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NORTHEAST NEWS

Americanisms



“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
— Martin Luther King Jr.

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VOL. 45, NO. 4/5 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

COVID-19 VACCINE RESOURCES

CITY OF HOUSTON
Registration
HoustonEmergency.org/
covid19
832-393-4220

HARRIS COUNTY
Registration at
readyharris.org OR
https://vacstrac.hctx.net
832-927-8787

STATE OF TEXAS INFO
Call 2-1-1 for referral to a
Vaccine provider
OR #COVID19TX

COVID-19 Cases as of January 25, 2021

HOUSTON AREA

477,463 POSITIVE
4,804 DEATHS
377,762 RECOVERED

TEXAS

2,250,827 POSITIVE
34,917 DEATHS
1,809,067 RECOVERED

UNITED STATES

25,155,357 POSITIVE
419,388 DEATHS
--- RECOVERED

WORLDWIDE

99,368,828 POSITIVE
2,133,140 DEATHS
54,885,577 RECOVERED

COVID-19 RESOURCES

City of Houston Pre-Screening 832-393-4220
Harris County Ask a Nurse
713-634-1110
Harris County Pre-Screening 832-927-7575
or readyharris.org
Harris County Mobile Tests
713-439-6000
MD Medical
1-888-776-5252
Methodist Hospital
Download
mymethodist app.

Harris County opens on-line COVID-19 Vaccine registration

HOUSTON — Starting on Tuesday, January 26th, Harris County Public Health (HCPH) will launch a new COVID-19 Vaccination Portal for residents who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) criteria for receiving a vaccine. The portal will allow individuals to be placed on a waitlist and contacted once vaccines and appointments are available. The waitlist will be available via the vaccine information link on ReadyHarris.org and https://vacstrac.hctx.net starting no later than Tuesday afternoon. Eligible residents without internet access can also call

(832) 927-8787 once the portal is live to be placed on the waitlist.

Harris County's new "Smart Waitlist" system will not use a first-come, first-served process for allocating vaccines. In order to ensure fair access for elderly residents, working families, and vulnerable populations, registrants on the waitlist will instead be selected through a prioritization and randomization process in accordance with state guidelines. Only individuals who fall under the DSHS Phase 1A and 1B category will be eligible to receive the vaccine at this stage. Those who are not qualified to receive the vaccine under 1A or 1B



Harris County Public Health Nurse administers a vaccination last week at the Pct. 2 Northeast Community Center.

will still be able to be placed on the waitlist but will not be contacted to schedule an appointment until the State of Texas expands eligibility beyond 1A and 1B, likely not until the Spring or Summer.

Priority phases:

Phase 1A: Individuals in Phase 1A who register for the waitlist will be prioritized before those in Phase 1B to ensure everyone in Phase 1A has an opportunity to receive the vaccine. Within Phase 1A, individuals will be selected at random from the following age cohorts, with oldest cohorts prioritized first: 75+, 65-74, 55-64, 45-54, 35-44, 25-34, 18-24.

Phase 1B: Individuals in Phase 1B who register for the waitlist will be selected at random from the following age cohorts, with oldest cohorts prioritized first: 75+, 65-74, 55-64, 45-54, 35-44, 25-34, 18-24.

Future Phases:

Individuals who are not qualified to receive the vaccine under Phases 1A or 1B will still be able to register for the waitlist. However, they will not be contacted to schedule an

See **VACCINE REGISTRATION, Page 4**

Texas proposes \$119.7B yearly budget, down 3%

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas Speaker of the House Dade Phelan today released the following statement on the House's base budget for the 2022-2023 biennium:

"The Texas House's base budget prioritizes the needs of Texans during this consequential moment in our state's history and advances the Legislature's commitment to the historic public education and school finance and property tax reforms passed last session. The decisions we make during the 87th legislative session will have lasting effects on the future of our state, which is why the House will work to improve our business climate, foster economic prosperity, and do what's right for our students. I am grateful to the Members of the House Appropriations Committee and the hard-working committee staff for their efforts throughout this process."

The House base budget



TEXAS STATE CAPITOL IN AUSTIN

recommendations for FY 2022-23 appropriate \$119.7 billion in general revenue, a decrease of three (3) percent adjusted for population and inflation. The House budget recommendations are \$3.2 billion below the spending limit of 7.06 percent adopted by the Legislative Budget Board in November 2020, and maintain a majority of the five (5) percent reductions identified by state agencies in 2020.

Significant provisions of

House base budget recommendations include the following:

- Maintains the Legislature's commitment to House Bill 3, the school finance reform legislation passed last session, by funding the Foundation School Program (FSP) at \$53 billion in all funds and \$41.2 billion in general

See **TEXAS BUDGET, page 2**
See Also **CAPITOL HIGHLIGHTS, page 4**



Brady goes for 7th Lombardi, Mahomes second in what could be a very real 'Super' Bowl!

I guess that Tom Brady guy still has something left in the tank.

After spending 20 years in New England and leading the Patriots and head coach Bill Belichick to six Super Bowl titles, Brady moved south to sunny Tampa, FL and proved he's not washed up at 43 years of age.

In Kansas City, Chief fans have once again put their faith in 25-year-old Patrick Mahomes, who led their beloved team to the Lombardi Trophy last year and is making a return trip this year to go after a second straight title.

The former Texas Tech star had his ups and downs this season, but when it mattered most, the strong-armed slinger put the Chiefs on his back in the AFC title game against Buffalo to lead them to a second straight Super Bowl.

In the Chief's 38-24 conference title victory, Mahomes passed for 325 yards and three touchdowns to send his team onto Tampa.

While Mahomes was working his magic, Brady

See **KEENEY on SUPER BOWL, page 3**

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SCHOOL NEWS

CenterPoint Energy recognized by Aldine Education Foundation and the Aldine ISD



CenterPoint Energy was recognized at the Jan. 12 Board of Trustees meeting for its partnership with the Aldine Education Foundation (AEF) and Blanson CTE High School. Pictured are (l-r): Linda Flores-Olson, Director of AEF, Lynette Sealy and Theresa Sauls with CenterPoint Energy, and Wanda Ardoin-Bailey and Ben Ibarra with Blanson CTE High School.

During the Jan. 12 Board of Trustees meeting, the Aldine Education Foundation (AEF), along with Blanson CTE High School, recognized CenterPoint Energy for serving as a business partner with Aldine ISD. AEF Director Linda Flores-Olson and Blanson Principal Ben

Ibarra thanked CenterPoint for supporting the district's Educator of the Year Awards, providing scholarships to AISD students, providing energy rebates to the district, and serving as a business partner with Blanson CTE High School. Over the years, CenterPoint has donated \$277,159.66 to Aldine

ISD. Representing CenterPoint at the Board meeting were Theresa Sauls, the People & Business Solutions, Community Relations Program Manager for Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and Lynette Sealy, District Director for Northwest Gas Operations.

Message from the Superintendent, Jan. 19, 2021

Dear Aldine Community,

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"

In Aldine, this question is what drives us every day. What are we doing for our students? What are we doing for our families? What are we doing for the greater Aldine community? As we plan for the remainder of this semester and look ahead to the next school year, this commitment to serving others will continue to be at the center of everything we do.

I hope you found time yesterday, or any day, to honor Dr. King's legacy and serve others in your community. Thank you for all you do to support our students. While this day is set aside to honor his work, we must live every day with service, equality, and compassion for others in mind.

Let's continue doing our best to keep our community safe, healthy, and learning.

Student Engagement Matters

Please continue encouraging your students not only to log in or show up to class but also to engage — to be curious, to ask questions, and to find ways of learning that make them excited. We know it can be difficult, but it is important that all students — whether learning at home or on campus — engage with their lessons and complete assignments, quizzes, and projects. For At-Home and On-Campus learners, all grades for the second nine weeks have now been uploaded to the Home Access Center as of January 12, 2021. If you do not have a Home Access Center (HAC) account, please sign up via the Home Access Center website.

Aldine ISD COVID-19 Update

While the Houston/Harris County area has seen an uptick in positivity rates, Aldine ISD's rates remain relatively steady. We continually monitor cases across the district and have plans in place should there be an increase or outbreak. We all must continue doing our part: wear a mask, wash our hands, and continue to social distance.

Families can always check the COVID-19 dashboard for an overview of the active cases by school.

COVID-19 Testing Sites in Aldine Area

Drive-thru rapid COVID-19 testing is available for all Aldine ISD students and staff learning and teaching on-campus at the M.B. Sonny Donaldson Child Nutrition Services Building, 1802 Aldine Bender Rd., Houston, TX 77032. Please note that online registration is required. You can access the online form by clicking here.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The district is continuing to work with local officials, including Harris County Public Health (HCPH), to communicate the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine. Registration is currently open to those in Phase 1B, which includes anyone over the age of 65 or with one of nine chronic conditions



as defined by the state. As we receive information, we will share it with our stakeholders.

School Meals Available

Free curbside meals/weekend meal bundles are available for all children 18 and younger. Additionally, free breakfast and lunch will be provided to all Aldine ISD students learning on campus. Details can be found on our website.

Aldine ISD also offers free evening meals to students at all middle schools, ninth grade schools, and high schools. These schools provide after-school educational enrichment programs for students, which enable the district's At-Risk Evening Meal Program to be provided by the Child Nutrition Services Department. Please contact your campus for more information.

Remote Learning Days

Remote Learning Days are set aside for all students to learn from home while all campus-based staff will report to school. Our next upcoming Remote Learning Day is Friday, January 29.

During Remote Learning Days, all students should log in to Schoology and revisit pre-recorded lessons and previously posted assignments. It is a perfect opportunity for students to catch up on any missing assignments and review any lessons they may have missed or need additional time to complete. Teachers will not present any live instruction sessions and may not be available for live feedback sessions.

The district will mark attendance through the evidence of students completing assignments and/or logging into Schoology. Families who need students to be on campus Friday or during any designated Remote Learning Days should directly contact their child's campus.

Please mark your calendar for Remote Learning Days during the 2021 spring semester:

Friday, January 29
Friday, February 26
Friday, March 12
Friday, April 16
Monday, May 17

Enjoy your four-day week!

With Aldine Pride,

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney
Superintendent

NEWS NOTES

Two HCPH Locations Offering Free COVID-19 Testing

There are two stationary sites. At the M.O. Campbell Education Center in Aldine, children can also be tested. Hours are 6am-1pm. Register at www.hcphtx.org or call **832-927-7575**.

For the Pasadena stationary site at San Jacinto Central Campus, people must be 13 or older to be tested and people can register at www.doineeda.covid19test.com or call **832-927-7575**.

New ACCESS2Health Services now open

Pct. 2 has installed a Medical Smart Pod office in the parking lot at the Northeast Community Center on Bentley. The public can get Free COVID-19 tests, and many other medical services. According to Dr. Bernice Koko of United Health Partners, all services are free and walk-ins are welcome, no appointment necessary.

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Aldine ISD Trustees Hold Monthly Board Meeting on Jan. 12

Aldine ISD Trustees held their Jan. 12 Board meeting with some Trustees attending live in the Board Room of the Donaldson Administration Building and others via videoconference per the modified open meetings act by order of Gov. Greg Abbott. Board President Paul Shanklin, Assistant Secretary Dr. Kimberley Booker, and Member Steve Mead joined Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney and members of her Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in the Board room, while Vice-President Rose Avalos, Secretary Connie Esparza, and Members Dr. Viola M. Garcia and Randy Bates took part in the meeting via videoconference.

Elected officials, community, and district honor Aldine ISD Board

In honor of School Board Recognition Month, several elected officials honored the Aldine ISD Board of Trustees for its leadership and commitment to the community during the Jan. 12 Trustees meeting. U.S. Rep. Sylvia Garcia sent a Congressional certificate on her behalf thanking Board members for their service. Rep. Garcia also delivered a video message thanking Trustees for their service. Abel Garza, Assistant Superintendent of Government Relations and Constituent Services, announced that State Senator Carol Alvarado also provided certificates of appreciation, State Senator Senfronia Thompson, State Rep. Armando Walle, Harris County Precinct 2 County Commissioner Adrian Garcia, and Harris County Precinct 4 County Commissioner Jack R. Cagle. Staff member Clint Klingerman represented Commissioner Cagle at the Board meeting. The Aldine ISD Board of Trustees consists of President Paul Shanklin, Vice-President Rose Avalos, Secretary Connie Esparza, Assistant Secretary Dr. Kimberley Booker, and Members Dr. Viola M. Garcia, Randy Bates, and Steve Mead. The district's Communications Department presented a video of Trustees out in the community. Aldine schools will share videos and messages on their marquees and social media celebrating Aldine ISD Trustees throughout January.

On Monday, Jan 11, a group of Aldine administrators visited the homes of Trustees working from home virtually.

AISD's Trustees appreciated the tokens of appreciation, and each took the time to reflect on why they chose to become Board members.

"This is the best work I've ever done in my life," Dr. Booker said.

"As Trustees, we want to make sure our kids are safe," Mr. Mead said. "We're all in this together. I could be doing a lot of other things, but serving as a Trustee with my fellow Board members is the most important thing to me."

"I give 110% to this, and I love working with our superintendent and my fellow Board members," Mrs. Esparza said. "This is all about the kids."

"After 30 years of volunteer service, I knew where God wanted me to be," said Mr. Bates, the newest Trustee who was elected in 2019. "It's my responsibility to see that kids have opportunities. I also want to thank my fellow Board members for accepting me."

"My dedication to Aldine ISD and this Board is absolute," said Dr. Garcia, the longest-tenured Trustee with 28 years of service as a Trustee.

Ms. Avalos has resided in Aldine since she was two months old, and spent 33 years as an educator in Aldine, said serving as a Trustee is important to her.

"I want to protect the investment I've made during my 33 years in Aldine," she said. "This is what I feel my calling is."

"God put me here for a reason," Mr. Shanklin said. "This is the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my life."

Texas Budget proposal,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

revenue, an increase of \$3.8 billion. The House budget adds \$3.1 billion in general revenue to fund enrollment growth, an additional \$992 million in general revenue for tax compression; and \$1.1 billion in general revenue to replace one-time CARES Act funding provided in 2020.

• Provides \$5.9 billion in general revenue at the Teachers Retirement System with an increase of \$838 million to fund the increased state contribution rate adopted last legislative session.

• Appropriates \$74.2 billion in all funds for the Texas Medicaid program, including \$27.4 billion in general revenue with an



State Representative Armando Walle is on the Appropriations committee, and will be on the Conference committee with the Senate to come up with a final budget.

additional \$920 million to address projected caseload growth.

• Appropriates \$3.3 billion in general revenue for behavioral and mental health services, an increase of \$26 million from last session.

• Maintains border security funding across multiple agencies at \$800 million in general revenue.

• Does not tap into the state's Economic Stabilization Fund, more commonly known as the "Rainy Day Fund".

The Texas Senate has proposed a similar bill, with a \$251.2 B budget, but the two houses must hold a conference committee to align the bills and agree on the wording for both.

Next Start courses offer Spring credit with flexible start dates at Lone Star College-North Harris

HOUSTON (Jan. 25, 2021) – Students who missed the start of the spring semester still have a way to earn full credit with Lone Star College-North Harris' Next Start courses.

Next Start offers students more than 20 courses to choose from, such as government, history, math, and more, with online, in-person, and hybrid options available that transfer to a four-year university. LSC-North Harris and LSC-East Aldine Center have 14-week courses beginning Monday, Feb. 1,

12-week courses beginning Monday, Feb. 15, and 8-week courses beginning Wednesday, March 24.

Students who wish to enroll in Next Start courses must first meet with an advisor and receive approval to enroll. Be sure to enroll by Feb. 1 to get the best schedule! To view advising hours, schedule a virtual appointment with an advisor, and view a list of the available courses this semester, please visit LoneStar.edu/LearnMore.

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.

Lone Star College, RigUp to offer free training for solar professionals

HOUSTON (Jan. 19) – The solar energy industry is experiencing massive growth but is facing a severe shortage of skilled solar professionals. Lone Star College and RigUp have announced a partnership to provide free training for students interested in joining the growing renewable energy industry.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for those who have lost jobs in the oil and gas or construction industries to retool and learn new skills," said Ken Kral, executive director, Lone Star Corporate College. "We are honored to partner with RigUp as they help build the solar industry in Texas and support tremendous job growth."

RigUp is a leading workforce management solution for the skilled trades, serving the renewables, oil & gas, construction and defense industries.

Students will learn the basics of installing utility scale solar racking and modular equipment, and will earn Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 certification. The free Solar Installer Training Course, including an online OSHA Training and two-day, hands-on course, will take place in the El Campo area where the Aktina Renewable Power Project solar farm is being constructed. The facility is expected to take two years to complete and will consist of 1.4 million solar modules.

Once students complete the program, they will be offered employ-



Lone Star College and RigUp have teamed up to provide free training for students interested in joining the growing renewable energy industry. Pictured are solar professionals constructing a solar farm at Round Rock, Texas.

ment to work in the solar industry to construct, assemble and maintain commercial solar systems.

"RigUp is committed to helping people get back to work," said Ron Nickelson, head of solar at RigUp. "Our partnership with Lone Star College gives local residents access to the training they need to secure good jobs with low barriers of entry, whether they are simply looking for short-term work or a long-term career in the solar industry."

The weekly course offering is expected to begin in mid-February and continue through the spring. Visit LoneStar.edu/Solar-Installer to learn more.

"The solar power industry is booming, with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicting an over 50% growth rate of solar installations through 2029," said Kral.

ABOUT RIGUP

RigUp is the leading workforce management solution for the skilled trades. We make it easier for skilled laborers to find work and for compa-

nies to find in-demand, trained workers. RigUp operates across the oil & gas, wind, solar, construction and defense industries. Through people and technology, we provide the staffing, training, and professional services to empower the people who get hard work done. For more information, visit www.rigup.com.

ABOUT LONE STAR COLLEGE

Lone Star College offers high-quality, low-cost academic transfer and career training education to 93,000+ 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 almost \$3 billion. LSC consists of seven colleges, 10 centers, two university centers, Lone Star Corporate College and LSC-Online. To learn more, visit LoneStar.edu.

Super Bowl Preview,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tossed three touchdown passes to lead the Buccaneers to a 31-26 win at Green Bay. Brady wasn't great, he did throw three interceptions in the NFC title game, but he did enough to send TB to its second Super Bowl in team history (Tampa Bay defeated Oakland 18 years ago for its only NFL title).

Brady not only led his team to the ultimate game, but they will play the game in their home stadium, becoming the first team to host a Super Bowl. In the 1980 game, the Los Angeles Rams played in their backyard in the Rose Bowl when they faced the mighty Steelers, but their home stadium at the time was the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The other team that came closest to hosting the big game was the San Francisco 49ers, who defeated Miami in the 1985 big game in Palo Alto, CA, a suburb of Frisco.

Brady's 10th Super Bowl (he's 6-3 in the big game) will make him the fourth NFL quarterback to lead two different teams to a Super Bowl. Tom Terrific joins Craig Morton (Dallas and Denver), Kurt Warner (St. Louis Rams and Arizona Cardinals), and Peyton Manning (Indianapolis and Denver) as the only quarterbacks in NFL history to take two different teams, and start, a Super Bowl.

The 55th version of the NFL's ultimate game could be a very special one as both teams have explosive offenses and bi-play ability.

Brady had a solid season in his first year in Tampa throwing for 4,633 yards and 40 touchdowns. He led the Bucs to three straight road playoff wins passing for 860 yards and seven TDs.

Mahomes followed up his 2019 MVP season with 4,740 passing yards in 15 games (he sat out the Chief's season finale) and 38 touchdowns. In two home playoff games he passed for another 580 yards and four touchdowns and overcame a concussion and big toe injury in the AFC Divisional game against Cleveland.

Having an extra week of rest before the Feb. 7 game should benefit Mahomes, so expect him to be ready to take on a solid TB defense on Sunday.

KC head coach Andy Reid does have a major

injury concern to deal with as he prepares his team for a shot at a second straight Lombardi Trophy (it would be the franchises third overall. Kansas City defeated Minnesota in Super Bowl 4). Starting left tackle Eric Fisher, who protects Mahomes blind side, was lost for the season in the AFC title game when he sustained an Achilles injury. Chief fans are probably confident that Reid and his staff will find a suitable replacement and they had better because Tampa Bay has an aggressive and quick front seven that has produced six sacks and three fumble recoveries in three playoff games (the Bucs had four against Aaron Rodgers in the NFC title game). The secondary is also playing well and has produced five interceptions in three playoff games.

But this will be the TB's defense biggest test when they take on Mahomes and an offense that is loaded with offensive weapons. Mahomes has a host of dependable and speedy wide receivers, but the best of the bunch is Tyreek Hill (87 receptions, 1,276 yards, 15 TDs in the regular season). In two playoff games Hill has caught 22 passes for 250 yards, but has yet to score a post-season touchdown. Mahomes also has the game's best tight end in dependable Travis Kelce (105 receptions, 1,416 yards, 11 TDs). Kelce has grabbed 23 passes for 226 yards and three scores in the Chief's first two playoff games. He's going to be a matchup nightmare for the TB linebackers and when Mahomes needs a big play in a tight situation, you can bet he will be looking for big No. 87.

KC has also got some nice production from speedy wide receiver Mecole Hardman in the playoffs. He had a 50+ yard run to set up one touchdown and grabbed a scoring pass from Hardman against the Bills.

The Chiefs are not a one-trip pony, they can also run the ball and having rookie running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire (803 rushing yards, 4 TDs) back in the fold should help keep the Bucs defense honest knowing they will need to stop the run first to slow down the Chiefs (good luck with that, Bucs). Edwards-Helaire missed the last two regular season games and the first playoff

game with a high ankle sprain, but returned for the AFC title game and helped the cause with a touchdown run. Backup Darrell Williams has done a nice job as his replacement and don't forget about Le'Von Bell as well. If Bell is healthy (he missed the Buffalo game with a knee injury), I would not be surprised if Reid comes up with some gadget play to get him involved in the game.

Brady has a few weapons of his own and has two solid receivers to throw to in former Texas A&M Aggie Mike Evans (70 receptions, 1,006 yards, 13 TDs). In three playoff games, Evans has grabbed 10 passes for 107 yards and two TDs. Fellow wide out Chris Godwin (65 receptions, 840 yards, 7 TDs) has been Brady's go-to guy in the post season with 14 receptions for 223 yards and one score. Brady also has his buddy from New England to go to in Rob Gronkowski, who has only one reception in the post season. Don't be surprised if Gronk's role expands in the Super Bowl.

Tampa Bay has also gotten some nice production in the running game from Leonard Fournette, who has come up with two rushing scores and one receiving score in the playoffs. Fournette's ability to move the chains could be crucial in SB 55 because if the Bucs can control the clock and keep Mahomes off the field, their chances of winning a second Lombardi Trophy would be greatly enhanced.

This one has all the making of an offensive shootout and playing on their home field will be a huge benefit for the Bucs. This will be the fifth time Brady and Mahomes have met and both own two wins against each other, so something has to give on Sunday. Brady is the Master and Mahomes is the Student, but he's a quick learner and it's tough to bet against either one of them on the big stage.

This one might come down to who has the ball last, and something tells me the kid will outplay the legend as Mahomes outduels Brady and enters a select club of NFL quarterbacks who have won two or more Super Bowls. Enjoy the game folks; it should be a good one. My pick, Kansas City 36, Tampa Bay 33




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100th Ticket..... Portable Ice Maker	600th Ticket..... Outdoor Propane Fire Pit
150th Ticket..... \$200 Gift Card	650th Ticket..... GoPro Hero/Black Waterproof Camera
200th Ticket..... 250 Amp Battery Charger/Starter	699th Ticket..... 50" Roku/Smart TV
250th Ticket..... Beats Solo 3 Wireless Headphones	700th Ticket..... 2021 Chevy Camaro or 2021 Chevy Colorado Pick-up
300th Ticket..... \$200 Gift Card	<small>(Color & Model may vary from Pictures)</small>
350th Ticket..... Fire HD 8" Tablet	

Posters Courtesy of the Highlands STAR-Crosby COURIER

Vaccine Registration,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Phases 1A and 1B. Once individuals are selected to receive a vaccine, they will be provided a link with instructions on how to select a location and time to get vaccinated at a HCPH site.

The launch of this new portal and waitlist expands the previous process by allowing eligible residents to sign up for vaccines on their own directly. Since December, Harris County Public Health has administered 27,426 vaccines to eligible residents, less than a week after receiving each shipment. To date, HCPH has so far been reaching out directly to and vaccinating front-line workers under Phase 1A and specific groups in Phase 1B who have high contacts or will have trouble obtaining a vaccine outside of HCPH.

As more supply of vaccine becomes available, HCPH will continue to en-

sure allocation and administration of vaccines are done in ways that are efficient, fair, and equitable, and that vulnerable communities have equal access to vaccines.

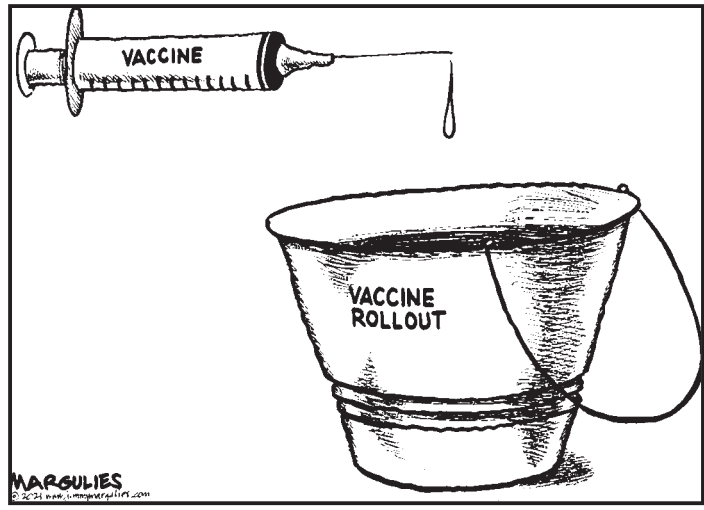
Residents who are selected for an appointment should show up no more than 15 minutes before their scheduled time to ensure the process flows smoothly. Those who are not eligible or who show up without an appointment at an HCPH site will be turned away. All appointments are based on vaccine availability, and current appointments may be adjusted due to any possible changes to the department's vaccine allotment.

Current COVID-19 vaccines require two shots and the protectiveness of the vaccine — which has a 94% efficacy rate — does not set in until a week or two after your second shot. Even with the arrival of a COV-

ID-19 vaccine, HCPH encourages residents to stay home, cancel gatherings, wear a facemask, socially distance, and get tested.

In addition to the new registration portal, HCPH will be launching a COVID-19 Vaccine Data Hub. The Data Hub that show vaccine availability, distribution and other demographic data. The data included currently only reflects vaccines allocated to Harris County Public Health and select providers in the area through the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and will grow to include partnering organizations and Houston Health Department in the near future.

More information about COVID-19 vaccines is available at www.hcph.tx.org or www.ReadyHarris.org.



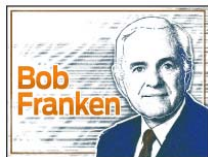
STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Chris Cobler

★ OPINION

Trump is Dumped

By Bob Franken

Trump Is Dumped — It's ludicrous that some of the white supremacists who participated in the Capitol riot are actually disowning Donald Trump, even though he made their bigotry fashionable again, at least among the tens of millions in his base. In their view, Trump became a traitor when he yielded to pressure from the few remaining sane members of his shrunken staff and called off the same riotous mob he had incited with a video "plea" to "go home." Even though he added "we love you" and "you're very special," it was not enough to placate some of the supremacist seditionists (SS) who have now added their hero to their snit list with charges that he threw them under the bus. "Get out of our way," said one. "We don't follow you." One can argue that these freaks from the fringe are just giving Donald Trump the Trump treatment. The Trumpster made a habit of tossing his most ardent supporters into the dumpster whenever it suited his whims. Even Mike Pence, who spent an entire four years toadying up to him, got trashed because at the last minute, Pence wouldn't break the law for him. But Donald Trump made the white supremacists what they are today: a genuine threat to the United States of America. Where before they crawled along the secret sewers of super patriot intolerance, they now march with their heads high, beneath their "Proud Boy" and "Boogaloo" banners, like so many divisions of the Trump Army. Trump, as presi-



dent, allowed them to wear their bigotry proudly. "I was a racist before racism was cool" was their spirited cry. Still, they are turning on the guy who encouraged them now that he is retreating with his tail between his legs. Some of them, those who even bother debating with their critics, use the "What about ...?" argument — as in, what about the leftist extremists who also use violence and attack police and innocent businesses in the name of the Black Lives Matter movement? Before we go any further down this false equivalence path, let's stipulate that all violence is bad. Having said that, let's go back to the root causes of racial prejudice. White people brought Black people to America as shackled captives. White people built their country using slave labor and fought a war to keep the slave system. White people forced Black people to endure discrimination under Jim Crow and only grudgingly are giving it up; our society is still riddled with discrimination, including a huge disparity in the use of deadly police force against people of color. That was the backdrop for this summer's protests against law enforcement fatal abuses. The massive demonstrations against the outrageous discrimination were overwhelm-

ingly peaceful and orderly. But yes, some of the demonstrators engaged in unwarranted violence, and again, let's emphasize that all violence is unwarranted. But at least their cause is righteous: opposition to the significant vestiges of racism that permeate our society. But, in the case of the white supremacists, they are the extremists who are the advocates of maintaining the racism. They are the ones who stormed the Capitol, along with those who are obsessed with other cultural grievances that caused them to attack democracy itself and now threaten civil war against the United States. All because a fair election deposed the man who breathed life into their racist delusions. Some of them dream of the helter-skelter of a race war. That's where Donald Trump's presidency was leading us and what American citizens rejected. Although, the uncomfortable fact is that more than 70 million people continue to believe that the election is unfair, corrupt, a "steal," or whatever word their iconic leader wished to call it. That's who the fascists are now rejecting as too moderate. The majority choice of Joe Biden promises to be a turn toward more moderation, at least until another authoritarian wannabe comes along.

Bob Franken is an Emmy Award-winning reporter who covered Washington for more than 20 years with CNN.

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Lawmakers start \$7 Billion away from Budget target

Texas House and Senate leaders appear to agree on their proposed budgets. Next, they just have to figure out how to cut \$7.2 billion.

Senate Finance Chair Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, worked with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick to propose a state budget of \$119.7 billion in general funds. House Speaker Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, proposed the same budget figure, indicating a collaborative spirit at the start of the 87th session.

That spirit will be tested as legislators try to meet Comptroller Glen Hegar's budgeted revenue forecast of \$112.5 billion.

"We have many tools available to balance this budget, which will require us to re-establish our priorities, stretch every dollar and find more efficient ways to deliver services," Nelson said in a statement. Among the priorities she set:

Maintaining the education funding increases and teacher pay raises established in 2019, including \$3.1 billion to fund enrollment growth for public education and \$1 billion in additional state aid related to property tax compression in the 2022-23 biennium.

\$5 billion for payroll growth and continued reforms to the Teacher Retirement System passed last session.

\$8.1 billion to fund higher education institution formulas. Combined projected funding of \$8 billion for mental health across 24 state agencies, including an increase of \$19.5 million to maintain operations for the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium; more than \$1 million in new funding to create a peer-to-peer counseling network and increase access to licensed mental health providers for Texas Law Enforcement Officers; and \$145 million to continue community mental



effects on the future of our state, which is why the House will work to improve our business climate, foster economic prosperity, and do what's right for our students," Phelan said.

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER

You don't find many strawberry fields in Texas, but that could change if a seed planted by the Texas Department of Agriculture takes root.

The department has awarded a second grant to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to research and test how the state's farmers can make more money growing strawberries.

Leading the project is AgriLife extension's Russ Wallace, a horticulturist in Lubbock. You might call him the John Lennon of Texas strawberries.

"We're extremely excited about what we've learned thus far to successfully grow strawberries in Texas and increase profitability," Wallace said in an AgriLife news release. "This is the next step in our ongoing research where we'll be doing more work with shading trials, fine-tuning fertilization and additional work with herbicides."

Strawberries have some juicy potential as a specialty crop because consumers have shown an increasing hunger for locally grown produce, ag experts say, although they don't often use bad puns.

One of the research sites is Atascosa County's Poteet, the self-proclaimed strawberry capital of Texas. Poteet Strawberry Festival organizers recently announced the event will go on April 9-11.

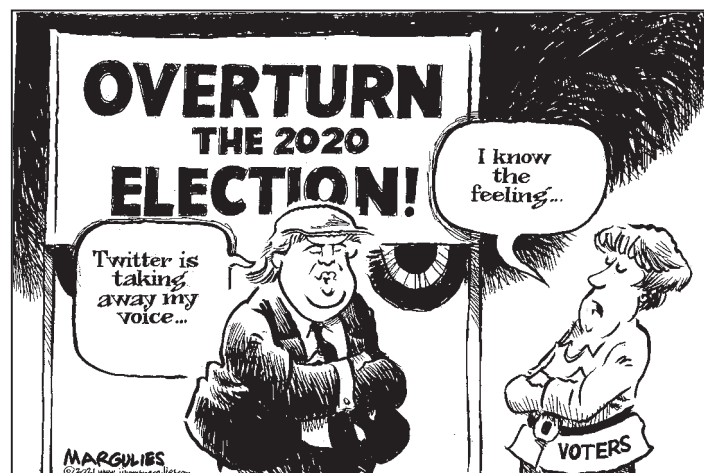
Some readers of the festival's Facebook page criticized the move as having the potential to spread COVID-19 faster than jam on toast.

Festival organizers responded that "we've been working and hoping for a blessing that we can continue, within allowable restrictions or capabilities, but still continuing as possible. We hope all goes well."

With your permission, gentle readers, we'll close here with this Beatles' opening stanza and try to leave you with a song in your heart:

Let me take you down 'Cause I'm going to Strawberry Fields
Nothing is real
And nothing to get hung about
Strawberry Fields forever

Chris Cobler is a board member and past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. He welcomes email at ccobler@texaspress.com. Veteran journalist Gary Borders will be taking over the "Capital Highlights" column starting next week as Cobler embarks on a new challenge.



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SPANISH PAGE

Mensaje del Superintendente, 19 de enero de 2021

Estimada comunidad de Aldine,

El Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dijo una vez: «La pregunta más persistente y urgente de la vida es: ¿Qué estás haciendo por los demás?»

En Aldine, esta pregunta es la que nos impulsa cada día. ¿Qué estamos haciendo por nuestros alumnos? ¿Qué estamos haciendo por nuestras familias? ¿Qué estamos haciendo por la comunidad de Aldine? Mientras planeamos para el resto de este semestre y miramos hacia el próximo año escolar, este compromiso de servir a los demás seguirá estando en el centro de todo lo que hacemos.

Espero que haya encontrado tiempo ayer, o cualquier día, para honrar el legado del Dr. King y servir a otros en su comunidad. Gracias por todo lo que hacen para apoyar a nuestros alumnos. Si bien este día está reservado para honrar su trabajo, debemos vivir todos los días con el servicio, la igualdad y la compasión por los demás en mente.

Continuemos haciendo nuestro mejor esfuerzo para mantener nuestra comunidad segura y saludable y asegurar de que nuestros alumnos sigan aprendiendo.

La participación de los alumnos es importante

Continúe alentando a sus alumnos no solo a iniciar una sesión o clase en línea o asistir a clase, sino también a participar, a ser curiosos, a hacer preguntas y a encontrar formas de aprendizaje que los entusiasmen. Sabemos que puede ser difícil, pero es importante que todos los alumnos, ya sea que estén aprendiendo en casa o en la escuela, participen en sus lecciones y completen tareas, cuestionarios y proyectos. Para los alumnos en el hogar y en la escuela, todas las calificaciones de las segundas nueve semanas se cargaron al (Home Access Center / Centro de Acceso Desde el Hogar o HAC por sus siglas



en inglés) a partir del 12 de enero de 2021. Si no tiene una cuenta HAC, regístrese a través del sitio web Home Access Center.

Actualizaciones de Aldine ISD COVID-19

La tasa de positivos del área de Houston/Condado de Harris sigue incrementando, pero aún las tasas de Aldine ISD se mantienen relativamente estables. Monitoreamos continuamente los casos en todo el distrito y tenemos planes establecidos en caso de que haya un aumento o un brote. Todos debemos seguir haciendo nuestra parte: usar una mascarilla, lavarnos las manos y continuar con el distanciamiento físico o social.

Las familias siempre pueden consultar el panel de COVID-19 para obtener una descripción general de los casos activos por escuela.

Sitios de prueba de COVID-19 en el área de Aldine

Para todos los alumnos y miembros del personal que aprenden y enseñan en las escuelas de Aldine ISD, las pruebas rápidas COVID-19 están disponibles. Las pruebas cuales se realizan desde el automóvil están

disponibles en el Edificio de Alimentación Escolar M.B. Sonny Donaldson, 1802 Aldine Bender Road., Houston, TX 77032. Tenga en cuenta que es necesario registrarse en línea. Puede acceder al formulario en línea haciendo clic aquí.

Vacunas contra el COVID-19
El distrito continúa trabajando con los funcionarios locales y el Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Harris (HCPH), para comunicar la disponibilidad de la vacuna contra COVID-19. El registro para recibir la vacuna contra COVID-19 está abierto actualmente para aquellos en la Fase 1B que incluye a cualquier persona mayor de 65 años o con una de las nueve condiciones crónicas definidas por el Estado de Texas. A medida que recibamos información, la compartiremos con nuestras familias.

Comidas escolares disponibles
Los paquetes de comidas de fin de semana / comidas en la acera gratis están disponibles para todos los niños menores de 18 años. Además, se proporcionará desayuno y almuerzo gratis a todos los alumnos de Aldine ISD que estén aprendiendo en la escuela. Los detalles se pueden encontrar en nuestro sitio web.

Aldine ISD también ofrece cenas gratuitas a los alumnos en todas las escuelas intermedias (intermediate schools), escuelas de noveno grado y escuelas secundarias o high schools. Estas escuelas brindan programas de enriquecimiento educativo después del día lectivo para los alumnos, lo que permite que el Departamento de Servicios de Alimentación Escolar proporcione el Programa de Comidas Nocturnas del distrito. Comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo para obtener más información.

Días de Aprendizaje Remoto
Los Días de Aprendizaje Remoto

se reservan para que todos los alumnos aprendan desde casa, mientras que todo el personal de los planteles escolares deberá reportarse a sus escuelas. Nuestro próximo Día de Aprendizaje Remoto es el viernes 29 de enero.

Durante los Días de Aprendizaje Remoto, todos los alumnos deben iniciar sesión en Schoology y volver a visitar las lecciones pregrabadas y las tareas publicadas anteriormente. Es una oportunidad perfecta para que los estudiantes se pongan al día con las asignaciones faltantes y revisen las lecciones que se hayan perdido o que necesite tiempo adicional para completar. Los maestros no presentarán sesiones de instrucción en vivo y es posible que no estén disponibles para sesiones de retroalimentación en vivo.

El distrito tomará la asistencia escolar a través de la evidencia de que los alumnos completen las tareas y / o inicien sesión en Schoology. Las familias que necesitan que los alumnos estén en la escuela el viernes o durante los Días de Aprendizaje Remoto designados deben comunicarse directamente con la escuela de su hijo.

Marque su calendario con los Días de Aprendizaje Remoto durante el semestre de primavera de 2021:

- viernes 29 de enero
- viernes 26 de febrero
- viernes 12 de marzo
- viernes 16 de abril
- lunes 17 de mayo

¡Disfruta su semana de cuatro días!

Con Orgullo Aldine,

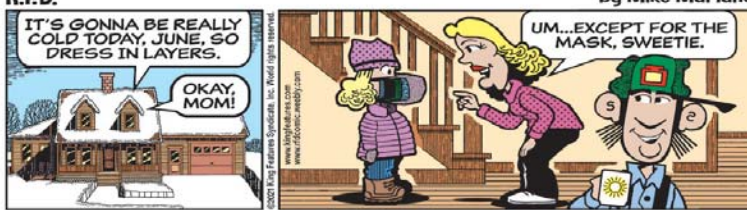
Dra. LaTonya M. Goffney
Superintendente

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



R.F.D.



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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

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!

HOCUS-FOCUS
BY HENRY BOLTZHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Letter on flag is missing. 2. Mustache is gone. 3. Vase is missing. 4. Drawer knob has been added. 5. Letter on shirt is different. 6. Plant has fewer leaves.

Posting Date January 25, 2021

King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15			16					17		
			18				19			
20	21				22	23				
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32			33					34		
			35				36			
37	38	39				40				
41				42	43			44	45	
46				47				48		
49				50				51		

ACROSS
1 Atlas page
4 Act of faith?
8 TV's "Warrior Princess"
12 Oklahoma city
13 Operatic solo
14 Sick as —
15 Newscast opener
17 Cathedral area
18 Vittles
19 Half of a '60s group
20 Sad song
22 Begged
24 Early Peruvian
25 Taylor Swift's genre, say
29 R-V link
30 Beetle
31 Bailey's boss
32 Bargain for leniency
34 Felines
35 Fail to see
36 Island porch
37 Neptune's realm
40 Ride the waves
41 Actress
42 Cowboy Cassidy
46 Challenge
47 Matty of

DOWN
1 Yoga pad
2 Hubbub
3 Drink-to-go holder
4 Coffee bar offering
5 Cupid's alias
6 Tire filler
7 Salary
8 idyllic place
9 Dutch cheese
10 Bright star
11 Mellows
16 Long tale
19 Viral Web phenomenon
20 Platter
21 Division word
22 Sweat outlets
23 Women's links org.
25 Buddies
26 Silicon Valley
27 Teeny bit
28 Mozart's "— fan tutte"
30 Whirl
33 Stunned
34 Sagan or Sandburg
36 Waikiki windings
37 Probability
38 Pisa farewell
39 British noble
40 Espy
42 Deli meat
43 Flamenco cheer
44 Born abroad?
45 Sailor

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY: The United States shares a land border with how many countries?
- HISTORY: When did the Great Fire of London take place?
- MEASUREMENTS: What does a sphygmomanometer measure?
- FOOD & DRINK: What kind of food has varieties called castelvetro, manzanilla and nyon?
- TELEVISION: What was the name of the Coneheads' home planet ("Saturday Night Live")?
- MOVIES: How many versions of "A Star Is Born" have been made?
- LITERATURE: The title of William Faulkner's novel "The Sound and the Fury" is taken from which of Shakespeare's plays?
- SCIENCE: What does the acronym DNA stand for?
- MUSIC: What is a diggeridoo?
- CURRENCY: Whose likeness is depicted on the U.S. \$50 bill?

1. Two, Mexico and Canada; 2. 1666; 3. Blood pressure; 4. Olives; 5. Remulak; 6. Four; 7. "Machbeth"; 8. Deoxyribonucleic Acid; 9. An Australian wind instrument; 10. Lysses Grant

Solution time: 26 mins.

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COMMUNITY WATCH

Who killed Lee Collins Jr.?

Crime Stoppers and the Houston Police Department's Homicide Division need the public's assistance identifying the suspect responsible for a Murder.

On Monday, January 18, 2021, at approximately 10:19 a.m., the body of Lee Collins Jr. was found in the 12900 block of the North Freeway Service Road in Houston, Texas. Officers were dispatched to a shooting just occurred and found the victim unresponsive inside a vehicle at the location. The victim had sustained multiple gunshot wounds and was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The family of Lee Collins Jr. is requesting the community's help with identifying the suspect responsible for his murder.

Crime Stoppers may pay up to \$5,000 for information leading to the identification, charging and/or arrest of the suspects in this case. Information may be reported by calling 713-222-TIPS (8477), submitted online at www.crime-stoppers.org or through the Crime Stoppers mobile app. Only tips and calls DIRECTLY TO Crime Stoppers are anonymous and eligible for a cash reward.

Man dies after being shot and crashing under Eastex Freeway

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas — A man died after being shot by another driver who pulled up beside him at the Eastex Freeway early Monday morning, according to Harris County Sheriff's Office deputies.

It happened at the corner of Aldine Bender and the Eastex Freeway around 1:17 a.m.

Deputies said the victim was at a red light when a red Mustang pulled up beside him and opened fire several times.

The Mustang then sped off westbound on Aldine Bender. Deputies said the victim kept driving until he crashed into a column under the freeway. He was found dead there.

Deputies said they were working to obtain surveillance video for more information on the suspect.



Motorcycle in Fatal Wrong-Way Crash at 3600 North Freeway

Houston police are investigating a fatal crash at 3600 North Freeway (North Interstate Highway 45) about 12:30 a.m. today (January 29).

The identity of the male victim is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division Sergeant J. Benavidez and Officer J. Crisler reported:

The driver of a silver Nissan Pathfinder was traveling southbound on the North Freeway. As he approached North Interstate Highway 610, he saw a black Honda motorcycle traveling northbound in the southbound lanes. The driver tried to avoid the motorcycle but it struck the front left side of the Nissan. The driver of the Nissan remained at the scene and called 9-1-1. Houston Fire department paramedics responded to the above address and pronounced the driver of the motorcycle deceased.

The driver of the Nissan was evaluated by an HPD DWI Task Force officer and was determined not to be intoxicated.

There are no charges in this incident, as the investigation is continuing.

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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey —

1. Is the book of 2 Timothy in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Ruth 1, who called herself Marah, a name meaning "bitter"? Priscilla, Miriam, Naomi, Deborah
3. What did Malachi say the people of Judah were stealing from God? Servants, Unrighteous miracles, Holy Grail, Owed tithes
4. Which was a city of Ephraim and home of the Ark

5. What Old Testament word means "anointed"? Bishop, Messiah, Jehovah, Salvation
6. Ahasuerus was also known as ...? Noadiah, Agrippa, Joash, Xerxes

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Naomi; 3) Owed tithes; 4) Shiloh; 5) Messiah; 6) Xerxes
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HEBREWS 6:10,11

"Soldiers Giving Christ a Drink" by Lucas van Leyden (1512)

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HCC Adult Education Joins “Moving Ahead with Adult Ed” Campaign to Get Adults Back to School and Work

Reskilling, Upskilling Will Help Move Adults in Family-Sustaining Jobs for Economic Recovery from Pandemic

HOUSTON (January 8, 2021) – With reskilling and upskilling programs in place, adult education is an economic catalyst to help low-skilled adults and their communities recover from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs provide numerous options for participation, including working from home or receiving in-person instruction.

Houston Community College joins more than 65,000 adult educators in “Moving Ahead with Adult Ed,” a new national campaign to enroll adult learners into programs that equip them with skills that lead to high school equivalency and jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage. Millions of Americans are out of work or underemployed and need to reskill or upskill to re-enter the workforce or pursue their education. The pandemic has exacerbated the need for services.

HCC’s adult education programs including the High School Equivalency, ESL and Career4U Academy Workforce Certificates. HCC is currently providing instruction both online and Flex-campus a combination of online and in-person. CDC guidelines and sanitation protocols are in place for in-person instruction to ensure a safe learning environment.

An international study indicated approximately 43 million working-age Americans lack the skills needed for many of the nation’s fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs. According to the U.S. Census,

there are over 22 million adults in the U.S. without a high school diploma.


“Adult education provides on-ramps to better jobs and to community college,” said Dr. Christina Robinson, HCC Executive Director of Adult Education. “With adult education, the infrastructure is in place to reskill and upskill Houstonians and not only get them back into the workforce but get them into better jobs than they had before the pandemic.”

Campaign partners Coalition on Adult Basic Education and the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education also estimate that for every dollar invested in adult education, a community receives \$60 back in increased income, property taxes and savings on public assistance and legal-system expenses.

The #MovingAheadWithAdultEd campaign focuses on re-engaging the millions of Americans who are in need of additional skills to compete in the workforce to recover financially from the pandemic. In addition to providing industry skills training through Career4U Academy, our adult education programs teach literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, as well as provide high school equivalency classes for those who want their GED.

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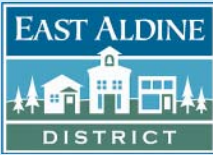
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East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

An Interview with Aldine ISD Icon Rose Avalos

Rose M. Avalos’ remarkable life of dedication and accomplishment has always been intertwined with the Aldine Independent School District. She was an AISD student, classroom teacher (English, reading, Spanish), counselor, assistant principal and principal (Escamilla Intermediate, MacArthur Senior High). AISD’s Avalos Pathways in Technology Early College High School is named in her honor.

She was recently re-elected as a trustee of the Texas Association of School Boards, a milestone that led to this talk with her. (Questions and answers were edited for clarity).

What led to your interest in education and what sustained you throughout your career?



I grew up in East Aldine from when I was 2 months old. We were very poor; I shared a bedroom with two brothers and a sister. I didn’t realize how poor we were until I went to school and saw what other kids had. But I don’t remember it affecting me in a negative way. I think teachers touched my heart in a way, because I picked up the idea that I could do anything. They made me feel good. I loved the routine of schools; I didn’t like summer because we weren’t in school. So I started a “school” in our detached garage. I would pretend I was a teacher. So since I was 7 years old I wanted to be a teacher. I really felt that that is what I was meant to do.

I was very eager and happy to start my career (after getting degrees at Sam Houston State University). I even have life-long friends who were my students and now are adults doing well. I think that’s what triggered my staying with it, seeing how education could change your life. (And after teaching elsewhere), I just tended to gravitate and relate better to the kids who were in Aldine.

I was encouraged to become an administrator, which I had never considered, because it’s farther away from the kids. But I learned you can influence their education (from that position).

Eventually you became principal at MacArthur High, where you had been a student?

I felt that somehow a higher power had taken me back there. I had relationships with the teachers, some of whom had been by own students. I considered it a blessing because I believed in my heart that is what I was meant to do.

Your are never going get rich as a teacher, but you get rich in your heart by making a difference with kids. You see that it moves on to the next generation.

What should East Aldine families know first and foremost about how to ensure their children get a good education?

It’s really critical that parents insist their kids go to school. We were not allowed to stay home or take a day off. I would also encourage parents to try to stay engaged with their kids’ school, even though (parents) have to work. There are activities at night. It sends a message to their child they think school is important.

Have kids participate in extra curricular activities. Aldine offers buses after school — let their kid participate! Don’t necessarily encourage students to get a job (during the school year) — they are going to help their family more by getting a college degree and then coming back. I worked every summer — I helped my parents as much as I could. I never forgot they stood by me. They knew their child’s life is not going to get better than theirs unless (their children) got a better education than them. Education is the great equalizer. It’s going to put a person on an even playing field if they have an education behind them.

Education opens the door. It’s not important where you come from, it’s where you are going. Kids in Aldine may have not had the opportunities other kids had but they can accomplish a whole lot if given a chance.


How will Aldine ISD get through the challenges of the pandemic and funding shortages?

There will be some changes we will experience, but we have been through (funding shortages by the state) before. We will probably have to adjust teachers’ assignments (by grade level) and probably not be able to fill all vacancies, and we will have to cut what might be considered ‘luxuries.’

(In past years) some school districts had to lay off teachers and ask every department to cut their budget. The finance department looks at every budget and says where ‘you need to cut.’ It hurt a little but we overcame it and we may have to face it again.

What else should we ask about?

Establishing the East Aldine District was one of the best things that could have been done for this area. (The District supported more neighborhood roads connecting to major thoroughfares) and you can see the difference it has made up and down Aldine Mail Route and Highway 59. I think the district brings value to the area and people feel like something is happening there for them.



AVALOS P-TECH EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL IN EAST ALDINE

— Interview by Alan Bernstein