



“TRUMP is blunt and he speaks volumes,” said Steve Biggers, a Nashville transplant and tea party member in Granbury, Texas. Photographs by CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

# A REPUBLICAN CIVIL WAR DEEP IN TRUMP COUNTRY

GRANBURY, Texas — An American flag hung on the side of a barn and a country song about a working man played at Warren’s Backyard, a music venue, where on a searing summer evening, the Hood County Republicans met for an open bar and a silent auction to kick off the campaign season.

A school board candidate rallied her supporters. A precinct chair held court at the front door next to a storied basketball coach. The county commissioner — a local hero since 2019 when he shot and killed a gunman who had stormed a church — wiped sweat from beneath a brimmed hat and nodded to the faithful. When talk turned to political enemies, it wasn’t about Democrats, who are scarce here, but of a far-right faction of fellow Republicans who have instigated a civil war within the party.

“I grew up with these people and they’re attacking me,” Robert Granger, the precinct chair, said of the ultraconservative wing of the party. “It’s getting worse. They want to break public education and

Infighting between traditional and far-right members in Texas county is reshaping local government

By Jeffrey Fleishman



GLENDIA Gillingham and grandson Liam, 3, fish in Granbury, Hood County, which has been roiled by a brasher style of politics.

go to school vouchers. It’s political grandstanding.” The self-described Reagan Republican added that local far-right meetings “felt like I was in a Pentecostal church. It’s Christian nationalism.”

The far-right movement in Hood County exemplifies the rancor and divisions that have reordered American politics and provoked a battle for the identity of the Republican Party. That fight in Congress plays out over immigration, reproductive rights and the war in Ukraine, but in this Texas region, where Donald Trump won 81% of the vote in 2020, it veers into skirmishes over multimillion-dollar school bonds, book banning and petty fights over septic tanks and overzealous constables. It is a seething tapestry of social media attacks, conspiracies, Bible quotes and name-calling under the maxim that all politics is local, if viscerally so.

“The infighting here is unbelievable,” said David Fischer, a religious conservative and former head of the county Republican Party, noting a re-

## NEWSOM SIGNS PLASTIC BAG BAN INTO LAW

The state closes a loophole in a previous attempt that might have led to an increase in such waste.

By SUSANNE RUST

On Sunday, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law that will close a legal loophole that has allowed for an increase in California’s plastic bag waste, despite a 2014 law that was designed to ban the environmental blight.

“Plastic bags create pollution in our environment and break into microplastics that contaminate our drinking water and threaten our health,” said Jenn Engstrom, state director of CALPIRG, a consumer advocacy group. “Californians voted to ban plastic grocery bags in our state almost a decade ago, but the law clearly needed a redo. With the governor’s signature, California has finally banned plastic bags in grocery checkout lanes once and for all.”

In 2014, the Legislature passed a law that banned single-use plastic bags at grocery store and retail checkout lines. However, they allowed stores to offer consumers, for a small fee, “reusable” bags. Such bags included paper and high-density polyethylene plastic bags, which plastic companies argued could be reused.

## UC Irvine professor back after probe

He denies its finding that he violated the school’s policy against sexual harassment.

By REBECCA ELLIS AND NOAH GOLDBERG

UC Irvine professor Bruce Blumberg sat down at a quiet cafe and began composing a message.

He’d arrived in Spain a few days ahead of an international conference, along with a graduate student he’d invited to participate.

He texted the student saying he’d found a spot to dine with no tourists.

Instead of joining him, the young woman hurried to her hotel to pack, “fleeing” from the man she said had spent four days bombarding her with sexual remarks and innuendo, according to a 129-page university investigation reviewed by The Times.

The student, who was not identified in the report and whom The Times is not naming, told a UCI investigator after abruptly returning to Irvine in May 2022 that she had been uncomfortable with the idea of being alone with Blumberg and brought someone else along on the trip.

## Where China’s weary young ‘retire’



A VOLUNTEER meditates at Guanye Youth Retirement Village near Yesanpo National Park in China.

A generation burned out by the economy and tough job market taps ‘nursing homes’ to balance life, grind.

By STEPHANIE YANG AND XIN-YUN WU

Su Cong, 29, was scrolling on his phone in February when he noticed an ad with undeniable appeal: a temporary retreat, a fresh start, a mental adjustment, a healed soul.

The Beijing tech worker had just returned from visiting family in Chengdu over the Lunar New Year holiday, and was already dreaming of his next vacation. In his online search for escapism, he stumbled upon a new type of business targeting restless workers just like him.

The social media post dubbed it a “youth nursing home,” where the young and able can go to work primarily

on their mental health and happiness, far from the hectic urban grind.

These slow-paced havens have become the latest attempt by young Chinese to reckon with growing unemployment, economic disillusionment and shifting attitudes about careers and the workplace.

“I thought this would be a good way for me to relieve some stress,” Su said.

In seeking a more balanced, less stressful life, Chinese young people are mirroring trends seen in the U.S. and other nations, where the younger generations are rebelling against previous workplace pressures, and demanding more flexibility and personal time.

After some research, Su found a retreat a couple of hours from his home. He requested permission to work remotely, subleased his room in a three-bedroom apartment and left for his new home in the fields and mountains west of Beijing.

### Hezbollah fires over 100 rockets

The overnight barrage is in response to Israeli attacks in Lebanon that have killed dozens. **WORLD, A3**

### City Council leader sworn in

Marqueece Harris-Dawson says homelessness and housing affordability will be top issues. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

### Rams gut it out, Chargers fall

Late field goal gives Rams a win. Chargers struggle offensively in a defensive battle with Steelers. **SPORTS, D1**

### Weather

Sunny and warm. L.A. Basin: 88/63. **B5**

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