

## Columbus Day, No Longer



**Lacee Johnson**  
Connally High School

In most states, Americans get a day off work on October 12 to celebrate Columbus Day. It's an annual holiday that commemorates when the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus officially set foot in the Americas and claimed the land for Spain. It has been a national holiday in the United States since 1937. Today the celebration of this holiday has come under question and many have renamed the day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday that celebrates and honors Native American peoples and commemorates their histories and cultures. It began as a counter-celebration of Columbus Day, which honors Christopher Columbus. It was instituted in Berkeley, California, in 1992, to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas on October 12, 1492. Two years later, Santa Cruz, California, instituted the holiday. In the years following Berkeley's action, most government institutions have either renamed or completely abandoned the holiday as a whole, the decision to do this was inspired by the gathering of knowledge which granted evidence to show who the true founders of America were.

Like most educated people of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christopher Columbus thought the world was spherical, but he also thought the size of the Earth was small enough that a westward boat trip from Europe to Asia was achievable with existing ship building technology.

## Columbus Day



**Joshua Moore**  
Manor H. S.

Columbus Day is a U.S. holiday celebrating Christopher Columbus's landing in 1492 in the Americas, and Columbus Day 2020 is on Monday, October 12. As early as the 18th century, it was unof-

icially celebrated in a number of cities and states, but it did not become a public holiday until 1937. The holiday is a way for many to both recognize the contributions of Columbus and celebrate Italian-American heritage. But Columbus Day and the man who inspired it have created controversy in its history, and several holiday alternatives have been proposed since the 1970s, including Indigenous Peoples' Day, only recognized in a handful of U.S. states. Christopher Columbus was an Italian-born adventurer who, with the backing of the Spanish monarchs King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on board the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria ships, set sail for Asia in August 1492.

Christopher Columbus considered himself an explorer and navigator and wanted to find a shorter route to Asia that wasn't the Silk Road. So, he set sail to the Atlantic Ocean on August 3rd, 1492, with a crew of 90 men from Palos de la Frontera, Spain. The world ended up being larger than Columbus had anticipated and he ended up "finding" two enormous continents which was called the "New World" to Europeans. This in lies the confusion because this supposedly "New World", wasn't actually a new discovery, only new to Europeans. Before Columbus "discovered" the New World, the Vikings had explored and settled areas of the North Atlantic including the north-eastern fringes of North America almost 500 years prior and even earlier than that, almost 15,000 years ago, people came from Asia and settle the Americas. Descendants of these early settlers are known as Native Americans or Indigenous people.

This information seems to have been easily forgotten. By 1605 Columbus had completely taken over a nation of people who had already been settled for thousands of years. And as you can imagine, the Native American's were passionate about the land their ancestors had lived on for hundreds of years, and they didn't willingly make the decision to hand it over to the Europeans. Columbus recognized the power differentiation he had over the Native people and took full advantage of it, completely enslaving, torturing, raping, murdering, and destroying the native culture. And for years in our modern timeline we were taught to praise the man behind these disgusting actions as a hero of our country. Therefore, on each and every October 12th, I believe we should celebrate what the Native people brought to us, and not the dictator who took everything from them. Happy Indigenous Peoples Day!

## Student Sick Out Day



**SaNaya White**  
Ann Richards

Wednesday, October 14 marked the day that included actions to support a protest movement. Student Sick Out Day was a day in which Austin Independent School District (AISD) families and students planned on not reporting to class and being marked as absent. The reason for these actions was to stand in solidarity with AISD staff members. Individuals who protested are pushing AISD towards the adoption of the plan put forth by Education Austin. This plan consists of utilizing volunteers first, enforcing a rotation system, and giving staff the option to work from home when it is not necessary for them to be on campus. The protest was to inform AISD that their treatment of staff members directly impacts the education of students. In the protest for the safety of schools, every absence was marked as a vote of support. Students participated in ways such as the expected, which is by not logging onto anything that AISD can count attendance for.

In some cases, some students were not able to do that possibly due to an important test or discussion in a class. To still participate, some students asked their parents to email all their teachers permitting them and asking them to mark their child absent. In addition to this, others who had to be present simply asked their teachers to mark them absent or decided to wear their masks over zoom for

the entire day just as their teachers had to. The purpose of this was to express that the teachers should be given an option to return home for their safety, rather than having them on campus with their mask on for the day. I participated in the protest movement. I did not attend some of my classes but I still did the work for them to prevent myself from getting behind. For the classes I did have to attend, I did not fill out the attendance form so that I could be marked absent. The district relies on student attendance for state funding, which is something I did not know.

The goal of the participants was to send a message to board officials saying that individuals want options for teachers to choose their place of teaching and whether or not they are comfortable returning. CBS reached out to this district and they provided a comment on the subject of the Student Sick Out Day. The comment was, "While we encourage all students to engage in learning and attend classes, we respect our students' rights to engage civically on matters important to them." In addition to this, AISD Trustee Arati Singh expressed, "Talk to us and let us work through this together. We do loose about 58 dollars a day any time a student is absent, so I kind of just want people to know that." I want to encourage everyone to speak out and do what they can to express themselves and how they are feeling in order to make change. I constantly tell myself that it's a lot harder for someone to understand you without your expression, actions, and vocalization. I hope differences and changes can be made. I hope you all find something you're passionate about. Lastly, I hope your passion requires you to take action.

## My Travel Plans



**Ava Roberts**  
Pflugerville H. S.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, I was very excited about my 2020 through 2022 travel plans. I had planned several trips with my Girl Scout troop, with my mom and with my family. My travel dates are no longer confirmed, but I still daydream about the fun I would have. Let me share where I had planned to go.

In June of 2020, I had planned to visit Savannah, GA with my Girl Scout troop. We were going to visit the birthplace of Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low. We had planned to do 'everything Girl Scouts' during the first part of the week. We also planned to do the culinary tour and stay on Tybee Island until our

flight back at the end of the week.

And to celebrate both my birthday and my going to high school, my mom had booked a 'mommy and me' cruise to the Eastern Caribbean (the Bahamas). The 8-day cruise would have stopped in Key West, Freeport, Half Moon Cay, and Nassau. I looked forward to meeting kids of my age and was excited about touring the islands. My mom rebooked the trip for the summer of 2021.

Also in the summer of 2021, I will travel to Japan with my Girl Scout troop. In the summer of 2022, I plan to travel to Paris with my troop too. We are still planning our itinerary for both trips but can't book without the approvals from Girl Scouts. Our travel plans are pending for now.

Thanks for letting me share my exciting travel plans. I can't wait until the pandemic is over especially since it stopped me from seeing the world! When Covid-19 is over, where will you travel?

## James Talarico Run for Re-Election

by **Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon**  
VILLAGER Columnist



(VILLAGER NEWS) - As a part of the Blue Wave of 2018, James Talarico of Williamson County got elected into the Texas State House. Over the years, Williamson County has been trending as a purple county. In other words, Williamson County has become a battleground county in which both parties have an opportunity to win. Now, he is running for re-election.

Moreover, Talarico decided to run for the Texas House District 52 due to numerous reasons. Talarico wants to bring more bipartisanship to the Texas Legislature. "The country and state are in trouble. When I was a teacher, I always told my students to be part of the solution. So now, I'm taking my advice and running for State Representative in Texas House District 52. I grew up in this community, and I'm ready to fight for it at the State Capitol. From Round Rock to Taylor, we're ready to build a future where every Williamson County family can get ahead, stand up to extremists, and restore respect, reason, and responsibility to our politics," stated Talarico.

Finally, James Talarico ran on numerous issues in which he plans to champion at the Texas Legislature. He plans to lower property taxes for all Texans and strengthen our Texas Public system. According to Mr. Talarico, "As a former teacher, I'm deeply committed to fixing our State's broken school finance system and increase education funding levels, revamp outdated funding formulas and rework our recaptured system to be more equitable."

## Nigerian Americans Set To Process

by **Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon**  
VILLAGER Columnist



**Ifeamo protesting against police abuse in Nigeria.**

(VILLAGER NEWS) - will bring awareness of the issues in which their country faces. A local church will be holding a prayer walk session to bring about change in Nigeria. Finally, there will be another peaceful protest that will occur at the Austin, Texas State Capitol to address the police brutality in Nigeria. The group plans to rally from 9:00 AM to noon.

This upcoming weekend, the Nigerian American community



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