

## Pat on the Back

Congratulations to the **Foster Lady Falcons varsity softball team** for winning the bi-district round on Thursday. All the way to state!

## Our View

# Mayor Humphrey enjoys the good life — thanks to taxpayers

Kendleton only has a population of some 340 souls, but they're awfully generous — even if they don't know it.

Just ask Mayor Darryl Humphrey Sr., who has enjoyed taxpayers' generosity for years.

He spends thousands of dollars annually dining out, shopping for groceries, washing his vehicles, buying gas and shopping online — all at taxpayer expense.

How do we know this? Earlier this month, The Herald requested copies of the city's credit card statements for the past 10 years. The city provided only three years' worth, saying that was all it had in its possession.

Really? Because the new city accountant told the council at a recent meeting that he would have to review financial records back to 2015 in order to prepare them detailed financial statements. Those financial records he will review MUST include the credit card statements. How else could he reconcile bank statements, right?

Besides, the ex-accountant for the city says she saw credit card statements going back to 2015 at city hall before she was fired in January of this year.

Humphrey was criminally indicted in December for failing to or refusing to turn over public records as required by law.

So we wouldn't put it past him to keep four years worth of credit card statements from us in direct violation of the Texas Public Information Act.

What credit card statements we received are damaging enough.

They reveal Humphrey and City Secretary Christina Flores living the high life at taxpayer expense.

A review of the credit card statements reveals:

■ \$12,957.17 was spent at grocery stores, department stores and thrift stores.

■ \$6,627.54 was spent dining out.

■ \$11,376.15 was spent shopping on eBay and Amazon.

■ \$10,584.61 was spent on gas.

Indeed, a total of \$41,545.47 was spent on food, groceries, shopping, gas and Amazon alone.

And taxpayers unknowingly footed the bill.

We listed their grocery and restaurant purchases in today's paper so readers could see for themselves where Humphrey and Flores went and when and how much they spent.

It's certainly eye-opening, and disgusting.

The median household income in Kendleton is just over \$40,000. Thus, the property tax revenue coming into the city isn't much to boast about. Likewise, the city's sales tax revenue is only about \$3,000 per month.

By the end of the calendar year, Humphrey and Flores have spent the entire \$36,000 in sales tax revenue eating out, gassing up, visiting convenience stores, shopping online and buying groceries, as the credit card statements indicate.

It's sad.

Certainly, as city administrators, they're going to spend some tax dollars running the city. They'll have to buy some paper and stationery, pay telephone and light bills, and occasionally sponsor a community event, such as the annual Juneteenth celebration.

But the spending we see going on seems excessive.

They're clearly taking advantage of taxpayers' generosity.

In our next issue we will list their gas purchases, online purchases and other purchases so our readers can see what we're seeing.

We hope Fort Bend County District Attorney Brian Middleton takes a close look as well.

Middleton owes it to the good folks of Kendleton to investigate the matter to the fullest.

We certainly will.

# Numbers continue to plague me

I should have realized I was going to have this numbers problem when I was about five years old.

I had struggled to learn my telephone number so that if I got lost coming home from school, I could tell a friendly stranger my number or at least borrow their phone so I could make a call. There were actually friendly strangers back then in the way distant past.

Then, a few years later, the telephone company changed our number. They hadn't changed it really. They just took the letters out of the number and added a couple of numerals in their place.

Numbers have plagued me ever since.

At first, the number crunch was not too bad. Mostly, I had to be concerned with my shoe size, and it kept changing naturally.

The hardest number I had to remember back then was my Little League batting average, and it wasn't a statistic that was too hard to calculate.

In high school, things became more difficult.

I had to remember my football jersey numbers, which was not a big feat since it was only two digits.

Then I had to worry about the numbers on my tests. These scores would be translated into my report

card grades, and my dad would always think my grades should be higher.

The grade talks with dad worked until I got another number. This number was my driver's license number. I did not know it too well, until I got my second traffic ticket — at which time pop got me to memorize what the slip of paper looked like since I was not going to see it much longer.

Next came a number that continues to be important to high school graduates — the SAT score. This determined, and still does, if a kid gets to go to the college of his choice.

Mine turned out to be acceptable and I then went off to one of those big universities where everyone warned me I would "be just a number," as if that had not been the case already.

I soon learned that my school did consider me just a number — my social security number.

I had owned this number for a couple of years before college, but I had never memorized it. Having this number was a necessary evil in order to earn spending money.

Nowadays of course, if you want to get an income tax deduction for your kids, they have to have one of these numbers as infants.

My memorization of this nine-digit sequence was the real beginning of the number barrage.

Now, I not only have to remember my home telephone number, I have to remember my smart phone number, although it says that I am an "old" for having both numbers. I have to enter a four-digit number just to be able to use my smart phone.

As I have aged, I now have to pay attention to numbers, which represent my blood pressure and cholesterol and glucose levels.

There is a security alarm system here at the office and one at home. They both use four-digit numbers and the keyboards are very similar.

Needless to say, on more than one occasion, I have entered the home number into the office machine and vice versa.

When this happens, the alarm folks call just before sending the SWAT team and you have to tell them another series of account numbers and some other numbers that they call "codes."

I have a couple of credit cards that I use, and in addition to the numbers on the front of the cards there are also card security codes on the back that must be entered to make a transaction work.

But the final straw for me is payment identification numbers, which are commonly called "pins."

These are used to prove an identity usually or as a secondary layer of security. Most of the time when I am asked for one of these, I do not know it.

Last year, I foolishly asked for a pin on the IRS website. I don't know why I got one of these, as I am no longer competent enough to do my own taxes.

But sure enough, my accountant had to call me and ask me for the number, and miraculously I had it, along with all the trove of other digits I have to remember just to go through life every day.

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## Outside View



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# Senate OKs land protection bill

This week, the Texas Senate approved sweeping state and national security protections with the passage of Senate Bill 147 by state Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham).

By an overwhelming vote of 19-12, the legislation aims to curtail the purchase of "Texas" strategic assets — farmland, oil and gas, timber and rare earth materials — by foreign entities classified as hostile by the Director of US National Intelligence for three consecutive reports.

These nations currently include China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.

"I'm proud of the support for this important next step in strengthening our state and national security," Kolkhorst said. "With this legislation we can protect our Texas food supply and energy resources as well."

The legislation builds on last session's unanimous passage of SB 2116 which prevented hostile nations from doing critical in-

frastructure business in Texas. The issue was prompted when a Chinese company with connections to the Chinese Communist Party purchased 140,000 acres near Laughlin Air Force Base in Val Verde County.

The bill also clarifies its prohibitions do not apply to lawful permanent residents, as well as United States citizens and dual citizens.

One of the bill's supporters, Sen. Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen emphasized "...these nations are a threat to our security."

Similar sentiments of support for SB 147 have been provided by Texas Congressman Michael McCaul, chair of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

"It's no secret that America's adversaries are growing more aggressive by the day. As the spy balloon revealed, the Chinese Communist Party knows no bounds when it comes to espionage," said McCaul.

The bill now moves to the Texas House for consideration.

During the debate that lasted for over three hours on the senate floor, Kolkhorst said, "Texas is rich in its natural resources and is home to twenty-five invaluable strategic military bases and installations.

Ceding control of our agriculture, energy deposits and rare earth materials to authoritarian nations listed in the National Threat Assessment would cause grave consequences for our state and national security."

Similar bills are being proposed throughout the nation in states like Florida and California, with Utah most recently signing a prohibition last month.

Twenty-two states already have prohibitions on foreign land purchases with another five requiring reporting.

Texas currently is one of the states without restrictions.

# Trump's extremism on abortion cannot be hid

Ron DeSantis had it coming, but Donald Trump's attempts to paint the Florida governor as a scarier right-winger than he is deserve to fail. What DeSantis has done in Florida — virtually ban all access to abortion — Trump has come close to doing to the entire country. Trump is just better at playing all sides.

Trump said that the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, which guaranteed a basic right to abortion, was bad for Republicans. He was right about that, witness recent lopsided pro-choice votes in Kansas and Wisconsin, not exactly liberal strongholds. And the public's unhappiness only grows as Roe's fall unleashes the right's war against reproductive rights in shocking ways.

"Some people maybe say it's my fault," Trump has said.

As a candidate in 2016, Trump promised to nominate Supreme Court justices who would overturn Roe. And he did. His three justices provided the majority that took down Roe.

The strongest argument for ending Roe was that states should make abortion policy. At first, it worked that way. States supportive of abortion rights kept abor-

tion rights. Those opposed, limited or ended them.

However, Matthew Kacsmaryk, a U.S. District Judge in Amarillo, Texas, plowed through the states-should-describe thing by ruling that the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the abortion pill mifepristone was improper. If it holds, that would mean that no one in America could have access to the most frequently used means of abortion, including in states where abortion remains legal.

Kacsmaryk was showing Trumpian contempt for medical expertise. It is unclear whether he ever took a biology class and unsettling that his sources for declaring the abortion pill unsafe included anonymous blog posts. This is the first time a court invalidated a drug approved by the FDA.

How did Kacsmaryk get his judgeship for life? Trump nominated him.

Not for one minute do we think that Trump cares one way or another about abortion. He used to be very much pro-choice.

No matter: Trump characteristically blamed Republicans' midterm letdowns, several tied to the abortion issue, on others. "It wasn't my fault that the Republicans didn't live up to expectations in the midterms," he wrote on his social media platform. "It was the 'abortion issue.'" He specifically blamed those who insisted on no exceptions in the case of rape, incest or life of the mother.

As for DeSantis, there were no exceptions in the bill he signed

last year lowering the time limit for ending a pregnancy to 15 weeks from 24 weeks. But 93% of abortions in this country occur in the first 13 weeks, so a 15-week window would not stop most women's ability to end a pregnancy. It could have been regarded as a sensible tightening of the rules. (Progressive countries in Europe have set similar restrictions.)

But then DeSantis did great self-harm by throwing out the 15-week window and signing a new bill that forbade abortion after six weeks. Many women are late or miss a period for a variety of reasons and don't assume that they are pregnant. Six weeks is, for all intents and purposes, is a ban on abortion.

Polls show that Americans overwhelmingly favor some access to abortion, including 64% of Floridians. It's now unclear that DeSantis could get reelected governor of Florida, much less win the presidency.

Neither DeSantis nor Trump nor countless other Republicans would be battling these headwinds had Trump not ensured that Roe would be overturned. But what makes Trump's extremism scarier is that he was actually elected president. DeSantis is a diminishing threat.

This new chaos being forced on women and their families is Trump's fault. And more than "some people" believe it.

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Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.