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# NORTHEAST NEWS



**LION DANCE** at the East Aldine Arts Festival  
Full coverage in Next Week's Northeast News.

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VOL. 47, NO. 18 TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2023 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

## NEWS NOTES

### Aldine ISD Graduation Schedule

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 31**  
Victory ECHS 5:00pm  
MacArthur HS 7:30pm

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1**  
Hall Academy 5:00pm  
Davis HS 7:30pm

**FRIDAY, JUNE 2**  
Nimitz HS 9:00am  
Carver HS 11:30am  
Aldine HS 2:00pm  
Blanson CTE HS 5:00pm

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3**  
Eisenhower HS 9:00am  
Avalos P-Tech 11:30am

All Graduation Ceremonies at M.O. Campbell Center

### TCEQ to hold meeting in East Aldine re: Concrete Batch Plants

From the East Aldine Civic Association:

**IMPORTANT:** East Aldine residents and neighbors, PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND the following meetings:

\*TCEQ Public Hearing on proposed permit amendments for the Yellow Jacket LLC. Concrete Batch Plant located on Hartwick Rd.

**Date: Monday June 12, 2023 Time: 7:00 PM**

Location: East Aldine District Office, 2909 E. Aldine Amphitheatre Dr. Houston TX. 77039

Purpose: This meeting is being held by TCEQ to discuss and allow public input regarding the changes that Yellow Jacket LLC. wants to make on their permit with the state. This is the plant located at 2219 Hartwick Road. Please bring family, friends, and neighbors to share their concerns!

It is very important that you attend these meetings to provide feedback to TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) to voice your concerns regarding the pollution coming from these plants that is affecting our community's health and safety.

### JUNE 16, FRI. Field Trip to the Zoo with Pct. 2

Field Trip FRIDAYS will include a trip to the Houston Zoo on Friday, June 16 from 8 am to 3 pm, leaving from James Driver Park.

Registration starts on Monday, May 1. Call 713-274-2222 for information.

# Aldine ISD celebrates Top 10 scholars

## Superintendent fetes all HS Grads with Ice Cream celebration

BY MIKE KEENEY

Aldine ISD held its fourth annual Superintendent's Top 10 Scholars Celebration on Thursday, May 11 at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center.

The event is held annually to recognize the Top 10 scholars at each of the district's 10 high schools.

The Top 10 students were treated to ice cream and received medals to signify their standing as the top academic achievers at their respective high schools.

The students were also given the chance to share with the audience what college or university they will attend and what they will major in. This group of Aldine seniors have been accepted to John Hopkins, Harvard, Yale, the University of Michigan, Boston College, the University of Texas, Texas A&M University the University of Houston and many other prestigious institutions of higher learning.

Chief of Staff Sheleah Reed delivered the welcome and congratulated the seniors for their hard work to reach Top 10 status in their respective classes.

"This is truly a special event, and I am so excited that we can gather to cele-



The Top 10 seniors from MacArthur High School pose with the medals they received at the Superintendent's Top 10 Scholars Celebration on Thursday, May 11 at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center. Pictured with the students are MacArthur Ninth Principal Yule Everline, left, and MacArthur High School Principal Shauna Showers.

brate the academic accomplishments of our outstanding scholars," Reed said. "Graduation is right around the corner, and a new journey is about to begin. It's a big deal to receive the rank of 1-10. You've worked hard to get here. Continue to reach for the stars as you embark on your collegiate careers. Keep the work ethic that earned you this recognition here today."

Reed then introduced the key note speaker, Blanca Soto. Soto is a grad-



**BLANCA SOTO**  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

uate of Aldine High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in environmental design from Texas A&M University and her Masters of Architecture from the University of Houston. She currently serves as a project manager at PBK Architects, a Houston-based firm specializing in designing educational facilities. She is also a licensed architect in the State of Texas.

Soto shared with the students her story of her journey that took her to

where she is today.

She knew at the age of 12 that she wanted to be an architect.

Soto was born in Mexico and at the age of one, she and her family immigrated to Houston with few resources, with two small children, unaccustomed to the language, but her parents were determined to provide a good life for her and her sibling.

"Because of my parents struggles, I think I had to grow up a little faster," she said. "My humble beginnings really made me understand that just being in this country is a blessing in itself. I understood from a young age that I really needed to take advantage of the opportunities that came my way and advantage of all the help that was offered."

Soto challenged the Top 10 scholars to continue to work hard and take advantages of opportunities when they are presented to them.

"There is no straight path toward success," Soto said. "Everyone has their own path and their timeline. A&M was no easy walk in the park. I went to school with people way smarter than me, with people who had more cultural

Continued. See Top 10 Graduates, Page 5

## ALDINE NATIVE Griner resumes play with WNBA team

### After Russian Incarceration

LOS ANGELES — Brittney Griner, native of Aldine and a graduate of Nimitz High School, played her first regulation WNBA for the Phoenix Mercury last Friday night. She had 18 points, six rebounds and four blocked shots Friday night in her first WNBA regular-season game since being jailed in Russia. Her Phoenix Mercury lost to the Los Angeles Sparks 94-71 in the teams' opener.

Griner made an immediate impact. She fired a pass to Moriah Jefferson, who hit a 3-pointer for Phoenix's first basket. Griner grabbed a couple of rebounds and scored twice in helping the Mercury to an early lead.

"How good did she just look? Unbelievable," WNBA commissioner Cathy Engelbert told reporters at halftime, when the Sparks led 45-39.

Griner played 25 minutes and spent the last several on the bench with the Mercury getting routed.



**BRITTNEY GRINER**  
Phoenix Mercury WNBA

Brittney Griner says she won't play overseas now, except for the Olympics.

For the first time since last season, Phoenix coach Vanessa Nygaard opened her pregame comments without announcing how many days Griner had been jailed. Griner has been free since December when she was part of a high-profile prisoner swap.

"Until the day we got the news in the morning that she was on her way home, no one thought that it was going to happen," Nygaard said. "We did our jobs prob-

Continued on Page 2. See Griner plays with WNBA team.

## Almendarez bill passes Legislature unanimously

HARRIS COUNTY— The Texas State House unanimously passed Senate Bill 224 known as the "Deputy Darren Almendarez Act," authored by State Senator Carol Alvarado. The bill garnered strong bipartisan support in both chambers of the legislature.

SB 224 was filed in response to rising crime related to catalytic converter theft across Harris County and the State of Texas. The bill is named after Deputy Darren Almendarez, husband of Aldine resident Flor Zarzoza Almendarez, who was killed when he interrupted thieves attempting to steal the catalytic converter from their personal vehicle at a grocery store on FM1960 one year ago.

SB 224 puts in place a comprehensive criminal and regulatory framework by creating a presumption of unauthorized criminal possession, new criminal offenses in the theft and criminal mischief statutes and a penalty enhancement if the thief was in possession of a firearm. The bill also incorporates regulatory provisions to close the business-to-business loophole by clarifying who can buy and sell catalytic converters and requiring record keeping of transactions between businesses.

"Texans should not have to be constantly looking over their shoulder in fear of would-be catalytic converter thieves," said Senator Alvarado. "Now that the Deputy Darren Almendarez Act is on its



**Flor Zarzoza Almendarez testified before the Legislature after the murder of her husband.**

way to becoming law it will send the message that if you mess with Texans, you will be held accountable. I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers for their help in its passage."

"Catalytic converter theft will be comprehensively addressed by this bill and more Texans will be safe because of it," said Representative Jeff Leach, Chair of the House Committee on Judiciary & Civ-

Continued on Page 2. See Almendarez bill passes.

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# COMMUNITY WATCH

## Fatal Motorcycle Crash at 5800 Little York Road

Houston police are investigating a fatal crash at 5800 Little York Road that occurred about 10:05 p.m. on Tuesday (May 2).

The identity of the deceased male, 24, is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division Sergeant D. Rose and Officer K. Hines reported:

The male was operating a teal Suzuki GSX-R600 motorcycle at a high rate of speed westbound on Maple Leaf Street and was approaching the intersection of Little York Road as a black Mercedes GLA was traveling eastbound on Little York and turned north onto Maple Leaf. The motorcycle operator (victim) put the bike down, slid into the intersection and struck the right rear side of the Mercedes.

The male was pronounced deceased at the scene by responding Houston Fire Department paramedics. The male driver, 21, of the Mercedes, who remained at the scene, was determined not to be impaired and was questioned and released. None of the occupants of the Mercedes suffered serious injuries.

The investigation is continuing.

## House Fire on Wellman Road

ALDINE – Houston Fire Department reports a House fire on May 2, 2023 at 12:15 a.m.

The house was located in the 14900 block of Wellman, 77060.

There were No reported injuries. The HFD reported \$76,000 in estimated damage.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, but noted that the house was not occupied, and seemed to be abandoned.

Firefighters arrived on scene within seven minutes to find heavy fire coming from the

roof of a small 1-story home. They made an attack and extinguished the fire. The home was abandoned with no electricity and HFD Arson investigators were requested to determine the cause and origin of the fire. Crews from Stations 84, 15, 31, 64, 58, 67, 74 and 30 responded to this incident.

## Almendarez bill passes, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

il Jurisprudence. "I am proud to have worked with Senator Alvarado by sponsoring this bill in the House and look forward to it becoming law."

"Texans can rest assured that anyone who engages in catalytic converter theft will face serious punishment," said Dean John Whitmire, Chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice. "I am honored to have joint-authored this important legislation."

"I have estimated catalytic converter theft to cost Texans well over \$100 million annually, and that's why legislators of both parties have come together to pass this legislation protecting Texans from this crime," said Chairman Paul Bettencourt. "I look forward to SB 224 becoming law and appreciate the opportunity to have worked with Senator Alvarado."

SB 224 now heads to Governor Greg Abbott's desk, taking immediate effect after its signing.

## Griner plays with Phoenix team, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ably with less joy than professional athletes do. It was heavy every day."

Not anymore. "Today is a day of joy," Nygaard said. "An amazing, amazing thing has happened."

Griner and the Mercury were greeted with a standing ovation when they came on court for pregame warmups, although the biggest cheers were reserved for the Sparks.

Griner hugged Vice President Kamala Harris and first gentleman Doug Emhoff as they left the court after Harris was presented with a No. 49 Sparks jersey. Earlier, Harris posed for photos in the Mercury's locker room.

Griner scored 10 points in 17 minutes in an exhibition loss to the Sparks last week. It was the 32-year-old center's first game action since she was arrested at a Moscow airport in February 2022 after Russian authorities said a search of her luggage revealed vape cartridges containing cannabis oil.

"We brought back this Black, gay woman from a Russian jail and America did that because they valued her and she's a female athlete and they valued her," Nygaard said.

"Just to be part of a group that values people at that level, it makes me very proud to be an American. Maybe there's other people that that doesn't make them proud, but for me, I see BG and I see hope and I see the future and I have young children and it makes me really hopeful about our country," the coach said.

Fans arriving early to Crypto.com Arena wore T-shirts with Griner's name and jersey number on them. The 6-foot-9 Griner stopped to photo-bomb a group of young girls posing courtside before the

game. Billie Jean King and wife Ilana Kloss, who are part-owners of the Sparks, were on hand for the opener, as was Magic Johnson, Pau Gasol, Byron Scott, Robert Horry, Los Angeles Lakers coach Darvin Ham and South Carolina women's coach Dawn Staley.

Since her release, Griner has used her platform to advocate for other Americans being detained abroad. She was already an LGBTQ+ activist since publicly coming out in 2013.

"She stands for so many people, so many different kind of people who can be undervalued in our society," Nygaard said. "She stands with pride and confidence and has never once has shied away from who she is."

Griner announced in April that she is working with Bring Our Families Home, a campaign formed last year by the family members of American hostages and wrongful detainees held overseas. She said her team has been in contact with the family of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is being detained in Russia on espionage charges.

"She's an amazing person on and off the court," Phoenix guard Moriah Jefferson said. "I think her energy just inspires everybody every single day to show up and be the best version of themselves."

With all that has happened off the court, it's easy to forget Griner had arguably her best season in 2021. She finished second in the MVP voting after averaging 20.5 points, 9.5 rebounds and nearly two blocks per game. She was a major reason the Mercury reached the WNBA Finals before losing to the Chicago Sky.

## "Pops with Cops" at Westfield Fire Department and HCSO

East Aldine District 2d · 3 "Pops with Cops" at Westfield Fire Department this month had an amazing turn out with the firefighters hosting an open house and Harris County Sheriff's Office giving out car seats and baby formula! The East Aldine District was so proud to play a part in this great event. Thank you to Sgt. Terry Garza for sharing these photos!



## Harris County increases Homestead exemption

New exemption for Seniors and Disabled raised to \$275K; 3rd time Garcia has saved homeowners' money

Harris County — During the May 16 Commissioners Court, Commissioner Adrian Garcia led an effort to increase the homestead exemption for seniors and disabled homeowners. The measure, which passed unanimously, means seniors and homeowners with disabilities who qualify for the exemption may take an additional \$25,000 (\$275,000 total) off the appraised value of their homes. The move would provide an average savings

of about \$130 per year.

A longtime champion for taxpayer relief, Commissioner Garcia has repeatedly looked for ways to reduce the burden of property taxes for families. Back in 2020, Garcia proposed the first increase in the homestead exemption since 2008.

"Once again, we deliver real savings to people desperate for help. This latest increase of the exemption should help negate the im-

part of rising appraisal values on families across Harris County," said Commissioner Adrian Garcia, "I'm proud to have helped put money back into the pockets of hard-working families."

Should the Texas Legislature raise the maximum amount available for homestead exemptions, Commissioner Garcia plans to bring an item to Commissioners Court to increase it in Harris County as well.

## AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

The Aldine Branch Library will be closed on the following days and times for Memorial Day: **Friday, May 26 we will close at 5pm, Saturday, May 27 and Monday, May 29 we will be closed. We will re-open Tuesday, May 30 at 10am.**

May is **Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month!** Join us for **Monday Movie Matinees** to celebrate the culture! **Mondays at 2pm in May.**

**Pokémon** are hiding in the library. Find them all to get a prize! Each Pokémon will have fun facts about **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.** This activity will be available **all month long.**

**BILINGUAL STORY TIME** Join us in the library for story time in English and Spanish **Tuesdays at 11:00am!**

**KIDS CLUB** Kids from 3rd to 5th grade, come for DA-

**CAMERA** The Science of Sound, a special STEM program! **Wednesday, May 24, 4:30pm.** Students dive into sound energy and how it works with musical instruments, concluding with a series of lab stations dealing with vibration.

**TEEN THURSDAY** Teen Thursdays at Aldine Branch Library are a fun, safe environment for teens ages (12-18) to hang out after school! Join us as we play games, watch anime, and hang out! **Thursday, May 18 3:30 - 5:30pm.**

**COMPUTER CLASSES** We have computer classes in Spanish and in English, online and in-person. If you want to participate, register online at: <https://forms.office.com/r/rTQyUGd1Yy>

**Wednesdays: Office 365 & Google Apps**, (English, Online), 5-7pm  
**Thursdays: Office 365 & Google Apps** (Spanish, in person), 5-7pm

**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, photos, copies, and required people present with them.

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

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# SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

## Message From the Superintendent, May 19, 2023

Hello Aldine Community!  
SCHOOL FUNDING

We are rockin' and rollin' in May, and with less than two weeks to go before June, everyone is working hard to finish the fourth quarter strong! The work that we are doing as public school educators is amazing, and we must do what we can to ensure we receive the funds we need. School superintendents across the state, including myself, are advocating against vouchers. The bottom line is simple — school vouchers take funds that should go to public schools, hurting public school students. Thank you to our friends at Just Fund It TX, Pastors for Children, the Texas Legislative Equity Coalition, Friends of Texas Public Schools, Texas Council of Women School Executives, and everyone supporting Texas public schools.

Our friends at Raise Your Hand Texas created a document to address the school funding shortage. You can send a respectful message in just 15 seconds! Please support public schools before the 88th biennial Texas Legislature ends at the end of May. ALL THE BUZZ THIS MAY

If you follow us on social media or our district website, you know there's a lot going on in Aldine before we wrap up for summer. Make sure to catch up on all the Latest Aldine News. Here are a few highlights from around the district:

\*We celebrated the Top 10 Scholars from each high school

\*Day of Design, a STEM-focused event, had over 500 students participants

\*Stephens Elementary School students received first place for the most Outstanding Upper Elementary Choir Performance at the Children's Music Invitational

\*Choice Schools hosted a collaborative student art show at Baker-Ripley-East



Campus Advanced Academics announced that we identified over 500 new gifted and talented students

\*330 high school seniors are receiving the Seal of Biliteracy graduation cord

\*We celebrated students on their math and reading achievements

\*Students and mothers shared experiences in our Newcomer Empowerment Initiative

\*Carver High School's theater brought home seven Tommy Tune Awards

\*We held our Partners of Excellence meeting and recognized several churches for opening their doors to Aldine ISD. We also presented certificates to faith-based leaders who supported Aldine throughout the school year.

\*The nonprofit organization Children at Risk recognized

\*Aldine ISD as the top district in Texas for exemplary high standards for serving wholesome meals to all students. AISD Partners to Commemorate Houston Loves Teachers Campaign

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Thank you to everyone that attended our final two Community Meetings at MacArthur High School and Nimitz High School.

We had great turnouts, which shows how engaged and how much our communities care about what is happening in our schools. And loved getting to talk with students and families.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

\*May 20: Aldine ISD Police to host an event to paint catalytic converters. Click here for details.

\*May 20: Workshop for Families of Emergent Bilingual Students in Grades PreK-2. (Details)

\*May 22-26: Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month — Celebrate by listening to podcasts. Click here for options.

\*Now-June 1: AISD is applying to receive its share of ARP ESSER III (ESSER III) funding as determined by the Texas Education Agency. Aldine ISD seeks feedback from all district and community stakeholders to help determine how the district should best utilize these resources.

\*July 19: Aldine ISD to host a Virtual Job Fair.

\*September 20: Aldine ISD to host a Virtual Job Fair

REMINDERS FOR FAMILIES

\*Outside food and beverages are prohibited on all secondary school campuses (middle, ninth-grade, and high school campuses) premises. Click here for details.

\*Backpacks are prohibited on all middle school campuses for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.

\*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/health-alerts](http://www.aldineisd.org/health-alerts).

With Aldine Pride! Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney Superintendent of Schools Aldine ISD

## Class of 2023 Graduation Schedule

Wednesday May 31	Victory Early College High School	5:00 p.m.
	MacArthur High School	7:30 p.m.
Thursday June 1	Hall Success Academy	5:00 p.m.
	Davis High School	7:30 p.m.
Friday June 2	Nimitz High School	9:00 a.m.
	Carver High School	11:30 a.m.
	Aldine High School	2:00 p.m.
	Blanson CTE High School	5:00 p.m.
Saturday June 3	Eisenhower High School	9:00 a.m.
	Avalos P-TECH School	11:30 a.m.

## The Journey of the Social and Emotional Learning Department in Aldine ISD

The Aldine Social and Emotional Learning and Culture Department, established just three years ago, has quickly become an integral part of the Aldine community. This department's mission is to provide sustainable campus support for students, staff, and parents, focusing on interventions in varying intensities based on student needs and advocating for mental health services. The Aldine SEL department is committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment that fosters academic success and personal growth for all students and staff. Through its innovative and comprehensive approach, this department is positively impacting the lives of many in the Aldine community.

Dr. Marcie Strahan, Executive Director, emphasized ensuring all students feel safe, engaged, and ready to learn in Aldine. "We want to integrate the use of SEL practices throughout the student experience and develop a culture of belonging by building relationships between students and staff," said Dr. Strahan.

To capture this, the SEL department has implemented a strategic success plan that is used as a guideline for its vision: Well-supported students in need, highly trained and effective staff, teacher and staff wellbeing, and tailored community support. Led by Dr. Strahan, the SEL department is small in numbers but strong in productivity.

Establishing student ownership is a significant focus of the SEL and Teaching and Learning departments, and for good reason. Recent data revealed that only 35 percent of observed classrooms demonstrate effective practices and successful student ownership implementation. To address this issue, the SEL department has launched an initiative in collaboration with T&L to provide support from the district level to the classroom on creating safe learning spaces for students. By doing so, the department hopes to lay the groundwork for student ownership and encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning. Additionally, one of the critical goals of this initiative is to have a 5 percent reduction in behavior events by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year. Through these efforts, the Aldine SEL department is working to empower students and create a more positive and effective learning environment for all.



### The Big Picture:

Lauren Robinson, Licensed Mental Health Professional, understands the importance of looking at the whole child, while laying the groundwork for success. "It's important to create a pathway for the students to learn and recognize where the issues are stemming from. Sometimes students are doing things, and do not know why they are doing it. Home and school are playing a part in their personal success."

Sharon Davis, Specialist, believes "changing the campus culture" is step one. Davis said, "Changing campus culture can help students find different ways to express themselves comfortably. Establishing a safe environment by creating a small community." This includes the practice of personal behavioral charts, making them incentive-based and easily recognizable for the student, and the use of restorative circles, where students can be open and honest about their perspectives regarding a conflict in their behavior.

One of the challenges the department faces is providing proper follow up intervention and assessment services to students previously identified in crisis due to the amount of initial crisis calls received. One of the SEL department's initiatives is to expand campus-based crisis support by providing Mental Health First Aid training to campus support staff, counselors, and administrators. This initiative aims to increase the support students receive from the staff at the campus level and reduce the overall number of crisis calls by 10 percent by June 2024. By prioritizing highly trained and effective staff and expanding campus-based crisis support, the Aldine SEL department is working to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.



Jerlene Gibbs, Specialist, has emphasized the department's work to partner with campus leaders to support teachers at the campus level by advocating for mental health moments. "The teachers and their wellbeing are just as important as the students," said Gibbs. "Some campuses have implemented incentives such as "Walk it Out Wednesdays" for teachers which highlights their sacrifices. In addition, some campuses provide lunches, massages, and utilize faculty calming rooms to build better campus culture and encourage teachers to take a mental break." The SEL department also advocates for adult mental health by encouraging staff members to utilize the district's Employee Assistance Program, which offers many services that benefit teachers and staff, including counseling.

In conclusion, Aldine ISD is taking important steps to provide tailored support for the Aldine community by increasing the uptake of SEL resources that reflect the community's diversities. By partnering with wrap-around service providers, the district is able to offer a range of support options including individual and group sessions, professional and community behavioral health services, and medication management. Through these efforts, Aldine ISD is not only promoting the social and emotional well-being of its students but is also supporting families in a way that is culturally aware and responsive to their unique needs. As the district continues to prioritize social emotional learning, we can expect to see even more positive outcomes for the Aldine community in the years to come.

## AISD Wraps Up its 'Painting with a Purpose'



Wednesday, May 3, Aldine ISD's Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department held its final Painting with a Purpose session at Teague Middle School. These sessions are part of the initiatives FACE implements to provide activities for students and their families.

The events were held at Cypresswood Elementary, Raymond Elementary, Caraway Elementary and Teague Middle School, with over 100 families participating throughout all of the sessions. Much like all of FACE's events, the sessions were free and open to all families of the district.

"Providing opportunities for our families to spend time together and have a more personable relationship with the district their children attend



is something that we strive to do," said FACE's Executive Director, Dr. Martha Escalante. "What better way to do it than through the arts!"

FACE plans events for the families of the district

throughout the year. If you would like to stay updated on when Painting with a Purpose will return, or the various other events FACE offers, and how you can join

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By Texas Department of Transportation

More people are dying in Motorcycle crashes in Texas

AUSTIN – As motorcycle fatalities continue to rise and the spring weather draws more riders to Texas roadways, TxDOT is urging drivers to look twice and be considerate on the road around motorcycle riders.

Amy Jo Miller was enjoying a ride on the back of her boyfriend's motorcycle in Bell County when an inattentive driver turned left in front of them, hitting the bike and throwing her across the road.

Amy Jo, now 49, is just one of thousands of Texas motorcyclists seriously injured—or worse, killed—in crashes every year. In 2022, 562 motorcycle riders were killed in motor vehicle crashes, an 8% increase over the previous year.

“People on motorcycles are more vulnerable on our roadways,” said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. “It’s important for drivers to pay extra attention and look out for motorcycles — especially at intersections, when turning in front of oncoming traffic and while changing lanes. We all want to get home safe.”

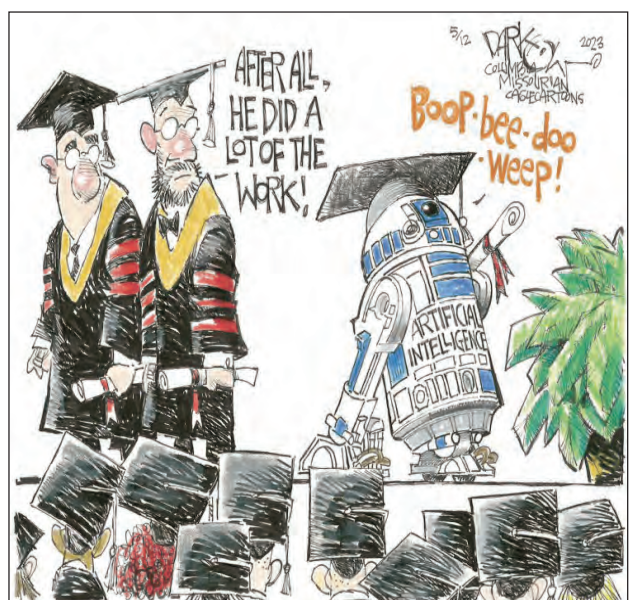
In addition to National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, TxDOT's annual safety campaign “Share the Road: Look Twice for Motorcycles” also aims to protect motorcyclists by educating drivers on how to safely share the road. Below are safety precautions all motorists should keep in mind to help prevent motorcycle crashes:

- Stay alert. Give driving your full attention. Even a momentary distraction, such as answering a phone call or changing the radio station, can have deadly consequences.
• Pay special attention at intersections. One-third of all motorcycle fatalities happen at roadway intersections.
• Take extra care when making a left turn. Always assume motorcycles are closer than they appear and avoid turning in front of an oncoming motorcycle.
• Look twice when changing lanes. Check mirrors, check blind spots, and always use turn signals.
• Give motorcyclists room when passing them. Move over to the passing lane and don't crowd the motorcyclist's full lane.
• Stay back. If you're behind a motorcycle, always maintain a safe following distance. When a motorcyclist downshifts, it can catch drivers off guard since there are no brake lights to signal reduced speed.
• Slow down. Obey posted speed limits and drive according to conditions.

To help drivers fully understand the importance of driving safely and the dangers motorcycle riders face, TxDOT is taking its “Share the Road: Look Twice for Motorcycles” campaign exhibit on the road during National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. The exhibit will feature a virtual reality component that gives participants the opportunity to experience high-risk traffic situations from the perspective of both a driver and a motorcyclist.

TxDOT's “Share the Road: Look Twice for Motorcycles” campaign is a key component of #EndTheStreakTX, a broader social media and word-of-mouth effort that encourages drivers to make safer choices while behind the wheel to help end the streak of daily deaths. Nov. 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

House Lawmakers Defy Abbott on Vouchers

A key House education committee adjourned last week without voting on a school voucher bill that is Gov. Greg Abbott's top priority this session, the Houston Chronicle reported.

The Senate had approved a bill that would provide Texas families \$8,000 in taxpayer money to fund private or charter school tuition. The House narrowed the scope so that it would only apply to students with disabilities or those attending schools with a failing grade issued by the Texas Education Agency — an estimated 800,000 students.

State Rep. Brad Buckley, R-Killeen, chair of the House Public Education Committee, said he doesn't plan to call a vote on the measure. Abbott has threatened to veto the House version or call a special session if the House does not approve the Senate version.

Opponents of the voucher system say it would take money away from public education. “These voucher proposals have been brought before — in 1957. A tuition grant bill was passed through the House. It failed ultimately, but it was to allow kids to leave integrated schools and join white-only schools,” state Rep. James Talario, D-Round Rock, said.

BILLS FAVORING NATURAL GAS POWER PLANTS ADVANCE

A Texas House committee voted Thursday to send to the House floor a Senate bill providing \$10 billion in taxpayer money for low-interest loans to build natural gas-powered electrical generating plants. The plan is still subject to change in the waning days of the legislative session, however.

The Dallas Morning News reported the call for plant expansions stem from the near collapse of the power grid during the devastating winter storm in 2021. Hundreds of Texans died during that blackout.

State Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi, and chair of the House State Affairs



Committee that is considering the bills, said the \$10 billion loan fund and other power generation measures remain “works in progress.” The legislative session ends May 29.

HOUSE, SENATE CLOSER ON TAX RELIEF PLAN

The Texas House and Senate appear to be nearing a deal that would deliver billions of dollars in property tax relief, the Austin American-Statesman reported. The proposal combines House Speaker Dade Phelan's preference for cutting appraisal caps by half with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's preference for increasing homestead exemptions.

The Legislature was under a mandate from Abbott and Patrick to return nearly half of the state's \$33 billion budget surplus to taxpayers. The latest measure would lower the appraised value cap from 10% to 5% for all properties. The House version would also raise the state's homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000, with an added \$10,000 exemption for seniors and disabled homeowners. Patrick's original proposal was to raise the exemption to \$70,000.

DRAFT BUDGET BARS TAX DOLLARS FOR PAXTON SETTLEMENT

House and Senate budget negotiators plan to bar using state funds to pay the \$3.3 million whistleblower settlement negotiated by Attorney General Ken Paxton and his former aides, the Statesman reported.

The settlement was reached in February after four former employees of the AG's office sued Paxton, accusing him of bribery and abusing his office. Since that time the four aides were

fired or have resigned. Paxton denied their allegations, but as part of the settlement apologized for calling them “rogue employees.”

Paxton said when the settlement was reached that it would save taxpayer money in the long run by avoiding an expensive court battle.

“I have chosen this path to save taxpayer dollars and ensure my third term as Attorney General is unburdened by unnecessary distractions,” Paxton said in a statement at the time. “This settlement achieves these goals.”

SUSPECTED FUNGAL INFECTIONS LINKED TO MATAMOROS SURGERIES

The Texas Department of State Health Services is sounding the alarm to the public and doctors about suspected cases of fungal meningitis among Texas residents receiving surgery in Matamoros, Mexico — across the border from Brownsville. So far, the investigation has found at least five affected patients, four of whom are now hospitalized and one who died.

The patients traveled from Texas to Matamoros for surgical procedures that involved an epidural anesthetic, which is injected around the spinal column. One of the possible elective procedures conducted under an epidural is liposuction.

“It is very important that people who have recently had medical procedures in Mexico monitor themselves for symptoms of meningitis,” said DSHS Commissioner Jennifer Shuford. “Meningitis, especially when caused by bacteria or fungus, can be a life-threatening illness unless treated promptly.”

Anyone who had surgery involving an epidural in Matamoros this year is advised to contact a doctor, DSHS said in its news release.

MORE THAN \$9 MILLION IN EMS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The state is funding more than \$9 million for 1,500 emergency medical services scholarships. The goal is to expand the state's EMS workforce, especially in underserved and rural areas. The funding comes from legislation passed during the 2021 legislative session.

“This funding to support EMS education opportunities and to increase the workforce will ensure a strong EMS system in Texas,” said Joe Schmider of DSHS. “These scholarships are impacting the current and future emergency care throughout all of Texas.”

Potential EMS students can learn more by going here: dshs.texas.gov/emstexas.

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

“Lukewarm Water”

Yesterday wasn't the best day.

I don't like to complain and, the truth is, I have very little to complain about. Still, yesterday was not the best day.

I woke with a stomachache. I'd gone to bed with a stomachache, and this is not terribly unusual. My mother gets stomachaches, and now my 20-year-old niece is prey to them. Stress and irregular eating set them off, these stomachs of ours, and sometimes they take hours or even days to get sorted out. This one was particularly stubborn and saw me through the night and into the next day. By mid-morning, I realized, unless I was writing about a stomachache, I wasn't likely to get much writing done.

So I thought I'd learn a new program I'd promised myself I'd learn. The young woman on the video assured me that this training was for “absolute beginners,” and I felt reassured. I sat down with my stomachache and started watching.

I had no idea what she was talking about.

It wasn't that she left me behind—I never got on the bus. The bus pulled away and left me standing on the curb. I suddenly felt old. I was an old woman with a stomachache.

Then I heard from my agent. My agent is cheerful and hopeful and loves my book, and she's working hard right now to sell it. She wrote to tell me I got another rejection. She sounded pretty down—for a perpetually upbeat person. She sounded as if we might be running out of people to send my book to. This was depressing news.

That's when I saw the Facebook post.

A friend objected to my recent column where I looked through the stained glass in a church and found color—and reason to be happy. It wasn't realistic, he wrote. Bad things happen, and people like me should acknowledge them. He talked about tornadoes and shootings. He said people like me would go looking for a pony in a pile of horse poop. He wasn't very nice. And I still had a stomachache.

Nothing makes me feel better when I am down than a nice hot bath by candlelight, and it was certainly time for one of those. But the bathtub faucet was not working, and so the hot water filled the tub very slowly—so slowly that, by the time there was enough for a bath, it was lukewarm.

“Oh well!” I said as I hopped in. “A lukewarm bath by candlelight is better than no bath at all.”

That's when the candle fizzled out.

I sat in the lukewarm water in the dark. I still had a stomachache as I mulled over the rejection of my manuscript. I remembered my friend's accusation that I was not realistic. I realized he was right.

But, as I considered the options, I honestly couldn't think of another way to live. Life is short, no matter how long we live. Knowing that my time is short, and my abilities limited, encourages me to do whatever I can with this precious time I have—right now—sitting in lukewarm water. I get a choice about how I wish to feel about all of it, even the stomachache. And I believe (realistic or not) that it is a precious gift to live in this a continually amazing, astonishingly beautiful world.

I feel better today. The sky is still gray. The faucet is still broken. There is still no word on my book. But my stomachache is marginally better. And I am enormously grateful to experience all of it.

Till next time, Carrie

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# Aldine ISD celebrates Top 10 scholars

## Superintendent fetes all HS Grads with Ice Cream celebration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

experience, with students who had generations of college graduates in their family. But that was ok. I just had to keep working hard and at the end of the day I graduated alongside these same students, some of who became friends.

“Today, I am amongst some of the brightest students in Aldine who I know will achieve great things. You all have already heard so many cliches this senior year from your teachers, your parents, your counselors, and unfortunately for y’all, I’m joining the same list. It’s ok to work a little harder than most, it’s ok to fail, it’s ok that sometimes life gets in the way. You all have already achieved the honor of being the Top 10 students in your class. Don’t let it stop there. This achievement is yours. You’ve earned it and I know you will work for a lot more.”

Following Soto’s remarks, Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney delivered remarks of her own letting the Top 10 scholars know this event is one of her favorites of any school year.

She congratulated the Top 10 scholars as being some of Aldine’s “best and

brightest students.”

Dr. Goffney also shared with the scholars the importance of the medals they each received.

“The medal you are wearing now symbolizes your hard work and dedication,” she said. “It reminds me of a quote that I go back to often that has served me well when I need a bit of motivation or just a push in the right direction: ‘Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do.’”

She said she hoped the students will take that quote to heart as they advance in their academic careers.

“You all understand this because you’ve sacrificed many nights doing what you had to do – like all-night study sessions to pass a test or finish a project – to be where you are today. You understand that reaching a goal requires hard work and dedication – and that it isn’t always fun or easy. I’ve been there. I understand. Like you, I was an earnest and hard-working student. My grandparents, Big Mama and Papa, encouraged education and wanted me to work hard so I could go somewhere and do something good with my life and I wanted to make

them proud. In fact, I kept the middle initial “M” for my maiden name, McGowen, as a reminder of the sacrifices and support they gave me as I grew up. A first-generation college student, I was all business, all work, all the time. And thanks to that work ethic, I graduated from Coldspring-Oakhurst at the top of my class. I’ve been there.”

Dr. Goffney also challenged the Top 10 scholars to make the most of their opportunities in college and beyond.

“Make memories. Take advantage of every opportunity to be involved, student government, choir, sports, set. Try it all! And finish. Live your best life and have fun. On behalf of myself, our Board of Trustees, and the administrative team, congratulations on a job well done.”

The Top 10 scholars from each Aldine ISD high school are:

### ALDINE HIGH SCHOOL

- David Villa
- Lauren Bains
- Valerie Castellanos
- Emely Reyes
- Emily Barcenaz
- Jesse Flores
- Maria Gomez
- Melanie Rocha

- Rebecca Cervantes
- Yamilez Cortez

### AVALOS P-TECH HIGH SCHOOL

- Jason Coreas
- Jocelyn Suerte
- Monica Flores
- Terry Hargis
- Chelsea Mendoza
- Kayla Castaneda
- Marilyn Calderon
- Jesus Puento
- Angie Macias
- Christian Flores-Zavala

### BLANSON CTE HIGH SCHOOL

- Ismael Diaz
- Sophia Mari Waterhouse
- Elena Lai
- Vanessa Tapia
- Elisabeth Zapata
- Yahir Pastran
- John Ezekiel Cabalquinto
- Giovanni Cortes
- Delilah Alize Sandoval
- Ana Barbara Navedo Alvarez

### CARVER HIGH SCHOOL

- Ryan Jamyra Randolph
- Eniola Oluwatoyin Awe
- Ryen Kynnedi Nellum
- Julianne Velez
- Mariam Joana Kamara
- Zane Larue Justice
- Skyla Imari Gallow
- Delores Monea Sells
- Miliani Jahmia Huff

- Jessica Alexis Rivas

### DAVIS HIGH SCHOOL

- Tony Dinh
- Calvin Lee
- Jasmine Calderon
- Mariela Bonilla
- Uziel Beltran
- Joselyn Lemus Escamilla
- Leslie Gonzalez-Cisneros
- Jonathan Beltran
- Abner Yanes
- Miranda Hernandez

### EISENHOWER HIGH SCHOOL

- John Nhat Duong
- Mia Dariana Palacios
- Carolina Castro
- Eric David Cardenas
- Sydney Rose Prier
- Michelle Le
- Maritza Cristal Apolarin
- Tahamid Jarif Bhyyinan
- Cathy Nguyen
- Katelyn Leah Reyes

### HALL SUCCESS ACADEMY

- Jasmine Hardwell
- Johanna Sanchez
- Evelyn Zapata
- Conception Nunez
- Yvett Arroyo
- Moriah Davis
- Imzadi Lousteau
- Markus Perez
- Denisse Guerrero
- Jacqueline Arellano Castaneda

### MACARTHUR HIGH SCHOOL

- Karla Duran
- Abeiro San Juan
- Ronnie Leija
- Nadxieli Jimenez Bielma
- Melanie Fabela
- Kaitlin Tello
- Jasmine DeLeon
- Maritza Avellaneda
- Desyree Acosta
- Melissa Avellaneda

### NIMITZ HIGH SCHOOL

- Sarah Tabrez
- Oluwaseyi Pena
- Evelyn Rojas
- Pedro Pereira
- Jennifer Harrington
- Carlos Otolara
- Esmeralda Rodriguez
- Lauren Braxton
- Talyah Thomas
- Madysen Moore

### VICTORY EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

- Yoselyn Rebekah Owolabi
- Nashaly Guadalupe Diaz
- Isabel Kaithlyn Pamfile
- Guadalupe Ledezma
- Andrea Cruz
- Cody C. Vilaiya
- Jonathan Alexander Ortega
- Jonathan Alexander Bush
- Mayowa O.S. Ogunbowale
- David Elias Almanza

# Aldine ISD celebra a los 10 mejores académicos de cada una de sus escuelas secundarias

Aldine ISD celebró su cuarta celebración anual de los 10 mejores académicos del superintendente el jueves 11 de mayo en el Centro Educativo M.O. Campbell.

El evento se lleva a cabo anualmente para reconocer a los 10 mejores académicos en cada una de las 10 escuelas secundarias del distrito.

Los 10 mejores estudiantes fueron agasajados con helado y recibieron medallas para indicar su posición como los mejores estudiantes académicos en sus respectivas escuelas secundarias.

Los estudiantes también tuvieron la oportunidad de compartir con la audiencia a qué colegio o universidad asistirían y en qué se especializarían. Este grupo de estudiantes de último año de Aldine ha sido aceptado en John Hopkins, Harvard, Yale, la Universidad de Michigan, Boston College, la Universidad de Texas, la Universidad de Texas A&M, la Universidad de Houston, Stanford y muchas otras prestigiosas instituciones de educación superior.

La jefa de personal, Sheleah Reed, dio la bienvenida y felicitó a los estudiantes de último año por su arduo trabajo para alcanzar el

estado Top 10 en sus respectivas clases.

«Este es realmente un evento especial, y estoy muy emocionado de que podamos reunirnos para celebrar los logros académicos de nuestros destacados académicos», dijo Reed. «La graduación está a la vuelta de la esquina y un nuevo viaje está a punto de comenzar. Es un gran acontecimiento recibir la clasificación del 1 al 10. Han trabajado duro para llegar hasta aquí. Continúen alcanzando las estrellas a medida que se embarcan en sus carreras universitarias. Mantengan esa ética de trabajo que les ha valido este reconocimiento hoy aquí».

Reed luego presentó a la oradora principal, Blanca Soto. Soto se graduó de Aldine High School. Obtuvo su licenciatura en diseño ambiental de la Universidad de Texas A&M y su Maestría en Arquitectura de la Universidad de Houston. Es gerente de proyectos en PBK Architects, una firma con sede en Houston que diseña instalaciones educativas. También es arquitecta licenciada en el estado de Texas.

Soto compartió con los estudiantes la historia de su

viaje que la llevó a donde está hoy.

A los 12 años supo que quería ser arquitecta.

Soto nació en México, y a la edad de un año, ella y su familia emigraron a Houston con pocos recursos, con dos niños pequeños no acostumbrados al idioma. Aún así, sus padres estaban decididos a brindarle a ella y a su hermano una buena vida.

«Debido a las luchas de mis padres, creo que tuve que crecer un poco más rápido», dijo. «Mis humildes comienzos me hicieron entender que solo estar en este país es una bendición. Entendí desde muy joven que necesitaba aprovechar las oportunidades que se me presentaban y toda la ayuda ofrecida».

Soto desafió a los 10 mejores académicos a continuar trabajando duro y aprovechar las oportunidades cuando se les presentan.

«No hay un camino recto hacia el éxito», dijo Soto. «Cada uno tiene su propio camino y su línea de tiempo. A&M no fue fácil caminar por el parque. Fui a la escuela con personas mucho más inteligentes que yo, con personas con más experiencia

cultural y estudiantes con generaciones de graduados universitarios en sus familias. Pero eso estaba bien. Solo tenía que seguir trabajando duro, y al final del día, me gradué junto a estos mismos estudiantes, algunos de los cuales se hicieron amigos.

«Hoy, estoy entre algunos de los estudiantes más brillantes de Aldine que sé que lograrán grandes cosas. Todos ustedes ya han escuchado tantos clichés este último año de sus maestros, padres y consejeros; desafortunadamente para todos ustedes, me estoy uniendo a la misma lista. Está bien trabajar un poco más duro que la mayoría; Está bien fallar; Está bien que a veces la vida se interponga en el camino. Todos ustedes ya han logrado el honor de ser los 10 mejores estudiantes de su clase. No dejes que se detenga ahí. Este logro es tuyo. Te lo has ganado y sé que trabajarás por mucho más».

Después de los comentarios de Soto, la Superintendente de Aldine ISD, Dra. LaTonya M. Goffney, pronunció sus propios comentarios, informando a los 10 mejores académicos que este evento es uno de sus favoritos de cualquier año escolar.

Felicitó a los 10 mejores académicos por ser algunos de los «mejores y más brillantes estudiantes» de Aldine.

La Dra. Goffney también compartió con los académicos la importancia de las medallas que cada uno recibió.

«La medalla que llevas ahora simboliza tu arduo trabajo y dedicación», dijo. «Me recuerda una cita a la que vuelvo a menudo y que me ha servido bien cuando necesito un poco de motivación o simplemente un empujón en la dirección correcta: ‘Haz lo que tengas que hacer hasta que puedas hacer lo que quieres hacer’».

Ella dijo que esperaba que los estudiantes tomaran esa cita en serio a medida que avanzan en sus carreras académicas.

«Todos ustedes entienden esto porque han sacrificado muchas noches haciendo lo que tenían que hacer, como sesiones de estudio de toda la noche para aprobar un examen o terminar un proyecto, para estar donde están hoy. Entienden que alcanzar una meta requiere trabajo duro y dedicación, y que no siempre es divertido o

fácil. He estado allí. Entiendo. Al igual que tú, yo era una estudiante seria y trabajadora. Mis abuelos, Big Mama y Papa, alentaron la educación y querían que trabajara duro para poder ir a algún lugar y hacer algo bueno con mi vida, y quería hacerlos sentir orgullosos. Mantuve la inicial «M» del medio por mi apellido de soltera, McGowen, como un recordatorio de sus sacrificios y apoyo a medida que crecía. Una estudiante universitaria de primera generación, yo era todo negocios, todo trabajo, todo el tiempo. Y gracias a esa ética de trabajo, me gradué de Coldspring-Oakhurst como la mejor de mi clase. He estado allí».

La Dra. Goffney también definió a los 10 mejores académicos a aprovechar al máximo sus oportunidades en la universidad y más allá.

«Creen recuerdos. Aprovechen cada oportunidad para participar en el gobierno estudiantil, el coro, los deportes y el conjunto. ¡Prúebenlo todo! Hasta el final. Vivan su mejor vida y diviértanse. Felicitaciones por un trabajo bien hecho en mi nombre, el de nuestro Consejo de Administración y el del equipo administrativo».

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# CHURCH PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

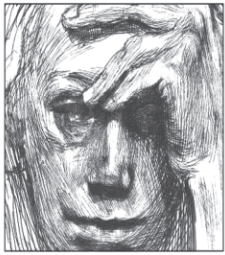
1. Is the book of Lamentations (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. In 1 Timothy 5:23, what did Paul suggest to Timothy for his frequent ailments? Water, Wine, Bread, Honey
3. From Genesis 41:41-42, which Hebrew became prime minister of Egypt? David, Joseph, Nehemiah, Joel
4. Where did Jesus spend his youth as found in Luke 4:16?

Smyrna, Tarsus, Antioch, Nazareth  
 5. Who was stoned to death in the valley of Achor? Abinoam, Achan, Ahilud, Abitub  
 6. Jesus and who else walked on water? Thomas, Andrew, Peter, James

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Wine, 3) Joseph, 4) Nazareth, 5) Achan, 6) Peter (Matthew 14:29)  
 Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy).  
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**THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE**

*The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 2 CHRONICLES 36: 15,16*



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16-2t

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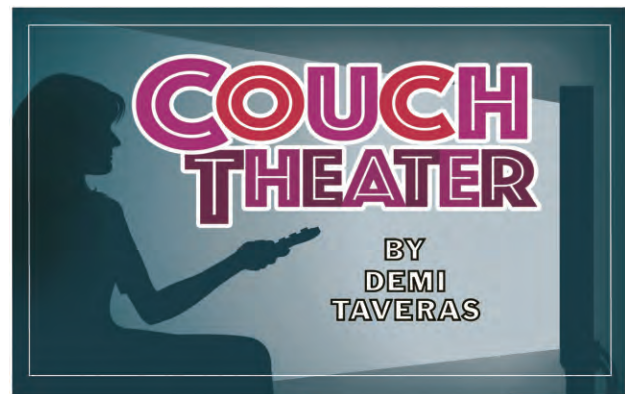
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Monica Barbaro, left, and Arnold Schwarzenegger star as father-daughter CIA agents in the action series "FUBAR."

"FUBAR"

"FUBAR" (TV-MA) — Action movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger has a new spy-adventure series premiering May 25, which is the longtime actor's first leading role in a scripted live-action series. Schwarzenegger plays Luke, a recently retired CIA operative who gets sucked into one last, relatively simple mission. The catch? Well, once Luke arrives on site, he realizes his daughter, Emma (Monica Barbaro), also works for the CIA and that the two have been lying to each other for years. Now, as they take on the mission together in a much different way than they expected, their bond as father and daughter truly starts to form. (Netflix)

"THE SECRETS OF HILLSONG" (NR) — This four-part documentary series releasing May 20 dives into the scandals surrounding the Christian megachurch Hillsong. The Hillsong Church campus established in New York City aimed to draw in millennials and Gen Zers, mostly due to former lead pastor Carl Lentz's efforts. Lentz then went on to become a spiritual advisor to many celebrities, including Justin Bieber, Kendall Jenner and Selena Gomez, before he was dismissed amid an infidelity scandal. This documentary explores the dark-sided atmosphere attached to Hillsong, with serious allegations of sexual abuse and abuses of power from pastors like Lentz. (Hulu)

\*\*\*  
 "PLATONIC" (TV-MA) — The duo who led "Neighbors," Rose Byrne and Seth Rogen, are teaming up again — this time for a comedy series. Byrne and Rogen respectively play Sylvia and Will, a pair of best friends who reconnect after years apart. Sylvia's a family woman now, but Will, who just went through a recent divorce, is in an entirely different stage of his life. So, as their friendship takes off again, the two must find the right balance between Will's shenanigans and Sylvia's family to prove that a man and a woman can maintain a platonic relationship. The first three episodes premiere on May 24, with the rest following on a weekly basis. (AppleTV+)

\*\*\*  
 "THREE THOUSAND YEARS OF LONGING" (R) — During a trip to Istanbul, British scholar Alithea Binnie picks out a random memento at an antique store. Unbeknownst to Alithea, the antique bottle she purchased contains the Djinn, a genie, inside. As the tale often goes, the Djinn offers Alithea three wishes, but first, he tells her the stories of how he ended up in the bottle and the many wishes he's granted before. Because of these stories, Alithea's lonely heart starts to beat again, and she finds immense purpose with the Djinn's sudden appearance in her life. Idris Elba and Tilda Swinton make an odd yet intriguing match in this fantasy-romance film premiering May 23. (Prime Video)

HOLLYWOOD  
 by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Pedro Pascal, who's been called "an overnight sensation" (it only took 27 years) has two streaming series ("The Mandalorian" and "The Last of Us") and two upcoming films. "Drive-Away Dolls" is due in September, and "Strange Way of Life," with Ethan Hawke, will premiere at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival. In addition, Pascal has hit the stratosphere as the lead in the sequel to director Ridley Scott's 2000 megahit, "Gladiator" (which grossed \$460 million and received 12 Oscar nominations, winning five).

However, I'm not sure that Pascal made the right choice wearing Valentino's long, red jacket with a black tie and black shorts at the Met Gala. Google it.



Pedro Pascal

Even before the writer's strike, NBC was making cuts to "Law & Order." The upcoming shows will mostly feature their major leads, and their supporting players will no longer be in every episode.

Over at CBS, 84% of the cast of "Bob Hearts Abishola" are faced with their solution to remove 11 of the 13 leads in the main cast, leaving only Billy Gardell and Polake Olowofoyeku, the two title stars. Among those cut are Christine Ebersole, Matt Jones and Maribeth Monroe. They'll now be recurring in five of the 13 episodes in season five of the series. The good news for them, they were told, is that they've been released from their exclusivity clauses and can now pursue other work. Is that really good news now that the industry has been shut down by the writer's strike?

Billy Gardell, at 53, has lost 160 pounds over three years, by way of gastric bypass surgery. He went from 370 pounds to 210 pounds. The good news is that it ended his diabetes scare.

Since she made her Broadway debut 50 years ago, legend Patti LuPone has

received three Tony Awards for "Evita," "Gypsy" and, most recently, "Company" (in which she stopped the show every night with "The Ladies Who Lunch"), as well as various award nominations for "Sweeney Todd," "Anything Goes" and "War Paint," to name some.

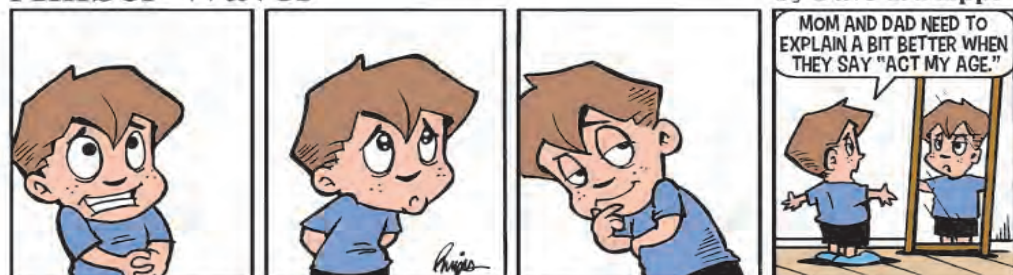
In October 2022, she officially resigned from Actors' Equity (the Broadway stage union), admitting, "When the run of 'Company' ended this past July, I knew I wouldn't be on stage for a very long time." She mentioned telling a producer who offered her a role that she didn't want to do the show on Broadway, opting instead for East Fourth Street. When explaining why she doesn't want to do Broadway anymore, LuPone stated, "Broadway's not turning into a combination of Disney, Las Vegas and the circus. Plays are closing. The education of an audience is in grave danger."

Like it or not ... Vegas is already making book on when she'll be back on Broadway!

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



**Weekly SUDOKU**  
 by Linda Thistle

4	7		5		3			
	5		6		1			
6		2			9			
3		9		5	2			
	6			4	7			
	2		5		8			
8				7	6			
	1		4	3				8
		9		1				2

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ◆  
 ◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging  
 ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆

**HOCUS-FOCUS**  
 BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Shaker is different. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Paper is smaller. 4. String is missing. 5. Sail is different. 6. Log is missing.

May 22, 2023 Posting Date  
**King Crossword**

**ACROSS**

- Beer ingredient
- Adj. modifier
- Taverns
- "The Middle" actress Heaton
- Denny's rival
- Susan of "Dead Man Walking"
- Donated
- Business mag
- Rose and fell on the sea
- Chicago cagers
- Seethe
- God of war
- Adirondack lake
- Martini ingredient
- "Star Wars" baddie
- Pirate's chart
- Arabian nomad
- Minus
- Melodies
- Blitzen's boss
- Two-piece suit
- Jazzy style
- Greek vowels
- Revolutionary War battle
- Hamlet, e.g.
- Stumble on

**DOWN**

- AWOL pursuers
- Bond rating
- USPS delivery
- Nature walks
- Outlet letters
- God, in Roma
- Eighth U.S. president
- London landmark
- Winter coaster
- Thanksgiving veggie
- Section
- Melville captain
- Peregrinate
- Raced
- Hostels
- Sharif of "Funny Girl"
- Purse
- "Topaz" author
- Sultry Horne
- Loses color
- Clerics' robing room
- "So be it"
- Group of actors
- Futile
- Unpaid TV ad
- Elevated
- Portable PC
- Daytime drama
- Hotel furniture
- Slanted type (Abbr.)
- Welles role
- Edge
- Coach
- Parseghian
- Eggs
- Berlin's country (Abbr.)
- Museum display

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

2	7	4	8	1	9	6	3	5
8	5	6	2	3	7	4	9	1
1	3	9	7	6	5	2	8	4
9	4	8	1	5	3	2	7	6
6	7	3	2	8	5	9	1	4
2	1	5	9	7	6	8	4	3
7	6	5	3	7	9	8	1	4
4	8	1	6	9	7	3	5	2
3	6	3	7	8	5	2	6	3

**Answers**

**King Crossword**  
 Solution time: 22 mins.

**Trivia test**  
 by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: What is the name of the high school in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"?
- MOVIES: Who voiced the character Woody in "Toy Story"?
- LITERATURE: Who are the tragic lovers in the novel "Wuthering Heights"?
- AD SLOGANS: Which product invites consumers to "taste the rainbow"?
- FOOD & DRINK: Which root vegetable is known as Japanese horseradish?
- ANATOMY: What substance gives skin its color?
- GEOGRAPHY: Where are the Great Pyramids of Giza located?
- HISTORY: Who was the first female prime minister of Great Britain?
- SCIENCE: What is the hollow, woody tissue that carries water and nutrients from a plant's roots to the entire plant?
- U.S. STATES: Which is the only state that doesn't have a mandatory seat belt law for adults?

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1. Sunnydale High; 2. Tom Hanks; 3. Margaret Thatcher; 4. Skittles; 5. Wasabi; 6. Melamin; 7. Egypt; 8. Margaret Thatcher; 9. Xylem; 10. New Hampshire.

# HCC Child Development program named best among nation's two-year colleges



HOUSTON – Houston Community College's Child Development program has been named the best in the nation among two-year colleges by EduMed.org, an online resource for students seeking higher affordable and flexible education programs.

The EduMed team's first-place ranking is based on research from government data provided by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. EduMed data scientists assigned weights and ranked schools based on a mix of affordability, support services and online program-availability metrics.

"Houston Community College offers two pathways for aspiring professionals in child development: A hybrid associate of applied science and an online certificate in child development administration," EduMed researchers wrote. "Both programs build key knowledge foundations in the care and guidance of young children, and courses completed for the cer-

tificate can be applied to the associate program for those who wish to continue their training."

EdMed noted that courses come in flexible online formats, although the degree program requires some in-person components. The curriculum is comprehensive for both programs, covering topics like creative arts for early childhood, child guidance, introduction to sociology and program administration.

HCC administrators believe the EduMed.org ranking proves HCC Child Development faculty's work is paying off.

"Those of us in the child development program believe we are developing experts in the field of child development, and we do not take this mission lightly," says Saran Winters, M.Ed., chair of HCC's education department. "We believe our program is successful because, as a team, we take the experiences we all once had as students and craft them into making our students successful within their

HCC child development pathways."

The Child Development program is part of HCC's Education Professions Center of Excellence. To learn more: <https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/liberal-arts-humanities/child-development>.

To learn more about the EdMed rankings: <https://www.edumed.org/online-schools/child-development-degrees/#2-year-schools>

**ABOUT HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 14 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country's largest singly accredited, open-admission community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit [hccs.edu](http://hccs.edu).

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- Business Administration
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**Northline Campus** | 8001 Fulton Street | Houston, TX 77022

**North Forest Campus** | 6010 E. Little York Road | Houston, TX 77016

**Northeast Campus** | 555 Community College Drive | Houston, TX 77013

**Automotive Tech. Training Center** | 4638 Airline Drive | Houston, TX 77022

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[hccs.edu](http://hccs.edu)

Scan for steps on how to get started!

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