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NORTHEAST NEWS

In Memoriam...



Ken Knippel, respected and beloved Aldine ISD administrator passes away See Page 2

Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 43 Years
 VOL. 44, NO. 05 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

For The Future Town Hall

East Aldine is part of a series of over 40 public education candidate events that the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation will be hosting across the state prior to the 2020 primary election on March 3. This town hall will be for HD 140. The candidate for this race is Armando Walle (Democrat - Incumbent).

Like all For the Future events, this will be an issue-focused conversation including questions on statewide and local topics. All candidates for HD 140 are invited to participate. Food and childcare will be provided!

February 06, 2020 from 6pm - 8pm at Baker Ripley - East Aldine, 3000 Aldine Mail Rte Rd, Houston, TX 77039.

History of Jazz

Thursday, February 6th @ 6pm, History of Jazz. From ragtime and Dixieland to the blues, swing, and more, "The History of Jazz" traces America's contribution to the world of music as it developed late in the nineteenth century from African American work songs, hymns, and spirituals. Light refreshments will be provided.

At High Meadows Library located at 4500 Aldine Mail Rt., Houston, TX 77039. 832-927-5540.

Free Infant Care Classes

Harris County Emergency Corps is offering free classes to women who are in their 2nd and 3rd trimester. The classes consist of 5 free classes, upon completing the classes there will be a baby shower. All expecting mothers will be eligible for a car seat, portable crib, diapers, and other baby care items.

Classes start at 6 pm at 2800 Aldine Bender Rd
 • 02/05/2020 - Car Seat Safety
 • 02/12/2020 - Safe Sleep
 • 02/19/2020 - Infant CPR & Water Safety
 • 02/26/2020 - Infant Emergency and Medication Safety
 • 03/04/2020 - What to expect when you are home!
 • 03/11/2020 - Baby Shower
 For any questions or more information please text or email Amy at acorbett@hccc.com or 832.655.0235.

Concrete plant application withdrawn

Large crowd at meeting forces reversal

ALDINE - A large crowd of concerned residents of the Aldine area gathered last Thursday night at the Northeast Community Center, to hear details of another concrete batch plant application in their immediate area. The contentious meeting ended in a surprise, when the beleaguered company president stated that she was withdrawing the application. It seemed the residents had won.

The meeting was called by State Representative Armando Walle, and present were members of



The applicant, Nomadic Aggregates LLC was represented by Aiene Rivas, who stated that she was the company president, owner, and a native of the Aldine area.

the TCEQ, or Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and representatives of the applicant company.

The discussion and comments made by the public were contentious, and at times very derogatory toward the company representative, Ms. Aileen Rivas, who said she was a part owner of the company and its president. Some



A large crowd filled the room at the Northeast Community Center, and spoke against the plant. Here Castlewood resident Steve Adame relates the problems he has had with the TCEQ and their review process.

of the speakers from the public said she did not See Concrete plant, p. 8

Aldine FFA holds annual Show & Sale

ALDINE - FFA agriculture students held their 61st Annual Livestock Show last Friday night at Campbell Center. Hundreds of people packed the stand, as 60 lots were auctioned off to high bidders.

Proceeds from the sale will go to scholarships, and the cost of raising the animals. An unofficial tally of the bids shows that over \$175,000 was raised in the initial bidding, with later add-on increasing this figure. The Northeast News will have a photo report in an upcoming issue.



Grand Champion Steer was exhibited by Angel Allen, and purchased by First Construction Group for \$16,500.



Bidders, family and fans packed the seats, including Superintendent LaTonya Goffney, Board President Paul Shanklin, Steve Mead, and many others.

Café with the Commissioner

ALDINE - Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia held an informal meet the public event last Saturday, Jan. 25th at the Mi Tienda market on Little York Road.

Garcia listened and chatted with dozens of individuals and families about issues that concerned them in Precinct 2, including water and sewer availability, cleaning of ditches, removal of nuisances, dumping of trash on roads, and more.

Garcia conversed freely in Spanish and English, and says he plans more of these social events.



Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia chats with an Aldine family at his Café last Saturday. MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 8



Mi Tienda employees welcomed the opportunity to meet and talk with Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia.

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FRIDAY-WEDNESDAY 1/31-2/5

Opens THURSDAY, Feb. 6
 * BIRDS OF PREY (R) 6:00 8:30

12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm
 Closed Caption
UNDERWATER (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 2:25pm, 4:50pm, 7:15pm
 Closed Caption
SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG) - 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm
 Closed Caption
JUMANJI: The Next Level (PG-13) - 3:15pm, 8:45pm
 Closed Caption; Spanish Dubbed
JUMANJI: The Next Level (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 6:00pm
 Closed Caption
FROZEN II (PG) - 9:30pm
 Closed Caption; Spanish Dubbed
FROZEN II (PG) - 12:30pm, 6:30pm
 Closed Caption
SPECIAL FROZEN II SING-ALONG (PG) - 3:30pm
 * THE QUEEN'S CORGI (PG) - 12:30pm, 2:30pm, 4:30pm
 Closed Caption

DOLITTLE (PG) - 12:00pm, 3:00pm, 6:00pm, 9:00pm
 Closed Caption; Spanish Dubbed
DOLITTLE (PG) - 12:00pm, 3:00pm, 6:00pm, 9:00pm
 Closed Caption

BAD BOYS FOR LIFE (R) - 12:00pm, 3:00pm, 6:00pm, 9:00pm
 Closed Caption; Spanish Dubbed
BAD BOYS FOR LIFE (R) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm
 Closed Caption
THE TURNING (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm
 Closed Caption

ELSEWHERE (R) - 12:15pm, 2:45pm, 5:15pm, 7:45pm
 Closed Caption

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SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWS

AISD's Kelley Named NAEA 2020 Western Region Supervision/ Administration Art Educator of the Year

The National Art Education Association (NAEA) has named Dr. Michaelann Kelley as the recipient of the 2020 Western Region Supervision and Administration Art Educator Award.

The award will be presented at the NAEA National Convention in Minneapolis, MN, set to take place on March 26-28, 2020.

This prestigious award, determined through a peer review of nominations, recognizes the exemplary contributions, service, and achievements of an outstanding NAEA member annually at the Regional level within their division.

Dr. Michaelann Kelley, who colleagues describe as a teacher, mentor, and educational leader, is the director of visual arts.

"I laud Dr. Michaelann Kelley for her leadership and vision," Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney said. "She is an active art education advocate."

"Michaelann reminds us of art education's value to cultivate creativity and innovation. Art is essential to the human experience from motor skills to self-expression to points that compel us to empathize with others. Michaelann is passionate about arts education and ensures all students have access to quality art experiences."

It is not the first time Kelley has earned recognition. The Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) bestowed Kelley with the Supervision/Administra-



Dr. Michaelann Kelley

tion Division Outstanding Art Educator Award in 2018.

The district arts program has also earned honors during Kelley's tenure. The Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) earlier this school year, named Aldine ISD a District of Distinction. Aldine was one of only 20 school districts in Texas to earn this honor. In 2015, TAEA recognized AISD's art program with the Youth Art Month (YAM) Award. The honor recognizes districts for their leadership and support of quality arts education.

Under Kelley's direction, the visual arts program has expanded with numerous students winning local, state, and national awards. It is not unusual to see Kelley, who visits art classes regularly, sitting down to guide students or to sit down to work on her project alongside them. She also attends many of the events that feature students' work.

Kelley strives to give her staff every staff development opportunity possible. She supports and

encourages professional growth. An advocate of art education, Kelley is always looking for new and innovative ways to teach art. Every year she works to integrate teaching experiences for effective learning for all students.

NAEA President Thom Knab states, "This award recognizes excellence in professional accomplishment and service by a dedicated art educator. Michaelann Kelley exemplifies the highly qualified art educators active in education today. They are leaders, teachers, students, scholars, and advocates who give their best to their students and the profession."

Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association is the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts educators. Members include elementary, middle, and high school visual arts educators as well as college and university professors. University students preparing to become art educators; researchers and scholars; teaching artists; administrators and supervisors; and art museum educators also are members. The NAEA also represents 54,000 students who are members of the National Art Honor Society. The NAEA represents members in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, U.S. Possessions, most Canadian Provinces, U.S. military bases around the world, and 25 foreign countries.

Ken Knippel devoted 39 years to the students and staff of Aldine ISD

Ken Knippel, who devoted 39 years to Aldine ISD and was a respected educator and leader across the district, passed away surrounded by his family and loved ones on Thursday, Jan. 30.

During his 39 years in Aldine, Ken served as a teacher, coach, and as an assistant principal at Aldine Middle School and MacArthur High School. He served as principal of Dunn Elementary School, Parker Intermediate School (which he opened), Nimitz Ninth Grade School (which he also opened) and Nimitz High School. He completed his career in Aldine as the Assistant Superintendent of Administration, a position he held for 13 years.

He is survived by his loving wife Susan, daughter Katherine (Katie), son-in-law Andres Gomez and granddaughter Alexandra, daughter Emily and son-in-law Stephen Lopez and daughter Amanda.

During his 39 years in Aldine, he served as a mentor to many, provided guidance and advice to Aldine's leadership team and was known as a proud graduate of Texas Tech University and a staunch Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers fan.

"Aldine ISD has lost a giant with the passing of Ken Knippel," said Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. "Ken devoted 39 years to Aldine and served in a number of capacities and excelled in all of them. Although we only worked together for a short time, Ken was instrumental in making my transition from Lufkin to Aldine a smooth one. Ken was loved and respected by so many people in Aldine and his passing will leave a void that will not be easily filled. On behalf of our Board of Trustees and the entire district, I want to send our heartfelt condolences to his family."

"What will be missed most is Ken's kind and thoughtful assistance to all his colleagues and students. He was a gentleman, an educator, and a real humanitarian in all his dealings with people and situations. He was one of the first, for example, to assist families in our community during Hurricane Harvey," Dr. Goffney said.

Former Superintendent Dr. Wanda Bamberg, who worked closely with Ken for many years, said Ken was a valuable voice who she depended on when it came time to make crucial decisions that impacted Aldine's students and staff.

"Ken had such a huge impact on the district. He had a tremendous understanding and context of the entire district," Dr. Bamberg said. "He had a keen memory and could always provide context when we as a cabinet discussed issues and made decisions. I relied on him and I knew that he always gave me honest input and feedback. When I sent out a text or a call for help, he was usually the first to respond. I knew I could count on him because of his strong work ethic and dedication for what was right for students and staff. He was completely dedicated to Aldine."

As a principal, he took a personal interest in all of his students, Dr. Bamberg said.

"I watched him at Nimitz graduations and he always spoke to each graduate while shaking their hands and providing words of encouragement for their futures," she said. "As a principal he touched numerous lives."

Dr. Bamberg echoed Dr. Goffney's sentiments concerning Ken and his service to help out those in need.

"Ken was always helping. I remember him driving me from my home in high water to the Child Nutrition Center after Hurricane Harvey so we could make sandwiches for those who were sheltered at the MOC," she said.



Ken Knippel, respected and beloved Aldine ISD administrator passes away

Ken enjoyed his coffee, and could be seen carrying a huge cup of it on a daily basis. And he was also known for carrying a small notebook with him that he would use to jot down notes and reminders.

Dr. Bamberg added that he helped develop future principals and district-level administrators thanks to his guidance and sharing of his vast experience.

"He always made sure we were true to our processes and procedures so that we could do our best work," Dr. Bamberg said. "He trained many, many people to do the same. Ken had a huge impact on Aldine students and staff. He will be missed but he leaves a tremendous legacy."

Ken delivered remarks to operations department employees during the 2018 Convocation, reminding them of the vital role they play on a daily basis in the lives of Aldine students.

"All of you in this room are important to our students' success," he said. "It's not what you do, but how you do it. You add value. You are the face of Aldine. We appreciate each and every one of you for what you do. When people see you, they see Aldine and I want to thank you for that."

Anne Hazzan, one of Ken's closest friends and cohorts, worked with Ken at Nimitz Ninth and served on the cabinet with him when she became assistant superintendent of finance. She said her friend was a well-rounded individual who was dedicated to his faith, family and profession.

"Ken was a man who was deeply rooted in his faith," she said. "He loved God, his family, his friends and his work. Anyone who worked with Ken can attest to his vast knowledge in the field of education. He had an unwavering desire to do whatever was necessary to support the students and staff of Aldine ISD. Ken had an enormous and positive impact on the many lives he touched throughout his career in Aldine."

Another close co-worker, Candice Moore, executive director of Student Services, said she cherished the years she worked with Ken.

"Over the years, our paths crossed often, working on problems, projects or just greeting each other at meetings," Moore said. "Ken started supervising Student Services and I knew he was always there for me, guiding me, supporting me and even having my back sometimes when maybe he shouldn't have. When Ken retired, more and more people started telling me Ken stories. How they had this very special relationship with him. How he changed their lives. How he got their career on the right path. How he helped them help kids be better."

One of those he mentored was Tom Colwell, who now serves as Aldine's director of safe and secure schools. Prior to becoming a district administrator, Colwell served as principal of Carver High School and Davis High School.

"Ken was my supervisor, mentor, father figure, big brother and friend all in one," Colwell said "As one of Ken's principals when I first went to Carver and

then we opened Davis High School, he always had high expectations. He would help and provide guidance whenever I needed it. He'd chew me out if I needed that, but never held anything against me. He was encouraging. He taught me about accountability and holding others accountable. He insisted we set clear expectations for both students and staff."

As many are aware, Ken was a huge Dallas Cowboys fan and sports fan overall. Colwell shared that the two attended two NFL games on the same day.

"One year, we went to two NFL games in one day. We started at NRG Stadium to watch the Texans play the Lions. We left at the end of the third quarter and drove to Arlington to catch the Cowboys play the Eagles on Sunday Night Football. We had a blast!" he said.

While Ken served as a mentor to many, he was mentored by former Superintendent Nadine Kujawa and former Assistant Superintendent of Administration Vernon Lewis.

Mrs. Kujawa said Ken was a unique individual whose leadership qualities were recognized very early in his career.

"Ken Knippel was a teacher, principal and an administrator who served the Aldine district and community for many years," Mrs. Kujawa said. "He was one of the most educated, committed and respected individuals with whom I had the privilege of working with during my years in Aldine. His impact on teachers, students and parents was evident in all that he did as he served as a teacher and mentor to so many during his 39 years in Aldine. He will be remembered as a tremendous leader and a good and kind person."

Lewis said it didn't take him long to figure out that Ken was a natural leader and a special person.

"I knew from the get-go his passion for kids and curriculum and how he worked and supported his staff," Lewis said. "Nimitz Nine opened and since he had previously opened a new school he was again selected for his creativity, staff selection and program development. Nimitz High then became available and it needed a strong leader to follow behind John Amshoff. Ken was a natural for the position taking what John started and taking it to the next level."

"Ken's innovations and steadfast belief in discipline and a concern for the safety of students, along with his computer skills, led him to be selected to replace me as assistant superintendent of administration. He took my position as I suspected and took it to a level the district had not previously seen. His creativity, leadership skills and his ability to get along with staff and parents made him a great leader."

Aldine was fortunate Ken shared his talents, skills and devotion to the district for 39 years. His contributions to the district, its students and staff will never be forgotten and will forever be appreciated and cherished.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that individuals donate to Ken's endowed scholarship for Aldine ISD graduates. Gifts can be made online at <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/AldineEducationFoundation/support.html>. Donors should add Ken's name in the comments section at the bottom of the online donation form (i.e.: for the Ken Knippel scholarship). Checks can also be made payable to: Aldine Education Foundation, Attn: Michele McGovern, 2520 W.W. Thorne Blvd., Houston, TX 77073.

Anxious About the Economy? New Survey Reveals Your Next Steps

(StatePoint) Economic analysts increasingly predict that the U.S. will soon experience a recession, and a recent survey by CFP Board/Morning Consult shows many Americans agree: 55 percent of respondents believe a recession will occur in the next year. Roughly three quarters of respondents said an economic downturn would affect their household, with more than a third projecting it would have a major impact.

Experts agree that developing and sticking with a prudent, long-term financial plan is key to protecting yourself against market swings, and the survey findings underscored the value of partnering with a financial advisor before and during a recession. Sixty-seven percent of respondents who are working with a financial advisor said they would feel prepared if a recession began in the next 12 months, compared to 38 percent of those not working with an advisor. In addition, 77 percent of people working with an advisor said they are confident their advisor would successfully manage their finances through a down market.

A Certified Financial Planner (CFP) profession-



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Gearstd / iStock via Getty Images Plus

can help you bring all of the pieces of your financial life together and provide confidence that your finances can withstand the pressures of an economic downturn. Of the survey respondents who work with a CFP professional, 73 percent reported feeling more prepared for a potential recession now than they did in 2008, during the Great Recession.

Trained to give you a "big picture" view of financial solutions and develop a plan that is tailored to your specific goals and interests, a CFP professional will help you set long- and short-term goals and will periodically review

and adjust your financial plan as needed to ensure you stay on track to reach those goals. A CFP professional will also help you understand the implications of your financial choices, providing competent and ethical advice that supports sound financial decision-making and avoids impulsive actions. To find a CFP professional near you, visit www.letsmakeaplan.org.

Partnering with a financial advisor may be one of the most important steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from feeling the effects of a dramatic market decline.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Students participate in Healthy Heart Challenge Assembly



Vardeman Students Participated in a kids healthy heart Challenge Assembly sponsored by the American heart Association . Vardeman pandas are getting ready to jump rope next week to raise money to fight Heart Disease!! Parents and Staff Can donate money to the American Heart Association to fight heart disease!! We will collect donations until March 1.

Mayor Turner, Harris County Sheriff's Office and community partners launch pilot program to educate homeless youth about trafficking

HOUSTON - Mayor Sylvester Turner announced today that the city of Houston's anti-trafficking case managers and the Harris County Sheriff's Office Homeless Outreach Team (HCSO HOT) will launch a six-month pilot program with a specific focus on increasing victim identification in homeless youth. The HCSO HOT and case managers from the Mayor's Anti-Human Trafficking division, along with outreach specialists from The Landing and United Against Human Trafficking, will ride with HCSO deputies to distribute goodie bags and talk with the vulnerable population about available trafficking services.

A rotating calendar of participating human trafficking outreach specialists will share these responsibilities twice a month with the HCSO HOT beginning in March.

The trafficking risk prevention unit is one of the city's responses to a 2017 research study that revealed that 1 in 5 homeless youth is a victim of trafficking in the United States. Prior to assembling this outreach team, the Mayor's Anti-Human Trafficking division worked with the Coalition on Homeless to add questions to its Universal Assessment for housing to assess people for trafficking victimization. Incorporating this into the assessment

was the first step in building a bridge for trafficking victims to shelters and eventually long-term housing.

"Human trafficking is prevalent among our homeless youth. By joining forces with the HCSO HOT and our longstanding partners, The Landing and United Against Human Trafficking, we will be able to increase victim identification with the safety, security and expertise of the HCSO HOT," Mayor Turner said. "Like all victims of trafficking, it is important that we work to uphold the dignity of those that carry the additional burden of being homeless. I also want to point out that this program leverages existing resources and the political will to do something about trafficking."

"Protecting homeless youth from falling victim to human trafficking predators requires law enforcement, local government, and our community partners to all pull in the same strategic direction," said Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez. "We are excited to join Mayor Turner and all the organizations involved in this joint effort to protect those who need us the most."

"Our hope is to meet these youth where they are and connect them to available services and support. We are encouraged by the steps Houston is taking to enhance victim services,

and as The Landing expands into youth advocacy, this program will support our efforts to help young victims of trafficking in our city. - Cara Parker, Executive Director, The Landing

"We are thrilled to partner with the City of Houston in their efforts to identify trafficking victims within the homeless population. These individuals are often overlooked in the trafficking conversation and we are thankful for the Mayor's efforts to shine a light on these vulnerable youth. We are confident through this collaborative approach, many of our young adults will be able to live free and heal from their exploitation." - Timeka Walker, Executive Director, United Against Human Trafficking

This new pilot is aligned with the City's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategic Plan and its overall goal to increase victim identification by setting up a variety of referral streams. The plan has been dubbed the first comprehensive municipal response in the U.S. by Polaris Project and can be found at humantraffickinghouston.org. For more information about this initiative or any of our other initiatives, please contact Minal Patel Davis, Special Advisor to Mayor on Human Trafficking at 832.393.0977 or minal.davis@houstontx.gov.

Lone Star College ranked #1 community college degree producer for minority students in Texas



Lone Star College has been ranked as the number one college in Texas for the number of minority students graduating in all disciplines combined.

HOUSTON (Jan. 27, 2020) - Lone Star College has been recognized by *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education* magazine as a Top Degree Producer among institutions conferring associate degrees to minority students.

"Lone Star College is focused on promoting academic success among all its students," said Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., LSC chancellor. "These rankings are a testament to the tremendous work done by our faculty and staff."

LSC ranked first in Texas and fourth in the nation among community colleges for the number of minority students graduating in all disciplines combined. The rankings are based on degrees conferred in 2017-18, the most recent data available, and

were published in the December issue of the magazine.

In addition, LSC ranked fourth for the number of Hispanic students earning an associate degree, ninth for the number of Asian students earning a degree, and 12th nationwide for the number of African American students obtaining a degree.

Diverse: Issues In Higher Education uses analysis from U.S. Department of Education reports submitted by institutions. Online "campuses" are seen as a single entity, even though they enroll students globally.

Among the notable findings in the report:

- More than 1 million associate degrees were awarded in the 2017-18 academic year.

- In 2017-18, 44% of the associate degrees awarded (439,482 degrees) were conferred to minority students, up from 42% in 2016-17.

- More than 50% of all associate degrees conferred by for-profit institutions were conferred to minority students in 2017-18.

"Lone Star College remains committed to serving all students," said Head.

Celebrating 35 years, *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education* is the nation's only newsmagazine dedicated exclusively to diversity issues in higher education. *Diverse* seeks to be a catalyst for change, and contribute to the building of educational, cultural, social and economic structures.

Police investigate stabbing of a man in Northpoint Drive

Houston police are investigating the stabbing of a man at 220 Northpoint Drive about 8:15 p.m. on January 20.

According to officials, after a male and his girlfriend got into an argument, the male took the girlfriend to her grandmother's house and returned back to his apartment to watch television. Some time later, the girlfriend and a family member, Michael Estrada-Perez, 44, went to the male's apartment to retrieve some of her belongings. The girlfriend did not call the male ahead of time because her cellphone battery died.

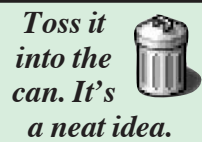
After not seeing her boyfriend's vehicle at the complex and assuming he was

not home, the female attempted to gain entry to the apartment by climbing through the patio on the second floor. When she could not access the patio door, Estrada-Perez volunteered and climbed through the patio to allow the female inside the apartment. At that time, the male, who was watching television in his living room with the lights off, saw a shadow from the patio window. The male stated he feared for his life, grabbed his work knife and stabbed Estrada-Perez in the left shoulder as he was inside the apartment. The girlfriend heard the male and Estrada-Perez yelling inside the apartment and she began knocking on the

door. The male opened the door and instructed the girlfriend to call police after he learned he stabbed one of her family members. The male then provided pressure to Estrada-Perez's wound until paramedics arrived.

The victim was transported to an area hospital in critical, but stable condition.

The male, 32, was not injured. He was questioned and released pending further investigation.



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- ◆ Go to any dentist you want - but save more with one in our network
- ◆ No deductible, no annual maximum

Call now to get this **FREE** Information Kit!
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OPINION PAGE



Social Security Matters

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

Ask Rusty – About Warnings to Make Sure I “file properly”

Dear Rusty: I am currently 63 years old and planning to delay retirement until 70 to maximize my benefit. I've been seeing a lot of financial planners advertising claims that you can lose thousands of dollars in benefits if you don't "file properly." Is there really anything more to it than simply applying for benefits when you are ready to retire? Do I really need to pay a financial advisor just to tell me how to apply to get the most benefits? Signed: Skeptical

Dear Skeptical: Nearly all the advertisements you see using language like that have an underlying purpose of trying to sell you something – usually a book, a subscription, or financial services. The phrase “losing thousands if you don't file properly” are very generic words meant to lure you into contacting them so they can sell something to you. Reality is that “filing properly” means simply choosing the right age to file for benefits given your specific personal circumstances. And personal circumstances are different for everyone. There aren't any tricks in the filing process itself – it's really quite straightforward, and you can get all your Social Security filing questions answered here at The AMAC Foundation's Social Security Advisory Service. Our staff of Social Security Advisors are fully trained and certified by the National Social Security Association (NSSA®), and we have years of experience on this complex topic. We provide Social Security information and answers to several thousand people each year, without a fee because we are a not-for-profit entity operating only on donations. And contacting us is easy at either ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org, or 1.888.750.2622.

As for when you should file, everyone's personal situation is different, and your marital status should always be considered. But as an individual, waiting until age 70 will give you the maximum benefit available

to you. If you are now 63, your age 70 benefit will be 29.3% more than it would be at your full retirement age of 66 years and 4 months, and about 65% more than you'd get at age 64. And provided you are in good health and expect at least average longevity (about 84) not only will your monthly payment be more, but you'll collect more in cumulative lifetime benefits by waiting. And here's an extra bonus – if you are married and you predecease your wife, her survivor benefit will be based upon that larger amount you were receiving because you delayed claiming. If she has reached her full retirement age, as your widow your wife will get 100% of your actual benefit. But if you were to claim earlier, your wife's survivor benefit would be based on that smaller amount.

The answer to your specific question is that there is no magical way to apply for benefits once you determine the age at which you wish to file. You can file by calling the Social Security Administration directly, either at their general number (1.800.772.1213) or your local office (find it at www.ssa.gov/locator), or you can also file online at www.ssa.gov/retire. Filing online is by far the easiest and most efficient way to complete and submit your application for benefits.

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.



Kobe Bryant 1978-2020

Governor applauds White House approval of women's health funding

AUSTIN — Gov. Greg Abbott said Jan. 22 that a Trump administration decision reestablishes the federal partnership for the Women's Health Program in Texas.

Abbott issued a statement concerning the approval of the 1115 Waiver for Healthy Texas Women: "The Lone Star State is once again in partnership with the federal government to provide meaningful family planning and health services while fostering a culture of life. This collaboration is a symbol of our commitment to championing the lives of Texas women. I am grateful to President Trump and his administration for approving this waiver and for his commitment to protecting the unborn while providing much-needed health resources to Texas women."

According to the governor's office, "Healthy Texas Women offers family planning and women's health services to Texas women who earn less than 200% of the federal poverty limit. In 2018, HTW served approximately 173,000 Texans. While this program is currently funded with state general revenue, Texas submitted a Medicaid 1115 waiver application after President Trump took office, requesting federal matching funds for the program. The waiver had previously not been renewed under the Obama administration because Texas refused to fund abortion providers or their affiliates."

Planned Parenthood, the nation's leading provider and advocate of high-quality, affordable health care for women, men and young people, had a different view. The organization posted a news release saying the Trump administration "rewarded Texas's long-standing effort to cut off people's access to health care. The administration

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Ed Sterling

approved Texas' request to implement a Medicaid family planning program that bars patients from accessing care at Planned Parenthood and other sexual and reproductive health care providers that also provide abortion. This is the first time the federal government has allowed a state to explicitly waive Medicaid's free choice of provider for family planning provision. This move upends longstanding federal law and sets a dangerous precedent for other states to pursue similar state-level measures, with grim consequences for health care access nationwide."

Data from the Austin-based Center for Public Policy Priorities estimates that nearly 45,000 fewer women received birth control, cancer screening and other services through the Healthy Texas Women program — a nearly 40 percent drop — than when Planned Parenthood participated in the program.

Jobless rate stays low

The Texas Workforce Commission on Jan. 24 reported that the seasonally adjusted Texas unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in December, up one 10th of a percentage point from 3.4 percent in November 2019.

Although the rate of unemployment increased slightly, Texas did add 29,800 jobs over the month. TWC Chairman and Commissioner Representing the Public Bryan Daniel said, "Our current economic climate creates opportunities for our skilled workforce and success for employers. We look forward to continued growth in our great state throughout 2020."

Regionally, the Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area recorded the lowest unemployment rate among Texas MSAs in December with a non-seasonally adjusted rate of 2.1 percent, followed by the Amarillo MSA at 2.3 and Austin-Round Rock with the third-lowest rate at 2.4 percent.

Paxton joins in brief
Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Jan. 22 announced his joining 17 other states in a friend-of-

the-court brief that argues for protecting fetuses with Down Syndrome from abortion based on genetics.

The brief, filed with the Cincinnati-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, seeks to reverse an Ohio federal district court ruling that "created a categorical right to abortion, regardless of whether the reason for an abortion is clearly based on discrimination against a child with disabilities," Paxton said in a news release.

Registration urged

Texas Secretary of State Ruth Hughs, the state's chief election officer, on Jan. 23 reminded Texans to make necessary preparations to vote in the upcoming March 3 party primaries.

Feb. 3 is the registration deadline.

"Being prepared is essential for Texans seeking to make their voices heard," said Hughs. "In addition to registering to vote, Texans should set aside time to ensure that they have made the necessary preparations to cast their ballot. Together, we will ensure that all eligible Texans are able to take part in shaping the direction of the Lone Star State."

As of this month, according to the Secretary of State's Elections Division, there were 16,106,984 registered voters — a new state record.

Information on how to register to vote and the voting process, such as what forms of identification may be presented when voting, is available at votetexas.gov or 1-800-252-VOTE.

Safety training is held

The City of Austin, Travis County and Joint Task Force Civil Support from the U.S. Department of Defense conducted response training in Austin last week for a fictional nuclear incident.

As many as 1,000 Department of Defense personnel, 50 City of Austin and 10 Travis County staff participated in the training.

Juan Ortiz, director for the City of Austin Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said, "We want to build the relationship with the armed forces to ensure we are prepared to respond and work together as efficiently as possible in the event of a disaster."

Events related to the exercise in Austin were conducted in Killeen and Fort Hood last week and continued into the current week.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

"Learning to Whistle"

My sister learned to whistle at age two.

She was precocious in other ways as well. She knew how to read by the time she started kindergarten. She demonstrated a physical dexterity I never did. She was much more talented at the piano. But it was the whistling that really got to me.

I was six when she started to whistle and I remember it clearly. She sat in her highchair at my grandparents' house and started whistling her heart out. She could see, even at two, that she was creating quite a sensation and so she continued, louder, demonstrating her newfound talent. I was sick with envy.

I don't think I have envied many people many times in my life, but I very much wanted to whistle when I was six. Like tying your shoes at five, it is a milestone. My dad whistled. My friends could whistle. Now my baby sister could whistle and everyone was over the moon. It was a low moment in my short life.

My grandmother, who I am sure was very well intentioned, did not make the situation better.

"Carrie, some people never learn how to whistle," she informed me.

I suppose this was to help me understand that I had company, that there was a great world of non-whistlers out there and I would surely find companionship with the similarly inadequate. I was not comforted.

"Some people never learn how to whistle!" I remember repeating to myself many times over. I think this may have been the first time I was seriously confronted with the possibility that there might be something I desperately wanted to do that I would not be able to. I had parents who assured me that I would be able to do whatever I put my mind to and here I was, at six, already stopped at a major roadblock. It was very discouraging.

I could be imagining this, but it seems to me my sister sensed my dejection and whistled with even more virtuosity.

All this came to mind as I was in New York last week. I had just performed material from my columns at a conference. I was certainly a late arrival to this world. Most of the performers were at least twenty years younger than me, if not thirty, and I was every bit as nervous as the youngest of them—perhaps more so.

I had fifteen minutes to perform and, while it's hard to tell with these things, I felt I did reasonably well. Afterwards, I changed out of my sparkly costume and headed back to the hotel to watch some of the other talented people perform. It was unseasonably warm in New York for January. The sky was clear and there was an unexpectedly big moon rising over the skyscrapers. I stopped, right in the middle of Broadway and stared at this giant moon.

I suddenly realized how ridiculously lucky I was. I was doing something new. I was having fun. I might or might not be embarrassing myself but—if I was—really did not care. I started to whistle. I was walking down Broadway whistling and I didn't care if anyone heard me. I fished my phone out of my purse and called my sister.

"Hey, Sister!" I announced without preamble, "I just wanted you to know that I couldn't whistle at two and not even at six but I actually am a halfway decent whistler now!"

My sister laughed and I told her I loved her and I kept walking and smiling and whistling.

Till next time,
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir is called, "Blue Yarn." Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

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MacArthur grad Richard Hightower is proof that hard work will pay off in the long run

Richard Hightower never used his lack of size or speed as an excuse for not getting things done on the football field.

Hightower, a 1998 graduate of MacArthur High School, was a tenacious and big-play safety for the Generals although he was only 5-8 and did not possess blazing speed.

Today, Hightower is the special teams coordinator for the NFC champion San Francisco 49ers who coached in the biggest game of his career when the 49ers took on the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LIV on Feb. 2 in Miami.

Hightower's story is an inspiring one. He never made excuses and excelled in the classroom and on the field in high school and college.

"I can't say enough great things about both of them. Both have great football minds and are phenomenal coaches and the coolest things is they are even better people. I learned a lot from them and have always tried to emulate them when dealing with our players."

Silha, currently the cross country coach at MacArthur, said it was an honor to coach a player with the determination and will to succeed that Hightower possessed.

"I coached Richard through middle school (Hambrick) and high school," Silha said. "Richard was an outstanding and gifted student and brought that intelligence to the football field."

"I graduated from MacArthur in 1998, one of the best experiences of my life and I am eternally grateful for the educators, coaches and friends I was blessed enough to meet along the way," Hightower said.

Hightower, who has coached in the NFL for 13 years, is thankful for the coaches he had in high school who taught him the game he has loved to play and coach since he was a young boy.

"All of my coaches definitely had an impact on me and I appreciate all of them because they invested so much time in all of us," he said.



MacArthur High School grad Richard Hightower is the special teams coordinator for the NFL champion San Francisco 49ers. Hightower coached in Super Bowl LIV when the 49ers faced Kansas City.

and coach Ron Gabriel were mine and the men I spent the most time with.

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pastoring of the Red Raiders.

His performance against Tech earned him a job on all of Texas' special team units for the rest of his UT career.

Prior to the start of his senior season in 2002, Brown surprised Hightower, and teammate Kyle Shanahan, with a scholarship. Hightower and Shanahan would be reunited a few years later when the latter began making a name for himself as one of the NFL's brightest young offensive minds.

Hightower graduated with a BA in business and he said he would be forever grateful to Brown for awarding him a scholarship.

"The scholarship meant the world to me," Hightower said. "Coach Brown did not have to do it. He just gets it. He always acknowledged players in special ways. Coach Brown is a special person, one of the rarest in college football. I was lucky to have Coach Brown as a head coach. He taught us football, but more importantly, he wanted you to be a productive person in society and placed importance on life after football."

With college behind him, Hightower entered the private sector, but his love of the game would not go away. He earned a marketing internship with the Texans and in 2006 he received the break he had always wanted, a chance to coach in the NFL.

When Gary Kubiak was named the Texans head coach in 2006, he brought with him Shanahan to coach wide receivers and his buddy at UT provided Hightower with the opportunity to serve as an intern to Kubiak.

He remained an intern until 2008 when he was named a special teams assistant coach. He left for the University of Minnesota for a year before he was reunited with Shanahan and his father Mike, when the latter was named head coach of the Washington Redskins in 2010.

Hightower was an assistant secondary coach with Washington from 2010-13 then moved on to Cleveland in 2014 and then followed the younger Shanahan to Atlanta the following year when Shanahan was named the Falcons offensive coordinator.

In 2015, Hightower moved to the 49ers as a special teams assistant then served in that same role with the Chicago Bears in 2016.

When Shanahan, his good friend and college teammate was named the 49ers head coach after the 2016 season, he called his buddy and offered him the special teams coordinator's job, which Hightower gladly accepted.

Hightower's unit is one of the best in the league. From 2017-18, SF's kicking unit ranked first in the NFL and its punt coverage team



MacArthur High School grad Richard Hightower visits with his players during a game from the 2019 season. Hightower serves as the special teams coordinator for the San Francisco 49ers and coached in Super Bowl LIV on Feb. 2 in Miami against Kansas City.

you develop with likeminded people are the things I value the most from my time in Aldine."

James said he and Hightower have been best friends since they met at Hambrick in the sixth grade. James, who is the head girls' track coach and coaches wide receivers on the football team, said he was happy for all the success his best friend is enjoying.

"I couldn't be more excited (for his success) and it couldn't have happened to a better guy," James said.

When asked what made Hightower such a good football player, James said that was an easy question to answer.

"First of all, his work ethic. He refused to be outworked and he also held his teammates accountable and made sure we worked," James said.

"Secondly, his intelligence. He was such a smart student and player. On and off the field, he believed in studying his books, his craft and his opponent. Lastly, he has a tremendous amount of confidence. He never used his lack of size and speed as an excuse or as a crutch. He believed in his abilities and simply trusted the work that he put in. Richard is just a special guy."

Off the field, Hightower and his wife Lanet, his high school sweetheart, are busy raising three children, Jaxon (8), Kaden (7) and Reagan (5).

Other special team coordinators such as John Harbaugh, have gone on to become successful head coaches in the NFL. Would the MacArthur grad like to have the chance to run his own team someday?

"If that is in the Lord's plan for me then we'll cross that bridge when we get there," he said.

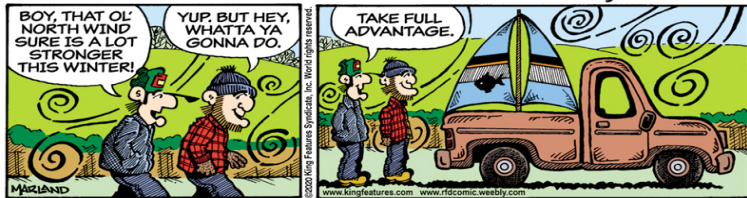
If the day does arrive when Hightower receives the opportunity to run his own team, do not be surprised if he's successful, because like his father taught him, "Winners never quit, and quitters never win!"

And Richard Hightower is definitely a winner.

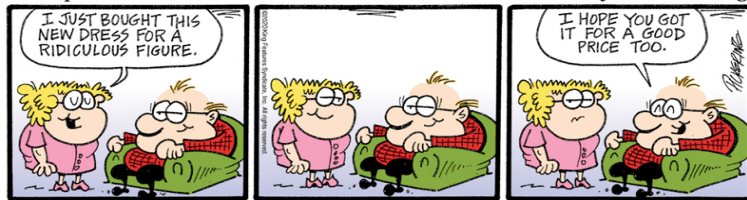
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The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. A 9x9 grid with some numbers filled in. Includes difficulty level and instructions.

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff. Two panels of a witch and a boy. Includes instructions to find differences.

Posting Date February 3, 2020 King Crossword

King Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a list of 51 clues.

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

Trivia Test Answers: 1. The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo; 2. Dr. Peter Venkman; 3. About 2.5 million; 4. Pony; 5. Mark Twain; 6. 'The Breakfast Club'; 7. KITT (Knight Industries Two Thousand); 8. Nepal; 9. Fear of the sun; 10. Octothorpe

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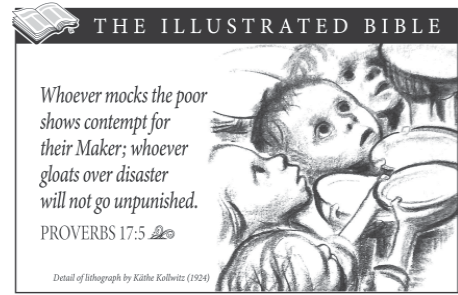
CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey—
 1. Is the book of Galatians in the Old or New Testament or neither?
 2. Which book could be summarized, "Pay attention, God has a master plan in the works we need to be a part of?" Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel
 3. From Judges 7, who had the barley-cake vision tumbling into an army camp overturning a tent? Shepherd, Soldier, Peasant, Steward

4. After an angel delivered them from a Jerusalem prison, where did the apostles go? Temple, Fields, Mountaintop, River
 5. Who had his servants set barley crops on fire because he refused to meet with Absalom? Job, Joab, Jethro, Jehoshabeath
 6. From Acts 12, where did Peter encounter an angel? Tent door, Prison, City gate, Temple

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Isaiah; 3) Soldier; 4) Temple; 5) Joab; 6) Prison



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Concrete Plant,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have very thorough answers to their questions and concerns, and they questioned whether she really was the president of this company. She said that she had a partner who had the technical answers, but she declined to name him.

The meeting ran over its scheduled time, and as one speaker after another voiced their opposition to the application and the possibility of another concrete plant in their residential area, the company representative looked more and more defeated. Finally the TCEQ facilitator, who was in charge of running the meeting, privately queried the company and the TCEQ, and they announced that the application had been withdrawn.

The audience reacted with applause and enthusiasm, but as explained to the Northeast News after the meeting, the company could reapply at a later time if they wanted to. There is apparently no limit on how often or when the application can be made.

It is apparent in this meeting, and a previous meeting held to oppose the Rocket Materials proposed

SPEAKERS AT THE HEARING:



State Senator Carol Alvarado



Nomadic Aggregates president Aileen Rivas



State Representative Armando Walle



Castlewood resident Steve Adame

Strong criticisms of the application, and the TCEQ review process, were voiced by these three speakers. As to Rivas's response, the comment was made "I don't have a lot of confidence in your answers."

plant on Pinafore Lane, the TCEQ has very limited power to regulate or even evaluate proposals. They can only judge air pollution, not water, noise or traffic concerns.

In her opening remarks, Rivas had said that the plant would have dust collectors, recycle wash water, wash down exiting trucks, sweep the street, and only have about 7 trucks per hour. However the permit was for 24 hour operation, 7 days a week.

Audience questions centered on pollution to the air and noise for neighbors, and damage to streets already evident at other similar plants.

Speakers included Codey Williams of the Air-Alliance, who spoke about the danger to health of the small particulate matter released by this type of plant.

Opposition speakers included Rep. Carol Alvarado, and Mike Light of Commissioner Garcia's office. Rep. Walle said "I respectfully ask Nomadic Aggregates to withdraw their application and find another use for the land."

Café with the Commissioner,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



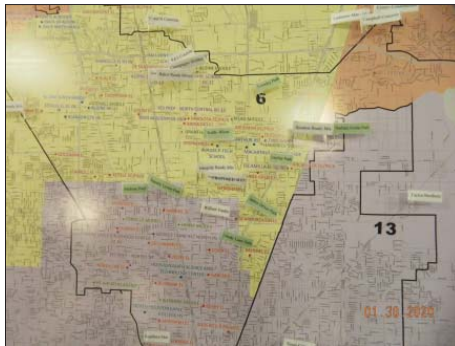
Families brought their children to see Commissioner Garcia and join in the group photo for the scrapbook (or Facebook).



On hand to participate in the Meet and Greet were State Representative Senfronia Thompson, and Aldine Assistant Superintendent Abel Garza.



Carol Alvarado points out the large number of concrete batch plants in the greater Aldine area, and displays a map with the locations. At center, TCEQ representatives Diana Avalos, Don Nelon, and Colleen Ford.



State Representative Carol Alvarado's map shows 8 concrete batch plants within a 5 mile radius of the proposed site of another plant.



Pastor David Smith and wife Linda not only got to talk with Commissioner Garcia, but brought their copy of the Northeast News with news of their Jensen neighborhood in Precinct 2.



KIM OGG

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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