

October 2016

PECAN GROVE

monthly

Morton Street Music A movement with meaning



On The Front Line
GiGi's Playhouse:
Shifting the perspective
on Down syndrome

FEATURED INSIDE: Halloween happenings and ghost stories you don't want to miss

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[1] 2016 Chrysler 200, \$22,977 Sale Price, \$269/mo. for 72 months. Stock #: E3916. MSRP: \$26,180. Manufacturer Rebate: \$2,000. Finnegan Discount: \$1,203. [2] 2016 Jeep Wrangler, \$24,977 Sale Price, \$309/mo. for 72 months. Stock #: ET1090. MSRP: \$27,535. Finnegan Discount: \$2,558. [3] 2016 RAM 1500, \$15,000 Off MSRP. Stock #: E3462. MSRP: \$46,595. Includes off road package: \$11,995. Total Price: \$58,590. Manufacturer Rebate: \$3,750. Finnegan Discount: \$11,250. [4] 2017 Chrysler Pacifica, \$27,977 Sale Price, \$329/mo. for 72 months. Stock #: E4089. MSRP: \$31,380. Manufacturer Rebate: \$2,000. Finnegan Discount: \$3,403. All prices plus TT&L with approved credit and financing. Vehicles pictured for illustration purposes only. All vehicles in stock on day of ad production. Rebates based on day of ad production. All payments based on 2.49% for 72 months with 20% of MSRP down plus tax, title and license with approved credit. Offers end 10/31/16.

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Contents & Staff

PECAN GROVE *monthly*™ | October 2016

Features



14

Morton Street Music

One couple's dream to offer free music to the public has come true.



16

GiGi's Playhouse

A unique nonprofit is on the front lines of Down syndrome and is tearing down stigmas and myths.



28

Holiday Feature

Spooky stories, spectre sightings and some good ol' Halloween fun.



27

Kitchen Corner

Just a few easy and creative Halloween-themed treats.



34

Business

Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics proves what it means to be a great partner.



23

Event

Fort Bend Walk to End Alzheimer's:
Local walk is focused on Alzheimer's research and cure.

PECAN GROVE

monthly™

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TO ADVERTISE

If you are interested in advertising in the Pecan Grove Monthly, please call 281-342-4474 for rates, information and deadlines.

PHOTO & ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

We are looking for fresh story ideas and enjoy publishing your articles in the Pecan Grove Monthly. If you have a story idea or photo to publish please send your information to mgriffin@fbherald.com with "Monthly" in the subject line.

©2016 Pecan Grove Monthly. All Rights Reserved. Pecan Grove Monthly has 30,000 print circulation and is a sister publication of Fulshear Living Monthly, Greatwood Monthly, New Territory Monthly and is a Publication of the Fort Bend Herald. Our publishing headquarters is 1902 S. Fourth Street, Rosenberg Texas 77471

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The Pecan Grove POA needs your help!

The Pecan Grove Property Owners Association is asking for help with a project that will benefit the entire neighborhood — redecorating Christmas wreaths.

As is tradition, the Pecan Grove POA, along with the help of the Boy Scouts, will hang Christmas wreaths throughout the neighborhood.

“We just pride ourselves on making the neighborhood beautiful for everyone,” said Paula Gibson, who is the community affairs coordinator for the POA. “But it came to my attention last

Christmas that our wreaths were definitely looking worn. So, the board is taking on the task of redecorating them.”

A total of 400 two-sided wreaths need to be redecorated, and Gibson is asking anyone willing to volunteer to contact her.

“This is a huge project that can only be accomplished if we work together,” Gibson said.

Paula Gibson can be reached on her home phone: 281-238-9695, or on her cell phone: 832-423-3264.

Don't Miss the Hallelujah Harvest Fest

On Sunday Oct. 23 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Faith United Methodist Church will host its annual Harvest Festival.

The church is found at 4600 FM 359 in Richmond.

This is an afternoon of free family fun and our community of friends and neighbors are invited. Activities are planned for all ages.

For the youngest we have a petting zoo, an indoor treat trail, face painting and carnival rides. The older kids can try a mechanical bull, rock climbing, the dunk tank, basketball and football throws, or the balloon catapult.

Pre-teens and teens can gather a team and play Laser Tag in the gym. Everyone loves the cake walk and the winners get to pick a favorite from a variety of goodies. There will be a live entertainment stage where Faith WOW kids and school choirs will perform.

All of this activity will make you hungry so the Faith Cookers will have hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage on a stick and nachos ready for purchase and a covered area to eat and fellowship with your neighbors.

The Fields of Faith Pumpkin Patch will be open selling pumpkins of all sizes.



Hallelujah Harvest Fest – Sunday Oct. 23 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The pumpkins are delivered the first week of October and The Patch is open Monday through Friday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends. 100 percent of the proceeds earned are donated to three local charities: Richmond/Rosenberg Helping Hands food pantry, The Pregnancy Center and The Fort Bend Women's Center/Shelter.

Plan to get some fall pictures of your kiddos in the Patch and help support local charities as you are getting pumpkins and gourds to decorate your home.

Wear your costumes, come early, stay late and have fun with your family and friends. Best of all, activities other than food is free.

Pecan Grove Women's Club announces October meeting

The October meeting of the Pecan Grove Women's Club will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 11 at Pecan Grove Plantation Country Club. We welcome you to join us at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and visiting. The program and business meeting will follow at 10 a.m.

Our October presentation will be Christmas Bows. Our club will be revamping the 400 wreaths that hang from the light posts in Pecan Grove. It should be a fun, festive time for everyone. It's never too early to plan for the holidays! Come join us and find out how.

Following the business meeting, an optional lunch will be served. If you wish to stay for lunch, please call or email Loyce Anderson at (281) 344-8055 (Loyce0519@att.net) or Sally Wingard at (713) 598-5850 (sally.wingard@yahoo.com) to make reservations. Reservations need to be made by Friday, Oct. 7 to insure a spot. The program is free, and the cost for lunch, should you like to stay, is approximately \$13.

Please note: A country club membership is not

necessary to visit or join the Women's Club. We welcome all women in the Pecan Grove area who enjoy laughter, conversation and who want to become further involved in their community.

FBJS's Sugar Plum Market is the perfect one-stop holiday shopping experience

Merchants will travel from all over Texas and beyond to showcase their unique treasures at the 2016 Sugar Plum Market.

Patrons will be thrilled to see a mix of favorite returning vendors, as well as some fascinating new merchants during the 16th Annual holiday shopping extravaganza.

“The committee is so excited to welcome our returning and new vendors. There are new vendors in women's and children's clothing, men's fishing wear, food, and many more,” said Katie Harris, Sugar Plum Market Co-Chair. “Don't miss out on all of the wonderful merchandise.”

Presented by the Fort Bend Junior Service League (FBJS) and Memorial Hermann, this year's “Making Spirits Bright” themed event will once again be held at the Stafford Centre Performing Arts Theatre and Convention Center.

Dates for the 2016 Market are Friday, Nov. 4 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 5 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A special Preview Night will be held from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3.

This VIP event offers patrons the chance to be first to shop the Market.

“This is our sixth year for Preview Night and we are excited for our guests to experience some big changes to the evening's festivities,” said Monica Henderson, Sugar Plum Market Co-Chair. “Our goal is to have the best Girls' Night Out party in Fort Bend County, all while raising money for our community.”

Continued on page 8

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Sugar Plum Market Committee members ready for a fabulous Preview Night! Front Row: SPM Co-Chairs, Danielle Hames and Katie Harris. Back Row: Hillary Watson, Heather Allen, Cara Millas, Heather Brown, Tracy Pipes, Taylor Connor, Jessica Miller, Caroline Bordelon, Amy Stine, Danielle Noonan, Jaynee Tierce, Michaela Brady, Stephanie Reilly, and Laura McGowen.

Continued from page 6

Preview Night tickets (limited quantity available) are \$75 and include light hors d'oeuvres, a drink ticket, and Market entry Friday and Saturday. General Admission tickets are \$12. Both ticket options are available online at www.sugarplummarket.com.

General Admission tickets may also be purchased at local Randalls stores beginning October 1st and at

the door on Market days.

The 2015 Sugar Plum Market raised a record-breaking \$285,000 for local non-profits. The 2016 Market will once again benefit numerous Fort Bend County charities.

Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available starting at \$250.

Top sponsors to date include title sponsor, Memorial Hermann, as well as the City of Stafford, Pamela

Printing, Fort Bend Lifestyles & Homes, absolutely! focus media, Audi Sugar Land, Randalls and HEB. For information on sponsorship and underwriting opportunities, please visit www.sugarplummarket.com or e-mail information@sugarplummarket.com.

Rosenberg Railroad Museum's "ALL ABOARD! the Whistle Stop Gala" chugging into town

Join Honorary Gala Chairs, the First Responders of Fort Bend County at Rosenberg Railroad Museum's annual "All Aboard!" Gala on Oct. 15 at Safari Texas Ranch in Richmond at 6 p.m.

This year's gala is a celebration of America and Roosevelt's famed Whistle Stop Tour across the USA.

Gala attendees are invited to mix and mingle with other supporters of the Museum, enjoy a sit down dinner, participate in live and silent auctions and to help us honor the first responders in the community.

"We are so very excited to honor the men and women who are the first to respond to an accident or natural disaster and protect us against criminals and those that wish to do us harm," said Gala Committee Chair Lisa Rickert. "It has been a tough year for these heroes and we hope that you will join us in sending the message that they are appreciated and admired for their selflessness."

Participating first responders include: Police Chief Dallis Warren and Fire Chief Wade Goates from Rosenberg, Police Chief Adams from Richmond, Police Chief Ramirez from Stafford, Police Chief Berezin from Missouri City and Sheriff Nehls.

As a 501(c)3, the Rosenberg Railroad Museum relies on support from the community to fulfill its mission of preservation and education of the rich railroad history of Fort Bend County with all proceeds from Gala going towards museum operating costs. To purchase tickets or to sponsor a table for the event, visit www.rosenbergRRmuseum.org or call 281-633-2846.

LIBRARY NEWS

Professional Genealogist To Speak At Library's 5th Annual Genealogy Symposium

In recognition of Family-History Month in October, Fort Bend County Libraries' Local History and

Genealogy department will present its 5th Annual Genealogy Symposium on Saturday, Oct. 1,

from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., in the Meeting Room at George Memorial Library, located at 1001 Golfview in Richmond. Registration will begin at 9 a.m., and different lectures will be presented throughout the day.

Professional genealogist and lecturer Nicholas Cimino will share his knowledge, experience, and insight on a variety of topics designed to help family-history buffs explore different avenues of genealogical research.

The schedule for the library's Genealogy Symposium is as follows:

- ◆ 9:30 am – "Planning a Research Trip to Ireland." Hear about online resources that are available to trace

Irish ancestors. Find out how to research the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

- ◆ 11 a.m. – "Researching Immigrant Ancestors." Learn how to track down the hometown of immigrant ancestors. Get tips on how to search passenger lists and one-name studies.

- ◆ 12:30 – lunch break

- ◆ 1:45 p.m. – "Drilling Deeper in the Lone Star State." Discover techniques for maximizing results in online and archival resources for Texas immigration.

- ◆ 3:15 p.m. – "Heirloom Research

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Continued from page 8

and Preservation.” Learn how to locate and preserve family heirlooms. Cimino will share stories of heirlooms he has found at estate sales and antique stores, and how he has been able to reunite those heirlooms with descendants.

A graduate of the University of California Davis, Cimino has also studied Historic Preservation at the University of Nevada/Reno. He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) and currently serves as the Vice President of the Lone Star Chapter of the APG. He publishes a weekly blog at AncestorPuzzles.com.

Cimino has conducted extensive in-person research in numerous record repositories such as the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C., the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the Public Archives of Canada, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, and dozens of



county courthouses across the country.

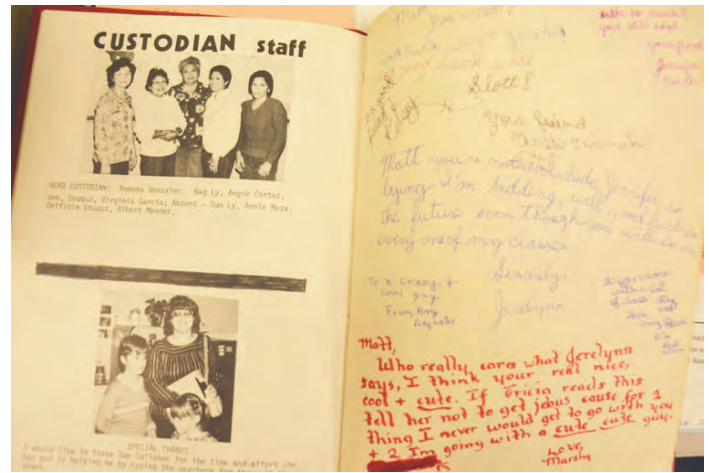
The genealogy symposium is presented with the generous support of the Friends of George Memorial Library. Proceeds from the Friends of the Library book sales and annual membership dues help to underwrite the costs of special programming and various cultural and educational events at the library.

The workshop is free and open to



Photo courtesy of **BAC PHOTOGRAPHY**

Honorary Gala Chairs Chief Ramirez, Chief Berezin, Chief Warren, Sheriff Nehls and Chief Goates



Photos by **Diana Nguyen**

Like many libraries, the George Memorial Library houses donated yearbooks from schools and past students, in the Genealogy and Local History Department. Shown here, are the pages of donated yearbook from previous owner “Matt,” and the end-of-the-year signings he received.

the public. Seating is limited, however, and reservations are required. To register online at the library’s website (www.fortbend.lib.tx.us), click on “Calendar,” select “George Memorial Library,” and find the program. Participants may also register by calling the library’s Local History and Genealogy Department at 281-341-2608.

Popular Digital Magazines Now Available Through Libraries’ Flipster® Service

Patrons of Fort Bend County Libraries can now get instant access to popular magazines online through the libraries’ new Flipster® service from EBSCO Information Services. Flipster is a next-generation magazine service that allows people to browse digital versions of the latest issues of popular magazines for adults, teens, and children, courtesy of the library.

Flipster magazines are full-print, full-color digital duplicates of the hardcopy print magazine, and library cardholders can now access them remotely through the Fort Bend County Libraries website, www.fortbend.lib.tx.us. The libraries’ collection includes 35 popular titles for adults and 14 titles for youth, including selections such as Forbes, Essence, Car & Driver, Highlights,

Comics & Gaming Magazine, and much more.

Magazines can be read online on a computer or downloaded to smartphones or tablets, including Android™ phones and tablets, Apple® phones and tablets, and Kindle Fire tablets, for offline reading anytime, anywhere on a free Flipster app that can be downloaded from the Apple App or Google Play stores.

Flipster provides an easy-to-use, browse-able reading experience. An online newsstand provides a carousel of the most recent issues in various categories, and many magazines provide access to back-issues as well.

The collection can be accessed 24/7, and there is no limit to the number of magazines that can be downloaded. There will never be overdue fines for Flipster magazines because the digital file will automatically disappear after a predetermined length of time. A magazine that is published weekly can be downloaded for 2 days, and a magazine that is published monthly can be downloaded for one week.

To browse the Flipster collection of magazines, go to FBCL website, www.fortbend.lib.tx.us, click on “Ebooks and Digital Media,” and scroll down to Flipster.

For more information, visit any of the libraries in the Fort Bend County library system, or call the library system’s Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.

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Fort Bend Education Foundation Hosts 2nd Annual Sugar Shindig

Enjoy a sweet time at the Fort Bend Education Foundation's 2nd Annual Sugar Shindig presented by Safari Texas on Friday, Oct. 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Shimmy over to Safari Texas for a casual evening of fun and frolic, including a fajita dinner, a dessert auction and dancing to the music of Password.

This is camaraderie at its finest as staff from our schools and

community members vie for the best cakes made by local bakers.

The event is hosted by the Angels of Education Auxiliary, whose mission is to create community awareness for the Foundation's Grants to Teachers and Schools programs.

Have your cake and eat it too at this shindig! To purchase tickets, adults only \$25/person, or make donations, visit www.fortbendisd.com/foundation.



Honorary Sugar Shindig Committee

Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees L to R: 1st row: KP George, Noreen Covey, Vice President - FBEF Auxiliary; Grayle James, Addie Heyliger, Kristin Tassin, 2nd row: KP George, Dave Rosenthal, Jim Rice

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory is off to a great start for the 2016-2017 school year

By Krista Kuperus

Director of Admissions & Advancement

This school year represents a milestone for Calvary as it celebrates the 60th anniversary of serving students and families in the Fort Bend Area. There is also excitement this year as over 50 new Crusaders have joined Calvary. Although most new students come to Calvary from



other public or private school in Fort Bend County, 10 are international students, grades 7-12, who come from China, Vietnam and Malaysia. These students are at Calvary to

study as well as learn the culture and traditions of our country.

A few visual changes at Calvary are the new BrightLink interactive boards in all of the class rooms and new lockers throughout middle and high school. Calvary Parent Teacher Organization (CPTO), Gary and Amy Randolph and Student Council funded these enhancements and brought much excitement to faculty and students.

PERFORMING AT A SKEETERS GAME

After only three days of school, Calvary Episcopal Preparatory choir director Paula "Ms. Cookie" Smith had a talented group ready to perform the national anthem at the opening of the Skeeters baseball game. Students from pre-kindergarten to high school were on hand for the performance and the game that followed. Headmaster, Mr. Maclom Smith and Father Paul Wehner even got to throw out the first pitch. It was a great night full of Calvary spirit and ballpark excitement.

FOOTBALL OFF TO A GREAT START

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory's football team, under the direction of coach Frederick Brooks, is off to a great start with a decisive victory over Wesley in a game played at "home field" at the TW Davis YMCA.



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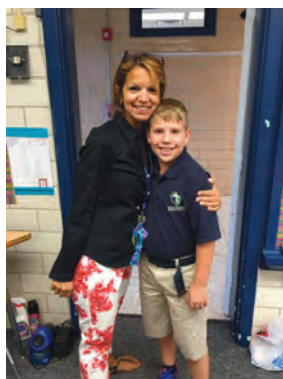
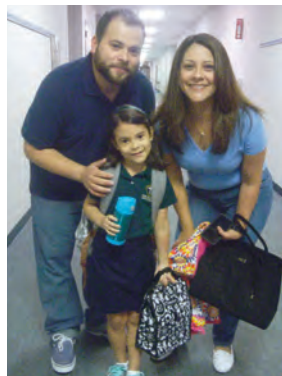
8:30 THE TABLE - Service in Chapel
9:00 TRADITIONAL - Held in the Worship Center
10:00 THE BRANCH - Service in the Chapel
11:00 THE VINE - Held in the Worship Center

Holy Rosary Catholic School celebrates 75 years

By Pam McCarthy

Community Relations and Development

This 2016/2017 school year marks Holy Rosary Catholic School's 75th anniversary. We have a multitude of events planned to mark this milestone and we plan on keeping the community informed of these events. In August welcomed our students back for the new school year. Despite the dreary weather, we had a campus full of smiles.



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Morton Street Music is a movement with meaning

BY Marquita Griffin
mgriffin@fbherald.com

Sometimes a person gets an idea.

It starts off as wishful thinking but after serious consideration it starts to take form like a statue that is meticulously carved out of stone. And the moment it becomes something sound, is the moment it becomes something people can appreciate.

Robert Quarles and his wife Stacie know about the journey an idea takes to solidify, as they are the founders of Morton Street Music, LLC, a company formed in August 2015 devoted to producing and promoting live outdoor music events for the public.

"I don't know that we really ever set out to form a company," said Robert Quarles, who is the district director for U.S. Rep. Pete Olson's Sugar Land office. "You have an idea or a vision, in this case to have a music festival in your home town.

So websites were made. Plans were discussed. Goals were agreed upon.

"You begin to stumble around and look at what others have done, what it takes to do something like that and you slowly begin to understand the scope of something like that and then realize important decisions need to be made," he said.



Robert Quarles, who founded Morton Street Music with his wife, poses with the band Kalila during Concert at Park in May. He is joined by Thanuska Bandara on drums, Anushka Bandara on bass, lead singer Kalila Atchley and Matt Catalano on guitar. "I was driving by Decker Park one day and thought to myself, 'This is a perfect venue for a concert. My wife agreed.' Concert on the Park was held at Decker Park in Richmond. In addition to live music, visitors were also invited to shop at several arts and crafts booths.

Either the Quarles needed to partner with a legal entity or create their own; the couple decided to form a limited liability company, or LLC.

"That was kind of the point of no return. No backing out," Quarles said. "It reminded me of when I remodeled our bathroom in our old house. You hit that old tile with a sledge hammer and you are out of the sketching and concept phase.

"We literally put our own money where our mouth was," he added. "That's when we knew: 'OK, this is for real. We are really serious about this and this is going to happen ... we must be nuts.'"

For the love of their community

The Quarles are not nuts in the mad sense, though. They are, however, infatuated with the idea of highlighting their city and showing people the potential the City of Richmond has to offer.

"We love the old part of town and we live close," said Quarles, who lives in Pecan Grove with his wife. "Morton Street has a charm to it and people that go there know this.

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 A family consisting of a mother, a father, and a young child are walking along a paved path in a park. The trees are lush and green, and the scene is bright and sunny.




Kalila Atchley, lead singer for the band, Kalila, sings a crowd-favorite, "Lean on Me," during Concert at the Park a few months ago. Kalila was among a number of bands recruited to play by Morton Street Music founder Robert Quarles. Other members of Kalila include Thanuska Bandara on drums, Anushka Bandara on bass, and Matt Catalano on guitar. Concert on the Park was held at Decker Park in Richmond. In addition to live music, visitors were also invited to shop at several arts and crafts booths.

I thought that a music festival could be successful there, and as we talked to people we found out that we were not alone.

This first Morton Street Music event, while highly anticipated, did not happen due to prohibiting weather, but the Quarles were not deterred. They came back strong in 2016 with Concert on the Creek in May.

Held at Wessendorff Park in Historic Richmond — a place Quarles calls Richmond's best kept secret — Concert on the Creek was presented by Morton Street Music, LLC and the West Fort Bend Management District on May 21.

The free concert featured live music from Kalia, Ashbury Keys, Amy Goloby, Brewster Moonface, Tasie Burnette and Eric Ashely as well as food trucks, eats from local restaurants and the chance to browse through downtown.

Quarles, who is a musician, said Wessendorff

Park was the ideal setting for a Richmond musical festival due to its acoustically sound gazebo and serene atmosphere. But what surprised him about choosing Wessendorff Park — found between 4th Street and 6th Street, just over the railroad tracks in historical downtown — as the site for the concert was how many people do not know how wonderful the area is.

Through Morton Street Music, he and his wife are working to change that, Quarles said.

A purpose with meaning

"It's not your typical business, that's for sure," Quarles said of his and wife's company. "Most of the time, people create a business like selling burgers or sofas with the objective of making a profit and expanding.

"We're certainly not opposed to a profit, and maybe one day Morton Street

"OK, this is for real. We are really serious about this and this is going to happen ... we must be nuts."

— **Robert Quarles**, co-founder of Morton Street Music

Music LLC will promote events elsewhere, but that isn't the case today and not likely to be for sometime, and that's OK," he said.

As it stands now, Quarles said Morton Street Music, LLC is a means to learn how to enrich Richmond by to promoting two musical events in the hopes to working up to "a grander true-blue, multiple day, multiple-stage music festival in the Fall, both of which are in Downtown Richmond."

Quarles anticipates the

next Concert on the Creek being held in March or April of next year with the even-larger goal of the first Morton Street Music Festival later in 2017 or 2018.






For more information about Morton Street Music, LLC visit www.mortonstreetmusic.com, www.facebook.com/mortonstreetmusic or twitter.com/Mortonstmusic. More information about Concert on the Creek can be found at www.concertonthecreek.com.



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On The Front Lines of Down syndrome

GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE

By MARQUITA GRIFFIN
mgriffin@fbherald.com

Fourteen years ago Nancy Gianni of Hoffman Estates, Illinois, gave birth to her third child, a little girl named GiGi, who doctors diagnosed with Down syndrome. In an open letter to the public after founding GiGi's Playhouse in 2003, Gianni describes the process of acceptance and determination she and her husband progressed through during the first few days of GiGi's life.

"Panic was welling up inside me but I was afraid for anyone to see it," she said.

"As soon as my husband and I made eye contact I said: 'If anyone can handle this we can.' ... I knew we were going to get through this together.

"Don't get me wrong – we were petrified. I can not even begin to tell you the total fear and devastation I felt. Everything they were telling us about Down syndrome was so negative. Suddenly no one had eye contact with me anymore, they kept the door to my room closed and they kept sending in the clergy."

What Gianni decided to do, in her own way, was change the attitude, to break the myths, to tear away the fear society formed around Down syndrome.

"I realized how strong she actually was," Gianni said. "[...] I made a promise to her that I would change the way the world looked at a person with Down syndrome; that I would help people understand that her and all of her friends were so much more than a diagnosis."



"GiGi's Playhouse is a place where you can leave your advocate hat — that parents of children with special needs are always wearing — at the door because the moment you walk through those doors you know that nobody there needs to be convinced that your child is amazing and capable of great things." —

Kristi Ross, mother of Grace Ross, 4, who is diagnosed with Down syndrome.



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That promise was the first building blocks of GiGi's Playhouse, a worldwide nonprofit network that is, generally speaking, an achievement center for children and adults diagnosed with Down syndrome. Through its free programs, those diagnosed with Down syndrome are offered educational and therapeutic programs devoted to increasing self-confidence and skills.

This year Gianni was named a 2016 CNN Hero. CNN Heroes is a year-long initiative that honors everyday people for their selfless, creative efforts to help others. Each year, CNN receives

thousands of nominations from around the world, and this year marks the tenth year of the Peabody Award-winning, Emmy-nominated campaign.

"This is not about me or GiGi. It is about all of us stepping up to make this world a better place," Gianni said after learning she was named a CNN Hero. "The real Heroes of GiGi's Playhouse include the participants themselves — they inspire me every day! — the volunteers who run 97 percent of all programming, the courageous families who embrace the journey of opening a Playhouse in their own community, and the believers who

make this all possible."

Joining the national network

To date, GiGi's Playhouse includes more than 30 center across the nation and Mexico and on Dec. 5 2015 Sugar Land became the 27th playhouse in that network and some local parents, including Belinda Orsborn, the site coordinator of GiGi's Playhouse in Sugar Land, wanted nothing more than to be a part of it.

Continued on page 18



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Continued from page 17

"My good friend Kristi Ross has a daughter with Down syndrome and she told me all about the plan to open a GiGi's here in Sugar Land," Orsborn said. "I immediately fell in love with the whole idea of it and I jumped right in."

Prior to her role at GiGi's Playhouse Orsborn was a teacher at Alief ISD before becoming a stay at home mother.

"I had always wanted to go back and get my Special Education certification. I loved seeing the kids in the Special Education programs in Alief and I told myself if and when I ever went back that I would teach Pre-school Program for Children with Disabilities or Life Skills.

"I have always had a heart for individuals with Down syndrome and when this opportunity came up, I just couldn't pass it up," Orsborn said. "God's plan was bigger than mine and I have loved every part of GiGi's. I love that it also teaches my own children about acceptance and to love all individuals."

As part of her responsibilities Orsborn manages the playhouse as well as its volunteers, program lessons, communication between the center and the families, community outreach and assists with events and fundraisers.

Since its inception in 2003 GiGi's Playhouses nationwide have assisted more than 25,000 children and adults with Down syndrome, but what is key to remember about GiGi's



"GiGi's Playhouse provides us a community of others who are going through or have been through our situation. It is comforting to have others to lean on, cry on and learn from." —

Ammie Blahuta, mother of Sadie Blahuta, 3, who is diagnosed with Down syndrome.

Playhouse is that its function is not only to support those diagnosed with Down syndrome, but to also shine an encouraging light on a topic society deems stark and unfortunate.

It "is place where families can come and connect with others and give them hope," Orsborn said. "It is a place where families can celebrate their child and let them know that they are not alone."

Each playhouse provides a variety of free programs that range from toddler classes to speech therapy and even features Zumba workouts.

"We offer support for all families, from diagnosis in utero to adults with

Down syndrome. It helps the world see that individuals with Down syndrome are accepted and embraced in their families, schools, and communities," Orsborn said.

Establishing a very real value

Kristi Ross knows first-hand the stigma that surrounds the diagnosis of Down syndrome. Her first bitter taste of it was when she was 32 weeks pregnant with her third child, a little girl she and her husband David named Grace.

"From the moment we got Grace's diagnosis I realized that many people — especially in the medical community — don't see a whole lot of value in children with Down syndrome," said Ross, a married mother of three children: Abigail, Andrew and Grace.

"From the moment you get the diagnosis, you are overwhelmed with information about all the things your child won't do, all the medical problems they will likely have, and how things will never be "easy" for you or your family again."

Ross, who is one of the founding members of the Sugar Land location of GiGi's Playhouse, said 90 percent

of children with Down syndrome are aborted in utero.

"That statistic alone shows the value that society places on these precious lives," she added.

Grace, who is 4 years old, had several open heart surgeries before she was even two years old — her first at two weeks old; a second at six months; a third at 13 months; and three more before she was 16 months old. In a time when most parents' biggest fears are their child battling a bad bout with flu or overcoming traditional developmental milestones, Grace Ross spent a large portion of her time in the hospital, fighting for her life.

"We knew that Grace would be born with a very broken heart, but we had no idea that she would endure so much at such a young age," Ross said.

Grace will need one or two more open heart surgeries when she is older, a fact Ross and her husband take in stride — "we trust that God will see us through, just like He did before" — but the "what if's" are always in the back of their mind.

"The thing that is hardest for us to reconcile is the 'what if' her heart can't sustain her and she requires a heart transplant?" Ross said. "At this point in time she would not be eligible for a new heart because of her extra chromosome and the associated developmental delays."

And this, Ross said, is the crux of the issue.

"I fully understand both sides of the argument on the topic," Ross said. "But I think it speaks to the value that is often times placed on children and adults with Down syndrome, and special needs in general."

In face of all the obstacles, however, Ross acknowledges the hope for families with children diagnosed with Down syndrome.

"We have been blessed to live in a community that has loved and embraced Grace and our family from the get-go," she said. "Our

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Continued from page 18

community has rallied around us and supported us [throughout] fundraisers, donations, loving on Grace's older sister and brother, etcetera, during some of the darkest days of our lives when we were worried that we may lose our sweet Gracie while trying to maintain a sense of normalcy for our two older children."

Ross added that Grace's teachers and the administration of Campbell and Velasquez Elementary Schools — two "amazing public schools" — believe in Grace and wholeheartedly work with the family to ensure Grace's future but she knows her family's "experience is not necessarily the norm."

"Unfortunately, we know many that aren't nearly as fortunate and are fighting what feels like an uphill battle to get the services that their kiddos need," Ross said.

This, Ross said, is why GiGi's



Playhouse is so vital to Fort Bend County.

"This is a place where new moms and dads will be met with a huge hug and congratulations because we know how amazing their journey will be despite what the rest of the world might say," she said.

"That is often times the first congratulations that they hear," Ross added sadly.

"GiGi's Playhouse is a place where you can leave your advocate hat —



Never on the sidelines

For almost a year now, Ammie Blahuta's daughter Sadie has participated in GiGi's Playhouse activities and if there is one thing she proudly stresses about the nonprofit is its ability to provide children with Down syndrome — and their families — with a sense of normalcy.

"When we found out the doctor wanted to test Sadie for Down syndrome, we were so uneducated on what that meant," said Blahuta, a married mother who is also the board president for GiGi's Playhouse. "We did not know anyone directly that had a child or family member with Down syndrome."

She recalls that when she was growing up, most children with learning disabilities were often put on the sidelines of life. They were not included. They were ignored.

"I felt scared and alone," Blahuta said when she learned Sadie was diagnosed with Down syndrome. But "GiGi's Playhouse provides us a community of others who are going through or have been through our situation. It is comforting to have others to lean on, cry on and learn from."

"GiGi's Playhouse provides a safe place for individuals and their families to get together to bond and be on this journey together," she added. "GiGi's brings together our community as a whole."

That community bond, however, is not limited to families with children diagnosed with Down syndrome, and this, Blahuta said, is a prime example of why organizations like GiGi's Playhouse is so vital to Fort Bend County.

"Someone might not have a child with Down syndrome but they might come volunteer and realize how much joy there is in working with someone who does have Down syndrome and in return they become inclusive and

that parents of children with special needs are always wearing — at the door because the moment you walk through those doors you know that nobody there needs to be convinced that your child is amazing and capable of great things."

And Ross offers hope to other parents in a similar situation: Do not give up hope. Dream immensely for your child despite the diagnosis.

"Even if we could remove the extra chromosome from Grace, we wouldn't," she said. "Not for a second because she has been the greatest blessing in the life of our family."

"My hope for Grace is that she will be all that God created her to be, and I know that God's plans will be exceedingly, abundantly, beyond anything I can even imagine. I'm confident that she will be included in main stream classes during her academic career," Ross said. "And I wouldn't be surprised if she is a soccer player, swimmer and or a cheerleader."

Grace is starting soccer this year and loves cheering her siblings on at their swim meets, soccer and basketball games..

"I can picture her and her best friend, Sadie, going to college and even being roommates some day. My two older kids want to work at The Rise School, an amazing school in Houston that Grace has attended the past two years, and for Grace to be their teachers assistant," Ross said. "Who knows? Maybe Grace will be a teacher someday. The sky is the limit."

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share this with their friends and family.”

In other words, the nonprofit is getting rid of those sidelines.

“Sadie is so young so not much gets to her but it has definitely been an eye opener to hear how people talk about intellectual or physical disabilities,” she said. “Educating people on proper verbiage and etiquette is a big thing. Hearing the R-word is like a stab to the heart and yet, I know I have used it because I was naïve to what it meant.”

Having a disability simply means living with something most others do not — that is it. And when it comes to children with Down syndrome, they are just like their peers in many ways, Blahuta stressed.

“People also always assume Sadie is ‘happy,’” said Blahuta who also has a five-year-old son, Keaton. “Yes, she is happy most



of the time. It is part of what brings us such joy and blessings, but she does have her moments just like any three year old. She can be quite stubborn.”

Blahuta also has a slice of advice for families who received a diagnosis like her family:

“I hope if someone is struggling with the diagnosis of Down syndrome that they come to us and let us welcome them with

open arms,” she said. “We have programs for individuals of all ages, infants to adults. No one can prepare you for the life that we have, but we certainly can help them on their journey. Down syndrome is such a gift from God. We are the lucky ones.”

What GiGi's Playhouse has to offer

A myriad of free programs are available at GiGi's Playhouse, including those that focus on developmental skills including: speech, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, literacy and math tutoring, fitness and nutrition, career skills and real world learning and self-confidence.

The programs are accessible to children and adults with Down syndrome and allow families and the community be involved. To date 100 families are in the

database of the Sugar Land location of GiGi's Playhouse with about 40 active participants.

“The best thing about GiGi's Playhouse is that all of our programs are free to our participants and families,” Blahuta said. We never want cost to be a barrier for providing the education, therapies or information needed to help our kids or adults be successful.”

GiGi's Playhouse needs your support

As with any nonprofit, GiGi's Playhouse operates off the work of volunteers and by community donations.

The Sugar Land location has one paid employee, a board of directors comprised of 12 local community members and about 40 volunteers.

“We are always looking for

Continued on page 22



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Continued from page 21

more to help with mail outs, cleaning crews, host families, event organization, tutoring and running programs.” Osborn said of the nonprofit’s desire to have more volunteers. “We have a place of anyone interested.”

“If you have not had the pleasure of joining us at an event or volunteering, I highly encourage you to do so,” Blahuta added. “We have a lot of teenagers and younger kids who volunteer and help. The joy that they have for helping our participants is indescribable.”

Osborn said the center is also welcomes donations.

“Having a child with special needs can be expensive with all the extras they need from various therapies to different medical appointments and all of our programs are free,” Osborn said. “We do not receive government funding so we rely 100 percent on donations so that we can provide those programs.”

The cost of running each program can range anywhere from \$100 to \$500.

Donations can be made online at www.gigisplayhouse.org/sugarland or checks can be mailed to 14015 Southwest Freeway, Bldg 11, Sugar Land TX 77478.

GiGi’s Playhouse also hosts fundraisers, with its biggest fundraiser, “I Have a Voice” Gala,



scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Oct. 15 at Cross Key Acres, 5543 FM 762 in Richmond. Individual tickets are \$150 or \$250 for two tickets. The evening will feature dinner and cocktails, dancing, a live auction as well as a wine and whiskey pull.

The nonprofit will also host its Spring Fashion Show at the Sugar Creek Country Club this year.

Find out more information or keep up with GiGi’s Playhouse in Sugar Land by visiting www.gigisplayhouse.org/sugarland or liking its Facebook page “GiGi’s Playhouse Sugar Land.”

“GiGi’s Playhouse is on the front lines of showing our community and the world that ‘different’ is not bad or scary,” Ross said. “Instead it’s a chance to see and experience an unparalleled joy and unconditional love that our kiddos have to offer.”

Programs at the Playhouse

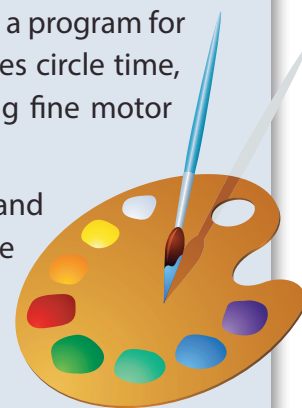
♥ Busy Bodies is a playgroup for our babies ages 0-2 years old. We laugh, play and work on gross motor skills. It also provides a positive setting for parents to share experiences and learn from each other.



♥ LMNOP (Learning, Music ‘N Our Peeps) is for ages 6 months – 3 years old. This program guides parents and infants through learning basic sign language and increases vocalization through music and movement.

♥ Busy Hands, Bigger Plans is a program for school age children that involves circle time, sensory time and strengthening fine motor skills.

♥ Art Explosion is for ages 9 and up to come and get creative. We work on different forms of art and provide a healthy outlet for children to express themselves.



♥ Teentastic is a program for our teens that promotes positive peer relationships and builds social development.

♥ Friday Friends is a fun night out for our adults to socialize. We do anything from Karaoke to Game Night.

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Take a Walk. End Alzheimer's.

BY MARQUITA GRIFFIN
mgriffin@fbherald.com

It is a wonder that something so simple, like walking, can generate such a powerful feeling. Walking for a cause is common these days, but not all walks are the same. The Fort Bend Walk to End Alzheimer's, a rain-or-shine event happening later this month, is an emotional walk with so much energy behind it that it becomes more than people donating money and completing a 3.1 mile course.

"The Fort Bend County Walk to End Alzheimer's is more than a walk; it is an experience," said Marisa Ramon the Regional Outreach Coordinator for Fort Bend and Wharton. "Over 1,200 participants in Fort Bend County will learn about Alzheimer's disease and how to get involved with this critical cause, from advocacy opportunities and clinical studies enrollment to support programs and services."

Characterized by impaired communication, disorientation, confusion, behavior changes and, ultimately, difficulty speaking, swallowing and walking, Alzheimer's disease is a growing epidemic and is now the nation's sixth-leading cause of death. The Alzheimer's Association, the world's leading voluntary health organization devoted to Alzheimer care, support and research, stated one in three senior citizens dies with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia and more than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's.

"As baby boomers age, the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease will rapidly escalate, increasing well beyond today's more than 5 million Americans to as many as 16 million by 2050," Ramon said. "The Walk to End Alzheimer's provides hope and raises much needed funds to support Alzheimer's disease care, support and research."



Currently there is no cure for Alzheimer's and with 350,000 people who are 65 years old or older in Texas living with the disease, Ramon said there is undoubtedly a need to educate the public and support research.

"Alzheimer's disease is a growing epidemic and the nation's sixth-leading cause of death," she said. "The walk in Fort Bend was one of the first Alzheimer's walks in the Houston area close to 20 years ago and it is still one of the biggest in the area. The Fort Bend walk helps support early-stage engagement programs in the Fort Bend area, for people living with Alzheimer's disease."

Continued on page 24

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Continued from page 23

To date, the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's — held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide — is the nation's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research, and Fort Bend County continues to show its support through its annual walk.

On Saturday Oct. 29, the annual Fort Bend Walk to End Alzheimer's, which is being sponsored this year by the Alzheimer's Association, will start at 9 a.m. at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. Ramon said this year's goal is raise \$155,600. Last year, the walk raised more than \$140,000.

"All funds raised through Walk to End Alzheimer's further the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association,"

Ramon said.

In addition to the 5K walk, participants also honor those affected by Alzheimer's disease with the poignant Promise Garden ceremony. Plus they will enjoy KHOU 11 news reporter and anchor Mia Gradney as the event's emcee who will pay a special tribute to those who have experienced or are experiencing Alzheimer's.

Event Details

Strollers are allowed, but, skateboards, bicycles, inline skates and wheelie footwear are discouraged, and depending on the Walk location rules, well-behaved dogs are welcome, but must be on a leash at all times.

Registration for the walk is free, but walkers are asked to make a personal donation which will be used to further the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association, a nonprofit organization.

In addition to the walk, participants will enjoy entertainment and special tributes to those who experienced or are experiencing Alzheimer's.

For more information visit the Alzheimer Association's web site at www.alz.org, call 713-314-1346 or email walk@alztx.org.

Join Richmond-Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group

Alzheimer's support doesn't end with this month's walk, though. Richmond-Rosenberg area caregivers of patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or other related dementias also share information and learn about coping with such a diagnosis at a monthly "Caregivers Support Group" hosted by the Richmond-Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group.

The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at St. John's United Methodist Church, 400 Jackson St. in Richmond, across from the historic Fort Bend County Courthouse. The meeting is open to all caregivers in the surrounding areas who are interested in learning more about Alzheimer's and how to live with the impacts of this disease.

The support group offers speakers, question and answer sessions, information sharing and general discussion of how

Alzheimer's affects us as individuals, families and communities. The Oct. 6 meeting, "Coping with Uncertainty," will be presented by Alzheimer Association's Fort Bend Outreach Coordinator, Marisa Ramon. Group discussion will follow the presentation.

Free and open to the public, the Richmond-Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group is presented by the Alzheimer's Association Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter (713-314-1313 or 1-800-272-3900) and sponsored by Faith United Methodist Church and St. John's United Methodist Church.

Additionally, the support group is sponsoring a walking team in association with the Alzheimer's Association 2016 Fort Bend County Walk to End Alzheimer's on Saturday, Oct. 29.

The community is invited to join Team Richmond/Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group by logging onto: http://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2015/General?team_id=341113&pg=team&fr_id=9332

Kim Galloway is Team Captain for the Richmond/Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group "Care to Walk" team. You can also reach the page by visiting www.alz.org and searching for the team "Richmond/Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group."

The group features a Facebook

Continued on page 26

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Continued from page 24

Page: Richmond-Rosenberg Alzheimer's Support Group. (www.facebook.com/groups/RichmondRosenbergAlzheimersSupport) and can be reached via e-mail at richmondementia2014@gmail.com.

More programs

Other area activities for family caregivers and their loved ones include Memory Café.

Memory Café is an informal social gathering for caregivers and individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease. The group provides a social setting where all participants can feel comfortable and relaxed.

Memory Café meets the third Thursday at the Mamie George Senior Center, 1111 Collins Road in Richmond at 9:30 a.m.

For additional information about the group, please contact Alzheimer's Association Fort Bend County Outreach Coordinator Marisa Ramon at 1-800-272-3900 or mramon@alz.org.

2016 | Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS THE
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SOMEONE IN THE UNITED STATES
DEVELOPS THE DISEASE



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IT KILLS MORE THAN BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER COMBINED

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THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS:

EVENT AT A GLANCE

What: 5K Fort Bend Walk to End Alzheimer

When: Saturday, Oct. 29; registration is at 7:30 a.m., the ceremony is at 8 a.m. followed by the walk at 8:30 a.m.

Where: Constellation Field, 1 Stadium Drive in Sugar Land.

Why: All funds raised through Walk to End Alzheimer's further the care, support and research efforts of the

Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Find out more at www.alz.org;



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Acorn Candy Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. prepared chocolate frosting
- 24 milk chocolate candy kisses (such as Hershey's Kisses unwrapped)
- 24 mini vanilla wafer cookies (such as Nilla)
- 24 butterscotch chips

Directions

Smear a small amount of frosting onto the flat bottom of a candy kiss. Press onto the flat bottom of the vanilla wafer. Smear a little more frosting onto the flat bottom of a butterscotch chip, and press onto the rounded top of the cookie. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Set aside to dry, about 30 minutes.



Mini Candy Bar Cookies

Ingredients

- 60 mini chocolate-coated caramel-peanut nougat candy bars (such as Snickers)
- 2 pkgs. (18.25 ounce) French vanilla flavored cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup water

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Unwrap all the mini candy bars.

Empty the 2 cake mixes into a large bowl, and stir eggs, vegetable oil, and water into the mixes. The batter will be stiff. Roll heaping tablespoons of dough into 1-inch balls. Push a mini candy bar into the cookie ball, and carefully cover the entire candy piece with dough. If any chocolate is visible, the cookie will leak. Place the filled cookies onto the prepared baking sheets.

Bake in the preheated oven for 11 minutes. Cookies will not look brown on top. Cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheets before removing to



finish cooling on racks.

Candy Bar Popcorn

This is a much-too-easy yummy treat. You can substitute the Snickers with any variety of meltable candy bars.

Ingredients

- 1 pkg. (3.5 ounce) microwave popcorn
- 1 king size bar chocolate-coated caramel-peanut nougat candy

Directions

Pop the popcorn according to the package directions. While the corn pops, cut the candy bar into 1/2 inch pieces. Spread the popped corn onto a microwave-safe platter (I like to use paper plates for easy clean up). Top with candy bar pieces. Heat on full power in the microwave at 30 second intervals, or until candy is melted.

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GHOSTS, HAUNTINGS AND SPOOKY FUN

Halloween-themed entertainment is scheduled throughout Fort Bend

Fort Bend County is no stranger to urban legends or ghost tales and some of the best tales are at your fingertips if you visit the George Memorial Library.

Sixteen years ago, long-time library and museum volunteer John C. Allwright compiled a collection of ghost stories that he recalled from throughout his lifetime of living in the Rosenberg/Richmond area. The collection was published as “Fort Bend Ghost Stories,” and Allwright donated the proceeds from the sales of this book to the Genealogy and Local History Department at George Memorial Library.

The book is one of five that Allwright wrote before his death in 2005. Dedicated to preserving the history of the Rosenberg/Richmond area, Allwright documented his memories of growing up in the area, raising children and grandchildren, and relating the rich history of the area to countless other individuals that he encountered as a volunteer at the library and as a docent at the Fort Bend Museum.

Allwright’s memories of growing up in the area and watching the many changes which took place over the years filled three other volumes – “My Memories of Rosenberg,” “People of Fort Bend

County That I Met,” and “Fort Bend County Ghost Stories,” which is a sequel to “Fort Bend Ghost Stories.” His final book was “Short Stories,” written in 2003.

For many years, Allwright fascinated the children of the county with tales of ghostly appearances in the area, and he was finally convinced to write them down.

The original “Fort Bend Ghost Stories” features more than 35 stories of ghosts who have haunted the local area throughout its illustrious past. From the “Cotton Seed Mill Robber” to the “Brazos River Ghost” and many more, Allwright brought to life the ghostly residents of the county once again.

The Genealogy and Local History Department at George Memorial Library currently has copies of Allwright’s “Fort Bend Ghost Stories” and “Short Stories” available for sale. Proceeds from sales of the book benefit the department at the library.

For more information, call the library system’s Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.

Ghost tours teeming with history

But perhaps a book is not enough to give you the scare you are looking for. If that is the case, ghost tours hosted by two women will be held in Downtown Historic Richmond for those interested in a bit of creepy history.

Melissa Dixon, owner of Texas Tour Connection who has been involved with local touring in Houston, Galveston and Fort Bend County since 1993, is again hosting her

annual Ghost Tours in Downtown Richmond. Whether folks believe the spooky tales or not, the tours are a popular event for Richmond in October.

Dixon’s tours are set for Fridays Oct. 21 and 28 and Saturdays, Oct. 15, 22 and 29 at 7 p.m.

All tours this year will meet at Richmond City Hall and the costs to take the tour are \$20 for adults and \$18 for students.

Although the tours will mainly focus about the eerie history of downtown Richmond — so nothing too scary — Dixon stresses that small children should not participate in the tours.

“If people want hardcore séances, I have suggestions for other (guides), but my tours are light, they’re entertainment,” she said.

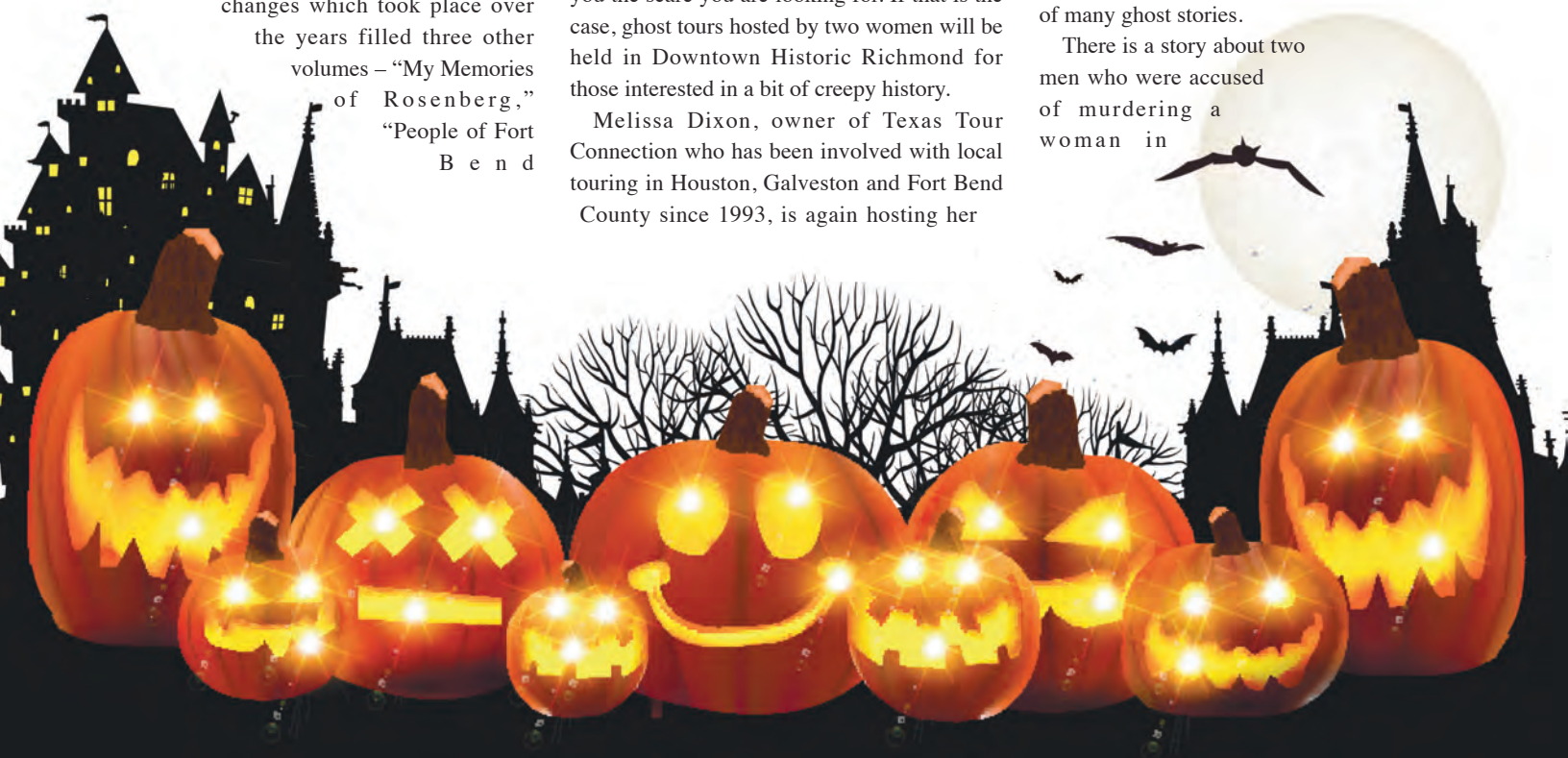
Dixon said she will also host private tours, as long as they are scheduled. Even before October the enthusiastic tour guide had been booked for a few private tours.

“The tour will be similar [to prior years],” Dixon said. “I am looking to make a few changes this year

“But we will still do the jail,” she added with a smile.

The jail — the Richmond jail that was built in 1897 — is a popular highlight on the tour and has been the center of many ghost stories.

There is a story about two men who were accused of murdering a woman in



Richmond decades ago, and while one man confessed another declared his innocence until his dying breath. The word is that the man who claimed to be innocent still returns to the jail in phantom form still reminding everyone he was not guilty.

Stories similar to this will be told at each of the stops on Dixon's tour. She also advises visitors to wear comfortable shoes and to bring a flashlight and a camera.

For more information or to reserve a spot on a tour call 713-826-6963, email melissa@texastourconnection.com or visit texastourconnection.com.

Adults Only: Black & White Masquerade at the Fort Bend Museum

Visit the Fort Bend Museum on Friday, Oct. 28 for a Black & White Masquerade just in time for Halloween. From 6:30 to 9 p.m., guests ages 21 and up can enjoy



Ready for the Black & White Masquerade are (front row) Colleen Collins, Ana Alicia Estrada; (second row) Jessica Avery; (third row) Keely Knipling and Letha Wood; and (back row) Dottie Allen.

hearty appetizers and signature cocktails, wine and beer while surrounded by the spooky-yet-festive atmosphere of the historic Moore Mansion.

"For the past two years, we have offered an All Hallow's Eve-themed house tour in honor of Ivy Moore, John Moore's eldest daughter who loved to host

Halloween parties at the home for local children," said Site Director Shereen Sampson. "This year we decided to step it up a notch."

Guests are encouraged to dress in black or white cocktail attire and will be able to get their fortunes told, take a tour of the eerily-decorated 1883 mansion and have a portrait taken next to a Victorian-era glass hearse. There will also be a contest for the best Venetian-style mask.

Fort Bend County Museum Association board member Keely Knipling is helping lead the event committee and says she is especially excited about decorating for the house tours.

"The thought and creativity that has gone into decorating each room of the house is going to result in something truly fabulous," she said. "The black and white theme is also really fun – I just love the chance to

Continued on page 30

Jingle Tree

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Continued from page 29

dress up and have an awesome event so close to home at the Fort Bend Museum. Having the backdrop of such a gorgeous old home doesn't hurt either."

Tickets are \$40 per person for members of the Fort Bend County Museum Association and \$45 per person for non-members. Must be age 21+. For more information, call 281-342-6478 or visit www.fortbendmuseum.org.

But wait, there is more.

Since the Masquerade is for adults only, on Oct. 29, the museum is presenting Miss Ivy's Spooktacular Halloween Party, a family-friendly Halloween experience.

The party runs from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. followed by Spooky House Tours from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 per child. If you are a member of the Fort Bend County Museum



Photo by Susan Lynch

Rhapsody in Blue: Stacey Tharalson, Katherine Leskin, Patricia Kelley, Andrea Cope, Tofik Khanmamedov, Jordon Nickerson. Seated: Dan Patterson, Elyssa Munden.

Association, the cost is \$8 for adults and \$3 per child.

Spooky games, mysterious

tricks and sweet treats will be part of the fun. For those who dare to enter the 1883 historic Moore Mansion, guests will step into the pages of horror classics by authors such as Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley.

The Fort Bend Museum is located at 500 Houston Street in Richmond. For more information, call 281-342-6478 or visit www.fortbendmuseum.org.

FBSO Kicks Off Its 25th season with two performances this month

The Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra opens its 25th season on Sunday, Oct. 9, at 2 p.m. in the Stafford Centre, 10505 Cash Road, with a concert evoked by George Gershwin's most famous work,



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Photo by Susan Lynch

Hauntcert: Jordon Nickerson, Andrea Cope, Katherine Leskin



Rhapsody in Blue.

Internationally award-winning Israeli-American pianist Tali Morgulis joins FBSO for this special event.

She appears as soloist with orchestras and chamber music groups across the globe, and can often be found in Houston as a regular performer with Musiq.

Ms. Morgulis began her musical studies at the age of four, and she holds her doctorate degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

Dominique Røyem, FBSO's music director, chose the selections on Rhapsody in Blue specifically to evoke the elegant jazz so

characteristic of the title composition's time period.

From W. C. Handy's St. Louis Blues...to Leroy Anderson's Jazz Legato...moving into a Duke Ellington medley arranged by Calvin Custer...1927's Three Shades of Blue: Indigo...Serenade in Blue, the 1942 swing song made famous by Glenn Miller's Orchestra... Broadway's Highlights from West Side Story...the jazzy pop sounds of A Fifth of Beethoven and other selections on the jazz theme round out this enjoyable family-friendly performance.

Later in the month, give your Halloween costume a trial run when you join Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra for a spooky evening of fun at Hauncert on Sugar Land Town Square, Sat., October 29.

The concert begins at 7:30, when Conductor Dominique Røyem leads the costumed orchestra as they



perform Halloween favorites from popular music, the classics and even video games.

Included on the program are Michael Jackson's Thriller, In the Hall of the Mountain King, The Phantom of the Opera and the theme from Star Wars.

There will be a costume parade during intermission, around 8 p.m. Bring the kids and the lawn chairs - the concert is free of charge.

More information on the concert and a full list of musical selections can be found at www.fbso.org. There are surprises in store, so be sure to check the website for more information as

the concert draws near.

Season Ticket Information

The four-concert series for FBSO's 2016-17 season is available for early subscribers until October 9 at a special price of \$112 - 160 (box seats), \$72 - 104 (orchestra seats) \$56 - 76 (mezzanine seats) and \$40 - 56 (balcony seats). There is a 10% discount for seniors 55 and over and military, with a 5% discount for all other adult packages.

Season ticket prices for middle and high school students (aged 13 - 18) are \$40. Children 2 and under are free when accompanied by an adult, but must have a ticket, and season tickets for children 3 - 12 are priced at \$20.

Tickets may be purchased online at fbso.org or by calling 281.276.9642.

Continued on page 33



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DID I JUST SEEN A GHOST?

As some of you may know, I have been airbrushing at a 1920's era movie theater in Historic Downtown Rosenberg Texas since August.

This movie theater was first opened in 1919 and named the Liberty Theater. In 1937, Mart Cole purchased the movie theater and renamed it the Cole Theater. It has many years of history and retains the same look today as it did when Mr. Cole purchased and renovated it in the late 1930s.

The local business owner who now owns the Cole Theater hired me to airbrush the front of the theater to appear as if it was being worked on and soon to open. While opening this historic landmark is not actually in the works, the artwork brightens up the façade either way.

This now brings me to the incident that occurred while I was airbrushing on August 5th.

It was about 2 o'clock and I was mid-way through the day and the sweltering heat was taking its toll.

I was painting my last wall and facing away from the theater's front door. I had placed my small ladder far enough into the covered space where I was working so the sun would not directly hit it, yet still outside of my work space. This resulted in the ladder being up against the front glass door.

Now, the front glass door, when opened, swings outwards. This is the only door you can use to get in and out of the theater since the rear door located at the back alley is locked and secure.

While painting, I heard the door slam shut. I immediately turned to look and the ladder was still placed right up against the



door. Additionally, there were no "persons of interest" in the immediate area who could have been identified as the perpetrators of the mysterious door-slam.

So this only left one other option, to look inside the glass door to see who might have been the culprit. There stood a man about five feet away from me, inside the theater and on the other side of the glass, walking the other direction with his head turned my way. He stopped, smiled and nodded his head as if to say "Hi, how are you?"

I nodded back and smiled as he continued walking into the abyss.

Now mind you, the theater has no electricity (unless you activate it from the breaker box), has been empty for a millennium, and is darker than Charles Manson's childhood. I wondered why this man, a middle-aged Mexican man, would simply walk into the back theater room with absolutely no lights on, not to return to the front area at all.

About an hour later, I was ready to clean up and load my supplies and materials into my truck.

Not wanting to lock the guy inside, I stepped in and yelled for him. Nobody answered, the place was quiet, desolate and now, mysterious. It immediately hit me: How in the world did anybody get into the place when the ladder never moved from blocking the front door and the back door is locked and secure? Who in their right mind would walk into a pitch

dark room and not return at all — and furthermore, disappear? So, I locked the door and went to see the building's owner to return the keys.

I told this short story to the owner, only for her eyes to widen. She said: "You did know that there are accounts of ghosts being seen in there, but not to the extent that you just experienced, right?"

I had absolutely no clue that ghosts have been seen in the theater in the past. I never would have guessed in a million years that I would ever witness one, if in fact this is the case.

I can only surmise that what I did witness was a middle aged Mexican ghost with a very cheerful disposition if somehow, however, that middle-aged Mexican man with a cheerful disposition was simply my own reflection in the glass, I would respectfully ask that you please disregard everything I've written up to this point.

Still, what I believe I experienced was a travel through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination.

— Paul Sanchez, President/Owner of Simply Artistic, Inc.

Send us your photos!

If you or your kids are dressing in costumes for Halloween, send us your photos for a chance for them to appear in the next edition of the magazine. Please no sexual or grisly photos.

Send your photos to:

mgriffin@fbherald.com

Also, add "Halloween Photos" to the subject line and please identify everyone in the photos.

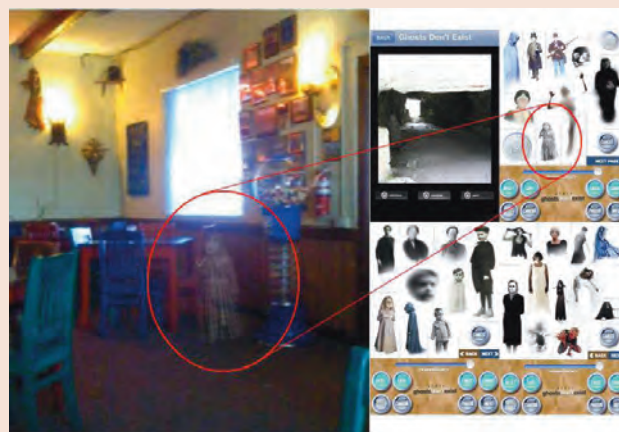


There was an app for that!

Did you know that **Larry's Mexican Restaurant** in Richmond was at the center of some ghost-sighting gossip? In 2010 a photo began circulating the web, primarily through email, saying a ghost was not only seen at the local restaurant but also caught on a camera phone.

As it turns out that "ghost" was a feature, a "stock spirit" if you will, in a phone app "Ghost Capture."

The image eventually made its way to Snopes.com where the rumors were put to rest. (<http://www.snopes.com/photos/supernatural/dinerghost.asp>)



Continued from page 31

HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS

Fulshear Scarecrow Festival at Cross Creek Ranch: Oct. 15

The 7th Annual Scarecrow Festival, which will benefit Texana and Arts Fulshear, is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission into the festival is free and open to the public but the all-day carnival tickets are \$10 per person. Considered West Houston's biggest collection of scarecrows, the festival will feature creative, full-size scarecrows, live music, a Carnival, food trucks, apple bobbing, face painting, pumpkin decorating and more.

For more visit www.crosscreektexas.com.

Haute Halloween: A Dueling Piano Experience: Oct. 28

7:30 p.m. - 09:30 p.m.

Held in Sugar Land Town Square this event kicks off the Halloween weekend by featuring Felix and Fingers Dueling Pianos who will entertain you with an interactive, all request, laugh out loud show for all ages. From Frank to Hank, Elton John to Lil' John, come ready to sing and dance as Felix and Fingers cover all your favorite requests! Jupiter will be serving beer and wine for \$5/each.

All Hallow's Day: Oct. 29

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Learn about 100 years of Halloween pasts with the George Ranch Historical Park's fun historic Halloween games and activities, historic candy trick and treating and an exciting scavenger

hunt around the Park. . Free with general admission.

City of Rosenberg BOO-berg Halloween Carnival: Oct. 29

The City of Rosenberg will again host its popular BOO-berg Halloween Carnival from 10 a.m. to noon at Seabourne Creek Nature Park. The free event is produced by the City's Parks and Recreation Department to give children ages 10 year old and under an opportunity to come out and enjoy the park while participating in fun and safe games and activities with prizes and giveaways. Children are welcome to come in costume and must be accompanied by an adult.

Ghosts & Grub: Oct. 29

7 p.m. - 10 p.m.

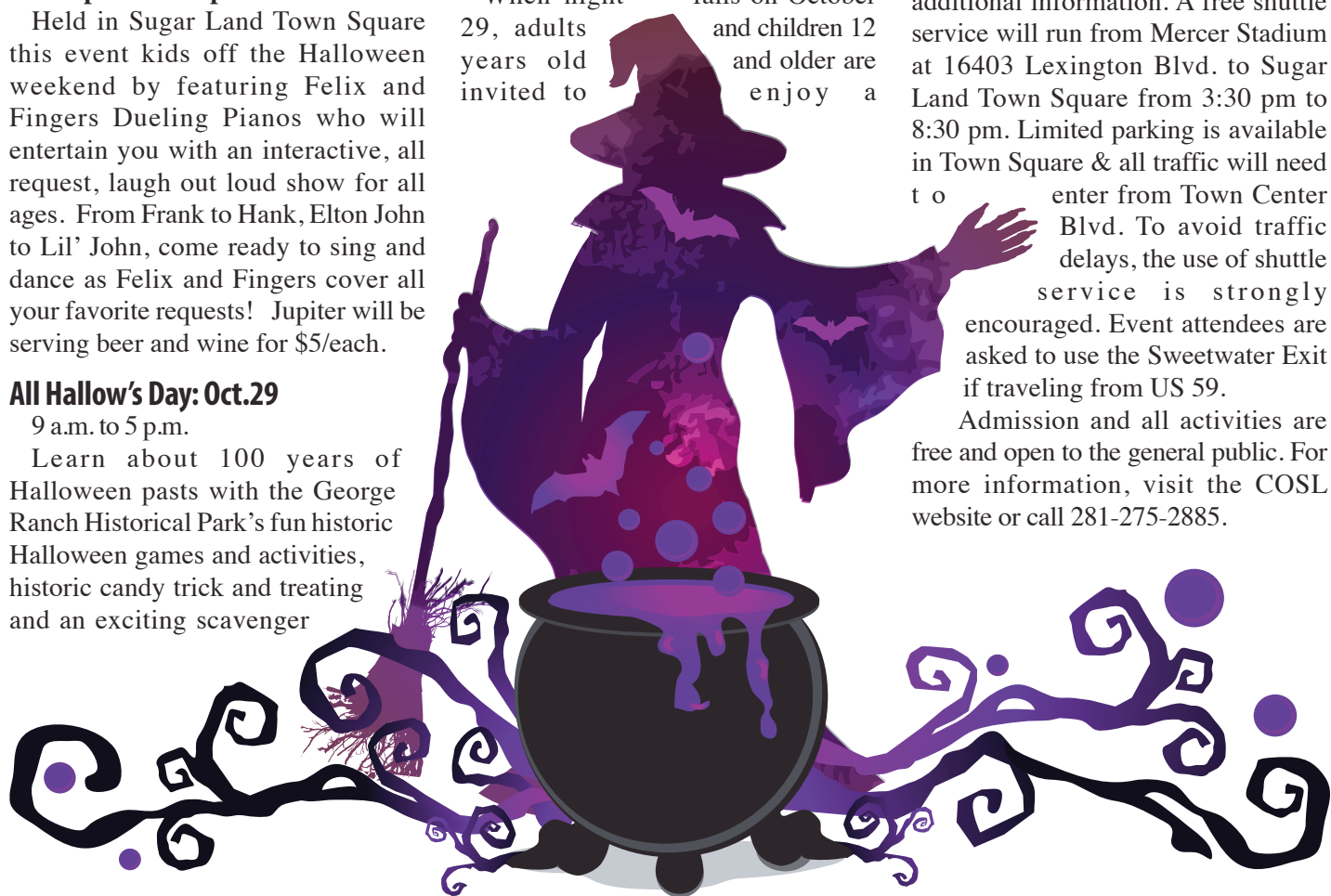
When night falls on October 29, adults and children 12 years old and older are invited to enjoy a

spooking-ly delightful dinner plus nighttime walking tour of the George Ranch Historical Park — complete with stories of ghostly encounters. Evening event: Advance reservations required. Reserve your spot by calling 281-343-0218 or emailing education@georgeranch.org. Cost is \$20 per person; recommended for ages 12+. The event will run from. and incorporates more than a mile of walking, so guests are encouraged to wear good walking shoes and bring flashlights.

City of Sugar Land's Halloween Town: Oct. 30

The fun and frights of Halloween Town returns! Come dressed in your most boo-tiful costume and enjoy the various games and activities planned for the evening. Wear your most creative costume and enter Halloween Town's costume contest! Pets, children and even groups are welcome to join in. Please click here for additional information. A free shuttle service will run from Mercer Stadium at 16403 Lexington Blvd. to Sugar Land Town Square from 3:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Limited parking is available in Town Square & all traffic will need to enter from Town Center Blvd. To avoid traffic delays, the use of shuttle service is strongly encouraged. Event attendees are asked to use the Sweetwater Exit if traveling from US 59.

Admission and all activities are free and open to the general public. For more information, visit the COSL website or call 281-275-2885.



Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics epitomizes partnership

By Marquita Griffin
mgriffin@fbherald.com

It is rare to hear of a handshake partnership, one that endures the changes of time but 38 years ago two orthodontists, Dr. Fred Garrett and Dr. Richard W. Boyd Jr., proved that when two like-minded businessmen work together, not only would they be successful but their community would benefit as well.

1978 was the year that birthed the partnership between Dr. Garrett, who has more than 50 years of experience in orthodontics, and Dr. Boyd, who has more than 38 years experience in orthodontics. In 1984, however, the doctors, both of whom are lifetime members of the American Association of Orthodontists and board certified by the American Board of Orthodontics, solidified their partnership by opening a practice in Sugar Land on Sweetwater Blvd.

In 2011 the duo expanded their business by opening a second practice in Rosenberg's Brazos Town Center.

"They basically started the whole partnership on a handshake," said Dee Duarte, the professional relations coordinator for Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics.

As part of its services, Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics ensures efficient diagnoses and treatment through in-house digital x-rays, state of the art

imaging software and iTero Digital scanning, which allows the capture of highly accurate digital impressions of the teeth and jaw and allows the doctors to simulate tooth movement. The practice also offers a variety of treatment options including Invisalign, Accelerated Treatment, as well as traditional braces, notably, without any headgear.

Dr. Boyd always says he would retire if he ever has to fit another headgear.

The value of community

Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics features a 15-member orthodontic team including the doctors, who rotate back and forth between the Rosenberg and Sugar Land locations.

"Essentially our patients are dealing with the same team members at both locations," said Duarte, stressing the communal bond between the practice and its patients.

"We provide a fun, friendly atmosphere in a professional setting. We want our patients to feel at ease with an open line of communication to discuss anything they feel is important about their smile. Orthodontics is a long-term commitment for each patient. We treat you like a member of our family and want to establish a relationship with all our patients."

One of the many ways the practice ensures that relationship is



Dr. Richard W. Boyd Jr. (left) and Dr. Fred Garrett not only started their successful business on a handshake, but together they found a way to support local education.

by offering free initial exams and screenings on children as early as age 7 to see if early interceptive treatment is need. If the child is not ready for treatment, the orthodontists continue to monitor those patients every six months until they are ready for treatment without any cost to the parents until treatment begins.

"We also offer affordable payment solutions," Duarte said. "We want everyone to enjoy the advantages of a beautiful and healthy smile."

That commitment to its patients is exactly why the Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics' story goes beyond the boundaries of a successful business narrative. Drs. Garrett and Boyd are not just about the model of supply and demand and providing top-notch care, they want to make it clear that they support the



Bowie Middle School is grateful for Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics support.

communities their patients call home.

A True Partnership

Five years ago, Dr. Garrett and Dr. Boyd decided another way to show their dedication to the communities they serve was to support education, so they launched a unique program called Partners in Education.

"In an effort to address the budget cuts to the school districts in 2011, Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics launched its Partners in Education program to become part of the solution," Duarte explained, adding that the program is a supplement to the doctors' other support efforts to the community and schools.

"I feel blessed to be an orthodontist and enjoy playing a part in my



Fred A. Garrett, DDS, MS | Richard W. Boyd, Jr., DDS, MS | www.LoneStarBraces.com

patient's life. I am also honored to be a part of our community," Dr. Boyd said. "Our Partners in Education program has allowed us to give back to our schools and show gratitude to our patients."

Through Partners in Education, Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics donates funds quarterly to the school the student attends.

"For every patient, who is a student, that starts treatment in our office, we donate \$100 directly to the school PTO/PTA the patient goes to," Duarte said.

In September Duarte reported that since the inception of the program over \$100,000 has been donated to the schools.

Some of the schools that have benefitted from this program include: George Ranch High School, Reading Junior High, Polly Ryon Middle School, Sartartia Middle School, Velasquez Elementary, Campbell Elementary, Dickenson Elementary, Travis High School, Sugar Land

Middle School, First Colony Middle School, Fort Settlement Middle School and Foster High School.

"We have the privilege of creating beautiful smiles and changing the lives of our young patients," Dr. Garrett said. "We feel a responsibility to support the schools in our community and join in the partnering of developing each of these students."

Follow Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Pinterest. For more about services or the practice itself, visit lonestarbraces.com.



Sartartia Middle School has been one of many schools that have received funds from Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics.



Saint Laurence representatives were excited about Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics' donation to education.

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