

'WE'RE DOING IT'

UH teams will wear blue, defying NFL.

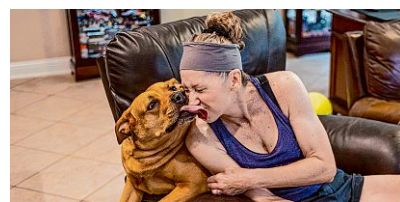
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CHOOSING SIDES IN THE HOUSE

GOP's Greene plans to call a vote next week on ousting Speaker Mike Johnson.

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TAKING CONTROL

Managing stress is key to good health.

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Latest EPA tests raise new questions

Agency vows to follow path of creosote-linked chemicals found in Fifth Ward vapor samples

By Rebekah F. Ward
STAFF WRITER

EPA officials promised to trace the impacts of elevated toxin levels in Fifth Ward near where a creosote plume has spread below the neighborhood adjacent to a Union Pacific rail yard.

Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday presented data for 78% of the sites in the first phase of testing they began

with Union Pacific contractors in October. The tests were designed to determine whether the creosote plume sitting under the neighborhood could be contaminating indoor air. The agency found six creosote-linked chemicals and five other dangerous substances so far in groundwater, sanitary sewers, storm sewers and underground gas, though the results do not yet prove dangerous gas entered nearby homes.

EPA told community mem-

bers the partial test results showed some concentrations up to 283 times its initial screening level for naphthalene and 52 times the level for benzene; both substances are linked to creosote contamination and to cancer. Still, a large majority of the test sites fell below sensitive screening levels for all chemicals, thresholds the EPA uses to see where further data is necessary.

"We need to determine whether or not there's a risk to people's health from this contamination, if it's migrated into the neighborhood, and we need
Creosote continues on A5



Brett Coomer/Staff photographer

Contractors for Union Pacific work to set up a testing site for contaminants in Fifth Ward near a United Pacific rail yard.

'A SERVANT'S HEART'



Family members mourn during the service honoring Harris County Sheriff's Deputy John Coddou on Wednesday at Second Baptist Church. The longtime lawman, who had worked with the sheriff's office for over two decades, died on April 20 after he was struck by a truck while helping a motorist. **Story, page A5**

YI-CHIN LEE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cy-Fair may cut half its librarians

District could reduce staff as it deals with a \$138 million deficit

By Elizabeth Sander
STAFF WRITER

Just over 40 of Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's 92 librarian positions may be eliminated as the district attempts to close a \$138 million budget shortfall for the 2024-2025 school year, according to librarians who were called into a meeting Friday.

A district proposal to close the deficit includes cutting 200 instructional specialists and 254 teaching positions. While the 2024-2025 budget has not yet been voted on, the district has already begun making some decisions.

While parents who attended a budget workshop last week asked the district to quell rumors that librarians would lose their jobs, district officials were careful not to avoid the subject. Only Trustee Julie Hinaman mentioned librarians in her comments, saying that she would not support cutting librarian positions because of the vital importance of literacy.

Just days later, Cy-Fair ISD librarians were called into a zoom meeting with district officials where they were notified that the library program as they know it would be eliminated.

District officials said they would be cutting dozens of librarian positions and instituting a floating librarian structure, where one librarian would oversee more than one campus, meaning thousands of students. There will be four librarians overseeing the high schools, seven librarians overseeing the middle schools and 30 librarians overseeing the district's 58 elementary schools.

"Staff reduction is inevitable when almost 90% of the budget is
Librarians continues on A3

Poll: Texans split on handling of Mideast war

By Taylor Goldenstein
AUSTIN BUREAU

A plurality of Texans want the U.S. to balance support for Israel with the prevention of Palestinian civilian casualties, according to new polling data captured before large demonstrations began on college campuses across Texas and the country.

More than a third of Texans surveyed by the Texas Politics Project online poll favor that approach — though voters are largely split over how the war in Gaza should be handled.

The results come as police have clashed with hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators at the University of Texas at Austin in recent days, and as the Biden administration's response to the war takes center stage ahead of the upcoming presidential election.

A little over a fifth of Texans favored a response that primarily supports Israel's military efforts, while about 14% preferred a response that primarily works to prevent Palestinian civilian casualties. Nearly a third thought the U.S. should not be involved in the conflict, and the

rest did not have an opinion.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, which is run by Hamas and doesn't distinguish between combatants and noncombatants but says

around two-thirds of the dead are children and women. The war has driven around 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million from their homes, caused vast destruction in several towns and cities, and pushed northern Gaza to the brink of famine.

The majority of Texans approved of Israel's response with about 32% strongly in favor and 23% somewhat in favor. Twenty-eight percent disapproved.

The poll was conducted between April 12 and April 22 among 1,200 registered voters,
Poll continues on A5

HISD union leaders strongly rebuke Miles, seek his removal

By Sam González Kelly
STAFF WRITER

The leaders of Houston's largest teachers union approved a resolution of no confidence in Houston ISD's Super-

intendent Mike Miles on Tuesday, in a strong but ultimately symbolic rebuke of the state-appointed superintendent's leadership.

The union's resolution calls for Miles' removal as superin-

tendent and lays out numerous grievances that have surfaced repeatedly over the course of his 11-month tenure. It now heads to the Houston Federation of Teachers' 6,000-plus members for ratification, with

results of the vote expected next week.

"The takeover of Houston ISD, the largest school district in Texas and the eighth largest district in the country, is a politically motivated, irresponsible

experiment that is worsening inequities and disenfranchising Houston voters," the resolution begins. "Houston ISD teachers and support staff have come together now to call for
Union continues on A5

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