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SOUTHERN DALLAS

Topletz tenants seek to join suit

2 requesting over $1M in damages; attorney hopes more will follow

By ROBERT WILONSKY
Staff Writer
rwilonsky@dallasnews.com

Tenants living in tumble-down rent homes say their landlord is violating state law by forcing them to make repairs to properties they do not own.

That landlord is the same one the city is suing: Dennis Topletz, owner of 100 rent homes — most in southern Dallas — that the city says are hazardous, unhealthy and in desperate need of repair. At least two tenants strongly agree, which is why they — and their attorneys — filed a petition Friday to intervene in the city’s lawsuit against Topletz and his companies, Topletz Investments and Monitor Development Corp.

James Choate, who lives in a house valued at $80,000 near South Lancaster Road off Interstate 35E, and Bevela Tovar, who lives in a tiny white house near Bed-

ley-Squier Park in Oak Cliff, are seeking damages “in excess of $1,000,000,” according to the petition. Their attorneys are also hoping to turn the case into a class action involving dozens of other Topletz tenants.

“We found two tenants willing to stand up,” said Michael Hindman. “I think we’ll find more.” The one-page lease Topletz gave to each tenant is at the heart of the petition. It says the “tenant agrees to make all minor repairs at tenant’s expense,” and that Topletz Investments will be

ELECTIONS ’16

Early voting begins

4 Dallas ISD races, other districts’ bonds, municipal measures on the ballots

By RAY LESZYCKI
Staff Writer
rleszyc@dallasnews.com

Early voting for city and school districts’ May 7 elections starts Monday. Four Dallas ISD races are contested. Coppell, Grand Prairie, Colleyville, McKinney, Plano and Richardson ISDs are asking voters for hundreds of millions.

Duncanville will choose a mayor. And there are liquor votes in Allen and Plano.

In Carrolton-Farmers Branch ISD, you’ll be able to vote once, twice and even three times for a favorite candidate.

The district will be the first in the area to use the “cumulative voting” system. Voters can divide their three votes however they wish among five candidates for three available seats.

Carrollton-Farmers Branch, where up to 60 percent of students are Hispanic but none of the trustees are, faces a voting-rights law.

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IN THE KNOW

What’s on ballot?

■ How to find early voting polling places and sample ballots, 4B
■ Duncanville mayor faces last contest

Economic development a key theme in campaigns for 2 seats on City Council

By LOYD BRUMFIELD
Staff Writer
lbrumfield@dallasnews.com

Election challenges are nothing new for Duncanville Mayor David Green, who has drawn ire of ra-

Going bald for a good cause

More than 60 North Texans will be returning to work and school with bald heads Monday, including (clockwise from above) Marcy Peary, Raymond Ramirez, Spencer Balding and Barrett Knestch. They had their heads shaved Sunday at Globe Life Park to help raise awareness of pediatric cancer during One Mission’s annual Buzz Off.

(Story, 3B)

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North Texas

ARLINGTON

Shaving heads to save lives

Over 60 get a haircut at Globe Life Park for annual Buzz Off

BY HANNAH WISE
Staff Writer

More than 60 North Texans will be returning to work and school with bald heads Monday.

They had their heads shaved Sunday at Globe Life Park to help raise awareness of pediatric cancer during One Mission’s annual Buzz Off.

Participants collected donations ahead of the fundraiser for One Mission’s efforts to provide services for youths and families fighting cancer.

Proceeds from Sunday’s free event will help families at the Pauline Allen Giffen Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children’s Medical Center Dallas.

Marcy Peyre, 45, of Dallas has participated in all the North Texas Buzz Off events to honor her grandfather, who died of cancer in 1990, and her mother, who has battled breast and lung cancer.

Peyre said she first shaved her head when her mother was going through radiation treatments. Cancer patients “don’t get a choice to lose their hair or me,” she said.

Julie Caine, 50, of Fort Worth was not concerned about any sort of social stigma about being bald. “You’re in an elite club.”

Bill Knetisch, 49, of Dallas wanted to find a way to teach his son Barrett, 6, about sacrifice. The Buzz Off fit the bill. They have participated as a team the last three years.

Bill was a Marine for 12 years and said being bald is “pur for the course.”

But Barrett said his friends at school have a lot of questions about why he shaves his thick brown hair off.

“I get haircuts during the year, but this is the super one,” Barrett said.

This year, the pair raised $70,000 to support families affected by pediatric cancer, bringing their three-year total to $230,000.

Raymond Ramirez’s daughter Conley accompanied him so she could shave his head.

Next year Ramirez, 47, of Fort Worth hopes to double his fundraising.

“I’m very blessed to be surrounded by people who think not of themselves but of people that are in need,” he said.

Spencer Bolding, 16, of Dallas decided to buzz his hair off after hearing about the Buzz Off when another student at the William R. Travis Academy in Oak Cliff came to school bald last year.

He said he wanted to help other kids with cancer and he should, too.

On Sunday, Bolding’s brown mop-top fell to the floor around him. He said he was thinking of his grandparents, both of whom died from cancer.

He said he wants others to learn from the mistake he made when he didn’t ask his friend why she shaved her head.

“One of my least favorite things is judging without knowing what is going on. If you’re giving them mean looks like that, it’s disrespectful,” he said. “I say you have to talk to them first.”

Rodney Odem of Allen shaved off Jackie Palmer’s hair during One Mission’s annual Buzz Off event at Globe Life Park in Arlington. She wasn’t worried about being bald to help fight kids’ cancer. “You’re in an elite club.”

Robert Scully, 9, who’s participated in the Buzz Off with his dad as a team for three years.

“I get haircuts during the year, but this is the super one.”

Barrett Knetisch, 6, who’s participated in the Buzz Off with his dad as a team for three years.

*Twitter: @thevessel20