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NORTHEAST NEWS

Americanisms



“Our nation is a rainbow — red, yellow, brown, black and white — and we’re all precious in God’s sight.”
— Jesse Jackson

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VOL. 45, NO. 26/27 TUESDAY, JUNE 29/JULY 6, 2021 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

SUNDAY



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.

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ONGOING
Free food at Branch Libraries

Every Wednesday you can pick up Breakfast & Lunch for the week (7 boxed meals for each child under the age of 18)

Courtesy Harris County Branch Library and the Houston Food Bank. Walk-ins welcome, no registration.

Celebrating Juneteenth in East Aldine

BakerRipley, East Aldine, and Studio 59 host Street Festivities

EAST ALDINE – Last Saturday, June 19th was busy with public events all over the district, including a Juneteenth celebration at BakerRipley in Town Center on Aldine Mail Route, and a Studio 59 Market Square monthly event on the southbound frontage road of US59.

Both events took place in stifling 100 degree heat, but lots of shade from the tents and BakerRipley’s open building helped the crowds be comfortable.

BakerRipley provided two hours of dancing, crafts and game participation, music and food to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday and the end of the school year.

Studio 59 holds their Market Square event on US59 frontage road near Aldine Mail Route every month, and dozens of vendors of all types show up with their particular specialties. From food to jewelry, toys, clothing and artwork, their is an enjoyable variety of exhibits to either view or purchase.

Continued. See EAD Celebrations, page 2



Vendors, food trucks, music, crafts, and more were present at the BakerRipley Juneteenth celebration.



Studio 59 owners Adriana and Dago Hinojosa had a booth selling homemade pita spreads and more.



BakerRipley has music and dance performances, including these authentic African dance moves.



East Aldine District’s Natalie Perez and Veronica Sanches had lots of gifts for the crowd, and also helped the Living Centers Project survey.

Local Democrats meet with VP Harris

Discuss Voter Restriction bills

WASHINGTON, DC – Last week a group of Democratic state legislators met with Vice President Kamala Harris to discuss the ongoing fight to protect voting rights in Texas and to urge the US Senate to pass S.1 to combat coordinated voter suppression efforts taking place across the country.

Sen. Carol Alvarado (D-Houston), the chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus, released the following statement after the meeting:

“Today the members of the Texas delegation had a productive conversation with Vice President Harris about the fight against voter suppression in the Tex-



The Democratic Caucus of the Texas Legislature, chaired by Senator Carol Alvarado of Houston, (in the green dress top left) meets with Vice President Kamala Harris, (top center in front of flag) to discuss federal and state legislation that is attempting to restrict voters’ rights. Also around the table, Houston State Representatives Armando Walle, Senfronia Thompson, and State Senator Boris Miles.

as Legislature and the importance of H.R. 1 and H.R. 4.

We are grateful for Vice President Harris’ partnership and support in our nation’s capitol as Democrats aim to preempt Jim Crow style laws from every level of government. As we look toward the next special session in Austin, the Texas Senate Democrats will continue to do our part in the fight to ensure that our sacred right to vote is not taken away by blatant Republican voter suppression tactics.”

The Texas Senate Democratic Caucus represents

Continued on Page 5. See Democrats meet VP.

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COMMUNITY PAGE

East Aldine's Juneteenth Celebration

STUDIO 59 BAKERRIPLEY

COUNTY CONNECTION
Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo



Booths came in all types, from tents to a Volkswagen Kombi bus. You could buy children's toys at the balloon booth, and music cd's at the VW.



Families were entertained by the music, food and dancing, but also got to participate with a variety of crafts projects and games.

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.

New Eviction Intervention Program helps families

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. 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. In addition,



Angel Babes Sweets & Treats was a popular booth, not only for the babes, but also for all those wonderful goodies they had to eat. Even Funnel Cakes. Hard to make a choice here.



This DJ at the BakerRipley celebration kept everyone in a good mood with her contemporary music selections.



The East Aldine Living Centers Study had a display, and asked for input on what qualities they thought would enhance living in Aldine. Here Art Murillo, a trustee for the Lone Star College District, and representative of METRO, discusses quality of life issues with two consultants for the study.

EAST ALDINE CELEBRATION, Continued from Page 1

Also part of the event was a public display of the East Aldine Living Centers Study, with the consulting group and the district asking for public input on what they think should be included in the district to

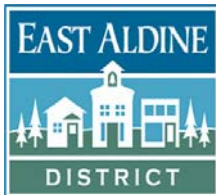
enhance the quality of life. Many suggestions were recorded, including shopping and transportation improvements, more sports venues, and activities for youth, especially when school is not in session.

top ten
Trending Food Orders*

1. Spicy chicken sandwich
2. Chicken burrito bowl
3. Chicken wings
4. Waffle fries
5. Cold brew coffee
6. Steak quesadilla
7. Iced latte
8. Fish and chips
9. Strawberry shake
10. Roast beef sandwich

*Diners, 2020
Source: Grubhub

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ELECTION INTEGRITY

IN THE 87TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

DEDICATED FUNDS FOR SECURE VOTING MACHINES, ELECTIONS TRAINING

The state budget provides \$34 million for reimbursements to counties for the retrofitting or purchase of new auditable voting machines and an increase of \$1.4 million for the training of county election officials.

POLL-WATCHER STATUS

HB 1128 clarifies who may lawfully be present at a polling place, early voting ballot board, and central counting stations.

Individuals who may lawfully be present at a polling place:

- + an election judge or clerk;
- + a watcher;
- + a state inspector;
- + a person admitted to vote;
- + a child under age 18 accompanying a parent who had been admitted to vote;
- + a person providing authorized assistance to a voter;
- + a special peace officer appointed by the presiding judge;
- + the county chair of a political party conducting a primary election;
- + a voting system technician;
- + county election officers, as necessary to perform election tasks; or
- + a person authorized by the presiding judge in accordance with the Election Code.

ZUCKERBUCKS BAN ON PRIVATE DONATIONS

HB 2283 prohibits election administrators from accepting large donations from private individuals (like Mark Zuckerberg) and organizations for the purposes of administering elections.

EFFICIENCY IN UPDATING STATE VOTER ROLLS

HB 1264 makes the process of removing deceased persons from voter rolls more efficient.

STRONGER PENALTIES FOR ELECTION FRAUD

HB 574 increases the penalties for conducting fraudulent activity in elections. The bill would make statute consistent by elevating some current election-related offenses from misdemeanors to felonies and would appropriately punish individuals who committed election fraud. The law takes effect on Sept. 1, 2021.

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★ OPINION PAGE ★

STARLITE
By Gil Hoffman, Publisher

Not a weekend to remember

We usually play catch-up on the weekends, because around a newspaper there is always one more thing to do, getting ready for the next edition.

But this weekend was one I would like to forget. It started when we came into the office Saturday morning. A piece of our ironwork that secures our storefront was lying on the floor. Why we wondered. Then we saw it. A bullet hole in the front glass, and we discovered pieces of the bullet on the floor. I can tell you this is a disconcerting event. And although no one was hurt, nor any property other than the glass window, you begin to wonder why anyone would shoot at your building in the middle of the night. Our commercial street is usually quiet and safe. Was it random? Was it personal? The police came, but offered no more information than we had.

But things didn't get better. Later in the day, we learned that our right-hand man, our friend and colleague for over 25 years in the newspaper business, Lewis Spearman, had a heart attack, and was in the hospital recovering. Luckily with good care at Houston Methodist, and a stent in his heart, he will be fine.

Trying to get some work done, and not worry too much about these events, I sat at the computer. And then the power went off. Newspapers are highly dependent on computers, and with no lights and no computers, you are out of luck.

And this was a weekend that seems determined to prove we had no luck. Yes we fixed the power, but we could only wish that next weekend would be better, and we could forget this one in the past.

OPINION
By Grace Chimene, President
League of Women Voters of Texas

Defunding of the Legislature is Dangerous to Our Democracy

League of Women Voters of Texas President Grace Chimene issued the following statement in response to Governor Abbott's defunding the Texas legislature by vetoing Article X of the new state budget.

"Governor Abbott's defunding of the legislature is dangerous to our democracy and undermines the will of the people and the constitutional set of checks and balances upon which our government is built.

"House legislators were doing their job, patriotically representing their constituents. The League of Women Voters is deeply concerned about the undemocratic action taken by Governor Abbott in retribution for not getting his way on an anti-voter bill. The Governor's action is a dangerous step away from democracy, shows complete disrespect to the voters of Texas, to the staff who do the work of the government and for our system of checks and balances.

"Of particular concern is the upcoming redistricting cycle, which is mandated by the U.S. and Texas Constitutions. The Legislative Council provides technical and legal support to the Texas Legislature during redistricting; and by defunding this nonpartisan agency, the Governor has jeopardized the Legislature's ability to produce new district maps. This threatens our democracy. The census report comes out in August and a special session on redistricting is planned for early fall. Elected officials will now have to create maps without expert legal and technical assistance. The power of our votes is determined by how district maps are written.

Our government and the people of Texas rely on the staff of these and other legislative offices to do the necessary work of our democracy.

Legislative office staff - Each legislator's staff works hard meeting the needs of the public their legislators serve.

The Legislative Budget Board - This agency develops budget and policy recommendations for legislative appropriations, completes fiscal analyses for proposed legislation, and conducts evaluations and reviews to improve the efficiency and performance of state and local operations.

The Legislative Council - The Texas Legislative Council is a nonpartisan legislative agency that serves as a source of impartial research and information and provides technical and legal support to the Texas Legislature for redistricting. Its staff assists legislators in drafting and analyzing proposed legislation, and in obtaining information on specific legislative problems and on matters affecting the general welfare of the state. Council staff also handles the printing, processing, and distribution of legislative documents and provides computer support to the legislature and all of the other legislative agencies.

The Sunset Advisory Commission - Their mission is to enhance government accountability to the Legislature and people of Texas by objectively evaluating the need for and value of state programs and services.

The State Auditor - Their mission is to improve government accountability by investigating allegations of illegal acts and improprieties involving any entity that receives funds from the state.

"The League of Women Voters will continue to monitor this dangerous step away from democracy and seek effective remedies."



THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

No News

Tanner wasn't waiting for me at the fence yesterday.

Dakota and Tanner, my two oldest dogs, are always waiting for me at the chain-link fence. Dakota can't hear and doesn't see well, so she stays close to the fence in the afternoon when I walk by in order to collect her treat. Tanner really can't see or hear at all, so he keeps close to Dakota. Yesterday he wasn't there.

The thing about giving out dog treats is that, even though I have a relationship with all these dogs, I don't know much about them.

"Where is your brother?" I once asked a long-legged hound that I always met with her sibling.

"We had to put him down yesterday," the hound dog's owner said, as his eyes filled with tears.

"Oh! I'm sorry. That was sudden," I said.

He nodded and wiped his eyes. The now-single hound looked up at me with big sad eyes, as if she knew what we were talking about. It was sudden for everyone.

Today I am worried about Tanner. He's 14, and it pulls at my heart the way he takes his treat so gently. He cannot see my hand. His teeth are old and worn. His muzzle is gray. He is so old and kind and careful. And yesterday, he was missing.

My heart was already tender.

My husband Peter's oldest sister, Shelley, has been in and out of the hospital for more than two months. She has made it out as far as rehab, and then had to go back to the hospital for more surgeries, more infections, more trouble.

Peter is still grieving the loss of his other sister, Lori, who died of cancer just this spring. He is worried—we are both so worried—about Shelley.

I try not to ask Peter, "Any news on Shelley?" because he would tell me if there was. And so I go for my walk and always in the back of my mind I'm wondering about Shelley. And then, yesterday, Tanner was missing.

"Where is Tanner?" I asked Dakota, as she ate her treat. She did not answer. I could tell she thought she should get a second treat, since I had another one in my hand, ready.

"This treat is for Tanner!" I told her. But she kept staring at me, giving me no clue where he might be.

I used to think bad news was the hardest thing to bear. Now I'm not sure if no news isn't a little worse. No news is a constant buzzing. It is hopeful one moment and doom-filled the next. It is pain and fear mixed together. It is the anticipation of loss, and it causes me to see ill omens and sadness everywhere.

There is still no news on Shelley. Her son and daughter-in-law can't know any more than the doctors, and the doctors don't know what is happening. She is tired. She is sad. I imagine she must be lonely. All we know is that she does not call and her voicemail is full and that is not like Shelley.

I brought a couple of extra-large treats with me on my walk today. When I got to Tanner's house, there was only one dog waiting outside. It was Tanner.

I hollered at him to no avail. I jumped up and down and waved my arms and finally caught his eye. He tottered over.

"Oh, Tanner. It's so good to see you," I told him.

"What's the big deal?" he seemed to say.

Sometimes no news is the best news of all.

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

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

Heat wave across Texas prompts conservation call

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas urged Texans to cut back on power usage last week when an unusually large number of power plants shut down for unexpected repairs as temperatures soared. ERCOT officials announced Friday that Texans could resume normal levels of electricity use, however.

ERCOT came under fire after widespread outages during the winter storm in mid-February, resulting in the CEO being forced out and much of the board replaced.

Saturday marked the official first day of summer.

BORDER WALL CONSTRUCTION PLAN UNVEILED

Gov. Gregg Abbott last week announced several key facets of his plan for the state to build a wall on its border with Mexico. Abbott and other state leaders signed a letter during a press conference, allowing the transfer of \$250 million to begin construction and to hire a program manager and contractors. The program manager will hire contractors and subcontractors needed to build the wall and will identify available state land, as well as private land whose owners are willing to volunteer space for the wall.

Meanwhile, Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced approximately 591,595 acres of state-owned land will receive emergency authorization to be used to build part of the wall. Texas and Mexico share 1,254 miles of common border, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

The governor is also seeking donations for building a wall via www.borderwall.gov. State lawmakers allocated \$1 billion for border security



By Gary Borders

in the recently passed budget, but Democratic officials have pointed out most of that money goes to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

ABBOTT APPOINTS COBOS TO PUC

Abbott last week appointed Lori Cobos to the PUC. She fills a term scheduled to expire on Sept. 1, although she could be reappointed. Senate confirmation is not required since the Legislature is not in session. The PUC will have a full complement of commissioners for the first time since February.

"I am proud to appoint Lori Cobos to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, and I know that she will draw upon her wealth of experience and knowledge to faithfully serve the people of Texas," Abbott said.

Cobos has served in several senior-level posts at the PUC and ERCOT, including as chief executive and public counsel for the Office of Public Utility Counsel. As a commissioner, she will draw a salary of \$201,000 annually.

FOREST SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS SENT TO AID OTHER STATES

Texas A&M Forest Service has sent 25 firefighters, including two engine crews, to wildfires in Colo-

rado, Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico and Florida.

"Texas state resources are supporting wildfire suppression efforts in multiple roles, including firefighters, engine support, prevention team members, aviation operations and support roles," TFS said in a press release. The release said TFS remains dedicated to protecting the state's natural resources from wildfire while assisting other states, a common practice.

Across Texas, the potential for wildfires remains low due to the copious amounts of rain this spring. For current conditions, visit the Texas Potential Outlook site: <https://tinyurl.com/3j84srd7>

VACCINE RATE CONTINUES TO SLOW

The number of Texans who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 has hit 11.4 million, about 39% of the state's population, according to Texas Department of State Health Services.

Across the United States, 45% of the population is fully vaccinated. Texas ranks in the lower tier of states in percentage of population that is fully vaccinated. However, the number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas dropped considerably from the previous week, with 8,414 reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University, along with 186 deaths. Hospitalizations dropped slightly, with 1,564 lab confirmed COVID-19 patients in Texas hospitals, according to DSHS.

STAAR TESTS SHOW DROP IN MATH RESULTS

Results from the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, which measures students' knowledge of several subjects, shows a sharp drop in math scores, the Texas Standard reported last week. The new scores came after a school year unlike no other, with many students taking classes online at home because of the pandemic.

Only 42% of high school students who took the primary high school math test were considered to be "at grade level," down from 66% last year. This year's STAAR results don't include all students, since some did not return to school in-person to take the exam.

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.

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COMMUNITY WATCH

Fatal Crash at 7800 Eastex Freeway

Houston police are investigating a fatal crash at 7800 Eastex Freeway (North U.S. Highway 59) service road about 8:40 a.m. on Wednesday (June 23).

The identity of the female victim, 33, is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division Sergeant L. Ross and Officer R. Bymaster reported:

The victim was driving a silver Nissan Sentra northbound near the above address, failed to drive in a single lane and struck a concrete light pole. Houston Fire Department paramedics transported the victim to Ben Taub General Hospital where she was pronounced deceased.

No other persons or vehicles were involved in this crash.



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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Jonah in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From 2 Samuel 11, who received a letter from David telling him to put Uriah into battle? Gideon, Ahab, Isaac, Joab
3. In Luke 12:27, what did Jesus say are better arrayed than King Solomon? Lilies, Angles, Trees, Sheep
4. Matthew, the tax collector, was known by what

other name? Levi, Felix, Reuben, Jehu
 5. Who was the baby born of Zacharias and Elizabeth? Daniel, John the Baptist, Noah, David
 6. Which king of Judah had his eyes gouged out? Uzziah, Ahaz, Jeconiah, Zedekiah

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Joab; 3) Lilies; 4) Levi; 5) John the Baptist; 6) Zedekiah
 Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.
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Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand.

JUDGES 14: 5, 6

Detail from "Samson and Delilah" series by Robert Gibbings (1925)

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Democrats meet VP Harris,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Texas Democratic Caucus group at the White House, preparing to meet Vice President Kamala Harris regarding SB7 and HB1, bills that deal with voter restrictions in Texas and nationwide. Chairman Carol Alvarado, Texas State Senator, is at the center in a blue dress.

urban and rural communities across the state, serving nearly 12 million Texans. The current members are Chair Carol Alvarado (Houston), Vice Chair Nathan Johnson (Dallas), John Whitmire (Houston), Judith Zaffirini (Laredo),

Eddie Lucio, Jr. (Brownsville), Royce West (Dallas), Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (McAllen), José Menéndez (San Antonio), Borris Miles (Houston), Beverly Powell (Burlson), Sarah Eckhardt (Austin), Roland Gutierrez (San Antonio),

and César Blanco (El Paso).

For questions regarding the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, please contact Sushma Smith by email at jasti.smith@gmail.com or (281) 772-9618.

Lone Star College has sign-up booth at BakerRipley Juneteenth Celebration

At last Saturday's Juneteenth community celebration at BakerRipley, Lone Star College had a booth with lots of computers and staff to help get students registered for the fall semester. They also had a popular booth with games and prizes.



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