

Elderly & Disabled
Housing
Page 2

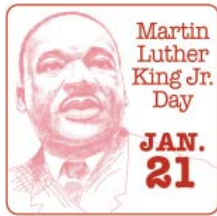
NORTHEAST NEWS

Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 42 Years
VOL. 43, NO. 04 TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

Artist's Showcase:



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Martin Luther King Jr. Day
JAN. 21

60th annual Aldine ISD Livestock Show set Jan. 30-Feb. 1

The 60th annual Aldine ISD Livestock Show and Country Fair will be held Jan. 30-Feb. 1 at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center.

Project judging will be held on Thursday, Jan. 31, beginning at 8 a.m. and concluding at 4 p.m. in the Campbell Center Arena.

On Thursday and Friday, all projects will be on display to the public throughout the day.

The Sale of Champions, which produced \$224,007 in sales in 2018, will be held Friday evening (Feb. 1) at 7 p.m. and will be held in the Arena. In addition to FFA students' projects being auctioned off, Aldine ISD art students will also have their art work auctioned off.

Prior to the Sale of Champions, the buyer's dinner will be held at 5 p.m. During the buyer's dinner, AISD art students will have their art projects on display and individuals will have the opportunity



Eisenhower High School FFA student Nick Cain raised the Grand Champion Steer at the 2018 Aldine ISD Livestock Show and Country Fair. This year's event will take place Jan. 30-Feb. 1 at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center.

to bid on the artwork.

Additionally, barbecue plates will be on sale Thursday and Friday in Room 104 of the Campbell Center.

For more information,

contact Aldine ISD's career and technical education department at (281) 985-6650. The M.O. Campbell Educational Center is located at 1865 Aldine Bender Road.

Second driver in deadly chase indicted

The driver of a vehicle that was chasing a 14-year-old male driver and passengers that collided with a pickup truck killing the women driver has been indicted by the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

A Grand Jury Panel returned the charges of manslaughter, failure to stop and render aid and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon on 48-year-old Christopher Lopez.

On Tuesday, January 1, 2019, at approximately 2:20 p.m. a tan GMC Acadia operated by a 14-year-old driver with two juvenile passengers, was traveling at a high rate of speed westbound on Aldine Mail Route approaching the intersection of Aldine Westfield Road.

A tan late 70's model Lincoln driven by Lopez, was chasing the GMC Acadia, and allegedly dis-



Christopher Lopez

playing a semi-automatic handgun.

The GMC Acadia disregarded a red signal at Aldine Westfield and struck a Ford F-150 as the Ford was traveling southbound through the intersection.

The driver of the Ford F-150 a 45-year-old female now identified as Silvia Zavala was found with no signs of life at the scene by paramedics.

NEWS NOTES

Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia to visit Castlewood Civic Club

Castlewood's first quarterly meeting of 2019 will be held this week. The CCC meeting will be held at Bethel Community Church on 2414 Lauder Road, on Thursday, January 24th, 2019.



The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. Commissioner Adrian Garcia, Precinct 2, will be the speaker for the evening and will talk about some of the issues in the area.

Texas employment growth continues in december

As 2018 concluded, the Texas economy added another month of positive employment growth, with 38,000 seasonally adjusted nonfarm positions added for the month of December. Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, and has remained at the same historic 43-year low since October 2018. Annual employment growth for Texas was 3.2 percent in December, and marked 104 consecutive months of annual growth. Over the year, Texas has added 391,800 jobs as Total Nonfarm employment reached a new high of 12,744,100.

Cantu one of 3 new Trustees welcomed to HC Department of Education Board



(left) Harris County Superintendent James Colbert Jr., newcomer trustees Josh Flynn, Danyahel (Danny) Norris, Richard Cantu and HCDE Presiding Board President Eric Dick.

Jan. 14, 2019 - Three Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees were sworn into office in January 2019 to represent Harris County students and community. The new faces who will help preside over HCDE matters are Richard Cantu', Position 3, At Large;

Josh Flynn, Position 4, Precinct 3; and Danyahel (Danny) Norris, Position 6, Precinct 1.

Richard Cantu' is the deputy executive director of the East Aldine Management District and has held a number of nonprofit and municipal leadership positions. The self-proclaimed

community and education advocate sees himself as a representative of working families. He supports increasing opportunities for citizens to access early childhood education, after-

See New Trustees, Page 3

Mac grad Diana Del Pilar named principal of Avalos PTECHS



Diana Del Pilar, left, was named Principal of Rose Avalos Pathway in Technology Early College High School during the Jan. 15 Aldine ISD Board of Trustees meeting. She is pictured with the school's namesake, and AISD Trustee, Rose Avalos.

Diana Del Pilar, a MacArthur High School graduate, is coming home. Del Pilar was named the principal of Rose Avalos

Pathway in Technology Early College High School at the Jan. 15 Board meeting.

See Del Pilar, Page 3

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PREMIERE CINEMAS

FRIDAY-WEDNESDAY 1/18-1/23

* GLASS (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating	* AQUAMAN 3D (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 6:15pm SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating
* GLASS (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 2:50pm, 5:45pm, 8:45pm SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating	* AQUAMAN 3D (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 7:30pm Stadium Seating
* A DOG'S WAY HOME (PG) - 12:15pm, 2:35pm, 5:00pm, 7:15pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating	* BUMBLEBEE (PG-13) - 3:10pm, 8:30pm SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating
* PERFECT STRANGERS (Perfectos Desconocidos) (R) - 12:45pm, 3:15pm, 5:50pm, 8:30pm Stadium Seating	* BUMBLEBEE (PG-13) - 3:35pm, 9:15pm Stadium Seating
* REPLICAS (PG-13) - 1:00pm, 3:30pm, 6:00pm, 9:00pm Stadium Seating	* BUMBLEBEE in 3D (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 5:45pm SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating
* THE UPSIDE (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 2:45pm, 5:45pm, 8:45pm Stadium Seating	* BUMBLEBEE in 3D (PG-13) - 1:00pm, 6:30pm Stadium Seating
* ESCAPE ROOM (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:15pm Stadium Seating	* SECOND ACT (PG-13) - 1:00pm, 4:00pm, 6:30pm, 9:00pm Stadium Seating
* AQUAMAN (PG-13) - 4:00pm Stadium Seating	* THE MULE (R) - 12:20pm, 3:00pm, 5:45pm, 9:00pm Stadium Seating
* AQUAMAN (PG-13) - 3:10pm SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating	* Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (PG) - 12:40pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:00pm

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COMMUNITY & SCHOOL NEWS

Aldine ISD teacher takes part in Fade to Black Festival

The fest showcases up-and-coming playwrights of color from the Houston area and across the country.

Rickey Atkins Jr. has many passions. One of those is working with special education students in Aldine ISD. His other passion is acting. The resource teacher recently displayed his acting chops during the annual Fade to Black Festival. This year's event took place Jan. 11-13 at the Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston (MATCH).

Each year, finalists are showcased at the Fade To Black Reading Series. One of the celebrated writers for the 2019 event is Britney S. Harris for her work *The Amazin' Jason*.

Harris teaches acting and collaborative techniques in the School of Performing Arts at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Her areas

of expertise are in race performance, activist theatre, and youth-based cultural enrichment programming. Currently, she is working on three independent projects exploring the effects of social media on the psyche.

Her play, *The Amazin' Jason*, explores the startling reality of the opioid crisis facing the U.S. teen population and the demands felt by student-athletes. The story evolves as Jason Dwyer, a once-rising high school football quarter with a bright future recounts the ill-fated night he let his future slip through his fingers as the result of his addiction.

Atkins, whose screen name is R.J. Atkins, portrayed the role of Derek Harmon, a case manager assigned to Jason Dwyer. Marcus Freeman directed the play. Damus Wynn played the role of Jason.

Charnele Brown is Atkins primary acting coach.



Rickey Atkins Jr.

Many who grew up in the late '80s and early '90s will remember Brown from the sitcom *A Different World*. She portrayed medical student Kimberly Reese. The series centered on the life of students at Hillman College, a fictional historically black college in Virginia. Brown heads the Charnele Brown Acting Academy in Houston.

Atkins works at the Aldine Education Center and Lane School.

Eisenhower's Jashon Palmer earns honors from Wendy's

Representatives from Wendy's honored Eisenhower High School senior football player Jashon Palmer, center, during a student assembly on Thursday, Jan. 17 for being named a 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman National Finalist. Wendy's presented Jashon with a \$1,000 scholarship, and a medallion. Pictured with Jashon are Wendy's representatives Edith Hernandez and Rickey Oberoi. To be eligible to be considered a national finalist, applicants must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) or better, be proven leaders and role models and must compete in at least one of 47 school sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee or the National Federation of State High School Associations. Jashon carries a 3.85 GPA, competes in four varsity sports and served an internship in Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's Office of Education.



Lone Star College-North Harris offers "Late-Start" option to students

HOUSTON (January 17, 2019) – It's still not too late to start the semester! Lone Star College-North Harris is offering multiple "Late Start" class options so that students can earn their credits during the spring 2019 semester.

LSC-North Harris Late Start class options include traditional options such as chemistry, government and history, and electives such as sign language, music and art.

Late Start classes offer

a convenient alternative for students who need flexible scheduling to pursue and complete their education. Dr. Derrick Manns, LSC-North Harris' Vice President of Enrollment Management said, "Classes are offered in person, online, and in hybrid formats for added convenience, and students can take classes during the day, at night, and on the weekends."

The next Late Start classes begin on Jan. 28,

with other sessions beginning as follows:

- 14-week Late Start classes start Jan. 28 and Feb. 1
- 12-week Late Start classes start Feb. 11
- 8-week Late Start classes start and Mar. 18
- 6-week Late Start classes start Apr. 1

For more information, visit www.LoneStar.edu/Late-Start.htm or contact LSC-North Harris Admissions at 281-618-5410.

Watch D.O.G.S. Kick Off Set for Hambrick Middle School

A Dads and Kids pizza night celebration to launch a family and community engagement program called WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) is scheduled for Tuesday, January 22 from 6 pm – 7:30 pm at Hambrick Middle School, 4600 Aldine Mail Rte Rd, Houston, TX 77039. The WATCH D.O.G.S. program was cre-

ated by a group of parents and educators in one school in 1998 and has grown to include thousands of schools across the country. The goal of the program is "to provide positive male role models for the students, demonstrating by their presence that education is important." Hambrick Principal, Dr. Rebecca Sanford encourag-

es parents, community members and even friends and relatives of staff members to get involved and help bring positive, male role models into the school on a regular basis. Sanford commented, "We are so excited about this program and what it will mean for our students and our school."

Aldine ISD receives top state honors for financial integrity and best practices

Aldine ISD has once again upheld its excellence in financial accountability. The District earned a "Superior" rating in the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST). This is the 16th consecutive year that the District achieves the system's highest grade.

The state agency recently released the 2017-2018 ratings, which are based on the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Aldine ISD passed every indicator measured and received an "A" for superior rating. The District has earned a "Superior" rating since the start of the state's financial accountability system.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed School FIRST in response to state legislation. The primary goal is to achieve

quality performance in the management of resources. Each Texas school district prepares an annual financial accountability report for School FIRST.

The School FIRST ranking was not the only honor the District received. The Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) bestowed AISD with the Award of Merit for Purchasing Operations. The award recognizes the District's commitment and efforts in utilizing best practices in the acquisition of goods and services. This is the first time AISD receives the TASBO award.

"Our Financial Services Department is committed to serving the students," said Superintendent LaTonya M. Goffney. "They are leaders who

strive to provide the best resources possible to our learning community while ensuring our District remains compliant to purchasing laws and responsible to our taxpayers."

The TASBO Award of Merit for Purchasing Operations recognizes a school district's achievement in implementing best practices in the area of purchasing. The District's Purchasing Department will receive the award in March during the recognition ceremony.

Dr. Tamika Alford-Stephens is assistant superintendent of finance, Alexia Rogers is executive director of finance, Carlotta Nicholas is director of purchasing and Frances Tucker is the purchasing supervisor.

Eisenhower High School to highlight college initiative programs, celebrate school choice

Band, cheerleaders, choir to perform at "Framing the Future with iASPIRE and IB"

HOUSTON (Jan. 16, 2019) – Eighth grade students, parents, and community members from local middle schools will be welcomed by cheerleaders and a band at "Framing the Future with iASPIRE and IB," an event highlighting the college initiative programs at Eisenhower High School.

The event will kick off at 8 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 25 with an opening ceremony by Eisenhower High School's choir and Reserve Officer Training Corp participants. Campus leaders and administrators will offer a formal welcome to attendees, after which students will tour the campus

and attend four half-hour sessions highlighting athletic opportunities and special programs at the high school. Current Eisenhower High School students will share their personal experiences of the school's academic rigor and cultural emphasis in a panel discussion.

This event is planned to coincide with the history-making celebration of National School Choice Week 2019, which will feature more than 40,000 school choice events across all 50 states.

"We will be celebrating school choice by highlighting the iASPIRE and International Baccalaureate diploma and certificate programs specific to this campus," said Aquila Aubrey, administrator for college initiatives at

Eisenhower High School. "Parents and students appreciate the broader experience of balancing academic success with participation in the arts, organizations, and athletics. We want to ensure all parents are knowledgeable about the proper support systems we have in place for student success."

iASPIRE is Eisenhower High School's College Initiative Program for first-generation students in grades 9-12 to positively impact college and career readiness. Through iASPIRE, students are motivated to address the importance of college enrollment, completion, and financial solvency.

For more information, contact Aquila Aubrey at (281) 878-0900 or aubrey@aldineisd.org.

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NORTHEAST BELTWAY 8 News

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Aldine ISD to offer young filmmakers workshop in February

The two-day workshop is developed for teens aged 12-18. The deadline to register online is January 25. Aldine ISD will furnish participants with opportunities to learn the art of developing a short film, collaborate with other young filmmakers, refine their work and exhibit their films.

Houston Cinema Arts Society, Aldine ISD Film and Photography Festival, Aldine TV and the AISD Visual Arts Department are sponsoring the workshop.

Students interested in taking part must register online with a sponsoring Aldine ISD teacher. After students receive confirmation that they have been approved to attend the workshop, they must submit to their teacher a completed Parent Permission form.

Young Filmmakers Workshop Dates & Links
 • Deadline to Apply: January 25, 2019



- Application Link: <http://bit.ly/2QbOFzX>
- Location of Workshop: Bamberg Professional Development & Resource Center, 9999 Veterans Memorial Dr. (Houston, TX 77038)
- Day 1 of Workshop: Friday, February 1, 4-7:30 p.m.
- Day 2 of Workshop: Saturday, February 2, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Film screenings, which are open to all students and the public, start at 2 p.m.

Workshop Focus
 Students will learn how to make short films (3-5 minutes in length) in any genre. They will:

- Develop a basic script
- Explore ways of capturing video content on devices they already have (e.g. cell phones, digital cameras)
- Incorporate archival footage to complete their projects.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo applauds Bail Reform vote as a welcome first step

Harris County, TX – January 17, 2019 - Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo released the following statement regarding Wednesday's vote on Rule 9.1, which implements post-arrest policies that begin to address the constitutional violations within the current system.

Judge Hidalgo praised the move as a welcome first step:
 "I commend the judges,

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez and D.A. Kim Ogg for taking a monumental step in pushing our system to become fairer, safer, and more cost effective. This work will require coordination between multiple agencies and I am working with key stakeholders to make sure we do it right. The judge's vote allows every resident of the county, regardless of his or her economic status, to have equal access to justice."

Rule 9.1 will allow non-violent offenders awaiting trial to return home and continue to attend work, support their families and prepare for their next step in the judicial process. Defendants who qualify will likewise be allowed to begin rehabilitation instead of remaining in jail because of their inability to post bail.

Del Pilar,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing. She will assume her new duties on Feb. 4.

She brings nearly 20 years of experience in the field of education to the role which includes more than 10 years in Aldine, and four years as principal of Houston ISD's Middle College High School-Gulfton.

The Sam Houston University graduate began her teaching career in 1999 as bilingual teacher at Aldine ISD's Sammons Elementary School. She also taught bilingual education at Hill, Wilson and Stehlik Intermediate schools before moving to Goodman Elementary where she served as the school's bilingual instructional specialist. In 2005, she moved to Spring

Branch ISD and served as an instructional specialist at Treasure Forest Elementary School before becoming an assistant principal at that same campus. In 2011, she moved to Houston ISD to serve as the principal of Helms Elementary School before opening the Middle College.

That experience will immediately be put to use as Del Pilar will lead recruitment efforts Aldine's district's first P-Tech high school and 10th high school.

Avalos PTECHS will open in August of 2019 and is the final school built with funds from the \$798 million 2015 bond referendum.

The campus is designed to offer smaller class sizes, supportive personalized learning environment while students are earning a high school diploma, an associate's degree, or a two-year post secondary industry certification through internships, apprenticeships and other job training programs.

"I want to thank the Board and Dr. Goffney for this outstanding opportunity," Del Pilar said. "I am excited about putting together a team that will create an outstanding learning environment for our students and prepare them for future success."

Avalos PTECHS is a partnership between Aldine ISD, BakerRipley and Lone Star College. The campus is named after Aldine ISD Trustee Rose Avalos who has served on the Board since 2006.

LSC-North Harris continues tradition of offering seniors a lifelong education

HOUSTON (January 15, 2019) – Lone Star College-North Harris is looking for a different kind of senior this spring. Through the Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL), prospective students ages 50 and over can join a wide variety of activities and classes. These classes include, but are not limited to the following:

- Education Seminars:**
 - Aging
 - Finance
 - History
 - Health and fitness
- Personal Growth:**
 - Book clubs
 - Art appreciation
 - Drawing and painting
 - Political discussions
- Skills Development:**
 - Basic computer
 - Writing
- Social Activities:**
 - Crafts and hobbies
 - Plays and concerts
 - Nature walks
 - Luncheons
 - Movies
 - Day trips

ALL will host open house events on Tuesday, Jan. 22 from 1-3 p.m. at LSC-Victory Center and Thursday, Jan. 24 from 1-3 p.m. in the LSC-North Harris Community Education Building. Visitors will be able to meet instructors, visit with ALL members and register for membership and classes.

ALL has a long tradition of serving seniors. This marks 15 years ALL has been at the LSC-North Harris campus.

"ALL encourages the 50+ community to visit our beautiful campus. We are always happy to meet new people and to reunite with our current members," said ALL Program Manager Pamela Gardner.

She added, "ALL is a community resource that provides opportunities for personal growth and development, stimulating enrichment classes and social activities. Everyone is welcome to participate in our amazing program and at-

tend classes designed especially with seniors in mind."

Membership allows for registration in classes at LSC-North Harris and LSC-Victory Center. Senior adults (50+) may join for \$20 per academic calendar year. Global membership is \$55 per year, which gives members the option to take classes at any Lone Star College campus.

To sign up for classes, future ALL students have two options:

- Mail a check with their registration form to LSC-North Harris, ALL, 2700 W.W. Thorne Drive Houston, TX 77073, or
 - Call the Continuing Education Office at 281-618-5634 or the ALL office at 281-765-7947.
- For more information, contact Pamela Gardner at 281-765-7947, email Pamela.J.Gardner@LoneStar.edu, or visit www.LoneStar.edu/all-nharris.htm.

New Trustees,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

school services for youth, workforce development initiatives and teacher professional development.

As the son of a Mexican immigrant who worked hard to achieve the American dream, Cantu says he knows the importance of education in transforming lives of working-class families.

"I am committed to improving access to existing critical services and developing partnerships to address community needs and challenges," he said.

Josh Flynn is a licensed tax professional chartered through the IRS and specializes in nonprofit accounting. He formerly served as trustee for a university in Bethany, Oklahoma. His immediate goal in office is to make HCDE as transparent as possible. Long-term, he will promote efficiency, directing maximum benefits to Harris County students.

Flynn's decision to enter public service occurs as the last of his three, publicly schooled children graduated in 2018. Choosing HCDE as a vehicle for public service seemed the logical progression for him to share his parenting skill-set.

"Knowing (that) my first grandchild will be entering the school system, I want the best system in place for

him and future generations of children," he said.

Danyahel (Danny) Norris is law instructor of legal research and associate director of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law Library at Texas Southern University. He is a practicing intellectual property attorney, principal partner of Norris & Norris Attorneys and Counselors at Law and is part president of the Houston Lawyers Association. He shares his leadership skills through various professional organizations, including the New Leaders Council, Houston chapter.

Norris' immediate goal as trustee is to partner with local school districts and state legislators to help revise the school finance formula. Long-term, he values continuing HCDE partnerships with local districts and initiating innovative education practices in the county to eventually share statewide and nationally.

"I believe by strengthening the education in our county, we help strengthen the future of our county, and I'm looking forward to helping do so," Norris said.

The incoming HCDE trustees join fellow board members at 1 p.m. on Jan. 16 at the monthly meeting at 6300 Irvington, according to Eric Dick, presiding

board president. Prior to the meeting, HCDE employees join HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. and the board for the School Board Recognition Month Appreciation Reception from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

About Harris County Department of Education:

HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax of approximately \$9 per homeowner. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. We operate four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated or recovering youth who require a low, student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. We are governed by an elected board of seven trustees and have 1,076 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at www.hcde-texas.org.

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OPINION PAGE

Tips for a Smooth Tax Season

(StatePoint) Though Tax Day happens every year, it still seems to take many Americans by surprise. This year, don't miss the deadline or let this crucial to-do loom large over your head.

To have a smooth tax season, consider the following:

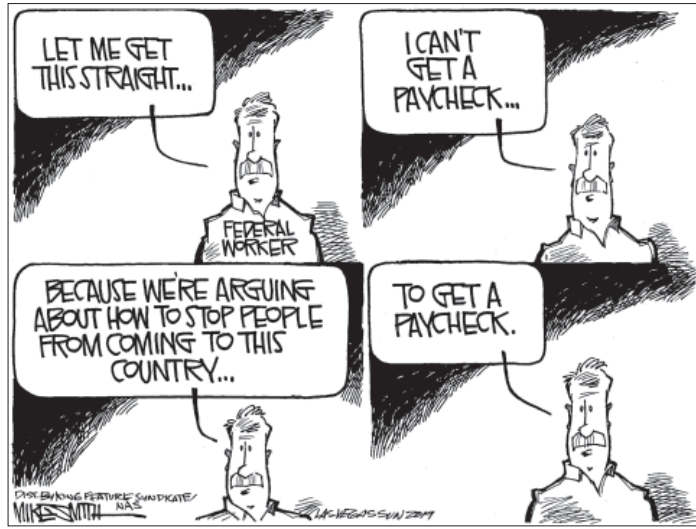
- **Getting Started Early:** If you can, get a head start on your taxes. Filing early is a good tactic for anyone, but particularly those with evolving or complex financial circumstances. Not only will doing so help you prevent the anxiety that comes with procrastination, you'll receive your refund early -- if you're due one -- or give yourself time to prepare to pay any owed taxes.

- **Relying on Old Tricks:** When it comes to tax preparation, sometimes, using old-school methods is the best way to go. Whether you are just getting started on crunching those numbers or you're finalizing all the information, a printing calculator like Casio's HR-170RC includes features that can aid in tax preparation and submission. This model also has some newer tools, like a built-in tax feature that lets you store a frequently-used rate and pull it up at-will, slicing your calculation times by an impressive margin. Other functions include: a reprint key, a check function to scroll up to 150 steps of previous calculations, a grand total function for quick correction of mis-entries, currency exchange calculations and cost/sell/margin calculations.

- **Doing Research:** The list of what is tax deductible is more extensive than you might realize, so do your research. Keeping good records throughout the year of your expenditures can help you take advantage of these opportunities.

- **Having a Refund Plan:** Don't just let your checking account absorb your tax refund only to spend it on an impulse buy. Whether you invest the money in your retirement, sock it safely away for a rainy day or put it towards the purchase of a big-ticket item, such as the down payment of a house, having a plan for your tax refund can help you make the most of the money.

This year, have a fuss-free tax season. With a little planning, you can file your taxes efficiently, without headache and at the greatest benefit to your finances.



House elects new speaker as legislative session kicks off

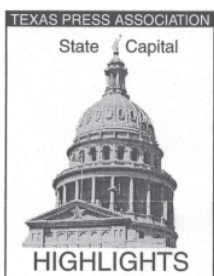
AUSTIN — The 86th Texas Legislature convened on Jan. 8 with all its customary ceremonies and recognitions—chief of which was the unanimous election of a new House speaker — Angleton Republican Dennis Bonnen.

On Jan. 9, Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who presides over the Senate, and Speaker Bonnen announced their joint commitment to passing legislation that would improve how public education is funded. That arduous and heretofore divisive task means rethinking and recalibrating what share of the cost would be funded by local property taxes — public education's primary source of funding.

Patrick predicted this legislative session would be different from previous ones. "If the three of us are aligned, that we're going to accomplish a mission and pass legislation, it happens," said Patrick. "This is not just a message to the public and to the media, but I think our members will take note, that this is really unprecedented, that we're addressing these issues at the beginning of session, totally united with one another." Patrick added that he would name a new Senate committee on property taxes to work on a plan.

House and Senate committee hearings will begin as soon as Patrick and Bonnen have selected chairs and members for each panel. Lawmakers

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Ed Sterling



must keep in mind that the comptroller's office has estimated the cost of public education, the biggest of all drivers of the state budget, at about \$63 billion in fiscal 2018-2019.

Ideas to streamline and increase the efficiency of public education came last month from the Commission on Public School Finance. Among other things, the commission suggested moving \$3.5 billion in existing state resources away from "outdated programs or obsolete hold-harmless provisions" into new strategies.

The commission's report also calls for a halt to the continuing decrease in state resources allocated to public education, and directing more money toward students who need it most, such as low-income, special needs and English language learners.

Revenue estimate is given

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Jan. 7 released his biennial revenue estimate, this one covering the state's 2020-2021 budget years.

Hegar said a strong national economy and rising oil prices over most of 2018 left the state with 8 percent more revenue than two years ago, or \$119.1 billion in total general revenue available.

However, he said, "Despite this projected revenue growth, the Legislature will again face some difficult choices in balancing the budget. The most pressing and costly budget drivers for the upcoming session include a potentially large boost in education spending to reduce the property tax burden and reform school finance."

"Texas remains economically well positioned compared to other states and we will continue to outpace the U.S. economy in the long

term," Hegar added. However, he also noted that the price of oil has been down since October, federal interest rates are up and both the global economy and U.S. trade policy remain uncertain.

Meanwhile, the state's Economic Stabilization Fund, commonly referred to as the "Rainy Day Fund," currently contains about \$12.5 billion, not counting currently outstanding spending authority. Absent any legislative appropriations, the balance of the fund is expected to be \$15.4 billion at the end of the 2020-21 biennium, Hegar said.

Monthly revenue reported

Comptroller Hegar on Jan. 9 announced his office would send cities, counties, transit systems and special-purpose taxing districts \$734.7 million in local sales tax allocations for January, an amount 3.6 percent more than sent in January 2018. Allocations are based on sales made in November by businesses that report tax monthly.

Julian Castro announces

Former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro of San Antonio on Jan. 12 formally announced his candidacy for president in 2020. He is a Democrat.

Castro, 44, a former mayor of San Antonio and twin brother of U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, is the first Texan to declare his candidacy for the next presidential race.

Oldest veteran laid to rest

Richard A. Overton of Austin, who died Dec. 27 at age 112, was buried in the Texas State Cemetery on Jan. 12 with full military honors.

Overton, who was in the U.S. Army from 1940 to 1945, served in the Pacific during World War II. He was America's oldest man and oldest military veteran.

Head of state agency dies

The Texas Workforce Commission on Jan. 7 announced its executive director, Larry Temple, died Jan. 5. He was 66.

Temple joined the agency in 1997, serving first as director of welfare reform for six years. He had served as executive director since 2004.

TEXAS SENATE NEWS RETURNS FOR THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION Finance Chair lays out Budget Highlights

By Richard Lee

(AUSTIN) — January 16, 2019 – The Senate will put more money towards education, mental health and transportation, according to the chamber's chief budget writer, Finance Committee Chair and Flower Mound Senator Jane Nelson. The state is in better shape economically than in January 2017, where state revenue collections had decreased nearly a percent over the previous biennium. Less revenue means a tighter budget, but that's not the case this session, with strong economic growth leading to nearly \$120 billion in available general revenue, according to the Comptroller's office. That's up from a little less than \$105 billion two years ago. The budget filed late Tuesday is an increase of \$8.4 billion over last biennium, for a total of \$112 billion in general, non-dedicated revenue for state services in 2020 and 2021.

In a statement released Tuesday, Nelson said that past conservative budgets have left the state in great economic shape today. "Our commitment to fiscal responsibility is paying major dividends, affording us an opportunity to secure the Texas miracle for generations to come. This budget makes targeted investments in education, including a well-deserved pay raise for Texas teachers, and continues our work on transportation, mental health and other key priorities," her statement read.

The Senate's budget includes more funding for public education, including \$3.7 billion for a \$5000 across-the-board teacher pay raise and \$2.4 billion to fund enrollment growth of about 65,000 new students. It also includes \$2.3 billion to reduce reliance on property taxes and recapture, known more commonly as the "Robin Hood" system of public school finance. Finally, it would earmark \$230 million to maintain current premiums and benefits for retired teachers.

For health and human services, the Senate budget would spend a total of \$7.5 billion across

21 state agencies to improve access to mental health care and reduce waitlists. It would fund women's health programs at a record level of \$285 million and would include funding to maintain current caseloads at Child Protective Services.

The Texas Department of Transportation would get more money, nearly half a billion dollars, raising the total appropriation for the agency that oversees planning and construction of state transportation infrastructure to \$31.2 billion. State parks and historical sites would get more money under the Senate plan, with all sporting goods sales tax collections going to the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Historical Commission.

Because the Legislature budgets for the future, every session lawmakers have to reconcile accounts between projected costs and revenues and actual costs and revenues. This session, the Senate will consider \$4.2 billion for that purpose as detailed in the supplemental appropriations bill, SB 500. That includes \$1 billion for Harvey disaster recovery, \$2.1 billion for the Medicaid Shortfall and \$600 million to address pension shortfalls for teachers and state employees. It would draw \$2.5 billion out of the state's Economic Stabilization Fund to help pay for these and other expenses.

The Governor must sign a budget before the Legislature leaves in late May, and what passes will be the result of negotiations between the House and Senate. In 2017, the Senate proposed spending \$103 billion that January, but the final budget signed by the Governor totaled almost \$108 billion. This year, the House filed budget would spend \$115 billion, about \$3 billion more than the Senate. Both chambers historically pass their appropriations bill by late March or early April in order to give House and Senate negotiators enough time to reconcile the two versions of the state budget for the next two years.

The Senate will reconvene Tuesday, January 22 at 11 a.m.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



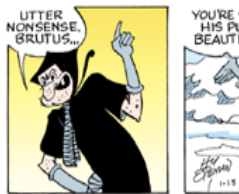
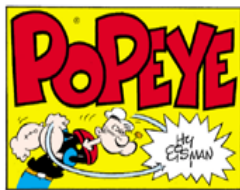
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



LAFF-A-DAY



"My feet feel better, but now I've got a headache coming on!"



"That figures... they met on the high school _____ team."

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

- Alarm BURRPET
Feint GEDDO
Sure CREATIN
Hidden DEVILE

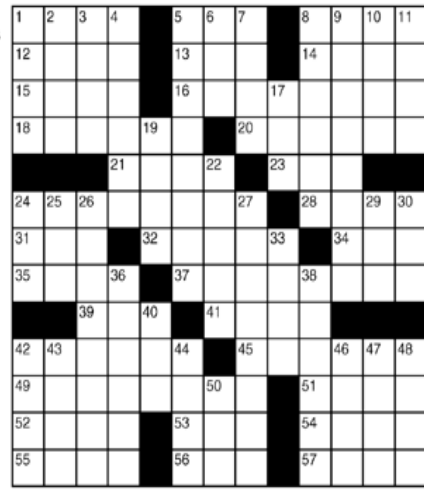
TODAY'S WORD

ACROSS

- 1 Nickelodeon's explorer
5 Phonograph stat
8 - podrida
12 Acknowledge
13 "Born in the ..."
14 Tide type
15 Korea-based sitcom
16 Laterally
18 Tartan patterns
20 Go by
21 "Star Wars" princess
23 Saute
24 Motorcycle attachments
28 Consider
31 Historic period
32 Prepare to pray
34 Chicken-king link
35 Weaver's filling thread
37 Revolvers, e.g.
39 Air safety org.
41 Soon to come
42 Coral rings
45 Money, slangily
49 Secondary job
51 Anger
52 Infamous ldi
53 Enjoyment

King Crossword

Posting Date January 21, 2019



- 8 Ahead
9 2012, but not 2013
10 Potato chip brand
11 Church section
17 Sprite
19 Pack of cards
22 "The results ..."
24 Stitch
25 Anger
26 Jonquil's cousin
27 Dregs
29 Shady tree
30 More, to Manuel
33 Toy block name
36 Skill
38 Richard III's cry
40 The whole enchilada
42 Pronto, on a memo
43 Fourth dimension
44 Winnow
46 Easter emblem
47 Lotion additive
48 Chops
50 Convent denizen

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle



Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. GEOGRAPHY: What is the number of the U.S. highway that runs along the West Coast?
2. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the fastest bird in the world?
3. LITERATURE: What is the name of the wood carver in "The Adventures of Pinocchio"?
4. MOVIES: Which 1980s movie featured the tagline, "One man's struggle to take it easy"?
5. ASTRONOMY: How long is a year on the planet Mercury?
6. BUSINESS: Which automaker sold a line of cars called the Fairlane?
7. ANATOMY: How many times does the average human heart beat each day?
8. TELEVISION: Which 1960s television drama featured the catchphrase, "Book 'em, Danno!"/>

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



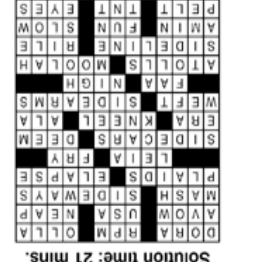
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Palmans are different. 2. Moon is higher. 3. Hair is different. 4. One picture is missing. 5. Headboard is lower. 6. No. 7 is missing from picture. 8. Headboard is lower. 9. No. 7 is missing from picture.

- 1. U.S. Route 101
2. The peregrine falcon, which can exceed 200 mph in a dive.
3. Goppito
4. "Ferns Butler's Day Off"
5. 88 days
6. Ford Motor Co.
7. More than 100,000 times
8. "Hawaii 5-0"
9. Frank Lloyd Wright
10. Ruff

Trivia Test Answers



Solution time: 21 mins.

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: O equals T

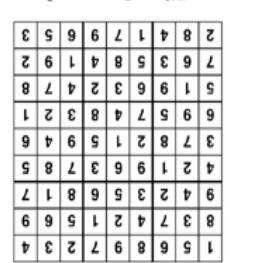
- QCD BARSHW RAJCS BAVBSKVCVF
UARS JSKW HMFVSKANU UNXSK-
XADSVD YKSPU:
"DQS YMH VSPU YSSKU."

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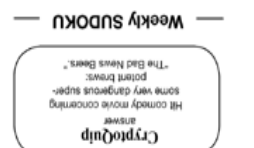
SCRAMBLERS

- DEBATING
Today's Word
1. Perturb; 2. Dodge; 3. Certain; 4. Welled

King Crossword



Weekly SUDOKU



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Sherry Colleen Moore
Lupe Figueroa-Galindo
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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey—

1. Is the book of Deuteronomy in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From John 20, by what other name was the apostle Thomas known? Caleb, Naaman, Omri, Didymus
3. Which book (KJV) begins, "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness?" Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joel

4. What did Jesus and Peter pay for with a coin found in a fish's mouth? Tax, Bread, Lodging, Sandals
5. From Proverbs 11, what word did Solomon use to describe soul winners? Warm, Wise, Wealthy, Wonderful
6. What prophet was saved from death by a talking donkey? Balaam, Ezekiel, Joel, Samuel

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Didymus; 3) Numbers; 4) Tax; 5) Wise; 6) Balaam

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed his flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

SONG OF SOLOMON
6: 2,3

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LIFESTYLE

Jones Park offers activities for the entire family

Tai Chi
Wednesdays 23, and 30 at 9 a.m.
Interested in trying a new healthy outdoor activity? Tai Chi is a centuries-old activity shown to reduce osteoarthritis pain and improve quality of life, reasoning ability, balance, and stability. John Spencer, volunteer Tai Chi instructor, leads this class based on the 24-step Yang form of Tai Chi. The one-hour class includes low-impact stretching, breathing, and range of motion exercises held in the outdoor classroom near the Nature Center.

Conservation Connections
Wednesdays, Jan. 23, and 30 at 8:30 a.m.
Join Horticultural Coordinator

Matt Abernathy Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. to assist with conservation projects around Jones Park. Projects may include the following: pollinator garden maintenance, vegetation management, habitat restoration, native plant propagation, biological surveys, and more throughout the year. Ages 10 and up. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Participants need to wear closed-toed shoes and bring their own gloves. Long pants, water, and a hat are recommended.

Tadpoles Club
Wednesdays, Jan. 23, and 30 at 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m.
Introduce preschool-

aged children to nature through stories, crafts, puppets, short walks, and animals. This free, interactive, naturalist-led program provides a great opportunity for caregivers and children to learn about and enjoy nature together. Reservations required beginning Wednesday, Dec. 5. Ages 3 to 4 only. Parent/guardian must accompany child. No younger or older siblings.

Animal Tracks & Signs
Saturday, Jan. 26 at 10 a.m.

There's no cloak and dagger necessary to become one of Jones Park's nature detectives! Join staff naturalist Jason Navivar as he teaches partici-

pants how look for signs of animals in the park. Using ancient and modern techniques, students will learn the observant art of animal tracking.

Jesse Jones Park Volunteers
Monday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.

Become a V.I.V. (Very Important Volunteer)! Get behind-the-scenes access to special programs and be the first to learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities, projects, and how to become involved with the nonprofit organization, Jesse Jones Park Volunteers. January's program is Spinning: How Settlers Spun the World Around Them. Join Jones Park staff for a firsthand look at how early Texas settlers

spun plant and animal fibers into thread. Ages 16 and up or accompanied by an adult.

Homestead Open House
Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Appreciate modern conveniences by taking a step back in time. Enjoy a look around the park's historically accurate 1830's Redbud Hill Homestead and Akokisa-Ishak Village. Learn about two very different, yet successful ways of life. Self-guided interpretive brochures are available in the Nature Center, so visitors can move at their own pace.

Nature Photo Contest

It's time for the park's annual photo contest! Get your cameras ready and join in the fun. This contest is open to all amateur photographers except for Harris County Precinct 4 employees. Call for rules and information or visit www.hcp4.net/Community/Parks/Jones/Contest.

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center is located at 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. All programs are free of charge and open to the public. Jesse Jones Park Volunteers (JJPV) welcomes applications from interested participants. For more information about the park or any of the activities and programs offered, please call 281-446-8588 or visit www.hcp4.net/community/parks/jones.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Judge Lucia Bates starts term with open house reception



Open House guests in Baytown at the office of newly elected Justice of Peace Lucia Bates. Seen are Pct. chair Hunter, State Rep. Carol Alvarado, Judge Bates, Former Constable Ken Jones, Former JP Tony Polumbo, and former Mayor Pete Alfaro. Congrats Judge Bates!

BAYTOWN – A meet and greet for Justice of the Peace Precinct 3 Position 2 Lucia Bates brought in some local legends to wish her well last Saturday. Mike Parrott, Tony Polumbo, Ken Jones, Pete Alfaro and Jason Rabelais came out to hear the new J.P. talk of working with young girls from her position.

Even as her partner Joe Stephens Justice of the Peace Precinct 3 Position 1 works with boys. She was later joined by Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Eagleton. Among other ideas expressed was that although misdemeanors bring youth into contact with the Jus-tices the experience need not necessarily be punitive

but an opportunity to grow and develop. Bates introduced her family and her office team including deputies. It was evident from her oration to attendees that Bates intends to work with and in the interest of compassion for the youth that she encounters.

Our Website has copies of back issues of this newspaper, for reading or downloading. See: www.nenewsroom.com

Highlands Rotary Club's
44th Annual
CHILI FEAST
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St. Jude's Catholic Church
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