

THE ALIRIAN

February 2026



Michael Burns
Chair

Hello ALIRians:

Welcome to a new year, and to the spring semester.

We have an outstanding array of classes before us, in the classroom and online. Kelleigh Lewis and the Curriculum Team have assembled a record 102 classes from which to choose, with 13 new instructors. Your efforts to help us recruit new ALIRians has aided our marketing efforts and we currently have 43 new members in our community, 33 of whom learned about ALIR from a current member.

This year will be a transition time for ALIR regarding technology. NEISD plans to replace the classroom desktop computers with secured laptops. We will gladly welcome the up-to-date equipment and schedule orientation training for instructors.

We will have the traditional three luncheons during the semester, the third of which will highlight the ALIR Bill Howland Scholarship Awards. Our wrap for the spring will be our art and performance show.

Thank you all for being a part of our ALIR family, and a special thanks to all the volunteer instructors, leaders, committee members, and those who help us with everything in between.

SEE YOU IN CLASS.

I'D WALK MILES FOR SMILES

Would you be offended,
if I asked you to smile?

Nothing mean's intended,
your Face's not on Trial!

In old Pics Grins were rare,
like a frozen Tableau.

Let the Subject beware,
they must not move a Hair!

They'd just glare like a Foe!

Today's Camera's a Friend:

Lights, Angles, and Cropping.

Just a Second you spend

to the Tune of a:

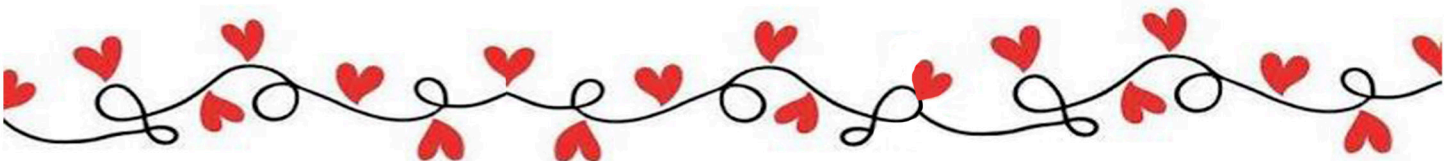
quick
Click.

No loud Snap, no Bulbs popping!

It may not be your Style,

but after a While, have I made
you Smile?

—Joanna McKinnis



2026: Spring, Summer, & Fall Calendar Dates

January 6	Spring catalog released
January 12	Spring registration
January 21	Instructor/new student orientation
January 26	Spring classes begin
February 23	1 st Luncheon
March 4	Summer applications available
March 9 - 13	NEISD closed - Spring break
March 25	2 nd Luncheon
April 2	Summer instructor applications due
April 3	Good Friday - campus closed
April 15	3 rd Luncheon/scholarship awards
April 21	Art/Performance set-up
April 22	Art/Performance
April 23/24	End of spring semester
April 24	NEISD campus closed
May 4	Summer catalog released
May 11	Summer registration
May 27	Instructor/new student orientation
June 1	Summer classes begin
June 29-July 4	NEISD campus closed 4th of July week
July 6	Fall instructor applications available
July 27	Fall applications due
August 7	End of summer semester
August 10	Fall catalog released
August 17	Fall registration
September 2	Instructor/new student orientation
September 7 or 8	Fall classes begin

Semester Beginning & Ending Dates

Spring 2026 12-week classes

January 26 - April 23/24

Spring 2026 six-week classes

1st Jan. 26th - March 6th
2nd March 16th - April 23/24th

Spring 2026 three-week classes

1st Jan. 26th - Feb. 13th
2nd Feb. 16th - March 6th
3rd March 16th - April 2th
4th April 6th - April 23/24th

Summer 2026 three-week classes

1st June 1th - June 19th
2nd June 22th - July 17th
3rd July 20th - August 7th

PLEASE HELP ALIR GROW

There is so much more we want to do for our ALIRian community, but that takes funding.
Please consider ALIR.

We are a 501.c.3 non-profit educational service for seniors, providing lifelong learning in a social setting, intellectual stimulation, and scholarships.

Please donate to the Bill Howland Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations can be left with Willson or checks mailed to Tom Colbourn, Council Treasurer.

Mark Stokes

By the time we ALIRIANS reach seniorhood, we all have stories to tell — some are worth repeating. Mark Stokes won't tell you his story. But I will.

Mark started with ALIR back when classes were being held at the Institute of Texan Cultures. When our landlord there decided the Institute needed our space, Mark, along with several other stalwarts found ALIR a new home, then they physically cleaned-up our current, long vacant building.

He taught the Socrates Cafe class for many years, and while on the Council, started the scholarship program — \$1500 for one NEISD student, now grown to \$2500 for several students, depending on donations and the committee's decisions each year.

Also, a strong advocate for the healing powers of meditation, Mark has taught meditation classes at ALIR and elsewhere.

For the past year or so, he has spent most weekday mornings walking or seated on a bench on the Riverwalk while he communes with nature and sometimes visits with other Riverwalkers. Recently, a young woman sporting a broad smile approached him and said, "Hi, I'm Andrea and I've just figured out where I know you from. Sometime back I saw you swimming in our pool at the Village at Incarnate Word."

During the ten minutes they spoke together, Mark talked about the health advantages of meditation. Andrea, the programs coordinator for residents of the Village, asked if he would be willing to help residents learn meditation. "And as your 'salary,' I'll arrange for you to have access to our heated swimming pool seven days a week." He readily accepted.

Mark has celebrated his 85th birthday. His life has been full of ups and downs as have the lives of many ALIRians. This new teaching experience and his daily wages/swimming have put a spring in his step albeit with his walker.

We at ALIR wish Mark success at his new job.

— Janet Alyn



November 5th, 2025 ALIR Luncheon





ALIR collared polo shirts and sturdy tote bags will be available for your pre-order or purchase at the spring 2026 luncheons. The shirts are quality fabric, washable, and do not fade or shrink. The sizes run from S to 3X and may be paid for by cash or check. They are \$20 each.

The tote bags have a large ALIR logo, inside zipper pocket, and a large pocket with a velcro strip on the backside. The cost is \$16 cash or check. They are great for carrying your ALIR gear.

Linda Comeaux will manage the pre-orders and sales. She can also answer any questions you may have. Checks should be made payable to "ALIR". See Linda at an ALIR luncheon or contact her at Lcome@aol.com or 210-273-8737.

HELP WANTED

The **Curriculum Committee** is looking for an organized, energetic person who is interested in contributing to ALIR's learning spirit and ongoing vigor by joining the committee.

The committee recruits and liaisons with ALIR's volunteer instructors, sets up each term's curriculum and schedule, and produces the course catalog. Computer literacy (MS Office primarily) is a requirement; editing experience is helpful.

Interested candidates can send an email to: ALIR@NEISD.net with the subject line: **Curriculum Committee Ad.**

A profusion of pink roses
bending ragged in the rain
speaks to me of all gentleness and its
enduring.

—*The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams*

Your stories, poems and ideas can be published in upcoming newsletters.



Please send your submissions to:

Rodney Brown -- rrbrown67@147thhillclimbers.org
Barbara Maphet -- bmaphet@luxurypresentations.com

December Luncheon



ART SHOW

ART & ENTERTAINMENT



Dear Fellow Writers:

I composed this little “cat-errel” after a heated discussion with some much younger people who said they had no use for writing cursive, but that printing was all that anyone needed or would ever need. I hope you will agree that printing expresses nothing of one’s personality and cuts off a vital connection with the letters of our ancestors.

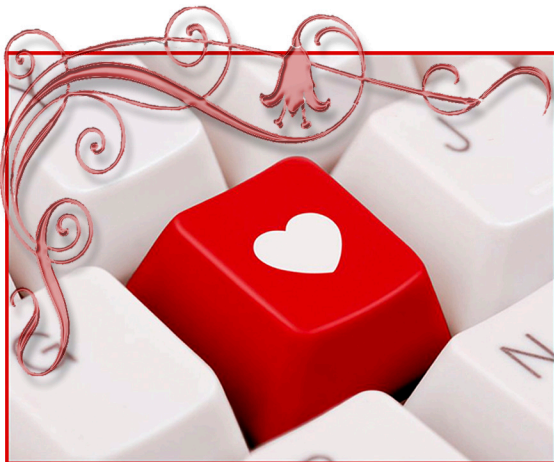
CURSED WITHOUT CURSIVE

I think that I shall never see
a thing as lovely as a Tree.
But when that Tree becomes a Slate,
There’re two Ways to communicate:
Riding the Waves of Whirls, Twirls, Curl-Cues,

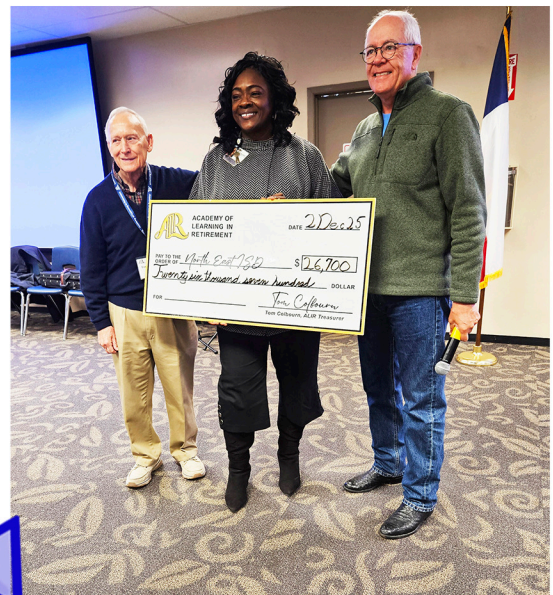
OR:

You may choose
to abandon the Penman-Ship
and downwards slip
to a Hopping Dance like a Printing-Press
with Nothing Personal to profess.
Without Cursive, you’re Sub-versive.

—Joanna McKinnis



Scan the QR code
for
the ALIR website



Tom Colburn, ALIR Treasurer
Mike Burns, ALIR Chair
Dr. Caprica Wells,
NEISD Executive Director of Adult
& Community Education

If you know someone in our ALIR community who needs a card of sympathy, a get-well wish or other words of encouragement (please be specific), notify Paul Cavazos at cavazos.paul@icloud.com or Willson Donovan at ALIR@neisd.net.



THE HISTORY OF THE HEART SHAPE

Venus, the Roman goddess of love, was credited for setting hearts on fire with the aid of her son Cupid, whose darts aimed at the human heart were always overpowering.

In the ancient Roman city of Cyrene — the coin (left) was discovered. Dating back to 510-490 BC, it's the oldest-known image of the heart shape.

A QUICK CLICK OF ETERNITY?

See, so much depends
on a bright blinding blue Sleeve.
My eye only spends
a Wink to perceive:
A Tudor Court Page
against a deeper blue Sky.
Colors Cent'ries cannot age,
so Sharp, made me cry!
They tell the Truth, never lie!

—Joanna McKinnis



ALIR MISSION STATEMENT

Academy of Learning in Retirement (ALIR) is an all-volunteer organization which provides opportunities for lifelong learning with social and community engagement.

BISCUITS

My recipe for biscuits
is in the back of my mind.
It is the very best recipe
That you will ever find.

I have a round glass pan
I like to bake them in.
They cook up so much higher
Then on a flat one made of tin.

I melt three-fourths cup of butter
in the oven set at three-fifty
Then put flour on my rolling board,
and now I'm all ready.

In a bowl I mix my flour and salt
Then add my baking powder.
I need to stir it real good, with the milk and butter.

In thirty minutes they'll be done.
I'll put them on the table to eat,
With some butter and good jelly.
Those biscuits can't be beat.

—August 2015