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NORTHEAST NEWS

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EPA to review TCEQ Permit criteria

County Attorney cites excessive Concrete Batch Plants in Minority areas

HOUSTON - (August 9, 2022)— Today Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee announced that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will investigate the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)'s concrete batch permitting criteria and processes under federal civil rights laws. The EPA initiated the investigation in response to complaints submitted by the Harris County Attorney's Office and Lone Star Legal Aid under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The EPA sent a four-page letter to Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee's office saying it



HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY CHRISTIAN MENEFEE at a press conference last week, announcing that the EPA will conduct an investigation of TCEQ permit criteria. Also present were Adrian Garcia, Rodney Ellis, Armando Walle, Ana Hernandez, John Whitmire, and other county leaders.

plans to investigate the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) after receiving two complaints – one in April and one in May. The complaints allege the TCEQ has been discriminatory with public participation, based on race, regarding its concrete batch permit process.

"The EPA stepping in and investigating Texas's environmental agency is a big step in protecting people who live in Harris County from toxic pollution. Harris County is littered with concrete batch plants, and they're primarily in Black and Brown communities. The people who live by these plants,

including children, can face many health risks, including respiratory illness and cancer. We must do all we can to protect them," said Harris County Attorney Menefee. "State leaders in Austin are supposed to keep communities safe from this toxic pollution. Yet time and again we see the state pass laws that make it easier to put polluting plants in our communities. And the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality does nothing to stop it. I'm glad the EPA is stepping in where the state is dropping the ball."

"People in our communi-

Continued. EPA to Investigate, Page 7

East Aldine BIG program expands to include Demolition

East Aldine District held their quarterly Business Luncheon last Thursday, July 28 at the district offices. Attending were local business persons and speakers for Lone Star College, BakerRipley, and East Aldine District.

Lance Dean of East Aldine District described an expansion of the BIG (Business Improvement Grant) program that now includes demolition of sub-standard structures, to improve the appearance of the district and enhance the value of properties. Dean said the 50-50 matching grant program is meant to encourage eligible property owners, businesses or individuals, to demolish structures for future development or quality of life improvement.

Grants are available up to the total amount of \$10,000, or 50% of the project cost.

Property owners will benefit with a sign that says they participated in the program, and publicity on District media with before and after photos.



East Aldine District's Economic Developer director Lance Dean, explains the new BIG Demolition program at last month's Business Luncheon.

Ashley Gomez of BakerRipley explained their Food Industry Resilience Program, meant to help existing businesses rebuilt that have been impacted by COVID-19. Subjects include healthy foods, a strategic business plan, and improved focus and mindset on recover. Call 346-

570-4441 for more details.

From Lone Star College, Chris Viser and several staff members had a booth with information on all the programs offered by LSC for businesses and individuals. An impressive brochure listed hundreds of classes, at over 20 campus and center locations.

Civic Club holds "Safety Pop-Up" Event in East Oakwilde



Pictured L-R, Armando Cardona, Benito Garza, Sgt. Terry Garza, Gloria Gomez, Marina Flores Sugg, Shirley Ronquillo, Guadalupe Jimenez, Rene Ortiz, Joanna Ortiz, Francisca Hernandez.

The Green Forest Civic Club hosted its first "Safety Pop-Up" event in the East Oakwilde Subdivision on Saturday, August 6, 2022. The event was the idea of the Civic Club's Special Events Committee chairperson and Board Director, Shirely Ronquillo. The purpose behind

these "Pop-Up" events is to "bring our resources to our residents' doorsteps and create a safer community for all of our residents", said Civic Club President, Ruben A. Salazar.

Among those in attendance was Sergeant Terry Garza who was invited

to provide East Oakwilde residents with crime prevention and safety tips. Sergeant Garza also engaged in conversation with residents regarding several crime and nuisance issues East Oakwilde.

Continued. See Safety Pop-Up, Page 7

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METRO HOV Lanes open Weekends for Summer

The Express Lanes that help you avoid traffic on weekdays will soon be open seven days a week as part of a regional pilot mobility program approved by METRO's Board of Directors today. HOV/HOT (Express) Lanes managed by METRO will be open on weekends beginning Saturday, July 2 through Monday, Sept. 5. This includes the Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays. Weekend and holiday operations will follow the same schedule, occupancy requirements and tolls as weekdays.

Lanes included in the pilot program run down the middle of Interstate 45, U.S. Highway 59 and U.S. Highway 290.

The lanes run in one direction, but are reversible depending on the time of day. In the mornings, vehicles travel toward downtown Houston. In the afternoons, they travel away from downtown Houston.

Toll requirements depend on the freeway, time of day and total number of people in your vehicle.

Laws of the Lanes

- * Carpools, vanpools and motorcyclists ride for free.
- * Solo drivers have the option of paying a toll to use the lanes.
- * Trailer towing is prohibited.
- * No trucks with more than two axles or a gross weight capacity of one ton or greater.
- * No bicycles (motorcycles permitted).
- * No pedestrians.

Free Meals for Aldine Students

A provision from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide the funding needed to allow all enrolled Aldine ISD students to eat breakfast and lunch at no charge during the 2022-2023 school year.

The money comes from the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The CEP hails from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which allows qualifying schools and districts in low-income areas to serve meals for free. To qualify for the CEP, 40 percent or more of the student body must be eligible for free school meals through other poverty programs. If that's the case, the entire school district becomes eligible for free breakfast and lunches.

"Aldine began offering free meals during the pandemic," said Susan D'Amico, executive director of child nutrition services. "We're pleased that this program allows us to continue offering all students access to nutritious food so they can come to class well-nourished and ready to learn."

Aldine ISD strongly encourages those families that would have qualified for free meals under the old program to continue to complete the annual income survey form. These surveys will be part of the registration process for

new families and the Annual Update that families of returning students must complete before the start of the new school year.

"The annual income survey is extremely important and helps fund many different programs at Aldine ISD," said D'Amico. "Data from this survey can increase technology funding and offer learning assistance programs to students in need." The income survey also gives families access to internet discounts, college application fee waivers, and various testing fee waivers.

Families that utilized the meal program in Aldine ISD before the pandemic may have dollars remaining on their student accounts. To check the status of student accounts, families should contact the cafeteria office of their child's school or log into SchoolCafe.com to see their child's account. Families with a credit balance can ask for a refund or may transfer the remaining funds to another student account. These funds may be used to purchase a la carte items such as chips or ice cream.

Visit aldineisd.org for more information about the district's Child Nutrition Services. Families can also contact Child Nutrition Services through the district's two-way communication platform, Let's Talk (click here).

Fatal Shooting at 11960 Airline Drive

Houston police are investigating the fatal shooting of a man at 11960 Airline about 9:30 a.m. today (July 19).

The identity of the victim, 46, is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

HPD Homicide Division Detectives A. Vinogradov and D. Crowder reported:

HPD patrol officers responded to an apartment at the above address and found the victim suffering from a gunshot wound. Paramedics pronounced the victim deceased at the scene.

Investigators were advised the suspect attempted to rob a second person inside the apartment after shooting the victim.

The suspect is described only as a light skin black male, between 25 to 30 years old, wearing a long sleeve green shirt with dark colored pants. He has long black locks that were tied up behind his head.

Anyone with information in this case is urged to contact the HPD Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

BILINGUAL STORYTIME

Join us back in the library for storytime in English and Spanish **Wednesdays at 10:30am!**

KIDS CLUB

Kids Club is back this **Wednesday, Aug. 17 at 4:30pm!** Come and have some fun!

TEENS MAKE IT

Join us **Monday, Aug. 15 at 3pm** as we make pizza bagels! Teens 13 and up just drop in. Frist come, first served.

TEEN THURSDAYS

Teen Thursdays are back! Join us on **Thursday afternoons** starting at **3:30pm**. Drop on in!

COMPUTER CLASSES

In addition to our online computer classes in both English and Spanish we will now be offering computer classes in person at the library. If you want to participate, **call us to register: 832-927-5410.**

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In addition to our online computer classes in both English and Spanish we will now be offering computer classes in person at the library. If you want to participate, **call us to register: 832-927-5410.**

Tuesdays: various topics (Spanish computer

class), 5-7pm, at the library

Wednesdays: Beyond the Basics with Office 365 plus Google Apps, (English computer class), 5-7pm, online

Thursdays: Beyond the Basics with Office 365 plus Google Apps (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library

BOOK CHALLENGE BOOK CLUB

This is the book club for people who hate book clubs! We don't all read the same book. We all do the same challenge! This challenge is READ A BOOK WITH A ONE WORD TITLE. The genre and author are up to you! We meet **Saturday, Aug. 20 at 11am** in the library. You have been challenged!

CALL FOR LITERACY TUTORS

Would you like to be a part of making an impact on people's lives? If you are interested in becoming a literacy tutor at the Aldine Branch Library, we want to talk to you! We are looking for volunteers to

teach English language classes in person and virtually. **Call 832-927-5410 or email for info: ald@hcpl.net**

ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you need to earn volunteer hours or are just looking for a meaningful way to spend your time? Volunteer at the library! Pick up an application at the Aldine Branch Library or call 832-927-5410.

PASSPORT SERVICES

Do have plans to travel out of the country soon? Get out of the ball and make sure you get your passport in order NOW! You can make an appointment for passport services at Aldine Branch - <https://www.hcpl.net/services/passport-services>

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COMMUNITY WATCH

Lawsuit filed after concrete truck falls from overpass, injures 3 and kills boy

HOUSTON — A family whose SUV was crushed when a concrete-mixer truck toppled off the East Beltway and landed on their vehicle is now seeking compensation in the wake of an apparent freak accident that killed a 22-month-old boy. Nicolas Resendiz was identified as the 22-month-old child who died in the Aug. 5, 2022, crash on the East Beltway.

His aunt, Esmerelda Resendiz, described little Nicolas Resendiz saying, "He was just a happy little boy. He wasn't shy like his sister. He would go to anybody. He would smile with you and laugh."

The family is having a hard time accepting what happened was real.

"It's still hard for us to process everything. Doing every day, daily things, with him not being here, or seeing one and not the other," Esmerelda Resendiz said.

The lawsuit was filed by Jennifer and Maria Resendiz, two of the SUV's occupants, against National Ready Mix LLC of Kingwood, which is the company that owns the truck involved in the Aug. 5 crash.

The two women, who are mother and daughter, are not only seeking damages for current and future medical expenses, but they are seeking compensation for the wrongful death of Nicolas, the child who lost his life.

"Plaintiff Jennifer Resendiz has forever lost her son. She is, therefore, entitled to be compensated for the past and future loss of the companionship, society, love, and affection resulting from the death of Nicholas, and for the mental anguish, grief and sorrow, which she has suffered since his death, and which she will in the future for the rest of her life," the filing reads.

The women, whom the lawsuit states as "seriously injured" from the crash, are seeking over \$1 million for Nicholas' death. A monetary amount was not disclosed for the women's injuries.

Houston attorney Terry Bryant is listed as the family's representation.

Concrete Mixer Truck fell from Beltway 8 onto car driving below on frontage road. A 22 month old boy was killed, 3 others injured.

COVID-19 Novavax Vaccine Now Available at HCPH Sites

Houston – Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is pleased to announce that there is a new option for people to get their COVID-19 vaccine. On July 13, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine for emergency use. Following approvals of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), HCPH is now offering the COVID-19 Novavax vaccine to residents. Novavax is a two-dose primary series for individuals 18 years of age and older given 3 weeks apart.

Novavax uses a different technique than other COVID-19 vaccines such as those from Pfizer and Moderna. Instead of using mRNA, which provides the instructions for your body to create the COVID-19 spike protein that in turn induces your body's immune response, Novavax's vaccine injects the small protein itself, that your body detects and that triggers your body's immune response. The Novavax vaccine is based on a well-established method of vaccine development that has been used for years for other vaccines such as the Human-papillomavirus, Hepatitis B, flu, and Shingles vaccines.

Approved COVID-19 Vaccines in the United States include:

- Pfizer-BioNTech (mRNA vaccine)
- Moderna (mRNA vaccine)
- Johnson & Johnson (viral vector vaccine)
- *New* Novavax (protein subunit vaccine)

Moderna, Novavax, and Pfizer are recommended for primary vaccination and Moderna and Pfizer are recommended for booster doses and must be used for the second booster dose. A person's eligibility for a booster dose(s) depends on age, primary series product, and immunocompetence. Fully vaccinated is considered 2 weeks after the final dose in a primary series. People are considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccines when they receive all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended, when eligible. HCPH urges residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if they have not done so already or get a booster shot for those who qualify.

All COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are safe, effective, and provide strong protection against severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Vaccines provided by HCPH are free and appointments are not required though encouraged. If you would like to schedule an appointment, go to a ReadyHarris.org, vacstrac.hctx.net, or call 832-927-8787. To find a location near you, click here.

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY NEWS

AMERICAN ARTIST APPRECIATION MONTH:

August is American Artist Appreciation Month! Join us at High Meadows for fun crafts, awesome story times, and interesting talks/classes taught by local artists themselves as we celebrate American artists.

THE ART THING FOR TEENS:

Every Monday at 3pm, we are celebrating local and American artists by playing with various art mediums and channeling our creativity through different art projects. This program is for teens/young adults looking to make quick and incredible pieces of art!

ARTISTIC ADVENTURES STORYTIME:

Every Tuesday at 11:30 am we will have Artistic Adventures Story Time! Join us as we read books, sing songs, and explore our creativity as we do art projects inspired by American artists. This program is for children 3-8 years old.

COLORFUL EXPRESSIONS:

On Wednesdays at 5:30pm, we invite adults

to Colorful Expressions. Discover local and American artists, discuss artists' lives and processes, and try your hands at various art forms.

HM HEALTH FAIR:

The library will host a health fair for the community on Thursday, August 25th from 10am to 2pm. Stop by the library and discover health resources for your family and get your children vaccinated.

ARTISTS' PLAYGROUND:

Join us on August 25th from 10am-3pm for our Artists' Playground. We will have a special story time and fun art activities.

KNIT & CROCHET CLUB:

We will have a new monthly Knit & Crochet Club. Our first meetup will be on Saturday August 27th at 12pm and we will have a special guest teacher. Bring your own projects or start a new one here at the library.

A NOVEL IDEA BOOKCLUB:

Our monthly book club will be meeting again on Monday, August 29th at 6pm. Join us as we discuss "The Next Thing You Know" by Jessica Strawser.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

We are in search of volunteers to help us with a variety of projects from shelving to teaching literacy classes. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Jennifer at jennifer.nandlal@hcpl.net.

GRADCAFÉ:

Every Tuesday we will have representatives from GRADcafé at the High Meadows Library. GRADcafé is a one-stop-shop offering free services to help you decide on a career, explore education and training options, apply to college, and find the financial aid you need. Whether you want to attend college to get a degree or work on a certificate in a professional trade, we are here to guide you through every step. You're never too young or old to get started. Services are available in English or Spanish.

For information on any of the above events or programs, please call us at 832-927-5540 or stop by the library.

JENNIFER NANDLAL SR ADULT PROGRAM SPECIALIST

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Message from the Superintendent,
August 16, 2022

Welcome back, Aldine ISD! The summer is almost over, but I hope you are refreshed and ready to start the 2022-2023 school year!

Our four campuses on the Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program returned to school on July 18. We are counting down to the first day of school at the rest of our 80 campuses on Wednesday, August 17.

This marks my fifth first day of school I celebrate in Aldine ISD. It is an honor to return to Aldine ISD and serve as your Superintendent of Schools. It is exciting and uplifting to see the work done by staff at the district and campus level to create engaging, memorable learning experiences and opportunities for all our students.

Much has been accomplished in Aldine ISD, and I am committed to continuing the work of excellence and equity in education for every student.



Remember, you are a vital part of this effort, and I look forward to working with you.

With Aldine Pride,
Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney
Superintendent of Schools

A Reminder to Keep an Eye Out
for Children and School Buses

Students on the ADSY calendar started school on July 18. The majority of Aldine ISD students return Wednesday, August 17. The district needs your help to keep students safe throughout the school year.

With some students already back in school and most returning on August 17, this is a great time to remind drivers that they will share the road with students and school buses.

School bus drivers do everything they can to keep children safe, but everyone must make an effort to drive safely around school buses. Parents and children walking to school should always be alert and only cross the street at intersections and designated crosswalks.

Bus Safety Tips

- *Yellow flashing lights mean drivers should slow down because the bus is about to make a stop.
- *Red flashing lights mean the bus has stopped. All drivers must stop for buses while the red lights are flashing and the Stop sign is out. It is against the state law to pass a school bus with the red flashing lights on, loading or unloading children. Traffic behind the school bus traveling in the same direction MUST stop. If a roadway is divided, the opposite direction roadway may proceed with caution.
- *The area 15 feet around a school bus is where children are in danger of being hit. Drivers should stop far enough back to allow children the necessary space to safely enter or exit a bus. Never pass a stopped bus on the right that is loading or unloading. It is illegal and could have tragic consequences.
- *Drivers should be patient. Buses travel at a slower rate, and they make frequent stops.
- *Drivers should stay alert. Be aware that children will be loading and unloading at bus stops. Children are unpredictable. Children walking to or from their bus are very comfortable with their surroundings, which makes them more likely to take risks, ignore hazards, or fail to look both ways when crossing the street.
- *Students should stay safe from the roadway while waiting for the bus and no horseplay. Students should stay alert while waiting for the bus.
- *Students should wait until the bus stops and the driver signals that it is safe to load the bus or cross the street.
- *Students should respect the rights of others while riding the bus. They should cooperate with the driver and remain in their seats.

Tips for Driving in School Zones

- *Remain alert at all times.
- *Put away your cellphone. Cellphone use is banned in active school zones, and violators face fines of up to \$200 in school zones where signs are posted.
- *Always obey school zone speed limits. Remember, traffic fines usually double in school zones.
- *Drop off and pick up your children in your school's designated areas, not the middle of the street.
- *Keep an eye on children gathered at bus stops.
- *Be alert for children who might dart across the street or between vehicles on their way to school.
- *Obey all traffic rules, signs, and signals.

Tips for Children Walking or Biking to School

- *Always cross at intersections and designated crosswalks. Look left, right, and left again before proceeding. Never attempt to cross a multi-lane highway.
- *Always walk on sidewalks whenever they're available.
- *Look for traffic when stepping off a bus or from behind parked cars.
- *Make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street. Never assume a driver sees you.
- *Always obey crossing guards.
- *Always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- *Don't be distracted by electronic devices that take your eyes and ears off the road when walking.
- *Look for cars turning in all directions, including those turning left or right. Be visible at all times to drivers.
- *Follow all traffic rules, signs, and signals.



District Names Assistant
Superintendent of Student
Support Services

Aldine ISD named Diaka R. Melendez Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services. Melendez is returning home, having started her career in education at Nimitz Ninth Grade School as a teacher and softball coach.

Melendez, who started on August 2, will oversee several departments and initiatives, including Guidance and Counseling, Health Services, School Administration, Dropout Recovery, and Social and Emotional Learning and Culture.

“Diaka brings 20-plus years of experience to the role and is eager to support the district’s strategic priorities,” said Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. “She will be an asset in continuing our work in giving students the resources, skills, and tools that help our students overcome barriers and find success in school, college, and life.”

She joins Aldine ISD from Spring ISD, serving as curriculum and instruction executive director since 2021. Melendez led the PreK-12 curriculum development efforts to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners. In her role, Melendez monitored and ensured curriculum projects, timelines, and activities were completed as outlined in the district’s strategic plan. She supervised the district’s curriculum directors, content specialists, and instructional technologists. The work entailed building capacity in staff to access, interpret and act effectively on data to inform curriculum delivery, interventions, and accelerations decisions. Melendez also led the development and creation of all local district assessments. Additionally, she supported the integration of literacy, arts, social-emotional learning (SEL), STEM, and digital technology across curriculum levels; she supported staff in administering regulations and their impact on curriculum development. Her work efforts included coordinating the district’s annual summer school curriculum and program for all eligible students.



Diaka R. Melendez

Melendez began her career in education at Nimitz Ninth Grade School in 2002 as a teacher and softball coach before joining Humble ISD as an assistant principal at Humble High School in 2008. She advanced to associate principal of curriculum and instruction at Summer Creek HS and Humble HS, a position she held since 2011 until joining Spring ISD in July of 2016. She started as a principal at Spring HS before moving into her most recent role in SISD.

“Working at Aldine means that I will have the opportunity to be part of the work that can positively impact the trajectory of our students’ lives,” said Melendez. “I take that role very seriously because the work I am helping lead means our students, staff, and schools can tap

into every ounce of potential. When I think of all the possibilities for the students in our classrooms, I think, ‘Wow! How awesome is it to work with this community to change lives? I feel very fortunate to be back.’

Student Support Services help improve the quality of student learning, reduce dropout rates, and promote academic performance. Student Support Programs help students stay engaged, overcome barriers, and achieve their goals.

How Student Support Services Are Helpful to Students

Increased Student Engagement: Students feel more connected, form connections, and develop grit, so they stay the course even when things get complicated.

Removing Barriers: Every learner might endure some difficulties at some point, such as financial issues at home, childcare, a confidence crisis, etc., that can create obstacles for student progress. Student Support Services assist in providing students with the resources they need to overcome their barriers to success. Resources can include tutoring, financial aid, healthcare, mental health services, and other programs to help students strive and achieve their objectives.

Helping Students Achieve Their Goals: Students can use Student Support Services to help them connect with career counseling and address underlying motivation that drives them to attend school and pursue college, trade schools, or the military to achieve their goals.

Melendez will be a part of the Schools Office, working alongside the School Assistant Superintendents.

“We are all looking forward to working with Diaka as we continue to meet the goals and priorities of our strategic plan,” said Chief of School Dr. Katy Roede. “We will continue to move forward to ensure that every student, teacher, and leader has what they need to be successful.”

Aldine ISD Starts Year With
New Employee Orientation



The 2022-2023 school year is approaching quickly, and campuses across Aldine have been preparing for the August 17th day when the doors open. The new year brings new faces as Aldine I.S.D. hosted its annual New Employee Orientation (NEO) at Davis High school this past Friday. With many new teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff joining the district, the NEO is a way to connect the people working together to improve the students of this district. During the orientation, Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney had a message for the new employees: “know your power, know your district, and know your why.”

“Know your power, and stay around people who sharpen you because power

shrinks around negativity and know with our job comes purpose.”

After hearing from Dr. Goffney, the new staff went into individual sessions to discuss topics related to their roles and responsibilities. This allowed new staff to ask questions and learn more about what to expect in their first year from instructional leaders.

The NEO was highlighted by a performance from the Davis dance team and a simple yet effective spirit chant, “Good Job, Good Job Aldine,” with the new employees chanting along, led by Dr. Goffney. To energize the new staff ahead of their first year in the district, Aldine continues to show its support and appreciation for all new members.

★

OPINION

By U.S. Representative
SYLVIA GARCIA



Assault Weapons Ban passes House

10 days ago, my House colleagues and I voted to reinstate the Assault Weapons Ban. Now it goes to the Senate. We know an assault weapons ban will work to reduce mass shootings, because it worked in the past.

A 2021 study by Northwestern Medicine found:

“[The] Federal Assault Weapons Ban (FAWB) — that included a ban on large capacity magazines (limiting the number and caliber of bullets) — from 1994 to 2004 — resulted in a significant decrease in public mass shootings, number of gun deaths and number of gun injuries.”

Even Republicans know this. That’s why many of them voted for the original ban.

I strongly urge my colleagues in the Senate to act NOW to save lives.

It’s been less than three months since we lost 19 children and 2 teachers in the Uvalde massacre. All of them might be alive and with us today if we had passed this bill already. Every day the Senate delays this vote is a day we might wake up to another Uvalde, another El Paso, another Buffalo – the list of preventable tragedies is truly endless.

I am fighting every day for the people of our district – and people across Texas – to have safe schools and public spaces. Inaction in the face of this epidemic of violence is inexcusable.

We must also defend every Democratic seat so Republicans can’t reverse any of the gains we have made.

In addition to running for reelection myself, I’m also working to keep strong Democrats in office, and flip seats to elect bold new candidates to join our ranks.

I hope the Senate gathers the courage to pass this bill, so we can begin to address the gun violence that has become rampant in our country.

In the meantime, I will keep fighting for you, and we need you with us!

Si, se puede!

Sylvia Garcia

top ten

Least Affordable Housing Markets

1. Hong Kong

2. Vancouver

3. Sydney

4. Melbourne

5. Los Angeles

6. Toronto

7. Auckland

8. San Jose

9. San Francisco

10. London

Source: Bloomberg

✂

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OPINION!

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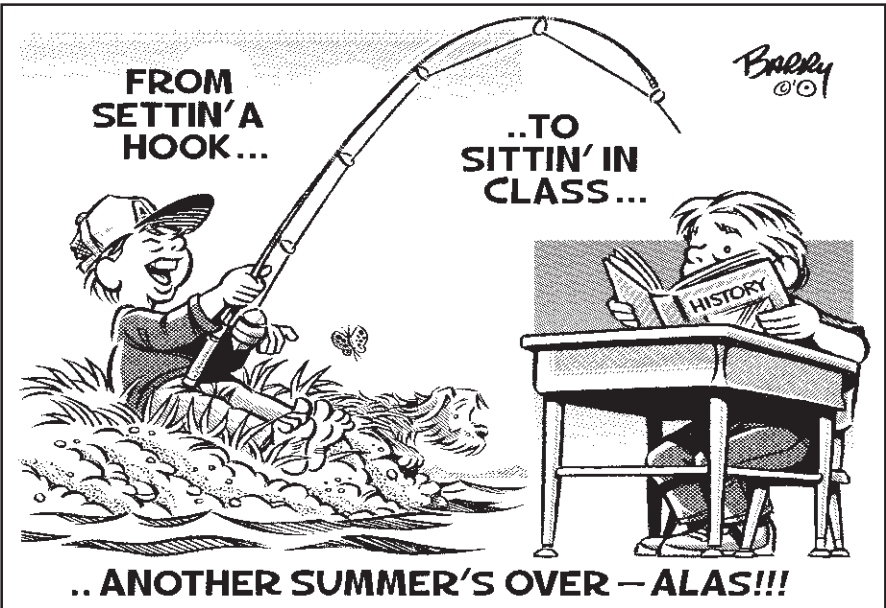
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★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Drivers Urged to be Alert as School Begins

DRIVERS URGED TO BE ALERT AS SCHOOL BEGINS

Millions of Texas children are heading back to school this month, as early as this week in some districts. The Texas Department of Transportation urges drivers to be especially alert and focused when driving in school zones and near bus stops.

Drivers are further reminded that a new Texas law requires drivers to stop and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, according to TxDOT. The Lisa Torry Smith Act is named after a young mother killed in Missouri City in a crosswalk as she walked her son to school. The driver received a \$50 fine for failing to yield, according to numerous media reports.

Now it’s a crime punishable with up to two years in prison.

EX-TRUCKING OWNER CHARGED WITH INSURANCE FRAUD

The former co-owner of Bill Hall Jr. Trucking in Bexar County has been indicted in Travis County for fraud in an alleged scheme to get lower workers compensation insurance premiums by concealing payroll reports. A Texas Department of Insurance news release said the plot allowed the company to avoid more than \$9 million in premium payments.

Francis Hall, the former co-owner along with her husband, was previously convicted of murder in 2016 for knocking her husband’s motorcycle off the road in 2013 with her Cadillac Escalade as she chased his lover, who was in another vehicle, on the same stretch of Loop 1604 in San Antonio. She claimed it was an accident, and the jury gave her the shortest possible sentence in that case. She was released two years later in 2018, according to the San Antonio Express-News.

Fraud investigators with TDI claim that be-



tween 2009 and 2016, “Hall allegedly provided false payroll information to Texas Mutual Insurance Company and concealed payroll reports to get lower insurance premiums on their extensive gravel hauling business.” If convicted, Hall could face life in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. She is currently free on bond.

WILDFIRE DANGERS CONTINUE IN THE DOG DAYS

As the summer heat and dry conditions persist, so does the danger of wildfire. The Texas A&M Forest Service reported 10 active wildfires across the state as of Sunday. The largest fire at 3,323 acres in Throckmorton County was 90% contained. The Big Sky Fire in Gillespie County had consumed 1,459 acres and was also 90% contained.

Burn bans are now in force in 225 Texas counties, according to the forest service. Only El Paso County and a portion of neighboring Hudspeth County are not under some level of drought throughout the entire state.

HEALTH CENTER GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

The Texas Department of State Health Services is seeking grant applications for \$20 million dedicated to health centers in areas where resources are scarce and access to adequate health care can be challenging. The funding came from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, and the Texas Legis-

lature approved funneling it to federally qualified health centers (FQHC).

“Federally Qualified Health Centers are a valuable support for people who need essential medical care but live in areas where resources are scarce and access can be challenging,” said State Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville. “Once they are up and running, they operate without local or state financial support. These grants are intended to bridge the gap between start-up cost and full certification to enable the program to expand in Texas.”

Open enrollment is available until Dec. 31 or until program funding is exhausted. More information is available on the D S H S website: dshs.texas.gov.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY ELIGIBLE FOR COVID-19 GRANTS

More funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act will soon be headed toward entities tied to travel and tourism which were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes arts entities, according to the Texas Commission on the Arts.

The program, operated by the Governor’s Office of Economic Development & Tourism, provides one-time grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible Texas businesses and non-profits that experienced an economic loss due to COVID-19. The \$180 million dedicated to the grant program to aid in the recovery of Texas tourism, travel and the hospitality industry was authorized in the last regular legislative session.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/3244psej>.

NEW COVID-19 CASES UP SLIGHTLY

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas during the past week rose slightly to 78,845, with 244 deaths reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. DSHS reports 3,490 lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, a slight drop from the previous week.

DSHS also reports 17.9 million Texans are fully vaccinated, or 60.6% of the state’s population, while 7.3 million have received at least one booster shot.

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.

★

THE
POSTSCRIPT

By
Carrie Classon

“Two Degrees”

They call the impossibly complicated screen I am looking at a “dashboard,” which I do not find reassuring at all. It would be nice not to associate my ignorance of technology with crashing some out-of-control machine into a ravine, although, as I think about it, that is very much how it feels.

Learning new technology is a bear. I don’t care what they say.

I understand the need to play with it, get familiar with the functions and learn in a less-than-linear fashion. But less-than-straightforward learning often leads me to travel in circles—I do the same thing again and again, and discover that I have learned nothing at all.

This is what I have been doing of late.

The goal is simple: I’m going back to some of “The Postscripts” from early on and making videos of them to post on my website and YouTube channel. I thought it would be a fun way for new readers to enjoy old columns. But I had to wade through a forest of fear and insecurities first—and I’m not home yet.

First, there are the required hours of staring at my face on the screen.

I was a stage actor before I started writing, where we take lots of photos but do not film the work. The result is that I know more or less how to position my face when a camera is in the vicinity to keep from looking completely ridiculous.

Video is different. My face is in constant motion on video. I stop the video midframe and see that I have an expression on my face that I did not know I was capable of making. It is never flattering. It is always grotesque.

“Do other people move their faces that much?” I wonder. I don’t think so. This is fear No. 1: having an abnormally mobile face.

Fear No. 2 is what to do with all this captured footage of my grotesque face contortions. Now we’re back at the “dashboard,” aptly named as I prepare for a crash landing.

The tutorials drone on and on about how to achieve an effect I would never dream of trying and merrily speed over the section where they explain, “This is how you can actually see what you are working on!” That would be nice to know.

There are dials and buttons and functions and reams of information about this video, less than five minutes long. There are special effects and filters I will never use, editing tricks I will never need and multilayering track capabilities that are totally superfluous to what I am doing. And, on every control, there is a long list of measurements I am supposed to understand to achieve the desired result. I suddenly feel that I am about two years old.

There is a story told about me when I was two. I got up on the bathroom scale and declared, “I’m going to see how tall I am. Oh!” I announced confidently, “Two degrees!”

I’m not sure I ever got over the feeling that measurements are not intuitive in the least.

But I am back at it today. The dashboard is all in shades of black and gray. I’m sure this is to make it look more intimidating and serious. We couldn’t have a candy-colored dashboard with little animated mascots helping me along the way.

By the end of yesterday, I had done what a typical video editor would accomplish in approximately 15 seconds. It felt like a tremendous accomplishment.

I think I progressed by at least two degrees.

Till next time,
Carrie
Photos from the column and other info can be found at CarrieClasson.com.

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SPANISH

PAGE

Mensaje de la Superintendente, 16 de Agosto de 2022

¡Bienvenidos de nuevo a Aldine ISD!
¡El verano casi ha terminado, pero espero que estén recargados de energía y listos para comenzar el curso académico 2022-2023!

Cuatro de nuestros colegios con el programa de Año Escolar con Días Adicionales (ADSY, por sus siglas en inglés) regresaron a la clase el 18 de julio. Estamos contando para el primer día de clases en el resto de nuestras 80 escuelas el miércoles 17 de agosto.

Este es mi quinto primer día de escuela que celebro en Aldine ISD. Es un honor regresar a Aldine ISD y servir como su Superintendente de Escuelas. Es emocionante y edificante ver el trabajo realizado por el personal a nivel de distrito y campus para crear experiencias y oportunidades de aprendizaje atractivas y memorables para todos nuestros estudiantes.

Mucho se ha logrado en Aldine ISD, y estoy comprometida a continuar el trabajo de excelencia y equidad en la educación para cada alumno. Recuerden, ustedes son



una parte vital de este esfuerzo y espero trabajar con ustedes.

Orgullosa de nuestro distrito escolar,
Dra. LaTonya M. Goffney
Superintendente de Escuelas

Aldine ISD PD será el anfitrión del segundo evento ‘Stop the Hurt, Paint the Convert’ el 13 de agosto

El Departamento de Policía de Aldine ISD ofrecerá a los residentes de la comunidad una oportunidad gratuita para ayudar a reducir el número de amenazas de convertidores catalíticos al organizar «Stop the Hurt, Paint the Convert» el sábado 13 de agosto en Blanson CTE High School (311 West Road).

Este evento gratuito se llevará a cabo de 10 a.m. a 2 p.m.

Se alienta a los miembros de la comunidad a venir a Blanson CTE High School el 13 de agosto y pintar sus convertidores catalíticos de un color neón brillante. Esto debería ayudar a evitar que los ladrones intenten robar convertidores catalíticos, que se ha convertido en una epidemia recientemente en el área de Houston.

Todos los vehículos serán aceptados, y los participantes deben firmar una exención.



Los horarios están disponibles. Las personas interesadas deben comunicarse con el oficial de policía de Aldine ISD, Ariel Holliday, al 281 924-6926.

El evento está patrocinado por Jed's Ace Hardware y la Asociación de Prevención de la Costa del Golfo de Texas.

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COMMISSIONER

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Me gustó como 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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GFCC Safety Pop-Up,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Pictured L-R, Francisca Hernandez, Joanna Ortiz, Rene Ortiz, Sgt. Terry Garza, Armando Cardona, Marina Flores Sugg, Gloria Gomez, and Benito Garza.

de residents are facing.

This was the first of many “Pop-Up” events the civic club has in its plans. Shirely Ronquillo says that she wants to bring these events into each of the various subdivisions in East Aldine. “This is an opportunity to not only encourage residents to become more proactive when it comes to crime prevention, but also to try and improve resident involvement in the community overall”, Salazar said.

He also says that the civic club is already planning for its next “Pop-Up” event for sometime in October of this year.

Crime prevention and public safety are something that the civic club has been putting at the forefront of their agenda. Salazar also said that the civic club had been actively advocating for additional street lights as well as sidewalk installations inside the residential areas in East Aldine to combat crime and improve residents quality of life.

So far, they have been involved in bringing additional streetlights to the neighborhoods of Eastern and Central Oakwilde, Greenwood Village, Mary Frances, Mary Eleanor, High Meadows South, Eastex Freeway Forest, and Fairgreen. This was made possible by funding from the East Aldine Management District. “We are grateful for the Districts support and commitment to public safety, and especially grateful to District Executive Director, Richard Cantu, who has ensured that residents’ concerns and issues are addressed.”

Residents are encouraged to “Follow” and “Like” the Green Forest Civic Club on Facebook. For more information you may contact them by email at greenforestcc1983@gmail.com, or contact civic club President, Ruben A. Salazar, at (713) 569-8305. Their monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the office of the East Aldine Management District located at 2909 East Aldine Amphitheater Dr., Houston TX 77039.

EPA to investigate TCEQ,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ty know the harms of these plants all too well. We have 140 concrete batch plants throughout Harris County and they are hyper-concentrated in areas that have a disproportionate amount of Black and Latino residents and folks from low-income households,” Menefee said. “Every resident in Harris County has the right to breathe clean air, regardless of their zip code.”

The complaints submitted by the County and Lone Star Legal Aid show that the TCEQ amended its Standard Permit for Concrete Batch Plants in the fall of 2021 yet failed to add a requirement that applicants show that particulate matter and crystalline silica emissions coming out of these plants will not be harmful to human health and the environment. Additionally, the TCEQ excluded limited English proficient people in Harris County (most of whom speak Spanish) when it issued notices and collected community feedback during the public participation process for the standard permit amendment.

“People in our community know the harms of these plants all too well. We have 140 concrete batch plants throughout Harris County and they are hyper-concentrated in areas that have a disproportionate amount of Black and Latino residents and folks from low-income households,” Menefee said.

He added that those communities have been outspoken about those plants being built in their neighborhoods due to the health risk the plants pose.

“Yet time and again, the TCEQ has approved permits for additional plants in these very same neighborhoods and failed to ensure that the pollution that comes out of these plants does not harm human health and the environment,” the county attorney added.

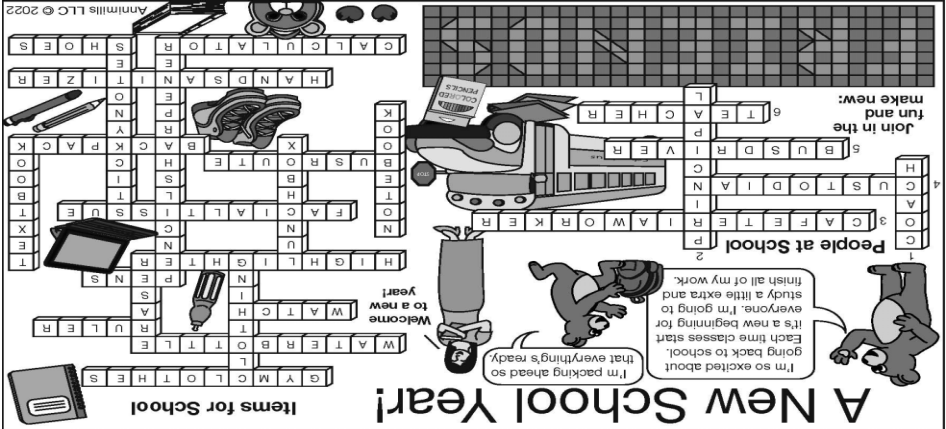
Menefee said his office commissioned an independent air modeling, which was not in line with what the TCEQ told the public.

“Our modeling shows that the air that is emitted in these plants is harmful to the people, to the seniors, to the kids, to the neighbors who breathe it on,” Menefee added. “It’s time for the TCEQ to do its job of keeping its community safe. We fought and fought with them and things aren’t getting better for these communities. I’m glad the community is stepping up for these residents.”

The EPA’s External Civil Rights Compliance Office will now investigate the complaints.

About the Harris County Attorney’s Office

Christian D. Menefee serves as the elected, top civil lawyer for Texas’ largest county. The Harris County Attorney’s Office represents the county in all civil matters including lawsuits. Menefee leads an office of 250 attorneys and staff members. He entered office at 32 years old, making him the youngest person and first African American elected as the Harris County Attorney.



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A New School Year!

I'm so excited about going back to school. Each time classes start it's a new beginning for everyone. I'm going to study a little extra and finish all of my work.

I'm packing ahead to make sure that I have everything ready. I'm going to try something new this year - maybe join the swim team.

People at School

cafeteria worker
bus driver
custodian
coach
teacher
principal

Read the clues to fill in this puzzle with 6 people who help to keep a school running smoothly:

- challenges us to play our very best as a team
- keeps the whole school running smoothly
- serves us nutritious meals
- keeps everything sparkling and in working condition
- gets us to school on time
- challenges us to learn more and more

Items for School

Fill in this puzzle with items you may need!

English
Science
Colored Pencils
ruler
pencil sharpener
eraser
pens
shoes
calculator
water bottle
clothing
facial tissue
watch
backpack
sticky notes
highlighter
bus route
notebook
textbook
gym clothes
hand sanitizer

The Missing Drumsticks

Uh-oh!

Start

End

Help Forest find his drumsticks in time for his drum lesson!

Classroom Jobs

There are a lot of jobs to be done to make the classroom run smoothly. Can you organize these jobs into alphabetical order?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

librarian
recycler
gardener
line leader
door holder
pet caregiver
chair stacker
recess helper
teacher's assistant
calendar attendant
homework collector
computer technician

Lone Star College awarded IDEAS grant to build study abroad capacity

Houston (Aug. 2, 2022) – Lone Star College has been selected to receive funding support from the U.S. Department of State’s Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program. LSC is one of 44 colleges and universities across the United States that will use the IDEAS grants to create, expand, and/or diversify American student mobility overseas in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.

“The goal of this program is to develop an enhanced American student mobility program in support of U.S. foreign policy goals,” said Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., LSC Chancellor. “Lone Star College is proud to have been selected and looks forward to participating in this very important endeavor.”

Since 2016, the IDEAS Program has awarded 145 grants to 139 institutions in 48 states and territories to create, expand and diversify their U.S. study abroad programs in 71 countries across all world regions. In addition to the IDEAS grant competition, the program also offers opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators at U.S. colleges and universities to participate in a series of free virtual and in person study abroad capacity building activities.

“The U.S. Department of State is committed to



A Lone Star student studying abroad in China.

supporting U.S. colleges and universities as they continue to rebuild study abroad capacity impacted by the global pandemic,” said Heidi Manley, USA Study Abroad Chief, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs said in a statement. “That is why ECA is proud to be awarding double the number of IDEAS grants this year so that we can support more institutions as they work to provide important international educational opportunities to their students.”

This U.S. Government program is funded by the U.S. Department of State and supported in its implementation by World Learning.

“Lone Star College has a rich history of offering its students the opportu-

nity to study abroad,” said Head. “These programs give our students the chance to experience different cultures and opens the door to personal growth and discovery.”

Registration for fall classes is underway. Learn more about the many opportunities available by visiting LoneStar.edu.

“Our IDEAS grant recipients reflects the full diversity of the U.S. higher education system – including community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, rural institutions and are committed to working with them to build study abroad programs that are accessible for Americans of all backgrounds,” said Manley.

Harris County Precinct 2 Access2Health Smart Pods™



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