

Southside Reporter

A new start

Superintendent Mark Eads leads Southside ISD as the district looks toward a brighter future.

P16-17

TEA ousts Edgewood ISD
board manager: P12

Hays Bridge building
decision delayed: P21

Southwest, Brack
notch first wins: P24

Billy Calzada / San Antonio Express-News



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» SAN ANTONIO

S.A. native to star in musical benefit

Metropolitan Opera tenor and San Antonio native David Portillo will star in a musical event featuring 200 students from the University of Texas at San Antonio, the University of the Incarnate Word, the University of Texas at Austin and the Northside Independent School District.

“Look at the World — Timeless Music, Ageless Beauty” will be at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17, at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets cost \$24.50, \$34.50 and \$44.50 and are available at TobinCenter.org.

Portillo, a graduate of Holmes High School, is a tenor with the Met in New York. His performance will be accompanied by the San Antonio Symphony.

The event is presented by YouthCUE and is designed to benefit San Antonio's Morningside Ministries, an organization providing care for seniors in retirement communities.

Nominations accepted for military service award

The Bexar County Veterans Service Office is accepting nominations for the 2017 LeRoy V. Greene Jr. Memorial Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions by Bexar County residents to veterans, military service members and their families.

Nominations will be accepted from individuals who have personal knowledge and who can attest to the accomplishments of the person they are recommending for the honor. Nominations from spouses, siblings or children of nominees will not be accepted.

To be eligible, nominees must have been a Bexar County resident for at least two

years at the date of nomination; have performed noteworthy actions over the current year and over a period of time, mostly as a volunteer; exhibit competence in teamwork and cooperation, leadership skills and dedication; and share their time and knowledge with the veteran and military community.

Nomination forms can be obtained by email: . Anyone interested is submitting a nomination should email a request to vets@bexar.org, with LRVG AWARD in the subject line. Forms may be returned by email to vets@bexar.org; by fax to 210-335-3632; or by mail to Bexar County Veterans Service Office, 233 N. Pecos, Suite 320, San Antonio, TX 78207.

The nomination deadline is Oct. 6.

Mariachi Lab coming to The Pearl

The Pearl will present Mariachi Lab on Saturday, Sept. 16, from 3 to 9 p.m.

The free event is a showcase of mariachi talent from San Antonio, including high school, all-female and top professional ensembles. Workshops, a documentary film screening and a grito contest also are planned.

Scheduled performers include Sebastien De La Cruz, Mariachi Azteca de América, Mariachi Guerrera Quetzalli and all-female groups Las Cornales and Las Altenas.

Parking information is available at atpearl.com/

Diez y Seis de Septiembre Commission sets events

The city of San Antonio Diez y Seis de Septiembre Commission invites the community to join the commemoration of the 207th anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain with educational and cultural programming for all ages.



John Davenport / San Antonio Express-News

In remembrance

Firefighters enter the Tower of the Americas before climbing the tower with other first responders during the San Antonio 110 9/11 Memorial Climb. First responders climbed the tower on the 9/11 anniversary to honor those who died in the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City.

Since 1994, the city of San Antonio has celebrated Diez y Seis de Septiembre in recognition of San Antonio's history and cultural connections to Mexico.

The 2017 Diez y Seis de Septiembre events calendar is available at all San Antonio Public Library branch locations and other partner locations throughout the city. The calendar is also available online at GetCreativeSanAntonio.com.

» SOUTH SIDE

New parenting class starts Sept. 18

Registration is open for a new parenting course for families of young infants.

“The Baby Bundle” course begins Monday, Sept. 18, and runs for six weeks. Classes are 6 to 8 p.m. and include free dinner and child care for those attending. Classes are held at Blessed Sacrament Academy, 1135 Mission Road.

The classes meet requirements set by Child Protective Services.

Call Kathy Lozano at 210-532-0894 to schedule an appointment.

Harlandale Class of 1997 plans reunion

The Harlandale Class of 1997 invites classmates to join in a reunion on Nov. 11 to celebrate 20 years since graduation.

Reunite, reminisce, and make new memories with past classmates with food, drinks and dancing. Two complimentary drink tickets will be given to attendees; a cash bar will be available.

The first 20 people to buy their tickets to the reunion will be entered in a drawing for a raffle basket. Tickets are non-refundable, and the cost is \$60 per couple; \$35 for singles through Sept. 22. Ticket costs increase by \$10 Sept. 23-Oct. 28.

For more information, email hhsindians97@gmail.com

Compiled by Melissa Rentería

TODAY IN S.A. HISTORY

1963: The Robert C. Cole Golden Cougars won their inaugural football game, 8-0, over the Comfort Bobcats.

1951: A sudden burst of rainfall over the past two days prevented San Antonians from having to ration their water use on their lawns.

1987: Pope John Paul II visited San Antonio and celebrated a Mass for an estimated 350,000 people in Westover Hills on the site of what is now Stevens High School. He also visited Plaza Guadalupe, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, San Fernando Cathedral and Municipal Auditorium.

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Express-News file photo

Luminaria will return to downtown with a Nov. 9-11 schedule at Hemisfair.

Fall arts season top picks

By Deborah Martin, Hector Saldaña and Elda Silva

EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Summer is blockbuster season for the movie business, but when it comes to the performing and visual arts, fall is where it's at.

That's especially true in San Antonio. Here are the Express-News arts and entertainment writers' picks for the best of the season:

September

"CHUCK RAMIREZ: ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO"

A survey of work by the late artist known for his large-scale photographs of everyday objects, the exhibit includes images from about 20 series and re-creates Ramirez's early exhibition installations.

Sept. 14-Jan. 14, McNay Art Museum

LUIS FONSI

When even your ophthalmologist is humming "Despacito" during your exam, you know the hit has broken through far beyond radio, music video and

social media. The Puerto Rican superstar singer and actor's smash hit with Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber has garnered billions of views on YouTube.

Sept. 16, Majestic Theatre

October

"THE LATINO LIST: PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS"

The exhibit features 31 portraits of influential Latinos by the renowned photographer, including images of former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros, author Sandra Cisneros and actress Eva Longoria.

Oct. 6-Dec. 31, San Antonio Museum of Art

CHRIS STAPLETON

Grammy winner is the edgier, grittier side of country with his albums "Traveller" and "From a Room: Volume 1." His tight combo includes his wife, singer Morgane Stapleton.

Oct. 20, AT&T Center

MALA LUNA MUSIC FEST

Future and Lil Wayne are the big headliners at the second annual festival, which last year attracted 30,000 fans. Rap is at

the forefront of the rap/EDM concert, which includes stellar performers Wiz Khalifa, Migos and Playboi Carti. DJs Afrojack and Carnage also are part of the mix.

Oct. 28-29, Wolff Stadium.

November

LUMINARIA

The annual arts blast marks its 10th anniversary with a return to downtown. Hemisfair once again will be the center of the action. In addition to the centerpiece free event, there will be some ticketed events, including brunches and a closing party.

Nov. 9-11, Hemisfair

December

GABRIEL IGLESIAS

The trimmed-down, Hawaiian shirt-wearing comedy star and reality TV foodie is sure to have his Latino comedy crew with him, including home-grown talent Rick Gutierrez. The title of his latest special says it all: "I'm Sorry for What I Said When I Was Hungry."

Dec. 7, AT&T Center

CALENDAR

ONGOING

» **Mixed martial arts classes** 6-8 p.m. Mondays, St. Michael Catholic Church hall, 418 Indiana St. Taught by Mike Ortiz, a mixed martial arts champion. Contact: 264-5291.

» **Masonic Anchor Lodge 424** meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays, 700 Hot Wells Blvd.

» **Free meditation classes** 10:30 a.m.-noon Wednesdays, Copeland Senior Activities Center, 5703 S. Flores St. (parking entrance on Southcross). Based on Deepak Chopra's "Getting Unstuck" series. Open to all seniors. No special clothing needed. Contact: 927-1112.

» **Mobile Mercado** 2-5 p.m. Wednesdays, VIA's Centro Plaza downtown, 909 W. Houston St. Professional chefs and nutritionists prepare dishes and provide nutritional information. WIC food items sold. Vouchers for food stamps, Lone Star cards (SNAP), cash and credit cards accepted.

» **Mid-Week Market** 3-7 p.m. Wednesdays, Truckin' Tomato, 503 Chestnut St. Indoor farmers market. Contact: 241-3545.

» **In-Depth Bible Study** Wednesdays, Mayfield Park Church, 700 W. Hutchins Place, with Pastor Mike Sutton. Meetings with meal 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall; Bible study 6-6:45 p.m., followed by open discussion until 7:30 p.m. Child care available. Contact: 923-2241.

» **Families Recovering Group** 7 p.m. Thursdays, Brookhill Baptist Church, 631 Utopia Lane. Free 12-step program similar to Al-Anon open to all. Contact: 863-1813 or 861-4161.

» **City Base Cancer Support Group** 7 p.m. Thursdays, Brookhill Baptist Church, 631 Utopia Lane. Contact: Brenda Fox, 415-2830.

» **Celebrate Recovery** Fridays, Mayfield Park Church, 700 W. Hutchins Place. The 12-step program for people struggling with hurts, hang-ups and habits is free. Meetings with meal at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Large-group time 7:15 p.m.; smaller groups 8:15 p.m. Child care available. Contact: 923-2241.

» **Mission Library Community Garden** needs volunteers to help tend the garden Saturday mornings. Volunteers meet 9-11 a.m. at the library, 3134 Roosevelt Ave., to water, pull weeds and plant seeds. Volunteers may take crops home. Contact: 207-2704.

» **Free Clothes Closet** held every first Saturday at Brookhill Baptist Church, 631 Utopia Lane. Free clothing distributed 9 a.m.-noon. Contact: 333-4947.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 13

» **Highland Park Neighborhood**

Association meets at 6:30 p.m. at Bode Community Center, 901 Rigsby Ave. Topics discussed will include upcoming "National Night Out" event. Meeting also will include a presentation by Envirosolar Power.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 15

» **El Grito** 5:30-9 p.m. Sept. 15, Market Square. Join the official El Grito ceremony celebrating Mexican Independence Day led by Mexican Consul General Reyna Torres Mendivil. Festivities include musical entertainment, food and art. The official grito is at 8 p.m. Free.

MONDAY, SEPT. 18

» **Friends of McCreless Library** meet at 6 p.m. at McCreless Library, 1023 Ada St., just north of the HEB Plus. The meeting is open to the public. Items to be discussed include setting a date for a benefit book and media sale and consideration of other fund-raising ideas. A nominating committee will be formed to select a slate of nominees to serve as officers in 2018. The Friends of McCreless Library is a group of volunteers who raise funds to enhance the library for all patrons. Membership is open to all for a nominal fee; membership forms may be found at the library.

UPCOMING

» **Texas A&M University-San Antonio's Science and Technology Topping Off Ceremony** is set for 11 a.m. Sept. 21 at the university. Construction workers will install the last beam for the Science & Technology building, symbolizing the beginning of new STEM programs and opportunities for students. The event is open to the public.

» **Unity 5k Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run** 7:45 a.m. Sept. 30, Comanche Park No. 2, 2600 Rigsby Ave., benefits Carmelite Learning Center. \$30 for 5k; \$5 for fun run. Contact Lorie, 392-6935. Register: iaapweb.com

» **St. Michael's Catholic Church Fall Festival** 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Sept. 30, 418 Indiana St. Contact: 532-3707.

» **Wheatley High School Class of 1977** is looking for graduates for its 40th class reunion set for Oct. 14. Contact Belinda Pena at 210-379-6493 or Belinda Gonzalez at 210-885-3300 for more information.

— Compiled by Melissa Renteria

All numbers are in the 210 area code unless noted. Send details and a phone number to mrenteria@express-news.net. Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Thursday before publication.

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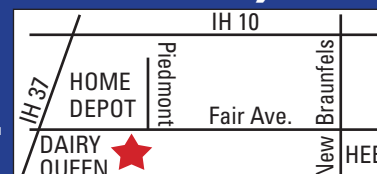
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- Sept. 21** An Evening with renowned author Ana Castillo
- Sept. 28** *Tejana Trilogy*: theatrical performance written and performed by Marisela Barrera
- Oct. 5** PAC Poetry/Rap Slam hosted by National Slam Poets Amalia Ortiz and Anthony "The Poet" Flores
- Oct. 9** Indigenous Peoples Day/Día de la Raza Ceremony

For the full list of events, visit:
alamo.edu/pac/heritage-month

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Sneakerheads appreciate 'the art' of the footwear

Eclectic shoes draw crowds at inaugural event in arena

By **Silvia Foster-Frau**
STAFF WRITER

There is a room in Nic Plunkett's house that you cannot enter. That's because it's filled with sneakers — about 1,800 pairs of them — to the point where it is uninhabitable.

"It's definitely an addiction," Plunkett said. "When I put a pair of shoes on, I feel fresh. Brand-new."

Plunkett wore a brightly colored pair of \$1,500 shoes at the AT&T Center on Sunday, where local vendors and private citizens showcased their rare, hundred- and thousand-dollar kicks. It's the first Spurs Sneaker Jam of many to come, Spurs officials said.

They call themselves sneakerheads — the predominantly male, hip-hop-influenced community that participates in the collection or admiration of valuable athletic sneakers, often from basketball or skateboarding.

Along the rows, baby shoes sat on displays next to snapback hats with the words "too dope" and large high-tops stamped with images of heavy metal bands. Roger Chavarria was showing shoes signed by Spurs players Kawhi Leonard and Danny Green. He also had a pair of sneakers that belonged to NBA legend and Cole High School graduate Shaquille O'Neal, which were size 22 and looked about double the size of Spurs player Tony Parker's sneaker, which lay beside O'Neal's. Chavarria estimated O'Neal's sneakers cost about \$3,000.



Photos by Edward A. Ornelas / San Antonio Express-News

Deven Cortes checks out sneakers for sale at the Spurs Sneaker Jam at the AT&T Center on Sept. 10.



Nic Plunkett, shown wearing a custom pair of Nike Air Max 1 Bespoke, says collecting sneakers is "definitely an addiction." He has an entire room full of sneakers.

The more than 1,000 people expected to attend the jam were a wide range of ages, from middle school kids clustered in awe around the flashy shoes to men who've made collecting sneakers a large part of their life.

The sneakerheads are a tight community, Plunkett

said, and he's made friends just by going up to strangers at malls who were wearing rare shoes and asking where they got them.

"This would be a great forum for a meet-and-greet dating app," joked collector Jake Danklefs. "Except it's all dudes."



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- It can ruin your travel plans...
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***PS – This event is limited to the first 20 people to register.
When you register, you can bring a guest at no additional cost.***

Trash crews among those from S.A. helping after storm

Diaper bank, group that works with vets also involved

By Jasper Scherer
STAFF WRITER

The convoy set out for Houston at 11 a.m. on a recent Sunday, a procession of 15 grapple trucks, 30 tractor-trailers and a mobile command center heading east on Interstate 10 toward Houston.

Among the vehicles were several vans transporting 62 workers from San Antonio Solid Waste Management, which had dispatched crews to clear debris from Harvey through a mutual aid agreement with the city of Houston.

By the next day, the San Antonio crews had begun moving from house to house in Kingwood, an affluent community in northeast Houston. Through the end of Thursday, they had filled 277 trailers with a total of 3,183 tons of debris.

"I've been in the business for 26 years, and some of these piles, it's nothing like I've ever seen before," said Andrew Gutierrez, commander of the operation.

Removing mountains of debris from front lawns has helped Houston families move beyond their initial post-hurricane shock, Gutierrez said.

"They've kind of turned a corner," he said.

In addition to countless individuals who have responded to calls for help, a coordinated force of San Antonio groups and organizations has dispatched volunteers and employees to areas affected by Harvey while continuing to field a decreasing number of displaced residents in the San Antonio area.

"The response for Harvey has been a complete community response," said Henry Van de Putte, executive director of the American Red Cross' San Antonio chapter. "I can't think



Photos courtesy of San Antonio Solid Waste Management

A San Antonio Solid Waste Management worker uses a grapple to load debris from a Houston home's lawn into a trailer. Dozens of trucks and workers went to Houston to help clean up after Harvey.

of one nonprofit that hasn't stepped up."

The Red Cross set up three shelters in San Antonio that at one point housed a total of about 1,500 evacuees, Van de Putte said. People at the shelters ate prepared meals and groceries from the San Antonio Food Bank, which sent more supplies — food, toiletries, clothing — to food bank partners in Houston, Victoria, Corpus Christi and other cities.

"I think all of us can't help but think, 'What if that was me?'" said Eric Cooper, president of the San Antonio Food Bank. "If you're told you can evacuate or stay, where would you go? Or would you evacuate? Your ability to evacuate tends to rely on resources and relationships. If you don't have those, you're stuck."

Smaller organizations have



Solid Waste Management dispatched crews to clear debris from Harvey through a mutual aid agreement with Houston. Over one four-day period, they filled 277 trailers with debris.

sent aid, too, including the San Antonio-based Texas Diaper Bank. The organization, staffed

by nine, has distributed diapers to infants and seniors in Houston and smaller areas such as

Corpus Christi, Port Aransas and Beaumont.

The diaper bank put out a call for diapers to Texas residents and has been inundated with shipments from around the country.

Jorge Medina, the organization's executive director, said thousands of donations have rolled in every day, including one vehicle from Ontario in Canada that arrived with a trailer full of diapers.

The bank has in turn shipped diapers to shelters in Southern cities. Relief agencies in those cities, such as the Children's Hunger Fund, have delivered the bank's diapers house to house.

Another small organization, Operation Finally Home, has helped veterans in Houston clean up their debris-filled homes — many do not have flood insurance — in partnership with New Hope Church in Friendswood, a small city south of Houston.

The organization, a nonprofit with headquarters in New Braunfels, typically partners with builders, developers and corporate sponsors to build houses for veterans. In Houston, it is aiding vets who have lost entire floors of their homes.

"It will be telling how FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the insurance companies come through," said Rusty Carroll, the organization's executive director. "What I've seen is an immediate and quick response from them. And the contractors coming in working alongside the companies, that is providing a lot of hope."

Gutierrez's team of San Antonio workers has observed similar devastation. They will remain in Houston for 30 days, continuing to clear out damaged furniture and piles of wreckage.

"The waters have receded," Gutierrez said. "You can see water lines on the houses, but no standing water or mud. All that has subsided."



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DACA is good, but real immigration reform is needed

Since last week's announcement about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals act, or DACA, we have been talking a lot about dreams.

We've been talking about the Dreamers, those among us who were brought to America illegally by their parents when they were *chiquitos*, maybe even too *chiquitos* to know what was even going on. Or maybe they were old enough to understand that they were leaving their world behind, but they were still *chiquitos*. The point, of course, is that they grew up in America. They attended American schools, learned English, and grew up chasing the American dream. They had everything but the citizenship.

DACA was, they were told, going to allow them to reach for that American dream.

We've been talking about the dreams of those *que nacieron aquí* and who saw the decision of DACA as an example of rac-

COMADRE CHRONICLES BY MARIA ANGLIN

ism. Why deport immigrants who registered for this federal program, met the criteria and paid the fee? Why deport people who met the bar and are working toward a college degree? Why now? *No se vale. Es más*, they say, that dream about people not being judged by the color of their skin? It seems so far, far away.

And there are others, those for whom DACA never even applied. Those who got here *ya de grandes*, those who brought the *chiquitos* who would grow up to be dreamers, those who broke the law to get here because there was no other way. The ones without the high school diploma, doing the necessary jobs that don't require one. *Las que limpian casas y los pintores de brocha gorda*; the ones changing Pampers and Depends.

The ones who said *no necesito que me den, no mas dejenme ir donde hay* — and then made it happen.

They, too, dream, even if those dreamers didn't hatch those dreams in an American classroom with a Pokémon backpack, studying *en ingles* next to the American kid whose American-born parents bought them the same Pokémon backpack at the same Walmart.

DACA never applied to them. DACA, while better than nothing, was misguided because it was never enough. It created a system that rewarded some immigrants and ignored others. And it's not surprising, because while driving home the idea that knowledge is power, Americans put a premium on higher education that unfairly penalizes those without it.



Rin Man Hui / San Antonio Express-News

A rally in response to President Donald Trump's decision on DACA at the Federal courthouse garners nearly 200 people opposed to his decision on Sept. 5.

And that penalizes a lot of hard-working, necessary people who have made the United States the country that it is.

Real immigration reform — the kind that would apply to everyone in America that has

been working to make the dream happen — is what's necessary.

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**SE HABLA
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State ousts dissenting Edgewood ISD manager

No reason given for replacing her from position

By **Silvia Foster-Frau**
 STAFF WRITER

The Texas Education Agency has removed Amanda Gonzalez from the board of managers it appointed more than a year ago to oversee the Edgewood Independent School District, notifying her by email Sept. 7 and later confirming it had named her replacement.

The agency had sent its letter to Gonzalez by regular mail, and she and other board members had not received it when word of her ouster — and the name of the new manager, Timothy Payne — began to spread from an early notice the TEA gave elected officials.

"I'm very surprised," Gonzalez said. "I wanted to provide the community with a desperately needed sense of transparency and accountability. But I strongly feel that TEA did not like the fact that I am vocal and I question things, as a young Latina."

"I would've really appreciated the professional courtesy of notifying me if I was going to be removed or replaced and the reasons why," said Gonzalez, who works for the nonprofit Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Payne, a consultant who is on the board of directors for the local Habitat for Humanity chapter, ran unsuccessfully for a spot on the Edgewood ISD board in 2012 and again in 2014.



Amanda Gonzalez, was ousted as Edgewood ISD's state-appointed board manager.

Tom Reel / San Antonio Express-News

The state agency took over Edgewood, one of San Antonio's poorest school districts, in 2016 after its elected board spent months in a 3-3 voting deadlock — a paralysis that prevented it from hiring a new superintendent and two principals and even filling a vacant trustee seat. The TEA appointed a board of five managers and a state conservator to monitor the district.

The TEA emailed the other Edgewood managers and Superintendent Emilio Castro about the removal of Gonzalez on Sept. 7. Its message to Gonzalez thanked her for her service but gave no reason for her removal. Agency spokesmen also declined to provide a reason or say whether the TEA normally notifies elected officials of such a removal before telling the affected board members.

Board President Roy Richard Soto said he was "somewhat surprised" by the TEA action but said there had been a "disconnect" between Gonzalez and the other board members and that Gon-

zalez "didn't place enough faith and trust" in Castro to manage the district.

Soto said Gonzalez had gained a reputation as a voice of dissent on the board, with clashes that included her disagreement with changing the district's law firm this year and her vote against the board's hiring of Castro late last year.

"She's very bright — a very, very impressive young lady. And she's very aggressive," Soto said. "And she's very knowledgeable. So she has her opinions and she doesn't hold back. You're always going to know how she feels about everything."

State Sen. José Menéndez, who represents an area that includes Edgewood ISD, released a letter he sent to Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath questioning Gonzalez's removal, calling the lack of explanation "unfair" and requesting a meeting with Edgewood and TEA officials.

sfosterfrau
@express-news.net

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Palo Alto to celebrate Heritage Month

Palo Alto College will celebrate Heritage Month from Sept. 18 through Oct. 12 to honor the indigenous heritages of South Texas, including Native American, Mexican-American and Afro-Latin. The celebration will include a series of events, such as panel discussions, film screenings, theater performances and exhibits.

A kickoff celebration will take place Sept. 18 with a blessing featuring Grupo de Danza Azteca Xinachtli; a special reading by Dr. Carmen Tafolla, former San Antonio poet laureate and Texas poet laureate; and musical performances from El Tallercito de Son SATX and Grupo Frackaso.

All Heritage Month events at the college are free and open to the public. For a list of scheduled events, go to alamo.edu/pac/heritage-month.

VIA's Semester Pass available for students

VIA Metropolitan Transit is selling the Semester Pass for \$38.

It can be purchased at VIA Information Centers. Students in VIA's service area, from the elementary through college levels, are

eligible to purchase the pass, which is also available for area trade schools.

To obtain a pass, a student must show proof of current registration and a school photo ID. If a student does not have a photo ID, VIA can issue one for a \$2 fee.

The pass is valid for unlimited rides on all regular, Express and Primo services for the semester. The fall Semester Pass is valid through Jan. 31. Semester Passes cannot be purchased online.

For details on the pass and VIA's other passes and fares, visit via.net/rates/.

St. Philip's College homecoming on way

St. Philip's College will host its 2017 Homecoming Dinner and Dance from 6 to 11 p.m. Oct. 20 in the Bowden Alumni Center of the college's Sutton Learning Center, 1801 Martin Luther King Drive.

A lineup of homecoming week activities will be announced online this month.

The free and family-friendly Homecoming Dinner and Dance is traditionally an evening program for alumni, students, employees and friends of the 119-year-old

college. The event is open to the public, and parking is free.

For information or to volunteer to help at the event, contact Dr. Sharon Crockett-Ray at 210-486-2887.

Community can meet SAISD police chief

Parents and the community will have the chance to meet Police Chief Joe Curiel of the San Antonio Independent School District and his staff at 5 p.m. Sept. 13 at Brackenridge High School, 400 Eagleland Drive.

This will be the first in a series of gatherings to be held at SAISD high schools to help foster a relationship with the school district's police department. The meetings also will include discussions on safety-related and other timely topics.

Golf tournament for scholarship planned

The eighth annual HEF Scholarship Golf Tournament is set for Sept. 29 at Republic Golf Club, 4226 S.E. Military Drive. Every high school graduate is eligible for the Harlandale Education Foundation Scholarship.

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Billy Calzada / San Antonio Express-News
Jasmine Paredes, a recent Sam Houston High grad, also graduated from an apprenticeship at Accenture Federal Services.

Apprenticeships expose East Side youth to jobs

By **Alia Malik**
STAFF WRITER

Jasmine Paredes' parents didn't go to college. Immigrants from Mexico who only speak Spanish, they opened a small auto dealership several years ago in their East Side neighborhood, an enterprise that Paredes, 18, described as "trial and error."

So Paredes' father was amazed when, two months after she graduated fourth in her class at Sam Houston High School, she graduated again — from an apprenticeship at Accenture Federal Services, a tech consulting company that contracts with the federal government.

"I never imagined somebody in my family being able to do something like this," Paredes

recalled her father saying.

Accenture began offering the apprenticeships in April, and a new cohort will begin in a matter of weeks, for a total of about 50 apprentices this year, said Ali Bokhari, director of Accenture Federal Services' Delivery Network. The positions are open to prospective tech industry employees 17 and older, Bokhari said.

They make \$14 per hour and can work up to 40 hours a week, depending on their availability, in application testing, application development, network infrastructure or program support, Bokhari said. There is no residency requirement, but Accenture is focused on recruiting from the Eastside Promise Zone through Sam Houston High School, St. Philip's College and the Eastside

Education and Training Center.

Apprentices shadow Accenture employees and, toward the end of the program, do hands-on work in a controlled environment, Bokhari said. Paredes' apprenticeship involved working on a database for about 200 clients.

"They understand how technology is used in business," Bokhari said. "They get exposure to the functional side of things and that's really important, whether or not you're going to actually write code."

A typical apprenticeship lasts 12 weeks, but ideally, Sam Houston graduates who go on to St. Philip's College could keep working for Accenture for years while earning their associate's de-

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Southside ISD Superintendent Mark Eads offers a high-five to new student Ronnie Spencer and his sister, Raniyah, on Aug. 8 at registration.

A NEW START FOR SOUTHSIDE ISD

Ambitious superintendent, new board lead district

By Alia Malik
STAFF WRITER

Mark Eads has already overcome one symbolic hurdle on the path to stabilizing the Southside Independent School District.

“Well, for one thing, I’ve been superintendent now for over a year,” Eads said.

That’s something like longevity at the rural South Bexar County school district. Southside operated under three interim superintendents between

summer 2015 and spring 2016, when Eads was hired. The last permanent superintendent, Ricardo Vela, held the title for a year and four months before he was fired. His predecessor lasted longer — but was also fired.

Eads said he understands that improving the troubled district means more than just hanging on to his job, and this school year, he has a fresh start with the board of managers appointed in May by Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath, in a wholesale

replacement of elected trustees.

Community members are counting on Eads’ success. Eads said he’s also counting on himself and his leadership team.

Southside ISD has about 5,700 students, 81 percent of them considered “economically disadvantaged” based on federal income benchmarks. In recent years, the district has been known for high employee turnover at all levels and board mismanagement that prompted the Texas Education Agency takeover. As the district went

through leader after leader, its scores on some standardized tests plummeted to the lowest in Bexar County.

Since Eads took over, he said, employees have constantly told him that standard procedures either did not exist or were not being followed. Eads attributed the disorganization to employees being left for years to rely on their individual, differing judgments.

One of Eads’ first actions as superintendent was to undertake a complete review of dis-

trict finances, personnel and curriculum. He used the findings to completely overhaul the district’s administrative team, especially at the secondary school level.

More active and visible administrators helped the district pass all four categories of the state accountability system this year, he believes. Last year, Southside came close to failing as a district because it fell short in the “overall performance” category. Southside also brought two schools out of “improve-

ment required” status this year, leaving no failing schools in the district.

“When I first got here, probably for the first six months or more, I dealt with a lot of angry, upset, unhappy people,” Eads said. Sometimes, he said, they’d been misinformed about actions the district was taking, but other times the district was at fault.

TEA investigators concluded in November that Southside’s elected trustees had been asserting their authority individually and not complying with

state contract procurement laws. Eads also found the district had been overstaffed for years, to the tune of \$2 million in unnecessary payroll costs. A finance director’s miscalculations caused a \$4 million budget gap, which community members found out about in April, along with the administration’s proposed cuts to close it.

Yet voters in May approved a bond of nearly \$60 million to address projected growth and renovate aging facilities. That election night was one of Eads’

best moments of the year.

“I felt that we had trust and buy-in from our community,” he said. “It was almost a validation for me, and I didn’t care if it was one vote or a thousand votes. I think it showed that the community was showing their faith in me and trusting me and our school district.”

Two weeks after the bond passed, Morath appointed the new slate of managers. Eads said he believes the board that hired him meant well, but trustees had made the mistake of

getting involved in the district’s daily operations. The managers have delegated operational responsibilities to Eads, eliminating problems that arose when elected trustees pushed for certain programs or buildings. Southside started this school year with a fully aligned curriculum, a change from previous years when each school operated as an island, Eads said. Teachers also are being trained in the Leader in Me and Boys Town models, standardizing leadership education and discipline across the district, Eads said.

Eads, 55, grew up in the Corpus Christi area. The son of a minister, he was the first in his family to earn a college degree. He said education was his first-choice profession but teacher salaries were dismally low, so he got a degree in banking and finance. He worked in finance until 1989, when his wife got a raise and he decided to become a classroom teacher in Alice.

Eads became a principal in Medina ISD, then trained principals in San Antonio at the Region 20 education service center. He said his subsequent job as director of human resources in Medina Valley ISD taught him the characteristics of the best applicants, helping him hire the right educators later in other districts.

A love for children is the most

important requirement, Eads said, adding, “I can’t take a person who knows the technical skills but doesn’t love kids.”

Southside trustees said they hired Eads because they believed he could stabilize the district, restore the community’s trust and improve academics and employee morale.

Gabe Farias, vice president of the board of managers and president and CEO of the West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, comes from a family with ties to Harlandale ISD. He said Eads reminds him of Robert Jaklich, the Harlandale superintendent who led that district to statewide acclaim before leaving five years ago amid board turmoil.

Farias said he hopes the Southside board and the TEA will change the district’s culture permanently so future elected boards give Eads the support he needs.

On a recent morning, Eads sat in his office in front of a white board, where “Southside ISD soaring to excellence” — the district’s new motto — was scrawled in dry-erase marker. Eads thinks Southside will be perceived as an excellent school district in three to five years, despite a much longer era of controversy and underperformance.

“It’s going to happen,” Eads said. “It’s already happening.”



Southside ISD Superintendent Mark Eads (right), converses with Gallardo Elementary School Principal Karen Feldman on the first day of registration on Aug. 8.

Photos by Billy Calzada / San Antonio Express-News



Mark Eads greets student Mark Gomez, who will attend Julia Matthey Middle School.

JOBS

From page SR15

gree, Bokhari said. “We wouldn’t put them through the exact same program again,” he said. “We’d put them through something more challenging or something different.”

Apprentices end up in a better position to apply for a job with Accenture — or any other employer in the field of information technology.

The Promise Zone, some 22 square miles, was designated during the Obama administration along with other high-poverty areas across the country to receive special consideration in the federal grant application process. The area has a poverty rate of about 31 percent and an unemployment rate of 10 percent.

Accenture’s apprenticeship program is the first of its kind in San Antonio, said Romanita Matta-Barrera, executive director of SA Works. It’s being used



Billy Calzada / San Antonio Express-News
St. Philip’s College student Obinna Ebikam has had an apprenticeship at the tech company Accenture.

as a model for similar partnerships with other corporations, including a manufacturing apprenticeship being devel-

oped with Precision Group, she said. “They are going to walk away with better skills so they

have better-paying employment,” Matta-Barrera said. “That’s a win-win for our community.”

SA Works convenes the public and private sectors to create employer-led job training. It helped connect Accenture to schools in the Promise Zone and federal funds to pay some apprentices through Workforce Solutions Alamo.

For apprenticeships, Accenture recruits students from the science and tech magnet program at Sam Houston High, those pursuing related fields at St. Philip’s College and graduates of the information technology certification program at Eastside Education and Training Center. More than 400 students have graduated from workforce training programs at the center, and 85 percent of them came from the East Side, said Mike Etienne, the city’s Promise Zone director.

Paredes has a scholarship to study chemical engineering at Texas A&M University in College Station. But when Accen-

ture recruiters came to her high school computer research class in the spring, Paredes signed up.

She had already been working part time, taking people up the Tower of the Americas, but said she felt privileged to have a job with a cubicle, badge and work-issued laptop so soon after high school graduation. Paredes said she learned how to network, dress professionally and interact in a business environment — skills not usually taught in high school.

All her pay from the apprenticeship went into savings, and Paredes said she will put her new spreadsheet skills to use at her parents’ business, which still keeps records on paper.

“I’m going to make sure to come back to Sam Houston and influence the other seniors to actually take part in this, because it’s a really good opportunity and we don’t usually get these things,” Paredes said. “I just hope that other businesses will look into other apprenticeship programs like this.”



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Rin Man Hui / San Antonio Express-News

Many Dignowity Hill residents and supporters of the Hays Street Bridge worry that an apartment complex proposed near the bridge would block views of the landmark.

Panel delays action on plan for apartments near bridge

By **Richard Webner**
STAFF WRITER

San Antonio's historic commission has decided to take more time to consider a plan for an apartment complex in Dignowity Hill because of concerns over its effect on the iconic Hays Street Bridge.

After nearly 20 residents spoke against the complex at a Sept. 6 meeting, members of the Historic and Design Review Commission said they want to visit the proposed site to understand how the complex would look next to the bridge. It should receive extra scrutiny for being close to a landmark, they said.

"We really need to understand the height of the building in relation to the height of the bridge," commission member Daniel Lazarine said.

A partnership between developer Mitch Meyer and Alamo Beer Co. owner Eugene Simor wants to build a 148-unit complex and a restaurant just north of the city-owned bridge. An agreement that Simor reached years ago with the city would allow the restaurant to have

tables on the bridge itself.

Simor has said the complex would bring relatively affordable housing to Dignowity Hill, where home prices are rising fast because of an influx of new residents. The units would be small, about 500 square feet each, and would have rents under \$1,000, he told the San Antonio Express-News.

Ignacio Aliaga, the design architect for the complex, pointed out at the meeting that it will be 67 feet away from the bridge.

But many Dignowity residents and supporters of the bridge worry that the complex, at 803 N. Cherry St., would block views of the landmark, which has become popular among joggers, cyclists and yoga practitioners. They also said the project's placement of a garage facing Cherry Street would be unsightly.

The Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association sent a letter of opposition to the project to the HDRC on Sept. 5, association president Brian Dillard said.

Opponents spent nearly

an hour telling the HDRC about their fond memories traversing the bridge in their childhood and their concerns that it is a "developer's dream, but the public's nightmare," as Gary Houston, a member of the Hays Street Bridge Restoration Group, put it.

"The bridge is an incredible asset for all of San Antonio," local lawyer Amy Kastely said. "Through this series of actions over time, the city and the developer, Alamo Beer, have basically tried to throw away this asset, tried to block it up, tried to cover it with walls."

The site of the proposed complex is the subject of an ongoing lawsuit between the restoration group and the city. The group sued the city in 2012 to prevent it from selling the land to Alamo Beer Co., saying the sale violated the terms of a 2002 memorandum of understanding that the group says required the land to be made into a park.

After the 4th Court of Appeals sided with the city in March, the group appealed the ruling to the Texas Supreme Court.



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Rachel Denny Clow / Associated Press

H-E-B's Lupe Gonzalez (left) and Ernie Garcia hand out water and bread to Aransas Pass residents from H-E-B's Disaster Response Unit in Rockport on Aug. 29.

H-E-B chairman gives \$5M to help in Harvey recovery

By **Joshua Fechter**
STAFF WRITER

Charles Butt, chairman and CEO of San Antonio-based supermarket chain H-E-B, donated \$5 million of his personal money to a Harvey recovery fund run by Houston Texans defensive end J.J. Watt.

H-E-B Houston President Scott McClelland presented the check to the Justin J. Watt Foundation's Houston Flood Relief Fund on Sept. 6 at NRG Stadium in Houston.

The foundation has raised \$30 million for Harvey relief efforts, Watt tweeted Saturday.

"Throughout this disaster, I have been humbled by the state's unprecedented generosity and heroism," Butt said in a statement. "I want to commend and support the extraordinary relief efforts of J.J. Watt, who has taken the lead, not as a world-class NFL player or celebrity, but as an individual who saw the need to help his fellow

Texans and immediately took action.

"Hurricane Harvey has taken a catastrophic toll on our great state. Now is the time to come together and collectively help rebuild our communities."

Butt is the wealthiest San Antonian and one of the wealthiest people in Texas. His family is tied with the Rockefellers as the 23rd-richest U.S. family, with a net worth of about \$11 billion, according to Forbes magazine.

H-E-B has pledged \$100,000 to Harvey victims and has deployed its own emergency crews — more than 15 disaster response vehicles, including the company's two mobile kitchens, water and fuel tankers, trailers and "direct response units" — to areas of Texas affected by Harvey.

The company deployed about 20 employees and 15 vehicles, including the mobile kitchens, about 8 a.m. Sept. 6 from its seasonal warehouse at 4300 Greatfare Road to Refu-

gio, about 43 minutes south of Victoria.

H-E-B's mobile kitchens — which have been stationed in Rockport, Aransas Pass, Victoria and Houston — have served about 35,000 meals so far, company spokeswoman Dya Campos said.

The San Antonio chain has given almost \$3 million in donations, volunteer hours and emergency responses so far, the company said in a news release.

All but three of the company's stores in the Houston area had reopened as of Sept. 6, Campos said. Some of H-E-B's stores on the Gulf Coast saw wind damage, Campos said, but all stores in the region are operational.

The private sector has pitched in hundreds of millions of dollars in cash donations toward Harvey recovery efforts, committing almost \$161 million so far, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reported. About 71 companies have pledged to donate at least \$1 million.

Palafos has big night for Highlands

By Adam Zuvanich
STAFF WRITER

Juan Morales knows as well as anyone that the Highlands offense revolves around Rene Palomino.

So the Owls' former head coach, in his first season leading Holmes, designed his defense to stop the shifty junior running back. The plan worked to near perfection in Thursday night's first half, when Palomino gained a mere 6 yards on nine carries.

The Huskies still found themselves trailing by 15 points at the break, because another one of Morales' former players made them pay for allowing the Owls to pass.

Senior quarterback Joseph Palafos threw four

of his five touchdown passes in the opening half, helping Highlands pull away for a 47-33 win in front of 2,417 fans at Gustafson Stadium.

"They just had too many people in the box, so it left a lot of room and open field and open guys," Palafos said. "I just had to throw the ball and let the receivers do their work."

The Owls (2-0), No. 4 in the Express-News sub-Class 6A rankings, snapped a five-game losing streak against the Huskies (1-1). Their last win in the series came in 1977.

Morales, who guided Highlands to two playoffs appearances in two seasons and hopes to lead a similar revival at Holmes, described the outcome as bittersweet.

"I would have loved to win, especially for our boys," Morales said. "At the same time, I'm happy for them."

Quarterback Jacob Longoria rushed for two TDs and threw for another for Holmes, which also got two touchdowns and a combined 175 rushing yards from DQ Haney and Marquis Jones. Jones rushed for a 55-yard score after the Huskies' defense forced a three-and-out to start the game, but they did not keep the momentum for long.

Dre'Chan Moody returned the ensuing kickoff 90 yards for a game-tying touchdown, igniting the Owls and starting a back-and-forth stretch that lasted more than a quarter.

"It was big," Jones said. "It changed the whole

momentum of the game."

Moody, a short but speedy junior, made just as much of an impact offensively. He finished with six receptions for 95 yards and three more touchdowns, helping the Owls dominate after the first quarter.

His second TD catch put Highlands up 21-14 early in the second period. His third, which came late in the third quarter, gave the Owls a 44-27 advantage.

Palomino also caught a scoring pass and finished with 93 rushing yards on



Tom Reel / San Antonio Express-News

Highlands' Dre'Chan Moody takes a kickoff back 90 yards for a score. Moody added three touchdown receptions in the Owls' win over Holmes.

26 carries, helping Highlands run down the clock in the latter stages.

"That was our old coach. We had to come

out and beat him," Moody said. "That's what we did."

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Dragons overcome Jay for absent coach

By Mike Considine
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Southwest coach Matt Elliott couldn't be on the sidelines Sept. 8 against Jay, but the Dragons conducted business as usual.

Elliott's team performed the way it always has under his watch in a 28-16 victory at Southwest Stadium, winning with ball-control offense and aggressive defense. A PA announcement before the game explained that the Southwest coach was out of town because of a family emergency.

"We were just playing for (Elliott), really," said Southwest senior running back Sean Ruiz, who ran for 115 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries. "We didn't want to let him down."

Southwest (1-1) seized

control in the second quarter, after Jay (1-1) took the lead on an 18-yard touchdown run from Jaylin Hastings (142 yards, 16 carries) on the game's opening possession. The Dragons drove 76 yards in three plays to tie the score on a 21-yard pass from junior Damian Lopez to Rosendo Olague with 3:43 left in the first quarter.

Dragons back Tommy Pusateri powered in from the one-yard line for the go-ahead touchdown early in the second quarter. Following a 38-yard field goal from Jay's Sal Solis, Southwest's Omar Castillo increased the lead to 21-10 with a 10-yard touchdown run with 6:24 until halftime.

"It's all about consistency," Southwest offensive co-ordinator Louis James said. "We're a pow-

er football team, so we need to control the ball. Coach Elliott, Coach (Pete) Wagner (Southwest ISD athletic director) and I all came up under the same system."

With 4:10 left in the game, Ruiz put the game out of reach with a seven-yard scoring run. Jay scored with 49 seconds remaining on a 12-yard pass from Jacob Zeno (11 of 24, 130 yards) to Danny Amezcuita.

Southside 31, Crystal City 20

The Cardinals (2-0) began the season by winning their first two games for the second-consecutive season as Edward Perez ran for 303 yards and three touchdowns Sept. 8 in Crystal City.

Perez logged 26 carries against the Javelinas (1-1),

helping Southside compile 320 rushing yards with an 8.9 yards per carry average. Southside quarterback Alejandro Escamilla also had a rushing touchdown,

Brackenridge 20, Devine 13

The Eagles (1-1) recorded their first win, defeating Devine (0-2) Sept. 7 at the SAISD Sports Complex.

The Warhorses scored first, but Brackenridge overtook them with two touchdowns in the last four minutes of the first half. Senior quarterback Vincent Gonzalez (9 of 19, 139 yards) ran for a five-yard score and connected with Juan Gonzales on a 41-yard pass play just 16 seconds before halftime.

Brack's Chris Lopez gained 94 yards on 14 carries.



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Central Catholic finding answers under new regime

By **Mike Considine**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A big part of being successful offensively in the early weeks of the football season is keep the chains moving and minimize the inevitable mistakes.

Central Catholic (2-0) did a better job in those areas Sept. 7 at Harlandale Memorial Stadium, utilizing three quarterbacks in a 39-13 non-district win over McCollum (0-2). The Cowboys, though, made some positive strides after halftime in their second game without their offensive leader Jonathan Handy.

"Coach (Mike) Santiago has brought us so much enthusiasm," Central Catholic senior quarterback Jay Yount said. "Everybody's together, and we're better than we've been for a while."

Santiago, who began the program at the University of the Incarnate Word, hadn't coached in four years before taking over the Buttons and didn't have the benefit of spring football.

So far, though, the

quarterback rotation of Yount, fellow senior Grant Stepan and sophomore Luke Campion has worked. The trio combined to complete 14 of 18 passes for 238 yards and four touchdowns.

"Stepan hasn't played in two years. We're looking forward to some things from him," Santiago said. "They all did a nice job. They were all able to do some good things."

Yount (11 of 14, 185 yards, 3 touchdowns) hooked up with Doug Karam on a 20-yard strike and Gibby Garza scored on a four-yard run as th Buttons took a 14-0 lead in the first quarter. Central Catholic wasn't able to get a 22-yard field goal attempt off as time expired in the half, preventing the Buttons from increasing their lead.

McCollum also has been utilizing a quarterback-by-committee approach. Junior Scott McAlexander (2 of 5, 40 yards) has been splitting time with freshman Ryan Ramirez. Ramirez (8 of 14, 132 yards) threw touchdown passes of 23 and 46

yards to junior Eric Laija (127 yards, 7 receptions) after halftime.

"We were able to put some drives together," McCollum coach Greg Felux said of the second half. "The kids were able to make some plays, and keep them off the field."

Junior Eric Torres (64 yards, 21 carries) saw increased duty as Handy's replacement. Felux said Torres, Jared Luevanos and Ryan Valdez were shifted over from defense to fill in for the senior, who sustained a high ankle sprain two weeks earlier.

"We're just being cautious until we get him back 100 percent," Felux said. "I've asked our guys to step up, and Eric Laija was that guy. Ryan did that at times."

McCollum lost a fumble on the second play of the second half and Central Catholic cashed in with a 13-yard touchdown run from Zach David-smeyer. The Buttons increased their lead to 26-0 with 3:24 remaining in the third quarter on a 37-yard pass from Stepan to Austin Vargas.

SPORTS BRIEFS

East Central's Smith commits to Baylor

East Central's senior 6-foot-4 forward NaLyssa Smith has announced she is committing to Baylor.

Smith, who announced her decision Sept. 1 on live video on Twitter, received numerous NCAA Division I offers and took official visits to Louisville, Baylor, Ohio

State and reigning national champion South Carolina.

Smith is the No. 7 national recruit for the 2018 class, according to ESPN. Smith earned a spot on the Express-News Super Team last season after averaging 23.0 points, 18.0 rebounds and 5.0 blocks.

Commitments are non-binding. The first day a basketball recruit can sign a national letter of intent is Nov. 7.

Pro boxing card

coming to Alamodome

Former four-division world champion Nonito Donaire returns to San Antonio to help headline a pro boxing card Sept. 23 at the Alamodome.

Yunier Dorticos (21-0, 20 KOs) of Cuba is scheduled to meet Dmitry Kudryashov (21-1, 21 KOs) of Russia in the 12-round main event, part of the World Boxing Super Series cruiserweight tournament.

From staff reports

East Central's Hornets are off to good start

Finishing touches put on win at Southwest

By Mike Considine
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Progress may most often come in small increments, but East Central's growth was evident three times Sept. 5.

The Hornets (14-9, 0-1) were one win short of their 2016 total with the District 27-6A season just underway. East Central's 25-18, 25-21, 25-19 win Sept. 5 at Southwest (11-15, 0-1) was the type of victory EC seldom claimed last year. It involved putting the hammer down when the Dragons challenged.

"We had a really hard offseason," said East Central senior Skyeler Embry, a Texas-San Antonio commit. "Coach (Jasmine) Hales pushed us. She sees so much in us and she never gave up on us."

East Central owned the first game of the non-

district match after claiming a 14-6 lead with kills from Casey Cosper and Yazzaray Melancon. Embry supplied three key kills early in the game.

Two consecutive kills from Valentina Martinez from the Dragons a 7-6 lead in Game 2. An ace from Rosalyn Montez put Southwest ahead 21-19. However, East Central scored the last six points for a 2-0 lead.

"I think we played well," Southwest coach Valerie Vieyra said. "We kept fighting for every point, even if we didn't come out on top. We kept fighting hard and kept making adjustments. It was encouraging to see that."

Kills from Southwest junior Sadie Ballesteros (6 kills, 6 digs) gave the Dragons leads of 11-8 and 14-12, but East Central again rallied late. Three consecutive kills from junior Kristin Upshaw-Mendoza was the turning point, building a 21-18 Hornets lead.

"It was a good reminder that, if you relax too much, they're going to take it to you," Hales said.

Both teams dropped their district openers. Powerful Clemens (28-3, 1-0) swept East Central 25-13, 25-17, 25-16 on Sept. 8 in Schertz. Southwest lost 23-25, 25-12, 25-13, 26-24 on Sept. 9 at Del Rio.

Highlands 3, Jefferson 0

The Owls (11-7, 4-0) won the District 28-5A first-place showdown against Jefferson (7-11, 4-1) Sept. 8 at Highlands.

Marissa Rivera (12

"We had a really hard offseason. Coach (Jasmine) Hales pushed us. She sees so much in us and she never gave up on us."

East Central senior Skyeler Embry

kills), Keionna Rankin (10 kills) and Sarah Wilson (8 kills) were the Owls' offensive leaders. Jagger Torres (22 digs) and Deisy Martinez (17 digs) led Highlands' defense. Jazlyn Losoya produced 19

assists.

Highlands also defeated Kennedy 25-17, 25-13, 25-6 on Sept. 5.

Lanier 3, Sam Houston 1

The Voks (5-12, 2-2) bounced back from a loss

to Jefferson to defeat Sam Houston (10-19, 0-5) 34-32, 22-25, 25-17, 25-22 in a District 28-5A match Sept. 8 at Lanier.

Mystique Garcia led Lanier with 13 kills and eight blocks against the Hurricanes. Elizabeth Gutierrez dealt 23 assists. Alexia Barrera contributed seven digs.

For Sam Houston, Alejandra Mendez had team highs of 13 kills, six aces and 20 digs. Katrina Munoz distributed 19 assists. Ashawntae Brown made eight blocks.

Jefferson defeated Lanier 25-22, 25-18, 25-18 on Sept. 5.

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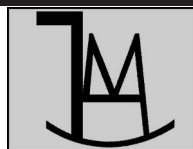
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