

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- Art Teacher of the Year, Page 2
- Alligator capture, Page 3
- Covid-19 Testing in Pct. 2, Page 6
- LSC: Bridging the Digital Divide, Page 8

# NORTHEAST NEWS



Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 43 Years  
VOL. 44, NO. 31 TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

See Page 8 for complete information

## NEWS NOTES

**TO OUR READERS:**  
The current Covid-19 Pandemic and other economic conditions have caused us to combine some issues every two weeks, and to change distribution to Pick-up locations. See page 7 for 50 locations where you can get a copy of the Northeast News, and page 6 for email subscriptions. We thank you for your continued support.

COVID-19
Cases as of August 5, 2020
HOUSTON AREA
19 COUNTIES
122,745 POSITIVE
1,307 DEATHS
69,272 RECOVERED
TEXAS
474,420 POSITIVE
7,494 DEATHS
315,652 RECOVERED
UNITED STATES
4,818,328 POSITIVE
157,930 DEATHS
1,576,425 RECOVERED
WORLDWIDE
18,710,668 POSITIVE
704,869 DEATHS
11,284,150 RECOVERED

## Aldine starts back to school August 17

### Distributes computers, hotspots, food boxes, backpacks

ALDINE – Like many school districts in the Houston-area, the Aldine Independent School District is going to begin the school year with virtual learning. In order to meet the needs of students in the district and bridge the digital divide, Aldine ISD officials handed out Chromebooks and hotspots to hundreds of families last Monday.

The drive-thru distribution event took place at Aldine High School Monday afternoon ahead of the district's Aug. 17 start date.

"All children deserve equal access to education and so with COVID-19 magnifying that device, we are making sure that our students are getting the learning tools that they need to be successful," said Aldine High School Assistant Principal Shavonya Rasberry-Vaughan.

District officials said more than 5,000 families signed up for the event and each family got one set of devices. With such a high need among students in the district, officials say they will plan a second event to hand out devices to more students.

**District Gears Up for Second Round of Device Distribution for Students**  
Families need to submit an online request form by



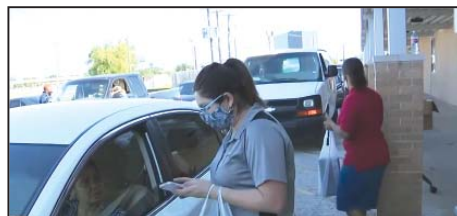
THOUSANDS of cars lined up at M.O. Campbell Center last Wednesday for a free food and backpack distribution, sponsored by Aldine ISD and BakerRipley. There were also 5000 free computers and hotspots handed out on another day at Aldine High School. There will be a second handout of computers on August 14 of this week.

midnight on August 10; distribution will take place on August 14.

Distance learning online education. A schoolboy boy studies at home and does school homework. A home distance learning.

The Aldine Independent School District is providing Chromebooks to students that need one just in time for the first day of school, August 17.

The District's re-entry plan, Return to Learn, has all students learning virtually from home for at least the first three weeks of the



Aldine ISD distributed computers at Aldine HS Monday.

2020-21 school year. Currently, Aldine's plan allows a return to physical classrooms on Tuesday, September 8, if their parents or legal guardians have chosen the on-campus

learning model. Students on the learning at home model will continue to receive virtual instruction.

Earlier this month, the District held the first round of device distribu-

tion targeting families that had chosen the learning at home option. To get technology in the hands of more students, Aldine ISD is hosting another learning device distribution event on August 14 geared to:

- families that selected Learning On Campus on the Commitment Form and have not already received a device, and
- families that received confirmation to pick up a loaner device on August 3 but did not attend (regardless of the reason).

If other children in the home have already checked out a learning device (e.g., Chromebook, laptop), the family is not eligible at this time.

Families that do not have a personal device at home should consider requesting a device. Students learning on campus will need a device at home to complete assigned tasks online.

Aldine will contact families that selected Learning On Campus on Friday, August 7. They need to complete a Request for Technology Form online. The link to the form will remain open until mid-

See **SCHOOL STARTS**, page 3

## Texas Renaissance Festival plans to open on Oct. 3

Todd Mission, TX (July 24, 2020) – Preparations are in full swing at the Texas Renaissance Festival with just over two months before the gates open for the start of the festival's 46th season on October 3, 2020. As the largest Renaissance festival in the nation, the Texas Renaissance Festival management team has been working closely with Grimes County and local government and emergency and health agencies to ensure COVID-19 response and communications plans are in place that will be followed prior to and during the months of October and November when the festival is open.

TRF's plan includes decontamination prior to festival and camping days and nightly when the festival is open, nightly cleaning of the shoppes, and spot cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day as required by state protocols. 80 sanitizing stations will be installed at the festival, while 50 will be located throughout the Fields of New Market Campground.

All TRF staff, perform-



ers and vendors will be required to wear a face mask during the season. If there is a state face mask mandate, patrons will be required to wear face masks. If there is no state mandate in place, patrons will not be required to wear masks, but will be strongly encouraged to do so. Patrons who attend the festival will have the opportunity to participate in a daily face mask contest that will be judged on creativity and coordination with the costume or themed weekend. Temperature checks will be required of all TRF staff, performers, and vendors before each shift, and any employee with a fever will be sent home.

Anticipating capacity limitations, the Texas Renaissance Festival moved

to date specific tickets with no ticket sales at the gate. Patrons will be able to purchase festival admission tickets in advance online at [www.texrenfest.com/tickets-season-passes](http://www.texrenfest.com/tickets-season-passes), Groupon and at H-E-B stores. TRF will continue the tradition of Kids 12 and under get in free on Sundays. Additionally, electronic people counters will be installed at the entrance and exit gates to keep a real-time count of people on the festival grounds.

Social distancing measures will include signage reminding patrons about distancing, hand sanitizing and face masks, limiting patrons in shoppes, maintaining 6' in line and reducing seating at the entertainment stages.

The Texas Renaissance Festival plan will continue to be revised as new information and input from government and health authorities is available. TRF will communicate expectations for the 2020 season via the [www.texrenfest.com](http://www.texrenfest.com) website, e-newsletters, press releases and all TRF social media channels.

## First student enrolls in new HVAC Program at Lone Star College-East Aldine

HOUSTON (Aug. 3, 2020) – When classes begin for the fall semester on Monday, Aug. 24, Michelle Luna will be among the first students taking part in the new Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Program launching at Lone Star College-East Aldine Center.

A recent graduate from Aldine Senior High School, Luna became the first student to enroll in the program when she chose to broaden her career path at LSC-East Aldine Center to follow in her father's footsteps in the HVAC industry.

Luna began working part-time with her dad at his HVAC job when she was a freshman in high school, turning the opportunity into her full-time summer job. She was in good hands for the work. Her father

has worked in the industry for nearly 30 years.

Now, Luna is ready to take her skill set to the next level with the training provided at the LSC-East Aldine Center to earn her Class A license, allowing her to work with any size HVAC unit. Once she completes her workforce training, Luna plans to once again work alongside her father, but with a new company.

"I am planning to get my license to start my own HVAC business with my dad in about three years," Luna said. "I want to learn everything there is to know about HVAC."

Fall registration is currently open, and all students who enroll in at least nine credit hours by Wednesday, Aug. 12, will be entered into a drawing for prizes including laptop computers and \$1,000

scholarships.

Students interested in registering for the fall semester should visit [LoneStar.edu/Learn-More](http://LoneStar.edu/Learn-More).

Lone Star College offers high-quality, low-cost academic transfer and career training education to 99,000 students each semester. LSC is training tomorrow's workforce today and redefining the community college experience to support student success. Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., serves as chancellor of LSC, the largest institution of higher education in the Houston area with an annual economic impact of nearly \$3 billion. LSC consists of seven colleges, eight centers, two university centers, Lone Star Corporate College and LSC-Online. To learn more, visit [LoneStar.edu](http://LoneStar.edu).

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## SCHOOL NEWS

### Child Nutrition Prepares to Feed Aldine ISD Students for the Upcoming School Year

This summer, Aldine ISD Child Nutrition served over 1.6 million curbside meals to Aldine ISD families. During the 2020-2021 school year Child Nutrition will continue to offer meals for students who have chosen to learn on campus and at home.

Beginning Monday, August 17, Aldine ISD will provide 58 curbside meal sites for Aldine ISD students. Meals will be provided on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.

Monday: (Breakfast and Lunch for Monday and Tuesday)

Wednesday: (Breakfast and Lunch for Wednesday and Thursday)

Friday: (Breakfast and Lunch for Friday)

The first priority of Child Nutrition is to en-

sure the health, safety, and well-being of our students. Through continued guidance from the State of Texas, the Texas Education Agency, and local health authorities, the [Return to School guidelines](#) will be used to continue the food services program while maintaining social distancing as well as safety and sanitation protocols.

Although the district will continue to provide curbside meals, AISD understands that some of our families will not have access to pick up meals throughout the week. The district is working with several apartment complexes in the community to provide meal delivery. Child Nutrition and Transportation will work together to bring weekly meals to those students.

Students do not have to

be present for meal pickup, however, a student ID must be provided at breakfast and lunch to ensure efficient scanning of ID for payment and minimize touching of ID by multiple staff. Families can find their student ID by visiting their [SchoolCafe.com](#) or Home Access Center account.

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### Aldine ISD Names Serjio Medina New Principal of Carroll Elementary

Aldine ISD is pleased to announce that Serjio Medina has been selected as the new principal for Carroll Elementary School.

Medina received his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas-Austin and earned his Master's in Educational Administration from Sam Houston State University.

Medina, an alumnus from Aldine High School, is very familiar with Carroll Elementary. It is the elementary school Medina attended as a student in Aldine. Upon graduating from UT, Medina returned to Aldine ISD and began his career in education in 2013 as a fourth-grade math and science teacher at Bussey Elementary.

A few years later, Medina transferred to Smith Elementary, where he served as a teacher and took a leadership role as an instructional leader. In 2017, Medina was named the assistant principal of Gray Elementary.

Over the years, Medina gained acknowledgment for developing new, engaging teaching practices, creating a positive school culture centered on student achievement, and building parent engagement.

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, Superintendent of Schools, stated, "I have said it many times before — Leadership matters. Sergio is an amazing leader. He is capable of inspir-



ing, leading, and supporting his staff and forging relationships with families to increase student outcomes and success. We are looking for these characteristics in leadership as we continue to build on our strategic plan to ensure our students have access to high-quality schools and learning experiences."

Medina is an advocate for equity in education for all students. He firmly believes that education is critical to help one generation at a time to achieve the American dream. Medina believes that it prepares students for their future and gives them more choices and opportunities in life. Each time students meet their goals,

they are closer to making the next generation of their families better and leaving them with new goals and higher expectations.

"While my Gray Elementary family will always have a special place in my heart, it is an honor to be given the opportunity to lead Carroll Elementary. The staff members and I are working together to build on the school's success," said Medina.

Medina, who began leading Carroll Elementary in June, reports to his respective School Assistant Superintendent and the Chief of Schools, Katherine Roede.

### Aldine ISD sets requirements visitors to campuses/district facilities

When Aldine ISD campuses reopen, visitors must make an appointment with the school or district facility. All visitors must wear a cloth mask covering both the nose and mouth at all times when inside district buildings. Those who enter a campus building and refuse to wear a cloth mask will be asked to leave.

Visitors must report at the front desk and have their temperature taken before being allowed entry into a school or district facility. They will also be asked to use the hand sanitizer station that will be

located on the receptionist's desk.

Visitors will be required to social distance and should not congregate in the halls, indoor commons spaces or be moving about the facility unless entering or departing the campus/district facility.

Only one visitor per family will be admitted to a campus or district facility.

These steps are being taken to ensure the safety and security of Aldine ISD students, staff and district visitors.

### Aldine ISD Art Teacher Yvonne López-Taylor Named Region 4 Elementary Teacher of the Year

Region 4 Education Service Center named Yvonne López-Taylor Elementary Teacher of the Year. Instead of an in-person gala ceremony, the event, Heroes for Children, went virtual this year. Region 4 announced the winners on August 3. The Secondary Teacher of the Year Award went to Janet Menzie from Fort Bend ISD. Both will be advancing to the state competition.

Pam Wells, executive director of Region 4, kicked off the ceremony with showcasing all 79 Teachers of the Year across the region, including the 10 finalists, who underwent a rigorous process that included a panel of judges. They were selected from among more than 76,000 teachers in the areas. The state winners will be announced later this fall.

The virtual event had several special guests, including Bob Harvey, president/CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, and Scott McClelland, President H-E-B, congratulated all the teachers.

Superintendent LaTonya M. Goffney lauded López-Taylor for the distinction and her work.

"Yvonne uses art to help students express their thoughts and emotions. Students learn to be creative, to solve problems, and create meaning in their lives in her class. All of these skills are critical for success in school and life," said Dr. Goffney. "Yvonne understands not only the power of art but also the promise we as educators make to our students: to bring our passion to the classroom and always find ways to inspire students. I am so proud of her and proud to know that the Region 4 Teacher of the Year is from Aldine ISD."

López-Taylor grew up in the Aldine area and attended Stephens Elementary School before joining the magnet school program attending Bethune and Drew academies before graduating in 2005 from Carver High School for Engineering, Applied Technology, and the Arts.

Art has always been a part of López-Taylor's life. Growing up, she only wanted art supplies, books, and dinosaurs. López-Taylor's parents always encouraged her love of art by taking her to museums and galleries. She is grateful to

her family, who continually supports everything she and her young artists do.

As a student in AISD, López-Taylor took part in numerous contests between middle school and high school. The Carver grad praises her art teachers who curated her art portfolio, which led to scholarships and the opportunity to attend the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. It is Wisconsin's only four-year, private college of visual art and design. López-Taylor double majored in communication design and printmaking.

López-Taylor has been teaching for seven years, but she didn't start in a classroom. After college, she started a career in advertising but knew she wanted to be an art teacher. Her goal was to come back to Carver and teach art "to make her students feel empowered by making art and learning new things."

López-Taylor wanted to make students feel the same way she did in the art studio. She credits her sister, a teacher at Jones Primary School, as one of her biggest influences in encouraging her to follow her dreams of becoming an art teacher. She is López-Taylor's constant collaborator in all things, such as learning new skills and ideas and now, virtual learning.

While her first teaching position in 2013 did not include "art" in the title, she integrated art in her lessons to prekindergarten students at Jones EC/PreK/K School. López-Taylor still integrates subjects, only this time from the art studio at Carter Academy, and she integrates reading and math in her art lessons to students in Grades 1-5. She loves being able to build confidence in her students, introducing them to different cultures and ways of thinking, and creating. López-Taylor teaches her students that it is perfectly fine to make mistakes. They learn how to start over with a new outlook. According to López-Taylor, art is a creative outlet for students and a way to enhance learning.

"Art class is a safe haven. Art integration, whether visual, dance, music, or drama brings a lesson to life," added López-Taylor. "Lessons become more memorable when

the arts are integrated. I can still remember lessons from elementary school because of the arts being infused. Art should always be part of a lesson. The arts make content more accessible, help students understand and express abstract concepts, build community, but most importantly provide opportunities for all learners, even those struggling, to be successful. I have seen this firsthand. We all have those struggling with academics and even behavior,



and many times it's through the arts that these students shine!

"Art class may be the first place they hear 'great job' or 'I knew you could do this! I am good at school.' That is so incredibly critical to a student at any age, but especially our young students who are forming connections, developing confidence, and building self-esteem. They need to succeed and hear words of praise and acknowledgment."

As an art teacher, López-Taylor has had many opportunities to present at the district, city, state, and national levels, but one of her favorite projects to work on is very local: the "Let's TACO 'bout it" segments with AldineTV. The show's acronym stands for Teaching Art Collaboratively Online (TACO). She and her cohort demonstrate how everyone can integrate other subjects into every art lesson, and it offers a chance to show students' works on YouTube. When At-Home learning began in the spring, the recorded episodes were shared again to help every educator create engaging experiences.

Collaboration and networking are essential to López-Taylor. She added that she

continues learning from other teachers, and is grateful for her "Aldine art flamingos." According to López-Taylor, Dr. Michaelann Kelley, the former AISD director of visual arts, helped open doors for Aldine artists and teachers. She stated that there is no team like #AldineArt. It is this collaboration that led to the Aldine art teachers being ahead of the game with online learning. The group had already developed online lessons. López-Taylor credits art for teaching

hearing them discuss art and their artwork, especially when they discover something new.

"I loved watching the students take ownership of the art studio and see their confidence glow," López-Taylor said. "I loved the laughs and experimentation and growth. I also hosted a virtual art club for our families and students. Everyone loved sharing. We laughed and chatted as if we were back in the art studio. I was so happy after the session, and then I bawled. I miss my students. This quarantine took an impact on teachers too. We miss our kids and our classrooms."

When asked what she would be doing if she didn't teach art, López-Taylor reiterated that teaching art means everything to her. She gets to teach culture, acceptance, confidence, and everyone's stories all at once. López-Taylor would not want to leave art, but if she had to, she would still teach but always integrate art into all her lessons.

Teaching art can have its challenges with some people thinking art is not a serious core subject or that she had students coloring or crafting. López-Taylor admits that she and her students do have fun, but her students are doing more than just making crafts. López-Taylor hopes art remains a vital part of all students' educational experience. She cannot imagine learning without the arts, which she credits for learning about chemical compounds, architectural structures, important historical people, mixtures versus solutions, supply and demand, and many more lessons. She firmly believes that young artists are problem solvers, quick thinkers, collaborators, speakers, inventors, and more.

"Yvonne is a global thinker, and she can reach kids and make connections with adults, which make her unique and such a great art teacher and art education advocate," said Dr. Michaelann Kelley, assistant professor of art and design at Mount St. Joseph University (Cincinnati, OH). "While in Aldine, I was fortunate enough to work with and see Yvonne blossom. I moved out of state, but Aldine and the art teachers will always hold a special place in my heart. Seeing one of our Aldine

ne teachers and an Aldine grad, win Region 4 Elementary Teacher of the Year, is one of my proudest moments."

To future teachers considering teaching art, she advises that they shouldn't be afraid to make mistakes and to try new things. They should always keep learning and collaborating with others. And they should ask questions. They should be passionate about what they teach and what they do. If they don't enjoy teaching, their students will know.

López-Taylor teaches her students many lessons, but the classroom mantra is "Beautiful Oops." It also forms part of the legacy she hopes to leave behind. The first day of art class begins with reading "Beautiful Oops" by Barney Saltzberg. López-Taylor focuses on the simple but complex message of "When you think you have made a mistake... oops ... think of it as an opportunity to make something beautiful!" For López-Taylor, this translates to keep learning, try new things, not to be afraid of mistakes, and always to stay creative. She hopes that when her students think about her, they not only remember the dinosaurs and cheeseburgers but also remember their mantra, to be confident, to be kind to each other, and most importantly, to be their true selves.

On receiving the Region 4 Elementary Teacher of the Year honor, López-Taylor was lost for words but expressed how much she loved her students, her school, and the district. Afterward, she expressed her thoughts in detail.

"Being named Elementary Teacher of the Year proves art education is important. The arts make me a teacher. This recognition means my constant advocating for the arts is making a difference, which motivates me to keep advocating for my young artists. It means diversity is being embraced in education. I am crying happy tears and that all my beautiful oops and learning got me here."

Follow López-Taylor, her students and her pink flamingos on Twitter to see all the art, adventures, experiences, and collaboration efforts: @mslowpaz

COMMUNITY NEWS

# Pct. 3 deputies capture alligator in Summerwood

HOUSTON – A few Harris County Precinct 3 deputies and some local authorities in northeast Harris County had an exciting Tuesday.

According to a YouTube video shared by Landon McDonald, with Precinct 3, Earl the 9-foot gator was found in the Summerwood neighborhood.

Earl put up a good fight and it took the “gator patrol” a while to get him out of the water. In the end, the video shows they were able to secure Earl and put him safely into a truck.

Harris County Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Eagleton said Earl was released to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for rehoming.



**Job opportunity for people 16 years and over. □ Work the polls during the November 2020 election season. □**

**If you are interested in becoming an election worker, call 713.755.6965.**

(Houston, TX) — The Harris County Clerk’s Office is looking for election workers to staff more than 800 voting centers that will be open for the November 3, 2020 General Election. Election workers are also needed three weeks prior to the election to work at approximately 100 voting centers during the Early Voting period, October 13-30.

“We expect a high turnout for the upcoming general election. Early predictions indicate that more than 65 percent of the 2.4 million registered voters in Harris County will cast a ballot in November,” said Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins. “We need more than 1,000 election workers for the Early Voting period – which has been extended to three weeks – and more than 8,000 election workers for Election Day. I highly encourage all civic-minded residents of Harris County to consider serving our communities as election workers.”

To serve as an election worker, you must be a registered voter in Harris County, have transportation to and from the polling location, and be able to attend training. Bilingual election workers are needed and encouraged to apply. Students 16 years of age and older can apply to work as student clerks. **All of these positions are paid.**

“We will take every possible measure to keep voters and election workers safe, from keeping voting centers sanitized, to enforcing social distancing, to providing personal protective equipment to all election workers and voters,” said Clerk Hollins.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Lone Star College was the perfect fit for Veronica Sanches

So many students today struggle to find the perfect fit when it comes to balancing college courses, jobs, and career aspirations. Veronica Sanches found that Lone Star College provided a perfect fit for her as she earned her Associate degree while working and now oversees a \$10 million budget for East Aldine Management District.

Then known as North Harris Montgomery Community College, Veronica was the first in her family to attend college after graduating from MacArthur High School. While attending classes, she also became a LSC employee, first as a student assistant, then part-time assistant with the LSC Police Department, and later a full-time Administrative Assistant for the Office of Emergency Management for LSC.

In addition to the work/school balance Veronica found at LSC, she says it was the professors that made it a perfect fit for her. “My most memorable experience was my college algebra and geology classes. I remember thinking these were going to be my most difficult classes, but the way the professors taught was something I will never forget. It was them be-



VERONICA SANCHES

ing passionate about each student’s accomplishments that made me continue in my educational goals,” she said.

Sanches ultimately earned her bachelor’s degree from Sam Houston State University and is now Director of Services for East Aldine Management District. The District works to enhance the social and economic well being of Aldine which is also home to LSC’s East Aldine Center. East Aldine Management District is an ardent, long time support-

er of LSC Foundation and Sanches’ colleague, Richard Cantú serves on the Foundation board.

As Veronica simply put, “It all started with LSC being my home away from home. The classes were just the right size, the professors were always helpful and LSC helped with my transition to my four-year college. LSC was part of my “growing years.” LSC has always been a part of my life from a student to my first full-time job.”

# COVID MASKS new policy for Houston

HOUSTON - Mayor Sylvester Turner announced today that he has directed the Houston Police Department to issue warnings and citations to anyone not wearing a face mask or face covering required by the state’s mandatory mask order. Police will not ticket those who are not wearing a mask if they meet the exemption criteria. The citation carries a \$250 fine.

“We know that wearing a mask or face-covering in

public is one of the most effective methods to slow the spread of COVID-19,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “Lives are at stake, so I am taking this step to save lives and slow the virus from spreading in August.”

Houston police will not respond to 9-1-1 calls about people not wearing masks.

The mayor’s announcement happened on the same day the Houston Health Department re-

ported 1,104 new cases of COVID-19, bringing Houston’s total to 50,896. There are six newly-reported deaths, bringing the city’s total to 478.

“For months, we have focused on education and not citations. But now, I am instructing the Houston Police Department to issue necessary warnings and citations to anyone not wearing a mask in public if they do not meet the criteria for an exemption,” Mayor Turner said.

# School Starts in Aldine,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

night on Monday, August 10. Registration must be completed by midnight on Monday, August 10. Please note that at this time, we are limiting devices to one per family.

Families who received a confirmation email for the August 3 device distribution but were unable to pick up their device will receive a new confirmation email on August 12. These families do not need to complete the Request for Technology Device Form again.

“Aldine ISD is working hard to ensure students have access to learning tools during these unprecedented times. Earlier this month, we distributed almost 4,000 devices to students across the District,” said Chief Business and Operations Officer Dr. Tamika Alford-Stephens. “As we near the first day of school, we recognize that many of our families are still without technology to support student learning.”

Alford-Stephens noted that Aldine and other school districts are adapting to a “new” normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She added that AISD would continually monitor local health conditions and reassess as needed throughout the school year.

“Providing students access to a device before the start of the school year will help them complete assigned tasks online once schools open, but they will also have a smoother tran-

sition if we need to go to our online learning platform this school year,” Alford-Stephens said.

While the District is limiting devices to one per family, as more devices become available, additional distributions will take place.

Families without internet are encouraged to reach out to their cell phone and internet provid-

ers. Several cell phone service and internet providers are offering access to free internet for those who live in our community. The District has also compiled a list of known resources for Aldine ISD.

For more information about the District’s device distribution plan, please visit our Aldine ISD District Devices FAQs.

## Important Information for Families

**If a parent or legal guardian did not receive an email regarding registering for a device, the District encourages them to update their contact information in the Home Access Center (HAC) to ensure AISD has their most updated information.**

**Please be aware that a request does not guarantee that a family or student will receive a device. Those who have received confirmation emails are eligible to receive a device. A device has been allocated for them.**

**Parents who miss the 8-14-2020 distribution date: If a parent or legal guardian misses their appointment time, they should work with their school leader to pick up a device. Their confirmation email identifies that they qualify for a device.**

**Devices that are not picked up by families who received a confirmation email on August 14 will remain at the designated high school campus as the District anticipates that additional distributions will happen at the five sites.**

# Sam Houston MSTC teacher named finalist for national award in CTE

HOUSTON – Sam Houston MSTC Plumbing and Pipes Trades teacher Raul Ortega has been named one of 50 finalists from across the nation for the 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence.

The award, which was started in 2017 by national tool retailer Harbor Freight Tools founder Eric Smidt, recognizes outstanding instruction in skilled trades in U.S. public high schools.

Ortega, a licensed plumber, is entering his ninth year at Sam Houston MSTC. Ortega’s hands-on classroom includes bathroom and kitchen simulators where students learn to install fixtures and piping systems using curriculum from the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER). Students enrolled in the program also perform basic plumbing repairs for homeowners in the Sam Houston MSTC community and learn directly from local employers who visit Ortega’s classroom regularly to hire graduating seniors.

“We are incredibly proud of Mr. Ortega’s accomplishment and dedication to his students,” HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. “Empowering students to pursue careers through our various CTE offerings is a top priority in HISD. I am thrilled to see Mr. Ortega’s work recognized at a national level.”

Eighty percent of Ortega’s students receive all three levels of their NCCER credentials after three years in the Plumbing and Pipes Trades program at Sam Houston MSTC. Half of his graduating seniors enter a



Raul Ortega, Sam Houston MSTC teacher

plumbing or construction trade upon graduation.

Ortega now advances to a second round of competition, where he and other finalists will create innovative instruction ideas and teaching practices that would inspire students. Two rounds of judging by separate independent panels of reviewers will narrow the field to 18 winners and ultimately name three grand prize recipients.

“Mr. Ortega is very knowledgeable about all things related to plumbing and construction, and he builds great relationships with students on the way to preparing them for a career,” Sam Houston MSTC Principal Alan Summers said. “Mr. Ortega has consistently produced students who rank at the top of their field nationally and in Texas. I believe that this, along with his love for plumbing,

makes him an excellent educator.”

The 18 winners will split \$1 million in prizes. Grand prize winners will each receive \$100,000, with \$70,000 going to their high school’s CTE or skilled trades program and \$30,000 to the individual teacher behind the winning program. The 15 additional winners will each be awarded \$50,000, with \$35,000 going to their high school’s program and \$15,000 to the teacher.

“I was stunned and humbled to learn that I was selected as one of 50 finalists in the nation,” Ortega said. “I am excited to continue my journey serving our children as they seek to enter rewarding, high-demand careers. I have a true passion for this work, so this recognition means a lot to me.”

**Take Pride in our Community Keep it Clean**

OPINION PAGE

**NEWSPAPERS**  
By Texas Press Association

**NEWSPAPER OWNERSHIP**  
*In a buyer's market for weeklies, where are the buyers?*

By Al Cross

Director and professor, University of Kentucky Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues

Most days this summer, I have written a story about goings-on in Midway, a small Kentucky town where my students and I publish the Midway Messenger. When students aren't around, I pick up the slack, but it's a labor of love to provide coverage for a proud community that once had a paper of its own and has adopted ours, even though after 11 years I'm still something of a parachute publisher.

I've been in the newspaper business most of my life, but never as an owner, and our mainly online, non-commercial enterprise is as close as I am likely to get. But there are plenty of opportunities out there.

"It's a buyer's market right now for weekly newspapers," former weekly publisher Gary Sosniecki writes, in a package of stories that we're publishing to attract potential owners to community newspapers. This article introduces that package.

You might have chuckled at the "buyer's market" line, since all the bad news about metropolitan newspapers may lead you to think that a newspaper is no longer a good investment. That's not true of most community newspapers, because they are the sole, reliable source of news about their communities, and most of them "are doing fine financially," says Kevin Slimp, the leading consultant to community papers.

"In areas where decreased population, diminished area businesses and other forces beyond our control are at work, it might not be viable to sustain a local newspaper," Slimp acknowledges. "Having said that, I've worked with many newspapers in the past year in towns with fewer than 600 residents who are finding ways to be successful."

Helen and Gary Sosniecki  
Gary and Helen Sosniecki found success with weeklies in three Midwest towns, the first with only 900 people. "If the population is stable, if most storefronts on Main Street are filled, if the town has its own school and the all-important sense of community, the prospects for a weekly newspaper succeeding long-term are good," he writes.

But this is a buyer's market with not enough buyers. When the West Virginia Press Association voiced concern that some newspapers in the state might close because their owners couldn't find buyers, Maryanne Reed, then dean of the West Virginia University College of Media and now the university provost, got some foundation money and started a program called NewStart to develop the next generation of community newspaper owners.

The program's director, Jim Iovino, writes in this package about the success that Michael E. Sprengelmeyer found in a New Mexico weekly, the Guadalupe County Communicator, after the closing of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, where he was a political correspondent and had the byline M.E. Sprengelmeyer.

Jim Iovino says his first group of fellows in the program are expected to start in June 2020.

That will be none too soon for the Texas Press Association, which has seen a rash of closures and mergers, and hears talk of more. As in West Virginia, buyers are hard to find. We suspect it's much the same in most of the country. "Many owners of our generation waited too long to sell and - unable to find buyers - are shutting down their papers," Gary Sosniecki writes.

Those of us in this informal group see at least two potential groups of buyers who need to be recruited: local business people who never thought about becoming publishers, but know their communities and the value of a newspaper, and know how to make a profit; and the thousands of journalists who have been laid off by metro newspapers.

"It's a conundrum that independently owned weekly newspapers are closing for lack of buyers at the same time that journalists who would make good weekly-newspaper owners are being laid off in record numbers by metro newspapers and national newspaper groups," Gary writes. "The challenge for our industry is to convince these unemployed journalists to explore the joys and rewards of owning a small-town newspaper."

Helen Sosniecki gets down to the nitty-gritty of that in another article, giving advice on how to go about buying a newspaper and testifying about the experience.

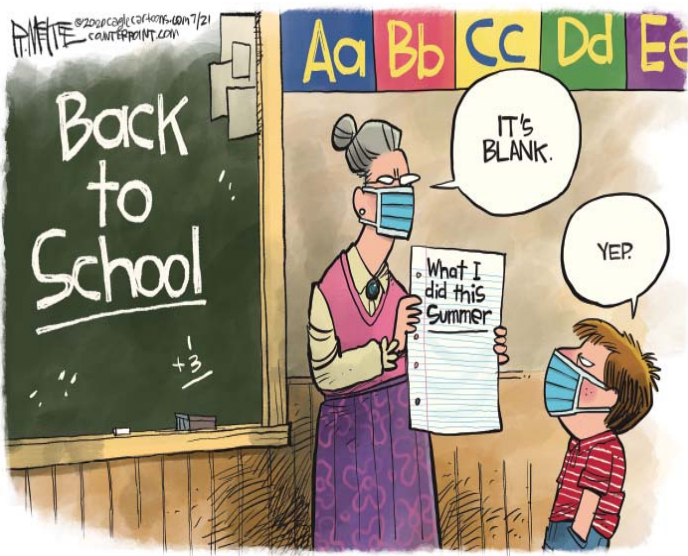
"It won't be all fun and games," she writes. "The hours are long. The financial paycheck may be less than your corporate salary. But the rewards in your accomplishments as a community newspaper owner can overshadow those drawbacks. . . . You live there. You chronicle the town's history. But you're also one of them. It's your town, too. It will fill you with pride when the school basketball team wins that first state championship. It will bring you to tears when you and your neighbors bury that young volunteer fireman with the pregnant wife who died along with another volunteer on the way to a brush fire. It will be your job, your business and your life - and you'll likely love it more than anything you've ever done."

Kevin Slimp and I agree that the keys to success as a community newspaper publisher are the right market, the right management and the right content. "Job number one is to put out a good product," he told The Washington Post recently. He told me in an email, "It's time we began to focus on publishing the best newspapers we can."

There are thousands of Americans who could put out a good newspaper. They need to give themselves the chance. We're here to give advice if you need it.

Al Cross edited and managed weekly newspapers before working 26 years for the Louisville Courier Journal and serving as president of the Society of Professional Journalists. For 15 years, he has directed the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky, where he is professor of journalism.

This article is one of a series distributed by the Texas Press Association for its members. If you wish more information, call 713-266-3444 or email grafkstar@aol.com



**THE POSTSCRIPT**  
By Carrie Classon

**"The Blue Tarp"**

I noticed my wrists were sticking to my desk.

This was a gradual awareness. I spend almost all day at my desk and I don't know precisely when it started, but I finally looked down because my wrists were undeniably sticky. I had used the wrist rest in front of my keyboard for... well, forever, and I'd noticed there were a few rips in the fabric. This had apparently progressed, completely unnoticed, until the wrist rest had started to ooze some awful sticky substance, which was now stuck to my arm.

"How did this happen?" I asked myself.

I have a friend whose father was a hoarder. She described the process whereby the house slowly filled with his stuff. He would conquer one room and then, almost imperceptibly, move into the next room until one day, the family found they could no longer use the kitchen range because it was piled high with stuff.

"How does this happen?" I asked her.

I remember a trip across the country when my husband, Peter, and I came upon a mobile home, sitting by itself, completely covered in a faded blue tarp. I assumed the home was abandoned until I saw there was a light on. The light was kind of hard to see because all the windows were covered with the blue tarp.

"How do you get to the point where you are living under a blue tarp?" I asked Peter.

"Gradually," he said. I think this is probably true.

I'm guessing there might have been a way to fix that roof that would have allowed the occupants to see out the windows. But they probably thought this would work for a little while. Then one day turned into two, two days turned into months and, after a while, they got used to it. Who needs curtains when all your windows are covered with a blue tarp?

I am spending more time in my house than ever before and it has caused me to notice things.

One morning I was waiting for my coffee to warm up and I got to looking at the poster we have hanging in the kitchen. The poster predates our marriage. I remember how I liked it when I first saw it—a cheerful print of peppers in shades of red and green with the names of the peppers underneath. I took a good look at that poster for the first time in ages and realized there were no longer red and green peppers on it. All the peppers had faded to various shades of pale pink and baby blue.

Furthermore, the frame had come unglued and there was a giant gap where there shouldn't be. The whole thing looked dreadful, and it had been hanging there in plain sight for who knows how long without me noticing.

"Peter! The pepper poster looks awful!" Peter took a look at it.

"You're right," he agreed. "How did this happen?"

I am replacing the pepper poster with a new poster of peppers. They are brightly colored and hopefully will stay that way for a few years.

In the meantime, I am looking around the house as if seeing a newly discovered land, trying to see what I no longer notice. (Why is there a box of cookies tucked behind my printer? Why are there peat pots stacked on the washing machine?) It is a revelation, looking at my house anew. And it's probably a good exercise. I'd like to do whatever I can to keep from waking up one morning and looking out on a blue tarp.

Till next time, Carrie  
Carrie Classon's memoir is called, "Blue Yarn." Learn more at [CarrieClasson.com](http://CarrieClasson.com).

**STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS**  
By Chris Cobler

**COVID-19 surge in nursing homes worries editor**

Thank you for all the well wishes after my first "Capital Highlights" column last week. I also appreciate the emails suggesting topics of high interest. Agriculture, oil, education and health care top the list so far, but please keep the conversation going about what's happening in your corner of our big state and what is of highest interest to you. One editor emailed to say he was highly concerned about the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes in his community. The data at the Texas Department of State Health Services for his county is about two weeks old, he said, even though the state website promises daily updates. Last week, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission released its first list of COVID-19 cases and deaths with details about individual Texas nursing homes. The initial release showed nursing homes accounted for about one-third of Texas' COVID-19 deaths and the number of cases in the health care facilities had more than doubled during July. In July, Texas reported 3,315 COVID-19 deaths and 252,884 cases. Both totals were more than all other months of the pandemic combined.

**Don't plant those mystery seeds**

Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller urged Texans to take extreme precaution if the mail brings mysterious seeds from China. The packets, mailed to multiple states, including Texas, are falsely labeled as jewelry. The seeds could contain harmful invasive species or be otherwise unsafe. The mailings could be part of an online scam to bolster product ratings, Miller said. People shouldn't throw away the packets because the seeds could grow in the landfill. Instead, email [SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov) for more information. In an interview with the Texas Tribune, Miller planted more seeds of doubt about China. "I'm getting sick and tired of these surprises coming out of China," Miller told the Tribune. "First, it was a China virus, then it was murder hornets. Then we had closed down their embassy because of espionage and spying. And now we, you know, we've got all these mysterious seeds." —

**Doctors not on the front lines**

The Texas Medical Association tweeted a MedPage Today story reporting there is no evidence the doctor group in a viral video had any expertise about COVID-19. The video went viral



last week after about 10 physicians, dressed in white coats with an embroidered America's Frontline Doctors logo, spoke for 45 minutes in front of the Supreme Court building. The MedPage Today article detailed the doctors' reported lack of credentials regarding the pandemic and the allegedly false information they spread. The Texas Medical Association represents more than 53,000 physicians and medical students.

**Texas A&M climbs aboard Operation Warp Speed**

A Texas A&M University System subcontractor will mass produce COVID-19 vaccines as part of the federal government's Operation Warp Speed. A new federal task order, valued at \$265 million, reserved production capacity in College Station through the end of 2021. "The Texas A&M System is ready to save lives and help protect the country," said John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. Operation Warp Speed aims to deliver millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of the year if the U.S. Food and Drug Administration determines they are safe and effective.

**The best in the country**

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer

Center ranks as No. 1 in cancer care in the U.S. News & World Report's 2020-21 "Best Hospitals" survey. The institution has been named one of the nation's top two cancer hospitals since the survey's inception in 1990. "This incredible honor is especially impactful during these unprecedented times," said Dr. Peter Pisters, MD Anderson president.

**Keep your eyes on the road plan**

The direction of Texas roads and highways for the next 30 years will be mapped out at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11, during a virtual public hearing. This is a key opportunity to speak about the Texas Highway Department of Transportation 2050 plan. To register in advance to talk, call 1-855-839-2750 by noon Aug. 10. The WebEx link to attend the meeting is at [TxDOT.gov](http://TxDOT.gov). The plan estimates Texas will grow from about 29 million to more than 47 million people by 2050, and its gross state product will rise from \$2 trillion to \$7 trillion by 2046. The document also predicts fast technological change in areas such as connected and autonomous vehicles.

The many rural readers of this column may want to weigh in on TxDOT's strategic approach. Less than 10 percent of current state spending is on rural and multimodal connectivity. One of five options in the plan would increase that to almost 35 percent; the other four would devote considerably less to rural areas.

Chris Cobler is a board member and past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. He welcomes email at [ccobler@texaspress.com](mailto:ccobler@texaspress.com).

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# Vance Dixon - More than just Ballcaps

EAST ALDINE — Vance Dixon is on a natural high as we roll up on him in his little strip mall community center at Charriton and JFK. The previous day had seen him hosting a voter registration drive, and among those who signed up to vote for the first time was Dixon himself.

"We had Rock the Vote shirts on and we had tables set up... One of the ladies I went to school with was like, 'Hey Vance I want to do something with everything that's going on,' and she asked if she could use my space and I said yes. We had a tent out front, and we registered 38 new voters. Yes, we offered a free meal, but you have to do something to get something. To think, I was 34 years old and had never voted, but that's about to change."

We are in Dixon's classroom-sized center seated at one of a few tables scattered about amid a wall open to the positive scrawlings of all and sundry, a sort of shrine to LeBron James (Dixon's hero, he

says unabashedly), and some of his t-shirts and hats. He is wearing one of those shirts now — plain black, bearing the legend "To God the Glory," — and his prophet-like bushy beard almost obscures the message.

As far as his apparel line goes, one item has outstripped them all: ballcaps bearing the simple declarative statement of pride "Just a Kid from Aldine Mail Route."

"It was just when I was growing up, I would hear about all the different areas in Houston: Southside, Acres Homes, Fifth Ward, Spring, just different areas. And nobody ever mentioned Aldine Mail Route. People would say, 'Where are you from?' and I'd say 'Aldine Mail Route' and they'd say they've never heard of that."

Dixon is all about putting Aldine on the map, literally. In the days of digital maps, some of those depicting Greater Houston would simply leave Aldine off the map, the better to run more ver-

biage and save on printer costs.

"My dad told me that and that's what I was talking about when I was saying that I wanted to make

would be like where are you from again? Aldine Mail Route? No joke. Literally I mean it. As I got older I realized that everybody is from somewhere,

gone from that," he says. "Aldine may be low-income or however you want to frame it, but that doesn't matter because it's where you end up at the finish line."

Dixon is just getting warmed up on a Sunday afternoon discourse:

"We do not have to travel the same path to get to the same distance. And sometimes, and I'm a little biased here, but when you take the path of most resistance, the difficult path, you learn more along the journey. And I'm not saying that nothing is easy but if it is easy, you didn't learn anything. I need the harder path, where you make mistakes and you learn something, that's when you really feel like you just accomplished something. I put my blood sweat and tears into this and I'm very proud of it."

Just another kid from Aldine Mail Route making good.

I asked him about his worship of LeBron James — there's a slogan reading "LeBron vs Everybody"

prominently displayed in the center.

"If I said I was a huge LeBron fan that would be an understatement," Dixon admits. "I even went up to Akron to see him play. I admire everything about him. Imagine you're 16 years old, famous already, inner-city kid, all types of people coming at you from all types of ways... Financial, all types of ways... And he made it this far? The only thing he's ever done wrong was some of the wording the ESPN special. Other than that, everything along the way, even the lady he was with since high school... LeBron is a family man. A role model, giving back, just everything."

And Vance Dixon is paying it forward. Just as LeBron James has never presented himself as anything other than just another kid from Akron, Ohio, so too has Vance Dixon proudly staked out his claim as just another kid from Aldine Mail Route.



this area more well-known," says Dixon, 34, and a graduate of Oleson, Hambrick and MacArthur High School. "People would always say they're from different areas but nobody would say they're from Aldine Mail Route, or when you told them that you were from here they

like some people are from the country, or wherever so I decided hey I'm just a kid from Aldine Mail Route."

Just a kid from Aldine Mail Route...

Dixon says sales took off from the second he posted a pic of one of his hats, resting on an ironing board, on Instagram. "It was just

## ENTERTAINMENT



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



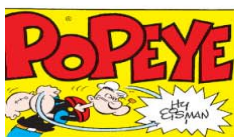
L.F.D.

by Mike Marland



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



LAFF-A-DAY



### SCRAMBLERS

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

- CHEATS
- POLES
- WASHET
- PARTEE

TODAY'S WORD

### Daily CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

- Height of fashion?
- First victim
- Expansive
- Retirement plan acronym
- Sushi bar soup
- Grooving on
- Plaid garment
- Greek vowels
- Small barrel
- Irish overcoats
- Wunderkind
- Thither
- Atmosphere
- sauce
- Florida city
- Mid-month date
- Chow down
- Painter
- Knitting need
- Archaeologist's find
- Cushion
- Opposed
- Plaything
- Malign
- Young child
- Mongrel
- Hodgepodge
- Yankee
- Doodle's feather?
- Huff and puff
- "Zounds!"
- Erstwhile

**DOWN**

- That guy
- Mound stat
- Holy fish?
- Pedro's pals
- Recycling receptacle
- Jacob's brother
- Humble
- "Platoon"
- locale
- Initial stake
- Celebrity
- Pitch
- Barbie's companion
- Drunkard
- Twosome
- Stash
- Curly's brother
- Shrill bark
- Coconut cookie
- Senior moment?
- Zits
- Take a chai
- Slight amou
- Army rank (Abbr.)
- Ten-year period
- Sanaa's lar
- Bear hair
- Country sir
- er Keith
- podrida
- A-line desig
- Sitarist's re
- dition
- Upper limit
- Aye rival
- Mamie's m

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### Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

7		1			4			
	2		9	8				
		1		3		7		
		3		6	9			
	8	4				5		
5			1	7				
	1	3		2				
3			5			4		
	7	4		1		8		

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ◆◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging  
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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### Trivi test

by F. Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY: Which coun the only one whose name ends wii letter "Q"?
- COMICS: What was the nar Dennis the Menace's dog?
- GOVERNMENT: Which C department oversees the National Service?
- ANATOMY: What is a con name for metacarpophalangeal joir
- SCIENCE: What is absolute ze
- MUSIC: Which famous mus nickname was Bocephus?
- MOVIES: What was the settir Alfred Hitchcock's film "The Birds
- ASTRONOMY: Which moon largest in our solar system?
- LANGUAGE: What does the word "veritas" mean?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who w only U.S. president who also serve as chief justice of the Supreme Cou

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### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTNOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Tree limb is missing. 2. Swim trunks are different. 3. Walkway is missing. 4. Boy's hair is different. 5. Umbrella handle is gone. 6. Windshield is missing.

### CryptoQuip

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

Clue: C equals E

Y ICCF PRIWF IQV KYKWH  
CFGMPZOH. RC PFF NZOR OMC  
GGQV KVCPOWVCH QOVN IQV  
GCPZWOH.

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### LOATHES

Today's Word

1. Scathe 2. Slope  
3. Swathe 4. Repeat

### SCRAMBLERS

Solution

### King Crossword

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

1. QATAR  
2. REXIE  
3. COMMERCE  
4. JOINT  
5. ZERO  
6. BOB DYLAN  
7. BIRDS  
8. DEIMOS  
9. VERITAS  
10. ROOSEVELT

### Weekly SUDOKU

Answers

3	7	4	6	2	1	5	8	9
8	6	2	1	7	4	9	5	3
9	1	5	3	7	4	2	6	8
5	4	6	9	1	2	7	3	8
1	9	8	4	3	7	6	2	5
2	3	7	5	8	6	4	9	1
5	8	1	2	4	3	9	5	7
4	2	3	7	9	5	8	1	6
7	5	9	1	6	8	3	4	2

Answers

1. I keep reading for clues  
2. We all know the  
3. poor creatures work for  
4. peanuts.

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# CHURCH PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Simeon in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Whose first chapter begins, "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab"? Exodus, 2 Kings, Job, Proverbs

3. In Luke 7, where did Jesus raise a widow's son from the dead? Amos, Nain, Lystra, Philippi
4. From Genesis 4, who is considered the father of all musicians? Jeremiah, Joash, Jubal, Job
5. In Luke 1, what was Elisabeth and Zacharias' child named? Elisabeth, Zacharias, Thomas, John
6. From Genesis 12, where did

Abram go after leaving Ur? Iconium, Nineveh, Haran, Salem

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) 2 Kings; 3) Nain; 4) Jubal; 5) John; 6) Haran "Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.  
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Psalm 19:14

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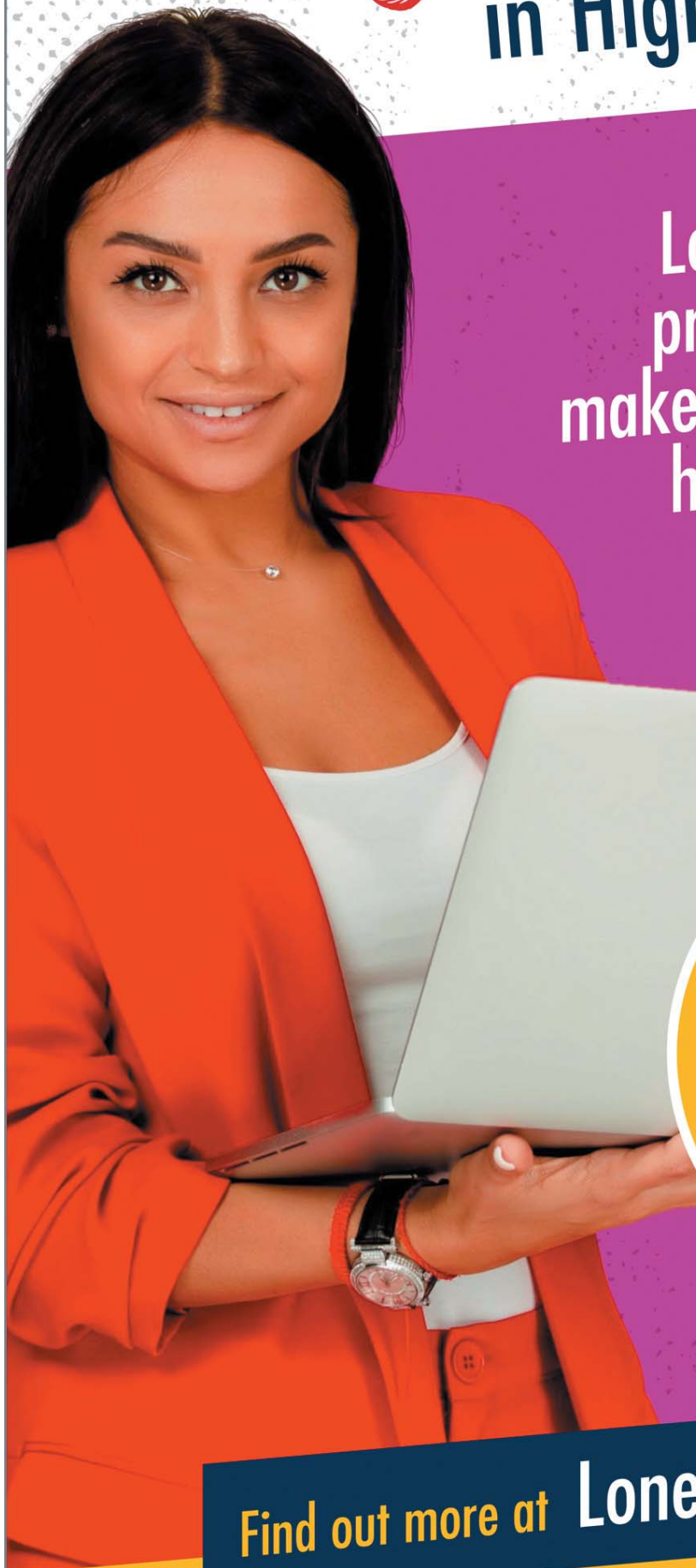
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