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FULSHEAR LIVING monthly

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PUBLISHER **Clyde King** cking@hartmannews.com

GENERAL MANAGER & ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Lee Hartman leehart@fbherald.com

COMPOSITION & GRAPHICS MANAGER Alfred H. Dubé adube@fbherald.com

> **GRAPHIC DESIGNERS** Melinda Maya mmaya@fbherald.com **Rachel Cavazos** rcavazos@fbherald.com

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FEATURE =

Fulshear florist wins BE-ST IN -STATE

by Claire Goodman

hen Ace Berry was laid off from is job in the oil industry in 2007, he knew he never wanted to have a job like that again. So instead he devoted himself to his lifelong passion: creating beautiful flower arrangements to make people happy. Twelve years later, Berry has won the title "Texas Floral Designer of the Year".

Berry recalled, "I delivered flowers when I was in high school, and I always remembered how happy people were to see me. Even at their lowest, like with a sympathy or a death in the family, they were still happy to see me. So when I got laid off, I wanted to live life with purpose."

Berry's wife supported his dream, so in the summer of 2008, Berry opened his floral business and began attending workshops to hone his craft. His shop, Fulshear Floral Design and Decor, is nestled in downtown Fulshear.

At first, Berry struggled to find work because of his physical image. Berry is burly and over six feet tall with tattoos, and customers assumed that he wouldn't be able to create a beautiful piece.

"Perception was really kind of the biggest obstacle that I overcame. When I met with brides, they didn't really let me have a chance because of the outward appearance that I had. I am





Fulshear Floral Design and Decor owner Ace Berry competes in the statelevel competition. Berry won the title "Texas Floral Designer of the Year."



Berry's interpretive design took first place.



FEATURE =

such a larger man, and they're like, "Oh no, there's no way this guy can do flowers, and if he can, he's not very good at it," said Berry.

Word eventually got out that Berry's arrangements were beautiful, and his business began to grow. He was nominated for the state competition, and Feb. 19-20, he presented his designs in the Texas state capitol.

Eight florists from across the state competed for the title. The florists were allowed to bring their own vases, but the competition officials gave them the flowers to work with. None of the florists knew what flowers they would be given.

There were two elements to the competition: a bridal arrangement and table centerpiece and an interpretive design. Berry won both challenges.

Berry immediately gave away his winning pieces. The first went to a lady who had let him use her parking lot, and the other went to a state senator's wife for her to take to a fallen officer's memorial service.

"I try to always give away whatever I make in various competitions to someone around me that needs flowers or needs to be uplifted. Flowers should make you smile, and when you get random flowers, I think it always makes you a little bit happier," he explained.

After winning the Texas level competition, Berry will now go on to compete at the national level in September.

Berry is proud of his accomplishments, but he still maintains that making people happy is the heart of his work.

"I want everyone, no matter if it's a \$35 arrangement to a \$200 arrangement to love flowers, so I always try to put my expertise in my experience into it no matter what it is," he said.

As part of his commitment to bringing joy to his customers, Berry brings his Labradoodle "Gus" to work with him in his shop.

"His job is to make people smile, and there's two things in this world that will make people smile at their lowest. I think that's animals and flowers. If a dog or a cat or any type of animal comes up and they give you that affection when you need it the most, that makes you smile. So that's his job: to welcome people," he said. Gus is also featured on Berry's logo.

For a designer with so many accolades, it seems intuitive that Berry's favorite flower would be a resplendent bloom like the rose or lily. But surprisingly, Berry's favorite flower to work with is the humble carnation.

Said Berry: "What's great about it is it comes in so many different colors. There are 70 or so different colors, so you can make it do so many different things. If you have green ones, you can make it look almost like grass. You can make it stand alone or feather it out to where it looks like a garden rose. You can cluster them together to make it look like a hydrangea. You can really make carnations do a lot of things. I think they get a really bum rap being a funeral flower or a cheap flower, but for me it's just such a great flower, and they have the best fragrance." Gus, Berry's Labradoodle has the important job of bringing joy to customers.



IN & AROUND FULSHEAR _____

Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce membership event strengthens local businesses

*B*γ **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

ne small business owner working to improve the local current chamber members came together in the conference economy at a legislative level would struggle to affect a room at the Holiday Inn & Suites Houston West to call their

change. Six-hundred local business owners banded together, however, can make a powerful impact.

In that spirit, Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a membership campaign Feb. 26-28 to encourage local business owners and nonprofits to join the chamber and build a more influential organization.

As it has only been in operation for five years, the Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce is still young by industry standards. However, with a twelvefold percent growth in membership since its inception, it's one of the fastest growing chambers in Texas.

At the membership campaign,



Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce board members Kristina Thomason (left) and David Melanson (right) and chamber president Don McCoy (center) celebrate the success of the membership event.

personal contacts to encourage them to join the chamber.

Andi Wallis is Community Relations Manager of Texana Center, a nonprofit dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. In solidarity with the chamber's membership efforts, she volunteered at the event.

Wallis said that the benefits to nonprofits include greater exposure and support from the community.

"Being a member of the chamber, we're able to talk about our nonprofit to even more people and more business owners,"Wallis said.

On a broader scale, bringing in new members increases not only the chamber's legislative strength but the bargaining power of the

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IN & AROUND FULSHEAR —



Pictured are only a small number of the many volunteers who worked at the Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce membership campaign.



Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce administrators process new applications for members. The chamber saw more than a 20% increase in membership in three days.

communities in the three counties that the chamber serves.

"When (chamber president Don McCoy) goes to Austin, he's representing 500 or 600 businesses and nonprofits," Wallis said. "Those businesses correlate to business owners and their employees and their customers, which means he is representing around 10,000 people."

Jimy Cusano specializes in helping chambers of commerce facilitate membership events. He was brought in by the Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce to help the members reach out to their contacts, and explain the value of a chamber of commerce.

"People think what the chamber of commerce does is just a ribbon-cutting or after-hours networking," Cusano said. "It's so much more than that. It's about pride in your community and building the success of the businesses here."

Former Mayor of Fulshear Tommy Kuykendall has witnessed the growth of the area first-hand. He served as mayor from 2010 to 2016, and his business is now located in Fulshear. As a business owner, he relies on the chamber to help strengthen the local economy.

"I have a great stake in the continued growth and continued development of this region," Kuykendall said. "The chamber is a huge advocate for attracting the right businesses here."

Preliminary numbers indicate that the three-day event drew in



over 120 new members to the chamber, which translates into an approximately 20 percent increase in membership.

For the Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce President Don McCoy, the success of the membership campaign is not about the numbers but rather the increased influence of businesses in the region.

"If just one business on their own went to Austin to lobby or to ask a senator or representative for something, or to talk about property taxes, they're not going to take that one business seriously," McCoy said. "But when an organization like a chamber walks in and represents 700 businesses, they will sit down and listen to what they have to say. That's what we're trying to do. We still do the festivals and have the fun events and have the networking, but we'll also be a force to be reckoned with when it comes to economic development and legislative issues."

McCoy acknowledged that the event's success was due to the dedicated members giving their time to work in the campaign.

"To have that amount of volunteers come out and give their time to supporting the chamber and each other was very humbling," McCoy said. "They took time out of their day and their business because they believe in what we're trying to do here."

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During the three-day event, chamber members came together to call their contacts to increase membership. The campaign brought in over 120 new members.



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____SCHOOL NEWS_____

KATY ISD EXPANDING — into Fulsbear —

by TOM BEHRENS

aty ISD is adding to its footprint in Fulshear with the opening of its newest Junior High, Joe M. Adams Junior High, located at 4141 Cross Creek Bend Lane, in the Cross Creek Ranch community.

The school officially opens in August for the 2019-2020 school year. Katy ISD has two additional schools in Fulshear, Randolph Elementary and Campbell Elementary.

Lamar Consolidated ISD schools in Fulshear include Fulshear High School, Leaman Junior High, Huggins Elementary and Lindsey Elementary. Lindsey is in a Katy zip code.

The sharing of a geographical area with two school districts is not unusual; it all de- pends on where the boundary lines are drawn for the school districts. Katy ISD has six additional schools with a Houston zip code address. The Katy district takes up 181 square miles within in Fort Bend, Harris and Waller County.

The new junior high's namesake, Joe M.Adams, served on the Katy ISD Board of Trustees for 27 years in every board position and continues to be actively involved in various school and community functions.

Adams served as director on the Gulf Coast Area Association of School Boards and was also part of the Board of Directors for the

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Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). During his time on that board, he earned the distinguished honor of being a graduate of Leadership TASB and was named a Master Trustee.

He was named Mentor of the Year in 2013. He actively participated as a Promise to Read and Junior Achievement volunteer. Adams was also a member of various PTA/ PTO organizations and was a founding director of the Katy ISD Education Foundation.

Elisabeth Brodt, the school's new principal, is excited about opening the school.

"We will establish a culture of excellence through relationships, perseverance, authentic engagement and innovation," said Brodt. "I want to build positive relationships with the students, the parents, the community members and teachers. I want Adams to be a place where students become vulnerable in their learning and understand perseverance in tough situations. I want my kids to take pride in their accomplishments and pursue their passions. I want my teachers to create authentic learning environments for our students and build positive relationships. Outstanding students build positive relationships with people.We are going to be a place where the kids want to come."



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____SCHOOL NEWS____

SHuggins Science Expo showcases student projects

by CLAIRE GOODMAN



Huggins students exhibit their project "Thermochromism - Color Changing Slime".

oung scientists at Huggins Elementary have been hard at work creating projects for the school Science Expo. On Feb. 15, the kids got the chance to present their projects to the school.

Over 150 children participated in the expo, exhibiting displays that ranged from chemistry and mechanics to physics.

Event volunteer Kate Hurlbut said, "The kids went above and beyond this year with some incredible projects."

Hurlbut reported that one of the favorite projects was "Elephant Toothpaste" in which hydrogen peroxide was mixed with food coloring, dish soap and potassium iodide to create a colorful volcano of foam.

"Monster Mallows" was another popular exhibit which

involved microwaving marshmallows to see how big they would get.

The most entertaining project, Hurlbut noted, was the hovercraft exhibit.

"Kids of all ages enjoyed riding on the homemade hovercraft that was created using a leaf blower, plywood, lawn chair and a great deal of ingenuity," Hurlbut said.

Other notable projects included "How Gears Work", "Homemade Snow", "Levitating Orbs" and "Thermochromism -Color Changing Slime".

"The kids of Huggins Elementary really blew us away with their projects," Hurlbut said.



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The most popular project was "Hovercraft" in which the students created a homemade hovercraft using "a leaf blower, plywood, lawn chair and a great deal of ingenuity".



"Monster Mellows" was a fun project that involved microwaving marshmallows to see how big they would expand.

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Brock headlines — first Fulshear class of Signees —

by TOM BEHRENS

Rulshear's baseball team narrowly missed the playoffs in its first season of varsity play in 2018 but touted four signees to college scholarships. Travis Long (Sul Ross University), Dylan Thuet (Blinn College), Julian Brock (University of Louisiana-Lafayette) and Chris Duncan (Southwestern Assemblies of God) signed National Letters of Intent in February.

_____SCHOOL SPORTS_____

"I'm extremely proud of all of them," Fulshear coach Robb Jensen said. "The first signing class ever in Fulshear High School history."

Brock was named Newcomer of the Year in District 27-5A while Long and Theut were all-district first-team selections last year. Brock was the first signee in school history with an early commitment to the Ragin' Cajuns of University of Louisiana – Lafayette.

Louisiana Lafayette coaches had watched Brock play and they asked him if he would like to visit the Lafayette campus.

"The day after my visit, I committed to the school," Brock said.

He received scholarship offers from all over the country, as well as some from local schools. "There were several things that helped me make the choice," Brock said. "Their record, making it



to the college world series, number ranking in the country, winner of the Sunbelt Conference, a great campus, the coaching staff. I liked everything about it."

Brock caught the eye of the Ragin' Cajuns coaches during the summer.

"We actually saw him play late last summer and kind of blew us away," Louisiana Lafayette Recruiting Coordinator Jeremy Talbot



"I think he has the raw strength that we can develop." coach Jeremy Talbot, University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Photo credit: Vivian Brock



said."That led to a fall conversation."

"He's got front line catching tools, MLB draft type catching tools...receive, block, and throw,"Talbot said. "He's a physical kid, 6'2", big body guy, moves well behind the plate. There's no question about his ability behind the plate. I think he has raw strength that we can develop. He crossed our T's, dotted the I's.

His high school head coach just raved about him, a good player and a good person. That's a slam dunk for us when we hear those kinds of qualities."

Fulshear coach Robb Jensen said he has coached some pretty good catchers in his coaching career, but Brock is at the top of the list in terms of pure athletic ability.

"He has a sub-two pop time, 1.94, which is pretty good," Jensen said.

Pop time is the seconds it takes the catcher to catch the ball and throw to a base.

"He's probably the best pure hitter," Jensen said. "He squares the ball up better than anyone I have seen or coached in terms of hitting line drives. The ball sounds a little different coming off his bat. This year he has worked on changing his launch level, working on elevating the angle a little bit, be able to hit the ball out of the park."

According to Jensen, Brock had two homers for the season last year. This year, before the regular season began, Brock had

a hit-a-thon hitting five out 10 balls thrown to him out of the Fulshear baseball field.

"Opposing pitchers pitched around him a little bit last year," Jensen said. "But this year we have some protection (good hitters) around him. Pitchers will have to pitch to him."

Brock has been to several workouts where professional scouts were present. He has completed questionnaires from around 20 Major League Baseball teams.

"I do think he has a chance to play professional baseball,"Talbot said. "When we sign guys, we want them to play through us, not just to us and then move on.

"We try to recruit guys that have the ability to be drafted. You can't predict how it will go, but he certainly has the raw ability to have that opportunity down the road."

Brock knows he needs to progress more in his baseball development.

"I can't get drafted until my junior year," Brock said. "It would be something I would have to talk to my parents and see where it would take me."

Adjusting from one level of play, high school to college, is always a challenge.

"It's a huge adjustment, a big step, one thing I learn from," Brock said. "Adjusting is something you have to do in life whether it's baseball or not."

Jensen said there is more to who Brock is than his ability on the diamond.

"Great kid, great work ethic, kind of soft-spoken, A's and B's in the classroom, more of a quiet leader, a leader by example," Brock said. "I had him in my math class and he didn't hardly say two words in the classroom. When he does speak, you can tell he's kind of a funny, quiet guy. He always has a smile on his face. "When he does speak, he has the respect of all his teammates. They realize what it takes to get to his level. They watch him dayin, day-out as he approaches the game. He comes to the ballpark and takes extra cuts. Several times when I first got here as the coach for Fulshear baseball, I had to chase him and his dad off so I could lock up the place, That's the kind of kid he is."



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_SCHOOL SPORTS____

Chargers earn historic first playoff win

by RYAN DUNSMORE | rdunsmore@fbherald.com

OLUMBUS — The Fulshear High School boys basketball team is only in its second varsity season but the Chargers looked like the veteran squad in their Region IV-4A bidistrict contest at the Marley Giddens Center on the campus of Columbus High School.

The Chargers out-hustled, out-ran, out-shot and out-game planned the Caldwell Hornets en route to a 91-44 win.

"This is awesome," Fulshear head coach Brett Nixon said. "It's always for the kids, they are so excited and pumped to be part of something special for Fulshear."

The game was the first playoff game for boys basketball and the first playoff win in program history. Boys basketball is only the third team sport to win a playoff game at Fulshear joining volleyball and team tennis.

The Chargers playoff run ended against District 28-4A champion Boerne in the area round in a 62-21 loss.

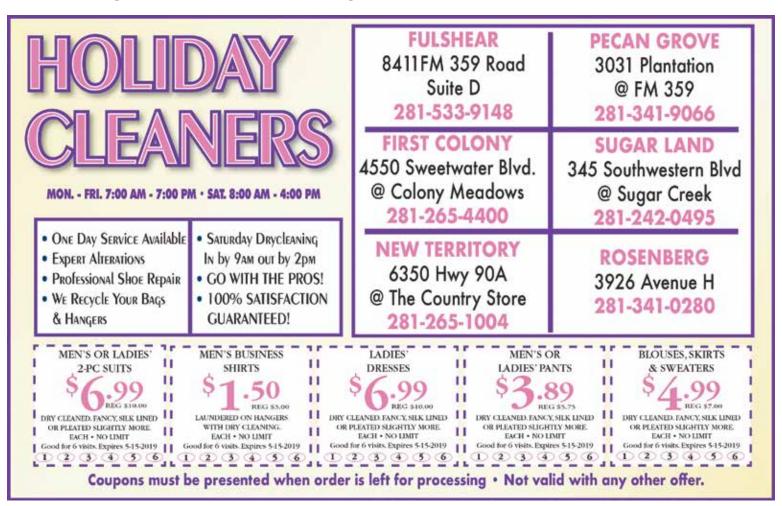
Fulshear hadn't played a game in 10 days before facing Caldwell, giving the Chargers plenty of rest and helping sophomore Demari Williams return from an injury.

Williams was an early spark as the Chargers jumped out to a 19-11 lead in the first quarter, scoring eight points and assisting on a handful of others.

Senior AJ Lee and freshman Sam Akinrelere overpowered the Hornets in the paint with drives to the basket as Fulshear opened



Fulshear players celebrate on the bench during the Chargers first playoff win in school history. Pictured, from left, are Dominic McBride (3), AJ Lee (21), Jackson Edge (5), Isaiah Barganier (14) and Sam Akinrelere (34).



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=SCHOOL SPORTS**=**

up a 40-22 lead at halftime.

A 17-to-8 run to end the third quarter put the Hornets out of their misery.

Coach Nixon was able to send out a lineup of sophomore Zach Coady, junior Sean Pountney, senior Jaxon Hyde, senior Cameron Bradley-Wagner and senior Eric Peña for much of the fourth quarter.

The bench unit was not only able to hold the lead but extend it with numerous shots beyond the arc.

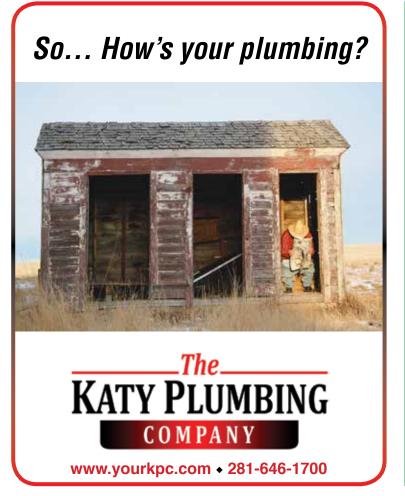
Lee finished with a teamhigh 20 points in 22 minutes, followed by Williams with 15. Akinrelere added 10 points.

"Lee came out played really hard," Nixon said. "But for us, it was about finding a rhythm and playing quick."

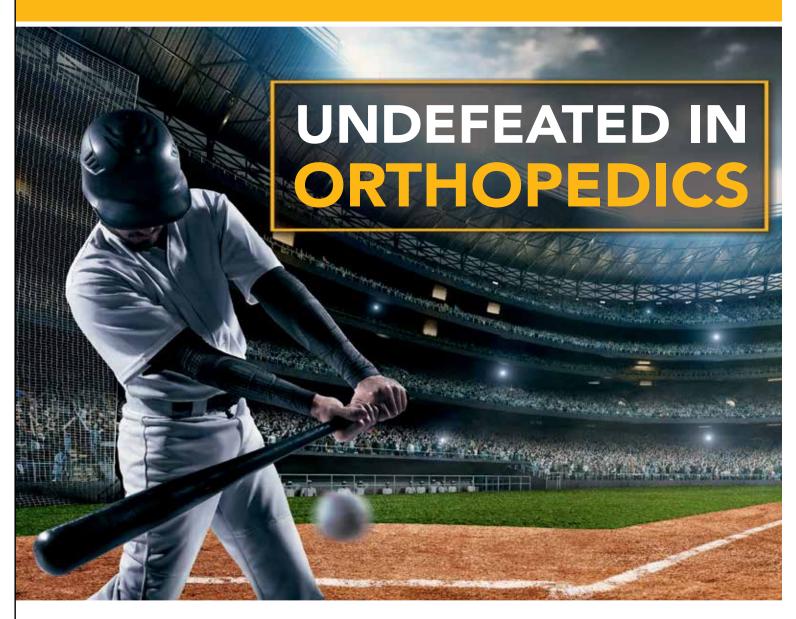
Lee narrowly missed a double-double with nine rebounds. He also had five steals.



Fulshear Chargers basketball coach Brett Nixon looks on during his team's first playoff win in school history against Caldwell.







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=SCHOOL SPORTS==



Fulshear's Dominic McBride drives to the basket against Caldwell in the Class 5A bi-district playoffs.







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Football stars shine in first Fulshear signing class

by RYAN DUNSMORE | rdunsmore@fbherald.com

ULSHEAR — Wednesday's National Signing Day at Fulshear High School had been three years in the making.

Head football coach Oschlor Flemming talked about how his student-athletes had taken a leap of faith as freshmen to help start a new school and build programs from the ground up.

The student-athletes' hard work was rewarded with five football players signing their National Letters of Intent for the Chargers' first National Signing Class.

"Its a great accomplishment for these young men," Flemming said."Coming to a brand new school, sometimes it can be hard to get noticed. "It goes to show the work that these young men put in the work to get noticed.

"I'm extremely proud of them for the first signing class ever in Fulshear High School history."

The football team played only one varsity season but netted five signees on Wednesday: Alex Torres (Case Western Reserve University), Cade Toruta (West Texas A&M University), Brody McLemore (Buena Vista University), C.J. Allen (East Texas Baptist University) and Keaton Huebner (Texas Wesleyan University).

Torres was an all-district second-team selection while Toruta and Huebner were honorable mentions to the alldistrict team.

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____SCHOOL NEWS____









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____SCHOOL NEWS____





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CINDY DAUGHERTY 713.459.9273 Cindy.Daugherty@GaryGreene.com Laura.Germann@GaryGreene.com Arlene.Hinsley@GaryGreene.com



LAURA GERMANN 713.816.3833



ARLENE HINSLEY 713.829.7721



RICK JONES 281.467.6076 Rick.Jones@GaryGreene.com



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