

Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 44 Years VOL. 46, NO. 48 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

# **East Aldine celebrates with Tree Lighting** Large Crowds enjoy a New Holiday Tradition

By Gilbert Hoffman

EAST ALDINE – A new community tradition was inaugurated last Friday night, with a Holiday Festival that included lighting an immense Christmas Tree 30 feet tall, and many other family friendly events.

A very large number of people of all ages, individuals and families, turned out for the event, which ran from 6pm to 9pm. Some came for the music, some for the food, some for the activities and most all enjoyed the beautiful warm weather and clear skies.

The East Aldine District sponsored the event, along with the Harris County Sheriff's office, BakerRipley, and Lone Star College East Aldine Campus. East Aldine executive director Richard Cantu said that they planned on making this an annual event, and that the Christmas Tree was from a commercial source with a five year contract to provide it in the future.

The multitude of people spread themselves through the attractive lawn of Town Center, some content to just view the night and others moving from activity to activity.

The celebration opened with the Carver High School Symphony Orchestra playing Christmas songs and other popular classics. The crowd soon formed at the food line, where delicious tortillas were being served. Photos around the Christmas Tree were very popular, and Frosty the Snowman stood by to join the photo.

Children and adults of all ages were awed by the presence of snow! One snowy patch became a friendly snowball battle site, while others slid

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The East Aldine District Tree is 30 feet tall with multi-colored lights and a Star atop. It was the centerpiece of the Holiday Celebration Friday night, with many families wanting their photo taken there.



The Carver High School Orchestra provided music for the evening.



Horse-drawn Carriage rides were very popular.



Real Snow and an occasional snowball fight were a special attraction

# Aldine man fatally shot by stray bullet while sleeping Griner released by Russia



Sheriff's deputies at the scene of the fatal shooting at Capewood Apartments, 4300 Aldine Mail Route.

HOUSTON - A man is dead after he was hit by a possible stray bullet while sleeping in his north Harris County apartment, deputies with the Harris County Sheriff's Office said.

According to Sgt. J. Brown with HCSO Homicide, deputies received multiple reports of a shooting in the 4300 block of Aldine Mail Rte Road at around 2:30 a.m. Saturday. The incident occurred at Capewood Apartments across the roadway from MacArthur High School.

Deputies arrived at the apartment complex and found a 21-year-old man unresponsive in his upstairs apartment. The man was reportedly asleep in his bed. He was pronounced dead.

Two teenagers were inside the apartment at the time the stray bullet hit the man, according to investigators. Neither of them were hit. Deputies said they do not believe the man was targeted at all.

Investigators said multiple apartments were also hit by gunfire but no additional injuries were reported by residents.

Deputies believe they have located the area where the shooting may have taken place. It is unclear if the suspects were shooting in the air.

Persons are urged to call HCSO at (346) 286-1600 with any information related to this case. You can also call Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.

### President announces Prisoner swap, ending 10 month ordeal for Aldine Nimitz HS Alum

HOUSTON - U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner, a Houston native and basketball star at Aldine's Nimitz high school, has been released from Russian custody in a prisoner exchange, President Joe Biden said Thursday morning.

"Moments ago I spoke to Brittney Griner. She is safe. She is on a plane. She is on her way home," Biden said in a tweet announcing the release. Houston City Hall will be lit red, white and blue Thursday night in her honor, Mayor Sylvester Turner said.

In a Thursday morning press conference, Biden said he had spoken with Griner on the phone and that she is "in good spirits."

"She's relieved to finally be heading home, and the fact remains that she's lost months of her life, experienced needless trauma," he said. "She endured mistreatment and a show trial in Russia with characteristic grit and incredible dignity."

Griner was arrested in a Moscow airport in February after airport officials discovered vape canisters and cannabis oil in her luggage. She was sentenced to nine years in Russian prison for smuggling illegal drugs into the country. The White House called the legal proceedings a

**Continued on Page 3** 

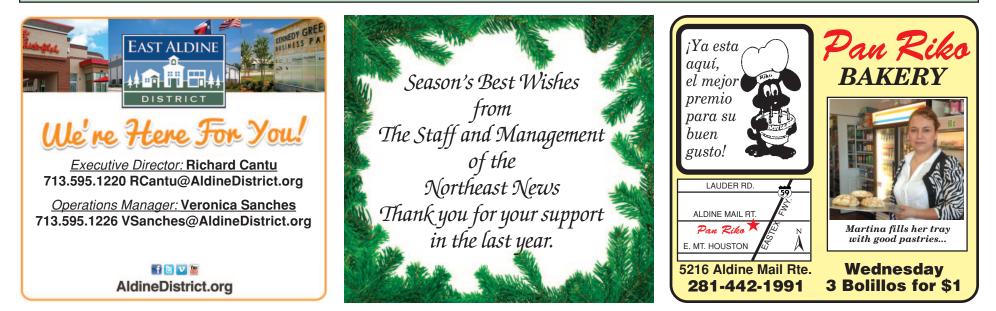


Brittney Griner smiles as she sits on a plane taking her out of Russia. At right, the exchange takes place at an airport in Abu Dhabi.



Prisoner Exchange: At left, notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout was exchanged for NBA basketball star Brittney Griner, at right.

### MARKETPLACE – Please Mention the NORTHEAST NEWS when you visit our Advertisers.



### NORTHEAST NEWS

Season's Greetings

Harris County Department of

Education

- 1 A &

AND LIGPPY RELEVEN

**BONDING AGAINST** 

**ADVERSITY** 

Helping Others

Help Themselves



#### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, Para Navidad yo quiero un kit de slime. También quiero una bolsa de chocolate y unos zapatos Nike. Si me traes mis regalos te voy a dar galletas con leche. Shirley Ixim, 10 years Stephens Stementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need Air Force 1 like that shoes size 1.5. I need Pokemon cards, real ones and white more than 100 life, a 4x4 with control with 6 tires. Anderson Vasquez, 10 years

Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a sweater and shoes that are Nike red, white and I am 5 size, also pencil. Rodrigo Cerda, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, I want a liquid candy named slime licker x2, toy car, book of dogma. I need a shirt medium. shorts, shoes size 4. Javier Garza, 9 years Stephens Elementary

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need air forces my size is 3 middle. I want 10 Pokemon cards, I also want a controlled of PS4 real Christopher, 9 years Stephens Elementary

\*\*\*

Dear Santa, Para Navidad necesito unos zapatos Nikes medida 5, una bolsa de chocolates, una pelota del mundial. También quiero una chamarra grande. Unos crocs, un taquéis. Esvin Cruz, 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\* Dear Santa, For Christmas I need shoes my size is 5, shirts and jackets. I also want spider, claim and a hat. Adam Muniz, 9 years Stephens Elementary

\*\*\* Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a backpack that is nike color black or pink. I also wan shoes 6.5. And also a pencil that is 3D. Noemi Cruz P, 9 years

Stephens Elementar

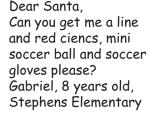
Dear Santa Para Navidad yo zapatos y pa dientes y comida. También quiero una patineta, unos air force, unos nikes black. Gracias Santa. Moises Diaz Garcia, 10 years Stephens Elementary

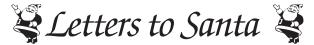
### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, This years for the holidays there's lot of things I want for Christmas. But I will only say some. What I want is a sketch look, and art supplies like color percil I want a squish maltow and clothes, my shirts is large to control I get good grades and I go master grade of the and clothes, my size for STAAR. Yaret Mercado Cruz years Orange Gr

I want a controlor for play with my ps4 and I want a phohz to play with my brother and sister. Christopher Gutierrez, 11, Oleson Elementary

Dear Santa,





Dear Santa, Hola como estas los que quiero es unos stickers, lo puedes comprar en Amazon, y de aesthetic y papel de pegar en la pared y color negro de imagen, lo puedes encontrar en Amazon y una chaqueta de niña talla S, también jeans de vaguera talla XS, también un perro. Eliza Fernandez, 11 years Orage Grove Elementary

Dear Santa, I want ornaments like World cup stickers. Elementary Dear Santa For Christmas I wou like crocs charms Twould like a time figure. I would like a Portugal t-shirt, bad bunny shirt and bad bunny stikers and nerve Jacet Demon clever. Sami Rosales, 10 years **Gr**ange Grove Elementary Dear Santa, want a shirt of Anime is Anya and a toy of Aphman like two and Anime stickers.

Jennifer Prieto, 9 years Prange Grove Elementary

t FIFA world cup sticker adoc they sell them on Walgreens. Miguel Pineda, 10 years old Grove Elementary



Dear Santa, For Christmas I want a little toy and marbles. Second reason I want a new key chain. Third reason is a calendar to write on it. Last thing I want is hair ties. Hannah Jimenes, 9 years Orange Grove

Dear Santa, I would like a new water bottle for school. I get good grades and I be good at home. My favorite color is purple and would like a phone case, makers, color pens and a notebook, drawing book. I have an iPhone I1. Thank you Aliyala Flores, 9 years old Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa, I want stanger things shirt (10/12 or xsmall). And a pastel cap and fake nails and pastel markers then jean's (size 10). Then pet erasers. You do not have to buy me all this Starr only if it's affordable. I think you should get me this stuff because I'm in e-sports. Khloe Gutierrez, 9 years Orange Grove

Dear Santa, I really want sweat pluuts grey, my size is 12 and a t-shirt, my size is 10 and black. And I want these things I think I deserve these things because I am good in class and I have good grades and I am grateful. Mariah Ruiz, 9 years Orange Grove Élementary

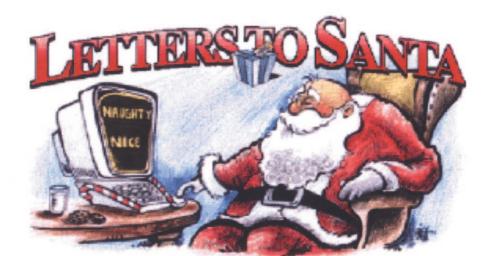
> Dear Santa, I really would like a squish mallows and slime I think I should get it because I get good grades. I am here every day and I get all E's in my report card. I at least want to give one to my friend. Emily Garcia, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

Merry Christmas of The Aldine INTERNATIONAL Friend of Youth Supporting the youth of Aldine

From the members

REAL AMPLE





Dear Santa, Mi nombre es Ashley y yo necesito slime y también unos zapatos de jordán y también es talla 4 y una gata y un perfume del mall y es todo, gracias por todo. Ashley Rodriguez Romero, 10 years Stephens Elementary

Dear Santa, My name is Cecilia Gonzalez. I am 9 years old, almost 10 on December 25. For Christmas I need backpack, some shoes size 5,6,7, markers and colorful pens. I also want a shirt zise M or S. Thank you. Cecilia, 9 years Stephens Elementary

#### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, My name is Luis Fernando, I'm 9 years old. For Christmas I need pants, chrutus and I want 800 roux and pens of color and a book. Thank you. Luis, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, My name is Maritza. I am 9 years old. For I need a Christmas long sweet small and new shoes 5, and new water bottle. I also want new braslets and a new necklace and a new claim. Thank you. Maritza Tovar, 9 years Stephens Elementary

Dear Santa, My name is Gael, I'm 9 years old. For Christmas I need new shoes, my shoe size is 2.5, sweater and my sizes are 10 to 12. I also want Pokemon cards. Gael M, 9 years Stephens Elementary

new book, money, soccer ball. I also want a new shoes that Carmelo, yeezy slide, a elf. Thank you Śanta. Jesus Calvillo, 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\* Dear Santa, For Christmas I need new

shoes Bloo Roblox gift card. I also want a VR head set and I want invisibility and a bag of takis. Thank you. Camila M, 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

#### Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a sweater adidas, \$100 robot gift card. I also want 2 bags of takis, a ticket for Hawaii. Thank you. Leticia Sanchez, 9 years Stephens Elementary

\*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a Hershey s'mores kit, huge gummy bear and a T-rex fun to pop the medium size. Thank you. Jeremy Yanez, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, I need shoe size 6 and flare jeans size 5, books. What I want is Jordan white Oreo size 6, flare jeans size 6, Diego Lainez jersey size M women, led lights. Emily Avila, 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need World Cup cards and I need Pokemon cards and books and more things. I like toys and a toy car and thank you Santa. Emanuel Moreno, 9 years Stephens Elementary

dogs. I also want new clothes, bath and body works and I also want slime. Thank you. Leah Denisse Delgado, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need purple shoes, I also need a PS5 with fornitz and a new backpack. Thank you. Santiago, 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a coloring kit, an elf, a small Christmas tree. I also want a Harry Potter Funko pop, markers and baby sitter's club book. Thank you. Mayte Estrada, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need a new desk for my room, legos of Harry Potter, Slime. I also want a Hello Kitty or Rumori backpacks, Funko pop of Wednesday and enid and a small Christmas tree. Thank you. Isabella Martinez, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I need long sleeve shirt, a book and a toy. I also want FIFA cards 5, apple gift card that cost \$20 dollars and get new Jordan shoes that are red and black. Dylan Mejia, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, I need food and some water and money. I want Jordan 4 size 6.5 or 6 and Pokemon cards and

### Griner released by Russia,

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** 

"sham." Griner pleaded guilty to the charges in September and apologized for the incident, calling it an "honest mistake."

Griner was a star on the Baylor University Lady Bears basketball team from 2009-13. She has played for the Phoenix Mercury since the 2013 draft and also played basketball in China and Russia during the offseasons.

Her former Nimitz high school basketball coach Debbie Jackson told Houston Public Media on Thursday she found out early Thursday morning, and was "ecstatic" to discover that her former player had been freed.

"I have to say, I am an optimistic person by nature. And I never lost hope. But that nine years sentence, and then the day she was actually transported to the penal colony were kind of the low points," Jackson said. "It was just ... thinking about a person you love being in those conditions for possibly nine years was very, very difficult."

### STATEMENT FROM ALDINE ISD

"Aldine ISD has been made aware that Brittney Griner has been released from custody and is on her way back to her loved ones in the United States. This is amazing news for Brittney, her family and her present and past teammates"

Griner's release was negotiated in exchange for the release of Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout, nicknamed "the Merchant of Death," CBS News first reported Thursday morning.

Griner's wife, Cherelle,

### appeared at the press conference alongside Biden to announce the release.

"Over the last nine months, y'all have been so privy to one of the darkest moments of my life," she said. "Today I'm just standing here, overwhelmed with emotions. But the most important emotion that I have right now is just sincere gratitude for President Biden and his entire administration."

Biden said he'd been engaged in "painstaking and intense negotiations" to release Griner from the beginning of her detainment.

"Even in a time of major conflict between Russia and the United States, positive things can and do still occur," Turner said. "Tremendous thanks to President Joe Biden, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and many others who worked tirelessly to bring Brittney home."

Notably, the prisoner swap did not include retired U.S. Marine Paul Whelan, who has been in Russian custody for nearly four years on espionage charges that U.S. officials also claim are false.

Biden said Thursday his administration has not "forgotten about Paul Whelan, who has been unjustly detained in Russia for years."

"This was not a choice of which American to bring home," he said. "Sadly, for totally illegitimate reasons, Russia is treating Paul's case differently than Brittney's. And while we have not yet succeeded in securing Paul's release, we are not giving up."

In April, Biden negotiated for the release of another Texan — Trevor Reed, a former Marine who had been detained in Russia for more than two years. Reed traveled to Russia in the summer of 2019 with his Russian girlfriend to learn the language. That August, after a party, Russian police took him to a police station to sober up, but he was later accused of assaulting an officer, ABC News reported.

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In exchange for Reed's freedom, Americans released Russian pilot Konstantin Yaroshenko, who was serving a lengthy sentence in the United States on cocaine-trafficking charges.

For decades, the U.S. government has periodically engaged in the diplomatic dance of prisoner exchanges with Russia and the former Soviet Union. But with Russia's continued invasion of Ukraine, the swap comes at the most fraught moment between the two countries since the Cold War.

The Mercury, Griner's team, had posted updates on Twitter of the number of days Griner had been detained. On Thursday morning, the team shared a new post that read: "No more days. She's coming home."

The two-time Olympic gold medalist arrived at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio on Thursday night for a medical evaluation. All returning Americans who had been detained undergo physical and psychological evaluation protocol upon their return, the government said.

**AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS** 

### WINTRY CANDYLAND

drawing, take a holiday

The library has been transformed into a Wintry Candyland! Come join us and enter the **holiday** Kids ages 6 - 13 can join

10:30am!

### KID'S CLUB

### Spanish Wednesdays at be offering computer classes in person at the library. If you want to

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Dear Santa,

Dear Santa, My name is Gio. I am 10 years old. For Christmas I need Roblox gift card \$120. Tickets to go see Messi play at Paris. I need a bad bunny hoodie. World Cup cards. I want Harry Potter book. Giovanni R., 10 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\* Dear Santa For Christmas I need black air forces size 8 boys and a polo jacket 8/ 9 black. I also want a black white and red polo shirts size 8/9. Thank you. , Jesus Lara, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### Dear Santa,

For Christmas I need a puppy, a roblox gift card and beds and toys for my gum. Jacob Ramos, 9 years Stephens Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, Para Navidad yo necesito unos air force reales y maquillaje y una patineta eléctrica. También quiero una pijama y una mochila de BTS. Jaylien Duarte, 9 years Stephens Elementary

photo in the photo area and get an extra ticket in the drawing for showing a staff member at the front desk your picture and tagging us if you post it online. We will also have s e v e r a l Candyland programs and activities throughout the month including a Winter

Pokemon scavenger hunt for all ages all month, and a Gingerbread House program on Dec. 14 at 4:30pm for kids 6 and up (registration required).

### PARA LOS NINOS

Para los Niños will be meeting every Saturday in December and January from 11 am - 12 pm in our meeting room.

Each workshop provides parents with resources, strategies, and activities to improve family literacy, learning practices, and parents' abilities to serve as their child's first teacher.

All materials and resources needed to establish a program are available at no cost.

For parents and children under 8 years (and siblings too!) Calendar:

December 3 - Healthy

Minds, Healthy Bodies December 10 - Self Esteem

December 17 - Loving Limits December 24 -

CLOSED December

31 -CLOSED

January 7 - How your child learns

January 14 - CLOSED January 21 - Raise a Reader January 28 - Building Blocks

### **BILINGUAL STORY TIME**

Join us in the library for story time in English and us for some Lego fun from 4:30 - 5:30pm

### **TEEN THURSDAY**

Teen Thursdays are a fun, safe environment for teens ages 13-18 to hang out after school. Come join us Thursdays at 3:30pm

### **VOLUNTEER TUTOR ORIENTATION**

Are you our next tutor? Join us for a volunteer tutor orientation on Saturday, January 28th at 10:30am to find out how you can teach classes & support the community!

- English language acquisition

- reading
- citizenship

Register in-person at the library or follow this link: https://bit.ly/ALDtutororienta<u>tion</u>

### ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Would you like to be a part of making an impact on people's lives? Are you looking for a meaningful way to spend your time? We are looking for adult volunteers to help with tasks and programs at the library as well as volunteers to teach English language classes and citizenship classes in person and virtually. Pick up an application at the Aldine Branch Li-<u>brary</u> or call 832-927-5410. We will have an orientation on Jan. 28 at 10:30am. Call 832-927-5410 or email for info: ald@hcpl.net.

### **BLOOD DRIVE**

- Give the gift of life! Donate blood!
- The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center will be here on Dec. 27 from 11am -3:30pm.

giveblood.org

### **COMPUTER CLASSES**

In addition to our online computer classes in both English and Spanish we will now

to register: 832-927-5 10. Tuesdays: various basic

topics (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library

Wednesdays: Beginner Computer Class (English), 1:30pm, at the library

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

Thursdays: various intermediate topics (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library

### **PASSPORT SERVICES**

Do have plans to travel out of the country soon? Get on 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/ser-<u>vices/passport-services</u>

Our passport hours -Mondays and Wednesdays 12pm - 5pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays 12pm - 7pm; Saturdays 10am - 12pm and 2pm - 4pm. We also have walk-in service from 2-4pm on Fridays on a first come first served basis. Those wishing to get a passport executed must have all necessary documents and required people present with them.

### **E-NEWSLETTER**

Sign up to get our newsletter delivered straight to your mailbox each month in English or Spanish! http:// eepurl.com/h3wOXH.

We will close at 5pm on Dec. 22 and be closed Dec. 23 - 26. We will reopen Dec. 27 at 10am.

**MICHELLE PICHON** LIBRARY PROGRAM SPECIALIST HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC **LIBRARY** ALDINE BRANCH LIBRARY 11331 AIRLINE DR. HOUSTON, TX 77037 832-927-5410

### By Jennifer Nandlal Sr Adult Program **Specialist**

For Christmas I need a

12 Days of Holiday Fun @ High Meadows:

Beginning December 5th, the library invites you to celebrate the holidays with us. From crafts, movies, storytimes, and games, we have something for all ages. Visit our website for more information or stop by the library for a calendar of events.

### **FAMILY TIME:**

Family Time will be expanding this month. Join us for the following activities:

December 5th at 5:30pm: Polar Express Day including a movie, hot cocoa, and crafts.

December 8th at 1pm: Yarn and Bead Holiday Trees.

December 9th at 1pm: Grinch Day including a movie marathon, snacks, and crafts.

December 10th at 11am: Watch Home Alone, create your own battle plans, or make scratch art with us.

December 12th at 1pm: Put your gift wrapping skills to use and learn some easy ways to

wrap presents.

December 13th at 1pm: Stop by and make snowflakes with us.

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY NEWS

### **KRAFTY KIDS:**

We have the following happening this month for Krafty Kids. Kids of all ages are welcome to join.

December 6th at 4:30pm: Make a wreath with us using household items.

7th at December 4:30pm: Create your own stylish paper snowman!

December 15th at 4:30pm: Use beads to create your very own Christmas Tree.

### **TEEN EVENTS:**

Otaku Outpost is celebrating the holiday season. On Tuesday, December 6th at 3pm, we will be making edible ornaments out of Oreos. On December 13th at 3pm, we are celebrating the holiday season with a party! Join us for games, crafts, pizza, and more!

The Art Thing is happening on December 14th at 3:30pm and we are making Sharpie Mugs. Design your very own mug for vourself or as a gift for someone this holiday sea-

tion and training options, apply to college, and find the financial aid you need. Whether you want to attend college to get a

**GRADCAFÉ**:

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.

### HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY 4500 ALDINE MAIL RTE HOUSTON, TX 77039

Library Hours: Mondays-Thursdays: 10am to 6pm Fridays: 1pm to 6pm Saturdays: 10am to 5pm Sundays: Closed

### have representatives from GRADcafé at the High Meadows Library. GRADcafé is a one-stopshop offering free services to help you decide on a career, explore educa-

Every Tuesday we will

### ☆ OPINION PAGE ☆

### Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

### By FRANCIS P. CHURCH,

First published in The New York Sun in 1897

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

### Dear Editor—

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this



great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.



### STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

### Patrick Lays Out Legislative Priorities

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick outlined his goals for the upcoming legislative session, calling them "general concepts," according to the Austin American-Statesman.

With an estimated \$27 billion surplus, the Legislative Budget Board voted last week to boost the Legislature's spending capacity by 12.3% — the largest increase allowed under the state constitution. But that still leaves the Legislature having about \$14.5 billion in the piggy bank above its spending limit.

Consequently, property tax reduction is one of Patrick's priorities. He is calling for a hike in the homestead property tax exemption from \$40,000 to \$60,000, as well as an expansion of personal property exemptions for businesses, the Statesman reported.

Other priorities include strengthening the state's power grid, boosting border security and law enforcement measures, such as increasing pay for sheriffs and a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence for anyone who uses a gun while committing a crime.

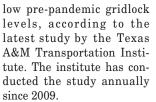
Patrick stressed that the Legislature has the ultimate say. "So much of what I'm laying out today is not specific, because it's really up to the members to write the bills in the Senate and the House," Patrick said. "It's good that the Legislature is back. We have an extraordinary opportunity, like we have never had before, to chart the future of the state of Texas."



### REPORT: PRIVATE BORDER WALL COULD COLLAPSE

A U.S. Department of Justice report kept secret for more than a year and produced by the global engineering firm Arcadis concludes a private border wall along the Rio Grande in Hidalgo County is in danger of collapsing if the area receives extreme flooding.

The report, obtained by ProPublica and The Texas Tribune, concludes the wall built by Fisher Industries doesn't meet basic international building code and industry standards. Its foundation is far shallower than previous border walls built by the federal govern-



This year's "winner" for most gridlocked stretch is Houston's West Loop, which held onto the title it garnered the previous year. Rounding out the top five of roadways one might consider avoiding if possible are the Woodall Rogers Freeway in Dallas; Interstate 35 in Austin; and Houston's Eastex and Southwest Freeways.

Researchers say traffic delays cost a ton of money in lost time and wasted fuel – more than \$3.8 billion on the state's busiest road sections last year, though that is about 10% lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Delays are not confined to the state's largest cities. Gridlock affects areas of all sizes, according to the institute, which has compiled a complete list of 1,860 road segments in 23 urban regions across Texas. The list can be found at <u>mobility.tamu.edu</u> LAWMAKERS SIGN NDAS TO GET UVALDE INFO

A half-dozen Texas lawmakers signed nondisclosure agreements to obtain investigative records from the Texas Department of Public Safety concerning the May shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde that have thus far been kept secret from the public.



### Wrong About Papayas

The fruit lady has my number.

One of the things I like in Mexico—and other countries we have visited in the past is buying fruits and vegetables from a stand, run by a family. I love wandering through the market, looking at all the unfamiliar things and asking questions.

"Is this for today or for tomorrow?" I ask in Spanish, wondering if it is ripe enough to eat immediately. The fruit vendors know when something is ripe. I load up my bags with papaya and little sweet bananas and pineapple and broccoli and cauliflower and carrots and potatoes and avocados and onions and tomatoes. And then I realize my bags are much too full and I have to stop buying things right now.

Then the fruit lady gives me a present.

I don't ask for a present. But after everything is loaded into my bags and I look like a burro headed home, she finds one perfectly ripe tangerine or apple and pops it into my bag.

"A gift," she says. I don't remember this ever happening in a grocery store.

And so, of course, even though there are dozens of fruit stands, I come back to her. She is always happy to see me. And every day, I tell her, "I want another papaya—sweet and ugly!"

She laughs because this is a running joke of ours. No matter what else I buy, I always buy a papaya, and the best papayas are a little disreputable looking. They are dimpled and bumpy and have splotches here and there.

"Is this spoiled?" I wonder. No. It is perfect. I cut it in half and sometimes it is filled with seeds and sometimes there are no seeds. It seems to me there must be a logical explanation for this. But then sometimes there are only a couple of seeds, and this makes no sense at all. However many seeds there are, I scoop them out before skinning it and chopping it up and putting it in the fridge. I have no idea if this is how experienced papaya eaters do it. Probably, an experienced papaya eater would say, "What the heck are you doing? That's not how it's done!" But I know nothing about papayas. I don't remember ever eating a papaya before I was 40. On the rare occasion that I did, the papaya was in some sort of fruit salad. I remember it as being pale orange and rather bland. It was the part of the fruit salad that I ate first to get it over with. I had obviously never had a good papaya. Now that I have, I feel as if I have made this amazing discovery.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" was an immediate sensation, and went on to became one of the most famous editorials ever written. It first appeared in the The New York Sun in 1897, almost a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age 21. The following year she received her Master's from Columbia, and in 1912 she began teaching in the New York City school system, later becoming a principal. After 47 years, she retired as an educator. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter, and to each reply she attached an attractive printed copy of the Church editorial. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died on May 13, 1971, at the age of 81, in a nursing home in Valatie, N.Y.



### RAINY DAY FUND, HIGHWAYS GET BOOST FROM OIL, GAS REVENUES

A significant amount of the state's current surplus is coming from oil and gas industry tax revenues, with the latest contribution being \$7.3 billion split equally between the Rainy Day Fund and the State Highway Fund. A 2014 constitutional amendment mandates that 75% of oil and gas tax revenue that exceeds the amount collected in 1987 be split evenly between the two funds.

"Revenue from the oil and gas industry is what's in the Rainy Day Fund, accounts for billions to the State Highway Fund, and contributes to state funds that pay for schools, universities, and first responders," Texas Railroad Commission Chairman Wayne Christian said.

The feds reached a settlement with Fisher Industries last May requiring that the fence be inspected quarterly, that bollards be removed, and that a gate be maintained to allow for the release of floodwaters.

An attorney for Fisher Industries said the company "strongly disagrees" with the report. However, several civil engineering experts say the settlement ignores the report's conclusions. Alex Mayer, a civil engineering professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, said the agreement overlooks what he termed the wall's flawed design, as pointed out by the report.

"It just shows the shoddiness of the whole effort. It worries me even more," Mayer said.

The two news organizations spent 15 months trying to obtain the Arcadis report, which confirms their earlier reporting about the privately built wall's potential flaws.

#### TEXAS TRAFFIC CONGESTION INCREASED IN 2021

Delays on the state's most crowded roadways grew last year, though they are still be-

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Founding Member North Houston Chamber (now Houston Intercontinental) Member Texas Press Association The Austin American-Statesman reported that state Sen. Roland Gutierrez, D-San Antonio, whose district includes Uvalde, was one of the six. Others include Sens. Royce West, Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa and Paul Bettencourt, and Reps. Dustin Burrows and Tracy King, according to the DPS. Most of the agreements were signed in June or July.

Since the shooting, which killed 19 students and two teachers, parents and others have fought for investigative records that might explain the failed law enforcement response at the school. A coalition of media outlets, including the Statesman, have sued seeking the public release of information from DPS.

### COVID-19 CASES RISE IN STATE

The number of COVID-19 cases in the past week in Texas rose to 21,026, with 43 deaths reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. That is more than double the number of new cases reported the previous week. There are 1,750 labconfirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations throughout the state — also an increase, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

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. "Have you tried the papaya?" I say to unsuspecting gringos in the market. "It's amazing!"

Most of them have had papaya and I'm sure they think I'm a little ridiculous, a freelance papaya booster, roaming the market. But I don't care. I would feel terrible if anyone didn't know how wonderful they were. Someone recently told me they were good for me. I really don't know. They seem as if they must be. They are so deep orange and sweet.

It's a wonderful surprise to learn that I was all wrong about papayas and, of course, it makes me wonder what else I've still got all wrong. It's wonderful to find out how much I like this sweet and ugly fruit.

Now that I know, I am eating all the papayas I want. I am eating papayas every day—to make up for lost time.

Till next time,

Carrie

Photos from the column and other fun stuff can be found at <u>CarrieClasson.com</u>.

### Page 5

### **SPORTS** PAGE

### FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 16: Chiefs look to put more hurt on Texans: Cowboys can't let up against Jaguars on road

This season can't end soon enough for the Houston Texans. Two weeks ago, they fell to 1-10-1 with a home loss to the Cleveland Browns and former Texans QB Deshaun Watson. Watson was making his first start in 700 days and his first in a Browns uniform after serving an 11-game suspension for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy.

While Browns fans were hoping for big things from the former Texan, they were sadly disappointed because he played like a guy who hadn't played a game in 700 days. Watson threw for just 131 yards and threw an interception, but that didn't matter because his team was playing the inept Texans offense.

The Browns did not score an offensive touchdown, but returned a punt for a touchdown, a Kyle Allen fumble for a touchdown and an Allen interception for a touchdown on the way to a 27-14 win over Houston.

This week's visitor to NRG Stadium won't have issues on offense as Patrick Mahomes and Co. will take on the Texans in what could be a long afternoon for the Houston defense.

Sure, the Chiefs lost two weeks ago at Cincinnati, 27-24, but that loss should focus Andy Reid's team as they begin their late-season run. They are now in a battle with Buffalo for the best record in the AFC and a first-round bye in the playoffs, so I don't expect the Chiefs to look past the lowly Texans. If you have Mahomes in Fantasy Football, this could be a huge week for you if your team has made the playoffs.

Other interesting games on tap in Week 15 has the 49ers visiting Seattle on Thursday Night Football in a key NFC West matchup. Two weeks ago, the 49ers lost starting QB Jimmy Garoppolo for the season when he sustained a broken foot in SF's 33-17 win over Miami. Rookie quarterback Brock Purdy stepped in and did a nice job, throwing for 210 yards and two TDs.

There's also a big game in the AFC East as the Dolphins visit the Bills. Miami's loss at SF, coupled with the Bills' win at New England two weeks ago put the Bills in first place in the East. Weather could be a key factor in this game as the boys from Miami might have to encounter Buffalo in mid-December. The 10-day forecast for Buffalo calls for a high of 35 with 15 mile per hour winds. Not exactly South Florida weather.

Other key games this week have the Giants and Commanders



day Night Football, saving us from having to watch the Patriots versus the Raiders in prime time. Thank you, Commissioner Goodell.

The Cowboys, fresh off their instate contest against the Texans (oh boy, that one could also get ugly), travel to Jacksonville to face the Jaguars. The Jags will probably treat this game like their Super Bowl, so Mike McCarthy's team should not look past Trevor Lawrence and the Jags.

There's a good intra-conference contest between the surging Bengals and the Bucs in Tampa on Sunday, while the Titans face another tough road test when they take on the Chargers in Los Angeles. Week 15 concludes with sort of a dud, as the struggling defending Super Bowl champion Rams visit Lambeau Field to take on Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers.

While the College Football Playoffs are weeks away, I'd say the committee got things right. Georgia (No. 1), Michigan (No. 2), TCU (No. 3) and Ohio State (No. 4) are the most deserving teams to make the CFP this year. Although the Buckeyes were throttled at home in their season finale by Michigan (45-23), I don't think a two-loss Alabama team deserved to play in the tournament. Perhaps 'Bama head coach Nick Saban will use the snub as a motivating factor heading into the 2023 season.

Before I go on, I'd like to add a personal note. Last week, we had to put down our wonderful pet Bambi. It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Bambi gave us 18 loving years and was a great companion to me and my wife Sharon, but time took its toll on her little body. The night before I took her to the vet, her eyes said it all. "Dad, it's time. I'm tired and am ready to go." I want to thank the professional and compassionate folks at East Texas Veterinarian Clinic in Humble for their kindness and patience. Bambi passed in my arms. We loved that little dog so much and will miss her, but we know she has crossed over Rainbow Bridge and has been reunited with her buddies. She's no longer in pain and we take comfort in that. We love you, Bambi. Rest well. Thank you for that.

the season record o 110-54~(67%).Now, onto this week's games.

### NFL

San Francisco at Seattle: Can the 49ers survive without starting QB Jimmy Garoppolo? We are about to find out when SF plays a tough road game at Seattle on Thursday Night Football. Two weeks ago, rookie Brock Purdy stepped in for Jimmy G and led the 49ers to a 33-17 win over Miami. If Purdy just manages the 49er offense, they should be fine because SF has one of the top defenses in the NFL. Look for running back Christian McCaffrey (307 rushing yards, 2 TDs/33 receptions, 282 yards, 2 TDs) to step up his game and get plenty of touches. That should also go for versatile wide receiver Deebo Samuel (50 receptions, 569 yards, 2 TDs). Seattle has been one of the surprise teams in the NFL this year and they are a tough out at home. QB Geno Smith (3,169 yards, 22 TDs) has two quality targets to throw to in Tyler Lockett (66 receptions, 836 yards, 7 TDS) and DK Metcalf (67 receptions, 798 yards, 5 TDs). If rookie running back Kenneth Walker III (649 yards, 9 TDS) is back from an ankle injury he sustained two weeks ago in the Seahawks road win at LA, that will give the 49ers defense one more weapon with which to contend. I think the 'Hawks take this one at home as the NFC West race gets that much tighter. My pick, Seattle 27, San Francisco 24

Miami at Buffalo: A big one in the AFC East has the Dolphins heading north to take on a Buffalo team that appears to clicking at the right time of the season. Two weeks ago, the Dolphins dropped a 33-17 decision at SF, while the Bills dominated the Patriots in New England, 24-10. Buffalo QB Josh Allen (3,406 passing yards, 25 TDs/581 rushing yards, 5 TDs) is playing like an MVP. He's also getting help in the running game from Devin Singletary (603 yards, 4 TDs) and from wide receiver Stefon Diggs (91 receptions, 1,202 yards, 10 TDs) in the passing game. Miami will need a hig game from QB Tua Tagoyailoa (2,859 yards, 21 TDs) and wide receiver Tyreek Hill (96 receptions, 1,379 yards, 5 TDS). Fellow bigplay wideout Jalen Waddle (57 receptions, 972 yards, 6 TDs) injured his knee and ankle in the SF loss,

so he might not be able to go this week against the Bills. If he's out, that will make the Dolphins chance of a road win all the more difficult. My pick, Buffalo 34, Miami 20

Dallas at Jacksonville: The Cowboys should take care of business against the Jags on Sunday. They know they can't afford to lose any more games if they hope to keep pace with Philadelphia in the NFC East race. Two weeks ago, the Cowboys entered the fourth quarter with a 21-19 lead over the Colts and then exploded for 33 points in the fourth quarter to win running away, 54-19. QB Dak Prescott (1,563 yards, 13 TDs) appears to be back in form after missing five games with a thumb injury. Dallas also has a strong running game led by Tony Pollard (852 yards, 8 TDs) and Ezekiel Elliott (654 yards, 8 TDs) and Prescott is making plays in the passing game to CeeDee Lamb (69 receptions, 928 yards, 6 TDs) and Michael Gallup. The Dallas defense continues to be one of the best units in the league. Against the Colts, the defense scored on a pick six and a fumble recovery. Jags' QB Trevor Lawrence (2,834 yards, 17 TDs) had better hope his offensive line protects him on Sunday. Something tells me Micah Parsons and Co. are going to be in a feeding frenzy on Sunday in Jacksonville. My pick, Dallas 31, Jacksonville 16

Kansas City at Houston: This one should be over early. Look for Mahomes (3,809 yards, 30 TDs) to come out attacking a suspect Houston defense as he makes plays to tight end Travis Kelce (77 receptions, 968 yards, 12 TDs), JuJu Smith-Schuster and a host of other play-makers for the Chiefs. Look for rookie running back Isiah Pacheco (521 yards, 3 TDs) to have a big day as the Chiefs look to take out the life out of Texans early. Houston should probably go back to Davis Mills (2,144 yards, 11 touchdowns/11 interceptions) because Allen (2 TDs/4 picks in two games) certainly isn't the answer. It doesn't matter who's under center come Sunday because the Chiefs are going to blow out the Texans. My pick, Kansas City 41, Houston 13

Philadelphia at Chicago: Like the Cowboys, the Eagles should be wary of their road trip to Chicago. Sure, on paper this is a mismatch, but the Bears will treat this game like their Super Bowl and would love to pull off the upset. The Bears have a top dual threat QB in Justin Fields (1,896 passing yards, 13 TDs/905 rushing yards, 8 TDs), so the Philly defense will look to keep him in the pocket and me him beat them with is arm and not his legs. The Eagles are loaded on offense with QB Jalen Hurts (2,940 passing yards, 20 TDs/

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609 rushing yards, 9 TDs), running back Miles Sanders (924 yards, 9 TDs) and wide receiver A.J. Brown (61 receptions, 950 yards, 9 TDS) and Devonta Smith (61 receptions, 711 yards, 4 TDs). Look for the Eagles to subdue the Bears as they look to keep a grasp on the best record in the NFC. My pick, Philadelphia 26, Chicago 20

Cincinnati at Tampa Bay: The hot Bengals leave the cold confines to Cincinnati for the warm climes of Tampa as Joe Burrow (3,446 yards, 25 TDs) and Tom Brady (3,332 yards, 16 TDs) do battle on Sunday. Two weeks ago, Burrow led the Bengals to a27-24 home win over the Chiefs, while Brady rallied the Bucs from a 16-3 deficit with 5:31 left in the game with two late TDs to pull off a 17-16 win over the Saints. The TB defense will get a stern test from Burrow, running backs Joe Mixon (605 yards, 6 TDs) and Samje Perrine (327 rushing yards, 1 TD/32 receptions, 262 yards, 4 TDs) and wide receivers Tee Higgins (60 receptions, 861 yards, 5 TDs) and Ja'Marr Chase (54 receptions, 702 yards, 6 TDs). Brady will look to get wideouts Mike Evans (55 receptions, 761 yards, 3 TDs) and Chris Godwin (68 receptions, 648 yards, 2 TDs) more involved in the passing game. The Bengals defense is underrated, so look for them to come up with a play or two to help Burrow and his team pull off the road win. My pick, Cincinnati 26, Tampa Bay 23

**Tennessee at Los Angeles** Chargers: It's a good thing the Titans play in one of the worst divisions in the NFL, because they are a struggling football team at the wrong time of the season. Two weeks ago, Tennessee lost its second straight game with a 35-10 drubbing at Philadelphia. Things don't get any easier this week when they face a Chargers team that is getting healthy at just the right time. The Chargers have a good, young QB in Justin Herbert (3,339 yards, 20 TDs), a versatile back in Austin Ekeler (589 rushing yards, 7 TDs/85 receptions, 564 yards, 5 TDs) and a big-play wide receiver in Keenan Allen (22 receptions, 308 yards, 2 TDs in just five games), who has returned after missing a majority of the season dealing with a hamstring injury. The Titans need to get running back Derrick Henry (1,078 yards, 10 TDs) going again, or they won't have a chance against the Chargers. In his last two games, Henry has been held to 38 yards against the Bengals and 30 yards against the Eagles. If Henry can't run, then the Titans are stymied on offense. Look for another long day for the big back as the Chargers look to keep their Wild Card hopes alive. My pick, Los Angeles Chargers 30, Tennessee 24 New England at Las Vegas:

The Patriots visit the City of Lost Wages to take on a Raiders team that has gotten hot at just the right time. Two weeks ago, the Raiders won their third straight game with a 27-20 win over the Chargers, while the Patriots dropped a 24-10 decision at home to the Bills. NE struggles on offense as QB Mac Jones (1,963 yards, 7 TDs) is suffering from a sophomore slump. Look for Bill Belichick to give running back Rhamondre Stevenson (734 rushing yards, 4 TDs/56 receptions, 383 yards, 1 TDs) plenty of work in this game. The Raiders have a nice thing going on offense with running back Josh Jacobs (1,303 yards, 10 TDs) taking care of the ground work and QB Derek Carr (2,980 yards, 20 TDs) and wide receiver Davante Adams (79 receptions, 1,176 yards, 12 TDs) taking care of things in the passing game. Look for that trio to have another big day as the Raiders pick up another win. My pick, Las Vegas 27, New England 23

New York Giants at Washington: This key NFC East contest has been moved to Sunday Night Football by the league. As mentioned earlier, these two teams played to a 20-20 draw two weeks ago. Washington had a bye last week to rest up for this one. QB Tyler Heinicke (1,444 yards, 9 TDs) has energized the offense, while rookie running back Brian Robinson (563 yards, 2 TDs) has provided stability in the running game. Wide receiver Terry McLaurin (62 receptions, 945 yards, 3 TDs) makes plays in the passing game. Washington has a solid defense, which should make things tough on NY QB Daniel Jones (2,365 passing yards, 11 TDs/522 rushing yards, 4 TDs) and running back Saquon Barkley (1,055 yards, 8 TDs). Look for the Commanders defense to be the difference maker in this one as Washington takes a leg up on New York in the NFC Wild Card chase. My pick, Washington 23, New York

Los Angeles Rams at Green Bay: Talk about going from the penthouse to the outhouse! That's been just the case for the defending Super Bowl champion Rams. Heading into last week's game against the Raiders, the Rams had lost six straight games and have suffered a plethora of injuries to key players, such as QB Matthew Stafford, wide receiver Cooper Cupp and defensive tackle Aaron Donald. Look for Rodgers (2,864 yards, 22 TDs), running back Aaron Jones (847 yards, 2 TDs), A.J. Dillon (624 yards, 3 TDs) and hot wide receiver Christian Watson (25 receptions, 401 yards, 7 TDs) to put the Rams out of their misery on Monday. Night Football. My pick, Green Bay 33, Los Angeles Rams 16

meeting for the second time in three weeks in an important NFC East game for both teams. Two weeks ago, those two played to a 20-20 tie in the Meadowlands. The NFL has flexed this game to Sun-

Before we take a look at this weekend's games, let's review last week's record. An 8-3 mark upped

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### CHURCH PAGE

### **BIBLE TRIVIA**

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Immanuel in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Which Old Testament prophet said the most about the birth of Christ? Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah 3. From Matthew 1:18, when Mary became pregnant, she and Joseph were ...? Married, Engaged, Just friends, Strangers

4. In Luke 2:8-11, how did the shepherds learn of

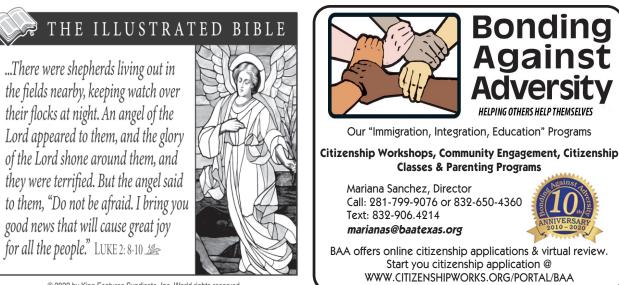
Christ's birth? Magi informed, Joseph announcement, Mighty wind, Angel appearance

5. Where did the wise men go first when they arrived in the Holy Land? Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron

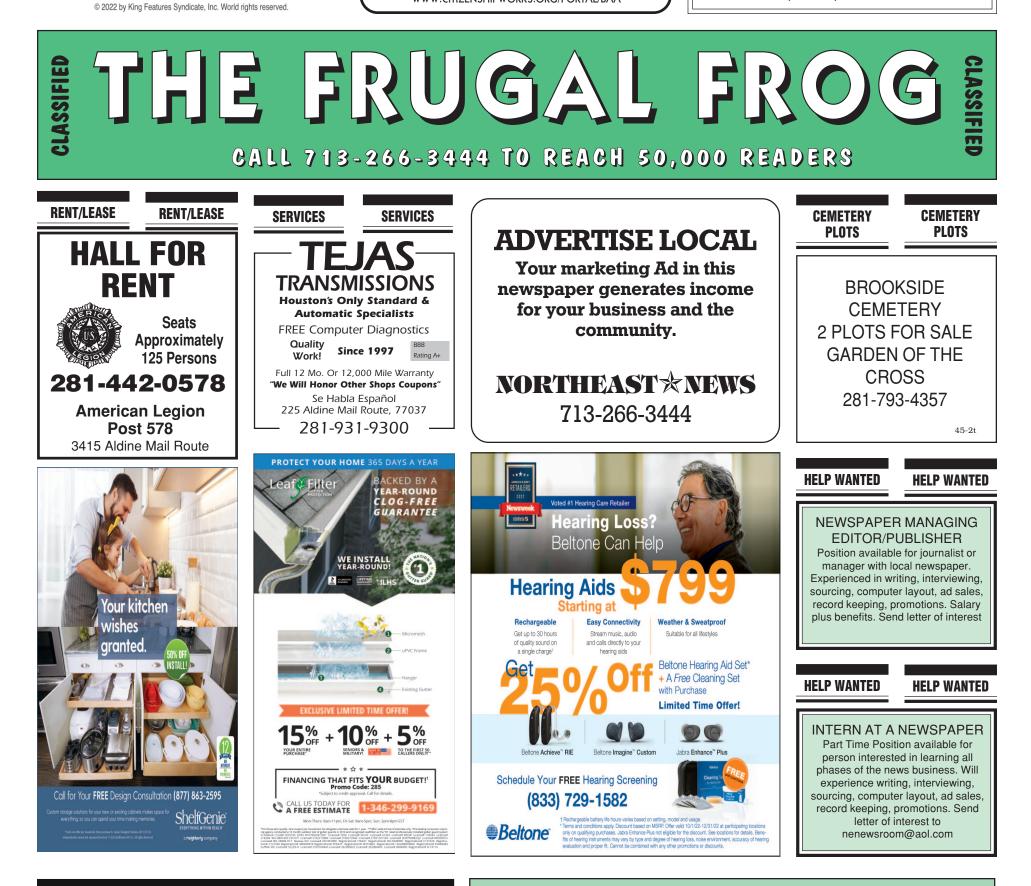
6. What does the Bible record as to when Jesus was born? Late September, Dec. 25, March 17, Does not

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Isaiah, 3) Engaged, 4) Angel appearance, 5) Jerusalem, 6) Does not Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com.

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### SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

### Message from the Superintendent, December 13, 2022

Dear Aldine ISD Community,

December is here, and it's beginning to sound like the holiday season! Many of you will attend holiday programs this week and the next. Yesterday we held our Annual Kujawa Gala in honor of our senior citizens. It was great to see so many of our community members. I hope these events inspire the joy of the season in all of you. We still have a few academic days left. In these final days of the fall semester, make them count! We have less than two weeks before the midwinter break!

Before I go any further, I was grateful for your patience last week. The district closed on November 28 and the following day due to the boil water safety issue with the City of Houston. The safety of our students and staff is among our highest priorities.

Since I last shared a message, I was invited to participate in the 100 Black Men of Metro Houston Superintendents Roundtable. I am always eager for an opportunity to discuss how education matters with parents, educators, and community members across the Houston area. Thank you to my peer superintendents and those who joined on for striving to be a part of the solution for improving student outcomes.

Moreover, thank you, K-12 Dive, for shining a light on our work in Texas as we work to demonstrate what's possible. I am also humbled to have been named Superintendent of the Year and so proud to represent Aldine ISD.

A part of the work we are

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doing is in literacy. Our new literacy framework shows what is possible for all students to read on grade level. During the break, I listened I want to the podcast "Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong." I urge vou to click here to listen to the podcast. Listen to the podcast because it is crucial to get literacy right. If there is one thing I know, it is the value of literacy. It is the new civil right because it equals more choices and opportunities for our students. Join us for our virtual #LiteracyMatters Conference on February 11, 2023. Click here to register.

Congratulations to student-athlete Ryan Niblett. The Eisenhower High School football player has been selected to the All-American Bowl Team. The bowl will occur on January 7 at the Alamo Bowl in San Antonio. I hope you can travel to support Ryan.

The latest episode of All The Things: The Aldine ISD Podcast of Episode 6, Season 3 . InvesTex Credit Union (formerly Aldine Teachers Credit Union) President and CEO Keith Kearney joins us on this episode of All The Things, the Aldine ISD podcast! We talk about the history of Aldine and the Credit Union, the benefits of banking with InvestTex, fossils, and a little bit about the U.S. economy. Tune in here to listen to episode 6, or click here to see all the episodes. Visit AldineISD.org to learn more about all the things going on in Aldine ISD.

Our Educators of the Year Breakfast is still a few months away, but take advantage of seeing possible candidates for the top two titles now. Follow us on Twitter at @AldineISD and see if you find your child's School Teacher of the Year.

Have a great rest of the week!

With Aldine Pride,

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney-Superintendent of Schools <u>UPCOMING EVENTS</u>

Dec. 2-Apr. 22: AISD's Health Services Department is holding monthly CPR classes. (click here)

February 11, 2023: Virtual #LiteracyMatters Conference — Click here to register.

Ongoing: Read to the Final® Competition has elementary students reading in a March Madness tournament. Click here to read more.

Ongoing: Family and Community University's 2022-2023 year has started. Click here to register.

Ongoing: iEducate is hiring college students, especially Aldine ISD grads, as tutors to work with Aldine ISD students. iEducate accepts applications on a rolling basis, and interested students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. SOCIAL MEDIA HIGH-

LIGHTEisenhower High's Ryan Niblett Selected to All-American Bowl Team MONTHLY OBSERVA-

#### TIONS DECEMBER

December 20: End of 9 Weeks

December 21: Student Holiday/Staff Development Day Dec. 21-Jan. 6: Midwinter Break (ADSY Calendar)

Dec. 22-Jan. 4: Midwinter Break (Traditional Calendar)

JANUARY January School Board Appreciation Month

January 5: Student Holiday/Staff Development Day January 6: Student Holi-

day/Staff Development Day January 9: Start of 9 Weeks

January 9: Law Enforcement Day

January 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

REMINDERS The state requires high school seniors to apply for financial aid to graduate. — FAFSA Application link or TASFA Application link

The state requires all entering college students to take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment. (Details).

Aldine ISD's top priorities are students' safety and academic success. The district posts information related to protocols along with any updates at www.aldineisd.org/ healthalerts.

Stay connected by visiting AldineISD.org. Check out our District News and Aldine ISD Podcast pages to stay updated on all the great things happening in our district. You can also connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



### HOPE Clinic Opens Second Aldine Location



HOPE Clinic employees Yashira Cuellar, Concepcion Camarillo, and Tabbie Saenz pose at the BakerRipley location. A second HOPE Clinic has opened in Aldine at 2112 Aldine Meadows Rd.

A second HOPE Clinic opened in the Aldine area to provide health services to community members.

Aldine's second HOPE Clinic opened recently and is located at 2112 Aldine Meadows Rd. and is located in the former Child Nutrition Services offices.

HOPE Clinic is a fulltime Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and serves more than 20,000 unique patients with more than 100,000 patient visits per year.

According to Tabbie Saenz, HOPE Clinic's Business Development and Community Engagement Director, HOPE Clinic provides health care services to all people regardless of their ability to pay. In addition, the clinic serves uninsured, underinsured, those with limited English proficiency, and low-income patients.

HOPE Clinic is a fulltime Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and serves more than 20,000 unique patients with more than 100,000 patient visits per year.

According to Tabbie Saenz, HOPE Clinic's Business Development and Community Engagement Director, HOPE Clinic provides health care services to all people regardless of their ability to pay. In addition, the clinic serves uninsured, underinsured, those with limited English proficiency, and low-income patients. including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Burmese, Arabic, and Spanish. According to Saenz, HOPE Clinic's mission is to provide quality healthcare without prejudice to all people in the Greater Houston and Aldine area.

HOPE Clinic's boardcertified doctors, other medical professionals, and staff provide all types of medical care, wellness services, and education at the new affordable walk-in clinic in Aldine. Other services include:

Wellness exams for women, men, and children

Immunizations Family planning

Sports physicals

Counseling and other behavioral health services Referrals to specialists and hospitals as needed.

The Aldine Meadows Clinic is open five days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (on Wednesday, it's available from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.).

HOPE Clinic personnel will assist those who need to apply for governmentprovided health insurance. Patients who don't have health insurance may qualify for discounted fees based on their family's income and size. HOPE Clinic accepts Medicaid, Medicare, ACA marketplace health insurance, and CHIP coverage.

### The gift of love. The gift of peace. The gift of happiness. May all these be yours this holiday season.

Aldine ISD will observe Midwinter Break for Students Dec. 21-Jan. 6 and Dec. 22-Jan. 4 for Employees.



El don del amor. El don de la paz. El regalo de la felicidad. Que todo esto sea suyo en esta temporada festiva.

Aldine ISD observará las vacaciones de invierno para los estudiantes del 21 de diciembre al 6 de enero. Y del 22 de diciembre al 4 de enero para los empleados.



HOPE Clinic provides services in 30 languages, For more information, contact HOPE Clinic at Aldine Meadows at 713-773-0803.

### Aldine ISD Utilizes TalkingPoints For Classrooms and Families

For the 2022-2023 school year, Aldine ISD's Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department has implemented TalkingPoints at 30 schools in the district, ranging from early learning to high schools, with the goal of allowing teachers to easily communicate with parents at home in their preferred language.

TalkingPoints is a twoway multilingual platform that FACE has made available through the use of ESS-ER funds. 46 languages are spoken at home within the AISD families, so Talking-Points' ability to translate in more than 100 languages provides a much needed resource for the communities of the district.

To begin, teachers input their original message and TalkingPoints then translates it into the parent's language of choice. The translation works in both ways, in that once the parents respond in their preferred language, TalkingPoints translates the response back to English. This system is what allows the teachers and parents to freely continue the conversation.

"Our goal is to help establish effective lines of communication between schools and families," said Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement, Dr. Martha Escalante. "That is why we chose to use TalkingPoints, it covers many languages, and it lets teachers easily communicate with families through texting."

This initiative is benefitting more than 20,000 students within the district, and with the function being done via text messaging, any parent with a simple mobile phone is able to access and utilize the program. While the '22-'23 school year was the first year the program was implemented, FACE already has plans to continue use of the program for the '23-'24 school year as well.

To keep track of the various programs and initiatives FACE currently has within

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- Auto Body/Collision Repair
- Bilingual AC Technician I & II (new)
- Cosmetology
- Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)
- Digital Communication (new)

  - Microsoft Office Technology Specialization
  - Process Operator/Instrumentation Tech
- Petroleum Technician
- Police, Fire, & EMS
- Welding & Bilingual Welding
- Air Conditioning Technician I & II
  - Plumbing Technician I & II

Acres Homes Campus | 630 W. Little York Road | Houston, TX 77091 Northline Campus | 8001 Fulton Street | Houston, TX 77022 North Forest Campus | 6010 E. Little York Road | Houston, TX 77016 Northeast Campus | 555 Community College Drive | Houston, TX 77013 Automotive Tech. Training Center | 4638 Airline Drive | Houston, TX 77022

### 713.718.8300

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ional origin, age, disability, sexua s, Director, EEO, 504, & Title IX C tollowing person Equity@hccs.edu

Scan for steps

### East Aldine Holiday Event,

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** 

down a snow covered sled ramp, a thrill only a few had experienced before this night.

A beautiful horsedrawn carriage, decorated with colorful blue lights, provided trips around the perimeter of Town Center, and again there was a long line to enjoy this unique opportunity.

There were other activities to keep people busy and having fun, too. Children and adults decorated cookies and made tree ornaments at the crafts tables. At a photo booth, families could don costumes and appear in a Nativity Scene with the Christ child, and get a photo of the tableau.

There was a raffle, where the East Aldine District gave out Christmas prizes, and to top off the evening, the Bayou City Car Club under the direction of Gilbert and Jennnifer Flores gave out toys that had been collected during last month's Toyz in the Hood Toy Drive, and others donated. The club reported that they had collected a total of \$3600, and thanked all donors. This allowed them to distribute hundreds of toys and gifts to needy families.

The crowd was estimated at between 500 to 1000 persons, and many brought lawn chairs and blankets to spend the evening. Parking was well managed by the Sheriff's department, with Lone Star College providing space. Most people indicated they were having a great time, and looking forward to the event every year in the future.



Crowds lined up for hot chocolate and tortillas.



The Bayou City Car Club collected toys at a Toy Drive, and then distributed hundreds to families last Friday night.



At the crafts table, children and their parents decorated cookies and made tree ornaments to take home



### General Office Administration

Dear Santa, For Christmas I would really appreciate clothes, the size M for men not boy clothes. Another thing I would really appreciate is the mini skate boorals to go with Wii connection or a Xbox gift card. Jesus Flores, 9 years Orange Grove

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa,

I wish for new clothes like shirts size M kid not men and some shoes size 5 or 4.5 I also wish for a finger skateboard 3 and Bad Bunny stickers. Gael Glores, 9 years Orange Grove Élementary

Dear Santa, This year I have been nice kid I want some goal keeper gloves, also some shoes my size is 2. I always help my mom clean the house. I have good grades. Also, I want some fingers skateboards tech deck also some anime stickers that is all I want. Nestor D. Reyes, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

### \*\*\*

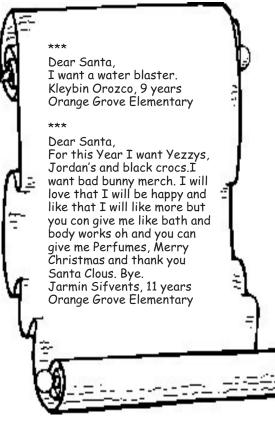
Dear Santa, I have been very good this year. For Christmas I would like to have infinity pencils and mini highlighters in colors pastel and a package of Aesthetic stickers. Carmen Rodriguez, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

#### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas I want 1. A Barbie from Amazon. 2. Clothes from Barbie. 3. Avatar Doll from Amazon. Thank you. Maria Medina, 9 Orange Grove Elementary

#### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, For Christmas all I am asking is \$19.99 for nite gift card, 2 reasons why.



1. I get good grades. 2. I respect my person. Jesus Tello, 9 years Orange Grove Élementary

Dear Santa, I hope you read this because you may not be real but it's fine I guess. I just wanted to say that I will be grateful for anything you give me. I really wanted some converse, vans, bracelets, rings and perfumes, but now I learned to be grateful for stuff that I have and stuff that people give me. I guess this is all I gotta say. Hope you read this and have a happy Christmas! Evelyn Garcia, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, Yo quiero slime and caja de colores y una caja de lápices, es todo lo que quiero. İvania, 10 Orange Grove Elementary \*\*\*

Dear Santa, Yo quiero 4 slimes, una caja de marcadores y colores, unos takis azules y rojo, pulseras y collares, stickers de BTS y de Bad Bunny y lápices de BTS y un diario de candado. Feliz Navidad. Estefany Videa, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

#### \*\*\*

Dear Santa, Hola, como estas? Quiero un jacket letter patched striped trim color black talla 7-8, No se stickers de anime y pulseras. Saphire, 11 years Orange Grove Elementary

### Dear Santa,

\*\*\*

I want a boogie board and a magnet pen and anime stickers and 1,000 v-buck card and ten dollar Roblox card and Posca markers and nerf gloves. Christian, 9 years Orange Grove Elementary

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## Gart Close.

### LoneStar.edu/SuperSaturdays