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NORTHEAST NEWS

Snakes Alive!

East Aldine's WIZARD FESTIVAL last Saturday gave Harry Potter fans an opportunity to know snakes and reptiles in a close, friendly way. SEE STORY BELOW.



Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 48 Years
VOL. 48, NO. 11 TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

Eggstravaganza at BakerRipley Sat. March 23

Family Fun at BakerRipley on Saturday March 23rd from 10am to 1pm. Join the Epic Egg Hunt, arts and crafts, sports games, chalk art, Fab Lab egg soap-making, face painting, henna, bubble station, door prizes and MORE.

Also a Family Photo Station. Bring your own kite and baskets. See ad on Page 5, or call 346-570-4463 for more information.

There will be market, food and dessert vendors on site.

Sponsored by East Aldine District, Lone Star College EAC, HCSO, Avalos P-Tech HS, Communities in Schools, FabLab Houston, and EACC.

Greens Bayou Cleanup Event Mar. 23

Join the volunteers to help cleanup Greens Bayou and Crowley Park. "Save the Date to Clean it Like You Mean It! See QR code on Page 8 for information on how to sign up.

Cleanup work will start at Crowley Park off Lauder Road and Vickery. Saturday, March 23.

Sponsored by Harris County Pct. 2 and the East Aldine District, with the Greens Bayou Coalition. More information, www.greensbayou.org

UIL Realignment keeps Aldine vs Spring competition

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Like ebony and ivory on a piano, the Aldine and Spring school districts just go together. For almost a decade, the districts have faced each other in two different leagues—District 14-6A and District 16-6A—to battle for supremacy on the gridiron. The competition has been dominated by Spring ISD who has brought home eight

straight district titles, seven for Westfield, and one for Spring since the 2016-2017 school year.

While Aldine has been on the short stick, they have still produced teams achieving the playoffs, but not with the same success as Westfield and Spring in particular.

During that period, Westfield compiled an impressive 90-17 record, five of those losses coming to their cross-town rivals North Shore in 2016,

2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023. Westfield managed two wins in that stretch against North Shore in 2017 and 2021. In 2020, the game was canceled because of the pandemic.

While North Shore and Duncanville have faced each other five times in the last six years for the state title, Westfield has fallen victim to Duncanville deep in the playoffs three times. While they were on the losing end, Westfield can boast they

played the state champion in Division 6A the last six years consecutively.

Spring has been runner-up in district for most of those eight years, but in the 2020-2021 season, the Lions won the district title with a perfect 6-0 record and advanced to the regional finals where they fell to DeSoto, 27-21. The following year, the Lions lost to Westfield and finished second again, but advanced to regionals before a 42-7

loss to Duncanville.

Last year, Nimitz finished third in the district with an 8-3 season record, and 5-2 league play mark.

The 16-6A District league will remain the same with Westfield, Spring, Dekaney, Aldine, Benjamin Davis, Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Nimitz included.

The football gods at

Continued. See UIL REALIGNMENT, Page 2

Wizards, Snakes, and Harry Potter fans at East Aldine Fest

East Aldine threw a Harry Potter celebration last Saturday, complete with Wizards, Witches, Hogwart's costumes and more.

Families gathered at the Amphitheatre for the fun day. Early arrivals registered for Harry Potter theater and dance classes.

Almost everyone enjoyed the snakes and reptiles and got to touch and hold them. There were crafts, lawn chess, costume contest with prizes, a raffle, a scavenger hunt, and carousel rides on your favorite animal.

There were also professional quidditch lessons and exposition. Quidditch is the game of flying on a broomstick!

Event coordinator Alma Dealejandro said that day was a great success, with many families participating in the spirit of the Harry Potter stories. Photos courtesy EAMD.



Everyone had an opportunity to hold a live, slithery snake. Ugh.



Carousel rides on your favorite animal were a reminder of the movie.



Quidditch lessons. Learning to fly on a broomstick, and other Wizardly tricks for this group.



Learning Wizard tricks and themes from the Harry Potter stories. This young lady got to wear the Wizard hat and try her magic skills.

Community Engineers at BakerRipley



By Claudia Aguirre

Meet our newest community engineers for the East Aldine community. The Community Engineer Program at BakerRipley is a cornerstone of our programs. It's all about recognizing that the leaders we seek are already among us in our communities. They simply require someone to

invest in them, believe in them, and guide them on how to use their passion and strengths to uplift their communities in a way that resonates with the people who call those communities home.

We understand that community members are the experts on what their communities need, and we

empower them to harness their passion and become catalysts for transformative change.

Through the program, participants gain the skills to influence policy, engage with government entities, tackle local challenges, drive grassroots initiatives, and become drivers of positive change.

Walle leads fundraising for signage on Almdarez' Memorial Highway

HARRIS COUNTY – In 2023, Rep. Armando Walle and Sen. Carol Alvarado passed SB 957 to designate a portion of United States Highway 59 in Harris County as the Deputy Darren Almdarez Memorial Highway.

The name change honors the life of Deputy Almdarez of Houston, who was shot and killed last spring while off-duty when he found three men attempting to steal a catalytic converter from his vehicle.

Flor Zarzoza, Deputy Almdarez' widow, has led efforts alongside the Harris County Deputies' Organization (HCDO) to fundraise for the signs. The Texas Department of Transportation has estimated the signs will cost \$40,000.

Rep. Walle, Sen. Alvarado, Zarzoza and David Cuevas of the HCDO released the following joint statement on the effort:

"Deputy Sheriff Almdarez was a pillar of our community and we are



DEPUTY DARREN ALMDAREZ

honored to memorialize his life of service with these signs.

"By opening this fundraising campaign to the community, we hope to ensure that all who knew and cherished Darren have the chance to participate, allowing anyone who wishes to honor his legacy the opportunity to do so."

Donations may be made online with the Harris County Deputies' Organization at <https://www.hcdoadf.com/>.

NORTHEAST NEWS – Send News Tips and Ad Inquiries to 713-266-3444 or nenewsroom@aol.com

EAST ALDINE DISTRICT

We're Here For You!

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713.595.1220 RCantu@AldineDistrict.org

Operations Manager: **Veronica Sanches**
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UIL Realignment,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UIL realign and reclassify teams based on their enrollments to balance fair play between schools every two years.

The new enrollment figures this next biennium are 6A numbers beginning at 2,275 students and above, 5A is 1,315-2,274, while 4A numbers are 545-1,314, 3A enrollments 254-544, 2A from 105-253, and 1A 104.9 and below. Some districts

petition to be moved up, some move up or down because of increasing or decreasing enrollments. Others petition the changes based on driving distance or what might seem to make more sense for them. The appeals have been filed and UIL granted some and refused others.

Football schedules are still being finalized.

Comprehensive details, including district alignments for football, basketball, and volleyball, as well as conference and division cutoffs, and realignment maps, can now be accessed on the UIL website at <http://www.uil.texas.org/alignments>.

Alignments for other UIL sports and academic contests will be released later.

Medicaid, CHIP Postpartum Coverage Extension To 12 Months

AUSTIN – Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) today announced that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved Texas' request to extend Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage from two to 12 months after pregnancy.

"This past regular legislative session, I was proud to sign a crucial bipartisan law that extends postpartum coverage for Texas mothers from two to 12 months," said Governor Abbott. "With Texas' application approved by CMS, this postpartum extension will help Texas mothers receive high-quality healthcare across our great state. I thank the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Senator Lois Kolkhorst, and Representative Toni Rose for their work to ensure this critical postpartum extension is available to new moth-

ers in need across Texas."

"I thank Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature for standing by our families," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young. "Twelve months of postpartum coverage will help mothers across this state gain access to high-quality healthcare."

Last year, Governor Abbott signed House Bill 12 into law, which extended Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage from two to 12 months. The law will take effect on March 1, 2024. Under the state plan amendments, anyone enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP who is pregnant or becomes pregnant will be automatically enrolled for 12 months of postpartum coverage. Services covered by Medicaid and CHIP include prenatal doctor visits, prenatal vitamins, labor and delivery, and postpartum checkups.

Coverage will be auto-

matically reinstated for individuals who are not current Medicaid or CHIP recipients, but who were enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP in Texas while pregnant and are still within their 12-month postpartum period, as long as they are still residents of Texas. Their coverage will be reinstated for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Women who are enrolled in Healthy Texas Women who are still within their 12-month postpartum period will be transitioned back to full-coverage Medicaid or CHIP for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Texas projects approximately 137,000 women will benefit from 12-months postpartum coverage in fiscal year 2025. To apply for Medicaid or CHIP, call 2-1-1 and choose Option 2 or visit YourTexasBenefits.com.

COMMUNITY WATCH

Authorities seek information on Killing of Jahlil Zachary

WHO KILLED JAHLIL ZACHARY?

Reward of up to \$5,000 leading to the arrest of the suspect(s) involved in this case.

Houston, Texas - Crime Stoppers, in collaboration with the Houston Police Department's Homicide Division, is urgently seeking the public's assistance in identifying the suspect(s) responsible for the tragic murder of Jahlil Zachary.

On Saturday, December 30, 2023, 22-year-old Jahlil Zachary was shot in the 800 block of W Greens Dr. in Houston, Texas. During this harrowing incident, he was discovered conscious on the ground, having sustained multiple

gunshot wounds. Mr. Zachary revealed that the shooting took place at the "Lake." Despite efforts to save him, Mr. Zachary succumbed to the injuries inflicted during the incident.

The grieving family of Jahlil Zachary is reaching out to the community for support in bringing the perpetrator(s) to justice. The pain of losing a loved one is immeasurable, and they implore anyone with information to come forward and assist law enforcement in identifying those responsible for this heinous crime.

Crime Stoppers may pay up to \$5,000 for information leading to the identification, charging and/or arrest



JAHLIL ZACHARY

of the suspect in this case. Information may be reported by calling 713-222-TIPS (8477), submitted online at www.crimestoppers.org or through the Crime Stoppers mobile app. Only tips and calls DIRECTLY TO Crime Stoppers are anonymous and eligible for a cash reward.

House fire on Cheeves Drive in the East Little York/Homestead area

Houston Fire Department reports a House Fire in the East Little York / Homestead Area on February 16, 2024, at 5:22 p.m.

The house was located in the 10100 block of Cheeves Dr. 77016. There were no reported injuries.

Investigators reported \$175,000 in estimated damage. The cause was listed as Unintentional (unspecified short-circuit).

Firefighters arrived on scene within five minutes to find heavy smoke and fire coming from a 1-story house and made an offensive attack. The home was ventilated, and a primary search was completed. Crews protected a nearby exposure and extinguished the fire.

37 personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from Stations 64, 15, 34, 45, 32, 43, 56, 27 and 30.

Vietnam Veterans honored March 30 at American Legion Post 586

Houston, Texas March 30th, 9 am-12 pm- The American Legion Post 586 is proud to announce a special event commemorating Vietnam Veterans Day on March 30th, 2024. The event will take place at 708 E Parker Houston, TX 77076, featuring a heartfelt tribute to the brave men and women who served our nation during the Vietnam War.

The highlight of the event will be a dynamic "Coffee and Cars" showcase, where attendees can enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee while admiring classic and vintage automobiles. This engaging display will foster camaraderie and appreciation for veterans and automotive enthusiasts alike.

Additionally, the event will include a poignant lapel pin presentation, symbolizing our profound gratitude for the sacrifices made by Vietnam veterans. Each pin is a tangible token of our nation's enduring respect and appreciation for their service.

Furthermore, a special letter of proclamation will be presented, reaffirming our community's commitment to honoring and supporting our Vietnam veterans. This proclamation serves as a testament to their valor and dedication to upholding the ideals of freedom and democracy.

All veterans, their families, and community members are cordially invited to join us in this meaningful commem-

oration. Together, let us honor the legacy of our Vietnam veterans and express our heartfelt gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

****Event Details:****
****Date:** March 30th, 2024 -**
****Time:** 9 am- 12 pm -**
****Location:** American Legion Post 586 - 708 E Parker Houston, TX 77076 -**
****Admission:** Free and open to the public**

For more information, please contact Commander Dwight Rumph at 832-797-1508 or rumphd@sbcglobal.net.

Join us as we come together to honor our Vietnam veterans and express our deepest appreciation for their service to our nation.

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! Tuesday, Mar. 12, 11-12pm.**

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.

Cloud Computing - Office 365 & Google Apps

This class is currently Offered in hybrid format through Google Meets/ In-person. Register here <https://forms.office.com/r/rTQyUGd1Yy> to get a link to connect to class, (please allow 2-3 business days to receive a link)

Wednesdays at 4:00-5:45 PM:

Go beyond the basics with MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint online. In addition, we will cover Google Workspace and Apps like Sheets, Docs, Slides, Forms, Keep, calendars, Sites (for designing websites) —Level: Basic to intermediate

*Note: This class is a series of sessions about applied technology and essential job skills skills.

Topics covered: Google Workspace and Apps, Office 365, plus other free online apps.

Requirements:

- 1.Ability to log in to Gmail account or Outlook account
- 2.Register here: <https://forms.office.com/r/rTQyUGd1Yy>

3.Wait (up to three business days) for an invitation to join class

Aprenda Computers & Job Skills

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

Teen Thursdays

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, Mar. 21, 3:30 - 5:30pm.**

LEGO Night

LEGO building can be fun and creative! Children of all ages are welcome to join us. We'll provide the LEGOs and you can create whatever your imagination can come up with. We look forward to seeing you! **Happy Building! Thursday, March 21, 5-6:30pm.**

Teen Volunteer Orientation

"Do you know volunteer hours for school or scholarships? Do you want to gain work experience, but aren't sure where to start? Volunteer at Aldine Branch Library and join us for one of our mandatory volunteer orienta-

tions. During this orientation, you'll learn the responsibilities of volunteers and how to work side by side with library staff to serve the Aldine community. Saturday, Mar. 23, 2:30 - 4pm

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/qzSMsPiATL>.

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 6-8 weeks and expedited processing time is estimated at 2-3 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

American Legion Post 586 PRESENTS

Vietnam Veterans Day Coffee and Cars

March 30th 2024 9am-12pm VIETNAM WAR

708 E. Parker Rd., Houston, TX 77076

all cars and styles welcome, come enjoy free breakfast and honor our Vietnam Veterans

*FUN*FOOD*MUSIC*

Come join us for the Vietnam Veterans Day Coffee and Cars Event. The event will have free breakfast and hope to cruise over to the Vietnam Memorial right after.

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Amanda Lee, Leticia Vargas Named AISD's Top Educators; Rosalind Burns, Dr. Cedric Stewart Named District's Top Principals

Aldine ISD celebrated its top teachers and principals at the annual Educators of the Year Breakfast, held Friday, March 8 at the Hilton Houston North Hotel.

Aldine ISD Trustees, district administrators, campus administrators, teachers and business partners donned their best in blanc attire as the district celebrated Aldine's top educators.

Amanda Lee of Carmichael Elementary School was named the district's Elementary Teacher of the Year and Leticia Vargas of Davis School was named the district's Secondary Teacher of the Year.

The four Teacher of the Year finalists were Wilhemina McCraw of Impact Leadership Academy, Beverly Berryman of Johnson Elementary School, Óscar Medina of Eisenhower High School and Sokhna Kabore of Victory Early College High School.

For the fifth consecutive year, the district also announced its Rookie Educators of the Year. Ricky Ward of Johnson Elementary School was the Rookie Elementary Teacher of the Year and Ryyan Pritchett of Shotwell Middle School was the Rookie Secondary Teacher of the Year.

In addition, Aldine ISD's Principals of the Year and Rookie Principal of the Year were announced.

Rosalind Burns of Jones Primary School was the Elementary Principal of the Year, while Dr. Cedric Stewart of Houston Academy was the Secondary Principal of the Year and La'Keshia Williams of Carver High School was named the Rookie Principal of the Year.

The two overall winners, the four finalists, all Campus Teachers of the Year, the Rookie Teachers of the Year, the Principals of the Year and the Rookie Principal of the Year received monetary awards from the Aldine Education Foundation (AEF). Lee and Vargas each received two United Airlines tickets for any

destination in the continental United States, a Jostens ring certificate, a Cane's goodie bag, and Whataburger for a Year. The four finalists received Whataburger for a Year, and a Cane's goodie bag. All campus Teachers of the Year received a Cane's gift card, a polo shirt, a McDonald's tumbler and a Whataburger water bottle. Burns and Stewart each received two United Airlines tickets for any destination in the continental United States, and a Jostens ring certificate. Ward, Pritchett and Williams also received a Jostens ring certificate.

AEF Director Linda Flores Olson thanked the sponsors who underwrote and provided gifts for the breakfast. United Airlines served as Platinum Sponsor, while the East Aldine Management District, PBK and Stantec served as Gold Sponsors. Silver Sponsors were Aldine AFT, Amplify, Caldwell Companies, imagine learning, and McDonald's. Campus sponsors were Beasley Tires, Bonfire Wings, Dilly Leather Jackets, Hanz Diner, Hertz Furniture Systems, LLC, Muses3, LLC, MWA Architects, Olivier, Inc. and Tarkett. Underwriters of the breakfast were Camdon Graphics, Cane's, 4imprint, H-E-B, Jostens, Whataburger, McDonald's and United Airlines.

Chief of Staff Sheleah D. Reed announced the Elementary and Secondary Principals of the Year.

Burns has 30 years of experience in education and six years of experience as a principal. She was named principal of Jones Primary School in 2017, where she also served as an assistant principal for five years.

Burns said she knew early in life that she would choose education as her chosen profession.

"Growing up in a family of educators greatly impacted my decision to become an educator," Burns said. "As a child, I spent many hours in

my mother's classroom and on home visits while she checked on her students. I saw the relationships she built, and the joy families had when they connected. As the lead learner of my campus, I have a passion for helping others learn and grow and positively impacting student lives. I hope to leave a legacy where the people I partner with continue pursuing excellence, equity and inclusivity in education.

Reed said Stewart has 27 years of experience in education and has served as a principal for four years. Before being named principal of Houston Academy, Stewart served as an assistant principal at Hoffman Middle School.

Stewart said he strives to provide his students with all the tools they will need to be successful in life.

"I've realized that a student's success in school depends on more than just high expectations and great teaching, though both are vital," he said. "Success also demands creating systems to prevent students from slipping through the cracks, ensuring regular school attendance despite the challenges or barriers they must overcome, and addressing young people's social-emotional needs in welcoming and safe environments. Our efforts in public schools, without a doubt, establish environments where every child, regardless of race, background, or circumstances, can reach as far as their dreams and determination will take them."

Chief of Academics Dr. Faviola Cantú then introduced the Elementary Rookie Teacher of the Year and the Secondary Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Cantú said Ward serves as an inclusion teacher at Johnson Elementary School.

Ward said choosing to become an educator was a personal decision for him.

"Choosing education was a deeply personal decision rooted in my own transformative journey," Ward said. "As a



Leticia Vargas, center, was named AISD's Secondary Teacher of the Year, while Amanda Lee (to the right of Vargas) was named the district's Elementary Teacher of the Year at AISD's annual Educators of the Year Breakfast. They are pictured with AISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, the finalists, members of the AISD Board of Trustees, AISD Chief Human Resources Officer Marcia Herrera, and Linda Flores Olson of the Aldine Education Foundation.

former struggling student, I understood the importance of having guidance and relatable experiences with someone who looks like me. What I love most about teaching is the opportunity to ignite curiosity and foster a love for learning. Witnessing the moment, a concept clicks for a student and seeing their confidence grow is incredibly rewarding."

Cantú then introduced Pritchett as the Secondary Elementary Teacher of the Year.

Pritchett said she was called to be a teacher at an early age.

"I felt called to teach so that I could restore hope in children who have witnessed a world that often seems hopeless," she said. "During a time when it may feel easier to give in to pessimism, I strive to create an optimistic classroom environment where every student feels empowered to excel. My favorite part about teaching is watching my students flourish into the best versions of themselves in the classroom and outside of it. As a first-year educator, my actions have shown my students that I am forever in their corner, advocating for their future and cheering them on every step.

Lee said she revels in seeing her students grow academically and overcome their challenges.

"I teach in a structured learning classroom, where I can teach my students for multiple years instead of just one," Lee said. "One of my proudest moments regards one of my first students. When he joined my classroom, he had no academic foundations and often fought when asked to complete

any work. He is an entirely different child now. He speaks in complete sentences; he knows all his letters and is currently working on reading. Giving this student structure and believing he could grow allowed him to flourish. My greatest accomplishment is looking at where he started and where he is now and knowing that I was the guiding force behind his change."

Vargas said that although she and her family struggled while she was growing up, it was a teacher who influenced her to become a teacher.

"My family and I endured some struggles growing up, but they have always been my biggest supporters," Vargas said. "One of the biggest influences on my life was my high school teacher. With his guidance and words of wisdom, I probably would have given up on attending school. I always tell my students they will always be my kids, and I will always care and believe in them to excel. My greatest accomplishment has been helping my students further their education and seeing that come full circle. It's amazing to have inspired a student who returned this year to teach Spanish. I feel honored to mentor her and contribute to helping her flourish now as a first-year teacher and educator. My heart fills with joy knowing that I inspired her to teach just as a teacher inspired me."

Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney delivered the closing remarks.

"Congratulations and thank you to each of our Aldine ISD Teachers of the Year,"

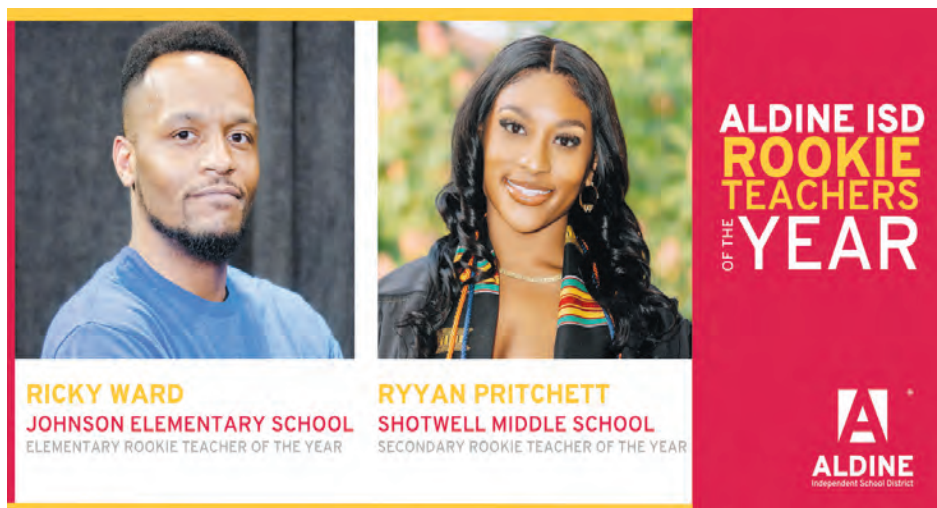
Dr. Goffney said. "On behalf of our board members, I want to congratulate our Campus Teachers of the Year, our six finalists, our Principals of the Year and our Rookie Teachers and Principal of the Year. And to our sponsors, thank you for your supporting the teachers and students of Aldine ISD through the Aldine Education Foundation. I want you to know how much we value each and every one of you, and we can't thank you enough for your dedication and devotion to our students. We absolutely cannot, cannot provide choices and opportunities for our students without our educators' passion and hard work. You have a profound influence on your students. Each of you is why we can deliver on the promise of what every Aldine ISD student deserves – an education that opens doors to choices and opportunities now and in the future. You inspire me each and every day."

Reed and Davis High School junior Caleb Davis, a member of the Superintendent's Student Ambassador Group, served as masters of ceremony for the event.

The Rooke Teachers and Teacher of the Year Committee consisted of Dr. Keena Bradley, Emily Frye, Paige Handy, Karen Hernández, Andrea Callender, Chiquita Sanders, Alva Richardson, and Kristin Wilson.

The Principals of the Year Committee consisted of Dr. Robin Williams, Ruby Allen, Georgiana Foroi, Ben Ibarra, Constance White, Dr. Kimberly Sinclair and Tracy Mansfield.

Aldine ISD Names 2023-2024 Rookie Teachers of the Year



Message From the Superintendent, March 8, 2024

Dear Aldine Community,

March is here, and there is so much to share with you. First, I am excited that we are on track to open the new Thorne Stadium, as promised, in time for the start of the 2024 football season. Before we started the project, it had been 44 years since the stadium was built. Everyone working on the project is thrilled with this state-of-the-art facility for our student-athletes, student performers, fans, and community members. And who can forget all the other performing arts events like band or watching our ROTC cadets on the field that will benefit from playing and performing in a premier facility we can take pride in.

This week, we had several community meetings planned at Conley, Gray, and Sammons elementary schools, which are set to close at the end of the '23-'24 school year. These decisions were made after careful review and evaluation of information. Aldine ISD will continue to focus on offering students choices and opportunities. These schools will maximize the use of the campuses and continue to fulfill our mission of providing a rigorous and enriching educational experience that prepares our students for college, career, and life success. Families that attended learned how the decisions were made and how it will impact students.

There are several observances in March, including Women's History Month. Our district proudly recognizes and supports Women's History Month as a time to celebrate women's incredible achievements and contributions throughout history. At Aldine, we believe in the importance of teaching our students about the pivotal role that women have played in shaping our society, and we are committed to promoting gender equality and empowering the next generation of female leaders. In this issue is a flyer with all the planned events celebrating women.

You will often hear me say that a school district is made up of its people — its staff. There are two groups of people this week — Diagnostician's Week and National School Social Worker Week. It is also SEL (social-emotional) Week. So many individuals impact students' lives every day. Thank you for all you do and for making a difference here at Aldine ISD.

Today, we celebrated our Educators of the Year Breakfast. Leadership matters, whether you lead a campus or a classroom. Principals create and sustain the environment for student learning and growth, and teachers are the backbone of education, offering guidance and dedication and giving young people the power of education. Congratulations to all the honorees!

As with every issue of this newsletter, it is full of the latest news and information. You'll find active links within the pages. One final thought: May everyone have a fun, safe, restful spring break.

With Aldine Pride!

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney Superintendent of Schools Aldine ISD

Aldine ISD named Ricky Ward from Johnson Elementary School and Ryyan Pritchett from Shotwell Middle School the 2023-2024 Rookie Teachers of the Year.

Principals were asked to nominate a stand-out Rookie Teacher on their campuses. After receiving nominations, the Teachers of the Year Committee narrowed the list to one Elementary and Secondary Rookie Teacher of the Year. From that list, the committee selected Ward and Pritchett.

Elementary Rookie Teacher of the Year

"Choosing education was a deeply personal decision rooted in my transformative journey. As a former struggling student, I understood the importance of having guidance and relatable experiences with someone who looks like me. What I love most

about teaching is the opportunity to ignite curiosity and foster a love for learning. Witnessing the moment a concept clicks for a student and seeing their confidence grow is incredibly rewarding. I want my teaching legacy to be more than just lessons and tests. I hope people remember me for teaching good values and making students enjoy learning. I want to create a space where students don't just do well in school but become kind, intelligent people who make the world better. I hope my teaching legacy inspires learning that changes lives, just as mine was changed."

-Ricky Ward
Secondary Rookie Teacher of the Year

"I felt called to teach to restore hope in children who have witnessed a world that often seems hopeless. During a time

when it may feel easier to give in to pessimism, I strive to create an optimistic classroom environment where every student feels empowered to excel. My favorite part about teaching is watching my students flourish into the best versions of themselves possible in the classroom and outside of it. As a first-year educator, my actions have shown my students that I am forever in their corner, advocating for their future and cheering them on every step. I want each student who leaves my classroom to know that it is okay to dare to dream — some dreams do come true!"

— Ryyan Pritchett
Educators of the Year Celebration

Ward and Pritchett will be celebrated at the annual Educators of the Year Breakfast on Friday, March 8.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**



HPD Not Investigating Crimes is No Surprise

I am sure you have seen the recent media coverage of a scandal that has broken, regarding the Houston Police Department routinely dropping the investigation of crimes by using a code indicating the case was being dropped for a lack of manpower. The fact that HPD was not investigating thousands of crimes should have been a surprise to absolutely no one.

In this Houston Chronicle column in 2008, I wrote about how awful HPD's clearance rates were. There has been no improvement since 2008. Here are the latest numbers for HPD from the Texas Department of Public Safety:

Offense	Percent Cleared
Murder	60%
Rape	19%
Robbery	15%
Aggravated Assault ³	28%
Burglary	5%
Larceny ⁴	4%
Auto Theft ⁵	6%
Arson	15%
Human Trafficking	21%

To be fair to HPD, the clearance rates are shockingly low for just about all law enforcement agencies. Here are the statewide averages and the clearance rates for the Harris County Sheriff's Department.

Offense	Statewide	Harris County Sheriff's Department
Murder	58%	55%
Rape	20%	9%
Robbery	22%	23%
Aggravated Assault ³	38%	54%
Burglary	9%	7%
Larceny ⁴	10%	7%
Auto Theft ⁵	7%	2%
Arson	24%	20%
Human Trafficking	35%	0%

Law enforcement predictably responds to criticism of their embarrassingly low clearance rates by complaining that it needs more resources and personnel. There is undoubtedly some validity to their complaint. But raising the clearance rate will require more than just throwing more money at law enforcement agencies.

Since I wrote my 2008 column, HPD's budget has increased by 73% (\$600MM\$1BB). That is about 20% higher than inflation. That could be explained had the department expanded to match Houston's population growth during that time, but rather its personnel has slightly declined (6,3756,254).

Some of you may recall that in 2009, Houstonians voted to allow the City to raise property taxes above the 2003 referendum cap by \$90 million. However, that increase did not result in any increase in personnel.

I agree with law enforcement that if we want to significantly move the needle on the clearance rate will take more resources. But that does not mean just blindly adding more "boots on the ground." We will have to be much smarter about how we approach the clearance rate problem.

First, we must devote more resources to forensics. While there have been some high-profile scandals about DNA tests being abused, the reality is that we have more forensics tools to solve crimes today than any time in history. But the backlogs at the Houston Forensic Science Center (HFSC) are completely unacceptable. According to its website, the average time to process a rape kit is 173 days. This is a total failure of our City to seek justice for rape victims and almost certainly contributes to HPD's abysmal 19% clearance rate for rapes, which is a disgrace. The backlog for firearm examination is a jaw-dropping 307 days.

Second, we must do more to prioritize investigation rather than patrol. I know that seeing a patrol car rolling through a neighborhood makes people feel safer, but actually taking dangerous criminals off the street will actually make them safer.

In this year's budget, about 22% of HPD's headcount (1,352) is assigned to investigation. That percentage has been gradually increasing in recent years but I would argue it has not increased nearly enough. There are a little over double that number assigned to patrol (2,874). About a third of the department's personnel are assigned to support, administrative, airport security, and other miscellaneous areas. I think the department should take a hard look at what support and administrative services could be outsourced or handled by civilian employees to increase the number of investigators.

Another idea I heard from one retired officer is to bring back retired detectives to work on cases on a contract basis. I am sure a detailed review of the department's operations would discover other ways to increase our investigative efforts. A better use of technology is likely one.

But if we want to solve more crimes, it must be made a priority. When I was running companies, one of my mantras was, "if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it." So, clearance rates should be reported by HPD on a monthly basis. And we need to start paying attention to the clearance rates. The media needs to start paying attention to the clearance rates. When is the last time you heard the media report how awful the clearance rates are? I suspect never.

But most of all, City Council needs to start paying attention to the clearance rates and demanding answers from the Department as to why the rates are so low. The upcoming budget hearings would be an excellent time to do so.

Until we, as a community, demand better performance from all of our law enforcement agencies at solving crimes, the vast majority of victims will continue to be denied justice for the crimes committed against them. That should be on all of our consciences.

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**



Massive Wildfires Ignited by Power Lines

Two wildfires that burned more than 1 million acres in the Panhandle were caused by downed power lines, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Juan Rodriguez, with the service, told the Texas Standard that its law enforcement investigators had concluded their probe into the source of the Smokehouse Creek and Windy Deuce fires.

"In this case, we saw winds that were over 60 and 70 miles an hour. And so, when the winds are doing that, driving down the roadways, you can just see power lines just bouncing up and down," Rodriguez said. "It's bound to cause one of these power lines to fail or something like that. So, you know, one of them or some of them may have fallen or just got out just due to the sheer wind."

Xcel Energy last Thursday issued a statement acknowledging that its facilities "appear to have been involved in an ignition of the Smokehouse Creek fire."

The company is urging people who lost property or livestock during the fires to submit a claim to the company.

As of Sunday, the Smokehouse Creek fire was 87% contained, while the Windy Deuce fire was 92% contained.

SOME INCUMBENTS LOSE IN PRIMARY

At least nine Texas House incumbents targeted by Gov. Greg Abbott and others lost bids for reelection in the March primary, while eight more are headed to runoff, The Dallas Morning News reported.

In addition, three sitting judges on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals lost their races after Attorney General Ken Paxton and former President Donald Trump endorsed their opponents.

Abbott spent more than \$6 million to target incumbents who blocked his school choice proposal last year.

"He's made it clear that if you cross him, you're going to have to fight for your reelection," Austin-based lobbyist and political consultant Bill Miller said. "For some people, that's like, 'Bring it on.' For others, it means, 'I quit.'"

House Speaker Dade Phelan faces a runoff without support from Abbott, who thus far has remained neutral in



that race. Paxton and Trump backed his opponent, David Covey, after the House voted to impeach Paxton on corruption charges. The Senate ultimately acquitted Paxton.

Phelan trailed Covey in the March primary and called the upcoming runoff a battle for the "soul" of the Southeast Texas district.

"In the next couple of months, the deceit and vitriol we've witnessed from my opponent and his dark money allies is poised to escalate to even greater heights," he said in a statement.

The Texas runoff election for races where no candidate exceeded 50% is on May 28. Early voting begins on May 20 and ends on May 24.

CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK PLACED UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP

The state's largest charter school network has been placed under conservatorship by the Texas Education Agency following a three-year investigation into its spending practices, the Texas Tribune reported. The arrangement is part of a settlement agreement between TEA and IDEA Public Schools, which has 143 campuses.

During the investigation, TEA learned IDEA officials used taxpayer dollars to purchase luxury driver services and spent \$15 million to lease a private jet.

IDEA's schools serve about 80,000 students in grades K-12. While independently run, they are funded with state money, totaling about \$821 million in the current school year.

Under the arrangement, conservators have the authority to oversee and direct all district actions, though they will not fully take over governing the district.

IDEA said in a statement

that it's "pleased to have reached a settlement agreement ... to resolve compliance issues our organization self-reported to regulators after an internal investigation in 2021."

TPWD APPROVES LAND SWAP WITH SPACE X

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission last week voted unanimously to swap 43 acres of state park to SpaceX in exchange for nearly 500 acres of privately-owned land near Port Isabel, the Texas Standard reported. The decision came despite hearing from Rio Grande Valley residents who opposed the swap.

The Boca Chica State Park land sought by SpaceX, owned by Elon Musk, is spread around the company's launch facilities. It contains some of the most sensitive habitats in the world, particularly for migrating shorebirds.

SpaceX has not purchased the 477 acres yet. TPWD will now conduct an environmental assessment of the land, which will include a 30-day comment period.

Dozens of Rio Grande Valley residents drove to Austin to attend the hearing and voice opposition. They questioned including why the hearing wasn't held in Brownsville.

"The process, the notice and this public meeting seems to have been intended to impede participation by the public, especially those who would be most impacted by the decision," Marisa Perales, an environmental justice attorney based in Austin, told commissioners.

COUNTIES BRACE FOR MASSIVE TRAFFIC AHEAD OF ECLIPSE

Hundreds of thousands of tourists are expected to flock to the Hill Country and other small towns in the prime viewing path of a rare solar eclipse on April 8. Some counties have already issued emergency declarations to help them prepare and respond to an expected strain on their infrastructure, The Dallas Morning News reported.

Bell and Kerr counties have already issued emergency declarations, and San Saba County is expected to do so as well. Hill Country officials are urging residents to stay home, avoid driving, refill prescriptions, buy groceries and fuel vehicles several days before the eclipse.

Some counties expect their population to double or even triple as folks flock to Texas to glimpse the rare phenomenon.

When the moon passes between the sun and Earth, the eclipse will result in total darkness for more than four minutes in areas in the path of totality. It will enter the state southwest of Uvalde at 12:10 p.m. and exit at 3:06 p.m. north of Texarkana.

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. E m a i l : gbborders@texaspress.com

THE POSTSCRIPT
By **Carrie Classon**

Rod Stewart Hair



"I like your hair!" a woman at the party said.

This is always nice to hear. My hair is my least endearing feature, primarily because there is not much of it. But since my husband, Peter, started cutting it, I worry a lot less.

"How does my hair look?" I ask as I head out the door. Peter always pretends to take this question very seriously. (He should, as my hairdresser.) He scrutinizes the top of my head for a long moment. He asks me to turn all the way around. Then he reaches over and tousles something on the top.

"Perfect!" he says. And I choose to believe him.

"My husband cuts it," I told the woman at the party. "He cuts his own hair, too!"

"Ooh! Isn't that hard?" "He's been doing it since he was 17, when the local barber wouldn't give him the haircut he wanted."

This is true. Peter started cutting his hair when the barber was threatening to give him a buzz cut—because that was the only kind of haircut he gave. Peter got up from the barber chair, walked out, and cut it himself. I like that story. Peter has always known what he wanted and has always figured he could learn new things.

"Don't tell people I cut my own hair!" Peter told me on the walk home.

"Why not?" "They'll think I'm strange." "You're married to me! I think they may have already formed an opinion."

Peter granted this was true. As it happens, I was feeling particularly pleased with my hair that evening because Peter had given me a haircut just that morning. Usually, the haircuts were his idea.

"Your hair could use a trim," he will announce in a way that makes it clear I am looking pretty scruffy. So I put on a raincoat, and raise my office chair as high as it will go, and he gets out his sharp scissors that make a satisfying "Snick! Snick! Snick!" noise and, in less than five minutes, he has cut my hair. He doesn't have much to work with, after all.

But this time, getting a haircut was my idea. I'd just watched an interview with Rod Stewart, the iconic rock star. He is 79 years old, and he has just released a jazz album. He is also a keen builder of model trains. But I was more interested in his hair than either his jazz or his trains. His hair looked great. I wondered how a man approaching 80 managed to have such ineffable style, and I decided it was, in large part, because he wasn't too worried about being tidy. Rod Stewart has the untidiest hair you're likely to find on an octogenarian (outside a long-term senior care facility), and I decided he was my new role model. His music is good. But his hair is terrific.

"I want hair like Rod Stewart!" I announced, after watching the interview, and Peter got out his noisy little scissors and set to work.

I'm not saying I look like Rod Stewart. I don't. He has a lot more hair and a lot more experience looking unkempt. But I woke up this morning and looked at myself in the mirror. I left the comb on the shelf. I ran my fingers through my hair and made it stand a little more on end than usual.

"How do you like your haircut?" my hairstylist asked.

"I love it," I told him. "I look just like Rod Stewart!"

"You do," he said. And I choose to believe him. Till next time, Carrie

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SPANISH PAGE

8 DE MARZO DE 2024 **ALDINE**
Independent School District

CRÓNICAS DE GOFFNEY

El Boletín Oficial de la Superintendente de Escuelas

Dra. LaTonya M. Goffney
Superintendente de Escuelas

Orgullosa de nuestro distrito!



El Boletín Oficial de la Superintendente de Escuelas

Estimada Comunidad de Aldine ISD:
Marzo ya está aquí y hay mucho que compartir con ustedes. Primero, estoy entusiasmada de que estemos en camino de abrir el nuevo estadio Thorne Stadium, como prometimos, a tiempo para el inicio de la temporada de fútbol de 2024. Antes de iniciar el proyecto, habían pasado 44 años desde que el estadio fue construido. Todos los que trabajan en el proyecto están entusiasmados con este nuevo estadio para nuestros alumnos-atletas, fanáticos y miembros de la comunidad. ¿Y quién puede olvidar todos los demás eventos de artes escénicas, como banda o ver a nuestros cadetes del ROTC en el campo, que se beneficiarán de tocar y actuar en una instalación de primer nivel de la que podemos estar orgullosos.

Esta semana, realizamos varias reuniones comunitarias en las escuelas primarias Conley, Gray y Sammons, que cerrarán al final del año escolar '23-'24. Estas decisiones se tomaron después de una cuidadosa revisión y evaluación de información. Aldine ISD continuará enfocándose en ofrecer opciones y oportunidades a los alumnos. Estas escuelas maximizarán el uso de los colegios y continuarán cumpliendo nuestra misión de brindar una experiencia educativa rigurosa y enriquecedora que prepare a nuestros alumnos para el éxito universitario, profesional y en la vida. Padres que asistieron a las reuniones escucharon cómo se tomaron las decisiones y cómo afectarán a los alumnos.

Hay varias celebraciones en marzo, incluido el Mes de la Historia de la Mujer. Nuestro distrito reconoce y apoya con orgullo el Mes de la Historia de la Mujer como un momento para celebrar los increíbles logros y contribuciones de las mujeres a lo largo de la historia. En Aldine, creemos en la importancia de enseñar a nuestros alumnos sobre el papel fundamental que han desempeñado las mujeres en la configuración de nuestra sociedad y estamos comprometidos a promover la igualdad de género y empoderar a la próxima generación de mujeres líderes. En este número hay un folleto con todos los eventos planificados para celebrar a la mujer.

A menudo me oírán decir que un distrito escolar está formado por su gente: su personal. Hay dos grupos de personas esta semana: la Semana del Diagnóstico y la Semana Nacional del Trabajador Social Escolar. También es la Semana SEL (social-emocional). Muchas personas impactan la vida de los alumnos todos los días. Gracias por todo lo que hacen y por marcar la diferencia aquí en AISD.

Hoy celebraremos nuestro Desayuno para los Educadores del Año. El liderazgo importa, ya sea que dirija un colegio o un aula. Los directores crean y mantienen el entorno para el aprendizaje y el crecimiento de los alumnos, y los maestros son la columna vertebral de la educación, ofrecen orientación y dedicación y brindan a los jóvenes el poder de la educación. ¡Felicidades a todos los homenajeados!

Como ocurre con cada número de este boletín, está lleno de las últimas noticias e información. Encontrarás enlaces activos dentro de las páginas. Un último pensamiento: que todos disfruten de unas vacaciones de primavera divertidas, seguras y relajantes.

Orgullosa de nuestro distrito,
Dra. LaTonya M. Goffney Superintendente Aldine ISD

Resumen de la celebración del Mes de la Historia Afroamericana de Aldine ISD



Durante febrero, los estudiantes y el personal de Aldine ISD reflexionaron sobre el viaje empoderador del Mes de la Historia Afroamericana dentro del distrito. El tema de este año fue el ARTE como plataforma para la justicia social.

Desde debates hasta actuaciones, Aldine ISD celebró el arte, la creatividad y las inestimables contribuciones de la comunidad negra. Cada evento se centró en la unidad, la educación y la búsqueda continua de la igualdad. A continuación se muestra un resumen de algunos de los eventos que Aldine ISD organizó para celebrar el Mes de la Historia Afroamericana.

Algunos de los eventos fueron:

Un concurso de oratoria, «El poder transformador del arte». Incluidos alumnos de primaria, escuela intermedia y secundaria

Exhibiciones de arte en los edificios administrativos

«Expresiones de excelencia: Contribuciones afroamericanas a las artes... Pasado, presente y futuro» Debate y discurso

Celebración a través de la palabra escrita (estudio de libros)

Celebrando con los padres, Historia del Comité de la Herencia Negra de la Exposición Ganadera y Rodeo de Houston

Celebrando a través de

Delicias Culinarias

Celebrando con nuestros estudiantes, School Yard Rap

En todo el distrito, el Mes de la Historia Afroamericana inspiró a los estudiantes y miembros del personal a celebrar y apreciar la historia.

Comité BHM: Dra. Tracy Bailey, Dra. Marcie Strahan, Dra. Crystal Watson, Dra. Shanaya Anderson, Dra. Robin Williams, LaTashia Abrams, Gina Foroi, Refugio Rodríguez, Kaileigh Newman, Carolina Pinales, Karen Strahan, Brooke Martin, Ivan Tamayo, Nicole Robertson, Kenyatta Herring, John Hickman, Dra. Dametra Skinner

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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 2 Thessalonians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Titus 1, Paul wrote that unto the pure all things are ...? Gold, Righteous, Worthy, Pure
3. What archangel is mentioned by name in the book of Jude? Gabriel, Silas, Michael, Melchizedek
4. In 1 Kings 21, who forbid Naboth to give his vineyard to Ahab? The Lord, Jezebel, Absalom, Balaam

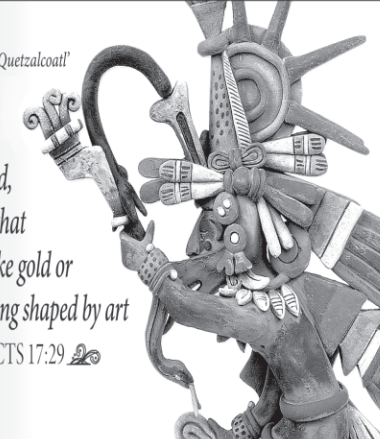
5. Jared was the father of Enoch and lived how many years? 110, 450, 600, 962
6. In Psalm 103:5, what bird's youth is renewable? Dove, Eagle, Raven, Swallow

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Pure, 3) Michael (Jude 1:9), 4) The Lord, 5) 962, 6) Eagle
 "Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Detail of sculpture of Aztec god 'Quetzalcoatl'

Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ACTS 17:29



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Martin Freeman, left, and Jenna Ortega star in "Miller's Girl."

"Miller's Girl"

"Miller's Girl" (R) — Martin Freeman ("Black Panther: Wakanda Forever") and Jenna Ortega ("Wednesday") star opposite each other in this erotic thriller, produced by Seth Rogen. Ortega portrays Cairo Sweet, an 18-year-old Tennessean girl who lives alone in her family's mansion. Cairo begins taking the creative writing class of Jonathan Miller (Freeman), a semi-successful author who is impressed by Cairo's extensive knowledge of literature. Cairo's best friend, Winnie (Gideon Adlon), raves about the idea of a teacher-student affair and even convinces Cairo to seduce Miller. Cairo does attempt to entice Miller, but the repercussions that follow are quite dangerous. Out now to rent. (Prime Video)

Willy Wonkawas such a success at the box office that it became the eighth highest-grossing film of 2023. Starring Timothee Chalamet as the title character, the movie kicks off in a dreary 1934 Europe, where Willy arrives with a few coins in his pocket and an intention to establish his own chocolate shop. However, a grimy pair of locals hoodwink Willy into staying at their boarding house, tricking him into signing a contract that he wouldn't be able to pay off for years. Not to mention, the rival chocolatiers won't let him sell chocolate anywhere in the town. But even with all the odds stacked against him, the happy-go-lucky chocolatier is determined not to fail. Co-starring a great ensemble cast, including Calah Lane, Keegan-Michael Key, Sally Hawkins and Olivia Colman, "Wonka" is out now. (Max)

"Damsel" (PG-13) — Millie Bobby Brown ("Stranger Things") leads this dark-fantasy film out now! Elodie (Brown) is a princess whose father has found a match for her in Prince Henry (Nick Robinson). Ever the dutiful daughter, Elodie agrees to marry Prince Henry, amid warnings from her stepmother, Lady Bayford (Angela Bassett), that she doesn't trust his family, especially his mother, Queen Isabelle (Robin Wright). Elodie quickly discovers this for herself after participating in a ceremony that leads to the prince himself chucking her into a cave with a dragon to repay an ancient debt. Stuck with nothing but the clothes on her back, Elodie must outwit the fearsome dragon to escape the cave in one piece. (Netflix)

"Love Island: All Stars" (TV-MA) — You might've heard of the "Love Island" dating game show and its many versions around the world. But the U.K. series came back in a major way with a season featuring former contestants and fan favorites from previous seasons. The show follows its original format, with a handful of men and women who enter the "Love Island" villa for a few weeks and "couple up with" another contestant to win the prize money of 50,000 pounds. But you should expect some insane twists along the way, in true "Love Island" style. Notable contestants are footballer Tom Clare, Georgia Steel ("Celebs on the Ranch"), former Playboy Bunny Hannah Elizabeth and Chris Taylor ("Barbie"). The full season is out now! (Peacock)

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Q: When does Lisa Vanderpump's new show premiere? Will any of the cast of "Vanderpump Rules" be in it? — K.J.

A: "Vanderpump Villa" will debut on Hulu beginning April 1. It features an all-new cast selected to work at an exclusive French estate by "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" alum (and restaurateur) Lisa Vanderpump.

According to Hulu, each episode follows her elite staff working and living together 24/7 while they try to provide a curated experience for their guests. Meanwhile, Vanderpump is also deciding whether she wants to make this French pop-up experience — and its staff — a full-time business for her growing empire.

Q: What happened to the show "Elsbeth"? They aired one episode, and now it's gone. Has it been canceled already? — C.I.

A: You're not the only one to ask. The new detective show — and spin-off of "The Good Wife" and "The Good Fight" — generated fantastic ratings when it premiered in late February, attracting 4.5 million viewers to CBS. The show stars Carrie Preston as a quirky but whip-smart, "Columbo"-type lawyer from Chicago who ends up in the Big Apple. Don't worry, though; it's coming back.

The show begins by revealing who the murderer is each week to the audience, similar to another hit show, Peacock's "Poker Face." But don't let this deter you! The fun is watching Elsbeth outwit the NYPD and trick the suspect into confessing. Her purpose is to observe the police force for any corruption, but she somehow always ends up solving their cases.

In addition to Preston, "Elsbeth" has a solid cast that includes Wendell Pierce, Carra Patterson and Gloria Reuben. Guest stars include a who's who from past hit sitcoms, including Jesse Tyler Ferguson ("Modern Family"), Jane Krakowski ("30 Rock"), Retta ("Parks and Recreation") and Linda Lavin ("Alice").

Unfortunately, "Elsbeth" had to go on a four-week hiatus because of President Biden's State of the Union Address and the NCAA March Madness tournament. CBS plans to re-air the pilot before "Elsbeth" returns with its second episode on April 4.



Lisa Vanderpump ("Vanderpump Villa")

Q: Is it true that Eddie Van Halen's son played guitar on the "Barbie" soundtrack? I thought I saw the name "Van Halen" in the credits. — N.N.

A: Yes, Wolfgang Van Halen, son of the late "Van Halen" guitarist Eddie Van Halen, ended up on the "Barbie" soundtrack by chance, but also because of his talent. He met the movie's music producer Mark Ronson while performing at the Taylor Hawkins' tribute concert in 2022. The two became friends, and Ronson asked him if he'd collaborate on the fabulous composition titled "I'm Just Ken." He even performed the song on stage alongside Ryan Gosling's Ken at the Academy Awards this month, along with another great electric guitarist — Slash from Guns N' Roses.

"I'm Just Ken" was not only nominated for an Oscar, but made it into the Top 5 of Billboard's Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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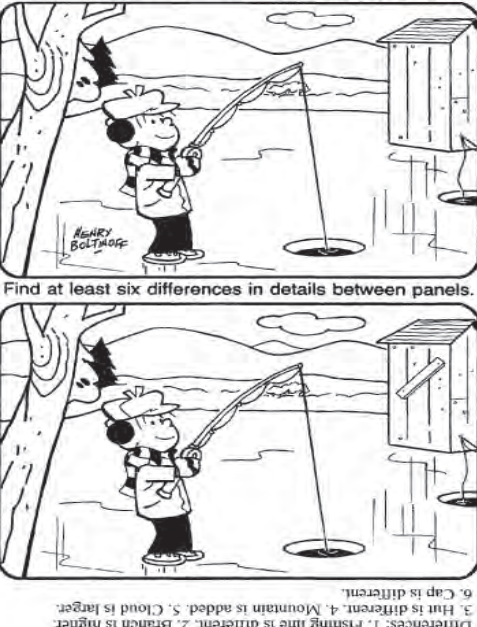
The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid by Linda Thistle with difficulty indicators and instructions.

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff



March 18, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

King Crossword puzzle grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues and a solution time of 26 mins.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. LITERATURE: What is the name of the kingdom in "The Princess Bride"?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: In British royalty, what is King Charles' family name?
3. TELEVISION: Which TV sitcom features Sheldon's catchphrase "Bazinga!?"
4. U.S. STATES: Which U.S. state is home to the Awatovi Ruins, a national historic landmark?
5. HISTORY: According to a WWII government slogan, what sinks ships?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What is the name of the small principality that lies between Spain and France?
7. ANATOMY: Which part of the brain controls hunger?
8. LANGUAGE: The Latin word "caput" refers to what part of the human anatomy?
9. SCIENCE: Which color has the longest wavelength in the visible spectrum?
10. FOOD & DRINK: What is the primary alcohol used in margaritas?

Solution time: 26 mins. King Crossword Answers

1. Florin.; 2. Mountbatten-Windsor.; 3. "The Big Bang Theory"; 4. Arizona.; 5. Loose lips.; 6. Andorra.; 7. Hypothalamus.; 8. The head.; 9. Red.; 10. Tequila.



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Lone Star College recognized for supporting students



Lone Star College was recognized for supporting students from underrepresented groups who seek careers in business.

HOUSTON – Lone Star College received the Insight Into Diversity magazine’s 2024 Inspiring Programs in Business Award for providing comprehensive support for students from underrepresented groups who seek careers in business.

“Lone Star College is committed to ensuring all students receive the support necessary to help them reach their academic goals,” said Mario K. Castillo, J.D., LSC chancellor. “This recognition validates the dedication of our faculty and staff to our students and I am grateful for those efforts.”

In all, Insight Into Diversity magazine recognized 27 institutions and organizations nationwide. Winners were selected for their efforts to inspire and encourage a new generation of young people to consider careers in business through mentoring, teaching, research

and successful programs and initiatives.

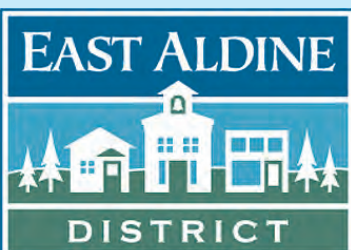
“We know that business programs are not always recognized for their success, dedication and mentorship for underrepresented students,” said Lenore Pearlstein, owner and publisher of Insight Into Diversity magazine in a statement. “We are thrilled to recognize those that create pathways for students who seek careers in a wide range of business sectors.”

Institutions and organizations recognized include Louisiana Tech University, Miami University, Syracuse University, The University of Oklahoma and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

“Lone Star College is proud to be in the company of such an elite group of colleges and universities who understand the importance of making sure all students seeking business careers get the

support and resources necessary to lead a better life,” said Carlecia Wright, LSC chief culture and engagement officer.

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.



East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

Resale shop lives up to its “Renewed Blessings” name

February 29th, 2024 | My East Aldine



Lisa Coronado

The Renewed Blessings Resale Shop in East Aldine offers retail “therapy at its very best” — guilt-free bargain shopping for a good cause.

From authentic rodeo gear to sparkling wedding gowns and designer First Communion dresses, the well-organized shop sells thousands of treasures to benefit the programs of the Buckner Family Hope Center.

Manager Lisa Coronado and her assistant Frances Ramirez have been working diligently to switch from winter to spring merchandise in the five sections of the store, which includes a women’s “designer” clothing section. In the process, they untangled a mountain of recently donated necklaces, earrings and rings from a defunct



boutique.

And they have carefully organized, by size, dozens of tiny, barely worn outfits in a cute room that feels like the location of a recent baby shower. Another room features clothes for larger kids, including shoes; a room featuring men’s wear; and bargain-priced women’s wear.

There’s also a section for small household goods and décor, as well as children’s toys and backpacks. That includes – surprisingly in land-locked East Aldine – a weather-proof scuba diving suit.

What makes the store unique, however, is the exemplary customer service that Coronado and Ramirez provide.

A new customer furnishing her first apartment had picked out a large faux ficus tree, but Coronado first insisted she leave it at the store so that she could completely dust it. When customers call looking for a particular item, the women often recognize their voices and call them by their first names.

Frances Ramirez

They provide a walker, equipped with a seat, for older customers who want to shop but often need to sit down before finishing. Or sometimes, Coronado said, “They really just want to come in and look around and talk.”

Coronado, who has worked in the store for five years, grew up with her grandmother after her mother died.

Through grateful tears, she said: “It might be that I am able to understand people who are in need.”

“Seeing them happy with the things they have found makes me happy,” Coronado said. “I’m seeing a lot of new residents from Honduras who are just starting out here. And they are so happy to be able to afford our merchandise.”

Renewed Blessings blesses its regular customers with a system called “key tag” savings. Customers who buy a \$5 key tag are entitled to enjoy generous savings – up to 75 percent off, on certain sale days. The shop also has “specials” each month.

All sales from Renewed Blessings benefit the community programs provided by the Buckner Family Center. All customers leave the store with a list of those services. For some, the store is their introduction to a range of services that range from after-school programs for children to counseling or other family services, such as financial empowerment.

The Buckner Family Hope Center is planning to move to a new location later this year, just 6.5 miles from its current location.

Renewed Blessings is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Although the store does not sell large furniture items, arrangements are sometimes made for such donations. Area residents who wish to donate clothing or other items are encouraged to call 281-449-4835.

— By Anne Marie Kilday

