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NORTHEAST NEWS

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 VOL. 43, NO. 48 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2019 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

Year in Review 2019

Compiled from the files of the Northeast News

JANUARY:

Aldine Optimist Club donated bicycles to school district. Carol Alvarado was sworn in as new Texas Senator for District 6. Lina Hidalgo took oath as new Harris County Judge. Congressman Gene Green honored by Aldine ISD Trustees. A woman died in car crash on Aldine Mail Rt. after being hit by an SUV. Pct. 2 distributed food during government shutdown.

FEBRUARY:

Aldine ISD hosted annual FFA Livestock Show. Public health confirmed three measles cases in Harris County. Aldine ISD expanded college opportunities for students. Rep. Senfonia Thompson filled bill to improve school safety. Trail Raiders announced annual Houston Rodeo. Aldine ISD recognized Principals of the Year.

MARCH:

Aldine Community met new Lone Star College Dean Luis Lucio for two locations, Harris and East Aldine. Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia held first community safety meeting. Harris County Clerk Dr. Diane Trautman announced Countywide Polling Place Program. Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo introduced "Civic Saturdays" to listen to community concerns. Little League season opened in North Houston with parade and games. Houston Community College named Dr. Monique Umphrey new HCC Northeast President.

APRIL:

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez hold safety forum in East Aldine and received partner's award. Fire truck crash closed Eastex freeway for 12 hours. Harris County Department of Education kicked off construction of new Academic and Behavior school. President Trump visited Houston area. House passed legislation to reform school finance and property taxes. Project Recovery-Harvey began in Harris County. 911 Call center opened in East Aldine.

MAY:

Lone Star College East Aldine center held Open House. Volunteers cleaned up Greens bay-out in Aldine in observance of Earth Day. North Forest area planned a New Management District. Eisenhower High School students won bus shelter design contest to be built in Aldine ISD School District. Body found dead near a pick-up truck at Keith-Wiess Park, suspect wanted. Commissioner Adrian Garcia proposed 1 million dollars for county-wide land trust program.

JUNE:

North Houston District boosted appeal of district with \$500 million in improvements. Former president candidate Hillary Clinton visited Houston. Prosperity Bank opened new branch bank building on Little York. Governor Abbot signed Disaster Relief and Preparedness Legislation into Law. A man's body was found behind a car wash on Aldine Mail Rt., near JFK Boulevard. Northeast Redevelopment District was vetoed by Governor.

See Year in Review, Page 3

Talented Joshua Eaton named NE News Defensive Player of the Year

By Mike Keeney
 Contributing Writer

Joshua Eaton is a coaches' dream. He's has a rare combination of size and speed for a cornerback with excellent man-to-man coverage skills.

He is one of the most sought-after defensive backs in the state as Alabama, Georgia and Oklahoma are hoping to sign him on National Signing Day on Feb. 5.



MacArthur High School head football coach Wayne Crawford congratulates Joshua Eaton on being named the 2019 Northeast News' Defensive Player of the Year.

In his senior season at MacArthur, the 6-2, 170-pound Eaton recorded 63 unassisted tackles, assisted on another 35, broke up seven passes, recovered one fumble (which he returned 55 yards for a touchdown) and recorded one interception. He also helped out on offense for the Generals, who earned their first playoff berth in 12 years, with 13 receptions for 141 yards and one touchdown.

Eaton's stellar senior season has earned him the Northeast News' Defensive Player of the Year honors.

MacArthur High School head football coach Wayne Crawford said it has been a

See Defensive Player, Page 3

Optimist Club announces winners of Reading Competition



Aldine Noon Optimist Club members Judy Hoya, Jan Winn and Stacey Smith pose with teacher Carlonda Davis and the two winners of the Bicycles for Reading contest at Dunn Elementary. The Optimist sponsored two bicycles for every Elementary school in Aldine ISD. Reading is the key to student success for our students.

Lone Star College to offer bachelor's degrees

HOUSTON (Dec. 10, 2019) – Lone Star College has received approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to begin offering bachelor's degree programs.

LSC students will be able to earn the following bachelor's degrees beginning in fall 2020: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN); Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity (BAT); and Bachelor of Applied Science in Energy, Manufacturing and Trades Management (BAS-EMTM).

The approval from SACSCOC, the higher education accreditation agency for the southeastern United States, makes Lone Star College the first community college in Texas to roll out three bachelor's degree programs.

See Bachelor's Degrees, Page 8

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SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWS

Aldine ISD students shine at the Texas State Thespian Festival, 31 advance to Nationals

High school theater students from the district delivered outstanding performances at the Texas State Thespian Festival held Nov. 21-23 in Grapevine, TX.

Each year, the Texas Thespians organization hosts a statewide festival, which includes more than 8,000 delegates. It is one of the largest annual thespian festivals where students and their troupe directors celebrate an entire weekend of theater.

The festival gives students opportunities to perform and earn recognition. Activities include:

- Workshops
- Main Stage performances
- Play marathons
- College auditions
- Performance competitions
- Technical competitions
- Nationally acclaimed guest speakers
- Opportunities to advance to the International Thespian Society National Festival

The sessions and workshops help young thespians develop their acting and technical theater skills.

Francine Hougbo, a junior theater student and playwright at Carver, was the Playworks winner with her play *The Waiting Room*. She received a monetary award and a professional staged reading of her play at the festival. This is the first time an Aldine ISD student wins in this category.

Aldine ISD has a total of 31 students that earned Superior ratings. Students that earn Superior ratings advance to the national competition at the International Thespian Festival held each June in Bloomington, Indiana.

Students Advancing to Nationals

Carver HS for Engineering, Applied Technology & The Arts

Scenic Design: Imani Titus and Jordan Smith
Monologue: Yasaar Ellis
Solo Musical: Trinity Gaddie

Duet Acting: Folasade Asoro , Brielle Johnson, Cody Dixon and Trysten Williams

Duet Musical: Jocelyn Dorsey and Kaleb Womack
Group Musical: Armani Brown, Jaya Brown, Caleb Carter, Joshua Cruise, Colby Ester, Sanna Hill, Francean Hougbo, Prejazaclyn James, Megan Mottu, Alton Nealey, Amare'on Reyna, Caleb Sells, Oscar Villagrán and Demiah Williams

Eisenhower High School

Duet Acting: Javion Cox and Clarence Moore



Carver High school student Kaleb Womack (left) sings during All-State performance.

Solo Musical: Emma Velasquez

Solo Musical: Victoria Cerda

State Management: Jasmin Garcia

MacArthur High School

Monologue: Alicia Morales

Nimitz High School

Monologue: Leanne Duckett

AIISD students that earned 'Excellent' Ratings

Carver High School

Costume Design: Erica Rhodes

Lighting Design: Jason Chavez

Sound Design: Zavion Milburn

Theater Marketing: Siemyone Edgar

Davis High School

Solo Musical: Damien Adams and Deja Lacy

Duet Acting: Branson Williams and Jennifer Samuel

Duet Acting: Xavier Dawson and Romance Early

Group Acting: Robin Turner, Ayesha Javier and Brea Davis

Nimitz High School

Monologue: Symone Williams

State Management: Alyssa-Marie Palacios

Eisenhower High School

Monologue: Jardon Brown

Costume Design: Selestee Poindexterbrown

Group Acting: Lesley Fernandez, Kenny Hoang, Guillermo Hernandez, My'kea McLenon, Shayla Rich, Micaela Rivera, Carlos Rojas and Oluchi Chukuka

Carver's Group Musical was chosen as the Main Stage Individual, and Group Event (IE) finalist meaning their piece received a perfect score from all the judges. Additionally, students Javion Cox and Clarence Moore from Eisenhower (Duet Acting) became finalists for the Mainstage Performances

at the closing ceremony of the festival.

Kaleb Womack from Carver earned an extraordinary honor. He got the chance to perform in the Texas Thespian All-State Closing Ceremony with Tony winner Wilson Jermaine Heredia.

Carver seniors Armani Brown, Megan Mottu, and Oscar Villagrán auditioned for college theater programs. They received a combined total of 25 callbacks from the following universities: American Musical and Dramatic Academy, Fairleigh Dickinson University, KD Conservatory College of Film and Dramatic Arts, New York Film Academy, Northwestern State University, Savannah College of Art and Design, Stephens College, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Oklahoma City University, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Texas Woman's University, University of Houston, University of Wyoming, Waldorf University, and West Texas A&M.

Texas Thespians students can also take on leadership roles. Yasaar Ellis served his second term as a State Thespian Officer (STO), which is the student governing board for Texas Thespians. Thespians elected Cody Dixon as an officer for the upcoming year.

Roshunda Jones is the theater director at the magnet high school, while Jabari Collins is the technical director. Mason Cargile is the technical theater director at MacArthur High School. Roenia Thompson is the theater director at Davis Ninth Grade School. Crystal Rose and Kristin Wilson are the theater director at Eisenhower High School. Clayton Younkin and Kimberly J. Ardison are the theater directors at Nimitz High School.

Aldine ISD schools take part in Texas Children's Hospital 'Project ADAM'



Pictured are a number of Aldine ISD school nurses, along with Maisha Guillory, program director of health services, representatives from Texas Children's Hospital, representatives from the American Heart Association and representatives from the Harris County Emergency Corps, who participated in the hospital's "Project ADAM" this fall.

Fifteen Aldine ISD campuses participated in Texas Children's Hospital's "Project ADAM" this fall. On Wednesday, Dec. 18, a ceremony was held at the Child Nutrition Center where the campuses received new AED's courtesy of Texas Children's.

"Project ADAM" unites affiliate hospitals such as Texas Children's with area schools to help them become better prepared to respond to Sudden Cardiac Arrest. The 15 Aldine ISD campuses that attended the Dec. 18 event earned their Heart

Safe designation thanks to their successful implementation of a quality sudden cardiac arrest program of awareness, training and effective emergency response to promote a heart safe environment for students, staff and visitors.

The 15 Aldine ISD campuses that participated in "Project ADAM" were: Carroll Elementary School, Victory Early College High School, Reed Elementary School, Nimitz Ninth Grade School, Nimitz Middle School, Plummer Middle School, Jones Primary School, Aldine Ninth

Grade School, Grantham Middle School, MacArthur High School, Garcia-Leza Primary School, MacArthur Ninth Grade School, Escamilla Elementary School, Stehlik Elementary School and Hambrick Middle School.

Maisha Guillory, Aldine ISD's program director of health services, staff from the 15 Aldine campuses, representatives from Texas Children's Hospital, the American Heart Association and the Harris County Emergency Corps took part in the event.

Aldine ISD Board reorganizes

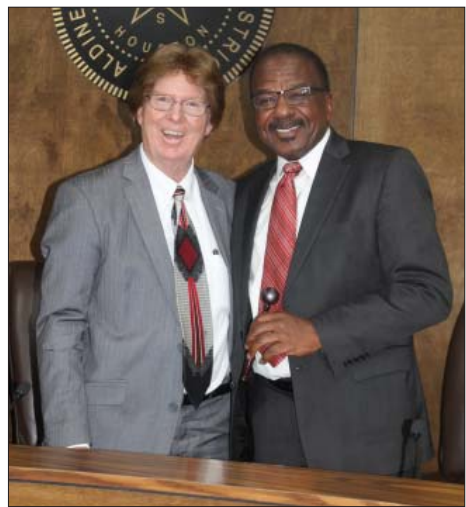
During the Dec. 17 Board meeting, Aldine ISD Trustees approved a new slate of officers.

Each year, the Board reorganizes in December with a new president, vice-president, secretary and assistant secretary. In November, the Board's Nominating Committee presented a full slate of officers for approval by the full Board during its regular business meeting.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Trustees Dr. Kimberley Booker (chairperson), Rose Avalos and Paul Shanklin, recommended that Mr. Shanklin serve as president, Ms. Avalos serve as vice-president, Connie Esparza serve as secretary and Dr. Booker serve as assistant secretary. Trustees Dr. Viola M. Garcia, Randy Bates and Steve Mead will serve as members.

During the Dec. 17 Board meeting, Mr. Mead handed over the gavel to Mr. Shanklin after serving as president for two consecutive years.

During his tenure as president he was part of a team that hired Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney as superintendent in April of 2018. During his tenure as Board president, the district developed a five-year strategic plan, A New Way Forward and began partnerships with EMERGE Fellowship and Good Reason Houston. Other highlights during his tenure as president saw the district open two Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) campuses, saw Aldine move from a 'C' to a 'B' district following the 2018-19 school year (the district moved from a grade of 76



The Aldine ISD Board of Trustees reorganized during its Dec. 17 meeting. Outgoing President Steve Mead passed the gavel to Paul Shanklin who will serve as Board president for the next year.

to 83 in one year), had four 'A' campuses and hosted Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick in August who came to Stephens Elementary in August of 2019 to celebrate S moving from a 'D' school to an 'A' school in just one year.

Mr. Mead was also proud of the fact that for the 16th consecutive year, Aldine received a "Superior" rating under Texas' FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) accountability rating system, proving the Board and district have been good stewards of its taxpayers money.

"I want to thank my fellow Board members, and

Dr. Goffney, for their support over the last two years and I look forward to my continued service to the students and staff of Aldine as a Board member," Mr. Mead said.

Mr. Shanklin said he was looking forward to serving as Board president and is looking forward to working with Dr. Goffney and her administrative team.

"We are here because you (the stakeholders) have put confidence in us," he said. "We have a transformational superintendent and I am looking forward to working with her. The responsibility we have for our children is amazing."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Year in Review,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

JULY:

Pct. 2 presented major work in Driver Park to create a county-wide "inclusive" park. Aldine ISD approved raises for all district employees. County, City did not support ICE raids. Residents listened details of Lauder Road Flood Control. Castlewood Civic Club celebrated 4th of July with parade. Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia visited Buckner Family Hope Center in Aldine.

AUGUST:

Aldine ISD held second annual Jamboree. Houston Community College North Forest opened new facilities. Commissioner Adrian Garcia detailed plans for Pct. 2 improvements. New facilities planned to be built at Squatty Lyons Park. TEA reported Stephens Elementary and Aldine ISD got high ratings. World class Bike Park opened in North Houston. Major fire in Haverstock Hills apartments displaced families.

SEPTEMBER:

Rep. Armando Walle presented Legislation update to Green Forest Civic Club. Haverstock Hills fire ruled arson and a suspect is wanted. Aldine residents opposed concrete batch plant. Community voiced concern about concrete plant at Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) hearing. METRO \$3.5 billion bond on November ballot. Tropical Storm Imelda paralyzed Houston, many homes, areas flooded. Lone Star College East Aldine Center celebrated dedication of new building.

OCTOBER:

Senator Carol Alvarado presented State of the District. County Attorney Ryan approved to go after violators of floodplain regulations. Commissioner Adrian Garcia pushed for Homestead Exemption increase. Angry homeowner demanded immediate flood relief during Imelda recovery community forum. Community celebrated National Night Out. Greens Bayou Regatta held. Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia supported impeachment inquiry. Baker Ripley opened flood control center. 45th annual Texas Renaissance Festival began. More disaster recovery centers opened in Harris County to help Imelda survivors.

NOVEMBER:

East Aldine held Fall Festival and Day of the Death. Judge Hidalgo, Sheriff Gonzalez announced measures to reduce gun-related violence. Houston ISD Sam Houston Math Science and Technology Center dedicated new building. New District Clerk Burgess collected \$2 million of unpaid debts. MacArthur Generals earned first Playoff Berth since 2007. Aldine Optimist Club recognized students for leadership. County Judge Lina Hidalgo outlined key accomplishments at first State of the County.

DECEMBER:

Haverstock Hills apartments shooter from 2017 gets life in prison. East Aldine Management District held community forum, introduced new faces. Lone Star dean Luis Lucio updated on classes at the new LSC-East Aldine campus. New Bus Service began for Northeast Harris County. East Aldine Board honored by Sheriff's office. Fire caused damages to Mi Casita Apartments on Aldine Mail Rt. East Aldine District held Partner awards. Turner won mayor's run-off.

Aldine Noon Optimist helps with Christmas Boxes

December 11, 2019
The Aldine Noon Optimist Club, Aldine ISD Student Dream Team, Counselors, and Central Receiving staff partnered to make meal boxes for 53 Primary and Elementary schools in Aldine ISD. The volunteers provided two families from every school with food items, fresh produce and a Kroger gift card.

Thank you to the District staff, students and volunteers who helped the Aldine Noon Optimist Club make Christmas a little brighter for local families.



Aldine ISD School Safety and Security Committee meets

Aldine ISD's School Safety and Security Committee held its fall semester meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at the Donaldson Administration Building Annex.

Senate Bill 11, passed by the 86th Texas Legislature, called for Texas public school districts to create a School Safety and Security Committee. Lawmakers passed the bill to address school safety in the wake of tragic school shootings, including the 2017 attack in Santa Fe, TX.

Part of the provision of the bill mandates that the School Safety and Security Committee meet three times a year, once in the fall, once in the spring and once in the summer.

Aldine ISD's committee is made up of district personnel, representatives from the Harris County Sheriff's Department, representatives of the Houston Health Department and two parents who have children attending Aldine ISD schools.



Tom Colwell, Aldine ISD's director of safe and secure schools, addresses the district's School Safety and Security Committee during their fall semester meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at the Donaldson Administration Building Annex.

Tom Colwell, AISD's director of Safe and Secure Schools, along with Dr. Charlotte Davis, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support-Services, led the fall meeting, which was attended by Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, Chief of Schools

Katie Roede, Board President Paul Shanklin and Board Member Steve Mead.

Colwell provided background on the bill, which included the Committee's responsibilities.

The School Safety and Security

Committee is responsible for the following actions:

- Provide recommendations for updates to emergency plans
- Provide support with required audits and reports
- Provide recommendations for training and resources
- Meet three times a year
- Document meeting minutes
- Post meeting dates and times

The bill also requires the Committee to address five phases of emergency management. Those five phases are:

- Prevention
- Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

SB 11 addressed elements of Gov. Greg Abbott's school safety action plan, as well as recommendations from both houses of the legislature following hearings on school safety.

HCDE Board of Trustees appoints 2 Trustees, elects new President and Vice President

Dec. 18, 2019 - The Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees voted Wednesday to replace trustees George Moore, Position 1, Precinct 2 and Josh Flynn, Position 4, Precinct 3 with Amy Hinojosa and Andrea Duhon, respectively.

Both Moore, board vice president, and

Flynn, president, had tendered their resignations prior to the meeting.

"I give my sincere appreciation to Dr. George Moore and Josh Flynn for their service to the students and citizens of Harris County," HCDE School Superintendent James Colbert Jr. said. "Dr. Moore is an outstanding man and has

left a significant fingerprint on this organization as a fierce advocate for the underserved and as a great supporter for our 1,100 employees. Mr. Flynn was a good leader who is very well read, extremely efficient and took pride in his leadership post, and I wish him well in his new endeavors."

Hinojosa, a Pasadena

resident, was sworn into office shortly after her appointment. She is a 16-year, oil-and-gas project manager. She volunteers with an education advocacy group called ProUnitas.

"I'm passionate about serving my community and about improving student outcomes," said Hinojosa. "I look for-

ward to the work ahead, and I'm excited."

Duhon, a Katy resident, is a small business financial advisor who has a record for advocating for public education programs such as Head Start. HCDE currently serves 1,250 Head Start children and families in northeast and east Harris County.

"I look forward to serving the community on behalf of the students of Harris County," Duhon said.

At the meeting, the board also named Eric Dick as president and Danyahel "Danny" Norris as vice president. Dick called the new trustee appointments "a breath of fresh air."

Defensive Player,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pleasure watching Eaton work his magic over the last two years.

"Joshua is a very talented young man," Crawford said. "He could play wide receiver at a Division I college, but he's such a good corner that a lot of schools are after him."

Eaton, a Houston Chronicle Top 100 recruit, originally committed to Texas, but de-committed and has set his sights on Alabama, Georgia and Oklahoma.

Those are three good options for a high school football player to have.

Eaton did not sign during the NCAA's early signing period (Dec. 18-20). He visited Alabama in December and will take a trip to Georgia in January.

Crawford said whoever lands his star pupil is going to get one heck of a defensive back.

"He has great man-to-man coverage skills," Crawford said. "He's a great tackler and has good ball skills as well. He basically shut down half the field for us this year. Teams

just refused to throw in his direction."

Eaton, a first team all-district performer for the last two years, wants to have the chance to contribute as a freshman and whichever team offers him that chance will have the inside track to land his services.

"Yes, for sure," when asked if he thought he could contribute for a major program as a freshman. "I'll be ready to work wherever I go."

Crawford said the three-year starter has the frame to add weight and he believes he can play at 200 pounds and maintain his 4.4 speed in the 40-yard dash.

"He can play at 200 and I think he'll add weight in

college," Crawford said. "His length is one of his best assets and something all the coaches who are after him have been really impressed with. Joshua is looking to get on the field as a freshman. That's very important to him."

Eaton is a three-sport athlete. He's currently playing on the MacArthur basketball team and will run track in the spring. Once he gets to college, he'll strictly focus on football.

"I need to get in the weight room and add some strength and weight," Eaton said. "I think concentrating just on football will help me do that."

Crawford said Eaton is a likable young man who is popular with his fellow students.

"Joshua is a great kid and one of our leaders around campus," Crawford said. "He's a member of our Young Man's Athletic Club. He's a passionate kid with a great personality."

When asked who he would compare him to at the NFL level, Crawford said his coverage skills remind him of shutdown corners Champ Bailey and Darrell Reavis.

"He's a lot like those two guys and just like them, he can do something with the ball once he gets it in his hands," Crawford said.

And how much will Crawford miss Eaton next year?

"We're all going to miss him around here next year," Crawford said. "It's been a blessing to inherit a kid like him."

Toss it into the can. It's a neat idea.



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PREMIERE CINEMAS

FRIDAY-WEDNESDAY 12/27-1/1/2020

<p>Opens THURSDAY, Jan. 2</p> <p>* JUST MERCY (PG-13) 6:00 9:00</p> <p>* LIKE A BOSS (R) 7:00 9:15</p> <p>* UNDERWATER (PG-13) 7:00 9:30</p>	<p>* STAR WARS: The Rise Of Skywalker 3D (PG-13) - 2:45pm, 9:30pm</p> <p>* STAR WARS: The Rise Of Skywalker 3D (PG-13) - 2:30pm, 9:00pm Spanish Dubbed</p> <p>BLACK CHRISTMAS (PG-13) - 11:30am, 2:00pm, 4:30pm, 7:00pm, 9:30pm</p> <p>JUMANJI: The Next Level (PG-13) - 11:45am, 2:30pm, 5:30pm, 8:45pm</p> <p>JUMANJI: The Next Level (PG-13) - 11:45am, 2:30pm, 5:30pm, 8:30pm Spanish Dubbed</p> <p>RICHARD JEWELL (R) - 11:15am, 2:10pm, 5:10pm, 8:10pm</p> <p>UNCUT GEMS (R) - 11:00am, 2:00pm, 5:00pm, 8:00pm</p> <p>QUEEN & SLIM (R) - 12:15pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:15pm</p> <p>FROZEN II (PG) - 11:30am, 2:00pm, 4:30pm, 7:00pm, 9:30pm</p> <p>FROZEN II (PG) - 11:30am, 2:00pm, 4:30pm, 7:00pm, 9:30pm Spanish Dubbed</p>
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Social Security Matters

by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – How Can We Change Social Security’s Earnings Limit?

Dear Rusty: How do we change the Social Security earnings cap amount? Do I need to go through my Congressman? Social Security is withholding my benefit because they say I earned too much. The system is very unfair! Signed: Disgruntled Worker

Dear Disgruntled: The Social Security earnings test has been a part of Social Security’s rules and regulations since the original Social Security Act of 1935. In fact, benefits were originally paid only if someone was not working at all, and if a beneficiary worked after they started collecting, they lost all benefits. The law has undergone changes over the years to bring it to where it is today, which is to limit the amount of earnings someone can have while collecting Social Security prior to their full retirement age before taking back some benefits.

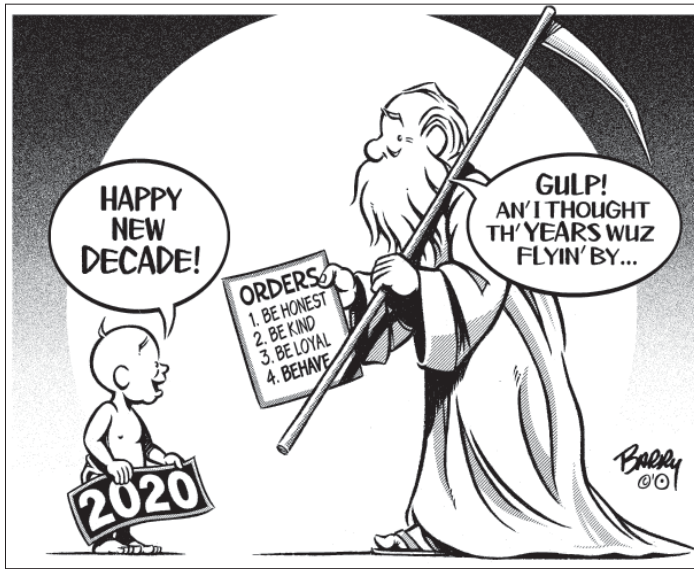
If the earnings limit is exceeded, and you have not yet reached your full retirement age, Social Security typically withholds your benefits until they recover what you owe for exceeding the limit. The limit is adjusted annually based upon changes to the National Wage Index, and the annual limit for 2020 is \$18,240, up from \$17,640 last year. There is also a “first year rule” which will subject those who haven’t yet reached their full retirement age and claim benefits mid-year to a monthly limit (1/12th of the annual limit) for the remainder of that year. The earnings limit increases significantly (by about 2.6 times) during the year you reach your full retirement age (FRA), and goes away entirely once your FRA is attained.

As you are probably aware, exceeding the limit will cause Social Security to take back \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit, or if you’re subject to the “first year rule” they will take back your entire benefit for any month you exceed the monthly limit. In the year you reach your FRA (but before your FRA) the “penalty” for exceeding the limit is less severe - \$1 for every \$3 over the limit. What you may not be aware of is that when you reach your full retirement age, Social Security will give you time credit for any months you did not receive benefits because

you exceeded the earnings limit and receiving that time credit at your FRA will result in your benefit being increased. For example, if, over the years before you reached your FRA, Social Security withheld 12 months of benefits due to you exceeding the earnings limit, when you reach your full retirement age Social Security will recalculate your benefit to account for those 12 months by changing your claim date to 12 months later than when you actually applied. That will increase your benefit somewhat and, as a result, you may be able to eventually recoup some, or all, of the benefits which were withheld (depending upon your longevity).

How can we change the earnings cap? Well, the earnings limit already increases automatically each year with changes to the National Wage Index. But if you mean how can we eliminate it, I’m not optimistic that is possible since it would require full Congressional approval as well as Executive Branch approval to do so, and since Congress is now more focused on Social Security’s broader issue of the Trust Fund being depleted in about 2035 (which will result in an across-the-board cut in benefits unless Congress acts sooner). Nevertheless, you should certainly feel free to bring your concerns about Social Security’s “earnings cap” to the attention of your Congressional Representatives. Congressional Representatives are always willing to hear and understand the concerns of their constituents, and Social Security is very much a topic of discussion in Congress today.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.



Paxton lauds 5th Circuit ruling against Affordable Care Act

AUSTIN — After the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit declared the individual mandate in “Obamacare” unconstitutional on Dec. 18, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton expressed his agreement.

“The Fifth Circuit’s holding is clear: the federal government cannot order private citizens to purchase subpar insurance products that they don’t want,” Paxton said. “The individual mandate is the centerpiece of Obamacare and I am glad the Fifth Circuit recognized that it is unlawful.”

Paxton said he looks forward to demonstrating in federal district court that the rest of the law cannot stand without the individual mandate, and added:

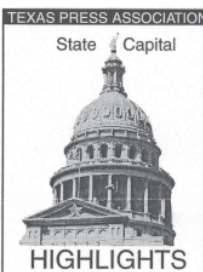
“Yesterday’s decision is a win for the rule of law,” he said. “Finally being rid of this law will be a victory for all Americans.”

The lawsuit against the federal government was filed in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Texas by Paxton and a list of other state attorneys general. Paxton said it would be up to the lower court to determine whether any part of the U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, referred to as “Obamacare,” can remain, in light of the mandate’s unconstitutionality.

In Texas and 38 other states where the federal government administers health exchanges, health insurance premiums rose an average of 105 percent from 2013 to 2017, Paxton said.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Obamacare in 2012, but a majority of the justices agreed that the law’s individual mandate was constitutional only because its accompanying tax penalty could justify forcing individuals to purchase health insurance under

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Ed Sterling



JOBLESS RATE STAYS LOW
The Texas Workforce Commission on Dec. 20 announced that the Lone Star State’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate held steady at 3.4% in November.

The rate marks the sixth consecutive month of record low unemployment in the state. Also, 3.4% is the lowest unemployment rate since series tracking began in 1976, according to an agency news release.

The Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) recorded November’s lowest unemployment rate among Texas MSAs with a non-seasonally adjusted rate of 2.1%, followed by the Amarillo and Austin-Round Rock MSAs each with an adjusted rate of 2.5%. The College Station-Bryan and Lubbock MSAs each recorded the third lowest rate at 2.6%.

REPS VOTE ON IMPEACHMENT
The U.S. House of Representatives on Dec. 18 voted to approve two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump.

The vote on Article I, Abuse of Power, was 230 for, 197 against and 1 present/not voting. The vote on Article II, Obstruction of Congress, was 229 for, 198 against and 1 present/not voting.

For Texas’ 36-member House delegation, the vote was partisan. All 23 Republicans voted not to approve both articles and all 13 Democrats voted to approve both articles.

As of the deadline for this column, the articles of impeachment had not been forwarded to the U.S. Senate, where the president would be tried in accordance with Article 3 of the U.S. Constitution, with the Honorable John Roberts, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, presiding.

A list of events is posted online at

tpwd.texas.gov.

TPWD PROMOTES HIKES
The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department on Dec. 20 encouraged Texans “to kick off the next decade of adventures at a Texas State Park by participating in a First Day Hike.”

To foster the effort, the agency scheduled a variety of events on New Year’s Day. First Day Hikes aim to help visitors commit to their New Year’s resolutions to get healthy, the agency said.

First Day Hikes events include strolls on scenic trails, midnight walks, polar plunges, bike rides and short treks with four-legged family members and more strenuous hikes for experienced visitors.

Last year, according to Texas Parks & Wildlife, 77 state parks hosted First Day Hike events in which an estimated 4,000 participants walked, paddled and biked.

A list of events is posted online at

Both men and women resolve to tackle disorganization in 2020

Women Report Feeling More Stressed By Its Effects

(NAPSI)—If you’re ever determined to finally streamline your office “to do’s” and make a dent in your inbox, or committed to finding a way to keep the kids’ toys out of the way of unwary feet, you’re not alone. A recent national survey of more than 1,200 individuals conducted by the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals (NAPO) for its annual Get Organized & Be Productive campaign revealed that a full 31 percent of respondents are putting “getting organized” on their list of New Year’s resolutions. While the data shows both genders on board with this idea, it also showed that for women, the ramifications may be more significant.

GO Month evolved as recognition that many view the fresh start implied by a new year as the time to finally tackle the disorganization in their lives—at home and on the job. The survey was designed to probe how feelings of disorganization impact men and women.

“People have different levels of tolerance for disorganization in their lives, and what is acceptable for one person may be intolerable for another,” NAPO Executive Director Jennifer Pastore Monroy, CAE observed. “This was particularly true for women.”

What The Survey Showed

While half of all respondents said that when they feel disorganized, they find it hard to concentrate on current projects, more female respondents reported feeling stressed from feeling out of control of their environment than did men. Specifically:

- Thirty-six percent of women said that looking at how organized or disorganized their home is, they feel stressed or completely stressed compared to only 22 percent of men
- More than half of women respondents (53.7 percent) report disorganization leaves them unable to concentrate on the work at hand, vs only 45 percent of men.
- 35.5 percent of women vs 22 percent of men wished at some time for someone to come in and organize their home.
- Monroy’s advice to help streamline one’s environment? “Don’t wait until you feel out of control to tackle the stressors in your life. Having a professional organizer or productivity expert to help look at things with fresh eyes can encourage new day-to-day behaviors to create the needed change, whether you are a man or a woman.”

For further facts and tips, visit www.napo.net.

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SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

CFP semifinals could be special: Texans close out regular season against Titans

The final Saturday in 2019 is going to be a huge one for college football fans and for the four teams involved in the College Football Playoffs (CFP).

On Dec. 28, No. 1-ranked LSU will face No. 4-ranked Oklahoma in the Peach Bowl in the first semifinal game, followed by the second, which will pit No. 2-ranked Ohio State against No. 3-ranked Clemson, the defending national champions, in the Fiesta Bowl.

The two winners will meet on Monday, Jan. 13 in New Orleans for the CFP title.

These are definitely the four best teams left standing and the CFP committee got it right this time. Both games should feature plenty of offensive firepower and both should go down to the wire. The teams that play a bit of defense should be meeting for the whole ball of wax come Jan. 13.

While the focus of the college football world will be on those four games, locally, Texas A&M and the University of Texas will remain in-state for their respective bowl games as the Aggies will face Oklahoma State in the Texas Bowl at NRG Stadium, while the Longhorns will face Utah in the Alamo Bowl in San Antonio.

We will take a look at the Jan. 1 and other bowl games in next week's final column of the year.

In the NFL, the Texans close out their regular season hosting Tennessee at NRG Stadium. Two weeks ago, Bill O'Brien's team picked up a huge 24-21 road win in Nashville to take over first place in the AFC South race. Sunday's game could be a moot point if the Texans took care of business against Tampa Bay last Saturday, while the Titans hosted a very good New Orleans team on Sunday.

Houston could very well have the division wrapped up by the time Week 17 rolls around, which means O'Brien could give some of his star players, such as quarterback Deshaun Watson, wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins and others some time to rest heading into the playoffs.

Speaking of the Saints, quarterback Drew Brees became the all-time leader in touchdown passes two weeks ago on Monday night when he threw three scoring strikes to pass Peyton Manning on the all-time list. Brees entered the Tennessee game with 540 career TD passes, while Tom Brady is two back at 538. There's a good chance this record could go back and forth between the two future Hall of Famers before all is said and done.

Week 17 features division matchups as the Cowboys host the Redskins, Pittsburgh travels to Baltimore and the biggest game of the weekend will pit the 49ers at the Seahawks with the NFC West title hanging in the balance. Seattle took over the top spot in the division two weeks ago with a win at Carolina, while the 49ers suffered a shocking home loss to the Falcons.

Before we take a look at those games and a host of others, let's review last week's record. An 8-1 week upped the season record to 115-56 (67%).

Before we look at this week's games, I want to wish all of you a Happy Holiday season and Happy New Year!

NCAA

Texas Bowl - Texas A&M vs. Oklahoma State: Jimbo Fisher's Aggies face Mike Gundy's Cowboys in the Texas Bowl in a game that should feature plenty of offensive fireworks. The Aggies finished 7-5 this season, two games worse than in 2018, but this was a young A&M team (Fisher had only three seniors on the roster). Look for Fisher to use this game as a springboard for the 2020 season. This could be quarterback Kellen Mond's (2,802 yards, 19 TDs) final game. Freshman running back Isaiah Spiller (869 yards, 9 TDs) and wide receiver Jhamon Ausbon (65 receptions, 862 yards, 4 TDs) should have big days against a suspect OSU defense, but the Cowboys should find success moving the ball behind running back Chubba Hubbard (1,936 yards, 21 TDs), one of the best running backs in the country. This will basically be a home game for the Aggies, who will use that to their advantage. My pick, Texas A&M 36, Oklahoma State 33

Alamo Bowl - Texas vs. Utah: The 2019 season was a disappointing one for Texas fans. They entered the season with high hopes of winning the

Big 12, but a rash of injuries on defense took their toll early as the 'Horns struggled for most of the season on that side of the ball. They face a Utah team that had a chance to land a CFP bid, but the Utes were blown out in the Pac 12 title game and their consolation prize is a trip to San Antonio. Utah did win 11 games this year and have a dynamic one-two punch on offense with quarterback Tyler Huntley (2,960 yards, 18 TDs) and running back Zack Moss (1,389 yards, 18 TDs). The UT defense will have their hands full slowing those two down. Texas has some firepower on offense as well led by quarterback Sam Ehlinger (3,462 yards, 29 TDs), running back Keaontay Ingram (745 yards, 6 TDs) and speedy wide receiver Devin Duvernay (103 receptions, 1,298 yards, 8 TDs). Look for UT head coach Tom Herman to use this game to motivate his team for a turnaround in 2020. I think the 'Horns show up for this one and use this game to get the bad taste of the 2019 season out of their collective mouths. My pick, Texas 26, Utah 23

Peach Bowl - LSU vs. Oklahoma: The scoreboard keeper should be kept quite busy when the Tigers and Sooners face off in Atlanta on Saturday afternoon. Both teams have explosive weapons all over the place on offense, but this one could very well come down to how well the LSU defense plays. For much of the season, the Tigers gave up gobs of yards and points, which was fine because they had an offense that was led by a Heisman Trophy winning quarterback in Joe Burrow (4,715 yards, 48 TDs). In their last two games, the LSU defense gave up seven points to A&M and 10 points to Georgia in the SEC title game. That unit will get its biggest test of the season against an OU team that is led by a pretty fair QB in Jalen Hurts (3,634 passing yards, 32 TDs/1,235 rushing yards, 18 TDs). Hurts isn't the only weapon on offense, as he has a future NFL receiver in CeeDee Lamb (58 receptions, 1,268 yards, 14 TDs) to throw too. Lamb is averaging 21 yards per catch. I think the Sooners give the Tigers a game, but look for the LSU defense to be the deciding factor as Burrow plays



for a national title in his adopted home state on Jan. 13. My pick, LSU 38, Oklahoma 30

Fiesta Bowl - Ohio State vs. Clemson: The nightcap should be an offensive thriller as well as the high-scoring Buckeyes face a Clemson team whose coach believes his defending national champs have been disrespected by entering the playoffs ranked third. While Clemson head coach Dabo Swiney may be miffed, he might want to compare the two team's 2019 schedules. Ohio State owns wins over six bowl teams (Cincinnati, Michigan, Michigan State, Penn State, Miami, Ohio and Wisconsin (who OSU beat twice)), while Clemson owns wins over four bowl teams, (A&M, Virginia, North Carolina and Florida State). The Big 10 was definitely stronger than the ACC this year, but that won't matter to either team come Saturday evening in Tempe, AZ. The Buckeyes are loaded on offense led by quarterback Justin Fields (2,953 yards, 40 TD, one interception), running back J.K. Dobbins (1,829 yards, 20 TDs) and big-play wide receivers Chris Olave (46 receptions, 799 yards, 11 TDs) and K.J. Hill (51 receptions, 569 yards, 10 TDs). Clemson is solid on offense as well led by quarterback Trevor Lawrence (3,172 yards, 34 TDs), running back Travis Etienne (1,500 yards, 19 total TDs) and wide receiver Tee Higgins (52 receptions, 1,082 yards, 13 TDs). What Clemson doesn't have is a game changer on defense like the Buckeyes do in defensive end Chase Young, who many draft experts expect to be the No. 1 overall pick in April's NFL draft. Young is a combination of size, speed and quickness who can wreak havoc on an offense. Look for the Heisman Trophy finalist to be the difference maker in this one as the Buckeyes meet the Tigers for

the CFP title in New Orleans on Jan. 13. My pick, Ohio State 36, Clemson 32

NFL

New York Jets at Buffalo - The Bills are headed to the playoffs, while the Jets are headed back to the drawing board to figure out what went wrong with the 2019 season. Two weeks ago, Buffalo secured a playoff berth with a 17-10 win at Pittsburgh as the defense recorded four sacks, intercepted four passes and recovered a fumble. Look for that unit to have another big day against the hapless Jets, while the offense will get going behind quarterback Josh Allen (2,876 yards, 18 TDs), running back Devin Singletary (729 yards, 2 TDs) and speedy wide receiver John Brown (71 receptions, 1,007 yards, 5 TDs). My pick, Buffalo 26, New York Jets 13

Pittsburgh at Baltimore - Pittsburgh head coach Mike Tomlin should be considered for Coach of the Year honors after the job he did with the Steelers this season. Tomlin kept his team in playoff contention after losing quarterback Ben Roethlisberger early in the season and running back James Conner and wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster for the latter half of the season. But two weeks ago the Steelers offensive deficiencies were exposed in their loss at home to Buffalo as quarterback Delvin Hodges was intercepted four times in the loss. Things won't get any easier this week when they face a Ravens team that will be looking to wrap up home field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs. Look for quarterback Lamar Jackson (2,889 yards passing yards, 33 TDs/1,113 rushing yards, 7 TDs), running back Mark Ingram (963 yards, 10 TDs) and tight

end Mark Andrews (58 receptions, 759 yards, 8 TDs) to continue to roll into the playoffs. My pick, Baltimore 30, Pittsburgh 17

Washington at Dallas - Two weeks ago, the Cowboys finally woke up from their late-season doldrums and wiped out the Rams, 44-21 in Arlington. Quarterback Dak Prescott (4,334 yards, 26 TDs) and running back Ezekiel Elliott (1,188 yards, 11 total TDs) each accounted for two touchdowns and the defense stifled Rams QB Jared Goff for much of the afternoon. Last week Dallas played in Philadelphia to decide the NFC East and if the Cowboys won that game, they should have wrapped up the division (they would have swept Philly), so this game might be meaningless. Then again, head coach Jason Garrett might want his team to keep up the good vibes and what a better team to do that against than the hapless Redskins. My pick, Dallas 33, Washington 14

Tennessee at Houston - The Texans showed a lot of grit and resolve in their win at Tennessee two weeks ago and this game could be nothing more than a glorified scrimmage for O'Brien's team as it preps for the playoffs. I would not be surprised to see Watson (3,668 yards, 26 TDs), Carlos Hyde (1,003 yards, 5 TDs) and Hopkins (99 receptions, 1,142 yards, 7 TDs) get maybe a half of work and then O'Brien turns it over to the reserves. The Titans will be only playing for pride, so look for Ryan Tannehill (2,272 yards, 17 TDs) and running back Derrick Henry (1,329 yards, 13 TDs) to pat their stats and look ahead to the 2020 season. My pick, Houston 23, Tennessee 21

Chicago at Minnesota - The disappointing Bears face the playoff-bound Vikings in a game that could hand the NFC North to Minnesota. Last Monday night, the Vikes hosted Green Bay in a key division game. If Minnesota came out on top, a win in the season finale could very well hand the division title to Mike Zimmer's team. Look for quarterback Kirk Cousins (3,481 yards, 25 TDs) to have a big day against a Chicago team that is looking ahead to next season. The Vikings might be without star

running back Dalvin Cooks (1,135 yards, 13 TDs) who suffered a shoulder injury two weeks ago in his team's 39-10 thumping of the Chargers. Even if Cooks is a no-show, the Vikings are still the better team. My pick, Minnesota 31, Chicago 16

Green Bay at Detroit - The Packers are in the playoffs and will look to improve their seed when they visit the Motor City on Sunday. Look for quarterback Aaron Rodgers (3,463 yards, 24 TDs), running back Aaron Jones (830 yards, 14 TDs) and wide receiver Davante Adams (63 receptions, 788 yards, 4 TDs) to take the starch out of the Lions early as the Pack romps on the road. My pick, Green Bay 34, Detroit 15

New Orleans at Carolina - Brees (2,447 yards, 21 TDs) will look to add to his career touchdown record, while wide receiver Michael Thomas (133 receptions, 1,552 yards, 8 TDs) will be out to break Marvin Harrison's single-season reception record (144 season catches in 2002) when the Saints take on the Panthers on Sunday. The Saints won't rest their starters in this one because Sean Payton's team still has a shot at one of the NFC's top two seeds and a bye week. Look for Brees, Thomas and Alvin Kamara to continue the good times in 2019 on Sunday. My pick, New Orleans 36, Carolina 16

San Francisco at Seattle - This is the Game of the Week in Week 17 and will probably be flexed to Sunday Night Football. Two weeks ago, the 49ers went from the top seed to the fifth seed with an unexplained late home field loss to the Falcons, while Russell Wilson (3,708 yards, 28 TDs), Chris Carson (1,190 yards, 7 TDs) and Tyler Lockett (75 receptions, 994 yards, 7 TDs) took care of business on the road at Carolina. I expect Jimmy Garoppolo (3,445 yards, 26 TDs) to have his team ready for this one, but the 'Hawks are tough to beat at home. Look for a competitive game, but the nod goes to Wilson who will make one or two more plays down the stretch to hand the top seed and the NFC West title to Seattle. My pick, Seattle 30, San Francisco 27

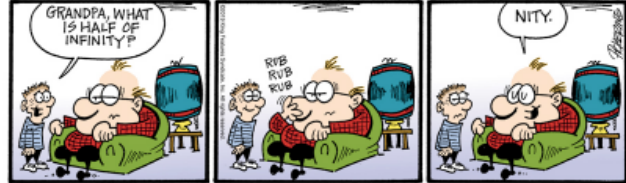
Amber Waves



R.F.D.



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. A 9x9 grid with numbers and empty cells for a puzzle. Includes difficulty level 'Moderate' and 'Challenging'.

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltzhoff. A cartoon panel with a character and a list of differences to find between two panels.

Posting Date December 23, 2019

King Crossword

King Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a list of 55 clues and a grid with numbers indicating starting positions.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez. A list of 10 trivia questions with a crossword puzzle grid and a solution time of 21 minutes.

LIFESTYLE

Black Elementary STEM Family Night Success

Students and families at Black Elementary School enjoyed a night of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

During the event, families were able to make their own LED rockets, learn how to code with Minecraft, participate in hands-on math games, create Cardboard Kingdom masks and shields, program robots and more.

A crowd favorite during the event was the MaKr U

bus. The refurbished bus travels across the greater Houston area to provide engaging STEM activities to students.

Last year, Black Elementary School received a \$10,000 grant for materials to create a STEM lab for students. The grant allowed the campus to give their elementary students access to STEM activities.

expand their knowledge of STEM, coding and robotics.

STEM is beneficial to elementary students, due to the inquiry-based teaching methods that are student-centered. STEM lessons give students ownership over their learning.

Students in all grade levels at Black Elementary have access to the STEM lab through their specials class period.

High demand for English/Spanish interpreters filled by Lone Star College-North Harris

HOUSTON (Dec. 12, 2019) - For those who have a knack for languages and want to enter the growing field of professional interpreters, there's still time to enter the English/Spanish Interpreters Program at Lone Star College-North Harris and Lone Star College-East Aldine Center.

Classes begin with the start of the spring 2020 semester on Monday, Jan. 13. Courses are offered Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday from 6-9 p.m. Registration for all spring classes and programs is now open.

The LSC-North Harris and LSC-East Aldine Center English/Spanish Interpreter programs serve as training towards professional certification for those who want to provide a voice to community members who do not speak English.

Professional English/Spanish interpreters are increasingly in high demand. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of interpreters is expected to grow 18 percent, from 2016 to 2026.

LSC-East Aldine Center give students an edge over competitors when applying for open positions.

Due to the expected increases in the population of Hispanics in the United States, a similar increase will develop for the need of qualified interpreters. Moreover, under federal law, federal agencies are required to provide Limited-English-Proficient individuals fair access to their programs and services.

See High Demand, Page 7

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CHURCH PAGE

High Demand,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tion as an English/Spanish interpreter will open doors to work in healthcare, law and other industries where the need for good communication is critical.

LSC-North Harris and LSC-East Aldine Center offer three courses as part of the interpreter program: English/Spanish Foundational Interpreting, English/Spanish Interpreting in Court Settings and English/Spanish Interpreting in Medical Settings. All these courses are approved by the Judicial Branch Certification Commission of the State of Texas as a Pre-Licensing Orientation course, which is required before applying to become a Certified Court Interpreter.

In the lecture portion of the classes, participants learn about current principles, code of ethics, responsibilities and standard practices of the interpreting profession. During the lab sessions, they use the state-of-the-art interpreting equipment to practice note taking, sight translation, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. In addition, participants go on field trips to medical and courtroom settings to witness firsthand the rewarding career of an English/Spanish interpreter.

For more information, visit LoneStar.edu/BilingualInterpreterCertificate.htm, or contact professor Erich Polack at 281.618.5564 or Erich.G.Polack@LoneStar.edu.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Eisenhower HS Alumni Talk About Disney+ Musical Reunion



The castmembers from Eisenhower High School's 1998 musical production of "Godspell" reunited in 2019. Their production aired on Disney+ new series "Encore!" on December 20.

In 1998, classmates at Eisenhower High School bonded as they put on a musical, *Godspell*. They reunited this past summer at their alma mater, and now their reunion performance aired on Friday, December 20, on the Disney+ series "Encore!"

Zedrick Applin, an original cast member, had submitted an application to "Encore!" After numerous interviews, the "Encore!" production team selected Applin along with alumni Jabari Black, Roenia Thompson, Shavon Cannon, Candace Anderson Cade, and Tabatha Leviston for the 2019 performance of *Godspell*. The five comprised the original cast. Kevin Hansford, an Ike alumnus, was also invited to take part in the production.

"Encore!" comes from executive producer Kristen Bell. The series gathers high school alumni who performed in a musical to

reunite and perform the same show one more time, 10 to 20 years later. With no set cast, each episode follows a different set of alumni from all across the country.

The cast members only have a week to put together their entire show with the same cast in the same roles

from high school. They are provided with a director, a choreographer, and a music director, along with some professional performers to fill out the cast.

Several of the castmates had not seen each other in years. Roenia Thompson and Tapatha Leviston are current Aldine ISD educators. Thompson is the assistant theater director at Davis Ninth Grade School, while Leviston is a diagnostician at Eisenhower HS. Leviston previously taught at Vines EC/PreK/K School, and Thompson had previously taught theater at Eisenhower Ninth School.

When asked how they felt about seeing each other, the castmembers all agreed that they felt a flood of the camaraderie and support they had for each other then.

The group invited their former theater director Freddie Buckner and their choral director, Mrs. Heather Orr. For Buckner, this was an emotional reunion. He also got to participate with his former students.

"Watching my old students catch up was fun and brought a warm, nostalgic feeling," Buckner said. "It was an honor to be a part of the experience and to see my students once again."

None of the castmembers would give too much away about Episode 107 - *Godspell*. They encourage everyone to watch, especially those who love theater and the arts.

Eisenhower High School's Performing Arts Department was given \$25,000 due to the alumni's performance with "Encore!" on Disney Plus.

Castlewood celebrates Christmas



Castlewood Board LeBlanc and Shnur.

What a perfect Saturday afternoon on Dec. 14 for the Castlewood Civic Club to host their annual "Christmas in Castlewood". The delightful weather permitted residents to walk to the event to join in the Christmas cheer greeted by holiday music as they arrived. Children played games like pinning the orange nose on the snowman, blinko and the chicken race and awarded prizes. Excitement filled the air as spectators watched the children hit the candy-filled piñatas. The photo op with Mr. and Mrs. Claus and the Ginger Bread Man, provided by the East Aldine Management District, was a welcomed addition to the festivities. Residents of all ages enjoyed the goodie bags of holiday candy, tamale tasting and Christmas cookies. The Castlewood Civic Club would like to extend a special thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Patrick and Wanda LeBlanc for hosting the celebration at their home. We would also like to acknowledge our student volunteers, Merayah Martinez and Jade Momon, for helping the children with the games and Mr. and Mrs. Tony and



Kids celebrate Christmas at Castlewood Civic Club.

Carmen Schnur for volunteering and donating the Christmas cookies. As President, I would like to thank the entire Board for their continued support of time and money to the success of the holiday event. Finally, our sincerest appreciation to EAMD for always

supporting Castlewood in hosting community events. Looking forward to 2020 "Christmas in Castlewood" and wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas with family and friends.
—Connie Esparza, Castlewood CC President

Bachelor's Degrees,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"This is a significant milestone for Lone Star College," said Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., LSC chancellor. "This approval allows Lone Star College to expand its commitment to providing high-quality academic and workforce programs in response to our area employers' needs."

The BSN degree is designed for licensed Registered Nurses seeking to advance their professional qualifications. Graduates of the program will have a broader understanding of the nursing profession and will be better prepared to assume leadership and management roles.

The BAT in Cybersecurity will prepare students for careers in the field of Information Technology. Coursework will include a balance between theoretical and technical competencies associated with the IT profession, with a concentration in cybersecurity.

The BAS-EMTM is designed for students who hold an Associate of Applied Science degree and are seeking to further develop their professional qualifications. Graduates of the program will have a greater understanding of the managerial roles in energy, manufacturing and trades industries and will bring that knowledge to

their advancing roles in their workplace.

"Students interested in earning one of these degrees can enroll at LSC, study close to home and take advantage of paying the same tuition rates to earn a bachelor's degree as they would an associate degree, saving them thousands of dollars," said Alton Smith, Ed.D., LSC Board of Trustees chair.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 2118 in 2017 allowing the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to authorize certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science, applied technology and nursing.

"In addition to state approvals, Lone Star College needed program approval from its regional accreditation agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges," said Head. "By receiving approval to offer these programs, Lone Star College will be helping to address the severe shortage of nurses and technically-skilled workforce in our region."

Applications will be accepted starting Feb. 3. Visit LoneStar.edu/Bachelors to learn more about this exciting opportunity.

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