

COMMUNITY WATCH

Woman Found Dead in North Houston Motel Room

HOUSTON - A woman was found dead in a motel room in north Houston on Saturday morning, according to the Houston Police Department.

HPD said officers responded to the motel, located in the 6100 block of the North Freeway, at about 11 a.m. Authorities said that Houston Fire Department paramedics also responded to the scene, where they pronounced the woman dead.

According to investigators, the incident was initially reported by a man who said he was a friend of the victim. The man told officers that when he woke up at about 7 a.m., he found the woman unresponsive. Police said he then asked motel employees to call 911 at about 10



Street view of the motel where woman was found dead. [Source: Google street view.]

a.m. Officers said that he reported last seeing the woman alive at about 9 p.m. the previous night.

Officials said the investigation into the woman's death is pending the cause of death, which will be determined by autopsy.

HPD said anyone with information about this incident is advised to call its Homicide Division at 713-308-3600.

Emergency Management students get hands-on experience,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for ways to innovate and ensure our curriculum is up to date," said Laura Gehrig, Ph.D., LSCS department chair, BAS Emergency Management. "Disaster wargaming allows students to engage in their classwork in a more meaningful way, responding to simulated disasters on the spot."

LSCS students in the BAS Emergency Management program take courses such as Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness, Infrastructure Systems and Disaster, Emergency Management Planning, Disaster Response and Recovery, and Risk and Crisis Communications.

These classes prepare graduates like Brett Shryock to confidently enter or advance in the workforce. Shryock was one of the first students to enroll in the BAS program after obtaining an associate degree in fire science from LSC-CyFair. Since graduating, he has been promoted from a logistics specialist to a logistics supervisor at the Harris County Office of Homeland Security &

Emergency Management.

"I wouldn't change it for the world," Shryock said. "I had matured a lot as the years went on, so I looked at the classes differently than I would have at age 18 or 19. Bringing that experience to the classes really helped. I got to give a lot of feedback and share my experience with classmates, and I learned a lot from the professors."

Many students in the program are already actively working as first responders. Some are pursuing a bachelor's degree to access additional stipends at work, while others hope to advance their careers or have an alternate pathway lined up once they're ready to move on from the more physically demanding frontline roles.

Emergency managers must have excellent organizational and project management skills as they make crucial logistical decisions amid disasters. Gehrig said this degree program allows students to create stability for their families and have job security in a high-demand

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SCHOOL NEWS

ALDINE ISD SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney
Welcome Back Aldine ISD

Welcome Back to the 2026-2027 School Year

There is nothing quite like the excitement of a new school year — new faces, new school supplies, and new beginnings. It is my absolute joy to welcome our entire Aldine family to the 2026–27 school year! I look back fondly on my first days of school as a middle school language arts teacher at Lincoln Junior High School. I loved preparing my classroom and imagining all the students I would welcome through my doors and have the privilege of teaching throughout the year.

At Aldine, we believe every child deserves a future filled with hope, and we create that hope every day through strong teaching, meaningful relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for success.

To our students: Believe in the possibilities. Whether you're a prekindergarten student taking your first steps into school or a high school senior preparing for college, a career, or the military, thank you for choosing Aldine ISD. We are here to help you shine and climb. We offer many choices so you can achieve your goals, and we're here to support you and your dreams.

To our families: Thank you for your trust and partnership. Our families and caregivers are what make Aldine truly exceptional. We're here to roll out the red carpet and make sure that you feel the support that you deserve.

To our employees: You matter and we are grateful you chose Aldine. Our employees are the heart of Aldine ISD, which is why we are proud to provide two mental health days — one each semester. When we care for the



Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, Aldine ISD Superintendent.

people who care for our students, everyone benefits.

As we begin this school year, we do so with tremendous momentum. This summer, we celebrated outstanding accomplishments across our district. Our students once again demonstrated academic growth, earned more than \$1.35 billion in college scholarships and financial aid offers, received statewide and national recognition in academics, the visual and performing arts, and career and technical education, and showed there is no limit to what they can achieve. We also celebrated our exceptional educators through the Teacher Incentive Allotment, expanded programs that increase student opportunities, and aligned district leadership to continue advancing excellence across our district.

These accomplishments are worth celebrating, but they are not our destination. They are reminders of what is possible when students, families, educators, and our community choose to work

together with a shared purpose. Every day, the choices we make to support one another help shape brighter futures for our students.

This year, we remain committed to our mission of providing every student with a rigorous and enriching educational experience that prepares them for college, career, and life. Through our Accelerate strategic plan and Portrait of a Graduate, we will continue focusing on instructional excellence, supporting the whole child, strengthening our teams, and ensuring every student graduates with the skills, confidence, and meaningful choices and opportunities they need for the future.

As we begin this new year, let's choose to give our best, encourage one another, and believe in what's possible.

And every single day ... choose hope.

Thank you for choosing Aldine ISD. It's a great day to be in Aldine ISD!

With Aldine Pride,
Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney-Superintendent

Buckner helps students get ready for school,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

resources.

State Rep. Armando Walle also attended the event, joining community members and organizers in supporting local students and families.

Buckner Houston orga-

nizers said the event reflects the organization's commitment to creating opportunities, strengthening families and investing in the future of the community.

Buckner Houston expressed appreciation to everyone who helped make the Back-to-School Event a success and contributed to preparing students for the year ahead.



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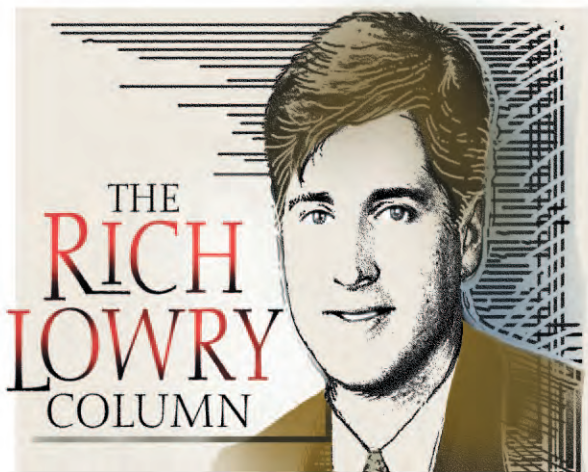
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A foreseeable and dire munitions crisis

During the 1979-1980 hostage crisis, a defiant Iran starkly demonstrated the limits of American power. Forty-five years later, it is doing the same thing, although in vastly different circumstances. Back then, when the post-Vietnam military was at a low ebb, we didn't strike Iran, and a long-shot rescue operation ended in abject failure.

Now, with the U.S. military at its most proficient and professional in history, we have inflicted punishing blows against the regime but still haven't been able to impose our will, in part because we are running low on the munitions necessary to prosecute the war. Not only is this embarrassing, it is dangerous.

If Operation Midnight Hammer — last year's lightning strike against Iranian nuclear facilities — demonstrated the prowess of the U.S. military and sent a useful deterrent message to our enemies, the Iran War is now doing the opposite. We're running low on missiles and interceptors in a months-long conflict with a beleaguered second-rate power. What would happen in a drawn-out war with a major adversary?

President Trump has posted a thunderous denunciation of leaks to the media about our depleted weapons stocks, and the leaks are indeed irresponsible. But this problem is a matter of public record and has been tracked by outside organizations.

At the end of July, the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated that, out of an arsenal of 2,330 Patriot interceptors before the Iran war, we had roughly 800 remaining. We were down to roughly 250 THAAD interceptors from 450 at the start of the war.

On top of this, news organizations are reporting that we are almost out of ATACMS — a ground-launched precision-strike missile — and Precision Strike Missiles, the newer, longer-range successor to ATACMS.

This isn't comforting at a time when a war with China could be in the offing. Even before Operation Epic Fury, a war game involving a conflict in the Taiwan Strait conducted by CSIS had the U.S. running out of key munitions in days or weeks.

What happened? This is a crisis a long time in the making. As defense analyst Mackenzie Eaglen of the American Enterprise Institute has warned for years, skimping on the acquisition of munitions was an easy way to meet constrained Pentagon budgets, and we relied on optimistic scenarios about potential wars to justify chronically insufficient production.

For some understandable reasons, we also emphasized sophisticated missiles and interceptors over "good enough" systems. This led to Iran, for instance, forcing us to use highly expensive, difficult-to-replace interceptors against cheap, bulk threats from drones. All this means that we've expended ordnance that it will take us years to build again. According to media reports, we've used about half our supply of Tomahawk cruise missiles, when we've been manufacturing fewer than 100 a year.

We need to put missile production on a wartime footing, and leverage hungry new defense firms to produce cheaper precision missiles and interceptors at scale. In World War II terms, it's the difference between the easy-to-maintain and mass-produced Sherman tank and the exquisite and powerful, but ultimately impractical Tiger. Whatever advantages the Tiger had in armor and punch, you'd still rather be the U.S. with 50,000 Shermans than the Germans with 1,500 Tigers.

The Trump administration has been talking the right game, and there have been encouraging moves. It has signed agreements to acquire 10,000 cruise missiles over three years at a cost of a few hundred thousand dollars each, far less than a Tomahawk at more than \$2 million.

Wars always bring surprises. It should have been a shock to no one, though, that contemporary military conflict is largely missile warfare, or that we'd have trouble sustaining prolonged hostilities given that we started out with inadequate stocks. The American way of warfare is often to mess it up before adjusting and getting it right. The course correction here should be considered the most urgent priority of U.S. national security.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Texas Schools See Little Change in TEA Grading

Texas public school campuses and districts received their state report cards late last week from the Texas Education Agency, with most showing little change from the previous school year, The Texas Tribune reported.

Of the more than 9,000 campuses in the 2025-26 school year, 24% earned an A; 34% earned a B; 23% earned a C; 10% earned a D; and 4% earned an F. Some schools did not receive grades. About one in four schools saw their grades improve, while about the same number of campuses saw a drop.

TEA Commissioner Mike Morath praised the ratings, noting the hundreds of campuses in high-poverty communities that earned an A.

"We are teaching them handwriting. They are memorizing the timetables. They are thinking through more and more advanced math problems. All children can learn and achieve," Morath said.

The grades are based on three main metrics: how students perform on the state exam and meet other college- and career-readiness benchmarks; improvement on state tests over time; and how well schools educate underserved students.

HOW THE VOUCHER NUMBERS STACK UP THIS FAR

As Texas gears up for the first year of its school voucher program, The Dallas Morning News reported that more than 27,000 students have returned their school vouchers. More than two-thirds were previously enrolled in public schools.

Although more than 122,000 students have been awarded vouchers, critics say using them can be challenging. Private schools can deny admission, charge more in tuition than the voucher covers, or be located too far away.

"Just because you got an award does not mean you have a seat in a private school," said Dee Carney, director of the Texas Center for Voucher Transparency. "They have to pick you."

The program offers \$10,474 to families to offset private education costs. Special-needs students can receive up to \$30,000, while homeschooled students can get \$2,000.

NATIVE AMERICAN GROUPS SUE TO BLOCK BIG BEND



CONSTRUCTION

A nonprofit group that aims to protect Native American historical sites filed suit in federal court to block the Trump administration's border security construction in Big Bend National Park, the Houston Chronicle reported. The suit claims the Department of Homeland Security does not have authority under federal law to build in national parks and seeks an injunction to stop construction and demolition work.

Construction equipment arrived at the park a few weeks ago to build new patrol roads and vehicle barriers, sparking strong opposition from park supporters and area residents. More than 40 Texas state House members, both Democrats and Republicans, have signed a letter asking Gov. Greg Abbott to halt demolition and construction in Big Bend.

"We support securing our border and recognize our duty to protect Texans. However, it is essential that border security policy be pursued in a manner that is effective, fiscally responsible, and respectful of the communities and landscapes we are sworn to protect," the letter read.

NEW SECRETARY OF STATE OPPOSES SUIT SEEKING CLOSED PRIMARIES

Texas' new secretary of state says he agrees with his predecessor in opposing a lawsuit seeking to restrict Republican primaries to voters registered with the party, but predicts the issue will be settled in the next legislative session, The News reported.

Newly appointed Secretary of State Robert Howden recently filed an answer as to whether the state's official position had changed. He recently succeeded Jane Nelson in that position.

The Texas GOP filed suit last year against the secre-

tary of state's office, arguing that only registered Republicans should be allowed to vote in that party's primaries. Texans are not required to register with a specific political party, so they can vote in either party's primary.

The party unsuccessfully tried to close the party's primary system via legislation during last year's legislative session, then filed the suit when that attempt failed.

APPEALS COURT RULES FOR MAIL BALLOT ID REQUIREMENTS

The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated limits on mail-in voting enacted in 2021 that a lower court ruled violated portions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the San Antonio Express-News reported. The decision by the three-judge panel was unanimous.

The new requirements included asking those who vote by mail to provide identification or a Social Security number, or risk having their ballots rejected. The judges echoed President Donald Trump's claim of widespread election fraud in their ruling.

"It has long been established that mail-in ballots are prone to fraud," Judge Andrew Oldham wrote in the opinion. "That is why voting by mail jeopardizes election integrity and democracy itself."

Several advocacy groups had sued to block the provisions, saying they further complicated voting and locked people with disabilities out of the voting process.

ERCOT ERROR LEFT TEXAS GRID WITH FEWER POWER RESERVES

An undetected error led the Electric Reliability Council of Texas to buy billions of watts less in reserve power for seven months than its plans called for, The Dallas Morning News reported. Despite that, the Texas grid has held up thus far under record demand, even as ERCOT bought 3.7 gigawatts less in reserves. That is enough electricity to power as many as 3 million homes.

The reserves fell short because an employee responsible for modeling how much backup power was needed switched jobs, according to a regulatory filing. ERCOT has responded by adding a second reviewer to verify the modeling.

Independent market grid monitor Potomac Economics used the mistake to point out that ERCOT has been overpaying for reserves since the deadly 2021 winter freeze.

"The ERCOT proposal goes too far and will result in significant excess cost with no added reliability benefit," the monitors wrote.

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.



Fully Recovered



About a million years ago (or at least it feels that way), I used to produce theater. The season ended just before Christmas with "A Christmas Carol," and a peculiar thing would happen just as the last show closed.

I would get a fever.

I was always in the show, and sometimes I would feel my fever rising before Scrooge had Tiny Tim on his shoulders. I'd check my forehead, and sure enough, before the audience had made it out into the cold winter night, I would have a fever, which would be followed by congestion and coughing and everything else that comes with a bad cold.

This was odd because I was never sick before that night. Of course, I was in my twenties, so keeping healthy was less of a stretch than it is now. But I frequently ate poorly, and I'm sure I didn't always get enough sleep. The one thing that was constant was stress. I had something to worry about every single day. But as the lights went down on that final performance, my body decided it was time to be sick.

The first time this happened, I thought, "What bad luck!"

The second time it happened, I thought, "There must be a lot of germs around this time of year!"

But by the third and fourth time it happened, there was no denying what was going on. I was somehow—unwillingly—giving myself permission to get sick. And it infuriated me.

I spent the holidays sniffing and blowing my nose and probably infecting other people. It was a lousy way to spend Christmas, and it seemed terribly unfair that I couldn't simply take a little time off.

I now realize that I was taking time off the only way I knew how.

After I left the theater, I was no more prone to illness over the holidays than any other time of year. I no longer had this extended period of pushing myself to the limit and then collapsing completely. "Good!" I said. "I'm glad that's over!"

Then I started writing.

I wrote 1,000 words or fewer in the first days. I slowly ramped up over the subsequent weeks, and usually by the end, it felt like a mad race to the finish line. I had no idea how the story would end, and I was filled with this massive fear that, when I got to the end, it would be terrible, or there would be no ending, or the book would never be finished.

When I reached the end of the book, it felt like a miracle. And then I got sick.

The first time this happened, I thought, "What bad luck!" (I am a very slow learner.) But I have now written a few books. And every time I finished a book, I had to take a break to fully recover.

So on this last book, I told myself, "Slow down! You are going to finish." I paced myself. I still finished. There was no disaster. And best of all, I didn't get sick.

And I realized that I fuel a lot of activity with unbridled stress. I use panic as a means to meet deadlines and anxiety to accomplish goals. It's a little embarrassing because it seems to me that by now, I should have a few more skills.

So I'm taking some time off before I begin editing. I'm sleeping a little longer. I'm eating a little better. The book will wait. Because I realize that, after all these years, I am still not fully recovered.

Till next time,
Carrie

NORTHEAST NEWS

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North Houston District Wastewater project moves forward,

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Aerial view of the intersection of Greens Road and Greenspoint Drive.

efficiency.

What to Expect During Construction

While the extensive project will not cause any full road closures, the traveling public can expect to experience traffic congestion and delays due to lane closures and the presence of work crews and heavy machinery.

The following roads will be impacted throughout the course of the project:

Benmar Drive: Fall 2025 – Summer 2026 / Spring 2027 – Winter 2028

Northchase Drive: Winter 2026 – Summer 2026

Imperial Valley Drive: Fall 2025 – Fall 2026

Aldine Bender Road: Summer 2026 – Winter 2027

Greens Road: Winter 2026 – Fall 2026

Greens Parkway: Spring 2026 / Spring 2027 – Summer 2027

Cotillion Drive: Fall 2026 – Winter 2027

Once utility work has been completed, all impacted roadways and medians will be reconstructed to restore the area to its original condition.

Upgrading Inherited Utility Infrastructure

Historically, the North Houston area grew as an unincorporated part of Harris County until annexed by the City of Houston in the 1980s. When the City acquired it, they inherited the wastewater treatment plants that served small piecemeal sections of the area, treating wastewater and supplying drinking water for people living here.

The problem was that these smaller wastewater plants were significantly less efficient than large-scale plants with greater processing capacity. And they posed potential environmental impacts to

nearby Greens Bayou, due to more frequent issues with processing wastewater.

“For reference, these small local facilities typically only have capacity for maybe 1-2 million gallons per day. Meanwhile, the mega processing plant established near Bush Intercontinental Airport has the capacity to process 55 million gallons per day,” said North Houston Vice President of Planning & Infrastructure, Robert Fiederlein.

These smaller plants included:

- *Northgate Wastewater Treatment Plant
- *Municipal Utility District (MUD) 203 Wastewater Treatment Plant
- *Imperial Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant
- *The former Northgate Wastewater Treatment Plant was already converted to a lift station—a simpler pass-through station



Aerial view of Imperial Valley Drive.

ROADWAY	2025	2026				2027				2028
	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Benmar Drive										
Northchase Drive										
Imperial Valley Drive										
Aldine Bender Road										
Greens Road										
Greens Parkway										
Cotillion Drive										

that pushes wastewater on to its final destination for processing—in 2024. The MUD 203 and Imperial Valley plants are undergoing decommissioning and will be completed by 2028, after a force main redirecting wastewater to the new Northgate Lift Station, and on to the IAH mega processing plant.

The Value for Local Residents & Business Owners

By consolidating and upgrading wastewater infrastructure, the project ensures the system can meet current and future demand while protecting public health and the environment. Reducing reliance on the smaller, outdated facilities that are costly to maintain and more prone to issues leads

to better outcomes for the community and the bayou ecosystem.

The force main project has been encouraged by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), which has been advocating for the City and other entities to move toward the regionalization of wastewater treatment plants for decades.

“The City of Houston has plans to do this all across the area; to regionalize. The District just happens to be the beneficiary of three of the small plants they’re consolidating. We want to share details about the ongoing project to the public so they’re aware of the ongoing work in the area and how it will impact them,”

Fiederlein said.

Once complete, the project will deliver strengthened overall wastewater system performance, helping to prevent breakdowns and service interruptions and support the growing North Houston community. A single, larger gravity line feeding a regional lift station is easier to operate and maintain than multiple smaller facilities and lines. This helps reduce the risk of backups and overflows during heavy rain and supports compliance with strict state and federal water quality standards.

Check back for periodic updates as the construction progresses.

Aldine ISD posts four straight years of academic gains,

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2025. Following an appeal later that year, Aldine said TEA revised its 2025 district score upward to 75 after corrections involving College, Career and Military Readiness indicators and STAAR domain calculations.

This year’s 79 keeps Aldine in the C range but moves the district within one point of a B. District officials pointed to stronger instruction, curriculum alignment and closer use of student performance data as key drivers of the gains.

“Our students and educators continue to demonstrate what is possible when we stay focused on academic growth, hold high expectations, and keep students at the center of every decision,” Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney said. “Since 2023, our district accountability score has increased 16 points — from 63 to 79.”

Goffney said the sustained improvement “does not happen by accident” and credited students, teachers, campus leaders and staff for the district’s progress.

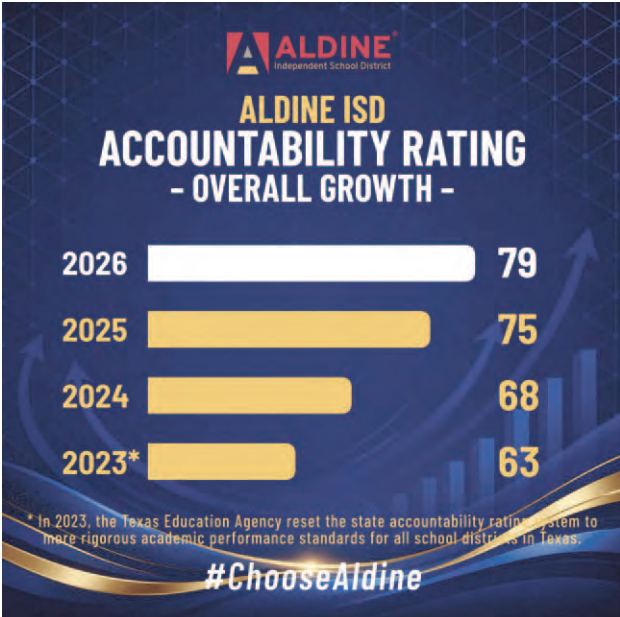
“Four consecutive years of growth is worth celebrating, but we know our work is not finished,” Goffney said. “We will continue building on this momentum and pursuing excellence for every student, in every school, every day.”

Aldine ISD earned an overall accountability score of 79 for 2026, an increase of 16 points from its 2023 score of 63. The continued growth comes as the district works under the state’s more rigorous accountability system implemented in 2023.

Four Consecutive Years of Academic Growth

The results reflect the district’s continued focus on strong instructional practices, rigorous and engaging curriculum, and using student data to identify areas of need to accelerate learning.

“Our students and educators continue to demonstrate what is possible when we stay focused on academic growth, hold high expectations, and keep students at the center of every decision,”



tations, and keep students at the center of every decision,” Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney said. “Since 2023, our district accountability score has increased 16 points — from 63 to 79. That kind of sustained progress does not happen by accident. It reflects the commitment, focus, and hard work taking place every day across Aldine.

“I am incredibly proud of our students and grateful for the teachers, campus leaders, and staff who continue to believe in them, challenge them, and provide the support they need to succeed.

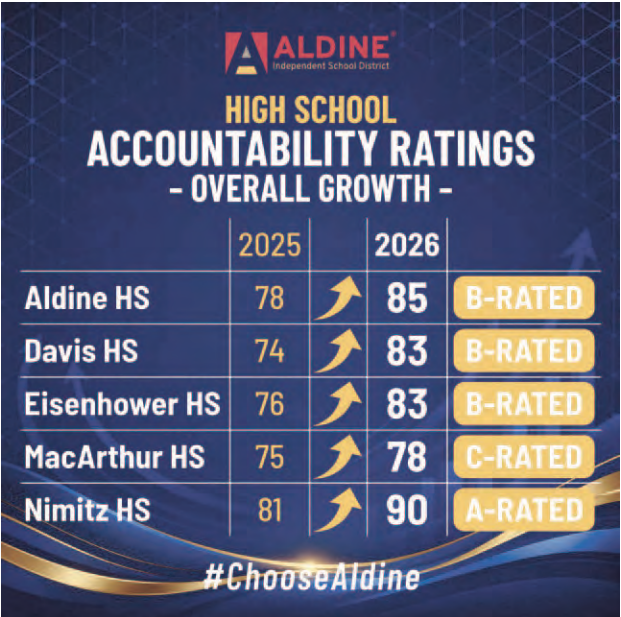
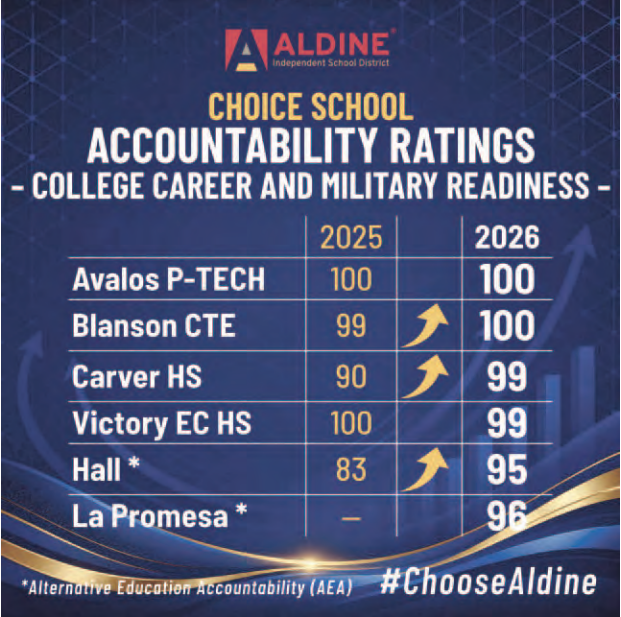
Four consecutive years of growth is worth celebrating, but we know our work is not finished. We

will continue building on this momentum and pursuing excellence for every student, in every school, every day.”

High Schools Continue to Show Growth

The 2026 accountability results also show continued improvement across Aldine ISD’s high schools, with all choice schools receiving an A and all five comprehensive high school campuses increasing their overall scores from 2025 to 2026.

Aldine High School increased its overall score from 78 in 2025 to 85 in 2026. Davis High School increased from 74 to 83, while Eisenhower High School increased from 76 to 83. MacArthur



High School increased from 75 to 78, and Nimitz High School increased from 81 to 90.

These gains represent continued progress at the high school level and reinforce the district’s focus on ensuring students are prepared for success beyond high school.

Strong College, Career and Military Readiness Results

Aldine ISD’s commitment to preparing students for life after graduation is also reflected in the district’s College, Career and Military Readiness (CCMR) results. All high schools earned an A rating in CCMR, with 95% of Aldine ISD graduates identified as college, career or military ready.

The 2026 CCMR results include:

The results reflect Aldine ISD’s commitment to ensuring students graduate with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to pursue their goals and purpose beyond graduation.

“We are not simply preparing students to graduate; we are preparing them to graduate ready for what comes next,” Superintendent Dr. LaTonya Goffney said. “Whether they choose college, a career, the military, or another pathway, we want every Aldine graduate to leave us with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and opportunities to pursue the future they envision for themselves. That is what our Portrait of a Graduate represents — young people who are prepared to reflect, learn, lead, and navigate with purpose. Ultimately, our goal is for every student to leave Aldine prepared to fulfill their potential, create their own path, and make a meaningful impact wherever life takes them.”

To view district and campus accountability ratings and learn more about the Texas A-F Accountability System, visit www.TXSchools.gov.

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BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 44:5-7

Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes. I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame.

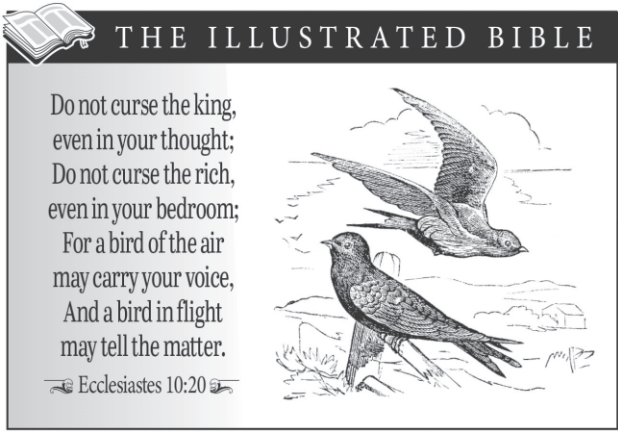
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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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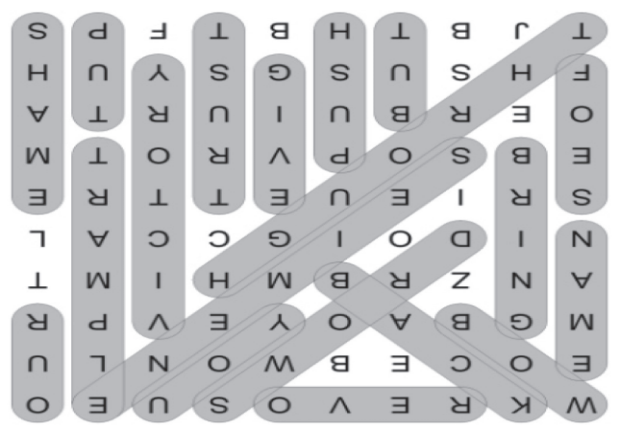
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BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Hosea (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Which gospel does not contain the Olivet prophecy? Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
3. The prophecy of Obadiah is basically about what nation? Shem, Edom, Tabor, Nebo
4. Who said, "Rabbi" and kissed Jesus? Alexander, Mark, Mordecai, Judas
5. David was what relation to Boaz? Brother, Son, Grandson, Great-grandson
6. Who was Nun's son? Jehoshaphat, Joshua, Zachaeus, Meshach

ANSWER: 1) Old, 2) John, 3) Edom, 4) Judas, 5) Great-grandson, 6) Joshua
Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patience.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!



Answers
BIBLE WORD SEARCH

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Drew Starkey, left, and Madelyn Cline star in "Outer Banks: Season 5."

“Outer Banks: Season 5.”

“Toy Story 5” (PG) — The third-highest-grossing film of 2026 is officially available to rent on Aug. 18, after a box-office run of \$1.096 billion against its \$250 million cost. (Pixar needed the money back since this installment is also one of the most expensive animated films ever made!) Tom Hanks, Tim Allen and Joan Cusack, respectively, reprise their roles as iconic characters Woody, Buzz Lightyear and Jessie; meanwhile, Conan O’Brien (“If I had Legs I’d Kick You”) joins the cast as Smarty Pants, a toy that assists with pottery training, and Greta Lee (“Past Lives”) enters the series as Lilypad “Lily,” a frog-themed tablet. The film, which takes place two years after “Toy Story 4,” follows

our favorite group of toys and their latest debacles as electronics start to take over their playtime with their current owner, Bonnie! Fun fact: Scarlett Spears, who now voices Bonnie, also played Young Glinda in last year’s “Wicked: For Good.” (Amazon Prime Video)

“Outer Banks: Season 5” (TV-MA) — The wait is almost over for the series finale of this hit 2020 series! Fans have followed these characters from the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the Bahamas, South America and Morocco, and they’ve even had to say “goodbye” to a much-beloved main character, Rudy Pankow’s JJ Maybank. Season 5 kicks off right after JJ’s death with his friends drowning in

grief, but the Pogues are still determined to track down JJ’s killer, his biological father Chandler Groff (J. Anthony Crane), as well as the mythical artifact of the Blue Crown. The Pogues are still getting run out of their own town, and with no other people left to help them besides Sarah’s deranged brother, Rafe (Drew Starkey), they embark on yet another unbelievable adventure full of close calls with death and spur-of-the-moment action! Look for all 10 episodes of season 5 to premiere on Aug. 20. (Netflix)

“The Invite” (R) — This comedy-drama film out now to rent is Olivia Wilde’s third directorial feature film, following her 2022 psychological thriller “Don’t Worry Darling.” Wilde also stars in the film, with just three of her fellow actors rounding out the cast — Seth Rogen (“The Studio”), Penelope Cruz (“The Bride!”), and Edward Norton (“A Complete Unknown”). “The Invite” takes place over the span of one night in a San Francisco apartment owned by married couple Joe (Rogen) and Angela (Wilde). To Joe’s surprise and dismay, Angela has invited their noisy upstairs neighbors over for dinner. But when neighbors Pina (Cruz) and Hawk (Norton) arrive for dinner, the night takes quite an unexpected turn for Joe and Angela, as they receive an extremely alluring invite of their own. (Fandango at Home)

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HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Jennifer Aniston has completed the final season of “The Morning Show.” Now she’s returning to movie-making with the holiday comedy film “Naughty,” co-starring Peter Dinklage, who plays Santa Claus. Aniston’s also completed 10 episodes of Apple TV’s dramedy “I’m Glad My Mom Died,” but decided not to continue with the show due to “scheduling conflicts.” Filmmaker Jason Reitman also bowed out of the series due to “creative differences” with author Jennette McCurdy.

Meanwhile, Dinklage will star in the upcoming rom-com “Wicker” with Olivia Colman and Alexander Skarsgard. It’s set to release in October.

Ryan Gosling will star as supernatural horror hero Johnny Blaze, aka Ghost Rider, in a new film that will be directed by “Deadpool & Wolverine’s” Shawn Levy (for a 2028 release). Levy also directed Gosling in “Star Wars: Starfighter,” which hits theaters on May 28, 2027.

Ryan Coogler will direct “Black Panther 3” and has chosen David Jonsson to play the adult version of the son of T’Challa (who was portrayed by the late Chadwick Boseman). No word yet whether Michael B. Jordan is participating.

Are you ready for “Spaceballs: The New One”? The sequel to Mel Brooks’ classic 1987 film will again star Rick Moranis, Daphne Zuniga and Bill Pullman. At 100 years of age, Brooks is producing the film (alongside Josh Gad) and reprises his iconic role of Yogurt for Amazon MGM Studios. It’s set to open on April 23, 2027.

Jonathan Lipnicki, now 35, was just a kid in “Jerry Maguire” (1996), as well as two “Stuart Little” films (1999 and 2002). Now he’s making his comeback in the season four revival of “The Joe Schmo Show.” He also appeared alongside Ron Perlman and Esai Morales in the western “Cottonmouth.”

Perlman and Morales are set to star alongside Josh Bowman (of the ABC’s series “Revenge”) in the thriller film “Live 2 Die.”

Also getting a sequel is “Blade Runner” in the form of an eight-episode series for



Peter Dinklage (Set to star as Santa Claus in “Naughty”)

Amazon Prime Video. Out in November, “Blade Runner 2099” takes place 50 years after “Blade Runner 2049” and stars Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh. While Ridley Scott is one of the producers, he couldn’t direct any episodes due to scheduling conflicts.

George Clooney and Eva Longoria are playing themselves in the upcoming French comedy-drama film “Dix Pour Cent.” It’s a sequel to the TV series “Call My Agent!” which aired in France from 2015-2020. The film will air on Netflix in September.

“The Odyssey,” which cost \$250 million and has already hit \$1 billion in the box office, has been criticized for not being a literal translation of the original epic poem by Homer. Some critiques stem from the actors speaking English with American accents and Helen of Troy being portrayed by a woman of color, Lupita Nyong’o. Frankly, who’d want to struggle through a Homeric Greek dialect?

The film’s destined to join the ranks of epic classics such as “Gone with the Wind,” “The Ten Commandments,” and “Ben-Hur.” How anyone could complain about this classic film is “all Greek to me!”

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

GERALD, DEAR, YOU ONLY EAT MAC & CHEESE AND FISH STICKS. TRY THIS CASSEROLE I MADE.

MMPHH...

GULP! CHOAK! ACKK!

YEAH, MY TASTE BUDS HAVE A STRICT “2-INGREDIENT POLICY.”

TIGER

YOU’RE CROWDING ME, STRIPE

LEMME PAST, STRIPE

OUTTA MY WAY, STRIPE

NOT SO CLOSE, STRIPE

The Spats

GULP

I WISH I WAS A BANANA...

...I’D REALLY LIKE TO SPLIT!!

Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

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

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

1. Arm is raised 2. Poster is smaller 3. Weight is missing 4. Cap is reversed 5. Line in sidewalk is moved 6. Leg is moved

King Crossword

August 17, 2026 Posting Date

ACROSS

1 Layer
4 Radiant
9 Soup legume
12 Dubai’s country, for short
13 Kin of “Presto!”
14 Online chats, briefly
15 Keyboard piece for two
17 Impose
18 Pained sounds
19 Nobel-winning Mother
21 “Hooray!”
24 Story lines
25 Hollywood’s Gabor
26 Genetic stuff
28 Nasser’s successor
31 Stinging insect
33 Pop
35 Arias for one
36 Animal’s nose
38 Mexican Mrs.
40 Teeny
41 “Phooey!”
43 Disney exec Michael
45 1912 Olympic legend
47 MGM motto start
48 Tease
49 Teen’s formalwear

DOWN

1 Young dog
2 Chou En-
3 Pro vote
4 Acknowledged
5 Blessing
6 Actress Lucy

7 “Get Here” singer Adams
8 Tends the lawn
9 Stops talking
10 Flightless birds
11 Hammett pooch
16 M-Q connection
20 Some HDTVs
21 Evergreen trees
22 Nobelist Pavlov
23 Latin ballroom dance

27 Small batteries
29 Sheltered
30 Wedding cake layer
32 Kitten’s sound
34 Visionary
37 Designated
39 Put on a clothesline
42 Succinct
44 Lith., once
45 Small combo
46 Mound
50 Non-Rx
51 Newt
52 — Lanka
53 Boston squad, for short

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. TELEVISION: Which musical instrument does Leonard play in “The Big Bang Theory”?

2. MUSIC: In what year did the Woodstock music festival take place?

3. MOVIES: Which horror movie features a character named Ellen Ripley?

4. HISTORY: When did the French Revolution begin?

5. FOOD & DRINK: What is carpaccio?

6. U.S. STATES: How many states border Mexico?

7. GAMES: How many wooden blocks are in the game of Jenga?

8. GEOGRAPHY: What is the longest mountain chain in the world?

9. ART: Who painted the “Mona Lisa”?

10. MATH: How many sides does a hexagon have?

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

ACROSS

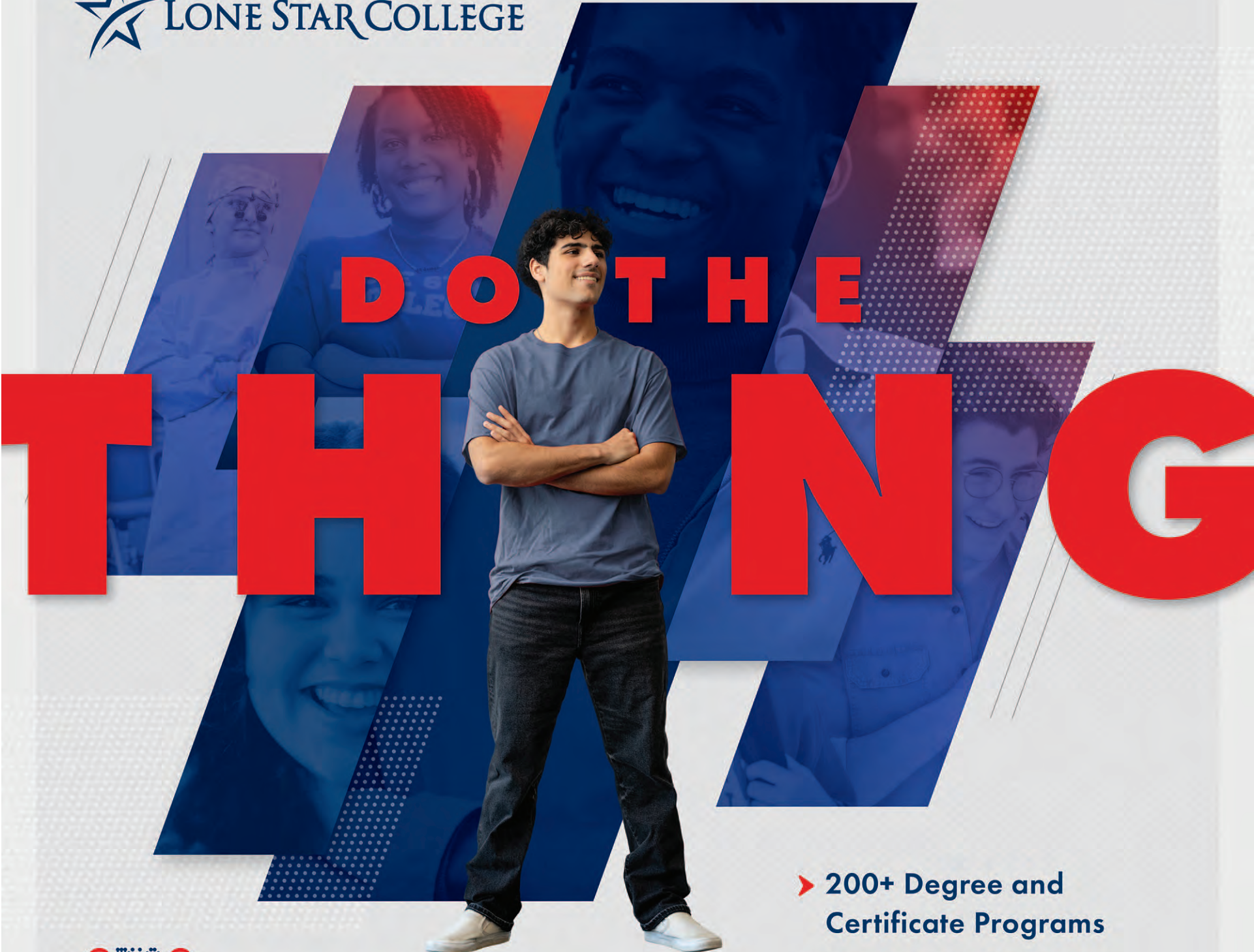
1. Layer
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38. Mexican Mrs.
40. Teeny
41. “Phooey!”
43. Disney exec Michael
45. 1912 Olympic legend
47. MGM motto start
48. Tease
49. Teen’s formalwear

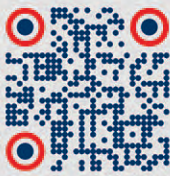
DOWN

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44. Lith., once
45. Small combo
46. Mound
50. Non-Rx
51. Newt
52. — Lanka
53. Boston squad, for short

Trivia Test Answers! 1. Cello; 2. 1969; 3. “Alien”; 4. 1789; 5. Thinly sliced raw meat or fish; 6. Four; California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas; 7. 54; 8. The Andes in South America; 9. Leonardo da Vinci; 10. Six







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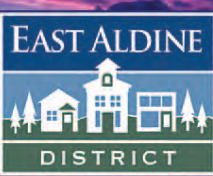
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