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NORTHEAST NEWS



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 VOL. 48, NO. 3 TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

65th Annual FFA Livestock Show and Auction set Jan. 24-26

The 65th annual FFA Livestock Show and Auction will be held Jan. 24-26 at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center. On Wednesday, Jan. 24, pig judging will begin at 8 a.m. with the staff swine showmanship show following. At 2 p.m., steer judging will take place. On Thursday, Jan. 25, the horse show will begin at 8 a.m. followed by the poultry show at 9 a.m. and the lamb and goat show at 1 p.m. On Friday, Jan. 26, the Buyer's Luncheon will be held at 11 a.m. followed by the Sale of Champions at 1 p.m. in the MOC Arena. BBO plates will be available Wednesday and Thursday, they can be purchased on site or ordered online for pick up on the Aldine Livestock show website.

County UPLIFT Program now open

Program offers \$500 monthly support for Low Income households

Harris County has opened Applications for the Uplift Harris Guaranteed Income Pilot Program starting Friday, January 12th.

The Pilot Program is to Provide Monthly Cash Support to Eligible Households Struggling with Poverty.

Houston – Harris County community members facing financial hardship can apply for the Uplift Guaranteed Income Pilot Program beginning Friday, January 12, at 9:00 a.m.

The updated application period begins this Friday, January 12, and closes on Friday, February 2, at 11:59 p.m. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing

basis; the program is not first come, first served.

Uplift Harris is made possible by a \$20.5 million grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Harris County Commissioners Court approved the ARPA funding for the program on June 6, 2023.

The initiative, the fifth largest publicly funded cash assistance project in the U.S., will distribute \$500 monthly to over 1,900 eligible households for 18 months. Recipients can use the monthly payments from Uplift Harris to cover essential needs, such as rent, groceries, transportation, housing, utilities, health care, and other necessities.

The program will sup-

port families living below 200% of the federal poverty line, approximately \$60,000 for a family of four. Families can be selected for the program through a randomized process if they live in one of the 10 targeted high-poverty ZIP codes or participate in the ACCESS (Accessing Coordinated Care and Empowering Self Sufficiency) Harris County program.

The target ZIP codes include:

- 77026
- 77028
- 77033
- 77050
- 77051
- 77060
- 77081
- 77091
- 77093
- 77547

Eligible applicants from the target ZIP codes above will be randomly selected for the program.

For more information, including a link to the application and live updates on the program, please visit the Uplift Harris website, Uplift.HarrisCountyTX.gov.

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia has offered this additional information regarding the program:

APPLY TODAY: You

could receive funds through Uplift Harris!

An important community update regarding the Uplift Harris guaranteed income pilot program. Thanks to the federal American Rescue plan Harris County received \$20.5 million dollars that will now be providing financial assistance to low income households in our community! This initiative is working to address the impacts of poverty and health disparity that were intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program aims to provide \$500 in monthly cash assistance, with no strings attached, to select participants over a peri-

Continued. See COUNTY UPLIFT PROGRAM, PAGE 2

County Attorney sues Concrete Plant

Menefee Takes Legal Action Against North Houston Concrete Batch Plant

Houston, Texas — Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee has announced that Harris County is taking legal action against Texcon Ready Mix, a concrete batch plant located in north Houston near the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood and the County's LBJ Hospital.

Harris County Pollution Control found multi-

ple violations over the course of more than a dozen separate inspections, including materials discharged into a nearby drainage ditch.

"This facility clearly violated the Texas Clean Air Act and rules set by the TCEQ. We have given them plenty of opportunity to clean up their act and follow the law, but since they have failed to do so we are taking action," said County Attorney Menefee. "We have to hold these companies ac-

countable for putting the people who work and live nearby at risk. We will not tolerate businesses in our communities failing to meet basic minimum standards when it comes to public health and the environment."

Harris County's lawsuit asks that Texcon Ready Mix keeps pollution capture equipment in good working order, cleans up spills promptly, reduce emissions by paving and treating roads, install a PM moni-

tor on the fenceline, and ensures materials are stored away from property boundaries. Additionally, Harris County is requesting Texcon Ready Mix provide a written report in response to each required improvement.

"We have outlined several next steps that will ensure this facility meets proper standards and is not polluting our air. Hopefully this will serve as notice to other concrete batch plants that we are serious about enforcing

environmental laws here in Harris County," added County Attorney Menefee.

About the Harris County Attorney's Office

Christian D. Menefee serves as the elected, top civil lawyer for Texas' largest county. The Harris County Attorney's Office represents the county in all civil matters including lawsuits. Menefee leads an office of 250 at-

Continued. See CONCRETE PLANT LAWSUIT, PAGE 2

Representative Walle is Speaker at UH Downtown Commencement

On Dec. 16, Rep. Walle served as the commencement speaker for the University of Houston Downtown graduation. A product of the University of Houston system himself, Rep. Walle offered words of wisdom to the graduating class of 2023.

"Because the path to success was long and hard, I became a better person," Rep. Walle said during the address. "And every day I bring the insight gained through my experiences to my work as a public servant"

Walle continued, "I had honor to give a commencement speech to 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students receiving their degrees from University of Houston Downtown.

Having earned two degrees and being a first generation college student I



Walle spoke to several thousand graduates at the Commencement ceremonies at the Berry Center in Cypress on Dec. 16th.

tried to urged graduates to write their own story and persevere.

Walle spoke to those graduating from the Marilyn Davies College of Business and the College of

Public Service.

Texas State Representative Armando Walle, now in his eighth term in the Texas House of Repre-

Continued. See WALLE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER, P.2

KEENEY'S KORNER - Defensive Player of the Year

Armad Bailey's big-play ability lands him NE News Def. Player of Year honors

By Mike Keeney
 Contributing Writer

Armad Bailey may not be the biggest guy on the football field, but he has a penchant for making big plays.

That was evident this season when the Nimitz High School safety intercepted six passes, returned two of those picks for touchdowns and also returned a fumble for a score. He also accounted for 42 tackles to help the Cougars win eight games and earn a second straight trip to the Class 6A playoffs.

Bailey's outstanding play earned him the Northeast News' Defensive Player of the Year Award.

His head coach said the 5-10, 160-pound junior is an instinctive player who has a nose for the football.

"Armad is a ballhawk," Harmon said. "He loves the game of football. His mindset is to attack every day on the practice field and in games. He was a huge player for us. He's a great



Nimitz High School safety Armad Bailey has been named the Northeast News' Defensive Player of the Year for the 2023 season.

player and a great kid."

Bailey is a two-year letterman and Harmon is glad he will be returning for his senior year. Bailey will be one of seven defensive starters back for a

Continued. See KEENEY'S KORNER, Page 5

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County Uplife Progam opens,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

od of 18 months. Applications for this program open January 12th at 9:00 AM and ends on 11:59 p.m. on February 2, 2024.

Eligibility: Applicants must be over the age of 18, reside in Harris County, and have a household income falling below 200% of the federal poverty line. About \$60,000 for a family of 4 or \$29,000 for an individual. Individuals must also live in one of the following zip codes (77026, 77028, 77033, 77050, 77051, 77060, 77081, 77091, 77093, or 77547)

To access the application visit: <https://uplift.harriscountytexas.gov/>

All applications must be submitted online by computer, tablet, or smartphone. All eligibility documents can be uploaded as photos from a tablet or smartphone. There is no paper application. Applicants without access to a computer, tablet, smartphone, and/or the internet are encouraged to visit an application assistance partner to receive help completing their application.

I encourage you to take advantage of this program if you qualify and don't wait to apply!

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Wanted in Stabbing at 412 North Sam Houston Parkway East

NORTHEAST HARRIS COUNTY – Charges have been filed against a suspect wanted in the stabbing of a woman at 412 North Sam Houston Parkway East about 12:10 a.m. on Monday (Jan. 10).



Alize Velosa

The suspect, Alize Velosa, 22, is charged with aggravated assault of a family member in the 486th State District Court. A 2023 booking photo of Velosa, who is not in custody, is attached to this news release.

The victim, 38, was transported to an area hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

HPD Major Assaults and Family Violence Division Detective C. Grahmann reported:

HPD patrol officers responded to the above address and found the victim suffering from multiple lacerations. Houston Fire Department paramedics transported her to the hospital.

Investigators learned the victim and suspect are partners and were involved in a verbal argument that escalated into a stabbing. The suspect fled the scene.

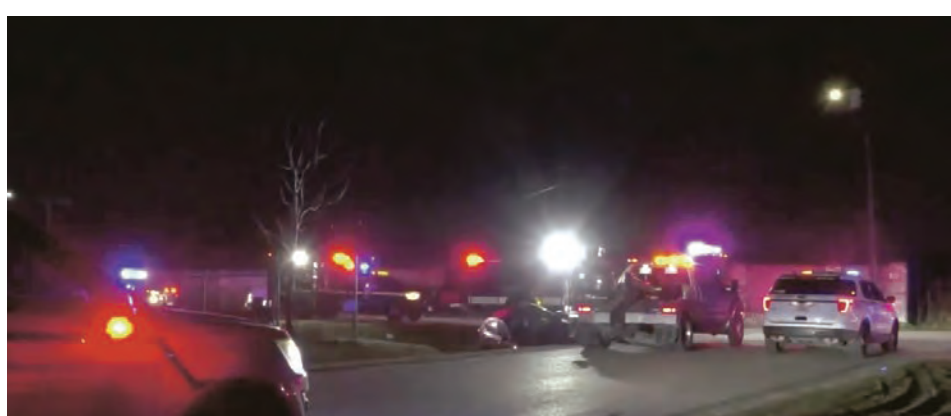
The Harris County District Attorney's Office was consulted and Velosa was subsequently charged for her role in the incident.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Alize Velosa or in this case is urged to contact the HPD Major Assaults & Family Violence Division at 713-308-8800 or speak anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.

Toss it into the can. It's a neat idea.

COMMUNITY WATCH

One teen in critical condition, 3 others injured after shooting at Aldine party



Deputies examine a car on Mooney Road as part of the Teen Shooting incident.

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas – One teenager is in critical condition and three other teens were injured in a shooting in north Harris County on Sunday, according to the Harris County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies received a call about a shooting at a party in the 4400 block of Mooney Road at Symbol Street around 12:30 a.m.

There were about 75

juveniles at the event, and a person later started shooting a gun.

When deputies arrived, they found a 17-year-old, who had been shot in the leg and another who had been shot in the back.

Two other teens arrived at local hospitals with gunshot wounds. There were four victims in total.

One of them is a 19-year-old that is in

critical condition. Two other victims are 17 years old, and a third person is 18 years old. The other teenagers are in fair condition and expected to be OK.

Authorities are still looking for a suspect, who has not been identified. The names of the teens have not been released as well.

If you know anything about the shooting, you should call HCSO art 713-221-6000

Walle UHD Commencement Speaker,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sentatives, grew up in the Aldine community and graduated from MacArthur High School. The oldest of five children raised by a single mother, he was the first in his family to attend and graduate from college. The values and lessons of his humble upbringing inform his legislative priorities, including the health, safety, and economic well-being of Houston's working families, disaster relief, and flood mitigation. Representative Walle serves on multiple committees, including the House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures, the Select Committee on Sustainable Property Tax Relief, the Select Committee on

Health Care Reform, and the House Committee on House Administration. He is also a member of several legislative caucuses, including the Mexican American Legislative Caucus, for which he serves as General Counsel.

Before Representative Walle was elected to the Texas House, he served on the staffs of multiple elected officials, including Congressman Gene Green and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. Now a practicing attorney, Representative Walle earned his bachelor's and law degree from the University of Houston. He remains a staunch supporter of the University of Houston System and an advocate of UHD.

Walle named 2023 Policymaker for Peace

This year, Community Justice named Rep. Armando Walle one of their 2023 Policymakers for Peace for his work protecting the lives of Texans, especially those in communities of color, by fighting for policies that would break the cycle of gun violence.

Rep. Walle was recognized alongside several prominent legislators across the country who are all strong advocates for public safety, including Sen. Raphael Warnock (GA), Rep. Jamaal Bow-

man (NY) and Rep. Sylvia Garcia (TX).

Concrete Plant Lawsuit,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

torneys and staff members. He entered office at 32 years old, making him the youngest person and first African American elected as the Harris County Attorney.

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AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

Bilingual Storytime

You're invited to attend Story Time every Tuesday at 11 am. Story Time is a great way for children to build early literacy skills with stories, rhymes and songs. Parents are encouraged to participate by sitting with children and singing (and learning!) new songs. Children of all ages are welcome!

English Computer Class

Learn computer basics by practicing on our PC's with Instructor Nyla! We will learn about using web browsers, google apps, Microsoft suite, keeping your information safe online, and MUCH more! Join us for a weekly class on **Tuesdays from 11:30am - 12:30pm!**

Basic Computer Class Registration preferred!

*Important- Instructions are in English. Google account is required (Though we can help you make one if you don't have one already)

Class format: In-person, in the computer lab at the Aldine Library.

Aprenda Computers & Tech

Sitio web de la clase
Limited space/ Espacio limitado

Pre-registrese aquí: <https://forms.office.com/r/rTQyUGd1Yy> luego presentarse a la clase para tomar evaluación de nivel.

Martes - 5:00 pm a 6:45 PM: Habilidades Esenciales de computación

(Computer Essential skills class)- Aprenderá a como obtener las habilidades esenciales sobre: Navegación con Windows, navegacion por Internet e interface, tipos de navegadores, consejos de seguridad, correo electrónico e interface, y otros temas relacionados a la tecnología con enfoque para empleos y uso personal en un nivel para principiantes.

Importante: * Se determinará sus nivel de habilidades en uso de tecnología con una evaluación en la computadora durante su primer día de su asistencia. * requerirá una cuenta de gmail.com y outlook.com para acceder a las aplicaciones y programas gratuitos de la internet.

Importante:

Instrucciones son en Español y las aplicaciones (Windows, Office 365, Google apps) son todas en Inglés

Coffee & Conversaion and Crafty Corner - Paint a Tote Bag

Join us for **Crafty Corner** where we will use acrylic paints

acceder a las aplicaciones y programas gratuitos de la internet.

Importante: Instrucciones son en Español y las aplicaciones (Windows, Office 365, Google apps) son todas en Inglés

Adult Anime & Manga

Relax after work or school by hanging out and meeting new friends in the meeting room where we will watch an episode or two of Anime, do a craft, and talk about our favorites! This is a monthly program on the third Tuesday of the month! **Tuesday, Jan. 16, 6:30 - 7:30pm**

Movie & Hot Chocolate

Families and friends, join us as we watch this classic children's movie. Hot chocolate will be provided. **Thursday, Jan. 18, 5-6pm.**

Aprenda Compters & Tech

Sitio web de la clase
Limited space/ Espacio limitado

Pre-registrese aquí: <https://forms.office.com/r/rTQyUGd1Yy> luego presentarse a la clase para tomar evaluación de nivel.

Nivel 2- Intermedio-Jueves- 5:00 pm a 6:45 PM:

Cloud Computing-Google workspace + Office 365 (Spanish computer class) Computación en la nube: Aprenderá sobre los servicios y como usar Google (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms). Como usar: Microsoft Office 365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Además, cubriremos otras aplicaciones como: Canva, Box y otras apps gratuitas. El enfoque general de de las practicas de computación serán para uso en empleos y de uso personal.

Importante:

* Se determinará sus nivel de habilidades en uso de tecnología con una evaluación en la computadora durante su primer día de su asistencia.

* requerirá una cuenta de gmail.com y outlook.com para acceder a las aplicaciones y programas gratuitos de la internet.

Importante: Instrucciones son en Español y las aplicaciones (Windows, Office 365, Google apps) son todas en Inglés

Coffee & Conversaion and Crafty Corner - Paint a Tote Bag

Join us for **Crafty Corner** where we will use acrylic paints

to paint Tote Bags! Take them home! **Coffee & Conversation** will be combined with the craft for those wanting to practice their English conversation skills. Join us and have some fun and make some friends! **Saturday, Jan. 20, 1-2pm.**

Adult Volunteers

Would you like to be a part of making an impact on people's lives? Are you looking for a meaningful way to spend your time? We are looking for adult volunteers to help with tasks and programs at the library as well as volunteers to teach English language classes, citizenship classes, or computer classes in person and virtually. Pick up an application at the Aldine Branch Library, call 832-927-5410, or click here: <https://forms.office.com/r/qSzMSpiaTL>.

Passport Services

Do have plans to travel out of the country for the holidays? You need to get your passport in order NOW! Current routine processing is estimated at 10 weeks and expedited processing time is estimated at 7 weeks. 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 - Appointments required. 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 to be added on the list to be seen. Sign-in starts at 1pm.

Michelle Pichon
Library Program Specialist
Harris County Public Library
Aldine Branch Library
11331 Airline Dr.
Houston, TX 77037
832-927-5410

EAST ALDINE DISTRICT

Take Pride in our Community Keep it Clean

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Aldine ISD Child Nutrition



We kicked off the new year with Conley Elementary this morning for Learn Grow Cook! Students rocked it, harvesting 45+ pounds of garden produce! WOW! In the culinary kitchen, we made kitchen sink soup with many veggies from the garden. It was very healthy and delicious!

Police Chief Cordova Strengthens Community Bonds



Police Chief Cordova making positive connections in the community! Enjoyed a friendly game of chess with our fantastic chess club students in Kujawa. Building bridges and fostering community relationships,

Aldine ISD Offers Free GED and ESL Classes for Parents of Bilingual and ESL Program Students



ALDINE ISD MULTILINGUAL DEPARTMENT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LONE STAR COLLEGE-EAST ALDINE CENTER OFFERS

* CLASS SCHEDULE PENDING
MARCH 19-MAY 9

FREE GED AND ESL CLASSES FOR ALDINE PARENTS

Parents who have a student enrolled in either the bilingual or ESL program in Aldine ISD will be eligible to attend. Classes will be offered weeknights and parents must commit to all sessions offered. Parents will attend classes at the Lone Star College-East Aldine Center.



For more information or to apply visit: <https://forms.gle/KJ4aTCjEras2V2279>

Registration opens Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023. Program organizers will contact eligible parents to schedule their pre-test. Mandatory Orientation on February 2, 2024.



Family Math Night at Black Elementary

Title I, Part A, Family & Community Engagement



Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Time: 5:30-7:00 PM

Place: Black Elementary School

Theme: Level Up! It's Game Time!

Children's Museum Houston Fun Math Activities and Stations

Savory Snacks

Prizes/Raffles



Black Elementary School 160 Mill Stream Ln Houston, TX 77060 (281) 878-0350

2023 - 2024



65th Aldine ISD FFA Livestock Show

Calendar of Events

January 24-26 2024

Wednesday, Jan. 24

Pig 8am

Staff Swine Showmanship
**Immediately following pig show*

Steer 2pm

Thursday, Jan. 25

Horse 8am

Poultry 9am

Lamb & Goat 1pm

Friday, Jan. 26

Buyers Luncheon 11:00am

Sale of Champions 1pm

For Additional Information scan the QR Codes

Elementary Tours



Middle School Experience



CTE Website



Be Prepared For The Cold:

- Gather supplies that can last through several days if there's a power outage.
- Consider each person's specific needs, including medication.
- If you have pets, think about their needs.
- Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.

Learn More: AldineISD.org

OPINION PAGE

COUNTY MATTERS
Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee



Menefee pushes for EPA to Strengthen Air Quality Standards

Houston, Texas – Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee submitted formal comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advocating for stronger national air quality standards for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which is airborne pollution typically emitted in large quantities at refineries and plants, construction sites, and other industrial facilities. PM2.5 exposure can lead to respiratory issues, irregular heartbeat, death in people with heart or lung diseases, and aggravated asthma.

“This is an environmental justice issue. Study after study has shown that air pollution has a greater impact on lower-income communities, and Black and Hispanic people,” said Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee. “There are many communities in Harris County where people live a stone’s throw away from industrial and toxic waste facilities. Every level of government should be doing all we can to protect them. I’m grateful that the Environmental Protection Agency is considering strengthening this air quality standard, and I fully support making sure every person living in Harris County has clean air and water.”

In a pivot from an April 2020 decision by the EPA under the Trump administration, the EPA in January 2023 announced a proposal to lower the threshold of acceptable annual PM2.5 emissions. If adopted, this rule would impact the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s (TCEQ) process for issuing permits to industrial facilities, as the TCEQ is the state agency charged with ensuring that the permitted emissions in Texas do not rise to a level that is harmful to human health and welfare.

The EPA’s comment period has now closed, and the agency has stated it plans to issue final standards later .



with Slim Randles

Street Party. It must have been the weather

It began the way most miracles do: by accident or the hand of God, take your pick. It might have been the weather, at least partly. For December, the day had been almost balmy and warm. You know, sweaters instead of heavy coats. No mittens in sight.

Then there were Christmas lights on the stores, and that little bunch of Girl Scouts out raising money in front of the Read Me Now bookstore. Jasper Blankenship was inside going through the books to fortify his cabin’s library for winter and sat, listening with a smile to the girls as they laughed and waited for customers that weren’t really coming along too briskly.

“It’s a shame there aren’t more people out today for those girls,” said Sarah McKinley, behind the counter. Jasper nodded and paid for his books, then walked out to the truck. He stopped and thought for a while, then brought out his violin, rosined the bow, and walked over to the sidewalk next to the girls.

“You girls like fiddle music?” he asked.

Carla Martinez was driving down the street, headed for the Soup ‘R Market when she saw the Girl Scouts dancing with each other in front of their table to Jasper’s music. Before he’d had time to finish that tune, she’d returned with her guitar and joined the fun. Jim Albertson, the elementary school principal, showed up with a harmonica, and he wasn’t bad at it.

Dud got out his accordion and was able to at least do the bass buttons as accompaniment.

By this time, it was getting dark in the street, and several people turned headlights on the area in front of the bookstore. Older people had joined the Girl Scouts dancing in the streets, and Delbert Chin from the Chinese restaurant across the street sent one of his girls out with a huge pot of coffee and paper cups.

The party was on.

It lasted until the cars’ headlights began to wear down the batteries, but during its brief lifetime, the street dance and mid-winter party cast a blessing on us all.

It must have been the weather.

In loving memory of times we spent with Polka Dan Zantek and Herman the German Hastreiter. No one could get a street party started more quickly.



THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

Sharing a Story

My nephew, Beau, keeps me on my toes.

Keeping on my toes is a good way to develop balance and agility. It is also a good way to fall on my face and embarrass myself. But since I don’t spend a lot of time with teenagers—and not nearly enough with Beau—I am trying.

Right now, he’s trying to convince me that I need a mechanical keyboard for my computer. I am old enough to remember typing class in high school. The “thunk, thunk, thunk!” sound of hitting keys is not a pleasant memory. My parents gave me a state-of-the-art typewriter when I left for college, and it had (wonder of wonders!) a self-correcting function, which was a huge improvement over the machines from high school, but it was still messy and time-consuming.

Then I didn’t write anything for years and, by the time I wrote again, I was using a wireless keyboard and wireless mouse with a great big monitor. Now, when I see typewriters, rather than experiencing a pleasant nostalgia, I feel something closer to dread. But Beau is trying to tell me that a mechanical keyboard is the way to go, and I am trying to keep an open mind.

“It’s really easy to use,” he assures me. “And it will last much longer than a membrane keyboard.”

“Hmmm.”

“And you can adjust it to any touch you want.”

“Uh-huh.”

In addition to his interest in computer peripherals, Beau is also a voracious reader. I gave him a book over Christmas, and he texted me a few days later saying he wanted to discuss it with me. The problem was, I hadn’t read it. (I had no idea I was expected to actually read the books I gave to him at Christmas.) So I went back to my local bookstore to buy a copy. As I approached the front desk, I saw a collection of books and a sign that read “Signed Copies.” I then realized one of the books on the table was the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, who died in A.D. 180.

“I guess you wouldn’t have a signed copy of Marcus Aurelius,” I said to Patrick, who works the front desk.

“Well, we wouldn’t have three for sure!” Patrick replied. Patrick is a smart aleck.

Also displayed in front was an old typewriter, much older than any I was forced to use. “I feel lucky to be writing now,” I told Patrick. “I bet we would have three more novels by Charles Dickens if he’d had word processing.”

“A lot of writers back then had their wives transcribe their manuscripts!” Patrick noted, disapprovingly.

“I’ve heard he read his books to his daughter,” I told him.

“You can tell,” Patrick said. “His writing sounds like a story you would tell aloud.”

I left the bookstore with the book I gave Beau and a copy of Marcus Aurelius. I thought how fortunate I was to be able to buy a book so easily and to have all these tools that make writing so effortless.

But as different as it all seems, I know that reading and writing have not really changed all that much. Whether the story was written with a quill pen or on a fancy computer, whether it was read off a stone tablet or an electronic one, it is still just someone sharing a story.

I’m going to give Beau’s mechanical keyboard a try. It will keep me on my toes. And it will remind me—once again—that there is no one right way to tell a story.

Till next time,
Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders



Quakes Prompt Officials to Limit Disposal Wells

The Texas Railroad Commission has suspended nearly two dozen permits that allow oil and gas companies to inject saltwater into the ground, which regulators say has contributed to increased earthquakes of greater magnitude in West Texas.

The Austin American Statesman reported the 23 disposal wells hold hundreds of thousands of barrels of produced water, which is a toxic brine. A 2022 report said the state generated 3.9 billion barrels of produced water from extracting oil and gas.

The RRC instructed major companies to no longer dispose of saltwater in Reeves and Culberson counties, which had seven earthquakes last year, including a 5.2 magnitude temblor that was the fourth highest in state history.

Meanwhile, the RRC has developed a framework for pilot programs to recycle produced water “safely and economically.”

“Operators will apply for authorization to conduct pilot studies, and RRC will issue a permit or letter of authorization if the application meets requirements. The operators would compile data of how treated produced water can be reused in certain activities that are safe and protective of human health and the environment,” the news release said.

The goal is to reduce the amount of produced water injected back into the ground, reducing earthquake incidents.

“This framework opens up the potential to use treated produced water in ways that have never been seen before in Texas, which is a win-win for conserving water resources, and protecting the environment and Texans,” Wei Wang, executive director, said.

LAST YEAR WAS HOTTEST EVER FOR TEXAS

It likely comes as no surprise to all of us who endured last summer, but 2023 was the hottest ever recorded in Texas, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and reported by the Texas Tribune.

The average temperature in the state measured 68.1 degrees last year, beating the previous 2012 record by 0.3



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

degrees. Every year since 2000 in Texas has been warmer than the 20th century average, said John Nielsen-Gammon, state climatologist. Last year was 3.5 degrees hotter than the 20th-century average in the state.

“That consistent warmth is because of climate change,” Nielsen-Gammon said.

Texas wasn’t alone in feeling the heat. Since federal record keeping began in 1895, last year was the fifth warmest in the contiguous United States, not counting Hawaii and Alaska.

“You can think of (2023) as kind of a preview of the future and it’s not pretty,” Andrew Dessler, professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University, said.

PAXTON ASKS HIGH COURT TO SHIELD HIM FROM DEPOSITION

Attorney General Ken Paxton is asking the Texas Supreme Court to keep him from being deposed in a long-running whistleblower lawsuit filed by four former employees at the agency.

The aides claim they were wrongfully fired after complaining to the FBI about Paxton’s conduct concerning a prominent campaign donor.

The Statesman reported Paxton filed the motion with the high court after an appeals court rejected his attempt to avoid being deposed. That ruling allows the whistleblowers to continue their suit, which comes after a \$3.3 million settlement agreement last year imploded when the Legislature refused to pay for it.

An investigation into the whistleblowers’ claims led to an investigation that resulted in the House impeaching Paxton, who was acquitted in the Senate. Paxton contends he complied with the non-

monetary terms of the settlement agreement, which included retracting a disparaging news release, and that the Legislature’s refusal to fund the settlement does not warrant continued settlement talks or a trial.

“The Legislature considered and rejected OAG’s request for funding, and even added a rider to the appropriations bill forbidding OAG from settling this case with taxpayer funds,” the attorneys for the whistleblowers wrote in their response.

HOMELESSNESS IN TEXAS ON THE RISE

Homelessness in Texas grew by more than 12% last year, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Tribune reported more than 27,000 Texans were unhoused when homelessness advocates conducted their annual Point-in-Time count last January, with 43% of those living on the streets.

Higher rents and the end of pandemic-era safety nets such as federal rent relief funds and a moratorium on evictions are being blamed for the increase. Homelessness rose in nearly every demographic group, according to the Point-in-Time estimate.

“We’re in a huge affordability crisis,” said Eric Samuels, president and CEO of Texas Homeless Network. “There’s a lot of people out there at risk of homelessness. And if they fall into homelessness, we have a lot fewer units to help them escape homelessness.”

RABIES VACCINE BAIT AIRDROP MARKS 30 YEARS

Planes are taking to the air in South Texas to kick off the 30th annual oral rabies vaccine airdrop, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

“Our goal is to vaccinate coyotes and gray foxes along the border to maintain herd immunity against rabies and keep new or previously eliminated rabies variants from becoming established in Texas,” said Kathy Parker, project director. “We will be distributing vaccine baits over 18 border counties this year.”

The project is expected to last two weeks. Vaccine baits are dropped along half mile intervals. More than 820,000 oral vaccine baits will be dropped. Since the airdrop program began, the number of animal rabies cases caused by the variants found in South Texas dropped from 122 cases in 1994 to zero cases by 2000.

There have been no human cases of rabies attributable to the rabies cases found in that region since the program began.

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, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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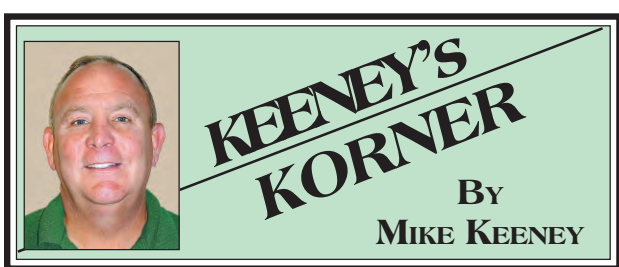
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KEENEY'S KORNER - Defensive Player of the Year
Armad Bailey's big-play ability lands him NE News Def. Player of Year honors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Nimitz team that won eight games this season and qualified for the playoffs for the second straight season.

"Armad is a huge leader for us," Harmon said. "He's the quarterback of our defense. He makes all the calls from his safety position. He's an intelligent guy. If he could play football all year, he would."

In addition to playing

football, Bailey runs track in the spring to help improve his speed.

He said he will use the offseason and track season to lower his 40 time of 4.6. He said he thought he had a pretty good season as a junior.

"It was pretty good," he said. "I just need to get faster a little bigger. I'll work on that in the weight room and the track."

When asked what he thought was his

strength as a safety, it didn't take Bailey long to answer.

"I'm good at coverage and when the ball is in the air, I go get it. I think we had a great season, but we want to improve on that next year. I've been playing football since I was four. I just love the game."

And the Cougars love the thought of Bailey being back to patrol the secondary for another year in 2024.

Lone Star College Foundation raises \$180,000 at Annual Golf Tournament

HOUSTON – Lone Star College Foundation will provide more financial assistance to students after raising \$180,000 at its 30th annual Drive for Scholarships Golf Tournament. Proceeds will fund 37 scholarships and add funding to educational programs and scholarship endowments.

"The golf tournament is one of the Foundation's major fundraisers to supply scholarships and other resources that impact students' lives and help them fund their education without incurring heavy debt," said James B. Harrison, III, LSC Foundation board chair and principal at HarrisonKornberg Architects.

LSC Foundation Golf Tournament took place Nov. 14 at The Woodlands Country Club with 214 golfers and over 60 volunteers raising funds and establishing resources to help change students' lives. Players also competed in hole-in-one, putting, chipping, longest drive and closest-to-the-pin contests. There were two raffle drawings, a dinner and an awards ceremony after the tournament.

"Lone Star College Foundation appreciates the individuals and businesses who continually support our fundraising events like the Drive for Scholarships Golf Tournament because it allows us to help fund educational dreams for our students," said Nicole Robinson Gauthier, CFRE, LSC Foundation executive director.

In 2022-2023, LSC Foundation provided over \$2.6 million in scholarships to 2,503 students and nearly \$1 million in program and emergency support to



Lone Star College Foundation held its 30th annual Drive for Scholarships Golf Tournament at The Woodlands Country Club. Pictured from left to right are members representing Caldwell Companies (Tournament Sponsor): Miranda Hadamik, Ronnie Hale, Stephen Raley and Chris Colville.

Lone Star College. This year, 63 sponsors and underwriters supported the event, including Caldwell Companies as the Tournament Sponsor and TEKVOK Drop-in AV as the Champion Sponsor.

"Caldwell Companies was proud to support Lone Star College Foundation Golf Tournament because it aligns with our mission to raise scholarships that will increase the community's access to quality higher education opportunities," said Miranda Hadamik, Caldwell Companies executive vice president, Investments and LSC Foundation Golf Tournament Chair.

Visit LoneStar.edu/Giving to learn how you can support students through LSC Foundation.

ABOUT LONE STAR COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Lone Star College Foundation impacts students' lives every day by reducing the financial barriers to a quality, college education. Currently, 24,500 students have felt that impact with over \$23.2 million awarded in scholarships and nearly \$10 million in program support since the Foundation's inception in 1991. Through tuition

scholarships, emergency aid relief or textbook funds, partner with the Foundation today to make your impact on the next generation.

ABOUT LONE STAR COLLEGE

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. Mario K. Castillo, J.D., serves as Chancellor of LSC, the largest institution of higher education in the Houston area. LSC has been named a 2023 Great Colleges to Work For® institution by the Chronicle of Higher Education 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.

✉ UPDATES FROM ✉
WALLE WORLD

IN THE NEWS

Walle fights against Immigration bill

Friends,

The First major immigration battle of 2024 is already taking shape here.

Governor Abbott is facing a lawsuit by the federal government over SB4, the Texas GOP's attempt to undermine federal immigration laws. This is a case that could very well determine the future of immigration policy nationwide.

Friend, I stood up for our communities when far-right Republicans refused to listen to our voices. But I'm going to need you with me as we fight for the laws that protect our immigrant communities, not target them.

The whole nation is looking at Texas.

I went on CNN to Discuss the damage this law will have on our communities. Texans are scared, and our law enforcement officers are already flagging how impossible this will be to enforce.

I told CNN what I'm telling you now; people shouldn't have to carry passports around because of a hateful, extremist group of legislator in our state government. This is when people like you and me become so important in the work to build a better Texas. It means taking a stand in moments like these.

Friend, I'll stand up for our communities day in and day out. But this time, I'm asking for your support in showing the nation our unity in this fight.

Gracias,
Rep. Armando Walle

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BIBLE TRIVIA


By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Goliath (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Exodus 10, who made a false confession to Aaron and Moses? Herod, Malachi, Satan, Pharaoh
3. Who was bespoken by an angel to save Israel from the Midianites? Ishmael, Job, Gideon, Philip

4. From 1 Samuel 9 and 10, who was the first king of Israel? David, Saul, Solomon, Jehu
5. Who laughed on hearing she would have a child in her old age? Sarah, Ruth, Lydia, Esther
6. From John 8:44, what is Satan the father of? Sin, Lust, Scepters, Lies

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Pharaoh, 3) Gideon, 4) Saul, 5) Sarah, 6) Lies
 Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com.
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Detail of "Hand of God" by Clare Leighton (1952)

HEBREWS 4:13, 14

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PET MATTERS
In Memory of Susan Hoffman



Houston Petset and L3 design deliver 50 dog houses to BARC ahead of Freezing Temperatures

The houses will be stored at BARC and distributed to pet owners who are unable to provide adequate shelter for their outside pets.

HOUSTON, Texas (Jan. 12, 2024) – Houston PetSet, a local nonprofit organization working to end Houston’s homeless animal crisis, coordinated with L3 Design, Landscaping & Outdoor Living, delivered 50 custom-built dog houses to BARC Animal Enforcement ahead of the approaching hard freeze.

Houston PetSet and L3 Design have been working with leadership at BARC to address the influx of reports made about dogs left outside in the cold. In 2022, the State of Texas enacted the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act that prohibits owners from leaving pets outside in extreme weather with no access to appropriate shelter.

Built by Houston PetSet’s exclusive landscaping and outdoor living partner L3 Design with lumber donated by Gabriel Home Builders, these dog houses will enable pet owners to properly care for their pets in the face of cold or inclement weather. The dog houses will be distributed at the discretion of BARC animal enforcement officers as they respond to calls from the community.

“With temperatures dropping and thousands of pets left without shelter, Houston PetSet is happy to be able to partner with BARC and the rescue community to distribute dog houses to those in need,” said Houston PetSet Co-President Tama Lundquist. “These life-saving measures will ensure that family pets are safe, and we

are grateful for this exclusive partnership with L3 Design and the generosity of Gabriel Home Builders.”

“At L3 Design, we are all pet people,” said Owner and Chief Growth Officer Lauren Olenius. “They are members of our family and we feel obligated to do what we can for dogs that are on their own and don’t have a family to love and take care of them. We believe in giving back to our community and dogs are a big part of our community. We are grateful to this organization that gives us the opportunity to be involved with such a worthy endeavor.”

“As BARC’s staff works hard to prepare our shelter pets for the incoming cold front, we urge the public to care for their own pets, bring them indoors, and provide them with proper safety from next week’s hard freeze,” said BARC Shelter Director Jarrad Mears. “We will have additional enforcement crews working overnight throughout the freezing weather to respond to Harris County Animal Cruelty Task Force calls. We’ll be staffed throughout each evening at the shelter to provide humane care as well for the animals in our care and any we collect in the community.”

Houston PetSet reminds the public to use straw to insulate dog and cat houses instead of blankets, as fabric can hold moisture and make pets even colder than the ambient air temperature. Access to food and fresh clean water (that isn’t frozen) is also vital for pets who are staying outside. Whenever possible, please bring pets inside when temperatures drop below freezing, as they are currently forecast to do.

HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Sofia Coppola finally revealed why her Elvis Presley (Jacob Elordi) didn’t really sing in “Priscilla.” She explained, “I originally wanted to have three Elvis songs, but I always knew that we might not be able to get them. I wanted it to really be focused on [Priscilla’s] story ... and to me, it is really more important to have Dolly Parton at the end, to have a woman’s voice at the end.”

Despite being an Oscar-winning director and the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola — and also having a career that spans decades with films such as “Marie Antoinette” (2006) and “Lost in Translation” (2003) — Sofia’s been competing with male directors to get bigger budgets. “I just see all these men getting hundreds of millions of dollars, and then I’m fighting for a tiny fraction of that,” she revealed. And that’s why Elvis didn’t get to sing much in “Priscilla.”



Director Sofia Coppola (“Priscilla”)

Has the flood of rom-coms on Hallmark, Great American Family, Lifetime and UPTV ruined the genre for movie theaters? Case in point: Glen Powell and Sydney Sweeney’s new film “Anyone But You.” Powell got noticed in “Hit Man” and “Top Gun: Maverick,” while Sweeney excelled in “The White Lotus” and “Euphoria,” but they couldn’t fill theater seats despite good reviews. In their first week, they grossed \$16 million against a \$25 million cost.

And despite having incredible battle scenes and Oscar winner Joaquin Phoenix as Napoleon, the epic Ridley Scott film “Napoleon” grossed \$213.4 million, but cost \$130 million. The first week of “Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom” only grossed \$58 million against its \$215 million cost. (The original grossed \$136 million in its first week.) But “Barbie’s” \$1.5 billion grosses prove that if you’ve got what moviegoers want, they’ll run in to fill those seats.

Ever wondered how much “Dancing with the Stars” pays their celebrities

and why it’s so important for them to make the semi-finals? Semi-finalists get \$50,000 for each week they remain in the competition. Plus, those who make it to the end will more than likely walk away with \$345,000, and one of them even gets a mirror ball trophy! It’s a lot of hard work, but can be fun and worth the prize money, especially compared to “America’s Got Talent.” The winner of “AGT” gets \$1 million, but the prize is spread out over 40 years — yes, I said it, 40 years!

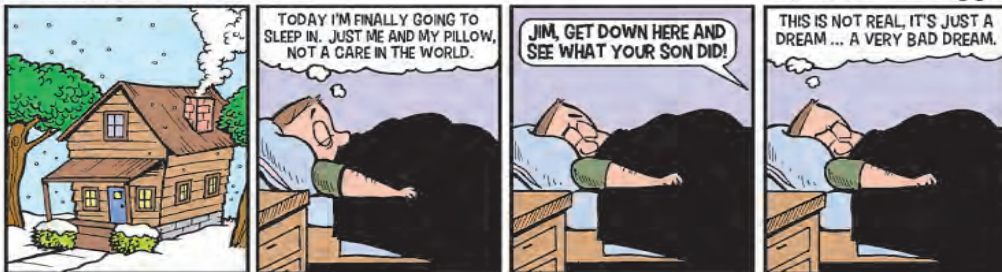
Though, that’s still a better case than “American Idol,” who gives its winners \$125,000 for winning the competition and another \$125,000 to complete an album in just four months. A \$300,000 advance is also given, but the musicians won’t receive a penny from their music until the advance is paid back. Some winners even felt trapped by the record label and weren’t able to get out of the contract to record with someone else.

“The Voice” awards \$100,000 to the winner and a record deal as well, but as of this date, not one of its winners has made it big. What’s your get-rich-quick scheme for 2024?

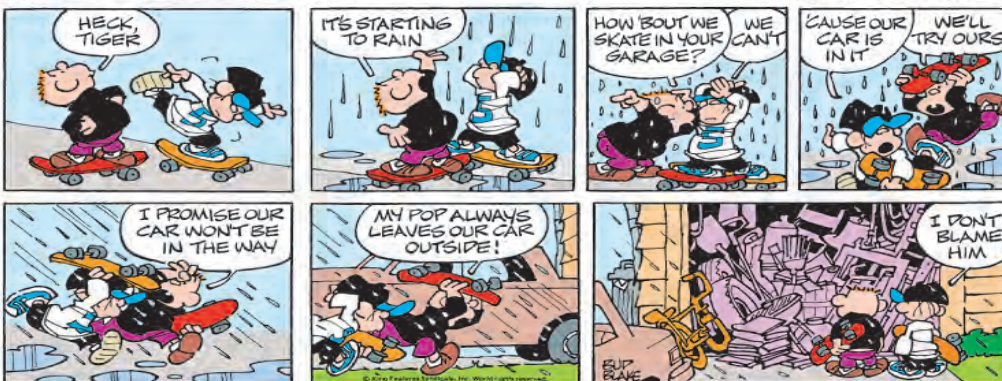
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ENTERTAINMENT

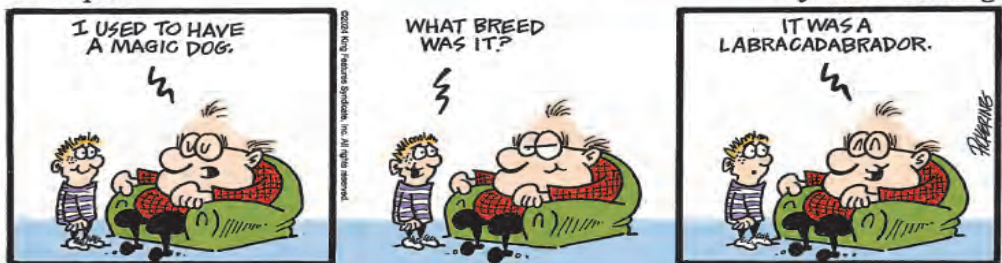
Amber Waves



TIGER



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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
◆◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Lampshade is wider. 2. Curtain is shorter. 3. Leaf is missing from plant. 4. Sleeve is longer. 5. Foot is smaller. 6. Arm of chair is different.

January 15, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13				14		
15				16					17		
			18				19	20			
21	22	23				24					
25				26	27				28	29	
30				31					32		
33			34					35			
			36				37				
38	39				40	41					
42				43	44				45	46	47
48				49					50		
51				52					53		

ACROSS

- Essence
- Sprint
- Weed whacker
- Part of a French play
- Draft status
- Jackson 5 hit song
- Bribe of a sort
- Kanga’s kid
- Hindu hero
- Mature, as fruit
- Laugh track sounds
- Painter Joan
- “East of Eden” son
- College life
- Kitten’s cry
- Nearby
- USN bigwig
- Wagered
- Shade provider
- Candied veggies
- Plano’s state
- Recap
- Wild hog
- pro nobis
- Website assistance features
- Motorist’s org.
- Biblical grain measure
- Sluggo
- Sammy
- Carrier to Amsterdam
- Sean Astin film
- Wan
- October outing
- Brother of Groucho
- Bassoon’s kin
- Nobel Prize subj.
- More (Sp.)
- Soccer star Mia
- Region
- Cowboy’s greeting
- Sail support
- Priests’ garments
- Editor Wintour
- Observe
- Notion
- Iowa city
- Moth repellent
- Vichy water
- Nobel-winning Mother
- Highland hat
- Drench
- Russian river
- Ran in the wash
- Nashville venue
- Outback bird
- Refusals
- Show to a seat, slangily
- Utter

DOWN

- “How frustrating!”
- Hosp. section
- Map lines (Abbr.)
- Capital of Iran
- Unhappy des-
- Editor Wintour
- Observe
- 21 Soccer star
- 22 Region
- 23 Cowboy’s greeting
- 24 Sail support
- 26 Priests’ garments
- 27 Runner
- 28 Sebastian

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- MOVIES: What state is the setting for the 1990s movie “Twister”?
- GEOGRAPHY: Lake Okeechobee is in which U.S. state?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president adopted the expression, “Speak softly and carry a big stick”?
- MUSIC: Actor/singer Jared Leto is also the front man for which rock music band?
- HISTORY: The U.S. Civil War ended in 1865 when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union forces in which Virginia town?
- SCIENCE: Which element has the symbol Pb?
- GAMES: What is the destination in the board game Candy Land?
- TELEVISION: Who was the long-running host of “American Bandstand”?
- U.S. STATES: What is the capital of Alaska?
- LITERATURE: Who is the author of the autobiographical work “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”?

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

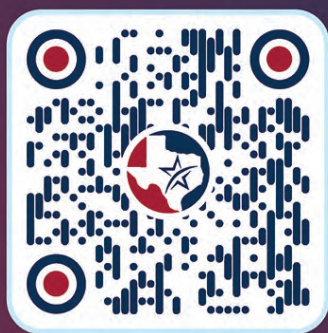
Trivia Test Answers
1. Oklahoma; 2. Florida; 3. Theodore Roosevelt; 4. Thirty Seconds to Mars; 5. Appomattox; 6. Lead; 7. Candy Castle; 8. Dick Clark; 9. Juneau; 10. Maya Angelou.



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[LONESTAR.EDU/START](https://lonestar.edu/start)

Lone Star College offers fast-track classes in high-demand industries

HOUSTON (Oct. 18, 2023) – Lone Star College helps employers recruit trained professionals through its Continuing Education (CE) program. CE offers state-of-the-art certificate programs to help students learn new skills for their current positions or retrain them for a different career field.

“Lone Star College’s Continuing Education program has over 50 workforce programs and many take six months or less to complete,” said Linda Leto Head, senior associate vice chancellor, External and Employer Relations. “These fast-track offerings prepare students to enter and excel in high-demand industries like computer programming, construction, energy, engineering, health care and technology.”

The college’s Mechatronics program, located at LSC-University Park, trains students to work on equipment integrating electronics, mechanics, pneumatics, hydraulics and computer controls. It gives individuals like Ben Harakal an opportunity to reinvent themselves. Harakal enrolled in the CE program because he wanted a hands-on career.

“I knew office life was not my cup of tea, but I enjoyed working with my hands,” Harakal said. “I was interested in Lone Star College’s Mechatronics program because it involved mechanical and electrical work, giving me a wide span of options.”

Harakal enrolled in LSC’s program in fall 2019 and learned career-related skills, including troubleshooting electrical wiring, schematics and basic hydraulic operations. He credits the program for



Lone Star College offers over 50 Continuing Education workforce programs to help students learn new skills for their current positions or retrain them for a different career field.

succeeding in his first maintenance job and winning a skill-based electrical troubleshooting and mechanical precision competition.

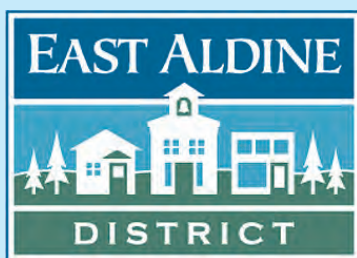
“Having the ability to read a schematic and troubleshoot off that knowledge is literally invaluable,” said Harakal. “I have encouraged multiple people to go through Lone Star College’s Mechatronics program. I always explain this type of work is difficult but rewarding, especially if they like logical, deep thinking.”

Harakal earned a Mechatronics Technician Certificate from LSC and works as an equipment maintenance technician at the Tesla Gigafactory in Austin.

Lone Star College Continuing Education workforce programs focus on technical and behavioral skills needed for specific occupations. Graduates receive certificates that are industry-recognized or have state or national occupational accreditation. CE also offers English as a Second or Other Languages (ESOL), General

Education Development (GED®) and Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) programs. Learn more at [LoneStar.edu/Continuing-Education](https://lonestar.edu/Continuing-Education).

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. Mario K. Castillo, J.D., serves as Chancellor of LSC, the largest institution of higher education in the Houston area. LSC has been named a 2023 Great Colleges to Work For® institution by the Chronicle of Higher Education 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](https://lonestar.edu).



East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

Muralists Paint the (East Aldine) Town

Two talented artists with strong ties to East Aldine have shown through their murals that home is where the art is.

Cease Martinez, who attended MacArthur High School, was recently putting the finishing touches on the “Greetings from East Aldine” mural on the wall of Ace Dental at 3420 Aldine Mail Route Rd.

His stunning new artwork is capturing attention from motorists and community leaders, who have rerouted their local trips to stop and take photos with the self-taught artist.

Kimberly Gillespie, who taught kindergarten and pre-K students for five years at Reece Academy, is the creator and painter of the Aldine mural that graces the wall near the amphitheater stage at the East Aldine Management District building at the Town Center. The brightly colored, whimsical mural will remain in place for at least the next year.

The East Aldine Arts Council, a committee of the District, funded both murals through Up Art Studio as part of their mission to bring more beauty to the area.

Martinez, who grew up in East Aldine, is a self-described “former knucklehead” whose artistic talents were first developed when he “tagged” a local grocery store with a can of spray paint.

He then convinced the owner of JFK Mart to allow him to paint a mural to cover up his own graffiti. That led to his first paid art gig, when a nearby garage owner gave him \$200 to paint Houston sports franchise logos on his building.

“That was the last illegal graffiti that I ever did,” Martinez said.

His artistic talents were developed by his grandmother’s doodles of shapes that he turned into cars and trucks. Martinez continued to draw and paint, despite his father’s insistence that his skills on the baseball field — as a shortstop and first baseman — were a more likely key to success.

Now the 44-year-old father of three travels the nation from his East Downtown apartment studio to complete commissioned murals and artwork.

Martinez was one of 21 Texas artists who donated their time and talent to the “Healing Uvalde Mural Project,” after the 2022 Uvalde school shooting. He painted the likenesses of teacher Irma Garcia and her husband, Joe, who died from a heart attack two days after her death.



Martinez with Connie & Alex Esparza

Gillespie’s Reece Academy creation

“I titled that “Amore Eternal,” because they had been high school sweethearts,” Martinez said. “I have gotten to know their family. But I got involved in the project just because I felt the need to contribute something to the community of Uvalde.”

More recently, Martinez was commissioned by UP Art Studios to participate in a mural project for the city of Victoria’s 2024 bicentennial celebration.

Martinez said he has really enjoyed painting the “Greetings from East Aldine” mural in his old stomping grounds.

“Now that I’m starting to get recognized for the talent I have and I’m getting paid well, I think that’s wonderful,” Martinez said. “But I have also learned that art can be healing.”

Through his art, Martinez and his father are now closer than they have ever been.

“Until this year, my Dad had never seen anything I made. And so, I invited him to a solo show, and he came,” Martinez said. “The pride and the words that he shared with me afterwards, that’s priceless.”

Gillespie, a native of Dayton, OH, is a graduate of Bowling Green University who came to Reece Academy as part of an Aldine ISD program to attract teachers to serve economically disadvantaged students. With her degree in elementary education, she taught art to kindergarten and PreK students.

Reece Academy is a magnet school that focuses on arts education.

“My entire life, I wanted to be a teacher and then I actually got into teaching and that is when I found out that what teachers love to do most is what we only get to do maybe 10 percent of the time,” Gillespie said.

She left teaching, but not without leaving a “goodbye present” to the children of East Aldine. She painted a large arts-themed mural on the Reece Academy cafeteria wall.

Gillespie & her mural

Some of those grown-up children now are enjoying her art again.

After teaching, Gillespie earned a master’s in business administration from the University of Houston and went to work in the tech industry. But she was so bored with her desk job that on her lunch breaks, she went home to paint.

Between her job as a licensed realtor, Gillespie fulfills her creativity by painting whimsical murals in the bedrooms of her clients’ children.

She also has painted murals for the Antone’s T.C. Jester location, the Memorial Trail Ice House and the Nutcracker Market.

Because she has stayed in touch with her teacher friends in East Aldine, Reece Academy violin teacher Tiffany Goines encouraged Gillespie to enter a design for the East Aldine District’s mural competition for the International Arts Festival held in May.

“And they selected mine,” Gillespie said.

“It was a design that I had to paint in a day, and it was brutal. It was very, very hot and I was getting dehydrated.”

Goines, the violin teacher, along with the vendors from a nearby taco truck, saved the day. Goines supplied her with water and the tacos kept her energy up, Gillespie said.

“When I finished the project, it was a very surreal moment. I took a picture from far away, way back by the playground, and I like the fact that you can still see it,” Gillespie said. “It really warms my heart that my design is bringing so much color and joy to that space. And it’s wonderful that it is in a community where I taught for five years.”

See Martinez’s work on Instagram at [@world_of_cease](https://www.instagram.com/world_of_cease).

See Gillespie’s work at [Kimmiedesigns.com](https://www.kimmiedesigns.com).

— by Anne Marie Kilday

