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# NORTHEAST NEWS

## Americanisms



"The planet has survived everything, in its time. It will certainly survive us."  
— Michael Crichton

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VOL. 45, NO. 25 TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

## East Aldine offers free grants to \$10,000 to improve your property in new BIG program

By Gilbert Hoffman

The East Aldine District goal is to improve the Quality of Life for residents of the district, and that includes the visual appearance of the area. To that end, the business and economic committee, headed by board member Joyce Wiley, has proposed a new program for businesses, to clean, remodel, and improve the appearance of

their physical buildings and landscape. The Program is known as the Business Improvement Grant program, or BIG acronym.

The District has established and funded the program, and will provide matching grant funds to eligible businesses, developers, and individuals within the East Aldine District boundaries.

Commercial Exterior Projects to be considered

for Grants include but are not limited to Exterior Painting, Parking Lot Repairs or improvements, and Power Washing.

Qualified grantees include any commercial lot or structure located within the District boundaries. Residential properties and District Board, Staff, and their families are not eligible.

Grant applications will be review for:

- Basic Eligibility requirements
- Potential to diversify the economy
- Effect and support of other businesses
- Local redevelopment consistency.

Financial assistance is set up as a single payment reimbursement to proper-

**Continue on Page 5. See EAMD BIG Program**

## Community Centers, Libraries Reopen

HARRIS COUNTY – As the number of COVID-19 vaccinations approaches the goal of 70% of the population, Harris County has eased their restrictions on using county facilities for public functions, with most locations limiting attendance to 50% or 75% capacity, and masks being requested but not required if you are vaccinated.

In Precinct 2, Commissioner Adrian Garcia has opened all the community centers with the exception of Northeast Community

Center on Bentley, which is being remodeled as part of the new All-inclusive County Park being constructed. Harris County Libraries are all open, too, including High Meadows and Aldine in this area. One exception is the Galena Park library, which is closed for reconstruction of storm damage. However, the Curiosity Cruiser visits every Wednesday. Curbside service is still available at all libraries, but meeting rooms cannot be used.

## County initiates program to help Homeless

HARRIS COUNTY – Last week, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzeles launched a workforce development program in collaboration with Harris County Precinct 2 and Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. that supports those experiencing homelessness in east Harris County.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, nearly 4,000 people in the Houston area are experiencing homelessness. This innovative partnership – rooted in community development – empowers our



Homeless Program participants removing Graffiti in East Harris County.

most vulnerable neighbors with the tools, skills, and support to help them overcome barriers to success. It connects program participants to affordable housing, employment resources, and other critical services through Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. It also allows them to earn an income by completing community development projects.

Commissioner Adrian Garcia's Office funded the six-month pilot program, which actively recruits participants and provides them with transportation, meals throughout the workday, personal protective equipment, and the necessary training and tools to properly remove graffiti from bridges, roads, and buildings. Weather permitting, participants will have the chance to work on a first come, first served basis Monday through Thurs-

day for about \$50 a day. Homeless Outreach Team deputies are in the community doing all they can to help those without housing. We have dedicated Deputy Medina to the program to coordinate with our partners on worksite locations, crew schedules, transportation needs, and other important logistics. He is serving as the program lead.

Their work continued this week in the Channelview and Cloverleaf areas and will eventually expand

**Continued. See Page 3**

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

[AldineDistrict.org/Grant](http://AldineDistrict.org/Grant)

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— Carlos de California

Me gustó cómo nadie me hizo sentir mal por endeudarme. Eran muy comprensivos. Todo me fue explicado y estoy trabajando hacia un lugar mejor financieramente.  
— Maria en Florida

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Director of Services: Veronica Sanches  
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# SCHOOL NEWS

**TO OUR READERS:**  
The current Covid-19 Pandemic, weather and economic conditions have caused us to combine some issues every two weeks, and to change distribution to Pick-up locations. See page 8 for 50 locations where you can get a copy of the Northeast News, and page 7 for email subscriptions. We thank you for your continued support.



## NEWS NOTES

### Beat the Heat! Free A/C units from Pct. 2

Commissioner Garcia is committed to keeping seniors 60+ safe during the hot summer months and will be offering 100 portable A/C units to seniors who need it the most. Units will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Contact the Precinct 2 Call Center at 713-274-2222 Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM to see if you qualify.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Disabled Persons
- 60 years and older
- Fixed/low income
- Must be a homeowner in Precinct 2
- Must Apply by June 30

The A/C Units will be offered to qualifying seniors or individuals with disabilities who have not received a unit from any other program.

Call 713-274-2222.



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Berry Road & Aldine  
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## Vardeman students enjoying PE class



We made it through the year! Students at Vardeman enjoying physical education class! Congratulations Pandas! Join the fun! Register this Summer for the Fall!

Linda Nigro  
Physical Education  
Teacher  
Vardeman EC/ PK /K  
3302 Connorvale Rd.  
Houston, Texas 77039  
Phone: (281) 985-3740

## Diaz Music Institute holds Summer Music Workshops

We would love to help as many kids as possible. We are offering scholarships to MacArthur HS/EAMD students!

Summer Music Workshop July 5 – 17, 2021

In Da Groove Dance Camp July 19 - 30, 2021

Don't Miss The Early Bird Registration Discount; it expires June 25th, 2021. Scholarships available for MacArthur HS area students!

Location: MacArthur High School 4400 Aldine-Mail Rt., Houston, TX 77039.

DMI's workshops engage students in a diverse music program to learn the importance of balancing school with music performance.

The curriculum includes Drum Circle, Latin Percussion, Drum Set, Piano, Dance, Bass, Guitar, Ukulele, Improvisation, Music Theory, Music Business, and more! Beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of instruction are offered. For more information, log on to <http://www.diazmusicinstitute.org> or call 832-858-5855.

Elizabeth Diaz  
Executive Director

Taller de música de verano 5 -17 julio, 2021  
Campamento de baile In Da Groove 19 – 30 julio 2021  
No se pierdan el descuento de preregistro se expira el 25 de junio del 2021. ¡Becas disponibles para estudiantes del área de MacArthur HS!

Dirección: MacArthur High School 4400 Aldine-Mail Rt., Houston, TX 77039.

Los talleres de DMI involucran a los estudiantes en programas de música distinta para crear la importancia de un balance entre el trabajo escolar y la música.

El currículo incluye círculo de tambores, percusión latina, batería, Piano, baile, bajo, guitarra, Ukulele, improvisación, la industria de la música y mucho más. Niveles de instrucción que se ofrecen son de principiante, intermedio y avanzado. Para más información, entre a la página [www.diazmusicinstitute.org](http://www.diazmusicinstitute.org) O llame 832-858-5855.

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## AISD School Board news, Meeting of June 15, 2021

### Trustees Approve Raise for All Employees, Budget for 2021- 2022 and Tax Rate

Aldine ISD Trustees approved a 2% pay raise for all employees during its June 15 Board meeting. The meeting was attended by all seven Trustees and held in person in the Board Room of the Donaldson Administration Building. Aldine ISD Trustees also approved a \$1,500 retention bonus for employees that will be paid in the spring of 2022. Trustees also approved raising first-year teacher's salaries from \$56,000 to \$58,000.

"I am extremely thankful to our Trustees for recognizing the hard work our staff has put in over the last year-and-a-half as they have dealt with COVID-19 and worked diligently to address our students' academic and social needs," said Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. "This increase reflects the Board's and district's ongoing commitment to remaining competitive in recruiting and retaining employees prepared and determined to offer meaningful learning experiences every day to our students. This is exactly why the increase in the starting teacher salary, from \$56,000 to \$58,000, is significant."

In addition to approving pay raises for all Aldine ISD employees, Trustees also approved the general operating budget for the 2021-22 school year.

The general operating budget for the 2021-22 school year will be \$650,216,641, a 1.2 percent decrease from the 2020-21 general operating budget. The budget recommendation was made by Chief Business and Operations Officer Dr. Tamika Alford-Stephens and was unanimously approved by AISD Trustees.

Dr. Alford-Stephens said the 2021-2022 budget provides funding for all district operations, instructional programs, and student activities.

"Prior to this presentation, each Board member was able to provide feedback regarding the proposed budget and given multiple options for consideration," Dr. Alford-Stephens said.

Also, during the June 15 Board meeting, Trustees approved the proposed tax rate for the 2021-22 school year. Dr. Alford-Stephens recommended the tax rate be set at \$1.2744 per \$100 valuation (.3025 cents for the Interest and Sinking fund and \$0.9719 for the Maintenance and Operation fund). The 2021-22 proposed tax rate is the same as it was for the 2020-21 school year. Trustees unanimously approved the proposed tax rate. The Board will not officially approve the proposed tax rate until the district receives the certified roll from the Harris County Appraisal District in late August. At that time, the district will be able to set the tax rate.

### Teaching and Learning highlights CTE programs

During the June 14 Board meeting, the Teaching and Learning Department highlighted AISD's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department. Chief Academic Officer Dr. Todd Davis introduced Robert Thomas, Program Director of Career and Business Partnerships. Thomas announced that five students from Davis High School successfully passed their Federal Aviation Administration's Part 107 UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) Pilot Examination in the spring. The students who passed the exam were Sergio Avilés-Aguirre, Janeth Mendoza, Sontee Pouncy, Alexander Torralva, and Endy Rocha Torres. Davis High School added the Aviation Program of Study three years ago. The students completed their testing at the district's flight instruction partner Texas Flight at Hooks Airport.

Dr. Davis then introduced Brooke Martin, Program Director of Career and Technical Education. Martin announced that Nimitz High School FFA students Alex Martínez and Emily Escoto earned the Lone Star Degree. Texas FFA has 140,000 members, the most in the nation, and of those, only 1% earned the Lone Star Degree this year. This summer, Alex and Emily will be awarded their Lone Star Degree at the Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth. This degree is the culmination of three years of dedication and hard work. The Lone Star Degree is the highest degree that a high school student can earn through the Texas FFA Association. Before applying, Alex and Emily had to catalog their agricultural science courses, participate in competitive events, demonstrate leadership skills, and commit to the FFA. They also had to maintain a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Between the two of them, they have

raised the SAE projects: five pigs, a lamb, a heifer, and a pen of chickens. At the 2021 Aldine ISD FFA livestock show, Alex earned the title of Reserve Grand Champion Market Lamb and Grand Champion Swine Showman. Emily earned the title of Reserve Grand Champion Breeding Heifer; she also placed in the top three in her class at the 2021 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Additionally, Alex has been elected as an Area III FFA Association Vice-President and Texas FFA Foundations Ambassador. This summer, he will be responsible for educating, encouraging, and entertaining guests, sponsors, and stakeholders at the Texas FFA Convention in Fort Worth. Alex will be the Nimitz High School FFA President, and Emily will be the Nimitz High School FFA Vice President during the 2021-22 school year.

### AEF recognizes its Executive Committee

During the June 15 Board meeting, Aldine Education Foundation (AEF) Director Linda Flores-Olson recognized AEF's Executive Committee. The committee consists of President Lisa McBride, President-Elect Richard Cantu, VP Finance Darrell García, VP Programs Sidney Brewer, VP Development Marine Jones, VP Marketing/Event Patti Acosta, Secretary Stacey Smith, At Large Seth Sharr, and Immediate Past President David Smith. During the 2020-21 school year, AEF raised money for student scholarships. A good-grades incentive program called Foundation Scholars, Educator of the Year cash prizes, and Emergency needs from Winter Storm Uri. Even during the pandemic, AEF's Dollar Makes a Difference employee giving campaign increased by 3.9%, the Educator of the Year Cash Awards increased by 147.5%, and AEF Scholarship cash distribution increased by 6.3%. "These fine folks display servant leadership at its best," Flores-Olson said. "On behalf of the lucky scholarship recipients and educators of the year, thank you, thank you, and thank you. Thank you for your service and for sharing your time, talent, and resources with the Aldine Education Foundation to improve the lives of students in Aldine. You are our heroes."

### Transportation employee recognized

During the June 15 Board meeting, Germán Enamorado, Executive Director of Transportation, named Lamar Gloria as his department's Employee of the Month. Lamar serves as the department's bookkeeper and works at the East Side Transportation Department.

### Staff assignment announced

During the June 15 Board meeting, Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney announced one staff assignment.

Dr. Joshua Gobert was named Assistant Principal at Stovall Primary School after serving as AISD's Literacy Coach.

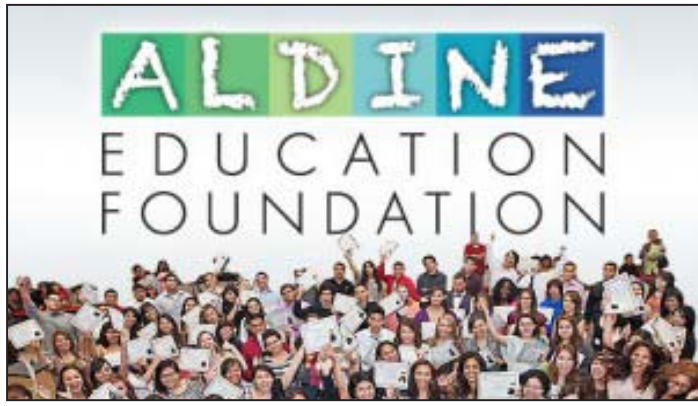
### Grants announced

Stacey Smith, Director of Special Programs, announced two grants during the June 15 Board meeting.

Grantham Academy teacher Sherry King received a \$2,579 grant from Toshiba to fund her "We Do" project, which utilizes coding to develop communication, problem-solving, literacy, and building student confidence. In her Computer Science class next school year, her students will use digital language to develop coding to move objects and give direction through sequential instruction. Instead of functioning in theory, 12 robots will create a visual and tangible object to demonstrate their coding.

Grantham Academy teacher Blanca Gonzales led several of her students who competed in the citywide GoIT Challenge. Her students brainstormed and came up with an idea for an app they felt would help address a need they saw in the community, designed it, writing code for it, and then put together a presentation to market the app to specific targeted audiences. Grantham had three of the six teams who made the final round of the citywide competition. They presented their app to professionals at Halliburton, community members, and other business partners. The judges (Halliburton and Tata Consultancy employees/professionals) then asked students about their app, presentation, and marketing ideas. The students were able to defend and explain their presentation. The judges awarded the three groups \$1,700 that is earmarked for use specifically in STEM education.

The grants announced at the June 15 Trustees meeting totaled \$4,279.



## AEF, ASF Award \$650,000 in Scholarships to Aldine ISD Seniors

ALDINE – Even during a pandemic, the Aldine Education Foundation (AEF) and Aldine Scholarship Fund (ASF) provided scholarships to deserving Aldine ISD seniors.

Two hundred-ninety six AISD seniors received either AEF or ASF scholarships this year totaling \$650,000.

AEF incorporated in 2012 to enable more Aldine ISD students to receive financial support for colleges of their choice, to award grants to educators for innovative instructional programs and to recognize and reward excellence in students and educators.

ASF, now under the direction of the Lone Star College Foundation, has a permanent endowment totaling more than \$2 million, which sends AISD students to Lone Star College.

AEF awarded 192 scholarships and ASF awarded 104 scholarships to 2020-21 Aldine seniors.

“We appreciate the bigheartedness of all of the scholarship donors for their financial generosity,” said AEF Director Linda Flores. “These kind gifts will allow students to be one step closer to their life goals and become our future leaders.”

A Partial List of Recipients follows:

The following AISD seniors each received a \$20,000 AEF Board of Directors Scholarship. Those students were: Ashleeya Ashley of Carver High School, Clarissa Banegas of Eisenhower High School, Hannah Omoruyi of Victory Early College High School, Abetzi Vazquez Ochoa of Davis High School and Martineus Fearon of Blanson CTE High School.

AISD seniors who received \$20,000/\$5,000 AEF Board of Directors Scholarships were: Asiria Martinez of MacArthur High School, Jessica Lozoya of MacArthur High School, Alejandra Arroyo of Nimitz High School and Heather Omoruyi of Nimitz High School.

AISD seniors who each received a \$5,000 AEF Foundation Board of Directors Scholarship were: Esmeralda Ledezma of Victory Early College High School, Francean Hougbo of Carver High School, Patrice Gatterson of Davis High School, Miguel Chacon of Blanson CTE High School, Karen Cordova of Eisenhower High School and Stephanie Gonzalez of Aldine High School.

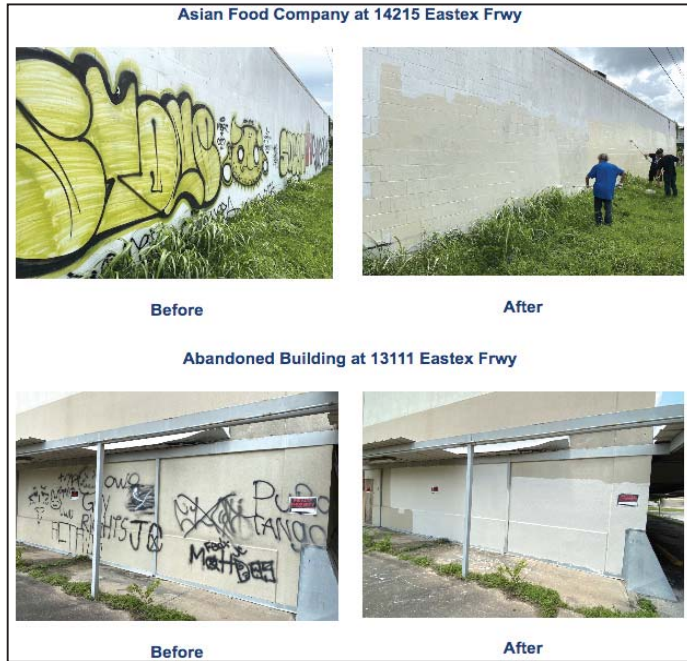
### East Aldine District Scholarships:

AISD seniors who each received a \$1,000 East Aldine District Endowed Scholarship were: Clarisa Ferreyra of MacArthur High School, Kayla Fisher of MacArthur High School, Emma Garza of MacArthur High School, Luis Garcia of MacArthur High School, Maritza Soto of MacArthur High School, Roxana Mendez of MacArthur High School, Jasmine Lozoya of MacArthur High School and Jeslyn Delgado of MacArthur High School.

Other \$1,000 East Aldine District Endowed Scholarship recipients were: Jarely Leal of MacArthur High School, Alonzo Vargas of MacArthur High School, Elnecia Preston of MacArthur High School, Angel Hudson of MacArthur High School and Marisol Perez of MacArthur High School. Karina Garcia of MacArthur High School received a \$1,000 George Acosta Memorial Endowed Scholarship.

## Sheriff initiates Homeless assistance program,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



to other quality-of-life and community beautification projects in east Harris County, such as removing trash from illegal dumping and maintaining clean parks.

On Thursday, participants started their day with warm showers and fresh clothes at Hope Center Houston before attending a Resource Day at Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. There, staff and volunteers shared more information about their comprehensive services, which range from job training to counseling and peer support. Participants also received on-site health screenings from UTMB Health and assistance applying for a Texas Identification Card and Harris Health’s Gold Card, a lifeline for affordable medications and clinic visits.

Homelessness is among the most important, complex issues facing our criminal justice system today. The Sheriff said we must work together to address these issues through multi-faceted strategies and compassion.

This workforce development program is an example of community policing and what can be accomplished when law enforcement agencies and the community come together.

The Sheriff’s office is proud to be part of this collaborative approach setting a viable path forward for those experiencing homelessness. Although our partner agencies have different missions, we’re all united around the call to serve our most vulnerable neighbors and keep everyone safe.

HCSO Continues Mental Health Training Aimed

at Helping Deputies Respond to Residents in Crisis

“Whether they go to detentions or patrol, (they) have to go through 40 hours of mental health training and then 16 hours of de-escalation training,” said Sgt. Jose Gomez.

De-escalation training includes scenarios. In one of them, an inmate at a detention center threatens suicide and deputies attempt to de-escalate the situation.

150 deputies are also equipped with tablets that can connect people in crisis at a scene directly to a psychiatrist at The Harris Center.

“When they go to a call for service and they need to talk to a clinician or need an assessment, they’re able to pull out the device,” said Gomez.”

## District Attorney opens 12 week campaign emphasizing Gun Safety

HOUSTON – Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg joined other elected leaders and gun-safety advocates, to unveil a 12-week advertising campaign to promote the safe storage of firearms in homes and elsewhere.

They wore orange and delivered the safe storage message as part of a nationwide effort to end gun violence. Free gunlocks were distributed and are still available from the District Attorney’s office.

The Safe Gun Storage Campaign launched Saturday, June 5th at 7 p.m. at Houston City Hall in the Legacy Room.

Presenting were District Attorney Kim Ogg and gun safety advocates and gun violence victims, including U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Houston Council Member Abbie Kamin, Clear Channel Outdoor Vice President Lee Vela, and partners Moms Demand Action, Students Demand Action, Clear Channel Outdoor.

City Hall was lit orange to honor gun violence victims.

### GUN SAFETY TIPS:

Store Guns and Ammunition Safely  
—Store guns in a locked

location, unloaded, out of the reach and sight of children

—Store ammunition in a separate locked location, out of the reach and sight of children

—Keep the keys and combinations hidden to gun storage

—When a gun is not in its lock box, keep it in your line of sight.

—make sure all guns are equipped with effective, child-resistant gun locks.

—If a visitor has a gun in a backpack, briefcase, handbag or an unlocked car, provide them with a locked place to hold it while they are in your

home.  
—Leaving guns on a nightstand, table or other place where a child can gain access may lead to injuries and fatalities.

### Talk to Your Kids and Their Caregivers

—Explain how a gun your kids might see on TV or a video game is different from a gun in real life.

—Teach kids never to touch a gun and to immediately tell an adult if they see one.

—Talk to grandparents and the parents of friends your children visit about safe gun storage practices.



HOUSTON CITY HALL was lit with Orange on June 5 to promote Gun Safety.



# SAVE A LIFE

## LOCK UP YOUR GUNS



OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
HARRIS COUNTY, TX



KIM OGG

HARRISCOUNTYDA.COM

★  
COUNTY NEWSHarris County Judge  
Lina HidalgoHurricane season is here,  
Voter restrictions fail,  
eviction intervention

## Hurricane Season is Here

Another hurricane season is upon us, and now is the time to make sure you are prepared for whatever storm the next six months may bring. Watch Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo outline the four essential steps to protecting your family and your property. For more information and resources for hurricane season, visit [ReadyHarris.org](http://ReadyHarris.org).

Bill Targeting Harris County Voter  
Rights Fails to Advance

This past weekend, Texas legislators killed SB7, the most suppressive voter suppression bill in the nation. By staging a walkout as a united front, members broke quorum with an hour to spare — a remarkable, difficult action and the only one that would have kept this bill from passing. It's no secret that this bill was a direct attack on Harris County, our voters, and our communities. SB7 was the result of the "big lie" that falsely claims widespread voter fraud is occurring in Texas and throughout the nation. Many lawmakers have used this lie to delegitimize the record turnout at the polls that was a direct result of our innovative efforts to make voting in Harris County more accessible and safe than it has ever been.

Last election, our voting laws served as a national model for how local governments can provide increased and secure access to the ballot box. We tripled the number of early voting locations, extended voting hours and added a day of 24-hour voting, implemented drive thru voting, and used county-wide voting centers so that people could vote at any location on election day. The reforms we implemented in 2020 gave all kinds of eligible workers easier access to the polls. We had the highest turnout in a generation and almost 70% of registered voters voted. SB7 would have limited voting hours and completely eliminated 24-hour and drive-thru voting, shutting out thousands of voters such as first responders and medical workers who work nontraditional hours. It would have created laws that would make it a felony to supply residents vote-by-mail applications if they haven't requested one and allow for poll watchers to be present throughout the voting day, possibly intimidating and harassing voters. It would have lowered the legal standard for elections to be overturned and would have ordered polls shut before 1 p.m. on Sundays — when many African American churches conduct "Souls to the Polls" initiatives.

While the legislation has been defeated for now, there will likely be a special Texas legislative session later this summer to attempt to pass some form of this voter suppression legislation. Our fight continues.

New Eviction Intervention Program  
Helps Families Facing Homelessness  
Avoid Evictions

Though employers are gradually rebuilding their ranks, many people remain unemployed and/or significantly behind on rent from the months their workplaces were closed due to the pandemic. The new \$8 million Eviction Intervention Program, a division of the Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), will work to divert eviction cases out of court, helping families avoid imminent homelessness and landlords recover overdue rent. The program will be run by The Alliance, a nonprofit agency helping refugees, immigrants, and underserved residents.

Tenants can apply for the Eviction Intervention Program by submitting an application for the Houston-Harris County Rental Relief Fund at [HoustonHarrisHelp.org](http://HoustonHarrisHelp.org). The application will ask if they have received a notice to vacate or a court summons, and, if so, requests the docket number. Qualifying applications will be automatically referred to the Eviction Intervention Program. Tenants who do not qualify for eviction intervention but who are still struggling financially because of pandemic-related wage reductions are still encouraged to apply to the Houston-Harris County Rental Relief Fund. The application portal remains open, and tens of millions of dollars in relief are still available. As of May 26, the Rental Relief Fund has pledged and paid over \$84 million to 23,146 tenants in need of assistance.

Eligible applicants to the Eviction Intervention Program must already have a docket number (or case number), cannot earn more than the income threshold (80% of area median income), and must prove pandemic-related financial impact. Both tenant and landlord must agree to participate. The Eviction Intervention Program offers up to six months of rent. You can view the eligibility requirements and FAQs, submit documents, and find other resources related to the Eviction Intervention Program and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program at [HoustonHarrisHelp.org](http://HoustonHarrisHelp.org). In addition, a phone line is available at 832-402-7568 six days a week: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## A father's guiding hand...

★  
THE  
POSTSCRIPT  
By  
Carrie Classon

## Time to Spare

"Do you have time for this?" my husband, Peter, asked.

Peter almost never questions what I'm doing unless I'm doing something particularly stupid. Yesterday, I had a meeting on Zoom. I figured I could finish my work, take my walk early, then run downtown and get my errands done all in time for my meeting.

"Sure!" I assured him. Peter looked skeptical. "Maybe I'll skip the stop at the hardware store," I added, to pacify him.

But the hardware store was right on the way, as I went from the library to the grocery store, so I dashed in, got my paint roller and potting soil, and dashed back out.

"Plenty of time!" I assured myself as I hit the grocery store, chose two graduation cards in record time, and grabbed wrapping paper, ribbon and a bunch of flowers.

It wasn't until then that I noticed there were people standing in the aisles.

"Why are people standing in the aisles?" I wondered. But I continued my high-speed chase and picked out two bags of grapes and six Honeycrisp apples.

Only when I had gathered everything from the four corners of the store did it dawn on me what those people were doing, standing in the aisles. They were waiting to check out.

"What?!" I said aloud, outraged.

"It's always like this at 4:30," a smiling fellow, standing in the seemingly endless line, said to me when he saw my face. "Half an hour earlier, there's no one in the store." Apparently, I had never been in the store at exactly 4:30 before.

"But ... I don't have time for this!" I said to no one who cared—or could do anything about it.

I raced to return my items to the four corners of the store, zipped out to my car, and made it to my Zoom meeting in the nick of time. The meeting was about the benefits of meditation; the speaker started out by talking about how meditation could alleviate stress.

The irony was not wasted on me.

I used to judge how well I had spent my time by how many items I had checked off my "to-do" list. If I arrived somewhere five minutes early, I figured there was something I could have done with those five minutes and then arrived on time—or maybe just a minute or two late, since everyone else would be late anyway. I felt gratified when I beat the clock, skidded in at the last possible moment, got more done than seemed possible. I used to think that when I was bathed in adrenaline, I was the most alive.

Now I think it's OK to have time to spare.

Because I've realized that it's only in those times when I don't need to hurry that I notice what is going on around me. Unexpected ideas occur. I see funny things. I have time to talk to people I meet. I take the time to stop and listen. I learn things. None of this happens if I am racing across the store in an effort to set the world record for the speediest purchase of a greeting card.

Manufactured emergencies are not the real thing. If the need arises to run from a predator, I'm pretty sure I'll still be able to do it. Purchasing wrapping paper should not rely on survival instincts.

"The store was crazy!" I told Peter. But really, it was me who was crazy.

Today I will go back to get my apples. I will make my selection carefully. I will have time to spare.

Till next time,  
Carrie

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

★  
STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

Governor Abbott vows to  
expand Border "barrier"

Gov. Greg Abbott vowed last week at a border security summit to build a barrier to slow the flow of migrants through the state's southern border.

Abbott said details would be forthcoming for the wall, which would be part of a new enforcement plan administered by several state agencies, ranging from the governor's office to the Texas Department of Public Safety. He said he intends to sign legislation appropriating more than \$1 billion for enhanced border security.

"While securing the border is the federal government's responsibility, Texas will not sit idly by as this crisis grows," Abbott said. "The state is working collaboratively with communities impacted by the crisis to arrest and detain individuals coming into Texas illegally."

The president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) blasted Abbott's actions.

"Governor Abbott stated that he intends to use Texas state budget dollars not for education, improving our electric grid or for Texas roads and highways," said Domingo Garcia, LULAC president. "Instead, he says he will continue to build a wall and other barriers along the border with Mexico. This is a huge waste of taxpayer money, and very likely illegal."

LULAC plans to take legal action on grounds that the federal government has authority over immigration and borders, not individual states.

LUMBER PRICE SURGE NOT  
AFFECTING TIMBER PRICES

One economic consequence of the pandemic lockdown has been a surge in lumber prices of more than 300%, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. However, landowners who grow and harvest timber are still facing stagnant prices, as they have since the housing crash of

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS  
By Gary Borders

2008. At \$30 a ton in Texas, the price has remained about the same for the past decade.

The challenge for timber owners is an abundance of ready-to-harvest timber, according to TFS.

"Landowners have been struggling to get their timber harvested for a while," said Rob Hughes, executive director of the Texas Forestry Association. "The mills are producing more wood than they have before, but it's still not to the capacity of how much timber is being grown in their areas."

A consolidation of sawmills is partly to blame. In 1997 Texas had 168 active sawmills, a number that has dwindled today to about 50. Some landowners have opted to supplement their forest income through carbon markets, which are bought by companies or governments to offset greenhouse gas emissions. One drawback is that the credits can only go to timberland owners if the forest is at risk of being harvested.

"There are a few contracts now that are just a one-year deal," said Hughes. "These seem more tolerable to the production-minded forest landowners that we've talked with. You defer your harvest, and you get paid for that amount of carbon as you sequester it."

Landowners can contact a consulting forester or a

Texas A&M Forest Service office for more information.

A WET MAY INCREASES  
RESERVOIR STORAGE

May is historically the state's wettest month. This year was no exception, with above-average rain in much of the state, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, a hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board.

By the end of May, drought conditions covered 25% of the state — down 45 percentage points from the end of April. The La Niña conditions, which are key factors in droughts in Texas, have dissipated and won't return this summer, Wentzel said.

"If you were trying to reduce drought in Texas, you couldn't pick a better month to have above-average rainfall," Wentzel wrote in a press release.

He added that besides greening up the landscape, May's rain increased reservoir storage to 84.6% of capacity, about normal for this time of year.

NEW COVID-19 CASES RISE  
WEEK-TO-WEEK

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas in the past week rose to 17,724, up 46% from the previous week, while deaths stayed steady at 213, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported 1,600 hospitalizations of lab-confirmed cases, up about 100 from the previous week. Vaccinations continue to rise, with 10.85 million Texans fully vaccinated — 37.2% of the state's population.

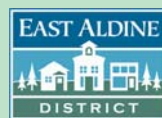
PUC LIFTS MORATORIUM  
ON UTILITY  
DISCONNECTIONS

The moratorium on utility disconnections for non-payment will be lifted June 18. Last Friday the Texas Public Utility Commission cited a proliferation of financial support and the need for electricity, water and sewer providers to resume normal business operations.

"This is not an easy decision, and it was not taken lightly," PUC Chairman Peter Lake said. "But by acting now, customers will be able to take advantage of deferred payment plans or federal assistance ahead of the summer season."

There are numerous options for ratepayers having difficulties paying their utility bills. The PUC has created a one-page fact sheet that can be accessed at: <https://tinyurl.com/4fdch5dt>.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: [gborders@texaspress.com](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).

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### East Aldine BIG program,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ty owners. Grant funds are limited to a maximum of 50% or up to \$10,000 of the project cost. Grant funds are available until the total funds for the budget cycle are depleted. The annual funding cycle begins January 1st and ends December 31st in alignment with EAMD's fiscal year. No grant will be awarded for work that has begun, been completed, or is covered by insurance. BIG Application must be reviewed and approved before

eligible work begins. Deviations from the approved grant project may result in total or partial withdrawal of the grant. Upon project completion, East Aldine District will provide a BIG sign which must be prominently displayed in a storefront window for a minimum of three months in order to officially recognize the EAMD BIG program. You and your company and the awarded Project will also be recognized as

a program recipient with the before and after photos featured on our website, newsletters, and social media platforms. Applicants are encouraged to attend our monthly Board of Directors meetings. Visit [AldineDistrict.org](http://AldineDistrict.org) for schedule and times. Failure to attend meetings when required shall be cause for rejection. If you have questions, Call us at 512-658-4985 or 832-677-0139.

### Victory ECHS student receives KPRC scholarship

Hannah Omoruyi received quite a surprise when she arrived at Victory Early College High School on April 13. Hannah is a remote learner and was coaxed by Principal Phyllis Cormier to come to the school on April 13 to wrap up some paper work. When she walked through the doors, she was greeted by Channel 2 News Anchor Christine Noel, a camera crew, school administrators and her classmates. Noel announced that Hannah was the recipient of a \$2,500 Channel 2 and Texas Mattress Maker Senior Scholarship!



Victory Early College High School senior Hannah Omoruyi was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship from Channel 2 and Texas Mattress Makers. Also pictured are Channel 2 News Anchor Christine Noel and a Channel 2 cameraman.

Hannah has had quite a successful run at Victory Early College High School. She will graduate with a 3.91 GPA, is her classes' valedictorian and will attend Wellesley College in Massachusetts in the fall.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Amber Waves



### R.F.D.



### The Spats



### Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Window is taller; 2. Ball is wider; 3. Ball is in different; 4. Cap is reversed; 5. Shoes are different; 6. Fence is broken; 7. Hedge is smaller; 8. Cap is reversed; 9. Shoes are different; 10. Fence is broken.

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### Posting Date June 21, 2021 King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13				14		
15					16			17			
18			19				20				
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33			34	35				36	37		
							38		39		
40	41	42					43		44	45	46
47							48			49	
50							51			52	
53							54			55	

**ACROSS**

1 "Sad to say ..."

5 Armed conflict

8 Folksinger Joan

12 Jet speed measure

13 Greek mountain

14 Big name in scat

15 Docking site

16 Leftovers carrier

18 Screenwriter's creations

20 Reddish horses

21 "I'm not impressed"

22 Martini liquor

23 Skilled

26 Flood protection

30 Gun the engine

31 Witty one

32 "As I see it," to a texter

33 Sleazy hotel

36 Be nosy

38 Train lines (Abbr.)

39 Aunt, in Acapulco

40 Part of Hispaniola

43 Iced desserts

47 Cinched

49 October birth-

6 Big fusses

7 Cleaning cloth

8 Past

9 Jessica of "Dark Angel"

10 Flair

11 Turns sharply

17 Beam

19 Favorite

22 Joke

23 Canine cry

24 N.J. neighbor

25 First lady?

26 Droop

27 Life story

28 I love (Lat.)

29 Republicans

31 Existed

34 Camelot king

35 French cheese

36 — Lancelot

37 Bigwigs

39 Roman robes

40 Wasted no time

41 Con

42 "Suffice — say ..."

43 Shopper's delight

44 Fencing sword

45 London gallery

46 Bridge coup

48 Inlet

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

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

### Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: What city is the setting for the 1980s medical drama "St. Elsewhere"?
- HISTORY: When was the first Veterans Day celebrated in the United States?
- MOVIES: Who played the role of Lt. Dan Taylor in the 1994 movie "Forrest Gump"?
- PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented in the condition called chorophobia?
- GEOGRAPHY: What is the southernmost city in Africa?
- FAMOUS QUOTES: Who wrote this about fleeting summer, "Summer's lease hath all too short a date"?
- SCIENCE: Which nerve transmits sound to the brain?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the color papaya?
- FOOD & DRINK: In which U.S. state did Pepsi Cola originate?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president received the Secret Service code name "General"?

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Trivia Test Answers:  
 1. Boston; 2. 1954; 3. Gary Sinise; 4. Fear of dancing; 5. Cape Town; 6. William Shakespeare; Sonnet 18; 7. Auditory nerve; 8. Orange; 9. North Carolina; 10. Harry Truman

## COMMUNITY WATCH

### Fatal Motorcycle Crash at 100 North Sam Houston Parkway E.

Houston police are investigating a fatal crash at 100 North Sam Houston Parkway East about 4:50 p.m. on Monday (June 14).

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

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division Sergeant G. Clark and Officer A. Mares reported:

The victim was operating a black Harley Davidson motorcycle northbound in the 11900 block of Greenspoint Drive and approaching the intersection of North Sam Houston East service road (Beltway 8). The motorcyclist went through the intersection and struck a black Nissan Altima traveling westbound on the service road.

Paramedics transported the victim to HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest where he was pronounced deceased. The male driver, 24, of the Nissan remained at the scene and was evaluated by a DWI Task Force officer. The driver showed no signs of intoxication.

The investigation is continuing. It has not been determined which motorist had the green light.

### NF High School student wounded in parking lot shooting

HOUSTON — A student was injured in a shooting at North Forest High School Wednesday morning in the 10700 block of Mesa Drive.

In an update after the incident, Houston ISD Police Chief Pete Lopez said that students were practicing for graduation and were released from rehearsal at about 10:20 a.m.

Minutes later, a campus police officer was called to the front of the school to respond to a disturbance and found that a student had been grazed by a bullet.

Joshua Geegan, a senior at North Forest, suffered an injury to his middle finger that was on the steering wheel of his car. Fortunately, his injury was minor enough that he was not transported to the hospital.

"Why me?" Geegan asked himself after realizing he had been hit. "Why at the school? Multiple kids could have gotten hurt. Or why in general? It's a crazy situation that happened."

Both HISD and Houston police responded to the situation.

Witnesses said they saw a grey Ford truck and a maroon Chrysler on the southwest corner of the campus in the parking lot involved in a shootout. The vehicles then left the campus and continued firing as they drove down Mesa Drive.

Geegan was in the driveway attempting to pull out of the school's front lot when he got caught in the crossfire.

"I've been thanking God that he kept me alive here today, because the incident/tragedy could have been much worse," Geegan said hours after he was hit.



Lopez said that police tracked down the grey Ford truck with bullet holes in the side panel in the 8100 block of Sterlingshire in a residential area.

Authorities found an 18-year-old inside, who was detained for questioning. Family identified him as a North Forest senior.

Authorities are still looking for the maroon Chrysler.

North Forest High School's last day of school is on Friday and their graduation is set for Saturday, June 12 at 2 p.m. at Delmar Field.

Meanwhile, HISD issued the following statement Wednesday night.

"The HISD Police Department is investigating a shooting that took place this morning in the parking lot of North Forest High School. One individual was treated at the scene and released by paramedics. In addition, HISD Police will have an increased presence at North Forest HS and are working diligently to ensure that all involved are held accountable. HISD remains committed to vigilantly protecting students and staff at our schools. If you have any information about this incident, please contact the HISD Police Department immediately at 713-892-7777, or call 911." (Photo courtesy of KTRH)

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# CHURCH PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey —  
 1. Is the book of Amos in the Old or New Testament or neither?  
 2. From Mosaic law, what would happen to the person who cursed his father or mother? Imprisonment, Outcast, 10 lashings, Death  
 3. In Daniel 2, who had a dream about a statue composed of different materials? Jezebel, Abednego, Rezin, Nebuchadnezzar

4. From Acts 7, who said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"? Philip, Stephen, Luke, David  
 5. In Genesis 14:3, what "lake" is called the Salt Sea? Galilee, Lake Pison, Dead Sea, Euphrates  
 6. Whose biblical name means "salvation"? Jude, Ahaz, Hosea, Ruth

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Death; 3) Nebuchadnezzar; 4) Stephen; 5) Dead Sea; 6) Hosea  
 Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy).  
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**THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE**

*For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.*

2 THESS. 3:10-12

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# Not even inclement weather could deter Aldine ISD graduation ceremonies!



Pictured is the first graduating class of Blanson CTE High School.

Not even the threat of inclement weather could prevent Aldine ISD from holding nine graduation ceremonies May 27-29 at Thorne Stadium.

While the graduates, their parents, Aldine ISD Trustees, Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney and her Executive Leadership Team (ELT) kept a close watch of the skies over those three days, the ceremonies came off without much disruption.

Eisenhower High School's ceremony began in the rain, but the hardy crowd persevered through some wet moments to see their loved ones receive their diplomas.

When it was all said and done, 3,229 Aldine ISD seniors proudly marched across the stage to receive their diplomas.

As Dr. Goffney said, the Class of 2020-21 overcame many obstacles to have their big moment in the sun, or evening, as three ceremonies were held in the evening (MacArthur High School, Aldine High School and Davis High School) to escape the heat.

"Students, congratulations. I am so very happy to be with you, in person, as you complete your journey with Aldine ISD," Dr. Goffney said. "The Class of 2021 is one that will be remembered forever. You ended your junior year in a pandemic and unfortunately, you will end your senior year in the same pandemic."

"Your class will be remembered for your perseverance, your resilience, your hope

and your ability to pivot and even thrive during change and uncertainty. You have seen so much change in the last year: A new civil rights movement has unfolded in front of your eyes. The pandemic has exposed new issues, offered and changed how we do business, interact with others and learn. The world we live in now is very different and you are more than prepared. Please cherish today, this moment, and be proud of your accomplishments."

Dr. Goffney also thanked the students' parents, families and teachers for the support they showed over the last four years. "Parents, families and teachers, you too should be proud," she said. "The support you have provided our graduates along the way helped them reach their academic goals. Continue to support them as they go on to the next chapter of their lives."

Hall Success Academy (43 graduates) had the first graduation ceremony on May 27. Keyanni Young delivered the Valedictorian address, while Ebony Sequendo delivered the Salutatory address. Blanson CET High School (275 graduates), which saw its first senior class graduate, was next with Miguel Chacon as Miguel Chacon delivered the Valedictorian address and Stephanie Montoya delivered the Salutatory address. The final ceremony on May 27 was MacArthur High School (576 graduates). Cassandra Chapa delivered the Valedictorian address,

while Roxanna Mendez delivered the Salutatory address.

On May 28, Victory Early College High School (87 graduates, 67 of whom earned Associate's Degree from Lone Star College) had the first ceremony. Hannah Omoruyi delivered the Valedictorian address, while Jocelyn Goodman delivered the Salutatory address. Eisenhower High School (402 graduates) held the next graduation ceremony on May 28. Karen Cordova delivered the Valedictorian address, while Vuong Duang delivered the Salutatory address. The final graduation ceremony on May 28 was the Aldine High School (592 graduates) Class of 2021. Christopher Rodriguez delivered the Valedictorian address, while Sara Sanchez delivered the Salutatory address.

On May 29 Carver High School (141 graduates) kicked things off with their ceremony at 8 a.m. Thuy-Vi Madison Tran delivered the Valedictorian address, while Khaliyl Armenius Peterson delivered the Salutatory address. Nimitz High School (489 graduates) followed Carver. Alejandra Arroyo delivered the Valedictorian address, while Luis Vasquez delivered the Salutatory address. The final ceremony of the weekend was held by Davis High School (624 graduates). Suchanut Namcharoen delivered the Valedictorian address, while Aiyana Vazquez Ochoa delivered the Salutatory address.

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