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# NORTHEAST NEWS

**New Stadium sandbox**



Attendees at the Replacement Stadium Groundbreaking were invited to take home a souvenir of sand from the groundbreaking ceremony.

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VOL. 47, NO. 4 TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2023 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

## Aldine ISD breaks ground for new Stadium

*Replacement Stadium will cost \$50 million, seat 10,000 for Football and Soccer*

### Replacement for Thorne Stadium to cost over \$50mil

ALDINE – Groundbreaking for the W.W. Thorne Stadium Replacement Project officially began on January 20 with a ceremony that not even the cold or the rain could diminish the excitement.

AISD Board President Randy Bates Jr. said “Fearless is my word this year. Everyone involved in this project has been fearless. From Board members to staff, engineers and architects ... everyone has been fearless in their commitment to upgrade and re-imagine the fan experience here at Thorne Stadium. To say that it has been long overdue is an understatement. Like everything else — and people (causing attendees to chuckle) — the stadium has been subject to wear and tear. It’s been 44 years since the stadium received this significant investment. So yes, it was time to set a new vision. I am excited about this new way forward for our students, families, and community.”

The stadium opened in 1979 and is named after W.W. Thorne, who served as superintendent of Aldine ISD from 1959 to 1973. Thorne’s leadership, determination, and dedication to Aldine’s students, staff, and community members directed the district through some difficult times, earning him the title Mr. Aldine. His visionary approach to education paved the way for what Aldine ISD has become to-



Groundbreaking for the new replacement W.W. Thorne Stadium was held Friday, January 20th in spite of heavy rain and wind. Administrators, athletic faculty, AISD board members, community members, students and Thorne family took part in the ceremony. Thoughtfully, somebody brought red umbrellas.



Artist's rendering of the new replacement W.W. Thorne Stadium. The new stadium will have a main entrance on the west facade facing the parking lot, and will seat 10,000 fans in two tiers of seats. It will accommodate both football and soccer games. The facility will include renovated locker rooms, concession stands, toilet facilities, and a new larger scoreboard. M.O. Campbell Center, seen at top right, will remain.

day.

W.W. Thorne passed away in 2021 at 98. However, several family members were present at the ceremony, including his children Bill Jr. and Anita, his granddaughter Heather, and his daughter-in-law Melissa.

Also present were members of the administrative staff and community members. Student-athletes representing the different high schools and student performers (the Nimitz HS drill team and Eisenhower HS drumline) participated in the celebration.

“I know you are just as excited as I am about the first game when we open the new Thorne Stadium in August 2024! We wanted to give students and the community a gift they could cherish and take great pride in. The brand-new, state-of-the-art stadium will provide a place to host sports games on Friday nights and be a staple venue for the community to use for training and other community affairs,” said Aldine ISD Board Trustee President Randy Bates Jr.

Bates thanked Goffney, the Aldine team, and Stantec — the district’s architect partner — for making the vision a reality.

Julietta Vega, a senior soccer player from MacArthur High School, and Jeremiah Swain, a junior football player from Eisenhower HS, followed Bates. Both shared what it meant to student-athletes like themselves to have a state-

*Continued. See NEW STADIUM, Page 2*

## Progress report: JFK Head arrives at JFK Boulevard

ALDINE – After months of planning and a few hours of careful physical work, famed sculptor David Adickes’ larger-than-life bust of the late President John F. Kennedy was placed at its prepared site on JFK Boulevard at Aldine Bender Road on Tuesday January 17 as part of the East Aldine Arts Council’s growing public art initiative.

The council is part of the East Aldine Management District.

Adickes, 95, was there Tuesday to watch the installation of his massive creation. His well-known giant sculptures include the head-to-toe statue of Sam Houston on Inter-



Workmen carefully lift the head of the JFK sculpture onto the base, which already has the torso in place (see photo, page 2). The sculpture was built in Adickes’ workshop in downtown Houston prior to installation in East Aldine.



Famed sculptor David Adickes was on hand to oversee the installation of his bust sculpture of John F. Kennedy at the site in East Aldine.

state 45 North, an abstract representation of a cello player in downtown Houston and busts of other presidents that sit together, with the nickname “Mount Rush

Hour,” on Interstate 10 downtown.

More work is ahead at the JFK site in prepara-

*Continued. See JFK Sculpture, Page 2*

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# Aldine ISD breaks ground for new Stadium

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of-the-art stadium to compete in.

Lakundre 'Dre' Thompson, executive director of athletics, spoke last, sharing how he and his teammates were in awe to play in a facility when he was a high school student-athlete in a neighboring school district like W.W. Thorne. And now, the AISD stadium will once again be a showcase.

"We are excited to bring a new, dynamic stadium to Aldine. Schools districts will once again look to Aldine," said Thompson. "The same discipline and teamwork essential for victory on the field can help pave the way for success in the classroom and beyond. Experiences on the sports field can last a lifetime. Everyone who enters this stadium will leave with a memory they will never forget. Whether it's competition, friendship, or fellowship, this stadium will be a huge part of building our future and a better future for this community."

Aldine ISD teams will play at George Stadium in Spring ISD home for the next two years.

Thorne will reopen in August 2024. The multi-purpose stadium will continue to host a variety of events every year. The stadium will be designed as a state-of-the-art facility to enhance the student and community experience. We'll have a new press box, new concession stands, new restrooms, a new football field, concrete bleachers and platforms, and a front entrance on the West Side of the stadium.

## Details of Stadium design

By Mike Keeney

AISD Trustees, Superintendent receive update on replacement stadium

During the December 12 Board study session, Aldine ISD Trustees and Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney received an update on the plans for the district's new stadium, which is scheduled to open in August 2024.

Representatives of architectural firm Stantec/Smith and Company Architects joined Fred Washington, Aldine ISD's Chief Operations Officer, and Patrick Mouton, the district's Executive Director of Facilities, Planning and Construction, to provide a progress update.

The demolition of Thorne Stadium, which opened in 1979, will begin in January 2023, making way for a new state-of-the-art stadium that is designed to enhance both the student and community experience. The new stadium will be built in its place and will accommodate up to 10,000 guests with two tiers of seating.

One of its unique features include customized LED lights on the West Side and East Side of the stadium that can be used to highlight the hosting team's school colors.

Additional features include:

- Locker room renovations at the adjoining M.O. Campbell Educational Center; (each locker room can be subdivided in half)
- A two-story press box
- A new, larger scoreboard
- Parking lot improvements
- New concession stands and rest rooms
- A multi-use community room
- A designated plaza for band and drill team pre-halftime performances
- An open air concourse with concession stands
- An officials' locker room and meeting space
- Multi-use turf designed for both soccer and football

"I hope our community is as excited as I am about the future of our new Thorne Stadium," said Superintendent Goffney. "Seeing a rendering means we are moving forward with our plans of providing Aldine supporters with a showplace for them and our students and I am super excited that this dream is becoming a reality. As I've said before, Thorne Stadium served the Aldine community for 43 years and it holds so many special memories for our community, but it is our goal and responsibility to be proactive in ensuring that the venue in which we welcome our community meets, if not exceeds, basic safety standards."

Earlier this year, Aldine

ISD utilized a third party, Texas Sports & Civil Engineering, to perform an evaluation of the stadium. Texas Sports & Civil Engineering recommended two options for the district. One was a repair option, and the other was a replacement option. The district opted for the replacement option. At their June 24 Board meeting, Aldine ISD Trustees approved the use of \$25 million in fiscal year 2022 and \$25 million in fiscal year 2023 to cover the cost of constructing the new stadium.

# JFK Sculpture arrives in East Aldine,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The JFK memorial sculpture is in three parts. Above, workmen affix the torso to the polished granite base, preparing for the placement of the concrete head on top of the torso and base.

tion for the statue's official debut in a few weeks. The date will be announced in advance.

But now JFK is finally "on JFK," ready to attract

and inspire onlookers from the neighborhood, travelers to and from Bush Intercontinental Airport and many other people.

# Gov. Abbott calls for random intrusion checks of all public schools in Texas

AUSTIN – Governor Greg Abbott today sent a letter to Dr. Kathy Martinez-Prather directing the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) to begin immediately conducting comprehensive school safety reviews to ensure all Texas public schools are following the appropriate procedures to maximize school safety.

In the letter to Dr. Martinez-Prather, Governor Abbott instructs that TxSSC ensure all school districts' School Safety and Security Committees meet ahead of the new school year to review their Emergency Operations Plan and address any campus safety needs, ensure the School Behavioral Threat Assessment Team is trained and has reviewed procedures

for each campus, ensure all staff and substitutes are trained on their specific district and campus safety procedures, and conduct an assessment of their access control procedures. TxSSC is instructed to provide a progress report of findings to the Governor's office and the Legislature by October 1.


"The work and trainings provided by the Texas School Safety Center has reached thousands of schools and instructors and has benefited millions of Texas school children," reads the letter. "However, the tragedy at Robb Elementary School last week requires us all to do more. I am charging the TxSSC, in coordination with the TEA, to develop and implement a plan to conduct

random inspections to assess access control measures of Texas school districts. Among other reviews, your team should begin conducting in-person, unannounced, random intruder detection audits on school districts. Also, the TxSSC should immediately begin working with my office and the Legislature on recommendations to improve current security systems and determine the funding necessary to continue the work of hardening our schools against outside threats. Texans have never shirked away from a challenge, and I know with the support of state leadership, we can continue the work of improving each student's experience in our schools."

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Message From the Superintendent, January 26, 2023

Dear Aldine Community,

Aldine had several celebrations last week that I am proud to share. We celebrated students' talent, opened a new resource for the community, held a groundbreaking event, and met with new teachers!

HOPE Clinic Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony I started my morning last Friday with the HOPE Clinic Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony. The clinic located at 2112 Aldine Meadows Road will offer numerous services, from primary and pediatric care to healthy living solutions, mental health, and more. The HOPE Clinic also provides services in multiple languages.

W.W. Thorne Replacement Stadium Groundbreaking Ceremony It was a great day for the W.W. Thorne Stadium Groundbreaking Ceremony. After 44 years, a new stadium is on the horizon! It addresses safety concerns and upgrades. The new, improved Thorne Stadium is a gift for our students, staff, and community to enjoy for the next 44 years! I want to thank everyone in attendance. You made the ceremony extra special. Not even the cold and the rain that day could dampen the excitement!

I'll be honest: Ya'll, I can't wait to attend the first football game when we open the stadium in August 2024!

Cows, Goats, and Swine Oh My! Our 64th Livestock Show kicked off yesterday at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center (MOC)! If you didn't get a chance to swing by yesterday, you missed seeing a few district- and campus-level leaders showing "their" pigs. As a reminder, the big event, the Livestock Auction, is tomorrow, Friday, January 27th. The Buyer's Luncheon will be held at 11:30 a.m., followed by the Sale of Champions at 1 p.m. in the MOC-Arena. I encourage you to join us in supporting our FFA students who are showcasing their pigs, horses, poultry, lambs, and goats! We also have students displaying their Western artworks. Click here for more details.

So Many Talented Students The Carver Mariachi performed in the UIL Mariachi Evaluation and earned a Sweepstakes award for a second consecutive year! Students from Carver, Aldine, and Davis HS comprise the mariachi group. Their director Jaime Alanis is Jaime Alanis.

Last week, we had an incredible turnout at the Aldine ISD/Houston Rodeo Art Reception. Our talented students from primary to high school showcased their artwork. Congratulations to the winners and students advancing to the next round of the Houston Rodeo School Art Contest, which will take place during the Rodeo season in March.

And Swoop, Swoop to Eisenhower High School's debate team! The team won second place in a World Schools Debate-CASE Debate. It's the first time the district has partnered with the Harris County Department of Education for CASE Debates. I understand that the season is still in progress and that Eisenhower, Blanson CTE, Carver, and MacArthur high schools are doing well. Good luck to all seven high schools taking part in this great opportunity. The skills gained in debate events will prepare them for college and beyond.

#SHINE in Aldine I loved connecting with more than 150 new teachers across the district on Saturday at the SHINE event. During this event, new teachers received much-appreciated professional development. Continue to shine brightly toward a brighter future for our students.

There are so many great things happening in Aldine. Moments and celebrations like these are a few of my Whys — why I choose to lead in Aldine. It's giving students access to high-quality schools and providing choices and opportunities. It's about service to our community.

Have a great rest of the week and a great weekend.

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

**UPCOMING & ONGOING EVENTS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Jan. 24-28: The Donna Summer Musical at Carver High School. Come and enjoy the story about Donna Summer, who became the icon of an era and the inspiration for every music diva who followed. For tickets, email rdjones3@aldineisd.org or call (281) 878-



- 1521.
- Jan. 24 & Jan. 25: The student matinee starts at 10 a.m. Tickets are \$5.
- Jan. 26 and Jan. 27: The evening show begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15.
- Jan. 28: The late afternoon show starts at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15.
- Jan. 25-27: 64th Annual Aldine ISD FFA Livestock Show (details)
- Winter Edition of VYPE: Be on the lookout for the latest edition of the Aldine ISD HS Sports VYPE Magazine.
- Now-Apr. 22: AISD's Health Services Department is holding monthly CPR classes. (click here)
- Feb. 11: Virtual #LiteracyMatters Conference — Click here to register.
- Feb. 13-April 21: Free GED and ESL classes for Aldine parents who have a student enrolled in the bilingual or ESL program in AISD. Click here for details.
- Ongoing: Read to the Final Four® Competition has elementary students reading in a March Madness tournament. Follow us on Twitter to see which school is leading the district competition! Click here to read more.
- Ongoing: Family and Community University's 2022-2023 — 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.

**MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS** January

- January School Board Appreciation Month
- Jan. 25: ENVI2ION School Day (ADSY Calendar)
- February CTE Month Financial Aid Awareness Month Magnet School Month Black History Month
- Feb. 1: National Signing Day (student-athletes); ENVI2ION School Day (ADSY Calendar); Families (all campuses) can access Progress Reports via their Home Access Center (HAC) accounts.
- Feb. 6-10: National School Counseling Week
- Feb. 8: ENVI2ION School Day (ADSY Calendar)
- Feb. 15: ENVI2ION School Day (ADSY Calendar)
- Feb. 17: Student Holiday/Staff Development (Traditional Calendar)
- Feb. 20: Presidents Day (Student Holiday in All Schools)
- Feb. 23: ENVI2ION School Day (ADSY Calendar)
- Feb. 24: Go Texas Day!

**REMINDERS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

- Outside food and beverages are prohibited on the premises of secondary schools (middle school, ninth-grade schools, and high schools). Click here for details.
- The state requires high school seniors to apply for financial aid to graduate. — FAFSA Application link or TASFA Application links
- 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](http://www.aldineisd.org/healthalerts).

**FOLLOW US!** Stay connected by visiting [aldineisd.org](http://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.

Aldine ISD Board Received Appreciation During January Board Meeting

January is national school board recognition month. During the monthly board meeting, the Aldine ISD school board was recognized for their service to the district, highlighted by a thank you video.

Vice President Kimberley Booker was surprised by a former student who wanted to personally show his support and gratitude to her as a part of national school board recognition month.



During the board meeting, the board discussed the goals of the district that are aligned with the district's mission. During the opening statements, President Randy Bates reviewed the approval of previous meeting minutes.

Employees recognized:  
During the January 24 Board of Trustees meeting, a number of Aldine ISD employees were recognized who provide leadership and represent the district's values in the most exceptional ways.

Grants announced:  
Stacey Smith, Director of Special Programs, announced two grants during the January 24 Board of Trustees meeting.  
\*Hinojosa Primary School Principal Denise Meister and Kathleen Flores secured a \$2,800 grant from East Aldine Management District to support the campus garden.

The grants announced at the January 24 Board meeting totaled \$1,952,800.00. Trustees approve action items

During the January 24 Board meeting, Aldine ISD Trustees approved a number of action items. Those action items were:

- Approval of MOU between Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) and Aldine Independent School District for participation in the HCDE case debate program
- Approval of Single contracts and purchases of \$50,000 and greater
- Approval of Mid-Year Budget Amendment 2022-2023
- Approval of 2023-2024 Academic Calendar & 2023-2024 Additional Day School Year (ADSY) Academic Calendar
- Approval of Release of Judgement Liens and authorize District Counsel to Execute and File Notices of Release of Liens Filed in Harris County District Courts in Cause Numbers:
- Approval of Release of Abstract judgments and authorize District Superintendent to execute a release of Abstract Liens filed in Harris County District courts in cause Numbers
- Approval of Monthly Tax Office Refunds
- Approval of Resolution to Revoke the expansion of exemption from Ad valorem taxation of freeport goods



\*Javier Villarreal, Chief resources officer, named Torivio Trevino as the Human Resources Department's Employee of the Quarter. Trevino serves as the HR coordinator.



Tracey Bailey, Executive Director of Special Education, Angel Webb, and Terra Thompson secured a \$1,950,000.00 grant from the United States Department of Education. Teachers from Aldine ISD will receive \$1.6 million dollars in professional development paid by grants and stipends totaling \$350,000.

Aldine ISD Black History Oratory Competition Begins Jan. 23

The third annual Aldine ISD Black History Oratory Competition will begin on January 23, 2023.

The competition will coincide with Black History Month in February and serve as a districtwide celebration. The competition is open to all Aldine ISD students in grades 3-12. In addition, each campus will host individual campus competitions before selecting the top winner at each campus.

Campus competitions will take place between January 23 – February 17. The district competition will take place from February 20-22.

To participate in the competition, students will individually create a spoken presentation that relates to the theme, Resilience.

In 3 to 5 minutes, students will describe how African Americans have demonstrated resilience by highlighting not only black scholars and medical practitioners in West-

ern medicine but also other ways; it will also focus on the importance of taking care of oneself — both physically and mentally. The original oratory piece must be recorded using the Flipgrid app, an online video discussion tool.


After each campus selects their first, second, and third-place winners, the first-place winners will compete in the district finals, where they compete against different students in their grade level from across the district. From this contest, three first-place winners (Elementary, Middle, and Ninth Grade and High School) will be named 2023 Aldine ISD Black History Oratory winners. The winners will receive a trophy and be honored at the March 22 School Board meeting.

Aldine ISD students in Grades 3-12 interested in participating in the third annual Aldine ISD Black History Oratory Competition should reach out to their campus.

You can read the Northeast News current and back issues on our website: [www.nenewsroom.com](http://www.nenewsroom.com)

★ OPINION PAGE ★

**WALLE WORLD**  
By State Representative **ARMANDO WALLE**



January 19, 2023

On Tuesday, Jan. 10th, the 88th Legislature officially gaveled into Session. Rep. Walle will spend the next six months traveling back and forth between Harris County and Austin, TX to fight for our communities in House District 140, and for all Texans across the state.

Rep. Walle was joined by his wife, Debbie, and their children, Armando and Joaquin, for the Opening Day Ceremonies. Several members of his extended family also came by to celebrate.



Texas legislators have until March 10, 2023 to file bills for the 88th Session. Each newsletter, we will highlight a few of Rep. Walle's legislative priorities for 2023.

**House Bill 737**

Raises the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$15.00 per hour.

**House Bill 778**

Expands worker's compensation benefits on construction sites to contractors and subcontractors, providing better coverage for working families.

On Jan. 16th, Rep. Walle joined the City of Houston and Black Heritage Society's 45th Annual Original Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade downtown. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner served as Grand Marshal of the event.



While marching in the parade, Rep. Walle met up with Houston City Councilwoman At-Large Letitia Plummer, Olympian and University of Houston Track and Field Head Coach Carl Lewis, and Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney (pictured above).

Rep. Walle sits down in his Austin office for an interview with ABC Houston Reporter Tom Abrahams.

88th Texas legislative session gets underway with incumbent house speaker reelected to role | ABC Houston

Among the 7,000 bills that might be filed during the long session, most of which are substantive in nature, there are also the hot-button issues: those that fall more sharply along cultural or ideological lines. ...

"You can see it in the bills that are being filed," State Rep. Armando Walle, D-Houston, told ABC13. "Anti-CRT. Anti-LGBT. Anti-transgender. Some of us are on these social issues. I think most Texans, average Texans, don't like to attack vulnerable communities."

2023 Texas Legislature: \$27 billion surplus raises stakes for Republicans | Houston Chronicle

"I think our No. 1 opportunity is in the crafting of the state budget," said state Rep. Armando Walle, a Houston Democrat who serves on the budget-writing House Appropriations Committee. "There'll be a lot of opportunity to spread goodwill around the state with the amount of surplus that we have. And that surplus needs to be reinvested in human capital, in the infrastructure of opportunity for people to get a good education, get a good job, access to quality health care and live in safe communities."

Walle is one of two Democrats on the influential Legislative Budget Board, which compiles draft budgets for the state's spending plans each session. He's aiming to put more money into the state's Flood Infrastructure Fund, formed by the Legislature in response to Hurricane Harvey to pay for flood control projects, and said he's working on sending more to the Harris County Flood Control District "by whatever source of dollars we can use."

**House Bill 1501**

Rep. Walle and Senator Royce West (D-Dallas) worked together with Feeding Texas on House Bill 1501 and Senate Bill 557, which instruct the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to identify college degree programs that are vocational or technical in nature so that students enrolled in these programs can receive SNAP benefits.

"A simple change in policy would allow low-income students in vocational and technical degree programs to access SNAP while they pursue their educational goals," Rep. Walle said in a statement. "Improving short-term food assistance would help thousands of Texas students along their path to economic self-sufficiency. This legislation is a win-win and makes good business sense for Texas."



**THE POSTSCRIPT**  
By **Carrie Classon**

**Walking Through The Snow**

It was snowing hard, the way it almost never does anymore, and I decided I needed to go for my walk, heedless of the weather.

"I probably won't be gone long!" I texted a friend in California as I headed out the door looking like an Arctic explorer. The snow was coming down fast and sideways. Many businesses were closed, and the streetlights had eerily popped on at midday.

Once outside, I wondered if this was such a good idea.

It was impossible to keep the snow out of my eyes. I pulled my fur-trimmed cap down so it nearly hid my eyes. I pulled my face mask up over my nose and navigated through a narrow strip of vision with a fringe of fur on top.

It was a lot of work. Between 4 to 5 inches of snow had already fallen and only a few people had traversed the sidewalk ahead of me. I found myself tripping and slipping in their tracks.

"I'm going to walk to the next cross street and turn around," I promised myself. "A short walk is better than no walk at all!"

I kept trudging.

But a funny thing happened on the next block. The last of the footprints disappeared, and I was walking through untouched, fresh snow. Once I was no longer stumbling in the footsteps of previous pedestrians, the walk became easier. The snow had a bounce to it. My steps, though slow, were even and smooth. I started to have fun.

"I'll go one more block before turning around."

The block came and went. Every so often, I'd hit a patch of sidewalk where someone had shoveled, and walking became amazingly easy. Then I'd go back to what I was now used to.

And, eventually, walking through the snow became normal. I settled into a slow but steady pace and observed the closed businesses and the unshoveled sidewalks and the snowplows trying to clear the street beside me. At one point, I saw two young people trying to pry a car out of a parking spot, and I helped push it free.

"Thank you!" they called as they headed down the street, wheels spinning in the deep snow.

"They're going to get stuck again," I thought. And they probably did.

I heard sirens in the distance and watched great whirls of snow gust off the rooftops and fill the air with dancing snow phantoms. I ended up walking my whole route.

I remember hearing the neural pathways of our brain described as paths through the snow. I can think in new ways, but it is much easier to follow an existing path, one that has already been cleared, and so I'll do that whenever possible.

But I wonder if there isn't more to it.

I think of all the times that I've heard there was a "right way" to do things, and remember all the times the right way hasn't been all it's cracked up to be. Of course, it's always easy to walk on a clear path. But sometimes I have to break a new trail and, when the path is new, it's often a good idea to find my own way.

"I did the whole loop!" I told my friend in California once I was back. "It wasn't too hard to walk because I was the first one to make tracks!"

"It's harder to follow in someone else's footsteps?" she asked. She hasn't seen a lot of snow.

"It is!" And it was. And there's a lesson for me in that, I am sure.

Till next time,  
Carrie  
Photos and other news can be found at [CarrieClasson.com](http://CarrieClasson.com).

**STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS**

By **Gary Borders**



**Lawmakers Push \$15k Teacher Raises**

A group of House Democrats is proposing a \$15,000 raise for the state's teachers and a 25% raise for other state employees by using some of the state's record budget surplus. State Rep. James Talarico, D-Austin, announced the bill last week and was joined by Democratic legislators and teachers, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

"This moment demands bold action, and that's what our state is known for," Talarico said. "House Bill 1548 would be the biggest teacher pay raise in Texas history. In Texas, we go big or we go home. Let's go big on teacher pay."

While the proposal may not gain traction in the GOP-controlled House, it could spur debate as the state faces a growing exodus of public-school teachers. The Dallas Morning News, which analyzed teacher salaries across the state, reported that major suburban and urban districts pay educators the most, while rural school districts and charter schools pay the least.

The highest average teacher salary is in the Houston region at \$62,589, while the lowest average teacher salary was in the Abilene region, according to the Texas Education Agency. The state operates 20 educational regions.

**DISASTER DECLARATION FOR SOUTHEAST TEXAS COMMUNITIES**

Gov. Gregg Abbott last week issued a disaster declaration for Harris and Orange counties after at least one tornado touched down in Pasadena, Deer Park and neighboring Southeast Texas communities. The Texas Division of Emergency Management has requested federal assistance in making preliminary damage assessments.

The Houston Chronicle reported no injuries despite the considerable damage in the area.

Abbott urged Texans with damage to their homes or businesses to complete a self-reporting damage survey at [damage.tdem.texas.gov](http://damage.tdem.texas.gov). Damage should also be reported separately to insurance agencies.

**TEXAS LEADS NATION IN JOB CREATION IN 2022**

A December employment release from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates Texas led the nation in job creation with 650,100 nonfarm jobs added last year - a 5% rate, the fastest in the nation. Coming in second with 621,400 new nonfarm jobs was California. "Texas works when Texans work, and in this legislative session, we will continue expanding opportunity and ensuring Texas remains the best state to live, work, build a business, and raise a family," Abbott said.

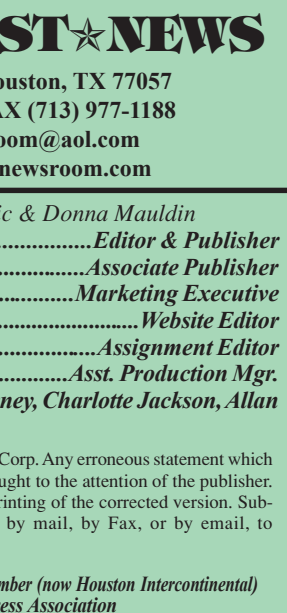
**HEAT-RELATED DEATHS REACH TWO-DECADE HIGH**

Heat-related deaths in Texas reached a new high last year, according to a Texas Tribune analysis of state data since 1999. The state's second-hottest summer and the worst drought since 2011 combined to increase risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke. At least 268 in the state were killed by heat, with a large portion of those being migrants who died after crossing the border, the Tribune reported.

**COVID-19 CASES DIP SLIGHTLY**

The number of new cases of COVID-19 in Texas during the past week dropped slightly to 23,530, with 194 deaths reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. The number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services was 2,513, down about 300 from the previous week. Only reported cases are tallied, and people who test positive with a home test kit likely are never reported.

**TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION**



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

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Published each Tuesday by GrafikPress Corp. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to [nenewsroom@aol.com](mailto:nenewsroom@aol.com)

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Stephanie Hsu, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan star as the Wang family in "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

"Everything Everywhere All at Once"

"Everything Everywhere All at Once" (R) — Evelyn Quan lives in a state of chaos in her everyday life. She is the owner of a laundromat and mother to her misunderstood daughter, Joy, and a million other tasks always seem to snatch up her attention. Because of this, her relationships begin to fall apart, leading up to one seemingly ordinary day when her life gets flipped upside down. A version of her husband, Waymond, from an alternate universe, visits her in need of her help from the evil Jobu Tupaki, who plans to destroy each existing universe one by one. As this alternate Waymond teaches her about the multi-

verse, Evelyn learns she has a much bigger purpose than she ever imagined in the fight against Jobu. With Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan taking home Golden Globes for this visually stunning film, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" is incredibly profound — and a must-watch. Out now. (Showtime) "You People" (R) — Ezra Cohen (Jonah Hill) hasn't had much luck in his quest for love, although marriage is something he definitely sees in his future. When he accidentally wanders into Amira's (Lauren London) car, thinking that she's his Uber driver, he begs her for the chance to make it up to her.

Ezra and Amira begin to hit it off, and Ezra finally feels like he's found the right person for him. As he makes plans to propose to Amira, Ezra's friend, Sam, tells him he needs to speak with Amira's family. So, Ezra sits down with Amira's parents (Eddie Murphy and Nia Long), and he finds that integrating his Jewish family with Amira's Black family isn't as seamless as he thought it'd be.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Mike Epps also star in this relatable comedy film, co-written by Hill and director Kenya Barris. "You People" premieres Jan. 27.

(Netflix) "Shotgun Wedding" (R) — Originally starring Armie Hammer as the male lead before abuse allegations came out against him, this romantic comedy film about a destination wedding replaced him with Josh Duhamel in the male lead role, with Jennifer Lopez as his opposite.

They play a couple named Tom and Darcy, who are about to say their "I do's" in the perfect tropical setting. At first, Tom and Darcy think the worst of their worries will be dealing with their eccentric family members.

But then, right before the wedding, plans get interrupted by a heavily loaded gang of criminals. The criminals take Tom and Darcy's families hostage, but the couple manages to escape and attempts to get help while simultaneously running from the captors. Is there any better way to start the rest of your lives together?

This Prime Video original film premieres Jan. 27. (Prime Video) (c) 2023 King Features Synd., Inc.

HOLLYWOOD by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Henry Cavill was the perfect Superman. He first became the legendary superhero for "Man of Steel" in 2013. He also donned his tights and cape for "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice" (2016), "Justice League" (2017) and "Black Adam" (2022).

But the new co-CEOs of DC Studios have decided to recast Superman. The studio heads made Cavill announce: "I will, after all, not be returning as Superman. After being told by the studio to announce my return back in October ... the changing of the guard is something that happens. James [Gunn] and Peter [Safran] have a universe to build."

This announcement came right after he quit Netflix's "The Witcher" after two seasons, with Liam Hemsworth replacing him in the lead role. But, worry not, Cavill's not hurting for work. He has "The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare," the four-film franchise "Argylle," "The Rosie Project" and the reboot of "Highlander" in his future. Also stacking projects is Cavill's "Argylle" co-star John Cena, who kicks off 2023 with "Fast X" (aka "Fast & Furious 10"); "Freelance" with Alison Brie; and "Coyote vs. Acme," opposite Will Forte — all lining up for release soon.

As "Avatar: The Way of Water" nears a billion-dollar gross worldwide, Disney must be biting their nails over the projected \$2 billion price tag (which will double for promotion) for the next three "Avatar" sequels. Disney inherited the "Avatar" sequels when they acquired 20th Century Fox. But judging from the \$3 billion grosses of the original "Avatar," and that "Avatar" creator James Cameron's "Titanic" is in the third spot, we can expect an "Avatar" sequel every Christmas for the next three years.

Executive VP of Disney Tony Chambers says "James Cameron's movies have a long tail. So this isn't about Day



Ronal (played by Kate Winslet) from "Avatar: The Way of Water"

1. This isn't about opening weekend. This is about the entire run of the movie." Luckily, there's very little competition this year. Even with mixed reviews (it received 77% on Rotten Tomatoes), their audience loves this franchise and are enveloping themselves in the IMAX and 3D format.

At a time when moviegoers have fewer reasons to leave home, many do come back to immerse themselves in "The Way of Water," which runs for three hours and 12 minutes. Moviegoers, especially the younger ones, return time and time again to be lost in their "Avatar" experience. Theater exhibitors hope "Avatar" will get post-pandemic filmgoers back into theaters in a pre-COVID way.

The question remains, was it wise to bank on four sequels filmed back to back with our ever-changing times as the world evolves quicker and quicker? If "Avatar" and its sequels turn out to be a white elephant, Disney could always turn it into a jungle franchise to make their money back. (c) 2023 King Features Synd., Inc.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

R.F.D.



by Mike Marland

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Includes a 9x9 grid and difficulty level: Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenge ♦♦♦♦ BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF. Find at least six differences in details between panels. Includes two panels of a man and a child with a forklift.

January 30, 2023 Posting Date King Crossword

Crossword grid with clues: ACROSS 1 Appear, 5 Commotion, 8 Online auction site, 12 Actress Fisher, 13 Part of DJIA, 14 Dell, 15 Youthful countenance, 17 Laundry appliance, 18 Soft leather, 19 Columns of light, 21 Pro votes, 24 Numerical prefix, 25 July's stone, 28 It ain't worth a nickel, 30 Prattle, 33 "Life — cabaret ...", 34 Stuns, as a perp, 35 "Bali —", 36 Chum, 37 Sharif of "Funny Girl", 38 Wild guess, 39 Run after K, 41 For fear that, 43 "No cheating!", 46 Eucalyptus eater, 50 Thames town, 51 Temporary mental fatigue, 54 Dazzle.

Down clues: 8 Perrier rival, 9 Brawl that's broken up by a bouncer, 10 Oodles, 11 Desires, 16 Tina of "30 Rock", 20 Colorations, 22 Wax-coated cheese, 23 Twine fiber, 25 Wardrobe malfunction, 26 "Suits" network, 27 Jim Bouton book, 29 Simple, 31 Small battery, 32 Clothing protector, 34 Writer, 38 Morrison, 38 Gems, 40 Food from heaven, 42 Enjoy Aspen, 43 Optimum, 44 Jazzy James, 45 Baseball stats, 47 Roundish 'do, 48 Lake bird, 49 Awestruck, 52 Nipper's co., 53 Goal.

Answers for King Crossword: 1. Japan; 2. Vibrantium; 3. Stephen Sondheim; 4. Red; 5. 1938; 6. Callista Flockhart; 7. Arby's; 8. Chicago; 9. The rabbit; 10. A kaleidoscope.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. GEOGRAPHY: Where is Mount Fuji located?
2. MOVIES: What is the material used in Captain America's shield?
3. MUSIC: Who wrote the lyrics to the 1961 "West Side Story" movie?
4. SCIENCE: Which color has the longest wavelength?
5. HISTORY: When did the United States outlaw child labor?
6. TELEVISION: Who played the leading role in the legal series "Ally McBeal"?
7. AD SLOGANS: Which fast-food chain tells customers that "We have the meats"?
8. LITERATURE: What is the setting for the "Divergent" novel series?
9. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which animal represents the 2023 Chinese zodiac year?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of butterflies called?

Solution time: 24 mins. King Crossword

# CHURCH PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Ruth (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From 2 Samuel, who commanded the rebel army when Absalom rebelled against David? Arioch, Abner, Abishai, Amasa
3. In the Old Testament, who said, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth"? Noah, Isaiah, Samuel, Adam
4. Who wrote most of the Proverbs? David, Solomon, Paul, Isaiah

5. What's the Sea of Galilee called in John 6? Tiberias, Dead, Jordan, Geneva
6. Who was the mate of Zipporah? Hosea, Amos, Moses, Malachi

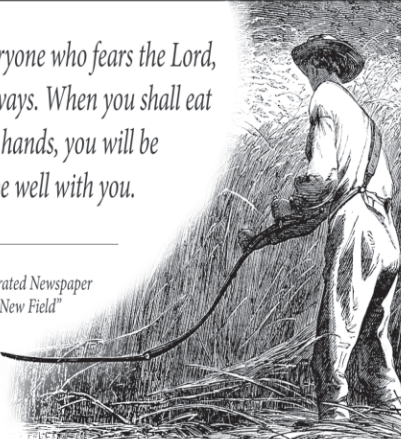
ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Amasa, 3) Samuel (1 Samuel 3:9), 4) Solomon, 5) Tiberias, 6) Moses  
 Comments? More Trivia? Gift Ideas? Visit [www.TriviaGuy.com](http://www.TriviaGuy.com).  
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**THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE**

*How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you.*

PSALM 128:1-3

Detail of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper version of "The Veteran in a New Field" by Winslow Homer (1867)



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## Texas State Rep. Sam Harless credits Lone Star College for starting close and going far

HOUSTON (Dec. 15) – Lone Star College prepares students to enter various industries such as education, health care, technology and politics.

After graduating from Spring High School in 1981, Sam Harless, Texas Representative District 126, attended Lone Star College while he figured out his next move.

“I was working and just wasn’t ready to jump into a big university environment,” said Harless. “Lone Star College offered me an opportunity to settle into academics at my own pace.”

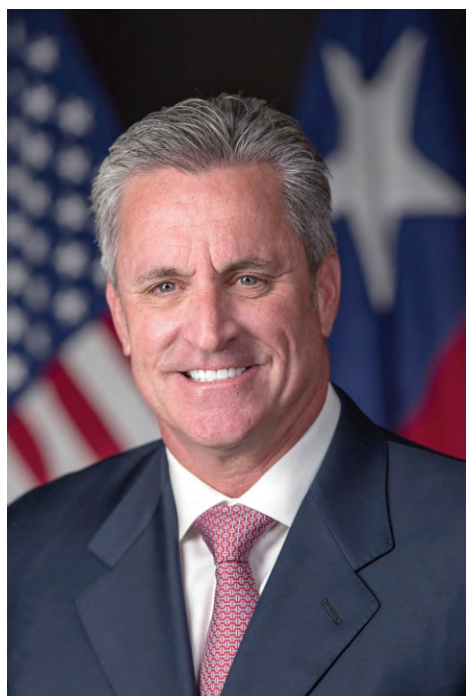
Harless attended what is now known as LSC-North Harris and LSC-Tomball. He enrolled in general classes, such as English, and courses that deepened his interest in politics and business. He learned how to socialize with others and become acclimated to a large educational environment while at LSC. Additionally, as the owner of Fred Fincher Motors, a second-generation independent automobile dealership and several other small businesses, Harless credits his success to his LSC education.

“Lone Star College is a great place for many young people to get their feet on the ground academically,” said Harless. “Not everyone is cut out for the high pressures and expenses that come with big universities. Not all students are fully socialized; some come from small, rural or private schools, and small campus environments, like Lone Star College, seem more like a community.”

Harless was elected to the Texas Houston of Representatives District 126 in 2018. He serves on two committees: Homeland Security and Public Safety and State Affairs. At the end of the 87th Texas Legislature, Harless was directly involved with 134 pieces of legislation.

“I have been in and around political figures and have always been intrigued in helping my community,” said Harless. “I get a great satisfaction in helping constituents regardless of if their issues are simple or mundane; it’s important to them,” said Harless.

After LSC, Harless attended Sam Houston State University. He current-



**Sam Harless, Texas State Representative District 126, started his college career at Lone Star College in 1981.**

ly sits on the Lone Star College Community Advisory Board, the Harris County Constable Precinct 4 Training Advisory Board and the Harris County Sheriff’s Training Advisory Board. Harless is married to Patricia, a former Texas State Representative for District 126 from 2007-2016, and they have one son.

Lone Star College enrolls over 80,000 students each semester providing high-quality, low-cost academic transfer and career training education. LSC is training tomorrow’s workforce today and redefining the community college experience to support student success. Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., serves as chancellor of LSC, the largest institution of higher education in the Houston area and has been named a 2022 Great Colleges to Work For® institution by the Chronicle of Higher Education, ranked 35th in Texas in the Forbes ‘America’s Best Employers By State’ list and recognized by Fortune Magazine and Great Place To Work® as one of this year’s Best Workplaces in Texas™. LSC consists of eight colleges, seven centers, eight Workforce Centers of Excellence and Lone Star Corporate College. To learn more, visit LoneStar.edu.

## Ermel Elementary Makes a Slam Dunk with New Basketball Court



By Luke Rabalais

Alma Maldonado, president of the Ermel Elementary PTO and mother of three Ermel students, knew that an empty asphalt pad behind Ermel had some potential.

After hearing that Bimbo Bakeries donated basketball goals and a paint job to Smith Elementary through their Good Neighbor program, she reached out. Alma was thrilled when Bimbo replied that they were on board and that Ermel would also be getting a basketball court in two weeks time.

The students and teachers at Ermel were overjoyed when Bimbo Bakeries vis-

ited to cut the ribbon on the new court, students said they couldn’t wait to start shooting hoops. Students also said “I want Gansito!” and “Takis, takis, takis, takis...”

Thanks to Alma’s engagement and care, the Ermel community now has brand new basketball goals and a shiny paint job, which will provide endless hours of dunking, H.O.R.S.E., and fun exercise for the students.

Alma is grateful for Bimbo’s generosity, and she knows that the new basketball court will be a valuable resource for the students and teachers at Ermel elementary school.

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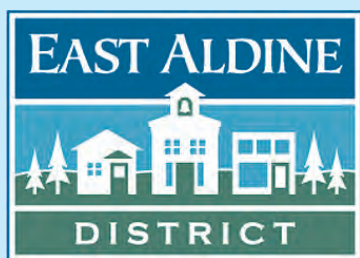



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## East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

# East Aldine Speaks Multiple Languages of Success

Multi-lingual business owners and employees can better problem-solve for a diverse customer base and build rapport in the local community, helping to attract and retain new customers. This situation is especially true in East Aldine, where some 80 percent of the area’s growing population is Latino and most people speak some Spanish.

These factors mean the tight-knit community just north of the Houston city limits provides not only the customer base, but also the employment base, for the success of new businesses.

East Aldine is also conveniently located to commerce hubs where Spanish and many other languages are spoken: Bush International Airport – which attracts travelers from all over the world – and the international Port of Houston. The community also has proximity to a variety of import/export businesses with ties to multiple nations and cultures.

Employees who speak more than one language can help with initial market testing of products and offer cultural insights to improve services. Speaking the same language as customers also helps workers efficiently meet customer needs. It helps customers feel comfortable, builds trust, and is key to customer service.

But bilingual employees can also be good for business in other ways. A Penn State study found that people who speak two languages are better at prioritizing and multi-tasking, two important business skills. Other research has found that people who are bilingual can process information faster than those who speak just one language. They also do better on tasks in which conflict management is necessary.

Business owners can hire bilingual staff or provide or partially fund language training for employees who don’t already speak more than one. For example, Lone Star College in East Aldine offers a wide variety of Spanish classes, including “Speed Spanish,” “Workplace Spanish 1” and “Spanish Conversation 1.”

In the U.S., one in five residents speak a language other than English at home, according to the United States Census Bureau. In Houston, the top languages spoken, in addition to English and Spanish, include Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic and French.

To incorporate more than one language into your business, consider adopting the following strategies:

- Spend time in the community getting to know customers
- Work to better understand your Spanish-speaking customers’ needs and wants by spending time networking along with your bilingual employees in the community or even working with a multicultural marketing consultant. Some businesses then decide to tweak their products—or add new ones—so they can cater to the new multicultural clients they want to attract.
- Make your business website multilingual
- Translate your website into Spanish, too. If you have the funds available, invest in a professional translation service rather than simply using Google Translate, which can often miss nuances, including dialect. Dialect is important. For example, if the majority of your Spanish-speaking customers are from Mexico, it may be better to use terms commonly used by Mexican Spanish speakers as opposed to terms that are more often used in Spain or in Central American countries. Making your website more accessible in this way will drive more traffic to your site, and it could also help to increase sales.

If you can’t hire bilingual staff, tap into free tech

If you don’t have the resources to hire bi- or multilingual staff, an alternative could be to tap into free apps like Google Translate and Apple’s Translate, both of which make use of machine learning to turn mobile and desktop devices into personal translators. There are plenty of translation apps available, so business owners interested in using one with customers may want to test out several to see which would work best for their needs.

Invest in bilingual marketing

As you plan your marketing and community outreach efforts—fliers, billboards, brochures, and even your social media—translate them into Spanish as well. Research shows that consumers respond more favorably to messages they receive in their native language. One survey shows that 65 percent of consumers prefer to have content in their native language, while 75 percent would also rather buy products they learn about through information in their native language.

Communicating in more than one language as a business owner does require some extra leg work, —and often, funds — to invest in new tools, people, technology and strategies. But in the end, for business owners and entrepreneurs who settle in East Aldine, communicating in more than one language will help to fuel your success.

— By Deborah Lynn Blumberg

## Fall Festival

9.1.22



**DIA DE LOS MUERTOS**

Evento Gratis

**Oct 29**

Saturday 11AM-4PM

**EAST ALDINE AMPHITHEATRE**  
2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Dr.  
BRING A BLANKET / CHAIR  
TRAIGA UNA COBIJA / SILLA

HUERTO DE CALABAZAS | MUSICA | DIVERSION | ENTRETENIMIENTO EN VIVO | COMIDA | PASEO EN CARRETA  
MUSIC | FUN | LIVE ENTERTAINMENT | FOOD | HAY RIDE | PUMPKIN PATCH  
SIGNUP TODAY AND NEVER MISS AN EVENT | ¡NUNCA MÁS TE FIANZAS UN EVENTO! | REGÍSTRATE HOY ALDINEDISTRICT.ORG