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# NORTHEAST NEWS

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See Page 7 for Your Chance to Win 4 Free Tickets to the TRF. Value \$160.

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VOL. 48, NO. 44 TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

**NEWS NOTES**

**East Aldine Christmas Tree Lighting Dec. 6**

East Aldine Christmas Tree Lighting & Holiday Kick-Off. Friday Dec. 6 from 6pm - 9pm at the Amphitheatre. Tree Lighting at 7pm.  
Holiday Decorations, Music, Food, Santa's Elves. Family entertainment to start the Holiday Season.

**HCSO Turkey Giveaway Thurs. Nov. 21**

The Harris County Sheriff's Office will be hosting a Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution on Thursday, November 21st starting at 10am, while supplies last. One turkey per family. For more information call: 346-286-3125. Location details below:  
Guanajuato Supermarket  
5429 E. Mt. Houston Houston, TX 77093

**BakerRipley 2024 Holiday Toy Drive**

Every Toy Counts. Help make their Holiday Bright.  
Support the BakerRipley Community Center by purchasing a toy from Amazon.  
BakerRipley East Aldine Campus, 3000 Aldine Mail Route Road, Houston, TX 77039. Follow this link to order a toy from Amazon: <https://shorturl.at/ActUr>.

## Vet Fest honors those who served

By Monica Campos

Uniting as a community, the East Aldine Management District pays tribute to the unwavering dedication and sacrifice of our Veterans.

In the heart of East Aldine, we gathered to honor and celebrate Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice. The program included a welcome by Deputy Executive Director, Veronica Sanches and patriotic music by Ashley Ramirez, a recent graduate from MacArthur HS and a current music major at the University of Houston.

In addition, we had the MacArthur JROTC for the presentation of colors and representatives from Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia's office who presented Certificates of Recognition for all of our Veterans in attendance.

Images were displayed of dozens of Veterans on our "Wall of Honor" and



PRESENTATION OF COLORS BY THE MACARTHUR JROTC.



VETERANS DISPLAY CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION FROM CONGRESSWOMAN SYLVIA GARCIA.

attendees received a patriotic bag, calendar, and other red-white-and-blue trinkets to commemorate the day. There was a lot of excitement for the raffles which even included an American Flag display case.

We appreciate our vendors who offered resources and information and our local Westfield Fire Department and Little York Fire Department for welcoming our Veterans with a giant American flag displayed on their fire truck.

A big thank you to our emcee Selina Valdez, US Marine Corps Veteran, along with our partners and community for coming out to support and honor our Veterans. Follow us on social media and visit our website [AldineDistrict.org](http://AldineDistrict.org) to stay connected.

MORE VET FEST PHOTOS ON PAGE 8

## Erreguin named new Events Manager at EAD

Emily Erreguin recently joined the East Aldine Management District as the Community Engagement & Events Coordinator. An experienced events planner, Emily has a passion for creating memorable experiences and looks forward to planning and executing special events, activities, and programs that strengthen connections within the Aldine community.

Prior to joining the East Aldine Management District, Emily spent 10 years



EMILY ERREGUIN

Continued. See EAST ALDINE EVENTS MANAGER, Page 2

## County Uplift 2.0 okayed by court to proceed

Provides Financial Assistance for Low Income Families

HARRIS COUNTY – A District Court has approved a revised Harris County program to support low-income families.

Harris County is moving forward with an initiative that provides financial aid to Houstonians that need it most.

On Friday, the Harris County Attorney's Office confirmed that the 165th District Court had denied the Texas Attorney General's Office's attempt to shut down the plan, which is titled the "Community Prosperity Program."

The program will provide financial sup-

port to approved families that are living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. The aid will be handled on preloaded debit cards that are restricted to essential items like housing, utilities, transportation, groceries and bill payments.

The Community Prosperity Program.

Continued. See UPLIFT 2.0, Page 8

## Report cites lack of Academic Progress at Aldine ISD

District says Data is not Up-to-Date; misses recent improvements

By Gilbert Hoffman

A recent published article on the Houston Landing website has called out the Aldine ISD District as failing to achieve any meaningful progress in Academic benchmarks, since the beginning of Superintendent LaTonya Goffney's appointment in 2018. The study is part of a project that Houston Landing is undertaking with its team of education reporters. Houston Landing is a well funded independent news source covering matters in the Houston region.

As part of the research for their article, HL as-

sembled data from the State Texas Education Agency, and compared it to districts that were similar in size and demographics. Pasadena and Alief were used as comparisons, as well as Fort Worth and Irving. The article focused on Aldine because it ranked lowest in improvement among similar districts.

Specifically, HL cited the following problems in the Aldine District:

- 30% teacher turnover, 20% teachers without experience
- 50% of new teachers uncertified
- Only 80% of students graduate on time, among

the lowest rate in Texas, and little improvement in Goffney's tenure

- Only 50% of graduates ready for college or career
- Test scores in Math and Reading are lower than comparable districts, and rate of improvement is lower.

However, Aldine administration stated that the article did not take into account STAAR test scores for 2024, where reading and math scores improved by as much as 4%.

When questioned about why Aldine District has lack of improvement and

Continued. See ACADEMIC PROGRESS AT ALDINE ISD, Page 2

### FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 12:

Texans look to take control of AFC South against Titans: No. 8 Indiana has tough task against No. 2 Ohio State

Things are winding down in the college football season, and as teams prepare to take on their traditional rivals during the Thanksgiving weekend, there is a huge game in the Big 10 this Saturday.

No. 8-ranked Indiana, one of, if not, the best stories of the 2024 season takes its 10-0 record to No. 2-ranked Ohio State on Saturday. The Hoosiers aren't just a basketball school anymore, not since they hired Curt Cignetti from James Madison. Cignetti forged a 52-9 record at James Madison and brought his Midas touch to Indiana, where he just keeps winning.

Cignetti's team will face its toughest test of the season against a Buckeye team that is rolling and has its sights set on not only a Big 10 title, but a national title as well.



This should be a good one in Columbus on Saturday.

There aren't a lot of big games on the college schedule this weekend, aside from the clash in Columbus, but there is an interesting one slated for Yankee Stadium in New York where No. 25-ranked Army (9-0) will face No. 10-ranked Notre Dame. This game used to be one of the biggest in college football back in the '40s and '50s, but has lost a big of its significance due to the fact Army struggled to be

relevant over the last few decades, but this Black Knights team is one of the top rushing teams in the nation and will face its sternest test against an Irish defense that has allowed just nine points a game through their first nine contests.

No. 11-ranked Alabama heads to Norman to take on the disappointing Sooners, who could very well be playing for

Continued. See KEENEY'S KORNER, Page 5

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

Friend, Thank You  
Armando Walle State Representative District 140 Democrat

We're headed to Austin again, Friend, and I have you to thank. I've been honored to have the support of our community over the past decade and a half as I've served as YOUR Texas Representative. It's because of you that we'll be heading into the Capitol ready to deliver for our families.

There's no denying what we saw on election night. Up and down the ballot, GOP victories in Texas have set the stage for what will be one of Texas' most defining moments.

We cannot retreat. We have an obligation to stand up for what's right, and commit to building an infrastructure that amplifies working class power and strengthens the bonds of our communities over the next few years.

Abbott is declaring victory. But we have a whole year ahead of us, a year that can be defined by the effort we put into making sure our state's future is not hamstrung by extremism and corporate capture.

We're in position to continue fighting for a better future because of your grassroots support. So thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Gracias,  
Rep. Armando Walle

## East Aldine Events Manager,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with Aldine ISD, initially as a business associate for the Facilities, Planning and Construction department. Most recently, she

served as the Executive Business and Events Associate for their Communications and Outreach department, where she

was responsible for developing and executing event strategies for the school district's signature events.

## Academic Progress at Aldine ISD,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lower test scores, the administration points to several factors:

- COVID occurred in the middle of the six-year period under the study, and schools were closed for several months
- During the COVID closures, students studied on-line, which was not as good as in person, and put them behind in learning
- Teacher shortages, both locally and statewide make recruiting and retention more difficult. Superintendent Goffney was quoted as saying 'If we don't have the best teachers... we will continue to struggle.'
- Goffney claims that at the start of her tenure, the students were not as prepared as she expected, and therefore they had more learning required to catch up.

The Aldine administration is working on a number of Initiatives to deal with these problems, and to bring up the test results in these categories, according to a meeting that this newspaper held with the administration. These include:

- A new approach to Literacy (Reading)
- The overhaul of two of the lowest performing schools with the ACE program (Best teachers, longer hours)
- Joined a System of Great Schools state program
- A New campus for im-

migrants (La Promesa)

- A Health Academy at Nimitz
- Young Woman's Academy, All Boys School
- Avalos P-Tech high school
- Collaboration with Lone Star College, Rice, and University of Houston
- Longer school year and 30 more school days

In addition, teacher recruitment has been successful and schools are now 95% staffed, they said. Newer teachers are mentored and coached on all campuses. To be competitive, starting salaries had been raised to compare favorably with other districts.

Spokesperson for the District Sheila Adams pointed out that the HL article did not include data from the most recent year, and therefore did not reflect some improvements. Cited were a drop in absenteeism by 7%, and improvement in reading and math scores, and graduation rates, although these gains have been slight.

One example of an Initiative and improvement is Victory Early College High School, with a 100% graduation rate, and 66% of its graduates going on to college. This compares with MacArthur, where only 83% graduated, and 33% went on to college.

The Aldine community, and especially the parents, seem satisfied with

the district and its performance, according to interviews that HL had with parents. The School Board has rated Goffney highly, and continued her contract. Board president Kimberly Booker said that Goffney brings "excitement" and "innovation" to the district, and notes she has a high reputation in the educational field in the state. However, State Representative Armando Walle, a MacArthur graduate, noted that the statistics "speak for themselves" and could be better. Pct. 2 County Commissioner Adrian Garcia said that "Aldine ISD must rethink its approach."

Superintendent Goffney has said that due to the factors such as COVID and the teacher shortage, she needs more time for her Initiatives to show their effectiveness to bring improvements in the scores. She is quoted as saying "God knows... we are not where we want to be, but we are working hard to get there."

The District is now implementing a new five-year improvement plan, entitled "Accelerate." This plan sets goals of about 10% improvement in 3rd and 8th grade math and reading scores, and 12% increase in CCMR, or College and Career and Military readiness after graduation.

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**SCORES & SCHEDULES WEEK 12**

**PLAYOFFS WEEK 1**

**LAST WEEK'S SCORES**

**THURSDAY 6A, Division 1**  
Galena Park North Shore 56, Deer Park 13

**FRIDAY 6A, Division 1**  
Conroe 34, Aldine Davis 7  
The Woodlands 42, Aldine Nimitz 20

**5A, Division 1**  
Barbers Hill 84, Houston Sterling 13  
College Station 41,

Crosby 10  
Port Arthur Memorial 70, Galena Park 0

**4A, Division 1**  
Needville 49,  
Houston Furr 7  
Tyler Chapel Hill 44,  
Huffman-Hargrave 35

**THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE**

**6A, Division 1**  
Galena Park North Shore Mustangs (11-0, 7-0) vs. Fort Bend Ridge Point Panthers (10-1, 7-0) at Pearland ISD Stadium, in Pearland on Friday night, Nov. 22 at 7 p.m.

**5A, Division 1**  
Barbers Hill Eagles (8-3, 4-2) vs. La Porte Bulldogs at Galena Park ISD Stadium in Houston. Game time is Friday night, Nov. 22 at 7 p.m.

## Uplift 2.0 okayed to proceed,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

perity Program was developed after the Texas Supreme Court halted a different initiative for low-income communities called Uplift Harris. Uplift Harris would have provided \$500 per month to underserved households with fewer spending parameters.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton disapproved of the Uplift Harris proposal, and the state eventually

stopped it.

In a statement announcing the court's decision, Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee said his office was proud of the state's decision.

"My office is pleased with today's ruling, and I hope this will put an end to the state's attempt to shut down a program that offers financial stability to our residents who need it the most," Menefee said.

"Harris County addressed the State's concerns about Uplift Harris, but the AG still felt the need to sue the County again. This shows that the AG's lawsuit is not about the law; it's about using people living in poverty as a means to score political points. I will continue to fight for the people of Harris County against state leaders trying to undermine local control."

## AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

**Wednesday, Nov. 27 we will close early at 5pm and be closed Thursday, Nov. 28 - Saturday, Nov. 30. We will re-open Monday, Dec. 2 at 11am.**

**Islamic Arts Society Art Display**  
Visit Aldine Library to view a special arts display from the Islamic Arts Society during the month of November. The display will be available from November 2nd until December 2nd.  
Islamic Arts Society aims to share the rich heritage of Islamic Arts.  
Art is a common language and binds diverse communities. The Islamic Arts Society hopes to promote mutual understanding and to bring the broader American community together.  
Find more information at <https://islamicartsociety.org>

**Movement Mondays**  
Come out and move! Join us weekly for Movement Mondays! This program focuses on improving physical health and also enhances early literacy skills in a fun and interactive way. So, be prepared for Dancing, Stretching, reading and lots of laughter. Program is in English and Spanish. Encouraged to bring water. Best for kids for toddler/ preschool. No Registration is required. **Monday, Nov. 25, 11 - 11:30am.**  
**Happy Hour**  
Got a case of the Mondays? Fight the mundane Mondays and join us for a Happy Hour, where we do different recreational activities every week! Join us every **Monday from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm! For ages 18 & up** - no registration required.  
Here's what we'll be doing each week in November:  
Nov 04 - Adult coloring - Color your world  
Nov 11 - Board Games  
Nov 18 - Walk in Place - Let's get moving!  
Nov 25 - Book swap - Bring a book to trade  
**Paint with Me**  
Paint with Me is a space for you to explore creativity and embrace the

beauty of making mistakes. You'll work together with other teens to create large-scale pieces based on classic works of art! Our finished pieces will be displayed in the teen area. Each session begins with a brief introduction to the painting techniques and styles used in the classic work so that you can have a foundation to experiment with. Paint with Me is all about artistic expression, not technical perfection. Embrace your creativity, learn from your mistakes, work together, and find joy in the artistic process. **Monday, Nov. 25, 3-4:30pm.**  
**Bilingual Story Time/Hora de cuentos Bilingue**  
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, Nov. 25, 11 - 1:45am.**  
Estás invitado a asistir a tiempo de cuentos cada martes a las 11 am. Tiempo de cuentos es una excelente manera para que los niños desarrollen habilidades de alfabetización temprana con libros, rimas y canciones. Animamos a los padres a sentarse con los niños y canten las canciones con nosotros. ¡Los niños de todas las edades son bienvenidos!  
**Are Books Good**  
Help us decide once and for all whether books are good. Ms. Gage and Ms. Nicole will read the stories out loud. You eat snacks and vote on which story is the best! Great for reluctant readers ages 9-13 or for readers who need to practice their language skills! Snacks will be provided. This program is best for 2nd to 6th graders. **Tuesday, Nov. 26, 5-5:45pm**  
**1 on 1 Drop in Tech Help**  
Have questions about email, social media, word, your smart phone or more? Book a 45-minute 1 on 1 appointment and let's figure it out! Register on the website [www.hcpl.net/events](https://www.hcpl.net/events) or call the branch at 832-927-5410. **Tuesdays and Thursdays 5-6:30pm.**  
- Computer repair or diagnosis is not available.  
- To assist as many individuals as possible, you may only register for one appointment per week.

- Hablas español  
**Self-Care Sessions**  
Adulting is hard and exhausting. It's time to take it easy and focus on yourself. Join us on Wednesdays at 11am for Self-Care Sessions and take some time just for you. Adults 18 and over only. **Wednesday, Nov. 27, 11am - 12pm.**  
November Sessions:  
Nov. 6 - Chair Dancing & Guided Meditation  
Nov. 13 - Gentle Yoga & Guided Meditation  
Nov. 20 - Seated Workout & Guided Meditation  
Nov. 27 - Qigong and Guided Meditation  
**Tween Spark: Battle Jacket Patches**  
Welcome to the world of battle jackets, the ultimate form of self-expression! We'll be making patches together to sew onto your armor of choice (jacket, vest, shirt, whatever you'd like) next week. Snacks will be provided. This program is best for 6th-9th graders. **Wednesday, Nov. 27, 4:30 - 5:30pm.**  
**Passport Services**  
Do have plans to travel out of the country? You need to get your passport in order! Current routine processing is estimated at 4-6 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 most Fridays on a first come first served basis. Those wishing to get a passport executed must have all necessary documents, check/ money order, 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  
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832-927-5410

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While we appreciate every donation, in some cases, we find that we are unable to accept certain vehicles, watercraft, and/or recreational vehicles due to the prohibitive costs of acquisition. If you have any questions, please give us a call at (855) 833-2924.

# SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

## Davis HS Football Clinches Playoff Spot in Coach Chatham's Second Year



HOUSTON – The Davis High School Falcons football team is heading to the playoffs for the first time under head coach Kelvin Chatham, marking a significant milestone in just his second year at the helm. After a transitional first season that saw the team finish 5-5 overall and 3-4 in district play—landing fifth in the standings—the Falcons have soared to new heights this year, capping the regular season with a 6-4 overall record and a 5-2 district finish, good for second place.

“It means the world to us,” Chatham said of making the playoffs. “When I first started here, I focused on the fundamental pillars of competition, sustainability, and resilience. To make it into the playoffs in the second year proves that we’re turning the corner and trending in the right direction. Now we have to build on those success measures.”

Davis showcased grit throughout the season, bouncing back from a rocky start to string together three consecutive wins early on. With a relentless defense ranked second in the district in points allowed, the Falcons have proven they’re a force to be reckoned with.

Chatham emphasized his vision for long-term success. “Although I’m not the first coach to take Davis to the playoffs, I want to be the first to take them there and succeed,” he said. “Now that we’ve made it, our next step is to learn how to sustain this success for years to come.”

The Tramble Effect A key to Davis’ resurgence has been junior running back Nicolas Tramble, a three-star recruit who has rushed for over 1,000 yards and nine touchdowns this season. Known for his shiftiness and field vision, Tramble has recorded four 100-yard games and is averaging 103 yards per game. However, it’s his maturity and selflessness that have impressed Chatham the most.

“Tramble has sacrificed his own stats for the success of the team,” Chatham said. “He’s grown as a young man, and that growth has translated to his performance on the field. He’s become more selfless, which has made him a better player and a better teammate.”

Building a Legacy For Chatham, making the playoffs is just the beginning. His vision extends beyond football, aiming to establish a culture of competitiveness across all sports at Davis.

“We’re setting the standard for all sports here at Davis,” Chatham said. “I teach my kids not to be enamored with the destination but with the journey. We aren’t focused on where we’re trying to go; we’re focused on how we get there.”

The Falcons will face Conroe High School this Friday at 7 p.m. under the bright lights of the newly renovated W.W. Thorne Stadium. With the playoffs in sight and a season of growth under their belt, Davis is ready to show they belong—and to set the tone for years to come.

AUGUST 18, 2023

ALDINE  
Independent School District

## GOFFNEY CHRONICLES

The Official Newsletter of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney

Superintendent of Schools

With Aldine Pride!

Dear Aldine Community,

Pepperoni pizza wins! In the election at Hinojosa Primary, the students chose Pepperoni Pizza with 355 votes over Cheese Pizza with 129 votes (not to mention 19 voided ballots!).

At Aldine ISD, we view each election season as an opportunity to encourage civic engagement and foster real-world learning. Whether or not your candidates prevailed this week, your participation in this process strengthens our community and democracy. We want to thank the Civic Engagement team for connecting with our students who got to vote in their first election as registered voters. I am incredibly grateful to all those who have gone before us to ensure that we have the opportunity to vote.

Speaking of being grateful, November invites us to practice gratitude, and I am immensely thankful to be part of this community. Each time I visit our campuses, I see the incredible dedication of our teachers, staff, coaches, bus drivers, and community partners. Your commitment to our students and the #AldineImpact you make is inspiring.

**Awards**  
We’re proud to celebrate our achievements.

Blanson CTE High School and Avalos P-TECH School earned national distinctions on the AP (Advanced Placement) School Honor Roll, with Blanson achieving Silver and Avalos Bronze. Both schools received AP Access Awards for ensuring equitable access to advanced coursework. Congratulations to our students, teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents for these achievements!

Our Family and Community University has received recognition, winning the 2024 Parent and Family Engagement Promising Practices Award for empowering parents and strengthening community engagement.

**Sharing Our Story**  
Recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming Commissioner Mike Morath and the Texas Education Agency to Aldine ISD, where we showcased our district’s achievements and programs. I was honored to speak at Good Reason Houston’s ConnectEd Luncheon, sharing Aldine’s story and the promise of public education with regional leaders and advocates.

**Bond 2023**  
As we move forward with the \$1.8 billion Bond 2023 projects, I’m grateful for the community’s support of our vision. Our bond initiatives

are progressing, including updates to Aldine Middle School, Carver High School, and a new Education and Performing Arts Center. These projects pave the way for new opportunities for generations of Aldine students. Visit our Bond 2023 webpage for updates on our bond projects and more.

This week, we honor our school psychologists for helping students succeed. As Veterans Day approaches, let’s recognize the sacrifices of our military veterans in our community. Their dedication is an inspiring example for us all. Please take a moment to thank our veterans for their service.

**Stay Engaged**  
Finally, we’re in the second grading period. I encourage you to connect with your child about their progress, discussing areas of pride and any additional support they may need. These conversations are invaluable in helping them succeed.

Visit [AldineISD.org](http://AldineISD.org), follow us on social media, read the [Aldine Connection](#) newsletter for the latest updates, and tag your good news with #AldineImpact.

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

## MacArthur HS Repeats as District Academic Decathlon Champ; 9 Students Head to Regional Competition

Eleven teams competed in this year’s district Academic Decathlon®, representing 10 AISD high schools.

MacArthur High School scored 26,547.7 points and an 8,800.5-point lead over the second-place campus, taking home first place for a fifth consecutive year.

The school snagged top honors thanks to students Logan Haagenson-Jiménez, Kealsy Rincón, Alan Álvarez, Sophia Valenciano, Andrés Juárez, Adán Mendoza, Katie Sánchez, and Samuel Moreno, as well as coach Park Van and assistant coach Stephanie Debettignies.

“I couldn’t be more proud of my students,” said Van. “They are soame of the best and brightest in our district. They inspire me with their love of learning. While winning is fun, the most important thing is to have fun and support each other — that is what being a team means.”

Ninety-four students competed in this year’s district Academic Decathlon®, representing every high school campus. AISD is categorized as a large district in Region 6. MacArthur High School hosted the competition.

The 2024-25 district Academic Decathlon® tested students’ knowledge of the theme “Our Changing Climate.” Decathletes spent nights, weekends, lunchtimes, and free time preparing in 10 subject areas: art, economics, essay, interview, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, and speech. Since 2020, the district competition has no longer had speech and interview events due to a shortage of volunteers. The Super Quiz was also not included in the district competition this year due to time constraints with grading. The U.S. Academic Decathlon® curricular topics for the 2024-2025 school year competition.

Academic Decathlon® was founded in 1968 and became a nationwide competition in 1981. MacArthur High School’s Academic Decathlon® program has a long history of achievement, sending students to state and nationals.



MacArthur’s Academic Decathlon team takes home the District Champion title for the fifth consecutive year in the Academic Decathlon competition.

Congratulations

ACADEMIC DECATHLON

District Champions

for 5th Consecutive Year



Nine head to the regional competition!

Per Academic Decathlon® policies, each group of nine students is grouped into three divisions based on grade point average (GPA): Varsity (3.199 GPA and below), Scholastic (3.2 to 3.799 GPA), and Honors (3.8 GPA and above).

**Headed to Regionals**  
Nine students will go to the Regional competition: Logan Haagenson-Jiménez, Kealsy Rincón, Alan Álvarez, Sophia Valenciano, Andrés Juárez, Adán Mendoza, Katie

Sánchez, Samuel Moreno and Brandon Guzmán. The regional competition will be held at Dekaney High School on January 24 and 25, 2025.

**Overall Score Team Rankings — Large Division District, Region 6**

- 1st Place — MacArthur HS with 26,547.7 points
- 2nd Place — Aldine HS with 17,747.2 points
- 3rd Place — Avalos P-TECH School Team B with 17,689.3 points
- 4th Place — Blanson CTE HS with 17,569.0 points
- 5th Place — Carver HS with 16,430.3 points
- 6th Place — Avalos P-TECH School Team A with

15,283.9 points

- 7th Place — Victory Early College HS with 13,008.6 points
- 8th Place — Davis HS with 9,822.2 points

**Top Scores in Art Event — Large Division, Region 6**

- Honor 1st Place — Logan Haagenson-Jiménez from MacArthur HS with 660.0 points
- 2nd Place — Kealsy Rincón from MacArthur HS with 600.0 points
- 3rd Place — Edgar Barbosa from Aldine HS with 480.0 points
- Scholastic 1st Place — Andrés Juárez from MacArthur

HS with 580.0 points

- 2nd Place — Esperanza Castañeda from MacArthur HS with 500.0 points
- 3rd Place — Sophia Valenciano from MacArthur HS with 420.0 points

- Varsity 1st Place (tie) — Edward Islas from Avalos P-TECH School Team B with 400.0 points
- 1st Place (tie) — Alyssa Lejja from Carver HS with 400.0 points
- 2nd Place (tie) — Brandon Guzmán from MacArthur HS with 380.0 points

- 2nd Place (tie) — Katie Sánchez from MacArthur HS with 380.0 points
- 2nd Place (tie) — Jesse Co-

rona Tapia from Nimitz HS with 380.0 points

- 3rd Place — José Mascorro from MacArthur HS with 360.0 points

**Top Scores in Essay Event — Large Division, Region 6**

- Honor 1st Place — Logan Haagenson-Jiménez from MacArthur HS with 950.0 points
- 2nd Place — Lea Paniagua from MacArthur HS with 900.0 points
- 3rd Place — Priya Jagarnauth from Victory Early College HS with 850.0 points

- Scholastic 1st Place — Sophia Valenciano from MacArthur HS with 887.5 points
- 2nd Place — Yaromi Lara from Aldine HS with 875.0 points
- 3rd Place — Chinamerem V. Ugo from Davis HS with 862.5 points

- Varsity 1st Place — Samuel Moreno from MacArthur HS with 950.0 points
- 2nd Place — Katie Sánchez from MacArthur HS with 925.0 points
- 3rd Place — Brandon Guzmán from MacArthur HS with 825.0 points

**Top Scores in Mathematics Event — Large Division, Region 6**

- Honor 1st Place — Edgar Barbosa from Aldine HS with 600.0 points

- 2nd Place — Logan Haagenson-Jiménez from MacArthur HS with 542.9 points

- 3rd Place — Natalie Mazariegos from Carver HS with 485.7 points

- Scholastic 1st Place (tie) — Andrés Juárez from MacArthur HS with 542.9 points
- 1st Place (tie) — Edmundo Plancarte from Aldine HS with 542.9 points

- 2nd Place — Ricardo Vargas from Avalos P-TECH School with 457.1 points


- 3rd Place (tie) — Kelly Wang from Victory Early College HS with 428.6 points

- Varsity 1st Place — Rafael Perales from Blanson CTE-HS with 428.6 points

- 2nd Place (tie) — Katie Sánchez from MacArthur HS with 400.0 points
- 3rd Place — Valery Salvador from Avalos P-TECH School with 371.4 points

OPINION PAGE

**OPINION**  
By **BILL KING**



### Houston TIRZs: Taxing the Poor to Spend on the Rich

When the Texas Legislature originally established tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs), the intent was to provide a mechanism for underdeveloped areas to retain a portion of the property taxes collected in those areas to invest in projects that would spur development. The statute defined the areas that would qualify for this special treatment as those with a “substantial number of substandard, slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures.”

Houston now has 25 TIRZs that raked in nearly \$260 million in property taxes in 2023. It is important to understand that this \$260 million in property tax revenue was diverted from the general fund of the City of Houston and, to a lesser degree, the general funds of HISD or other sponsoring entities.

About two-thirds of that \$260 million went to just seven TIRZs: Uptown, Midtown, Market Square (Downtown), Lake Houston (Kingwood), Upper Kirby (River Oaks), Greenspoint (IAH) and Memorial. I don’t know about you but when I think about areas in Houston with a “substantial number of substandard, slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures,” none of these areas come to mind.

Over the years I have been observing the operations of the Houston’s TIRZs, it has always appeared to me that the bulk of the TIRZ money was going to projects in affluent areas of the City. However, I could never figure out how to prove or quantify that suspicion. Enter the Center for Public Finance at Rice University’s Baker Institute. As you may recall, I shared with you earlier this year that I had joined the Center as a Fellow.

Shortly after I started at the Center, I shared my suspicions about the TIRZs with my colleagues and asked if we could come up with a way to test whether the TIRZs were mostly benefiting more affluent areas of the City. The methodology they developed was to overlay the boundaries of the TIRZs on a map of census tracts using ArcGIS software. The team then grouped census tracts in the vicinity of the TIRZs and extracted median household incomes of these areas from Census Bureau data. This allowed us to compare the household incomes of the areas in and around the TIRZs to the rest of the City and between the individual TIRZs. The results were even more dramatic than I imagined. Here is what they found.

Half of the TIRZs had household incomes higher than the City’s \$62,637 median household income. In 11 of the TIRZs, the household income was more than 50% higher than the City’s median and in three it was more than double the City’s median.

But the comparison between the TIRZs is even more glaring. Thirteen of the TIRZs have median household incomes above the City’s average. Those 13 TIRZs collected 71% (\$184 million) of the property taxes rebated to all TIRZs. The 12 TIRZs with median household incomes below the City’s average only got 29% (\$75 million). Three TIRZs (Sunnyside, Leland Woods and Fifth Ward) have a household median income that is 30% below the City-wide average. Those TIRZs received a paltry 2% of the rebates (\$5 million).

Another way to judge the benefit conferred by the tax rebates to the TIRZs is the total amount spent on projects in those TIRZs over their lifetimes. In total, the TIRZs have spent \$3.5 billion.1 Of that total, 70% (\$2.5 billion) has been spent in the Uptown, Midtown, Market Square (Downtown), Lake Houston (Kingwood), and Upper Kirby (River Oaks) TIRZs. Uptown alone, which is, of course, one of Houston’s toniest areas, has accounted for nearly a quarter of all TIRZ spending. The average of the median household incomes in these five TIRZs is 80% higher than the City’s average (\$112,237 vs. \$62,637).

The team created this table of some of the key metrics for Houston’s TIRZs. Clicking on this image will take you to an Excel pivot table that will allow you to sort the TIRZs by any of these metrics. This is a link to the complete report.

As our team said in its report, it would be a mistake to overly generalize about the operations and financial effects on the City of the TIRZ program. Each of the TIRZs has a unique history and the manner and scope of their operations vary widely. For example, even though Kingwood is an affluent area and has received a substantial benefit from its TIRZ, the City has also consistently shortchanged it on infrastructure investment since its annexation in 1996.

But the data is clear that the TIRZ program, at least the way it has evolved in Houston, has strayed far from the Legislature’s original intent and has become a perverse regressive redistribution of the property tax burden within the City. Mike Morris at the Houston Chronicle has been making this point for some time.

Hopefully, the current administration and Council, as well as the Legislature, will implement a long overdue overhaul of this program. Frankly, that should include just flat out dissolving some of the TIRZs. In that regard, Uptown would be first on my list.

*Note 1 – The total amount the TIRZs have spent far exceeds the total of their tax rebate revenue because just about all of them have gone deeply into debt. I will be writing more on this soon.*

**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**



### Republicans largely flip Rio Grande Valley from Blue to Red

#### REPUBLICANS LARGELY FLIP RIO GRANDE VALLEY FROM BLUE TO RED

More counties in the Rio Grande Valley and surrounding areas went Republican this election, continuing what GOP leaders are calling the culmination of a years-long strategy. The party has managed to flip 16 counties since the 2016 presidential election, according to the Texas Standard.

The economy clearly was a major issue among voters in this election between former president Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris.

“A lot of the rural parts of Texas are shifting red because the economy is less good,” said Brandon Rottinghaus, a University of Houston political scientist. “And the threats to the oil and gas industry that people perceive are coming from Democrats are driving the communities to vote Republican.”

For example, in Starr County, Biden beat Trump by five points in 2020, but four years later voters there chose the former president over Harris by 16 points.

#### ELECTION DAY RUNS SMOOTHLY ACROSS STATE

Voting in Texas went fairly smoothly in Texas with no major disruptions reported, according to The Texas Tribune. Roughly half of the state’s 18.6 million registered voters cast ballots in person either in person or by mail, and another two million went to the polls on Election Day. That is slightly under the 11.3 million who voted in 2020, thus far, with counting of provisional ballots nearly complete.

There was only one violent incident reported at the polls, when a man punched an election worker in Bexar County after being asked to remove his Trump hat. Wearing clothing backing a candidate or proposition inside a Texas polling location is illegal. After the assault, the man was charged with a felony.



In another case, a Tarrant County man claimed a voting machine flipped his ballot from Trump to Harris, but election officials say he made a mistake while filling out his ballot. That ballot was discarded, and he was allowed to cast another ballot, prompting Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick to note that machines were not flipping votes.

“In Tarrant County, we have only had one person say their vote was flipped out of 591,885 votes cast to date,” he said.

#### STATE POPULATION ESTIMATES RELEASED BY DEMOGRAPHIC CENTER

The Texas Demographic Center has released its population estimates for July 1, 2023, and Jan. 1, 2024. Final population estimates are available for counties and places by age, sex, and race/ethnicity at demographic.texas.gov. Information for the estimates is collected through five surveys taken from October to February, gleaning information from counties, cities, and educational institutions.

The state’s estimated population rose from 29,145,505 in 2020 to 30,749,924 on Jan. 1, 2024 – an increase of 5.5%. Counties showing the largest percentage increase in that time period were Kaufman (26.7%); Rockwall (25%); Kendall (22.2%); and Liberty (20.3%).

The U.S. Census Bureau also makes annual population estimates, and TDC says differences in input data and methodologies lead to slight variations between the two.

tions between the two.

#### DFW AREA PREDICTED TO BE HOTTEST REAL ESTATE MARKET IN 2025

A real estate trends study reported by The Texas Standard predicts the Dallas-Fort Worth area will be the hottest real estate market in the nation for investment and development next year. The study compiled data from more than 2,000 industry experts.

“Obviously, it’s the really strong post-pandemic recovery. It’s also size,” Nick Wooten, real estate reporter for The Dallas Morning News, said. “We’ve seen the metro top 8 million people in the latest census estimates,” he said. “And there’s just continued demographic growth. Those are the three big factors that these experts cited.”

Both sales and home prices are fairly flat in 2024, with supply reaching levels not seen in a dozen years, Wooten said.

“You’re not seeing sales change a lot,” he said. “I think a lot of people are still sitting on the sidelines trying to figure out what’s going to happen in 2025.”

#### RECORD NUMBER OF TEXAS HORNED LIZARDS RELEASED TO THE WILD.

The state reptile, the Texas horned lizard, has been listed as a threatened species since 1977. The Houston Chronicle reports that thanks to captive breeding efforts to populate the wild with the iconic critter, more than 600 hatchlings were recently released to the Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Central Texas in cooperation with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The lizards are popularly referred to as horny toads. Their population decline is blamed on the pet trade, wild habitat loss, and the spread of invasive fire ants. The Texas horned lizard was designated as the state reptile in 1993. Their range takes them across the state’s borders to northern Mexico and throughout much of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and New Mexico. The hatchlings, about three-fourths of an inch in length, can reach as much as 7 inches in length at maturity.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com

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

### Monks in the Morning



“There will be monks here tomorrow morning,” is what I figured Jorge was telling me. In Spanish, “monks” sounds like “monkeys” in English. But I was pretty sure we were not having monkeys over for breakfast.

Jorge is my landlord here in Mexico, and he speaks only Spanish to me. He will speak some English when my husband, Peter, is around. But if it’s just me, he’ll stick to Spanish, and I am fine with that, but it doesn’t mean I get 100% of what he says.

“Very good!” I answered, because I didn’t know how else to respond. Then he said something about meeting them, if I wasn’t too busy.

“Oh, certainly!” I said, although I honestly had no idea what I was agreeing to. “What time tomorrow?”

“9:00.”

“OK!” I said, trying to sound enthusiastic.

This sort of thing happens to me a lot. I actually speak Spanish fairly well. The problem is that Spanish speakers (like Jorge) grossly overestimate how much I understand. I can only ask someone to repeat something so many times without seeming rude or incurably stupid, or both. So, eventually, I just gather that there will be monks arriving, for some reason, and go with the flow.

Later in the day, I quizzed the kitchen staff to see if I could get more intel.

“There are monks coming in the morning?”

“Yes.”

“Do they speak Spanish?”

“No.”

“Do they speak English?”

“I don’t know so.”

“Do you know why Jorge wants me to meet the monks?”

The kitchen staff shrugged in unison.

“OK. I will just say, ‘Hello, monks!’”

The kitchen staff laughed. So that was the plan.

What I know is that Jorge is always volunteering. He makes more than 100 sandwiches for children who come to visit the city from small villages every month. He sets up displays at the nearby fountain over Holy Week. He creates an enormous altar celebrating those who have died for All Souls’ Day. I was sure, whatever this was about, it was something kind that Jorge had volunteered to do.

The monks showed up early. They were Buddhist monks in orange robes. Jorge was nowhere to be seen, but every other staff person was in the kitchen preparing a huge breakfast.

Peter and I cautiously approached the monks. They spoke English, as it turned out.

“Are you enjoying your stay?”

“We are enjoying it very much.”

“How long will you be staying?”

“Five weeks.”

“It’s nice you get enough time to see the city.” Everyone smiled, and Peter and I returned to our apartment.

After breakfast, they began to chant.

At least two of the monks were doing “throat singing.” It is a low, growling harmonic sound that carried throughout the courtyard. (Our cat, Felix, did not like it at all, and hid under the bed.)

The procession of monks carried incense and bells up the outdoor stairs from the courtyard, past our apartment, and up to the roof. It appeared to be a kind of blessing, and one of the monks playfully splashed us with water as he passed. (Felix remained under the bed.)

And I marveled, as I so often do, how little of what happens I really understand. I don’t know half of what happens at this hotel. I don’t know why the monks came. I don’t know what they were doing or why they were doing it.

But I know I felt good, listening to them chant, and I know when they splashed water on us, they were wishing us well. And really, that’s all that matters.

Till next time,  
Carrie

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## FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 12: Texans look to take control of AFC South against Titans: No. 8 Indiana has tough task against No. 2 Ohio State

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

head coach Brent Venables job. OU fell to 5-5 two weeks ago after their 30-23 loss at Missouri, while the Crimson Tide rolled to a 42-13 victory at LSU thanks to four rushing TDs by QB Jalen Milroe. Alabama needs to win out to have a shot at one of the 12 College Football berths, so look for Kalen DeBoer's team to be focused come Saturday.

In the NFL, the Texans host the Titans as DeMeco Ryan's team will be looking to take control of the AFC South. Two weeks ago, the Texas lost a tough one at home to the Lions, 26-23 on a last-second 57-yard field goal. Houston needs to get its offense back on track. The Texans scored 23 points in the first half against the Lions, but were shutout in the second half.

In other games on the Week 12 schedule, Pittsburgh and Cleveland renew their heated rivalry on Thursday Night Football, while the disappointing Dallas Cowboys travel to Washington to take on the Commanders. Dallas appears to be playing out the string on what could very well be a double-digit loss season. Starting QB Dak Prescott has been lost for the year with a severe hamstring injury. The offense wasn't playing all that well with him as the starter, and it is really struggling now with Cooper Rush and Trey Lance under center.

The Lions, perhaps the best team in the NFL, head to Indianapolis to take on the Colts, while Minnesota and the Bears do battle in Chicago in a key AFC North contest. There's a good one in the NFC West this Sunday as the surprising Arizona Cardinals (6-4 after their 31-6 dismantling of the Jets) head to Seattle. The 49ers head to Green Bay to take on the Packers in an important game for both team's playoff hopes, while Sunday Night Football will feature the Eagles at the Rams. Week 12 concludes with a good one on Monday Night Football as Lamar Jackson and the Baltimore Ravens visit the Los Angeles Chargers.

I want to give a shout out to the two Aldine ISD teams that earned playoff berths. Kelvin Chatman's Davis Falcons took on Conroe in big district last week, while Cornelius Harmon's Nimitz Cougars faced The Woodlands in bi-district.

Before we take a look at this weekend's schedule, let's review last week's record. A phenome-

nal 11-1 week upped the season record to 83-37 (69%).

Now, onto this weekend's game.

NCAA

**Alabama at Oklahoma** - No. 11-ranked Alabama heads to Norman to take on a Sooners team that has found that life in the SEC isn't all sunshine and puppy dogs. OU dropped to 5-5 on the season two weeks ago with its 30-23 loss at Missouri, while the Crimson Tide played perhaps its best game of the season with its 42-13 pasting of LSU in Baton Rouge. 'Bama QB Jalen Milroe (2,046 passing yards, 13 TDs/565 rushing yards, 16 TDs) ran over and around the Tigers for 185 yards and four TDs. It was the second straight year that Milroe scored four rushing touchdowns against the Bayou Bengals. Look for another from Milroe, running back Jam Miller (488 yards, 7 TDs) and wide receiver Ryan Williams (37 receptions, 731 yards, 7 TDs). Look for the 'Bama defense to harass OU QB Jackson Arnold (1,243 yards, 12 TDs) all afternoon. My pick, Alabama 33, Oklahoma 16

**Army vs. Notre Dame** - No. 25 Army takes on No. 10 Notre Dame at Yankee Stadium in a big game for both teams and their CFP chances. Army is run of the top rushing teams in the country, and that ground game will get a stern test against one of the top defenses in the country. The Irish defense has allowed just 100 points in their first nine game, but they will face a QB in Bryson Daily (1,062 rushing yards, 21 TDs/644 passing yards, 7 TDs) who is one of the best option QBs in the country. Daily also has a solid running back in Kanye Udoh (856 yards, 9 TDs). The ND defense will look to shut down the Black Knights run, which won't be easy. The Irish have a pretty fair running QB as well in Riley Leonard (1,575 passing yards, 9 TDs/609 rushing yards, 13 TDs) and a capable runner in Jeremiah Love (583 yards, 10 TDs). ND also has a decent passing game, led by wideout Beaux Collins (29 receptions,

374 yards, 2 TDs). Look for the ND defense to be the difference maker in this one as the Irish pad their CFP resume with a big win in Yankee Stadium. My pick, Notre Dame 31, Army 23

**Indiana at Ohio State** - The Game of the Week pits the surprising No. 8 Indiana Hoosiers against No. 2 Ohio State in Columbus on Saturday. Indiana first-year head coach Curt Cignetti has done a masterful job in his first year on the job. He has a big-play QB in Kurtis Rourke (2,410 passing yards, 21 TDs), a strong running game led by Justice Ellison (688 yards, 9 TDs) and Ty Son Lawton (508 yards, 9 TDs) and a quality wideout in Elijah Sarratt (35 receptions, 685 yards, 6 TDs). The Hoosier offense will get its biggest test against a fast and experienced OSU defense. Indiana had an extra week to prepare for this game and that might not be enough against a Buckeye team that is focused on winning a national championship. The Buckeyes have a pretty fair offense as well led by QB Will Howard (2,237 passing yards, 22 TDs), two quality runners in Quinshon Judkins (647 yards, 6 TDs) and TreVeyon Henderson (588 yards, 5 TDs) and two big-play wide receivers in true freshman Jeremiah Smith (45 receptions, 765 yards, 9 TDs) and veteran Emeka Egbuka (47 receptions, 557 yards, 8 TDs). I think Indiana hangs with the Buckeyes, but look for OSU to pull away in the fourth quarter to pick up a big late-season win. My pick, Ohio State 31, Indiana 22

NFL

**Pittsburgh at Cleveland** - Week 12 begins with Thursday Night Football as the surging Steelers visit the slumping Browns in a renewal of one of the nastiest rivalries in the NFL. To say these to teams do not like one another would be an understatement, which means the Browns will probably put forth a solid effort in this one, but it won't be enough to slow down Pittsburgh and QB Russell Wilson (737 passing yards, 6 TDs in three games), running

back Najee Harris (645 yards, 3 TDs) and big-play wideout George Pickens (40 receptions, 639 yards, 2 TDs). The Steelers will be coming off a tough game against another division rival, Baltimore, but look for the Steeler defense to be the difference maker against a suspect Browns offense. My pick, Pittsburgh 26, Cleveland 13

**Detroit at Indianapolis** - The high-flying Lions hit the road for the second time in three weeks to take on the reeling Colts in Indianapolis. Two weeks ago, Detroit overcame a 23-7 first half deficit at Houston and rallied for a 26-23 win on a last second field goal. The Lions won in spite of five interceptions by QB Jared Goff (2,080 yards, 16 TDs). Goff has a load of weapons led by running backs Jahmyr Gibb (727 yards, 8 total TDs), and David Montgomery (520 yards, 8 total TDs) and dependable wideout Amon-Ra St. Brown (54 receptions, 524 yards, 7 TDs). The Detroit defense will get after Indy QB Joe Flacco (1,167 yards, 9 TDs) and look to slow down running back Jonathan Taylor (616 yards, 5 TDs). The Lions can help the Texans in their quest for a second straight AFC South title with a win in Indy. My pick, Detroit 33, Indianapolis 20

**Dallas at Washington** - The Cowboys head to Washington looking like a dead team at this point of the season. Two weeks ago, Jerry Jones' team fell to 3-6 after getting curb stomped at home by the Eagles, 34-6. Starting QB Dak Prescott is finished for the season with a severe hamstring injury. The offense is now in the hands of Cooper Rush (a whole 45 passing yards against Philly) and turnover-prone Trey Lance. Good luck with that Jerry. Washington has been one of the biggest surprises of the season and is squarely in the playoff hunt thanks to sensational rookie QB Jayden Daniels (2,147 passing yards, 9 TDs/464 rushing yards, 4 TDs). Look for Daniels to run around the suspect Dallas defense, while running backs Brian Robinson (464 yards, 6 TDs) and Austin Ekeler (326 yards, 4 TDs) run over it and wide receiver Terry McLaurin (47 receptions, 711 yards, 6 TDs) will make plays downfield. This one should be over by halftime. My pick, Washington 36, Dallas 13

**Minnesota at Chicago** - A big one in the NFC North for the Vikings who have come back to earth a bit after winning their first five games. QB Sam Darnold (2,141 yards, 17 TDs) needs to get back on his early-season roll. Two weeks ago, Darnold and the Vikes offense only mustered four field goals against that juggernaut Jaguars defense. Look for Darnold and wideout

Justin Jefferson (53 receptions, 831 yards, 5 TDs) to get back on track against a suspect Bears defense. The Chicago offense has also been in a funk lately as rookie QB Caleb Williams (1,785 yards, 9 TDs) has not played well over the last month. Look for the Vikes defense to make it another long day for Williams and the Bears. My pick, Minnesota 26, Chicago 16

**TENNESSEE AT HOUSTON**

- The Texans will look to put a clamp on the AFC South when the struggling Titans visit NRG Stadium on Sunday. Tennessee might just be the perfect tonic for the Texans offense that has struggled in the second half lately. QB C.J. Stroud (2,371 yards, 12 TDs) hopes to get star wide receiver Nico Collins (32 receptions, 567 yards, 3 TDs in first 5 games of the season) back for this one and that would be a huge boost for the offense. Running back Joe Mixon (655 yards, 8 total TDs) should have a big day against the Tennessee defense. Look for the Texans defense to get after Titans QB Will Levis (574 yards, 7 TDs/7 interceptions) and force the turnover over prone QB to give it to the Texans a time or two, or three. My pick, Houston 33, Tennessee 16

**Arizona at Seattle** - Don't

look now, but the Arizona Cardinals are cooking on both sides of the ball and are a legitimate playoff contender. Two weeks ago, the Cards dismantled the Jets, 31-6. QB Kyle Murray (2,058 passing yards, 12 TDs/371 rushing yards, 4 TDs) and he's getting help from running back James Conner (697 yards, 5 TDs) and rookie wideout Marvin Harrison Jr. (33 receptions, 499 yards, 6 TDs). Seattle has some offensive weapons as well in QB Geno Smith (2,560 yards, 11 TDs), running back Kenneth Walker III (398 yards, 6 TDs) and wide receivers DK Metcalf (35 receptions, 568 yards, 3 TDs) and Jaxon Smith-Njigba (50 receptions, 565 yards, 3 TDs). This could turn into an offensive shootout, but I think Arizona has the better defense, which will carry the Cardinals to a big road win. My pick, Arizona 31, Seattle 27

**San Francisco at Green Bay**

- A good one for the Lambeau Field faithful pits the surging 49ers against the solid Packers on Sunday. The 49ers got over the .500 mark two weeks ago with a tough road win at Tampa Bay, while the Packers had the week off. SF got superstar running back Christian McCaffrey back and he looked solid in the win. He gives QB Brock Purdy (2,454 yards, 12 TDs) one more weapon, along with tight end George Kittle (43 receptions, 560 yards, 7 TD). The Packers will need a big day

from QB Jordan Love (1,820 yards, 15 TDs), who used the bye week to heal up from a number of nagging injuries he has sustained so far this season. Love will need help from running back Josh Jacobs (762 yards, 4 TDs) and wideouts Jayden Reed (36 receptions, 620 yards, 3 TDs) and Romeo Doubs (30 receptions, 412 yards, 2 TDs). The 49ers have owned the Packers the last few years and appear to be ready to go on a run. Look for SF to pick up a big road win on Sunday. My pick, San Francisco 26, Green Bay 23

**Philadelphia at Los Angeles Rams**

- The Eagles and Rams get after it on Sunday Night Football as Philly will bring its high-flying offense to LaLa Land. Two weeks ago, the Rams lost at home to what was a two-win Miami team (23-15) as QB Matthew Stafford (2,262 yards, 9 TDs) could not muster even one TD pass. Stafford will need help from running back Kyren Williams (664 yards, 8 TDs) and wide receiver Cooper Kupp (41 receptions, 382 yards, 2 TDs) when it takes on a very good Philly defense. The Eagle offense is pretty potent as well led by QB Jalen Hurts (1976 passing yards, 12 TDs/375 rushing yards, 10 TDs), running back Saquon Barkley (991 yards, 8 total TDs) and big-play wide receivers A.J. Brown (28 receptions, 553 yards, 3 TDs) and DeVonta Smith (37 receptions, 457 yards, 4 TDs). Philly also has tight end Dallas Goedert back, which gives Hurts one more weapon. My pick, Philadelphia 32, Los Angeles Rams 23

**Baltimore at Los Angeles Chargers**

- Week 12 concludes with a good one for the Monday Night Football crew as the Ravens and Chargers meet in LA. This game will pit the Harbaugh brothers, as John will lead the Ravens, while Jim leads the Chargers. Jim Harbaugh is a master strategist and you had better believe he will have something in the works to slow down Ravens QB Lamar Jackson (2,669 passing yards, 24 TDs/538 rushing yards, 2 TDs). Good luck with that, Jim. Jackson is not a one-man offense as evidenced by running back Derrick Henry (1,120 yards, 14 total TDs) and big-play wideout Zay Flowers (50 receptions, 686 yards, 3 TDs). LA will need a big night from QB Justin Herbert (1,589 yards, 11 TDs) and running back J.K. Dobbins (670 yards, 6 TDs) and young, budding wide receiver Quentin Johnson (20 receptions, 306 yards, 5 TDs). I think the Chargers hang around in this one, but look for Jackson to be the difference maker late as Baltimore picks up a huge road win. My pick, Baltimore 30, Los Angeles Chargers 26

# CHURCH PAGE

## BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey


1. Is the book of Zechariah (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Numbers 21:6, what repulsive creatures bit the Israelites in the wilderness? Scorpions, Fiery Serpents, Vipers, Ravens
3. Before the Tower of Babel, how many languages were in the world? 1, 2, 3, 4

4. From Matthew 7:7, Jesus said that we should seek, knock and ...? Adorn, Ask, Try, Inspire
5. Whose last verse is, "Remember me, O my God, for good"? Genesis, Matthew, Nehemiah, Hebrews
6. How old was Adam when he died? 30, 130, 430, 930

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Fiery Serpents, 3) 1, 4) Ask, 5) Nehemiah, 6) 930  
 "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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*If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always... ISAIAH 58: 9-10*



Detail of "L'Homme Guide par l'Éternel" by Marc Chagall (1956)

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From left, Saoirse Ronan, Elliott Heffernan and Paul Weller star in "Blitz."

"Blitz"

"BLITZ" (PG-13) — From Academy-Award-winning director Steve McQueen ("12 Years a Slave"), this historical war drama takes place in London during World War II, as a mother named Rita (Saoirse Ronan) sends her young son, George, away to protect him during the Blitz in London. However, George unfortunately gets lost in the shuffle and doesn't make it to his destination, leaving Rita at a loss on how to find her son. Viewers watch as Rita desperately searches for George, while the young boy attempts to survive the bombings any way he can. Harris Dickinson ("Triangle of Sadness") and Benjamin Clementine ("Dune") co-star in this emotional film, out on Nov. 22. (Apple TV+)

psychological supernatural film that is the sequel to the 2022 horror success "Smile." Scott portrays a Grammy-winning pop star named Skye Riley, as she stages a comeback tour. But her past is littered with trauma, from the death of her actor-boyfriend Paul Hudson (Ray Nicholson) to dealing with substance abuse issues. When Skye seeks out medication for her back pain from drug dealer Lewis (Lukas Gage), she's surprised to find him in an erratic state, which eventually causes him to commit suicide, but not before giving her the creepiest smile known to man. Thus, the Smile Entity's curse passes onto Skye, forcing her to either fight against it or succumb to her inevitable death. Premieres Nov. 19. (Amazon Prime Video)

"SMILE 2" (R) — Naomi Scott ("Anatomy of a Scandal") leads this

"JAKE PAUL VS. MIKE TYSON" (TV-MA) — The long-awaited

match between YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul and former heavyweight world champion Mike Tyson was supposed to occur this past summer but had to be postponed due to Tyson suffering from an ulcer flare-up. The live event was then moved up to Nov. 15. It consisted of eight 2-minute rounds between the fighters, with 14-ounce gloves, and the age difference between Paul and Tyson is the largest age difference between fighters in the history of professional boxing. If you missed the live event, or even if you just want to rewatch some of the fight's better moments, you can watch the complete fight now on streaming. (Netflix)

"DUNE: PROPHECY" (TV-MA) — Before director Denis Villeneuve could even bring his two "Dune" films to fruition, there was already a spin-off series based on his films that was ordered back in 2019. The series, which takes place about 10,000 years before the events of "Dune" (2021), is also based on the novel "Sisterhood of Dune" by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson. Led by Emily Watson ("Small Things Like These") and Olivia Williams ("The Crown"), it follows sisters Valya and Tula Harkonnen as they establish the religious organization called the Bene Gesserit. The first episode of the six-episode-long season is out now, taking over "The Penguin's" 9 p.m. HBO time slot on Sundays. Here's hoping this spin-off does Villeneuve's cinematic universe justice! (Max)



Q: Why is "Wicked" going to be a two-part film? How long was the Broadway musical? — E.L.

A: "Wicked" was originally a novel written by Gregory Maguire before it became a Broadway musical. The stage version is about 150 minutes, plus an intermission. Even if the movie translates the musical verbatim, it would still be a long film, but it might not require a second one. The reason that a second film, which will premiere in theaters in November 2025, is needed might be due to the film version including more elements from the book. (Also, it's a great way for the studios to make more money.)

I personally believe that pro-shot musicals, which are filmed live musicals, are the best way to see a Broadway show on your screen. Disney+ did this with "Hamilton," which allowed millions of people who couldn't see the original cast on Broadway to experience the show.

Q: I heard that Claire Danes has a new show coming out. What network will it be on, and when does it start? — K.S.

A: "The Beast in Me" is the title of the upcoming limited series on Netflix — a mystery thriller starring Claire Danes ("Homeland") and Matthew Rhys ("The Americans"). Danes plays an author who is grieving the loss of her child, when she gets distracted by a mystery surrounding her new neighbor. This neighbor is a real estate mogul who was once suspected of being involved in his wife's disappearance.

The show is from the creative minds of Gabe Rotter ("The X-Files") and Howard Gordon ("Homeland"). It won't be released until sometime in 2025, but it has an impressive cast. In addition to Emmy award winners Danes and Rhys, the cast includes Jonathan Banks ("Breaking Bad"), Will Brill ("Fellow Travelers"), Kate Burton ("Grey's Anatomy"), Bill Irwin ("Legion"), and Julie Ann Emery ("Better Call Saul").

Q: I haven't seen one of my favorite dancers, Mark Ballas, on "Dancing with the Stars" for a while. Is he taking a break and coming back in the future? — D.O.



Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande star in the upcoming film "Wicked"

A: Mark Ballas actually returned as a guest judge on ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" for season 33. The three-time Mirrorball champion joined the judges' table alongside former "DWTS" pro Derek Hough, Carrie Ann Inaba, and Bruno Tonioli for just one episode. But he says that he's open to more in the future.

Ballas announced at the end of a "DWTS" live tour in 2023 that it would be his final dance with a "celebrity partner." Therefore, it's doubtful that he'll return to the ABC show as anything other than a judge.

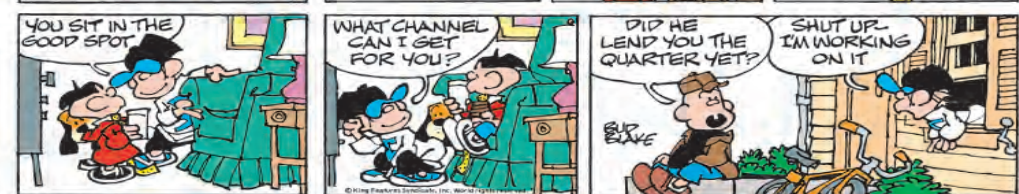
Ballas is the son of two Latin ballroom professionals and teachers. His father, Corky, was a dance pro on "DWTS" for two seasons, having been paired with TV sitcom icons Cloris Leachman in season 7 and Florence Henderson in season 11. Ballas' mother, Shirley, is a judge on "Strictly Come Dancing" in the United Kingdom.

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

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Grid with numbers 3, 7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 8, 6, 5, 8, 3, 8, 6, 4, 3, 9, 7, 2, 9, 5. Includes difficulty level: Moderate, Challenging.

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff. Two panels of a man and woman. Text: Find at least six differences in details between panels.

King Crossword November 18, 2024 Posting Date. Includes crossword grid and list of clues: ACROSS 1 Clutch, 6 Modern messages, 11 "Queen of Soul" Franklin, 12 Used a modern car service, 14 Irish singer O'Connor, 15 More promising, 16 "- Mine" (Beatles song), 17 "Zorba the Greek" star, 19 Hit CBS series, 20 Morning droplets, 22 Pump up the volume, 23 Bit of dust, 24 Road curves, 26 Test monitor, 28 Wardrobe malfunction, 30 Sharing word, 31 Driving instructor?, 35 Flavor, 39 "Les Etats-...", 40 Hosp. areas, 42 Earth sci., 43 Astern, 44 "Star Trek" doctor, 46 Computer acronym, 47 Band aide, 49 Fly, 51 Blood givers, 52 Evening prayer, 53 Newbies, 54 Perfume compound, 6 Start playing for pay, 7 Black, in verse, 8 Ballot marks, 9 Lingerie fabric, 10 Handles, 11 Stage comment, 13 Less damp, 18 Little rascal, 21 Feudal farmers, 23 Jazz singer Carmen, 25 Use a straw, 27 Ump's call, 29 Method, 31 Sentry, 32 Walking, 33 Lengthy list, 34 Tolkien creature, 36 Abrasion, 37 Horn blower, 38 Gantry of fiction, 41 Italian wine, 44 Surrealist Joan, 45 Saint Laurent of fashion, 48 "Le Coq -", 50 Follower (Suff.).

Trivia Test by Fifi Rodriguez. 10 questions: 1. Heart of the Ocean; 2. Tunisia; 3. Fox Mulder and Dana Scully; 4. O. Henry; 5. 1945; 6. Nicotene; 7. Benjamin Harrison; 8. Lithuania; 9. Minotaur; 10. A special bread in Jewish cuisine. Solution time: 21 mins.

# East Aldine VET FEST honors those who served

Continued from Page 1



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