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Amid coronavirus pandemic, Richards High School holds four-day graduation to satisfy graduates' desire to cross stage with diploma



Ozzy Lopez signs in for his daughter's graduation Wednesday at a tent at the entrance of Richards High School.



Ethyrella Stewart stands next to her granddaughter and graduate Shalice Winters and Larry Stewart inside the mouth of a large inflated bulldog, the school's mascot.



Graduate Hillary Aguirre walks across the stage Wednesday to her mother, Jazzmin Aguirre, who presents her diploma.

FINDING A WAY
TO WALK

By JESSE WRIGHT

One by one, as names were called, graduates and their families trickled through the Richards High School performing arts center Wednesday. Other families waited in cars out in the parking lot. Clad in traditional black robes and mortar boards, the graduates crossed the stage and received their diplomas and handshakes from administrators while family members stood in aisles taking pictures. Nobody was seated, as that was prohibited. Once off stage, the family left the high school and another family got out of their car for their turn. Wednesday was the first day for a four-day graduation ceremony for a graduating class of 425 students, with those

participating getting a private ceremony lasting about 10 minutes. As with other schools and districts, administrators had to get creative with the annual ceremony as the state is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Toriano Griggs, associate principal, said he and other administrators wanted to do something to honor their seniors and began exploring options in April, only weeks after the school sent students home and went to distance learning. "I had Zoom conversations with our Senior Council and other student groups and overwhelmingly they said they wanted to walk across the stage, they wanted their cap and

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"I waited four years to walk across the stage, so it's important."
— Mya Brandyburg

NATION & WORLD

Campaign running into storm clouds

A rally planned by President Donald Trump in New Hampshire is postponed by a weather threat. His campaign continues to try reversing its negative momentum amid criticism concerning Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and negative polls. Page 6



EVAN VUCCI/AP

SPORTS

Bragging rights on line for Readey

Disabato: Chad Readey, a two-sport student-athlete and rising senior at Homewood-Flossmoor, scored 1,460 on his SATs. Despite the high score, he is considering taking the exam again. Why? His dad scored 1,570. Page 13

DOLTON

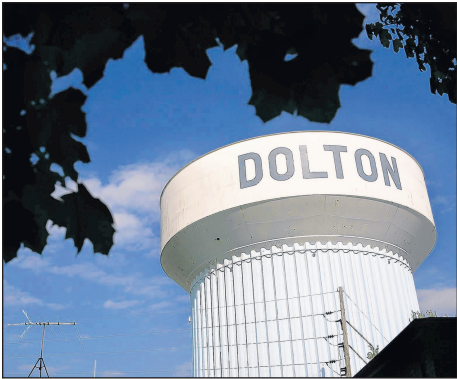
Village resumes water shutoffs

Changes announced on social media July 5; Harvey extends suspension of disconnections

By BILL JONES

Dolton residents will need to make sure their water bills are paid if they hope to keep the utility running in their households amid the pandemic, as the village resumed shutoffs Tuesday following more than three months of leniency. The village announced the change July 5 via Facebook, noting residents at least two cycles behind on their bills might be eligible for assistance through the village's water bill relief fund. Giavonni Nickson, Dolton's director of communications and external affairs, said the change was made "to be mindful of sustainability" as it relates to the village's budget. She noted that following Mayor Riley Rogers' initial decision to suspend shutoffs until the end of March, more information led to an extension. "The order was extended to provide some relief to the community," Nickson said. But as the state has moved into Phase 4 and more people have returned to work, Nickson said Dolton, too, needed to take a realistic and responsible look at returning to closer-to-normal operations. She said she did not immediately have numbers available regarding how many households the change would impact. She said that New Community Church stepped up to provide community relief funding. Residents in need can apply while funds last between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays at Village Hall,

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DAVID PIERINI/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dolton residents again will have to make sure their water bills are paid.

COMMENTARY

Blues singer remembers musical roots



TED SLOWIK

Legendary Chicago blues singer James Yancy Jones, better known as Tail Dragger, last performed in front of an audience in December in Florida, he said.

The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the livelihood of Jones, 79. The energetic performer would regularly tour the country and the world, playing for appreciative audiences. He shared a bill with Billy Branch, Eddy "The Chief" Clearwater and others in 2016 at Governors State University in University Park. "In April, I was supposed to be in Finland, then I was supposed to be in California and Brazil," Jones said Thursday at his home in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. "The disease is dangerous. It's not something that's going to go away. You have to understand that." Jones is preparing to perform again with other musicians for the first time in seven months. He is set to take part in an event at 7 p.m. July 24 that will be broadcast on social media and feature Grammy Award-winner Bobby Rush and other performers. "I'm going to put the band in the back-

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