

Letters to Santa

Letters to Santa

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 Elementary

Dear Santa,
Para Navidad yo necesito zapatos y pasta de 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 pencils I want a squish mallow and clothes, my size for shirts is large in youth. I get good grades and I got a master grade in the STAAR.
Yaret Mercado Cruz, 9 years
Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
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,
Can you get me a line and red ciencs, mini soccer ball and soccer gloves please?
Gabriel, 8 years old, Stephens Elementary

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 vaquera talla XS, también un perro.
Eliza Fernandez, 11 years
Orage Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
I want ornaments like FIFA world cup stickers.
Elisse, 9 years
Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I would like crocs charms I would 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
Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
I want a shirt of Anime is Anye and a toy of Aphman like two and Anime stickers.
Jennifer Prieto, 9 years
Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
I want FIFA world cup sticker and they sell them on Walgreens.
Miguel Pineda, 10 years old
Orange 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 11.
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 jeans (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 Elementary

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

Season's Greetings



Harris County
Department of
Education



WE WISH YOU A
Merry Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

BONDING AGAINST
ADVERSITY
Helping Others
Help Themselves



OPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL
Friend of Youth

Merry Christmas
From the members
of
The Aldine
Optimist Club
Supporting the
youth of Aldine

Season's Greetings
from


BEASLEY
TIRE SERVICE
INC.

BEASLEY TIRE
A Full SERVICE TIRE COMPANY

Wishing Everyone
A Happy Holiday Season and
Wonderful New Year




ADRIAN
GARCIA
COMMISSIONER

Merry
Christmas
from
STEVE
MEAD

Aldine School Board &
Optimist Club President

Component Sales & Service
281-442-8127

SEASON'S GREETINGS
TO THE
EAST ALDINE COMMUNITY



HAWES HILL & ASSOCIATES
LLP

Best Wishes to
Everyone
in our Community
For a Happy New Year



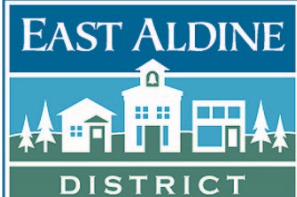
Airline
Improvement District
281-757-1788
airlinedistrict.org

We thank you for
another Year of
Support for your
Community Newspaper

Best Wishes
for the
Holiday Season




NORTHEAST BELTWAY 8
News



Happy
Holidays

Best Wishes to all the residents of Aldine
and Northeast Houston
Have a safe and prosperous New Year!
EAST ALDINE DISTRICT
713-595-1232

Best Wishes for a Safe
and Happy Holiday

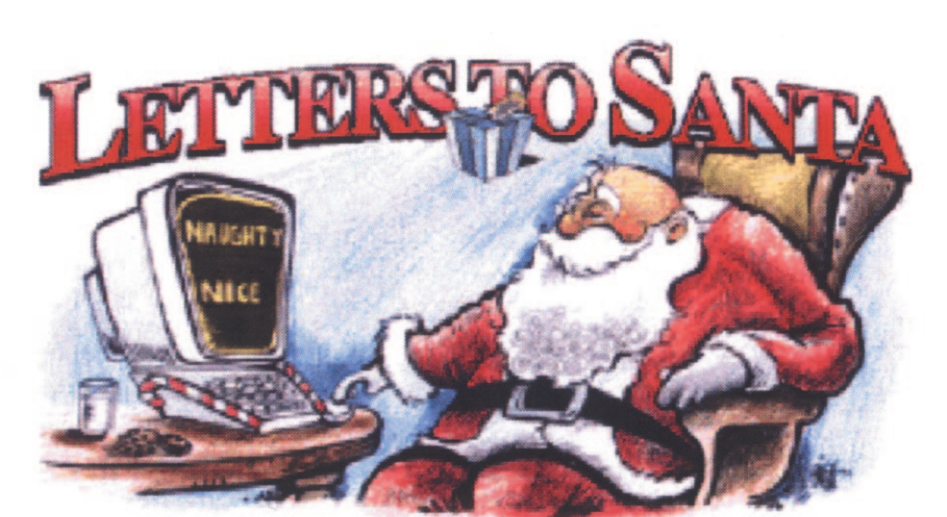


HARRIS COUNTY
EMERGENCY CORPS
2800 Aldine-Bender Rd.
Houston, TX 77032



Season's Greetings
& Best Wishes
for the
New Year!

281-874-2131
northhouston.org
f t in NHDistrict



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 Christmas I need a 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

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 a

new book, money, soccer ball. I also want a new shoes that Carmelo, yeezy slide, a elf. Thank you Santa.
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

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

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 P55 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 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

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.”

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

WINTRY CANDYLAND

The library has been transformed into a Wintry Candyland! Come join us and enter the **holiday drawing, take a holiday 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 **several 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 NIÑOS

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

Spanish **Wednesdays at 10:30am!**

KID'S CLUB

Kids ages 6 - 13 can join 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/ALDtutororientation>

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 Library 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

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.

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.

be offering computer classes in person at the library. If you want to participate, **call us to register: 832-927-5410.**
Tuesdays: various basic topics (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library
Wednesdays: Beginner Computer Class (English), 1:30pm, at the library
Beyond 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

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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/services/passport-services>

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 your 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

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY NEWS

By Jennifer Nandlal Sr Adult Program Specialist

12 Days of Holiday Fun @ High Meadows:
Beginning December 5th, the library invites you to celebrate the holidays with us. From crafts, movies, story-times, 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.

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.

December 7th at 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 yourself or as a gift for someone this holiday sea-

son.

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.

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

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.

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 become 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.



★

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.”

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.



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 government.

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-

low pre-pandemic gridlock levels, according to the latest study by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. The institute has conducted the study annually since 2009.

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 mobility.tamu.edu. **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.

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 lab-confirmed 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.

★

THE POSTSCRIPT

By
Carrie Classon

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.

“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 CarrieClasson.com.



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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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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." LUKE 2: 8-10

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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



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 you 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

UPCOMING EVENTS
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 HIGHLIGHTEisenhower High's Ryan Niblett Selected to All-American Bowl Team
MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

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 Holiday/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/heathalerts.

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 full-time 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.

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HOPE Clinic provides services in 30 languages,

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 board-certified 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 government-provided 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.

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 two-way multilingual platform that FACE has made available through the use of ESSER funds. 46 languages are spoken at home within the AISD families, so TalkingPoints' 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 benefiting 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



**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.

AldineISD.org



**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.

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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 horse-drawn 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.



Letters to Santa



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 Elementary

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.

Dear Santa,
I want a water blaster.
Kleybin Orozco, 9 years
Orange Grove Elementary

Dear Santa,
For this Year I want Yezzys, Jordan's and black crocs.I want bad bunny merch. I will love that I will be happy and like that I will like more but you can give me like bath and body works oh and you can give me Perfumes, Merry Christmas and thank you Santa Clous. Bye.
Jarmin Sifvents, 11 years
Orange Grove Elementary

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

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.
Ivania, 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 Vide, 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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