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NORTHEAST NEWS



Anthony Bruno is TRAIL BOSS of the Northeastern Trail Riders, who rode through this area on the way to the Houston Rodeo. See Story, and Photos on Pages 1 and 7.

Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 49 Years
 VOL. 49, NO. 8 TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2025 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

Aldine ISD votes to close 6 Schools

Spring Break KIDS CAMP March 10-14

East Aldine Spring Break Kid's Camp for all kids, Free, Hours 4pm to 6pm. Pre-Register at 346-570-4463.
 Events:
 MARCH 10- Dodge Ball Tournament, Ages 5-11 at Town Center Amphitheatre.
 MARCH 11- Tie-Dye at BakerRipley
 MARCH 12- Movie Night at Town Center
 MARCH 13- Paint Party, Ages 8 to 15 at BakerRipley
 MARCH 14- Bubble Party at Town Center Amphitheatre.
 Come and have fun. Sponsored by East Aldine District, BakerRipley, and Sheriff's Office.

Shape the Future of Jensen Drive Meeting March 12

Harris County Pct. 2 invites you to attend a public meeting on the Jensen Drive Project, which aims to improve safety, accessibility, and road conditions.
 Wednesday, March 12 from 6:00 - 8:00pm, New Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 9126 Jensen Drive.
 More Details on Page 2 of this newspaper.

Aldine ISD board faced with dwindling enrollment, budget deficit

By David Taylor
 Managing Editor

With no opposition to their motions from the community, Aldine ISD's board of trustees closed six more schools on Tuesday, Feb. 25, shuttering a total of nine schools in two years. Blaming the closures mainly on dwindling enrollment numbers and rising operational costs, decades of legacy education reaching as far back as 1959 (Smith Elementary School) were ended in 20 minutes of tough voting.

"Everyone on this board has agonized during the discussions on this matter," said trustee Randy Bates, Jr., an attorney with the Houston law firm Bates & Coleman, P.C.
 "I would even suggest that everyone on this board has some type of personal relationship with not just the schools themselves, but also the students from those various schools. But that doesn't stop us from having the responsibility to be stewards of taxpayer monies that are given to us."
 Following his state-



Aldine ISD Trustees voted last Tuesday night to close 6 schools to reduce the Budget Deficit, and to better utilize its Facilities. Students in the closed schools will be rezoned to other schools, and provided transportation when needed.

- Students impacted by the campus closures will be rezoned to the following Aldine campuses:**
- De Santiago EC/PK/K** – Griggs EC/PK/K School, Hinojosa EC/PK/K School, and Vardeman EC/PK/K School
 - Stovall EC/PK/K** – Kujawa EC/PK/K School, Reece Academy, and Vines EC/PK/K School
 - Eckert Elementary** – Calvert Elementary School, Marcella Elementary School, and Reed Academy
 - Oleson Elementary School** – Johnson Elementary School
 - Raymond Elementary School** – Carroll Elementary School, Stephens Elementary School, and Worsham Elementary School
 - Smith Elementary School** – Caraway Elementary School, Ermel Elementary School, and Harris Elementary School

ment, Bates motioned with a heavy heart to close Stovall EC/PK/K.

The lawyer hung his hope for resilient children

on the fact that they will either be moved to a better facility that will aid in the learning process, or to a higher achieving school

academically, and in most cases, both.

It was the vote that no board member expects to endure and as heart-

wrenching as it was, most families, after hearing the facts from the district in three separate community meetings preceding the closures, seemed satisfied, this was best for children and the survival of the district.

"These decisions were made after careful review, evaluation of information, and feedback from parents, staff and community members," said Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. "I believe these decisions will maximize the use of the campuses and help us to continue to fulfill our mission of providing a rigorous and enriching educational experience that prepares our students for college, career, and life success."

Aldine is among a growing number of districts throughout the state forced to take hard looks at their finances and make painful cost-cutting measures due to a sour economy, lack of state funding, and declining enrollment figures.

According to Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data, Aldine ISD

Continued. See AISD CLOSES 6 SCHOOLS, Page 7

BLACK HISTORY MONTH:

East Aldine District honors 4 Community Leaders

During Black History Month, and later Womens History Month, the East Aldine District held a reception and ceremony honoring the accomplishments of four of the outstanding women in the community. These included:

Deborah Foster, an East Aldine District board member for 19 years, guiding it through early formative times;

Shirley Portier Reed, a community activist who helped establish the HCSO



HONOREES: Deborah Foster, Shirley Portier Reed, Joyce Wiley, Sylvia Bolling



The MacArthur Jazz Ensemble presented a music performance during the ceremonies.

storefront, and headed Grandparent Raising Grandchildren;

Joyce Wiley, an EAD board member and past-president, a leader in many other community organizations;

Sylvia Bolling, founder and head of Aldine YOUTH and its successor, Buckner Family Hope Center.

These women were featured and feted in a Reception attended by about 100 friends and family last Tuesday evening at the EAD offices.

Trail Riders head to Houston Rodeo

Northeast trail riders continue legacy

By David Taylor
 Managing Editor

HARRIS COUNTY – The Northeastern Trail Rider's Association rode through the area last week on the way to the parade and HoustonRodeo. Established in 1982, the association ride continues in the face of dwindling numbers, but Trail Boss Anthony Bruno is hell-bent on preserving their history.

The Northeastern Trail Ride is one of the smaller groups to make their way to



After spending the night camped out in Memorial Park, the Trail Riders move into downtown Houston to participate in the HoustonRodeo parade.



Dr. Perry's wagon was decorated with the US and Texas flags and decked out in preparation for the Saturday Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo parade. See Story for the history of the Perry family and the Northeastern Trail Riders.

the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, but a proud one with a rich history and tradition. The group travels approximately 111 miles from Cheek, Texas near Beaumont to Memorial Park every year for the annual HLSR Parade.

Whether it's the clippity clop sound struck by the hoofs of a horse trotting on pavement, or the rolling sound of the wagon wheels traversing down the highway, the allure of even a modern trail ride is too much to miss for more than 3,000-plus riders who converge on Bayou City for the

Continued. See TRAIL RIDERS, PAGE 7

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

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 2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Dr. #200 - 77039
 713-595-1232 | info@aldinedistrict.org

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SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Report Suspicious:

- * Vehicles
- * Activities
- * Groups of People
- * Persons
- * Locations

HARRIS COUNTY HCSO SHERIFFS OFFICE

PLEASE JOIN THE HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN CRIME REDUCTION EFFORTS

WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING YOU CAN REMAIN ANONYMOUS

EMERGENCIES: ALWAYS CALL **9-1-1**

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ADRIAN GARCIA COMMISSIONER

REVIVE 2 THRIVE Community Revitalization Initiative



Shape the Future of Jensen Drive

Harris County invites you to attend a public meeting to learn about and provide feedback on the Jensen Drive Project, which aims to improve safety, accessibility, and road conditions.

About the Project:

The Jensen Drive Project will enhance 3.67 miles of roadway from Kelley Street to IH-69. Improvements will focus on safety, pavement quality, drainage, and better accessibility for all road users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.

March 12, 2025 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

New Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church 9126 Jensen Dr, Houston, TX 77093

High Meadows Branch Library

Luis Arredondo
LIBRARY TECHNICAN
4500 ALDINE MAIL ROUTE RD
HOUSTON, TX 77039
(832-927-5540)

UPCOMING EVENTS

.MAR 3-MAR 8

3 MAR 11:30 AM FABLES AND FUN
1 PM CONVERSATIONAL ESL

4 MAR 1 PM GAME CHANGERS
3:30 PM PONY BEAD BRACELETS

5 MAR 12 PM COMPUTER BASICS CLASS
1 PM CONVERSATIONAL ESL
3:30 PM KRAFTY KIDS

5 PM READING WONDERLAND

6 MAR 11 AM CITIZENSHIP

4 PM ARTOPIA

7 MAR 1:45 PM HEALTHIER YOU
3:30 PM FRIDAY FREE SPACE

10 MAR 11:30 AM FABLES AND FUN
1 PM CONVERSATIONAL ESL

MAR 4 PM CREATION STATION

FABLES & FUN/ READING WONDERLAND:
STORIES, SONGS, RHYMES, AND MORE!

COMING SOON...

SLIME TIME
MARCH 13
3:00PM
TURN STICKY GLUE INTO A STARCHY, SQUISHY GOO!

BRAVE LITTLE COMPANYS A SCHOOL PLAY:
MARCH 11
3:00PM
LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF THEATER AT THIS WORKSHOP



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CREATION STATION
COME ENJOY THE MAGICAL WORLD OF SCIENCE! WE'LL LEARN ABOUT A DIFFERENT CONCEPT IN SCIENCE THROUGH CRAFT AND PLAY EACH TIME!

CITIZENSHIP CLASS:
AN ON GOING CLASS TO LEARN THE STEPS ON BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN.

ARTOPIA:
MAKE SOME ART AND EXPRESS YOURSELF! CREATE SOMETHING NEW USING DIFFERENT MEDIUMS, SUCH AS PAINT, CLAY, AND MORE!

FRIDAY FREE SPACE
JOIN US FOR A RELAXING AFTERNOON AFTER A LONG WEEK. CHOOSE FROM A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES OR JUST HANG OUT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

PONY BEAD BRACELETS
MAKE YOUR OWN BRACELET USING PONY BEADS! MATCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS OR CREATE SOMETHING TOTALLY UNIQUE!

CONVERSATIONAL W/ ESL: PRACTICE YOUR ENGLISH WITH THIS JOURNALING CLASS..

HEALTHIER YOU
THE 4-SESSION SERIES EMPOWERS INDIVIDUALS TO LEAD HEALTHIER LIVES THROUGH IMPROVED NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE HABITS.

KRAFTY KIDS:
CRAFT PROGRAM CREATED JUST FOR KIDS!

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

Movement Monday

Come out and move! Join us on Monday and get ready to exercise your brain and body! We'll be dancing, reading, singing and moving. This program focuses on improving physical health and also enhances early literacy skills in a fun and interactive way. Program is in English and Spanish. Encouraged to bring your own water. **Monday, Mar. 3 - 11:45am.**

¡Sal y muévete! Únase a nosotros el lunes y prepárese para hacer ejercicios por su mente y cuerpo. Estaremos bailando, leyendo, cantando y moviéndonos. Este programa no solo se enfoca en mejorar la salud física sino que también mejora las habilidades de alfabetización temprana de una manera divertida e interactiva. El programa está en inglés y español. se recomienda traer su propia agua.

Clases de Computación Básica (Basic Computer Classes in Spanish)

Si las computadoras son nuevas para usted, se siente incómodo con ellas o simplemente quiere un curso de actualización, este curso es para usted. Revisaremos todo lo básico: ¿de cómo usar un ratón a utilizando el correo electrónico eficazmente y más! **Acompañenos los lunes de 4 a 5:30 p.m. Inscripción requerido. Llame o visite para inscribirse.**

If you are completely new to computers, feel uncomfortable with them, or simply want a refresher in the basics, this class is for you. We will review all the basics: from how to use a mouse to effectively utilizing email and more! Join us on **Mondays from 4 to 5:30 pm. Registration required. Call or visit to register.**

Bilingual Story Time & Craft/ Hora de cuento con manualidades

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. Last half hour is craft time! Children of all ages are welcome!

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. ¡La última media hora es tiempo de manualidades! ¡Los niños de todas las edades son bienvenidos!

Houston Ballet - Dance to Learn

DANCE TO LEARN is a movement integration program that approaches academic curriculum from a kinesthetic perspective. Houston Ballet teaching artists work together with teachers to create lessons that address TEKS in multiple subject areas while building Social Emotional Skills. For Preschool-aged kids. Limit: 15-20 kids. **Tuesday, Mar. 4, 11am - 12pm.**

Open Tech Lab (Bilingual)

Have questions about email, social media, word, your smart phone or more? Come in and let's figure it out! Computer repair or diagnosis is not available. **Tuesdays, 5-6:30pm. Registration** is required. Call 832-927-5410 or come by to register.

¿Necesita ayuda con un programa específico en la computadora? o cualquier pregunta relacionada con el teléfono celular? ¡Te podemos ayudar! Reparacion o diagnostico de computadoras o telefono celular no sera disponible.

Pajama Jam Story Time
Come join us in your pajamas for a special story time at night. We

have songs, stories, and crafts for Black History Month! This program is in English and Spanish. **Tuesdays, 6-6:45pm.**

Tween Spark: Sticker Sheet

Who doesn't love stickers? Join Miss Gage to learn how to make your own using tape and wax paper. You'll walk away from this program with a totally unique and awesome sticker sheet for all your decorating needs. Snacks will be provided. This program is best for 6th-9th graders. **Wednesday, Mar. 5, 4:30-5:30pm.**

Ology: Planes

What makes airplanes fly? Does the shape of the plane really matter for flying? Find out by racing paper planes! Join Ms. Gage to find out what plane flies best. **Thursday, Mar. 6, 6-7pm.**

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
11331 Airline Dr.
Houston, TX 77037
832-927-5410

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Aldine ISD Finalists Announced for 2025 Teacher of the Year

Aldine Independent School District has announced its six finalists for the 2025 Teacher of the Year award, recognizing outstanding educators' dedication and classroom impact. Three finalists were selected in the elementary category and three in the secondary category. These exceptional educators will be honored at the AISD Educators of the Year Breakfast on March 28, 2025.

The finalists for Elementary Teachers of the Year are:

- Lara Andree, Carmichael Elementary School
- Julian Quiero Serrano, Oleson Elementary School
- Adriana Patino, Spence Elementary School

The finalists for Secondary Teacher of the Year are:

- Candace Langenbuch, Avalos P-TECH School
- Dr. Janice Blades Miller, Blanson CTE High School
- Marcus Muñoz, MacArthur High School

Spotlight on Lara Andree



Lara Andree, a third-grade math teacher at Carmichael Elementary School, attributes her decision to become an educator to the compassionate and dedicated teachers who supported her during a difficult childhood. Growing up facing homelessness and family challenges, she found stability and encouragement in the classroom. Her teachers' unwavering belief in her potential inspired her to pursue a career in education, and she was determined to provide the same safe and empowering learning environment for her students.

Andree's teaching philosophy centers on fostering resilience and confidence in her students, particularly in math, a subject she once struggled with due to dyslexia. She creates an inclusive and encouraging classroom

where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. Her motto, "Mistakes help my brain grow," resonates with her students and fosters a growth mindset. Through engaging and differentiated instruction, she ensures that all students feel supported and challenged regardless of academic level.

Her impact extends beyond academic achievement. In the 2023-2024 school year, Andree's students demonstrated remarkable growth, improving by 88% on end-of-year benchmark assessments and being part of the 3-person math team that surpassed all other third-grade math classrooms in the district on the STAAR test. Additionally, she plays a vital role in enhancing school culture as a leader of the Carmichael Student Council, organizing initiatives that promote leadership, character development, and schoolwide engagement.

Spotlight on Julian Quiero Serrano



Growing up in Chile, Julian Quiero Serrano was inspired to become a teacher by the values of charity, service, and community instilled in him at his Catholic high school. Despite initial resistance from his father, he pursued his passion for education, earning the highest distinction in his program and writing a thesis on the diverse learning styles of English learners.

Since joining Oleson Elementary, Quiero Serrano has made a significant impact. He has taught multiple grade levels and helped bilingual students achieve record-breaking STAAR scores. His teaching philosophy centers on differentiation and adapting lessons to fit students' needs, often modifying curriculum methods to improve understanding. Beyond the classroom, he has

played a key role in improving school culture through his work on the MTSS committee. He helped implement the PRIDE behavior initiative, which has led to a decline in student infractions.

Quiero Serrano has been recognized for his dedication, earning Rookie Teacher of the Year in his first year of teaching and Teacher of the Year in his third. He remains committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment and advocating for instructional flexibility to serve all students better.

Spotlight on Adriana Patino



Adriana Patino, a bilingual educator at Spence Elementary School, is known for her unwavering commitment to student success. She believes every child, regardless of background, deserves access to a high-quality education that nurtures academic growth and personal development.

Patino emphasizes a student-centered approach, incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices and innovative strategies to engage her students. She has played a crucial role in mentoring new teachers and supporting dual-language instruction across the campus. Under her guidance, her students have consistently excelled in literacy and language acquisition, making significant gains on district and state assessments.

Patino's educational achievements as a bilingual teacher include teaching reading and writing strategies to students with limited English proficiency, leading to high reading STAAR scores. They also served on Aldine ISD's Amplify Task Force and contributed to the district's Curriculum Project Elevate.

Beyond the classroom, Patino advocates for family engagement, organizing workshops to empower parents to support their children's education. Her dedication to student achievement and community involvement has earned her recognition as a leader among her peers.

Spotlight on Dr. Janice Blades Miller



Janice Blades Miller, a dedicated career and technical education (CTE) instructor at Blanson CTE High School, aims to equip students with the skills needed for success in the workforce. Specializing in health science, she prepares students for industry certifications and real-world applications in medical careers.

Blades Miller is renowned for her immersive and dynamic teaching approach, blending state-of-the-art simulation labs with invaluable real-world clinical experiences. She actively forges partnerships with leading healthcare institutions, ensuring her students gain first-hand exposure to the demands of the medical field through mentorships and structured clinical rotations.

Fostering a culture of excellence, Blades Miller is the lead advisor for the school's HOSA-Future Health Professionals chapter. Students gain leadership experience, serve their community, and compete at state and international levels. She also supports teachers and advisors both locally and statewide.

Dedicated to professional growth, Blades Miller actively seeks opportunities highlighting the challenges and contributions of medical professionals who reflect her students' backgrounds to impart a broader understanding of healthcare equity and representation. Her impact extends beyond her classroom, shaping the future of aspiring healthcare professionals.

Spotlight on Marcus Muñoz



Marcus Muñoz, a mathematics teacher at MacArthur High School, is committed to breaking the stigma around math and making it a subject students can confidently embrace. As a first-generation college graduate, he understands the importance of education in transforming lives and strives to create an inclusive, engaging classroom environment.

Muñoz employs a student-centered approach, ensuring lessons are relevant and accessible to all learners. He integrates technology and real-world problem-solving into his instruction, making math practical and enjoyable. His dedication has led to increased student engagement and significant improvement in math proficiency rates at MacArthur High School.

Beyond the classroom, Muñoz mentors first-year teachers and actively participates in professional learning communities to continuously refine his teaching methods. His passion for education and unwavering student support make him a standout educator and role model within the Aldine ISD community.

Educators of the Year Celebration in March

The Aldine ISD community celebrates Andree, Quiero Serrano, Patino, Langenbuch, Blades Miller, and Muñoz for their dedication and excellence in education and honors all Campus 80 Teachers of the Year. The two recipients of the 2025 Teacher of the Year awards — Elementary Teacher of the Year and Secondary Teacher of the Year — will be announced at the upcoming Educators of the Year Breakfast on March 28.

Spotlight on Candace Langenbuch



Candace Langenbuch, a ninth-grade biology teacher at Avalos P-TECH School, is passionate about making science accessible and engaging for all students. With a background in STEM education, she strives to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, fostering a love for inquiry-based learning in her students.

Langenbuch enhances student engagement through hands-on experiments, project-based learning, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. She believes that by creating meaningful, real-world connections, students become more invested in their education and develop critical thinking skills beyond the classroom.

In addition to her work in the classroom, she mentors new educators, guiding curriculum development and student engagement strategies. Her leadership extends to coordinating science fairs and student participation in STEM-related competitions. Her students have consistently excelled in district — and state-level science fairs, showcasing innovative research projects that reflect her emphasis on inquiry-driven learning.

Her dedication to student success and her ability to create a dynamic, hands-on learning environment make her a valued educator within the Avalos P-TECH community.

Mariachi Acero From Aldine ISD Earns Distinguished Performance Award at UIL State Festival



Aldine ISD's Mariachi Acero may be a young program — it was formed in the fall of 2019 — but it has grown stronger each year.

Spring 2024 ended on a high note for Mariachi Acero, which wrapped up a successful competitive season. The group earned a Sweepstakes award at the Texas UIL Region Mariachi Contest, marking the first time the mariachi ensemble advanced to the state-level competition. At the State UIL Contest in late February, Mariachi Acero received a second-division rating and seven outstanding medals for best violin section. The group also performed at the Mariachi Region Concert in March.

Last school year, Mariachi Acero had two student musicians selected to perform at the fifth annual Mariachi Festival in August at the Wortham Center. In October, three students advanced to the state round after auditions in the Region 33 process. UIL State Mariachi Festival

Mariachi Acero musicians and vocalists again demonstrated their talent at the UIL State Mariachi Festival on Feb. 21, 2025, in Seguin. The group earned a Distinguished Performance Award and all eight violinists earned individual gold medals.

The group is comprised of Jesús Aguilar, Amy Alizondo, Mariana Arcovendus, Luis Campirano, Eduardo Carreón, Israel Castrejón, Julio Delgado, Jacob Díaz, Carlos Forero, Isabel García, Edgar Hernández, Anamaria López, Israel Mena, Marianne Olvera, and Domenic Velado.

Competing in the Texas Association of Mariachi Educators Contest Mariachi Acero also qualified this year to compete in the Texas Association of Mariachi Educators (TAME) Contest on Apr. 12, 2025, in Somerset, TX. All the best mariachi high school groups will showcase their exceptional talent.

Performing at Go Tejano Committee's Mariachi Invitational at the RodeoHouston®

Mariachi Acero will also participate this year in the "Go Tejano Committee's Mariachi Invitational" at the Houston Rodeo on Mar. 15 and Mar. 16, 2025.

Jaime Alanis, director of Carver High School's Mariachi Acero, praised the students' commitment and perseverance.

"The UIL mariachi competition is among the most challenging in Texas. Advancing at this level speaks to our students' dedication, musicianship, and teamwork," Alanis said. "They continue to set the bar higher, proving they belong among the best in the state. I'm beyond proud of their perseverance and passion for mariachi music."

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

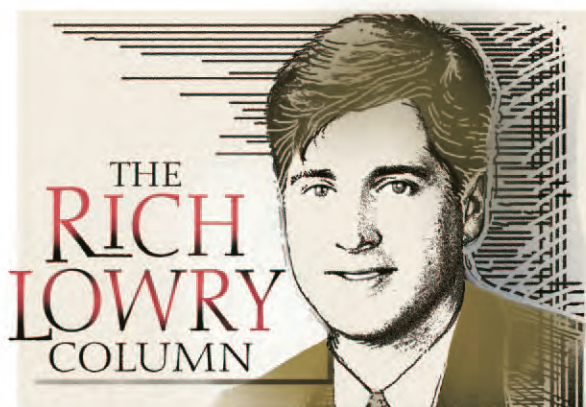
2025

#AldineImpact #AccelerateAction

Celebrate women's achievements. Raise awareness about discrimination. Take action to drive gender parity.

<p>MARCH 4-8</p> <p>"Thank a Woman" post on Social Media</p>	<p>MARCH 19</p> <p>"Strokes of Genius" by Visual Arts Dept. DAB 12:30 PM-2:30 PM max 30 people Rooms 107 Register here</p>	<p>MARCH 25</p> <p>"Create Your Own Scent-Sational Essential Oil Spray" by SEL BAM 9-11 AM, located in the foyer</p>
<p>MARCH 5, 19, 26</p> <p>"Purple Out Wednesdays"</p>	<p>MARCH 20</p> <p>"ILT Celebration" by CTE & SEL BAM 8:30 AM-3:30 PM</p>	<p>MARCH 27</p> <p>"Feel the Beat With Zumba" BAM 11 AM-11:30 AM bring your tennis shoes</p>
<p>MARCH 18</p> <p>"Strokes of Genius" by Visual Arts Dept. BAM 8 AM-10 AM max 30 people Rooms 5-7 Register here</p>	<p>MARCH 24</p> <p>"Create Your Own Scent-Sational Essential Oil Spray" by SEL DAB 9-11 AM, located in the foyer</p>	<p>MARCH 28</p> <p>"Feel the Beat With Zumba" BAM 11 AM-11:30 PM bring your tennis shoes</p>

OPINION PAGE



Ukraine never should have made the mistake of getting invaded

Ukraine never should have made the mistake of getting invaded

Ukraine got invaded by Russia. According to President Trump, it should never make that mistake again.

Miffed that Ukraine is miffed that it has been excluded from the early stages of negotiations over the war, Trump has blasted the embattled country for sticking up for its interests after being brutalized by Vladimir Putin for three years.

"Today I heard, 'Oh, well, we weren't invited.' Well, you've been there for three years," Trump said the other day. "You should have ended it — three years. You should have never started it. You could have made a deal."

This would be a fair charge to lodge against Ukraine if it had attempted to seize by force Russia's Rostov and Belgorod Oblasts and gotten bogged down in a costly war of attrition with no clear exit plan.

In reality, as we all know, Russia first invaded Ukraine in 2014 (after the Maidan Revolution toppled a pro-Putin president) and then followed up in 2022 with a more far-reaching attempt to decapitate Ukraine and render it a Russian satellite state.

Ukraine's offense is to have been victimized by an expansionist Russia, a quality it has historically in common with Poland, Finland and the Baltic states, among others.

If Ukraine had shown better judgment than to be located next door to a much larger, perpetually aggrieved and autocratic neighbor, with which it shares a complicated history, perhaps this never would have happened.

Skeptics of the Ukraine war want to say that Russia was provoked into invading Ukraine — missing its cities, blowing up its hospitals, destroying its electricity grid — by NATO's assurances that Ukraine was on the path to joining the alliance.

This wasn't in the offing anytime in the foreseeable future, though, and even if it had eventually happened, the idea that NATO would have used Ukraine as a launching pad for an invasion of Russia is phantasmagoric.

Vladimir Putin has set out his views on Ukraine at length, and they amount to the belief that Ukraine doesn't have a legitimate national identity separate from Russia. This is at the bottom of the conflict, as well as Putin's coveting of Ukrainian land and resources and his fear of a successful Slavic democracy next door giving his own people ideas.

When Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy clapped back at Trump, the U.S. president responded with a contemptuous salvo on Truth Social. Trump deemed him a "moderately successful comedian" (Zelenskyy used to have a career in entertainment) and, more significantly, a "Dictator without Elections."

It is true that Ukraine has been under martial law since it (foolishly) got invaded by Russia. Yet, Zelenskyy's popularity has held up, and he has much more democratic credibility than his adversary Vladimir Putin, who poisons and imprisons his political opponents.

Another Trump count against Zelenskyy is that he talked us into supporting Ukraine in the war. If it hadn't been for this scam artist, Trump implies, a bipartisan majority in the U.S. — and our European allies — wouldn't have believed we should stop a nation hostile to the West from installing a puppet government in a neighboring, sovereign state.

All that said, Ukraine isn't going to succeed in reestablishing its pre-2014 or even pre-2022 borders, and any plausible cessation of hostilities will involve painful concessions by Kiev.

This doesn't justify adopting an ahistorical perspective on the war and blaming Ukraine for its plight. Realpolitik is one thing; needlessly insulting an ally and condemning it in perversely moralizing terms is another.

Perhaps Trump's blunderbuss attacks on Ukraine will soften it up to accept an unsatisfactory but unavoidable deal. Still, the Kremlin is surely taking note that the president of the United States can't disguise his bitterness toward the weaker, hard-pressed country that Putin wants to humiliate and dismember.

It used to be said that a liberal is too broad-minded to take his own side in a fight. Trump is too consumed with pursuing a deal to acknowledge Ukraine is on our side.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



House Unveils its Voucher Version

Texas House members filed a bevy of education bills last week, including a proposed \$8 billion investment in public education and a voucher bill that ties the amount of money spent for private schooling to the dollar amount provided to public schools.

The House voucher proposal differs from the version already passed by the Texas Senate in that it sets out a tiered system depending on a family's income and prioritizes children with special education needs.

"We want kids in Texas to do better," Buckley said. "That's what it's about."

At least two Democratic legislators have pushed back. Rep. Gina Hinojosa, D-Austin, said she was "disappointed" by the proposed increase in per-student funding. The \$220 proposed increase does not cover increased costs due to inflation.

"Our neighborhood schools are desperate for the funding they need to keep their best teachers in the classroom," Hinojosa said. Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock, cast skepticism on Republicans' claim they have enough votes in the House to pass a voucher program.

"Voucher proponents have a habit of declaring victory prematurely," Talarico said.

SENATE BILL WOULD CRIMINALIZE HEMP PRODUCTS WITH THC

A bill filed in the Texas Senate would ban all products containing THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, The Dallas Morning News reported. Thousands of retailers across the state are selling CBD products derived from legally grown hemp but often containing THC.

The ban is a priority of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the Senate's presiding officer.

"We must take bold action to keep dangerous drugs away from our communities and out of our schools, and SB 3 is a critical step in protecting Texas families from unregulated



and mislabeled intoxicating products," Patrick said in December.

Advocates for consumable hemp — gummies, vapes, drinks and other types of products — are advocating a more measured approach that would include limiting the strength, increasing oversight, and banning sales to minors. The proposed ban would not affect the state's medical marijuana program.

Even if passed, the proposed ban faces an uncertain fate in the House, where no companion legislation has been filed.

AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER WANTS STATE FLUORIDE BAN

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller is urging state officials to ban adding fluoride to public water systems, The News reported. Miller said he was swayed by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime opponent of fluoridation.

"I don't want big brother telling me what to do," Miller. "Government has forced this on us for too long."

Across Texas, more than 100 public water systems serving nearly 10 million people add fluoride to water. According to the American Dental Association, fluoridation reduces cavities by about 25% in both children and adults. However, critics say the practice is no longer needed because fluoride is already found in toothpaste and other dental products.

MEASLES OUTBREAK SPREADING IN SOUTH PLAINS REGION

The number of people identified as having contracted measles has risen to 90 since late January, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Of that number, 16 have been hospitalized.

"Due to the highly contagious nature of this disease, additional cases are likely to

occur in the outbreak area and the surrounding communities," a DSHS news release stated.

Gaines County, between Lubbock and Midland, has reported the largest number of cases: 57 as of last Friday. Five of the people contracting measles said they had been vaccinated against the virus.

Most of the cases have been reported in children from infancy to age 17. DSHS said the best way to prevent getting sick is to be immunized with two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine.

A COOLER, WETTER JANUARY REPORTED

Texas weather was wetter and cooler in January than in past years, resulting in a slight drop in the percentage of the state in drought, now at 42%, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board.

Wentzel said he expects drought conditions to expand modestly in the next few months.

"A big factor in this outlook is an ongoing La Niña event, cooler-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the eastern Equatorial Pacific, that typically bring warmer and drier conditions to the southern U.S., including Texas, during the winter," he wrote. "Farther out, we're still hopeful for more drought relief."

La Niña is expected to be less of a factor after April, meaning that May — historically the wettest month in Texas — could bring added drought relief.

COALITION PRESSING TRANSPARENCY LEGISLATION THIS SESSION

The Texas Sunshine Coalition, which consists of 16 organizations (including Texas Press Association, the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas and the Texas Association of Broadcasters), is working to pass legislation to improve citizens' access to public information.

Seven measures have already been introduced, including a bill that would require governments to produce public records in their original format instead of converting them into PDF images that are impossible to search and sort.

Other proposals would require governments to respond to Public Information Act requests. The bills resulted from complaints that some government officials simply ignore requests in spite of state laws. The legislation provides for a complaint process when officials fail to respond. Other measures call for resuming access to dates of birth in public records to ensure accuracy when reporting on people with common names; requiring an open government hotline in the Texas Attorney General's office; and establishing a complaint process when public information is withheld.

More transparency bills are expected to be filed soon.

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

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Thinking About My Hair



I saw a photo of an author I admire recently, and she had no hair. I worried she was ill, so I immediately investigated. She was not ill. She had cut off all her hair and had done it for good reasons, she said. She had done a lot of thinking about her hair—a lot more than I had.

First of all, she said, she was not blond. "No one is blond," she added, or almost no one.

Less than 1% of the population is blond, and she implied she felt dishonest pretending she was blond when she wasn't. She went on to say that she had spent thousands of dollars and untold time on her hair. She sounded a little angry about the whole thing—the money spent, the dishonesty of it all.

I admit, I felt a little defensive because I am not blond either. I have never been blond. But I had never considered that I was part of some massive blond conspiracy, posing as blond to dupe the unsuspecting. I just assumed that everyone knew I was not blond. So for the record: I am not blond.

I am just not good at growing hair. I used to feel the need to apologize to my hairstylists. "I'm good at doing some things," I would insist. "Growing hair just isn't one of them!"

The hairstylist would work away for long minutes, and at the end, I would get up from the chair and there was no hair to see on the floor. It was as if the entire thing had been a pantomime involving scissors.

So now, my husband, Peter, cuts my hair. He finishes in less than five minutes and, given how little he has to work with, does a very fine job.

And, once every four months, I buy a box of hair dye and bleach my hair screaming blond. (I'm not sure if that's what the color is actually called, but it should be.) I figure, maybe if I'm blond, people won't notice that I don't have a lot of hair and that, what little there is, sticks up in odd directions.

But now I wonder how I'd feel if I cut off all my hair.

Peter would not like it, I know. When I still had other people cut my hair, I used to go to a haircutting school, and so I had very little say in how it was cut. Since there were so few options, this did not bother me. But one time, the teacher cut most of it off. Peter was shocked when I came home—which surprised me, since I had so little to start out with. Peter wants me to keep what little hair I have on my head, so for his sake, I do that.

But I don't think I would want to cut off all my hair anyway.

The feeling I had, reading what this author said, was that being a fake blond was evidence that I was not a very serious person. As I thought about it, I had to agree this was probably true. I am not very serious about my hair, at any rate.

I'm happy with my phony screaming blond hair. My "hairstyling routine" consists of the two seconds I spend every morning checking to see if I have snarls in my hair or if it's standing on end. After that, I can go for the rest of the day without thinking once about my hair.

And that's the way I like it.

Till next time, Carrie

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From Left, Hugh Grant, Sophie Thatcher & Chloe East star in "Heretic."

"Heretic"

"The 97th Academy Awards" (TV-14) — Hosted by former late-night talk show host Conan O'Brien, this year's Oscars ceremony is out now to stream after its live broadcast on ABC on March 2. In keeping with other awards shows this season, the musical film "Emilia Perez" received the most nominations (13), followed by "The Brutalist" and "Wicked" with 10 each. The Best Actor award will be an interesting category to watch after Adrien Brody landed the Golden Globe and Timothee Chalamet received the SAG. Zoe Saldana, Demi Moore and Kieran Culkin are the frontrunners for the other acting categories, while the Best Picture category is stacked with great films from 2024 like "Anora," "Conclave," and "The Substance." (Hulu) — "Heretic" (R) —

Hugh Grant ("Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy") leads this chilling horror film from A24, co-starring Sophie Thatcher ("Companion") and Chloe East ("The Fablemans"). Thatcher and East star as two Mormon missionaries who visit the home of Mr. Reed (Grant) to spread information about their church. Mr. Reed invites the girls into his home and welcomes a discussion about religion, but as the discussion carries on, the atmosphere becomes uncomfortable and intense. The girls soon realize that they're stuck inside the house with no phone signal and no way out, leaving Mr. Reed to commence his own sadistic lesson about the nature of belief and faith. Premieres March 7. (Max) — "With Love, Meghan" (TV-PG) — Meghan, Duchess of Sus-

sex, is finally premiering her lifestyle show on March 4 after the series was postponed back in January due to the Southern California wildfires. The show will consist of eight 33-minute episodes filmed at a farmhouse near Meghan and Harry's home in Montecito, California. Throughout the episodes, Meghan will showcase her personal "tips and tricks" in the kitchen, garden and more. Notable guests on the show include actress Mindy Kaling, actress Abigail Spencer, and chefs Roy Choi and Alice Water. Oh, and Prince Harry, of course! (Netflix)

In Case You Missed It "Yellowjackets" (TV-MA) — This thriller-drama series just had its season three premiere back in February, but it's not too late to binge the series and catch up in time for its season three finale in April. "Yellowjackets" follows a high school soccer team whose plane crashes on the way to a tournament in 1996, leaving them stranded in the wilderness for a year and a half. Bouncing between the events in 1996 and the girls' current lives in 2021, viewers get to see firsthand the trauma that the teenagers experienced and how the crash remains a part of them as they navigate the world as adults. The show features an incredibly talented ensemble cast that includes Sophie Thatcher (yes, the same one from "Heretic"), Christina Ricci, Juliette Lewis and Samantha Hanratty. Go stream season one, season two, and the first four episodes of season three! (Paramount+)

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Q: I'm so happy to see so many cast members on Reba McEntire's new sitcom. Are there any other cast members from the original "Reba" series set to appear in the future? — M.W.

A: Christopher Rich, who starred on the WB sitcom "Reba" from 2001-2007, recently guest-starred on McEntire's new NBC sitcom "Happy's Place." Rich suffered a stroke in 2018 and was thrilled to reunite with his former co-stars in an episode where he plays a tattoo artist who was also dealing with the residual effects of a stroke. He was eager to incorporate this experience into the character and hopes to return for another guest spot next season.

JoAnna Garcia Swisher, who played Cheyenne on "Reba" and currently stars in the Netflix series "Sweet Magnolias," told People magazine that she would 100% guest-star on "Happy's Place" if and when she's asked. ***

Q: Did the actress who played Eve on the Apple TV+ series "Bad Monkey" appear on a soap opera when she was younger? She looks like the actress who played Lizzie on "Guiding Light." — U.B.

A: If you're thinking of Emme Rylan, who played Lizzie Spaulding on "Guiding Light" from 2006-2009, she does resemble her, but it's not the same actress. Meredith Hagner, who recently starred opposite Vince Vaughn in "Bad Monkey," did get her start on a CBS soap around the same time as Rylan. She was cast as young Liberty Ciccone on "As the World Turns" and was nominated for a Daytime Emmy award before the long-running soap was canceled in 2010.

Hagner most recently played one of the double-booked brides in the Amazon comedy film "You're Cordially Invited," opposite Reese Witherspoon and Will Ferrell. Off-screen, she's married to actor Wyatt Russell ("Under the Banner of Heaven"), son of Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn.

"Bad Monkey," which was filmed on location in Florida, will move its production to the West Coast next season after receiving a \$20 million tax credit from the state of California. According to Colleen Bell, director of the California Film



Reba McEntire and Christopher Rich star in "Happy Place."

Commission, these incentives help encourage jobs in the state and drive economic growth. Bell stated, "The impact goes beyond the entertainment industry — it supports families, local businesses and communities statewide." ***

Q: Is it true that Kate Hudson was originally offered Anne Hathaway's role in the movie "The Devil Wears Prada"? — K.W.

A: Yes, Kate Hudson was offered the role of Andy Sachs in the 2006 hit movie "The Devil Wears Prada" (based on the best-selling novel of the same name), but she turned it down. The film's director David Frankel told Entertainment Weekly that several big-name actresses were in the running for Hathaway's role, including Rachel McAdams, Scarlett Johansson and Natalie Portman. Hudson says that the timing wasn't right for her to do the role, but she regrets her decision after seeing the movie.

Next up, Hudson stars in the sports-comedy series "Running Point," which was co-created by Mindy Kaling for Netflix.

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 puzzle grid and instructions. Difficulty: Moderate. HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS puzzle by Henry Boltinoff. Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Trivia Test Answers: 1. Harry Potter and the Dursley Family; 2. 'Family Ties'; 3. Martin Van Buren, born after the Revolutionary War; 4. Mercenary; 5. Maybelline; 6. Battle of Lexington and Concord; 7. Cotton candy; 8. 1929; 9. 8.34 pounds; 10. Green, white and red

March 3, 2025 Posting Date

King Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues. Includes a list of 61 clues and a grid with black squares.

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. LITERATURE: Who lives at 4 Privet Drive?
2. TELEVISION: Which 1980s sitcom featured the Keaton family?
3. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first American-born president?
4. COMICS: What is Deadpool's profession?
5. AD SLOGANS: Which makeup company's slogan is "Maybe she's born with it"?
6. HISTORY: Which battles marked the beginning of the American Revolution?
7. INVENTIONS: The 1904 World's Fair introduced which fluffy confection?
8. MOVIES: In which year were the first Oscars awarded?
9. MEASUREMENTS: What does 1 gallon of water weigh?
10. GEOGRAPHY: What are the colors of the Italian flag?

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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA


By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Lamentations (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. In 1 Kings 20:29, how many footmen (soldiers) of the Syrians were killed in one day? 5,000; 10,000; 50,000; 100,000
3. Who made the first "piggy bank" by placing a chest with a hole in it near the altar? Ezra, Jehoiada, Ahab, Jethro

4. From Jeremiah 7:32, what did the Lord say that Tophet will be called? Syria, Valley of Slaughter, Galilee, Mount Zion
5. Who was the father of Elisha? Josiah, Shaphat, Zadok, Joshua
6. In Esther 1, how many provinces did Ahasuerus reign over? 11, 90, 127, 140

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) 100,000, 3) Jehoiada, 4) Valley of Slaughter, 5) Shaphat, 6) 127
 Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com.
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



(As well as) those who were tormented with unclean spirits - (and) they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.

LUKE 6: 18, 19

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Trail Riders Head to Rodeo,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade.

At least 55-plus of them come from Cheek, Texas, an unincorporated community, southwest of Beaumont in central Jefferson County. Every year, the small community established in 1906 becomes the central gathering place of cowboys and cowgirls from around the area known as the Northeast Trail Riders Association.

"It's about a 108-mile trek from Cheek into Memorial Park in Houston," said Derrick Daniels, a scout for the trail ride.

Daniels rides lead for the trail ride and is the first person seen beside the police escorts that accompany the riders as they move from county to county.

"We all work together as a team, talking back and forth to keep traffic moving," he said as they mostly take up at least one lane of traffic on the highway as they head for Houston.

"We use walkie talkies to check on each other, keeping an eye on the health of the animals, and there are no issues with the wagons. My head is always on a swivel the whole ride to make sure we keep our riders safe and the public safe," he said.

They rolled into Crosby, Texas on Thursday about 5:30 p.m., a little bit later than they normally do.

"We encountered a lot of construction and had to make several detours so the traffic behind us could clear too," Daniels said.

They also take breaks to feed and water the animals and take human bathroom breaks, too.

"It's conditioning. We condition the animals year-round, so they are able to make a trip of 108 miles and we break it up into about eight to 10 miles per day," he said.

The trail ride got off to a rough start with a delay. Normally, they pull out on Sunday but there was a lot of



Keeping up a tradition are some of the Northeast Trail Riders. The Perry boys from left Taylor, grandpa Dr. Charles Perry, friend Joshua Joe, Derrick Daniels, and Caleb Perry.

lightning, the only thing that will slow them down.

"We don't ride our animals in lightning," he said. "If it is raining, we ride. Cold weather? We ride. Lightning will stop us so we can be safe."

Instead, they woke up at an early 5 a.m. call and readied themselves and pulled out of Cheek, Texas at 8 a.m.

Trail boss Anthony Bruno says the group plans for this the whole year.

"We have meetings throughout the year and we're always planning, fundraising, and training," he said.

During the day, Daniels said they are constantly replenishing themselves with a lot of fruits, water (especially in the heat), and even more so for the animals.

When it's time to settle in for the night, there's not a lot of microwave dinners or fast food, but plenty of barbecue and all the trimmings to feed the soul.

Throughout the ride the numbers grow and fall off as those who can't always take a full week's vacation join them when they can.

As the riders get into Houston, the excitement and danger increase.

"When we hit Memorial Park, it's a major reunion because you have all the other 12 associations gathering there at the same time. It's a big party on Friday night and

everyone is tasting each other's food and hanging out," he said.

Along the way, there's a lot of storytelling and the word spoken by most on the ride is tradition.

"I have my daughter, my grandsons, my in-laws, and my daughters-in-law with me this year," he said saying it's all about passing on the tradition to future generations.

For 78-year-old Dr. Charles Perry, it's a blessing to have his son and grandsons join him on the ride.

"We come from Arcola and meet up with them out in Cheek to ride in," the wagon boss said.

Don't think his age is slowing him down.

"I get geared up for it because I've been doing it for so long," he said. He's been riding on trail rides for 70 years this year, spending his early years with his grandfather and uncles.

"I enjoy it to my bones," Perry laughed.

One grandson is an assistant wagon boss and the other is learning the ropes with aspirations to take Bruno's spot as trail boss.

"It's important for us to have our kids and grandkids with us to experience this and burn into their hearts a desire to continue the tradition," Bruno said.

AISSD Closes 6 Schools,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

boasted an enrollment of 70,417 students during the school year 2015-2016. A decade later it dropped an enormous 20.2 percent, or down to 56,141. Projections from the demographic shift suggest enrollment is very likely to continue dropping for at least the next two years, due in part to smaller kindergarten cohorts.

The largest drop came in the first year of COVID 2020-2021 when the district lost 3,957 students in enrollment. They've never recovered and continue on a downward spiral losing an average of 1,791 more students nearly every year.

During that same time, the district also faced rising costs to the "doing business" expenses. Districts across the country weren't immune to the supply chain debacle and double-digit inflation affecting their bottom line.

The pandemic also brought the closures of numerous businesses and less tax revenue for the district.

The last time Texas schools received a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase per student was in 2019. Since then, the state legislature has not increased the basic allotment, which is the amount of funding per student.

According to the state's Legislative Budget Board, in inflation-adjusted dollars, funding has dropped \$590 per student over the past decade alone. Two years ago, districts were hit with more mandates for school security at each of their campuses because of the terrible shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on May 24, 2022.

While schools received access to a pool of money from TEA, it was nowhere

near enough to meet the requirements and local districts had to make up for the additional funds.

The last two years, Gov. Gregg Abbott practically held public education hostage until he received the passage of his school vouchers proposal.

Last week, Rep. Brad Buckley, R-Salado filed a bill that would increase the amount of funding public schools by an additional \$220, a boost that education experts say falls considerably short of their goal of \$1,000 additional funds per student.

Passage of the bill would increase the per diem rate for students from \$6,160 to \$6,380.

It's too late for school districts like Aldine, Spring Branch, San Antonio, El Paso, Edgewood, Fort Worth and even districts across the nation such as Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco.

Schools facing closure include De Santiago EC/PK/K School, (2019); Stovall EC/PK/K School, (1990); Eckert Elementary School, (1993); Oleson Elementary School, (1961); Raymond Elementary School, (2000) and Smith Elementary School, (1959).

The district also added that a revision to redraw the boundaries of Dunn Elementary School to send students to Calvert Elementary School will also accompany the school closures.

The district said they didn't anticipate any staff reductions and would place staff members affected by the change throughout the district.

Community meetings for parents of the schools that are closing have been scheduled for this week.

"We continue to strive to be the best choice for our students, staff, and fami-

lies we serve," said Superintendent Goffney. "We are not eliminating people. Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and administrators to prepare our students for success is more essential than ever, and that comes with a price tag. The closure of these campuses means we get to keep what matters most in Aldine: our people."

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Students share their journeys at LSC Foundation donor lunch



Lone Star College System and LSC Foundation recognized students who earned a scholarship for their "How My Lone Star College Experience Has Influenced My Life" essays. Pictured (center) with the recipients is Mario K. Castillo, J.D., LSCS chancellor.

HOUSTON (Feb. 5, 2025) – Lone Star College Foundation’s fundraisers help LSC students achieve their academic and career goals. Those efforts fund various scholarship programs including the annual LSC Chancellor’s Essay Contest.

“Lone Star College Foundation provides students with financial assistance and academic resources to ensure they can afford a quality education without incurring heavy debt and are successful in the classroom,” said Nicole Robinson Gauthier, CFRE, LSC Foundation executive director.

The LSC Chancellor’s Essay Contest awards \$1,000 based on LSC students’ essay submissions, “How My Lone Star College Experience Has Influenced My Life.” LSC Foundation recognized 16 recipients who earned the scholarship for the 2024-2025 academic year.

“Lone Star College System is humbled to hear the remarkable journeys our students go through to earn a college education,” said Mario K. Castillo, J.D., LSCS chancellor. “Helping students overcome obstacles toward a better life is exactly the mission of Lone Star College System.”

At the Chancellor’s Donor Appreciation Lunch, eight of the 16 recipients

read their essays. Each LSC campus selected two students to receive the scholarship.

--LSC-CyFair: Boris Nkeumboh and Iryna Tanasii

--LSC-Houston North: Kamryn Bonds and Shannon Daniels

--LSC-Kingwood: Jacob Avalos and Angela Cabrera

--LSC-Montgomery: Anthony Chukwumeka and Mia Pierson

--LSC-North Harris: Chelsea Cabalero and Narjis Fatima

--LSC-Online: Mohammed Alaboodi and Kadian Brown

--LSC-Tomball: Alejandro Camacaro and Kambria Paul

--LSC-University Park: Cecilia Le and Lesley Vasquez

“My time at Lone Star College has been a transformative period, marked by personal growth, academic achievements, and the development of a clear vision for my career in cyber security,” said Nkeumboh. “As I look forward to graduating and embarking on my career in cyber security, I am confident that the foundation I have built at Lone Star College will serve me well.”

The Chancellor’s Essay Contest Scholarship recipients will use the funds to pay for tuition, books and fees. Visit LoneStar.edu/Giving to learn how your support can help students.



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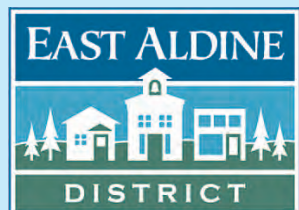
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East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

Joyce Wiley: A Champion for Community Growth and Development

For decades, Joyce Wiley has been at the heart of East Aldine’s transformation. As a former East Aldine Management District (EAMD) board member and a leader in numerous initiatives, Wiley has played a pivotal role in shaping policies and programs that have improved residents’ quality of life. Her leadership, connections, and unwavering dedication to community engagement have made a lasting impact.

A Legacy of Leadership and Advocacy

Wiley’s commitment to East Aldine began in 1987 when she worked as an advertising sales consultant for the Northeast News and North Forest News under founder and publisher V.E. “Vic” Mauldin, covering local issues and building relationships with residents and business owners. Her first job was as membership director of the Northeast Houston Chamber of Commerce, which was formed to engage and unite businesses to give them a more prominent voice. She also worked with a new chamber of commerce in the area over the years, striving to address the area’s needs.



Over the years, Wiley’s involvement grew. She advocated for infrastructure improvements, environmental sustainability, and higher education and helped drive key initiatives. The following examples are in no chronological order but a sampling of her involvement in East Aldine. While working with Lone Star College in community relations and outreach, she was asked where the campus should build a satellite center. Due to her involvement in East Aldine, she identified the area that developed into the Lone Star-East Aldine Center today. She also served on the Weed and Seed Program board to “weed out crime and seed in good stuff... a better life in communities” by working with law enforcement, community policing, and community revitalization. Weed and Seed is a U.S. Department of Justice initiative. They bought the first bicycles for the Sheriff’s storefront in Aldine through the Weed and Seed program. Always involved in the community she covered, Wiley attended the businessmen’s group meetings in the East Aldine area. Early members were local businessmen in the area at the time. They sought to develop a group to improve the East Aldine area, bring new businesses, and meet the community’s needs. Around this period, they heard of Hawes Hill and Associates, LLP. The group got legislation passed that eventually led to the creation of the East Aldine Management District.

During her tenure on the EAMD Board, Wiley helped oversee significant initiatives, including economic revitalization efforts, community safety programs, and infrastructure development. She chaired it for 2 years and played a pivotal role in shaping policies that directly impacted the community.

Her work with organizations like the Greens Bayou Coalition and Lone Star College underscores her passion for education and environmental stewardship. One of her notable contributions includes advocating for strategic partnerships that bring resources to underserved communities. Her leadership in supporting workforce training programs and small business development has helped create opportunities for economic mobility in East Aldine.

“I was chair on the East Aldine Management District Board, the Bayou Preservation Association Board, the Greens Bayou Coalition Executive Board, the Lone Star College Law Enforcement Acade-

JOYCE WILEY IN THE COMMUNITY



my Advisory Board, president of the Aldine-Greenspoint YMCA Board, the first minority president of the Texas Democratic Women Harris Metro, President of the American Business Women Association (ABWA) ... and a host of committees.

“I ran my mouth — I didn’t know the impact initially. I was present and engaged,” Wiley recalls. But her presence mattered. She became a trusted resource for residents, business owners, and community leaders, ensuring that people who often felt overlooked had somewhere to turn.

Seeing the Vision Through: The East Aldine Town Center

One of Wiley’s proudest achievements was helping the East Aldine Town Center come to fruition. What started as an empty plot of land became a central hub for the community, but the journey wasn’t easy.

“When we decided to buy the land, it was just that — a plot of land,” she remembers. “The man who owned it haggled over the sale. We had to move the dirt and pay way more than expected before we could even test the soil. The streets were a mess. The community grew frustrated with the delays, but we had a vision. It seemed never-ending, but we did it. It truly was a group effort.”

Her leadership also helped small businesses access funds to revitalize their establishments, making East Aldine more vibrant and welcoming. She saw firsthand how these efforts encouraged other business owners to invest in their properties, improving the district’s overall appearance and economy.

A New Chapter: Advocacy in Healthcare

Wiley’s resilience is truly inspiring. She didn’t slow down despite resigning from the EAMD Board due to a stroke. Instead, she channeled her energy into healthcare advocacy, working with the UTHealth Stroke Institute Community Advisory Board (CAB) and the Brain Health Equity Community Advisory Board (BHEq CAB). She now serves on several committees and focus groups, aiming to improve the experiences and outcomes of stroke patients.

“The stroke has given me different experiences. I still run my mouth — just now in the medical field,” she says joyfully. Her work has taken her to national stages, where she speaks to medical professionals from institutions like Emory and Johns Hopkins. She’s been invited to present again this year at a conference in California.

A Well-Deserved Honor

As East Aldine continues to grow and evolve, Wiley is deeply honored by her recognition during Black History Month. The honor is meaningful to Wiley, who grew up in Huntsville, TX, during segregation and the Civil Rights movement. By the age of 14, Wiley was the guardian of four siblings after their mother died. Known as the connection queen and for her positive, can-do attitude, adding value to everything she’s involved with, she began working in housekeeping cleaning hotel rooms before moving up to become a local Hilton Hotel’s director of sales and marketing. She developed the award-winning Greater Greenspoint Reporter, “the only one of its kind at the time.”

“I didn’t expect it,” she admits. “It validates all the work I had a part in. I used to bring in individuals to be honored — now I will be honored. It makes me feel good about all these years of work.”

For Wiley, the future of East Aldine depends on continued engagement from both leaders and residents.

“To district leaders: Keep paying attention to the needs of the community. Keep being a resource for residents and business owners,” she advises. “And to the community: Be active. Attend meetings. Share your thoughts. Stay aware of what’s happening in the district.”

Her legacy is a testament to the power of presence, persistence, and passion. Joyce Wiley has spent most of her life advocating for East Aldine, and even now, she remains a force for progress. Her work has transformed East Aldine and instilled a sense of pride and hope in the community.