and 30th

\* MEGA-CENTROS estarán abiertos hasta 9pm el 28, 29 y 30 de octubre

Region	Location	Address	City	Zip	Bus Stop	
CENTRAL:	Austin Central Library MEGA-CENTER *	710 W Cesar Chavez St	Austin	78701		
	Austin Recreation Center at House Park	1301 Shoal Creek Blvd	Austin	78701		
	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas	4900 Manor Rd	Austin	78723		
	Holiday Inn Austin Midtown	6000 Middle Fiskville Rd	Austin	78752		
	UT Flawn Academic Center	2304 Whitis Ave	Austin	78712		
	UT Gregory Gym	2101 Speedway	Austin	78712		
	Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center	7500 Blessing Ave	Austin	78752		
	NORTH / NORTE:	Pflugerville ISD Rock Gym MEGA-CENTER *	702 W Pecan St	Pflugerville	78660	
		Chinatown Center	10901 N Lamar Blvd	Austin	78753	
		Courtyard by Marriott Austin Pflugerville	16100 Impact Way	Pflugerville	78660	
Disability Rights Texas		2222 W Braker Ln	Austin	78758		
Gus Garcia Recreation Center		1201 E Rundberg Ln	Austin	78753		
Renaissance Austin Hotel at The Arboretum		9721 Arboretum Blvd	Austin	78759		
RRISD Hartfield Performing Arts Center		5800 McNeil Dr	Austin	78729		
Shops at Arbor Walk (by Home Depot)		10515 N Mopac Expy	Austin	78759		
SOUTH / SUR:		Southpark Meadows, suite 400 MEGA-CENTER *	9600 S IH 35 Frontage Rd	Austin	78748	
		Southpark Meadows, suite 500 (both by Hobby Lobby)	9600 S IH 35 Frontage Rd	Austin	78748	
	Austin Oaks Church	4220 Monterey Oaks Blvd	Austin	78749		
	Dan Ruiz Branch Library	1600 Grove Blvd	Austin	78741		
	Dittmar Recreation Center	1009 W Dittmar Rd	Austin	78745		
	Shady Hollow Village Shopping Center	9901 Brodie Ln, #170	Austin	78748		
	South Austin Recreation Center	1100 Cumberland Rd	Austin	78704		
	EAST / ESTE:	Millennium Youth Complex MEGA-CENTER *	1156 Hargrave St	Austin	78702	
		Carver Branch Library	1161 Angelina St	Austin	78702	
		Community Center at Del Valle	3518 FM 973	Del Valle	78617	
Dottie Jordan Recreation Center		2903 Loyola Ln	Austin	78723		
George Morales Dove Springs Rec Center		5801 Ainez Dr	Austin	78744		
Manor ISD Administration Building		10335 US-290	Manor	78653		
Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center		2608 Gonzales St	Austin	78702		
WEST / OESTE:		Ben Hur Shrine Center MEGA-CENTER *	7811 Rockwood Ln	Austin	78757	
		Bee Cave City Hall	4000 Galleria Pkwy	Bee Cave	78738	
		Christ Episcopal Church	3520 W Whitestone Blvd	Cedar Park	78613	
	Lakeway Activity Center	105 Cross Creek	Lakeway	78734		
	Northwest Recreation Center	2913 Northland Dr	Austin	78757		
	Peace Lutheran Church	10625 N FM 620	Austin	78726		
	Rolling Hills Community Church	6201 Lohman Fcrrd Rd	Lago Vista	78645		
	Westlake United Methodist	1460 Redbud Tr	West Lake Hills	78746		



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www.voteattravis.com

(512) 238-VOTE (8683)

elections@traviscourtytx.gov

rev. September 3, 2020

# **EXHIBIT " 4 " / ANEXO " 4 "**

Attachment C  
Adjunto c

## **Williamson County Early Voting Schedule**

*Horario de la Votación Adelantada del Condado de Williamson*

### **Joint General and Special Elections – November 3, 2020**

*Elecciones Generales y Especiales Conjuntas – 3 de noviembre del 2020*

#### **Dates and Times for Locations:**

*Fechas y horarios para localidades de tiempo completo:*

**Tuesday, October 13 through Friday, October 30**

7:00 am to 7:00 pm

*Del Martes 13 de octubre al Viernes 30 de octubre*

*7:00 am – 7:00 pm*

**Sunday, October 18 and Sunday, October 25**

1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

*Domingo 18 y domingo 25 de octubre*

*1:00 pm – 6:00 pm*

#### **Main Location** - *ubicación principal*

**Georgetown:** Georgetown Annex, 100 Wilco Way, HR108, 78626

#### **Branch Locations** – *ubicaciones de sucursales*

**Georgetown:** The Worship Place Church, 811 Sun City Boulevard, 78633

**Georgetown:** Georgetown ISD Technology Building, 603 Lakeway Drive, 78628

**Georgetown:** Georgetown Randalls, 5721 Williams Drive, 78633

**Georgetown:** Parks & Recreation Administration Building, 1101 North College Street, 78626

**Austin:** Anderson Mill Limited District, 11500 El Salido Parkway, 78750

**Austin:** RE Hartfield Performing Arts Center, 5800 McNeil Drive, 78729

**Austin:** Spicewood Springs Library, 8637 Spicewood Springs Road, 78759

**Cedar Park:** Cedar Park Public Library, 550 Discovery Boulevard, 78613

**Cedar Park:** Cedar Park Randalls, 1400 Cypress Creek Road, 78613

**Hutto:** Wilco Hutto Annex, 321 Ed Schmidt Boulevard, Suite 100, 78634

**Jarrell:** Jarrell ISD Administration, 108 East Avenue F, 76537

**Leander:** Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 N Brushy Street, 78641

**Liberty Hill:** Liberty Hill Municipal Court, 2801 RR 1869, 78642

**Round Rock:** Baca Senior Center, 301 W Bagdad Street, Building 2, 78664

**Round Rock:** Round Rock Randalls, 2051 Gattis School Road, 78664

**Round Rock:** Brushy Creek Community Center, 16318 Great Oaks Drive, 78681

**Round Rock:** Williamson County Jester Annex, 1801 E Old Settlers Boulevard, 78664

**Taylor:** Taylor City Hall, 400 Porter Street, 76574

Georgetown: **Limited Ballot Voting** – Georgetown Annex, 100 Wilco Way, Conference 105, 78626

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# BACK PAGE

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