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NORTHEAST NEWS



"Phoenix in Bloom" East Aldine's ART CAR

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VOL. 50, NO. 13 TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

Aldine ISD Honors Top Educators at Annual Recognition Breakfast

Aldine ISD celebrated its top educators during the annual Educators of the Year "Breakfast of Champions" on Friday, March 27. The event recognized outstanding teachers and principals from across the district for their dedication to student success.

This year's Kentucky Derby-inspired event brought together district leaders, educators, community partners and sponsors to highlight excellence in education. Guests sported festive hats, bow ties, and florals as the district honored those making a lasting impact in classrooms and schools. "Thank you for choosing Aldine ISD and your unwavering dedication to our students each and every day," said Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney. You are pacesetters, navigators and believers who refuse to let circumstances define a child's future. Because of your heart and commitment, our students can



EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR pose at the Recognition Breakfast on Friday, March 27, at center, with Aldine ISD Board Members and AISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney at right.

cross their finish line with confidence, choices and opportunities. We truly appreciate the incredible impact you make across our district."

The annual event recognizes educators who demonstrate excellence in instruction, leadership and student engagement, reinforcing the district's mission to prepare every student for college,



career and life. **District Teachers of the Year** Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney, left, with Michael Jackson and Sheree Stubblefield.

Continued. See EDUCATORS BREAKFAST, Page 5

NEWS NOTES

San Jacinto Day Celebration Brings Texas History to Life with Reenactments and Family Festivities

East Aldine SPRING MUSIC FEST
Saturday April 18
Live Music, food, games, prizes & More at East Aldine Amphitheatre, 5pm to 11pm. Free Cheeseburgers. 4 Bands. SEE PAGE 8

Walle Seminar April 23 "Know Your Rights"
Seminar on interactions with immigration enforcement will be held Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the East Aldine District Office, 2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Drive. RSVP is encouraged via email at District140.Walle@house.texas.gov.

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

LAPORTE — The thunder of cannons and the crack of musket fire will once again echo across the San Jacinto Battleground this month as the annual San Jacinto Day Celebration 2026 commemorates the 190th anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto, a decisive moment in Texas history.

Scheduled for Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the daylong event is presented by the San Jacinto Museum in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission. Organizers promise a full



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.

slate of activities blending education, entertainment, and hands-on experiences designed for visitors of all ages.

At the heart of the cel-

ebration are battle reenactments that recreate the dramatic events of April 1836. Reenactors dressed in period clothing will portray Texian and



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.

Mexican soldiers, bringing to life the clash that led to one of the most impactful military victories in North American history. The Battle of San Ja-

cinto Reenactment is scheduled to take place twice during the day, at

Continued. See SAN JACINTO DAY, Page 8

Almendarez Killer receives Life Sentence with No Parole

Joshua Stewart found guilty of capital murder in 2022 shooting

HARRIS COUNTY — A jury reached a verdict in Harris County Deputy Darren Almendarez's murder trial on Friday, according to the Harris County District Attorney.

Joshua Stewart, one of three people accused of shooting and killing Deputy Almendarez in 2022, was found guilty of capital murder, and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, the DA said in an X, formerly known as Twitter, post.

The DA added that Frederarious Clark and Freder-



DEPUTY DARREN ALMENDAREZ

ick Tardy, who were also charged with capital murder, will have their trials later this year.

The Deputy's widow, Flor Zarzoza Almendarez, was in the courtroom for the trial, but was not asked

to testify. Later she told the Northeast News that in spite of the verdict, "it won't bring Darren back." She said she will continue to fight until she gets jus-

Continued. See DEPUTY'S KILLER GETS LIFE SENTENCE, Page 2

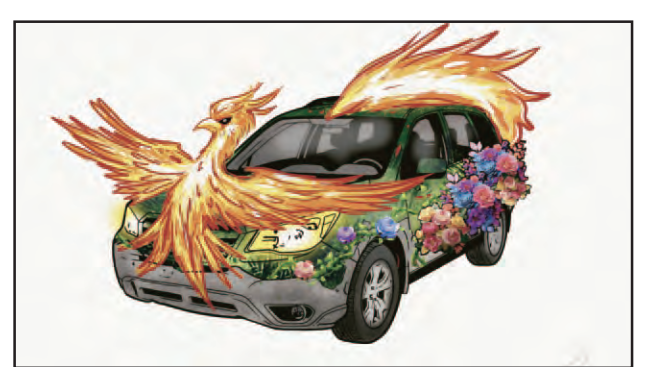
East Aldine enters their ART CAR in the Annual Art Car Parade

EAST ALDINE — Chairman Carlos Silva announced that the District purchased a 2020 Nissan as our Art Car. He said "it's a great blank canvas to work with, as we are participating in the 39th Art Car Parade with Avalo P-Tech and Up Art Studio.

In their proposal to lead the project, Up Art Studio said the following:

ART CAR is entitled "Phoenix in Bloom." UP Art Studio proposes a bold, nature-forward art car celebrating P-TECH Avalos High School and the East Aldine community. Centered on the school's phoenix mascot, the design symbolizes resilience, renewal, and the power of rising from adversity.

The vehicle will feature a dynamic phoenix emerg-



Initial Concept Sketch by Artist Inzo of UpArt Studio.

ing from a textured landscape of ash and fractured concrete, visually representing transformation and growth within an urban environment. As the phoenix rises, the composition transitions into lush natural elements, with flowing vines, roses, and blooming flowers overtaking the hardened surface to convey regeneration and

hope.

Subtle cultural design details will be thoughtfully integrated throughout the artwork, reflecting the rich identity and diversity of the East Aldine community. The overall palette will be vibrant and uplifting, ensuring strong visibility in parades and

Continued. See ART CAR, Page 5

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Life Sentence for Deputy's Killer,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Suspects charged include Joshua Stewart, Frederick Tardy, and Fredarius Clark

tice for his murder, but she has no hate in her heart. She sees Darren's death as an act of God.

Almendarez was shot off-duty in a grocery store parking lot while confronting two men who were trying to steal the catalytic converter under his truck.

Almendarez was shot to death on March 31. He was off-duty and shopping with his wife when, investigators say, he caught the three defendants in the act of stealing his truck's catalytic converter. There was an exchange of gunfire and Almendarez, a 23-year veteran of the department, was killed.

In earlier court proceedings, prosecutors also showed surveillance video

of a shooting two weeks before Almendarez's death that they say involved the same defendants doing the same thing. The victim in that case, who survived, testified and identified Stewart as the shooter.

And it was the first time, the deputy's relatives saw the surveillance video of his death. At times, they had to step out of the courtroom. His brother said that the video was hard to watch, but he needed to see it.

"There were so many other stories going around as to how many times he was shot, what happened, who he was wrestling with," explained Steve Almendarez. "It was good to see for myself because now I know what really hap-

pened. If anything, he went down fighting and I've seen that. He did his job, all the way to his last breath. He took criminals off the street."

Along with Stewart, Fredarius Clark and Frederick James Tardy are also charged with capital murder.

Clark's trial is scheduled to begin on May 29. Tardy had a pre-trial conference on April 14.

Since Almendarez murder, a bill named after him was signed into law.

In 2023, Gov. Greg Abbott signed the "Deputy Darren Almendarez Act" into law. The law enhances criminal penalties for offenses involving a catalytic converter.

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

- Etch Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on a catalytic converter.
- Paint catalytic converter with bright high-heat paint.
- If possible, park the vehicle in a garage or secured parking area.
- Park in a well-lit area.
- Install a catalytic converter anti-theft device (shield, clamp, alarm, etc.)
- Always be aware of your surroundings!
- Report incidents and suspicious activity immediately!

Etching the VIN on your catalytic converter(s) helps law enforcement identify the vehicle it belongs to and the owner if it is found. If law enforcement cannot locate the owner, the criminal will not be held accountable.

Painting your catalytic converter with bright, high-heat paint can help deter theft. It lets criminals know it is identifiable, which increases their risk of being caught.

Catalytic converter theft is on the rise, but you can help stop it. Simple steps like etching your VIN and using high-heat paint can make your vehicle a harder target for thieves.

Let's work together to keep our community safe and our vehicles protected.

Report suspicious activity: 713-221-6000

Friends of High Meadows Library

Now Recruiting: President & Treasurer

Join a passionate team of volunteers dedicated to supporting the High Meadows Branch Library in Houston's East Aldine community. The Friends of High Meadows Library is a nonprofit organization that strengthens our library through fundraising, program support, community advocacy, and special events.

We're looking for:

- President** - Lead the organization, coordinate meetings, and guide community initiatives.
- Treasurer** - Manage funds, track donations, and support financial planning for library programs.

Why Join?

- Make meaningful impact in your community
- Support literacy, learning and local engagement
- Collaborate with dedicated volunteers and library staff

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Questions?
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HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY High Meadows Branch Library
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Audien Hearing

High Meadows Branch Library

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

13 APR 11:30 AM INTRO ESL
11:30 AM FABLES AND FUN

14 APR 11 AM TODDLER TIME
3 PM POKEMON CLUB/GAME ZONE

15 APR 12 PM FUTURE U
3 PM TOON CAFE
3:30 PM KRAFTY KIDS
5PM AVENTURAS EN LECTURAS
5:30 PM MAGIC OF COLOR

16 APR 3:00PM TEEN LOUNGE
4 PM EXCEL BASIC

17 APR 3:00PM TOON CAFE

20 APR 11:30 AM FABLES AND FUN

SPECIAL NEWS

APRIL 22, 25, 28 @ 12 PM
ESL/CITIZENSHIP REGISTRATION
JOIN US FOR IN-PERSON REGISTRATION FOR OUR FREE CITIZENSHIP AND ESL CLASSES!
IN-PERSON REGISTRATION DATES

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

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FABLES & FUN, AVENTURAS EN LECTURA, TODDLER TIME
STORIES, SONGS, RHYMES, AND MORE!

GAME ZONE
DECOMPRESS FROM A LONG DAY AT SCHOOL BY PLAYING VIDEO GAMES AT THE LIBRARY! CHALLENGE YOUR FRIENDS TO A COMPETITION OR JUST COME HANG OUT!

KRAFTY KIDS
FROM PAINTING AND DRAWING TO SCULPTING AND MORE, THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERY YOUNG ARTIST TO ENJOY.

TEEN LOUNGE
IT IS TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS! MAKE A HOLIDAY ART FOR YOUR LOVED ONES THIS WINTER.

TOON CAFE
JOIN YOUR FRIENDS WITH SOME CARTOONS AND SNACKS

MICROSOFOT EXCEL BASIC
THIS CLASS IS FOR PEOPLE WHO ALREADY KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT USING A COMPUTER AND WANT TO LEARN MICROSOFT EXCEL SPREADSHEETS

POKEMON CLUB
GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL! DO IT WITH US AS WE PLAY POKEMON GAMES, DO CRAFTS, AND MORE!
FOR AGES 8+

TECH HELP
NEED HELP WITH YOUR TECHNOLOGY? BOOK A ONE TO ONE WITH US

MAGIC OF COLOR:
WATER COLOR PAINTING FOR ADULTS!

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

BOOK BUDDIES
Tuesday, April 14, 4:30pm-5:15pm
Description
Do you have a child in kindergarten through 3rd grade who loves stories—or one who could use a little extra reading support? Harris County Public Library's Book Buddies is a FREE, fun-filled literacy program that pairs enthusiastic, trained teen volunteers (Big Buddies) with younger readers (Little Buddies) for 10 weeks of reading adventures! Begins: Tuesday, Feb 17th 4:30 PM - 5:15 PM Feb. 17 - April 28 (Excluding March 17th) @ Aldine Branch Library
Each week, your child will build confidence, make a new friend, and discover the joy of reading in a supportive, one-on-one setting. ¿Tienes un hijo o hija en preescolar o primaria (hasta tercer grado) a quien le encantan los cuentos, o que necesita un poco de apoyo adicional con la lectura? El programa Book Buddies de la Biblioteca Pública del Condado de Harris es un programa de alfabetización GRATUITO y divertido que empareja a adolescentes voluntarios entusiastas y capacitados (Amigos Mayores) con lectores más jóvenes (Amigos Pequeños) durante 10 semanas de aventuras literarias.

FUTURE U! REVISE YOUR RESUME
Wednesday, April 15, 8:00am-9:00am
Description
Ready to Enhance your Resume? and Cover Letter? Take your resume and cover letter to the next level with a Future U advisor who can help you with great insight on how to attract top-notch employers and get their attention. Get great tips on crafting your resume and cover letter to be tailor-made with your skills, qualifications, and experiences. Have one on one talks with Future U advisor about today's job market and how to prepare and what to look for.

ESL 1
Wednesday, April 15, 1:00pm-2:30pm
Start learning English for free at the library! This is an introductory English class for complete beginners.
Class is once a week on Wednesdays from 1 - 2:30 p.m. It is an 8 week session from April 1st to May 20th, 2026
Registration is required in order to attend.
To register, visit us on a registration date to take a placement exam and confirm your spot in a class.
¡Empiece a aprender inglés gratis en la biblioteca! Esta es una clase de inglés introductoria para principiantes absolutos.
La clase se reúne una vez a la semana los miércoles de 1 - 2:30 p.m.
Es una sesión de 8 semanas desde el 1º de abril hasta el 4º de mayo.
Se requiere inscripción para asistir a la clase
Para inscribirse, visítenos en una fecha de inscripción para tomar un examen de nivel y confirmar su lugar en una clase.

TOGETHER TIME
Thursday, April 16, 11:00am-12:00pm

Description
Family program with each week is a different theme to hangout and have planned together time as a family. No registration required.
Together Time Thursday - Family Program
APRIL 16 - Collage Poetry
APRIL 23- Rock Art
APRIL 30th- Watercolor Programa familiar en el que cada semana tiene un tema diferente para pasar tiempo juntos y tener tiempo planificado como familia. No se requiere inscripción. **Jueves de Tiempo Juntos - Programa Familiar**
16 DE ABRIL - Poesía en collage
23 DE Abril - Arte en roca
30 DE Abril - Acuarela

SPARK 5 STORY TIME W/ THE MICHELLE PROJECT
Saturday, April 18, 11:00am-12:00pm
Description
Join the library and The Michelle Project for a special Saturday story time! These interactive story times are suitable for all ages and abilities. We'll explore the world of early literacy through singing, talking, writing, playing, and reading! Each super fun educational adventure is inspired by celebrations and traditions from that month. There's always a free book waiting for you at every session!

Bert Barron Adult Program Specialist
Aldine Branch Library
11331 Airline Dr.
Houston, TX 77037
Phone: 832-927-5410

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Principal Castille Honored for Deaf Education Leadership



Principal Gregory Castille works with a hearing impaired student at Ogden Elementary School

At Ogden Elementary, inclusion is a way of life. It's found in classrooms where students communicate across differences. Hallways fill with both spoken language and American Sign Language, ensuring every child is seen and empowered to succeed.

Principal Gregory Castille's leadership fosters an inclusive culture at his campus. Castille has been named the recipient of the prestigious 2026 Outstanding Principal Award from the Texas Association of Parents and Educators of the Deaf (TAPED) for his exemplary leadership.

He was selected for his steadfast commitment to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. He ensures these students are not only provided access but are also fully included and valued within the school community.

"This recognition reflects the kind of leadership that changes lives," said Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. "Mr. Castille has created a campus where students are not only supported, but truly valued. They are challenged to reach their full potential. In Aldine ISD, we believe all means all. This belief is woven into our #AldineStory. Ogden Elementary is a powerful example of that belief in action."



A Culture Where Access Is a Right

For Principal Castille, this statewide leadership honor reflects both his personal dedication and his collaborative efforts with the Ogden Elementary community.

"This recognition reinforces the idea that the work of our students, staff, and community is moving in the right direction," he said. "Personally, it is a humbling validation of the late nights and heart-led decisions we make to ensure every child feels seen."

His leadership philosophy is rooted in a simple but powerful belief: access is a right. "We want students to truly belong and lead," Castille said. "When we build a school for students with the most diverse needs, we create a more caring place for everyone."



Learning Together as One Team

Under Castille's leadership, Ogden Elementary has intentionally integrated the Region 4 ESC Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) into the fabric of the campus.

That integration is visible in daily interactions and instruction. "At Ogden, we don't just go to the same school — we learn together as one team," Castille said.

The campus embraces a "mirrors and windows" approach, ensuring students see themselves reflected in their environment and learn from others. Hearing and deaf staff serve as role models, and students regularly collaborate in shared learning spaces.

To further support communication and inclusion, Teachers of the deaf lead professional learning for staff and embed American Sign Language (ASL) throughout the campus. Environmental print and ASL signage in common areas — from hallways to the cafeteria — turn the entire school into a language-rich learning environment.

Building Confidence, Belonging, and Advocacy

The impact of this work is evident across the campus community. Castille has seen a significant increase in student agency. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing are becoming confident self-advocates.

"Our students are clearly explaining their needs to peers and adults," he said. That shift extends to staff as well.

"There has been a shift from 'your students' to 'our students,'" Castille added, reflecting campuswide shared support.

Beyond academics, the school's inclusive environment is shaping how students view the world. "Our campus is a place where kindness is a measurable skill. 'Community' means everyone is invited to the table," he said. "Students leave Ogden with a deeper understanding of empathy and belonging."

That impact is felt not only by students. Educators who support them each day feel it too. "Mr. Castille is a remarkable principal who ensures every student — hearing or deaf — is welcomed and fully included from the moment they walk through our doors," said Matthew Harper, deaf and hard-of-hearing education teacher at Ogden Elementary. "He is our greatest ally in the classroom, in the hallways, and in the conference room. While deaf education is often 'seen but not heard,' Mr. Castille has a heart big enough for all students. He is intentional about including them in every part of campus life."

"A great principal doesn't just lead a school — he creates a place where every student is seen, heard, and supported," added Michelle Porter, deaf and hard-of-hearing education teacher at Ogden Elementary. "Mr. Castille's commitment to deaf education ensures that all voices truly matter. His continued support is deeply appreciated."

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Leading With Purpose and Heart

For Castille, leading a culture of true inclusion guides the school's future. "Start with culture, then curriculum," he said. "You can have the best resources in the world. But if students don't feel like valued members of the campus, they won't thrive."

Castille will be formally recognized during the opening general assembly of the Texas Statewide Conference on the Education of the Deaf (SWCED) on June 25.

His recognition highlights his leadership and Aldine ISD's dedication to supporting every student's success.

Mustangs Advance to FCCLA State Competition

Four Aldine High School students have advanced to the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) State Leadership Conference, continuing a strong tradition of student achievement in career preparation and workforce readiness. FCCLA is the nation's leading organization for students pursuing careers in Education and Training, Hospitality and Tourism, Arts and Design, Personal Finance, Human Services and Public Service through Family and Consumer Sciences education.

Senior Andrea Larrea earned second place in the Promote and Publicize category, an event that challenges students to develop a campaign to raise awareness about FCCLA and Family and Consumer Sciences programs within their school and community. During the competition, participants are required to present both an oral presentation and a portfolio.

This marks Larrea's third year in FCCLA and her second appearance at the state level. She has developed a passion for advocating for Family and Consumer Sciences courses and plans to continue her education in Texas after graduation.

Larrea said the program has helped her grow personally and professionally.

"Second place feels amazing and very rewarding," said Larrea. "Compared to my previous competitions, I feel like I've made a lot of progress. My teacher believed in me, and so did my classmates. Their support really helped me get through the nerves. I'm extremely proud of myself—from placing 5th in my sophomore year, not placing at all in my junior year, to finishing second in my last year. I'm forever grateful."

FCCLA adviser and fashion design instructor La Keesha Craig said the program continues to have a meaningful impact on



students, both inside and outside the classroom.

"I'm truly impressed by their dedication to our FCCLA chapter and the effort they put into balancing school, part-time jobs, and other organizations. Watching them take initiative and develop confidence is inspiring," said Craig. "Their success reflects the strength of our fashion design program, especially in building leadership, responsibility, and strong organizational skills."

In addition to Larrea's success, Valeria Muñoz-Alvarenga, Karla Vergara-Juárez, and Juana Flores-Riveras all earned fourth place in the Chapter Service Project Display competition. The trio has shown consistent excellence, marking their third consecutive year competing. Muñoz-Alvarenga and Vergara-Juárez have advanced to state finals each year, while Flores-Riveras will attend for the second time.

All three students plan to pursue higher education. Muñoz-Alvarenga intends to study education, Vergara-Juárez plans to enter the nursing field, and Flores-Riveras hopes to begin in real estate before transitioning into the medical field.

Muñoz-Alvarenga said Aldine ISD has helped her feel more confident about her future. She plans to attend

Lone Star College-Atascocita and the University of Houston-Clear Lake before transferring to the University of Houston.

FCCLA has played a major role in her development.

"This program has taught me the importance of helping the community, which makes me want to continue doing projects like this after high school," Muñoz-Alvarenga said. "It has also helped me improve my communication skills, which I will need in the future to network. Speaking in front of peers and judges has helped me imagine being in a classroom and teaching something new."

Craig said the future of the Aldine ISD fashion program is bright as it continues to grow and create opportunities for students. Plans include hosting fashion shows at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center and expanding hands-on learning experiences.

Students are also gaining internships with local designers, with some opportunities leading directly to employment after graduation.

The FCCLA State Leadership Conference will take place in Dallas from April 9-10, with the awards ceremony scheduled for Saturday, April 11.



A morning packed with fun for the whole family!

ACTIVITIES

- Arts, crafts & games
- Free books for students
- Featured author talks & book signings
- Petting zoo
- Fire truck
- Soccer clinic
- Student presentations
- District & community resource tables
- Concession stands & more!!

Guest Speaker

Dr. José Luis Zelaya

- Nationally recognized educator
- Works with first-generation college students and emergent bilingual communities
- Turns ambition into opportunity



- 10 a.m. — Completing Your College Application
- 11 a.m. — Finding Your Voice: How to Write a College Essay

Featured Authors & Book Signings — 9 a.m.

Every student receives a FREE signed book!

Dr. Edith Treviño — "Dr. ET"

- Storyteller and Educator
- Author of *La Chancleta's True Story*
- La Frontera, Texas-Mexico Border



Angela Pham Krans

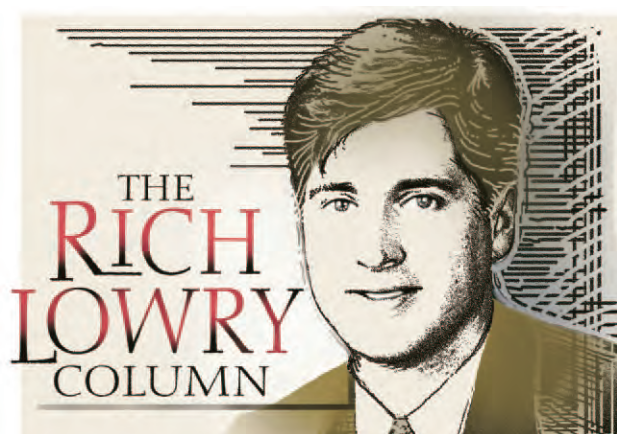
- Award-Winning Author of *Finding Papa*
- ALA Asian/Pacific American Honor Award for Literature
- Presents in English & Vietnamese



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OPINION PAGE



Artemis II: Yes, Boldly Go

Yes, boldly go
So much for journalistic objectivity.
The BBC science editor covering the launch of Artemis II couldn't contain her enthusiasm...

As the rocket lifted off, she got visibly emotional: "It's not just what you see and you hear as the rocket lifts off. You can feel the force of it through your body. This is the most powerful rocket that NASA has ever built!"

Rebecca Morelle can be forgiven for falling in love with the subject of her story. A rocket launch is an awe-inspiring event — a controlled explosion hurling a gigantic projectile into the ether.

NASA hasn't been glamorous in decades. Once upon a time, kids were putting up glossy photos of Apollo rockets and astronauts on their bedroom walls. But the Apollo program was killed long ago — civil-rights activists were among those mobilizing against it, oddly enough — and nothing has captured the imagination the same way since.

The space shuttle made space flight routine and boring, and there was nothing particularly ambitious about the International Space Station. Rovers and telescopes were worthy endeavors, but not thrilling.

There is no substitute for manned space flight. The Artemis project is not exactly boldly going where no man has gone before, since it seeks to return to the moon after we were there half a century ago. But sending astronauts 250,000 miles from Earth as part of a project to eventually set up a base on the moon is the most enterprising NASA project since Apollo.

This is all to the good, but Artemis has been plagued by delays and cost overruns. NASA hasn't been able to replicate the urgent, mission-driven approach that characterized the Apollo program. It took eight years to get to the moon the first time, while Artemis has been going for nine years and we still aren't back.

NASA projects tend to get caught in a cycle: One president proposes a big new initiative, only for it to get canceled by his successor, who proposes his own initiative that is canceled in turn. The worst case scenario is that a Democratic president elected in 2028 nixes Artemis because President Trump favored it.

That said, the space expert Robert Zubrin notes that space is particularly appealing to Americans as a people defined, in part, by the frontier. JFK talked of "the New Frontier," and the famous open of the TV show "Star Trek" called space "the final frontier."

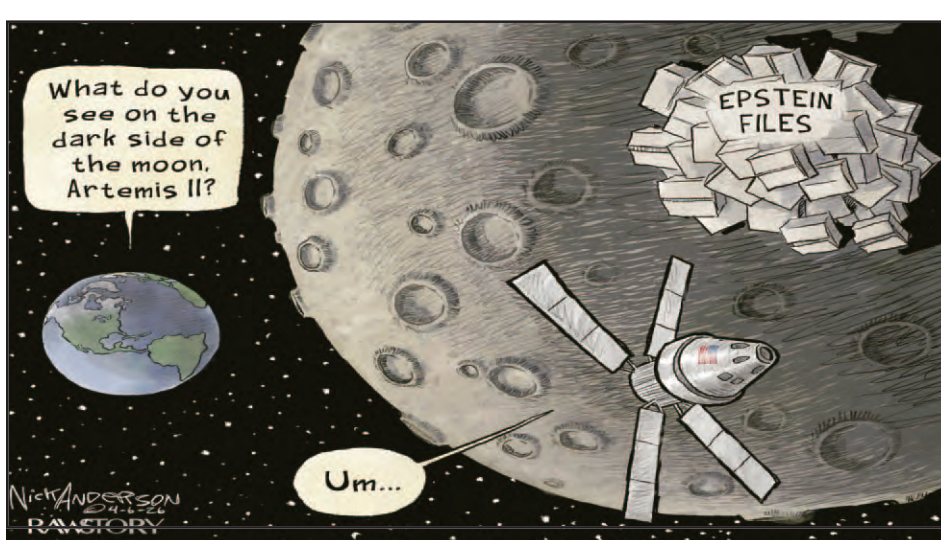
Certainly, the American space program is a marked contrast with that of the Europeans, the European Space Agency. NASA's budget is several times larger. We've sent men to the moon, whereas they haven't. And we've sent multiple successful landers and rovers to Mars (the first lander in 1976, the first rover in 1997), whereas the ESA has only managed two unsuccessful landers.

Getting back to the moon is nice, but it is a manned mission to Mars that should be our ultimate objective. It would truly be another giant leap for mankind, opening up a vista of homo sapiens as a multi-planetary species. The technological challenge would be significant, requiring Apollo-like exertions, while there's much of scientific importance to be learned on the Red Planet.

Right now, the most popular movie in America is "Project Hail Mary," a sci-fi thriller about a desperate mission into space. The film plays to our inherent interest in journeys into the unknown, and to our admiration for those who have the courage to explore new worlds, from Francis Drake to Neil Armstrong.

Artemis II tapped into the same thing, which is why that BBC reporter — and so many of the rest of us — were so moved.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Crazy Couch



Three years ago, I was in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, walking through what had once been a large fabric mill. It has since been turned into an art gallery called, appropriately, La Fabrica, where artists of all kinds lease space to show their work.

One day, while passing a shop, I saw the most outrageous couch.

It was an old camelback couch—a loveseat, really, but with wide, rolled arms. It appeared to be an older piece of furniture that had been restored. The fabric was crazy. It was a patchwork of burned velvet fabric in brilliant hues. It was the brightest, craziest couch I'd ever seen, and it was being sold alongside art and sculpture, which made sense, because it really was a work of art.

I don't know how stories come into being, but that brilliant couch, three years ago, left an impression on me.

I started writing a new book. The book was about a house that had lived in a small town by the river for 150 years and had, over the course of time, developed a fondness for the women who lived in it, especially its current tenant, Max. "What did Max do?" I wondered. And then I saw her making a couch very much like that one I'd seen, using crazy fabrics, and selling it to her art dealer, Bobby.

The story became "The Turnip House." When it was finished, I sent it to my agent and, after editing it, we submitted it to my publisher. And we have just learned that they want to publish it.

Last week, my husband, Peter, and I were considering moving from our tiny and much-beloved apartment at Casa de los Soles. We decided not to move. We realized we could not stand to be away from this place that has become our home away from home. Since we are not spending money on a larger apartment, I was walking through La Fabrica, wondering how we could make our place a little nicer. Just as I was thinking this, I saw a couch very similar to the one that had inspired "The Turnip House," the book that had just sold.

I went into the shop. "You had another couch," I began, "but it was in brighter colors."

The young woman did not look perplexed in the least. She headed off to the back of the store and indicated that I should follow her.

"No way," I thought. We climbed a flight of stairs. And there, sitting like it was waiting for me, was my couch. Except now, it was 40% off.

"Oh my gosh," I said in English.

I came home and told Peter. "If you like it, that's all that matters," Peter said. (Peter is wonderful that way.)

Then I asked Jorge, our landlord, if he'd mind if I replaced his couch with a new one. At first, he thought I was asking him to buy it.

"No! No," I told him. "It's a gift—to me." And I told him the story.

Jorge smiled. "No problem!" So today I am waiting. I should be getting the final contract for "The Turnip House," which will make it all official. And I should be getting delivery of the brightly colored couch that inspired it. I'm not sure which will arrive first, and I know they it doesn't matter. I and they belong together and are part of the same story.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



Border Wall Through Big Bend Apparently on hold

After public outcry, a physical border wall through Big Bend National Park appears to be on hold, The Texas Tribune reported.

In February, the Trump administration waived more than two dozen environmental laws in order to clear the way for a 150-mile-long wall through West Texas, including Big Bend and the adjoining state park. Opposition quickly arose from people and politicians from both parties.

The sheriffs of Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Presidio and Terrell counties — a mix of Democrats and Republicans — wrote an open letter that said: "Based on decades of combined experience working with this terrain, we believe that construction of a continuous physical border wall in the Big Bend region would not represent the most practical or strategic approach to border security in this area."

Now, a map on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website no longer indicates plans to construct a physical wall in the Big Bend region. It is unclear if those plans are final, since the map has been changed several times in the past few weeks.

The rugged area historically has been the least-busy of the nine Border Patrol sectors, accounting for just 1.3% of the 237,538 apprehensions recorded along the entire U.S.-Mexico border during the last fiscal year.

STATE ON TRIAL FOR UN-AIRCONDITIONED PRISONS

The state of Texas is now on trial in an Austin federal court to determine whether it must provide air-conditioning in state prisons, kut.org reported. Inmates and their attorneys have argued for decades that summer conditions — where temperatures can reach 110 degrees — constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

"The Constitution requires living conditions that are not exposing individuals to high heat levels, and the evidence has consistently shown that what TDCJ has done as an alternative has just not been effective," attorney Brandon Duke said. "It's not a solution." The state counters that it is bringing more AC online at its prisons. Plaintiff attorneys say at least five inmates have died in Texas from heat-related illness since 2023.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice says it would cost \$1.5 billion to install air-conditioning systems at all its



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

prisons, and that state lawmakers must approve the funding.

U.S. District Judge Robert Pittman is expected to rule from the bench after the trial concludes.

CAMP MYSTIC FILES APPLICATION TO REOPEN THIS SUMMER

Camp Mystic has filed an application with the state to reopen this summer, the Houston Chronicle reported. More than two dozen children and two camp counselors were killed in the July 4 flash floods that swept the camp. The Texas Department of State Health Services, which oversees camp licensing, said it has received complaints about the camp and that it will be "investigated for violations of the laws and rules governing youth camps."

DSHS has been sued by the parents of nine victims who contend the camp was wrongfully licensed just two days before the disaster last summer, even though it lacked an evacuation plan. In a separate case, a Travis County judge has ordered Camp Mystic to preserve for future examination the cabins and grounds damaged in the floods.

Camp leaders are asking for permission to open its Cypress Lake campus, which they said is "in compliance with all aspects of the state's new camp safety laws and has implemented additional safety measures that exceed the requirements of those laws."

TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAY DROPS

A new report from the University of Houston Education Research Center indicates average pay for Texas public school teachers has dropped about \$5,000 over the past decade, the Chronicle reported. The decrease comes even as the cost of living has increased during that time span.

"When we look at those regional differences, there are some increases across the state, but really what we're seeing is that average teacher salaries haven't kept up with inflation," said Toni Templeton, the Education Research Center's senior research scientist.

Average base pay for the state's most experienced teachers, those with 11 or more years of experience, has declined from about \$73,000 to about \$66,000 in 2024-25, according to the report.

The Texas Legislature approved pay increases based on teachers' years of experience, and those raises could show up in future studies.

SPACEX PLANNING WHAT COULD BE BIGGEST-EVER IPO

Elon Musk's SpaceX is confidentially planning to sell shares to the public in what could be the largest initial public offering in history, the Austin American-Statesman reported. It has filed paperwork with the Securities and Exchange Commission that indicates it could raise as much as \$75 billion in an IPO by July.

The confidential filing allows companies to get feedback from regulators without revealing information to competitors. However, SpaceX will have to release a public filing at least 15 days before its IPO "road show," when it presents its financial plan to potential underwriters and institutional investors.

SpaceX has become the world's leading commercial rocket launch company. Over the past five years, it has secured \$6 billion in contracts from the federal government.

TDI HELPS STOP \$400 MILLION MEDICARE SCHEME

A Texas Department of Insurance investigator and crime analyst played a key role in arresting a Russian national who submitted \$400 million in fake Medicare claims. Nikolai Buzolin established a durable medical equipment company in Houston in 2025. He is charged with stealing patients' and doctors' identities to submit fraudulent claims to Medicare Part C.

"A few of the patients checked their explanation of benefits and noticed that they were getting medical equipment that they didn't need. And it was coming from doctors they'd never met," said TDI Fraud Unit investigator Sgt. Kevin Mannion.

FBI agents arrested Buzolin as he was boarding a plane in Los Angeles to Russia. He faces up to 20 years in prison if found guilty.

"TDI works with federal, state, and local partners to follow cases wherever they go, whether it's California or right here in Texas," said Mannion. "We track them down, we shut them down, and we help dismantle these criminal activities."

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

Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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Aldine ISD Honors Top Educators at Annual Recognition Breakfast

This year's Teachers of the Year represent the very best of Aldine ISD, educators whose passion and impact are shaping the future of our students. In their classrooms, they create spaces where students are challenged to think critically and find their voice, embodying what it means to put Students First.

Michael Jackson of Anderson Academy was named the district's 2026 Elementary Teacher of the Year, and Sheree Stubblefield of Avalos P-TECH School was named the 2026 Secondary Teacher of the Year. Jackson, once a student who needed support and encouragement, now creates life-changing opportunities for his own students, just as his fourth-grade teacher once did for him.

"One thing I always say is I never want my name to be bigger than the work that I put in. I pray that the work that I have done has truly spoken for me," he said.

Stubblefield came to education later in her career but has quickly made a lasting impact on her ninth-grade students. She was previously named the district's 2021 Rookie Teacher of the Year.

"I've seen my first class, from ninth through 12th grade, cross the stage last year, and to know I was a part of that story means more to me than I can say," she said.

Teacher of the Year Finalists

Alicia Kellem of Ogden Elementary, Kirsten Kurtz of Worsham Elementary, Shawn Bingham of Blanson CTE, and Stephen Posada of Hambrick Middle School were finalists, each demonstrating instructional excellence and inspiring student achievement.

Rookie Teachers of the Year



Kaitlyn Fraser, center, with Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney and board members.

Rezie Hernandez, center, with Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney and board members.

The district also honored two first-year educators who have made an immediate impact in their classrooms. Rezie Hernandez of Reed Academy was named Rookie Elementary Teacher of the Year, and Kaitlyn Fraser of Plummer Middle School was named Rookie Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Hernandez's passion for special education brought her here to Texas from the Philippines, where she now helps struggling students build confidence and celebrate their growth. "Thank you. This is a huge gift from God. I never expected that I would be a teacher in the United States," she said.



Denise Meister, center, with Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney and board members.

Meister, who has 32 years in education, reflected on her journey in Aldine ISD. "In Aldine, we talk about choices and opportunities. I chose Aldine because my heart is here. Our kids and families deserve people whose decisions are always based on what's best for kids. Aldine has given me opportunities I wouldn't have had anywhere else," she said.

With deep gratitude, Stewart shared what the moment meant to him, saying:

"I sincerely thank you for this incredible recognition as Secondary Principal of the Year. This award is truly humbling. It stands as a testament to the collective success and dedicated effort of everyone who has guided me with their wisdom and knowledge."

Throughout the event, speakers emphasized the critical role educators play in shaping student success, including Kyra Brown, a student at Victory Early College High School and a Superintendent Student Ambassador, who served as emcee alongside Chief Communications Officer Sheila Adams. "I'm here because of my teachers' influence and dedication. Because of educators like you, I'm pursuing a future in biochemistry. Thank you for making a difference and creating classrooms that impact students like me," Brown said.

The Aldine Education Foundation highlighted its continued partnership in supporting students and staff through scholarships, innovative teaching grants and expanding learning opportunities. This year's event was made possible through the generosity of sponsors, including Platinum sponsors United Airlines, Whataburger, Jostens and East Aldine Management District; Gold sponsors PBK and Stantec; Silver sponsors Imagine Learning and Amplify; and campus sponsors AFT and Turner & Townsend Heery.

With their support, each of the top six honorees received special recognition, including free Whataburger for a year; a custom-designed commemorative ring sponsored by Jostens; and two round-trip airline tickets provided by United Airlines. Teacher of the Year recipients also received a curated gift package from the Aldine Education Foundation, including a T-shirt symbolizing their role as ambassadors for the organization and its mission to support students and educators across the district.

Board members and district leadership also praised educators for their unwavering commitment to students. "You invest in students, you open doors, you create opportunities, and in Aldine ISD, that work matters because we believe every student deserves a strong start and a strong finish," said Board Secretary Paul Shanklin. As the celebration ended, district leaders encouraged educators to continue building on the strong foundation they have created. The Educators of the Year Breakfast remains a longstanding tradition honoring the excellence, dedication and heart of those who serve Aldine ISD students and families.



Walter Stewart, center, with Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney and board members.

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LEGAL NOTICE

AIISD to Hold a Public Hearing on the 2024-2025 APR at the April 21 Board Meeting

Aldine ISD will hold a public hearing to discuss the 2024-2025 Annual Performance Report at the April 21 Board meeting. According to TEA guidelines:

"A hearing for public discussion of the annual report must be held within 90 days of the district receiving Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPRs). Parents and property owners must be notified of the hearing."

The April 21 Board meeting will be held in the Board Room of the Donaldson Administration Building and will begin at 7 p.m.

East Aldine District's Art Car,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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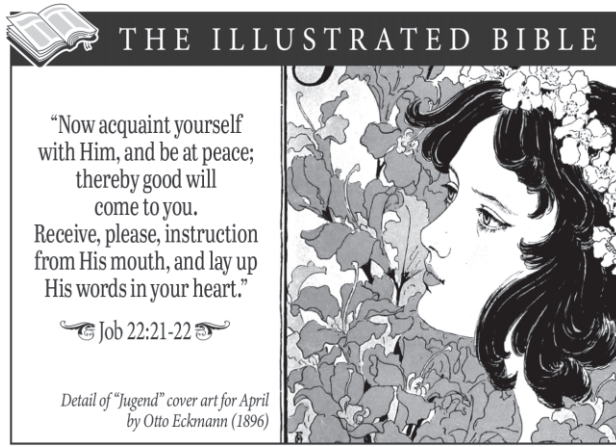
BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 40:16c-17

"The **LORD** is **great!**" **But** as **for** me, I am **poor** and **needy**; **may** the Lord **think** of me. **You** are my **help** and my **deliverer**; you **are** my **God**, do **not** **delay**.

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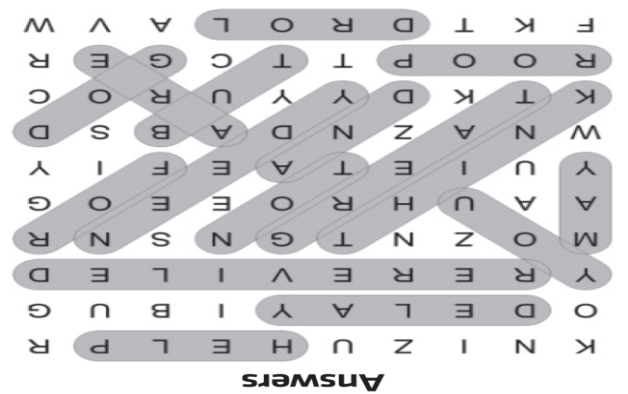
By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Obadiah (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Matthew 9, after Jesus healed a paralyzed man, what did the man pick up and carry home? Brother, Bed, Mother, Cart
3. Which book begins, "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai"? Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
4. What is the largest number phrase specifically mentioned in the Bible? 7 x 70, Ten hundred, Hundred thousand, Thousands of ten thousands
5. According to Acts 25, what title belonged to Agrippa? Priest, Apostle, King, General
6. In Exodus 7, what river was turned into blood? Red, Galilee, Marah, Nile

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Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreen.com/king_61_nile

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Bed, 3) Numbers, 4) Thousands of ten thousands, 5) King, 6) Nile



BIBLE WORD SEARCH

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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Seven studios bid to produce Jane Fonda's next film, and Lionsgate won. The film is called "The Correspondent," and it's about a retired woman who processes her grief through letters.

It was announced that Fonda would give a tribute to Robert Redford during the Oscars, but Barbra Streisand, who only made "The Way We Were" (1973) with Redford, outranked her. This was disappointing since Fonda made five films with Redford: "Tall Story" (1960), "The Chase" (1966), "Barefoot in the Park" (1967), "The Electric Horseman" (1979), and "Our Souls at Night" (2017). The Academy bowed to Streisand, and Fonda wasn't happy!



Bud Cort (1948-2026) for "Harold and Maude" (1971)

The Oscars In Memoriam omitted at least four other film stars. Considered one of the most beautiful woman in the world, Brigitte Bardot became internationally famous for the 1956 film "And God Created Woman." She wed "Barbarella" director Roger Vadim in 1952, and he later wed Jane Fonda in 1965.

Bardot made 47 films before retiring at 41 in 1971. She died on Dec. 28, 2025, at 91. Despite her being an animal activist, it was her controversial homophobic and Islamophobic remarks that were supposedly the reason why she was omitted from the In Memoriam segment.

Another omission (with no reason given) was Bud Cort, who died on Feb. 11 at 77. He made 40 films, most notably "M.A.S.H." (1970) and "Brewster McCloud" (1970). He hit it big with "Harold and Maude" (1971), which was a sensation because he played a 22-year-old boy who was in love with the 72-year-old Ruth Gordon. He surely earned the recognition that he was sadly denied.

A third omission was Robert Carradine, who died on Feb. 23 at 71. I met Bobby when he was 17 and starred alongside John Wayne in "The Cowboys" (1972). He was in at least 38 films, including "Mean Streets" (1973),

"Orca" (1977), "The Long Riders" (1980), the "Revenge of the Nerds" franchise (1984-1994), "Django Unchained" (2012), and the completed upcoming film "Sorority Shark Attack" before he died.

The fourth omission was June Lockhart from the Golden Age of Hollywood, who died on Oct. 23, 2025, at 100 years of age. She acted in 31 films, including "A Christmas Carol" (1938); "All This, and Heaven Too" (1940) with Bette Davis; "Adam Had Four Sons" (1941) with Ingrid Bergman; "Sergeant York" (1941), for which Gary Cooper won his Oscar; "Miss Annie Rooney" (1942); "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944) with Judy Garland; "The White Cliffs of Dover" (1944); "Son of Lassie" (1945); "She-wolf of London" (1946); and "Lost in Space" (1998).

She also starred in both "Lassie" and "Lost in Space" when they became hit TV series. I used to visit with June and her actress daughter Anne Lockhart ("Battlestar Galactica"). Looks like Lassie's mom will be lost in space for eternity!

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Roundtable

MESA REDONDA DE PARTICIPACIÓN CÍVICA

APRIL 30, 2026

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

LSC HOUSTON NORTH GREENSPOINT
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SATURDAY, JUNE 13 REGISTRATION 8:00 AM TO 9:30 AM ST. MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC CHURCH 120 ISAACKS RD. HUMBLE, TX 77338	SATURDAY, JUNE 20 REGISTRATION 8:00 AM TO 9:30 AM ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH 5356 11 TH ST. KATY, TX 77493	

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

by BUD BLAKE

by Jeff Pickering

Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Brush is larger; 2. Painted area on fence is larger; 3. Shirt is smaller; 4. Man has more hair; 5. Window is larger; 6. Leaf is smaller.

April 13, 2026 Posting Date

King Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10			
11			12		13					14				
15					16					17				
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50	51	52				53		54			55			
56						57					58			
59						60						61		

ACROSS

- Soak (up)
- "Nova" channel
- South Pacific nation
- Grouch
- Ump's call
- Tehran's country
- Rights org.
- Peyton's brother
- Dweeb
- Spars
- Boast
- Prom outfit
- TV detective
- Remington
- Shirt parts
- Flynn of film
- Frankfurt fellow
- Cleaning cloth
- A gazillion years
- Fine cotton
- "Shake —" (Taylor Swift hit)
- "Be serious!"
- More of a snoop
- Hosp. scan
- Inert gas
- Accord
- Pizzazz
- Bro, maybe
- Half a sextet
- Actress Falco
- tizzy (worked up)

DOWN

- Con job
- Killer whale
- Buddies
- "The Raven" writer
- Future tulip
- Mixes up
- Crime-solving aids
- Rage
- Pickle holder
- Hoosier st.
- Crunchy candy bar
- Minivan alternative
- Consumed
- Gen- — (baby boomer's kid)
- One of HOMES
- Linda, Calif.
- Mideast airline
- Tibia's place
- Jared of "Panic Room"
- Cupid's alias
- Droop
- Tiara jewel
- Service charge
- Capote nickname
- Wartime riveter
- Boy, in Barcelona
- Showy flower
- Scrabble piece
- Singer Ono
- Last letter in London
- Chemical suffix
- Actress Long
- Prohibit

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY:** Which country is also known to residents as Hellas?
- U.S. STATES:** Which state is the least populated?
- ENTERTAINERS:** Which show launched the career of comedian/actor Jim Carrey?
- MOVIES:** What museum is featured in the movie "Night at the Museum"?
- HISTORY:** When was Earth Day first celebrated?
- MUSIC:** Which song begins with the lines, "Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy"?
- TELEVISION:** Who starred in the title role of the TV drama "Designated Survivor"?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** What is the only sport that has been played on the moon?
- LITERATURE:** What is the name of the language used in the novel "1984"?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What is a group of giraffes called?

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King Crossword

Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Answers

1. Greece; 2. Wyoming; 3. "In Living Color"; 4. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City; 5. April 22, 1970; 6. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen; 7. Kiefer Sutherland; 8. Golf; 9. Newspeak; 10. A tower

Cannons to roar again at San Jacinto day celebration,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

11 a.m. and again at 2 p.m., allowing visitors multiple opportunities to witness the pivotal moment when General Santa Anna was defeated.

Beyond the battlefield, the event offers a deeper look at the broader story of the Texas Revolution through a series of presentations known as The Road to San Jacinto. Representatives from major historic sites across Texas will share how months of fighting, political debate, and hardship culminated in the final battle at San Jacinto. These talks will be held throughout the day, providing historical context and narrative continuity for attendees.

A large portion of the battleground will be transformed into a living history area, where visitors can step back nearly 200 years and observe daily life in revolutionary-era Texas. Reenactors will demonstrate cooking, weapon maintenance, and other routines of soldiers and civilians, inviting the public to ask questions and interact. All activities are family-friendly, with special opportunities designed just for children.

Hands-on experiences are a major draw of the celebration. Activities include cartridge box making, haversack packing, bullet casting, and a weapons touch table featuring replica arms used by both the Texian and Mexican armies. Visitors can also explore battlefield medicine, listen to period music during "Battle Beats," and participate in crafts such as flag making, badges, and buttons that reflect the diverse groups involved in the Texas Revolution.

This year's reenact-



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.

ment carries a note of remembrance for the Texas reenactment community. Mark Edward Hegman, who had been asked to portray General Sam Houston a couple of years ago, passed away last year. A longtime reenactor and Texas Army colonel, Hegman dedicated two decades to sharing Texas history with the public alongside his family, who often lived the reenactment life in period tents during events.

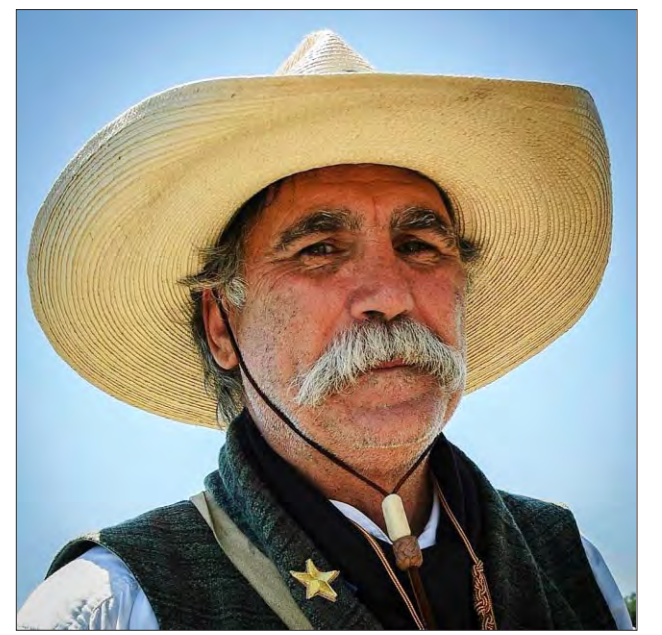
Hegman will long be remembered for his love of Texas history and willingness to share it in word and action.

In addition to historical programming, the celebration will feature a vendor market and food trucks operating throughout the day, giving visitors a chance to relax and enjoy the festival atmosphere between activities. Living history demonstrations will pause during reenactments to ensure clear viewing and safety.

Organizers encourage the public to drop in at any point during the day to experience the sights, sounds, and stories of San Jacinto, where history is not only remembered but vividly re-created for new generations.



Scenes from previous San Jacinto Day celebrations at the monument in LaPorte, Texas. Thousands of visitors will descend on the park for the festivities.



Mark Hegman, who passed away last year, portrayed General Sam Houston during one of the Battle of San Jacinto reenactments.

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