

November 2018

PECAN GROVE

monthly



Happy Thanksgiving



Kick off your holiday feast with
these recipes & party games

'They will hear the most
amazing voices they
have ever heard'

Pecan Grove's Lance Lassiter shares
why The Fort Bend Boys Choir
holiday musical is so magical



PLUS Lisa Davila
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shares why she supports
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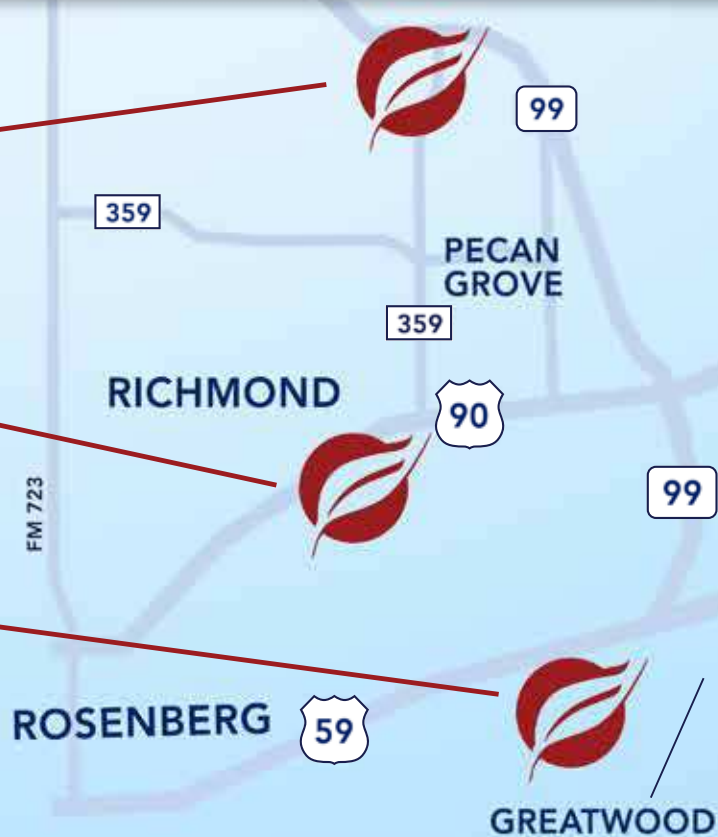
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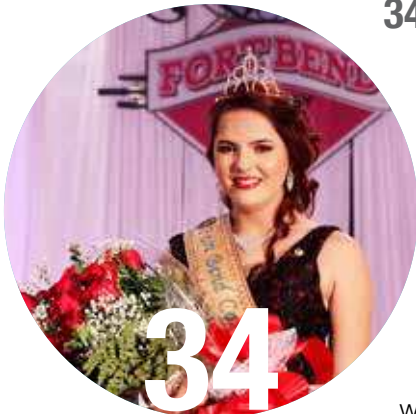


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PECAN GROVE

monthly™

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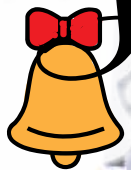
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.....Feature Story.....



Sounds of the Season



The Fort Bend Boy's Choir of Texas presents its 2018 Christmas Musicale

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com



When people talk about the sights and sounds of the holiday season, a specific image comes to mind for William “Bill” Adams, founder of the Fort Bend Boys’ Choir of Texas.

“I believe Christmas is best seen and celebrated through the eyes of our children,” he said. “What better way to begin that celebration than to see and hear our boys sing carols full of holiday beauty, whimsy and magic?”

And this exactly is why the members of the Fort Bend Boys Choir of Texas are steadfastly rehearsing for the choir’s Christmas Musicale, set for 7 p.m., Dec. 1 at the First United Methodist Church in Missouri City.

“The musical brings people together during this special time of year to enjoy the spirit of the season and beautiful music,” said Pecan Grove resident Lance Lassiter, who is a member of the Tour Choir.

For the past three years Lassiter, 12, has been a member of the Fort Bend Boys Choir and he said he’s thankful the choir gives him the platform to “sing and change people’s lives.”

“If [people] come [to the Christmas Musicale], they will hear the most amazing voices they have ever heard,” Lassiter said.

Around 100 boys, in four ensembles, will perform in this annual holiday event. Those in attendance will hear from the 6 and 7 year olds in the Music Magic choir, as well as the boys in the Training, Town and Tour treble choirs.

“The Christmas Musicale is my favorite performance because it is the perfect way to kick-off the holiday season with joy,” said Tiana Mortimer, the choir’s executive director. “It’s hard to feel down and out with the sounds of singing boys.”

REVISITING TIMES LONG GONE

“This concert always takes one back to their own childhoods, full of the sights and sounds we so vividly remember, now as adults,” said Adams. “Audiences are mentally taken back to a time gone past when they were a child.”

Some of the featured songs include: “Songs about Santa,” “Fruitcake” and “What’s in that Stocking?” performed by the Music Magic, choir; “Best Time of the Year” and “Chocolate in My Stocking,” performed by the Training choir; “Deck the Halls” and “Comfort and Joy,” performed by the Town choir; and “Sussex Carol” — a traditional English Carol — “The First Noel/Pachelbel’s



Lance Lassiter, the son of Clay and Lynn Lassiter of Pecan Grove, is a seventh grader at Bowie Middle School. “We are thankful that the Fort Bend Boys Choir has been a part of Lance’s life,” said Clay and Lynne. “Hard work, respect, acceptance and friendship are all part of what make this a truly unique organization.

“I have watched my son grow not only as a performer but also become a stronger and more resilient young man,” Clay said.

Canon,” “Nuttin’ for Christmas” and the gospel spiritual “Go Where I Send Thee,” performed by the Tour choir.

“And of course, all choirs will then take the stage and sing “Christmas is a Feeling,” a joint piece we have sung for over 22 years,” said Mortimer, adding that one year, that particular song was skipped.

“Mr. Adams got enough comments about it being missing that he added it back in and we have been doing it ever since,” she said with a laugh. “It’s a Fort Bend Boys Choir Holiday tradition.”

Tickets to the musical are available on the choir website or at the door.

Adult admission is \$15 and children 12 years old and younger are \$5. All proceeds from the Christmas Musicale will be used for program support, operational expenses and scholarships.

PLANTING SEEDS

Adams, who is known for not only leading the choir boys in their music but also encouraging them to connect with their community, said the Christmas Musicale goes beyond being a holiday event.

“We tell all our boys that they become ‘seed planters’ at our Christmas Musicale, when they are able, through music, to help people laugh or perhaps cry in a meaningful way,” Adams said.

“They love the thought of being able to help adults get in touch with their emotions and feel connected.”

And just like Lassiter, his parents Clay and Lynn Lassiter are anticipating the December

performance.

“We are looking forward to experiencing the joy of the season through the magic voices of the Fort Bend Boys Choir,” said Lynn. “It is a chance for the community to come together and celebrate the season.

“There will be laughter and maybe even some tears, but the voices of these boys will truly touch your heart.”

Adams guarantees audiences will be refreshed by this year’s performance.

“You just feel better about everything after attending one of our concerts,” he said. “At a time of year that is so hectic and frantic, what better way to relax and enjoy the sound of angelic choirboys singing songs of the season?”

“And of course, they are helping to make a difference in boys lives — one boy at a time.”

OPEN AUDITIONS FOR THE FORT BEND BOYS CHOIR

Considering there is a time limit on a young boy's voice, the Fort Bend Boys Choir is encouraging those interested in joining to audition Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. to noon, at First United Methodist Church Missouri City, 3900 Lexington Blvd., in Missouri City.

Special appointments are available if a boy

cannot attend the open audition date. Scholarships and carpooling assistance are also available.

Boys age 8 years old and older with unchanged voices can audition and previous singing experience is not necessary.

ADDITIONALLY ask about Music Magic, the choir's music enrichment class for six and seven year old boys, which starts March 2019.

Boys from all over the Fort Bend and Houston metropolitan area have the opportunity to learn more about music and singing as well as many of

life's important lessons like leadership, making friends and building self-confidence and self-esteem - all in a safe, proactive setting. Find out more by visiting www.fbbctx.org or calling the choir office at 281-240-3800 to schedule an audition time.

Follow the Fort Bend Boys Choir of Texas on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



The Town Choir in a past performance of the Christmas Musicale.



The Tour Choir singing "12 Pains of Christmas" at a prior Fort Bend Boys Choir of Texas Christmas Musicale.



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Give these Thanksgiving Traditions & Games a try



Thanksgiving Would You Rather

Need to get a fun conversation started at your Thanksgiving dinner? A game of Would You Rather will definitely get it started just right —just put a Thanksgiving twist on your questions.

If you don't know what questions to come up with — like Would you rather have to eat turkey for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week after Thanksgiving or have to wear a pilgrim costume to school for a week after Thanksgiving? — try some of the free question sheets at www.classroomfreebies.com.

Pin the Feather on the Turkey

This game — similar to Pin The Tail On The Donkey — will keep the kids entertained while dinner is cooking.

Make the turkey's body by cutting a circle out of sturdy brown construction paper, and then a smaller circle for his head. Get creative by gluing on googly eyes, a beak, and a top hat.

Make paper feathers in fall colors and have each child write their name on a feather. Attach tape to each feather and have the child close their eyes tightly and try to tape their feather onto the turkey.

Create a Family Cookbook

Hand out old family recipes to extended family this year by typing the recipes into a word processing program on the computer and print out copies to give out to the extended family.

Jazz it up by having the kids decorate the recipes with drawings of each food and scan them onto the document. Or you can get really fancy by developing a recipe photo book using a program like Shutterfly.

Choose one new recipe

One of the fun parts of Thanksgiving is all the unique food you may only eat once a year: turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, yams, pumpkin pie, etc.

In addition to these traditional foods, choose one new recipe each year to try out. If the recipe turns out good enough, add it to your repertoire and try something else next year.

Pass The Nut

Here's a fun family activity from www.improvementscatalog.com sure to set your festivities off.

You will need four bowls, enough sets of chopsticks for each participant to have their own set, two peas, two cranberries, two acorns, and two unshelled walnuts.

Place two of the bowls at one end of the room, each containing one pea, one cranberry, one acorn, and one walnut.

Place the other two empty bowls directly across from them at the other end of the room.

Divide all participants into two equal teams. Give each person a set of chopsticks. Have each team line up from the full bowl to the empty bowl.

When the signal is given, the person nearest the full bowl will pick up one of the items with their chopsticks, and will start to pass it down the line to the next person, also using chopsticks.

Once they are rid of that first item, they can pick up the next item. Nobody can use their fingers, and only small children are allowed to pick it up if it falls on the floor.

Older children and adults must run it back to the starting bowl

if it falls on the ground.

Once all four items are safely passed to the empty bowl at the other end of the room, that team wins.

Construct a Family Tablecloth

Use a plain white tablecloth and fabric markers to personalize your Thanksgiving table before you lay out the turkey and stuffing.

Have each person write their signature, the date, and what they are thankful for on the cloth before the meal begins.

Use the same tablecloth each year and enjoy reading the old memories before adding new ones.

Thankful Boxes

This is a cool tradition for kids to do year after year. The first year, have your kids decorate a box, such as a baby wipes box.

Then give them pieces of paper in one color and ask them to write down a thing they're grateful for. Store the boxes when Thanksgiving's over and bring them back out for the next year's Thanksgiving.

This time, give them paper in a different color. After a few years, their boxes will be filled with slips of thankfulness in various colors. Everyone can look through their boxes and reminisce.

Pilgrim's Progress

Here is another game for the kids from www.apinchofjoy.com that will surely be tons of fun.

One player is the Pilgrim. A second player is The Ship coming to the New World.

The ship is blindfolded. After the blindfold is in place, the other players sit, stand or lie between the ship and the Pilgrim.

The Pilgrim calls out directions to the ship so that the player can avoid the obstacles created by the other players in its way and make it safely to the New World.

Once in the New World, the Ship becomes the Pilgrim and another Ship sets sail for the New World.

Tips and Variations: For a larger group of older children, have two Pilgrims. Each one guides a different ship. The ship must listen only to its guiding Pilgrim. Start the second ship when the first is halfway to the finish.

Volunteer

Many people use Thanksgiving as an opportunity to help the less fortunate. Some people traditionally volunteer to serve food at homeless shelters on Thanksgiving Day and others donate to shelters or participate in canned food drives.

Start an annual gratitude jar

This tradition involves focusing all year on what you're grateful for. Set a large jar or other container (decorated as you see fit) in a visible place in your home.

Throughout the year, encourage your family members to write down the things they're thankful for on strips of paper and add them to the jar.

After dinner on Thanksgiving, open the jar and read the slips of paper, reminiscing about everything your family was blessed with that year.

Thankful Pumpkins

Paint a couple of faux pumpkins white and write on it with a black sharpie the things that you're thankful for.

Ask everyone to add theirs and then decorate your dinner table with these pumpkins. Be sure to take pictures so you'll always remember what was written.

For your guests, give them small pumpkins of their own and ask them to do the same thing.

Book of Thanks

Get a book with blank pages and call it the "Book of Thanks" (or whatever name you want to give to it.) Every year just before dinner, take a group picture of everyone and save a spot for it in the book.

On the pages, have every guest write what they're thankful for that year. Print out the picture and put it in the middle of the pages.

The next year, do the same thing and so on, so you can look back on it and see who got together which year and what everyone was thankful for.

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- Play "Turkey, Turkey, Squash" instead of "Duck, Duck, Goose."
- Play "Turkey Says" instead of Simon Says.
- Thanksgiving Alphabet Game. Much like the alphabet car game played during a long road trip, this game is the same except for each letter of the alphabet, you have to name something you're grateful for. Example: A, "I am thankful for the airplane that brought my grandparents here to visit."
- Turkey egg hunt: While the grown-ups are enjoying their coffee and dessert, send the kids out to the backyard to find the plastic eggs you hid just before dinner. Fill the plastic eggs with a piece or two of candy for a sweet treat. It can be played indoors as well.

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Deep-Fried Turkey

Prep: 30m | Cook: 45m | Ready In: 1h 30m

INGREDIENTS

- 3 gallons peanut oil for frying, or as needed
- 1 (12 pound) whole turkey, neck and giblets removed
- 1/4 cup Creole seasoning
- 1 white onion

DIRECTIONS

In a large stockpot or turkey fryer, heat oil to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Be sure to leave room for the turkey, or the oil will spill over. Layer a large platter with food-safe paper bags.

Rinse turkey, and thoroughly pat dry with paper towels. Rub Creole seasoning over turkey inside and out. Make sure the hole at the neck is open at least 2 inches so the oil can flow freely through the bird.

Place the whole onion and turkey in drain basket. The turkey should be placed in basket neck end first. Slowly lower basket into hot oil to completely cover turkey. Maintain the temperature of the oil at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C), and cook turkey for 3 1/2 minutes per pound, about 45 minutes.

Carefully remove basket from oil, and drain turkey. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh; the internal temperature must be 180 degrees F (80 degrees C). Finish draining turkey on the prepared platter.



Bourbon Mustard Orange Glazed Ham

By: *The Chunky Chef* (www.thechunkychef.com)

Prep: 15m | Cook: 2h 30m | Ready In: 2h 45m

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cups orange marmalade
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup whole-grain Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup bourbon
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice fresh, if possible
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 bone-in half ham (about 6-10 lbs)

DIRECTIONS

Move oven rack to lower third portion of the oven and preheat to 325 degrees F. Line bottom of a roasting pan with aluminum foil for easy cleanup and set aside.

Add orange marmalade, maple syrup, Dijon mustard, bourbon, lemon juice, ground ginger and salt and pepper to a mixing bowl and whisk to combine well. Set aside.

Remove ham from package and pat dry if too wet.

Place ham on roasting rack, flat side down, so the fatty side is facing up.

Gently score the ham in a criss-cross pattern, and brush all over with 1/2 cup of the prepared glaze.

Cover ham loosely with aluminum foil to prevent drying out or burning.

Bake for about 2 - 2 1/2 hours, until instant thermometer inserted into the middle of the ham registers 125-130 degrees F.

Remove roasting pan from the oven and peel back or remove foil from the top and sides of the ham.

Increase oven temperature to 425 degrees F.

Brush 6 Tbsp of glaze over the ham and bake for 20 minutes, brushing ham with additional 6 Tbsp of glaze every 6-7 minutes. You'll be brushing the ham with glaze approximately 3 times during this step.

Be sure to watch that the glaze doesn't burn, but instead turns a rich, deep golden color.

Remove roasting pan from oven and place ham on a large cutting board.

Tent loosely with foil and let ham rest for 20 minutes before slicing.

TO MAKE MUSTARD SAUCE FOR SERVING

Mix 1/2 cup whole grain Dijon mustard with 1/4 cup glaze.



Garlic Prime Rib

Prep: 10m | Cook: 1h 30m | Ready In: 1h 40m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (10 pound) prime rib roast
- 10 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme

Directions

Place the roast in a roasting pan with the fatty side up. In a small bowl, mix together the garlic, olive oil, salt, pepper and thyme. Spread the mixture over the fatty layer of the roast, and let the roast sit out until it is at room temperature, no longer than 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F (260 degrees C).

Bake the roast for 20 minutes in the preheated oven, then reduce the temperature to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C), and continue roasting for an additional 60 to 75 minutes. The internal temperature of the roast should be at 135 degrees F (57 degrees C) for medium rare.

Allow the roast to rest for 10 or 15 minutes before carving so the meat can retain its juices.



Cornish Hen with Homemade Classic Stuffing

Prep: 30m | Cook: 1h | Ready In: 1h 30m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Cornish game hen, thawed and giblets removed
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme (or herb of choice)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Olive oil, for brushing
- Homemade Classic Stuffing
- 4 slices white bread, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup butter, unsalted
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

For the stuffing: In a large skillet, melt the butter. Once hot, cook the onion and celery until soft, about 5-8 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl then stir in the bread cubes and salt. Mix thoroughly.

Preheat oven to 400F. Have a roasting pan ready.

In a small bowl, mix together thyme, salt, and pepper.

Fill the hen with stuffing. If there is stuffing leftover, add it to the bottom of the pan. If there is no stuffing leftover, add a roasting rack to the pan.

Tie the hen's legs together with oven-safe twine (optional but keeps the legs in place) then place on top of the stuffing or roasting rack.

Brush the hen with olive oil then rub the thyme mixture all over, getting underneath the wings, legs, and skin whenever possible.

Bake for 50-60 minutes or until juices run clear when thickest part of chicken is pierced and internal temperature reaches 180°F



Sausage, Apple and Cranberry Stuffing

Prep: 15m | Cook: 25m | Ready In: 1h 40m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups cubed whole wheat bread
- 3 3/4 cups cubed white bread
- 1 pound ground turkey sausage
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup chopped celery
- 2 1/2 teaspoons dried sage
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 Golden Delicious apple, cored and chopped
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup minced fresh parsley
- 1 cooked turkey liver, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup turkey stock
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degree F (175 degree C). Spread the white and whole wheat bread cubes in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes in the preheated oven, or until evenly toasted. Transfer toasted bread cubes to a large bowl.

In a large skillet, cook the sausage and onions over medium heat, stirring and breaking up the lumps until evenly browned. Add the celery, sage, rosemary, and thyme; cook, stirring, for 2 minutes to blend flavors.

Pour sausage mixture over bread in bowl. Mix in chopped apple, dried cranberries, parsley, and liver. Drizzle with turkey stock and melted butter, and mix lightly. Allow stuffing to cool completely before loosely stuffing a turkey.



Buttery Garlic Green Beans

Prep: 10m | Cook: 10m | Ready In: 20m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed and snapped in half
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 pinches lemon pepper
- salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

Place green beans into a large skillet and cover with water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until beans start to soften, about 5 minutes. Drain water. Add butter to green beans; cook and stir until butter is melted, 2 to 3 minutes.

Cook and stir garlic with green beans until garlic is tender and fragrant, 3 to 4 minutes. Season with lemon pepper and salt.

Pineapple Cheese Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (15 ounce) cans pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 cup white sugar
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 25 buttery round crackers, crumbled
- 1/2 cup melted butter

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Spread pineapple in the bottom of a 2 quart casserole dish.

In a small bowl, stir together the sugar, flour and cheese. Add to casserole dish.

Sprinkle crackers over the top of pineapple and cheese mixture. Pour melted butter over the top and bake for 30 minutes.

Reaping Rosettes

Sharon Tusa takes home 6 top prizes in 5 divisions

Story & Photo by **SCOTT REESE WILLEY** | swilley@fbherald.com

Sharon Tusa of Richmond looks forward to entering her crafts and needlework projects in the adults creative arts competition of the Fort Bend County Fair and Rodeo each year.

Each year she hopes to bring home at least one rosette — a coveted ribbon among competitors.

In October, she took home six in five very competitive divisions.

“I’m very humbled,” she said. “You hope to win one rosette, but to win six in one year is just amazing. It was unexpected.”

Sharon, who has lived in Fort Bend County since 1972, has entered projects in the county fair for 12 years.

Over those years, she’s won as many as three rosettes in a single year, she said.

Organizers say they have never heard of any single competitor winning six rosettes in one year.

Sharon earned rosettes for two quilts, an antique souvenir pitcher that is engraved with a 1904 date and which belonged to her grandmother, a Christmas tree skirt, a cross stitch wall hanging, and a seasonal wall hanging.

Some of the stitching projects took upward of a 10 months to a year, she said.

Sharon said the competition can get spirited at times.

“Especially in the quilting division,” she says. “Feelings can get hurt.”

But generally the competitors know each other and the competition is amicable.

“You win one year and they win the next,” she says. “That’s how it goes. We’re all pretty friendly with each other.”

But the same people competing each year is one of the thing

Sharon would like to see change.

“We need some new faces,” she says. “We don’t get enough participation — not enough people participating each year. It would be nice to see more people come out and enter their projects. It would make it much more fun to compete.”

Debbie Zwahr, who oversees the competition, said she, too, would like to attract more adults to the competition. She said 89 competitors entered projects last year and 115 entered this year.

“But I know we have many more than 115 people in Fort Bend County who have the skills to enter projects,” she said.

She encourages adults to visit Building D at the fairgrounds and see the projects for themselves.

“It might give them an idea for a project,” she said.

For more information, contact Zwahr at debzwahr@aol.com



Sharon Tusa of Richmond shows off a quilt that won her a coveted rosette ribbon at the Fort Bend County Fair. Sharon ended up winning six of the highly-prized rosettes.

Pecan Grove's O'Toole provides passion for serving others to Abigail's Place board

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and Holocaust survivor, stated “the opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.”

Action, he said, was the only remedy to indifference.

Several years ago, psychotherapist Lisa Davila O’Toole decided to take action by joining the board of Abigail’s Place, an organization committed to supporting displaced single mothers in Fort Bend County by providing emergency shelter and housing assistance.

“I knew there was this great need, and as a former single mother, I wanted to do something to help with their mission to serve others,” said O’Toole said who has lived in Pecan Grove for 18 years.

She has been practicing psychotherapy for over 20 years and specializes in trauma, anxiety and depression.

Her deep understanding of how traumatic events can impact a person’s life compelled her to become a board member of Abigail’s Place, which helps provide a safe haven for mothers and children in crisis, said Shareen Sampson, founder of Abigail’s Place.

“The security and safe feeling this housing can offer during a crisis can be so instrumental in the healing process, and vital to giving the women and children a place to recover and continuing

on to lead happy and healthy lives,” she said.

Abigail’s Place is funded by private donations only, and many in the community have provided generous support to their mission, Sampson said.

However, the nonprofit faces many challenges.

“Housing is the most expensive thing we can assist with, and we are actively seeking more donors to help us help our clients who are in desperate need,” O’Toole said.

“We tell people to go to our website at abigailspplace.org to see what we do and how they can help us help displaced single mother families by becoming a sponsor.”



Lisa Davila O’Toole



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Child Advocates of Fort Bend Kicks Off 2018 Christmas Home Tour

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is gearing up for its 27th annual Christmas Home Tour on December 7 and 8.

“When our offices reopened last year after Harvey, we considered canceling the tour,” said Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford. “We realized, however, that the tour was more important than ever.”

Child Advocates staff and volunteers quickly realized evacuation from the home and relocating away from family and friends can disturb family and social networks, and for child victims of abuse — some of whom had already been removed from their homes — an event like Harvey could make symptoms worse.

For some, a natural disaster could spark depression, extreme stress, anxiety, PTSD and a host of other problems.

“The number of children and families served by our Children’s Advocacy Center increased 25 percent in 2017 alone and has increased 58 percent in the last five years,” said Mefford. “As of August 31, we’ve conducted more forensic interviews for children who have made outcries of abuse than in all of 2017. As the demand for services grows, we struggle to have enough staff, resources and space to help all of the children who are victims of abuse, however, we are committed to doing everything in our power to never turn away a child who is in need of our services.

“By sponsoring or participating in the Home Tour, you can help us ensure that all child victims of abuse get the therapy and healing services they desperately need,” she added.

The tour is one of the agency’s largest fundraisers. 94 percent of the money raised by the tour goes toward programs and services.



From left, are Home Tour committee members Colleen Fox, Alexis Jackson and Kelly Vaughan.

ABOUT THE TOUR

The Christmas Home Tour features beautiful private homes in Fort Bend County decorated for Christmas.

One ticket allows entry to all homes during tour hours. Sponsorships, which are critical to the success of the Tour, are now available.

Sponsorship Opportunities range from \$100 to \$15,000. To become a sponsor or to volunteer or for more information visit <https://www.cafb.org/events/home-tour> or contact Lisa Moore at 281-344-5108 or lmoore@cafb.org.

6 years and waiting

This mom uses rolling billboard in search for kidney

Story & Photo by **AVERIL GLEASON** | agleason@fbherald.com

“I NEED A KIDNEY. I WANT TO LIVE. 713-569-2472”

These are the words plastered on the back of Toni Ordín’s gray Dodge Journey.

Toni, 61, was diagnosed with Polycystic kidney disease six years ago.

For the last six years, she’s been waiting, hoping and praying for a kidney match. One day, Toni decided to take matters into her own hands.

“I was watching the news about a month ago when I saw a story about a man who stood on the side of a busy highway three days a week with a cardboard sign that said he needed a kidney,” she explained.

“So, I went to Hero Signs in Rosenberg and got a similar sign with my information to plaster on the back of my car.

“But when I went to pay, the owner told me it was free of charge.”

Toni said she couldn’t believe how kind the Hero Signs workers were to her in her time of need.

Polycystic kidney disease is hereditary. Toni said it’s considered a rogue disease.

“Cysts just keep growing on my kidney and the only way to stop it is to go to dialysis or get a new kidney,” she revealed.

“So, if you don’t get a kidney, you’re on dialysis five hours a day,

three times a week, with two needles stuck up your arm, for the rest of your life.”

Toni has been on dialysis for six years. Dialysis is a treatment that takes over ones kidney functions if those organs stop doing their job.

“I can never leave town,” Toni said. “I can never take a vacation. This is a life sentence. At least until I can get a new kidney.”

Toni said that each year, the transplant waiting list gets longer and longer and the wait to get a kidney does too.

“I want to see my kids grow up,” she stressed.

“I want my grandchildren to have a grandmother.”

For more information or to help Toni, call her at 713-569-2472.



Toni Ordín

Annual "Deck The Halls" Concert will add joyous notes to the holiday season

"Deck the Halls" is a cherished holiday tradition for many Fort Bend families.

This year's celebration by the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra and Chorus is Sunday afternoon, Dec. 2, at 2 p.m. in the Stafford Centre.

Continuing FBSO's year-long theme of family and home, the 2018 family-friendly concert is focused on "Home for the Holidays."

Each year, FBSO Music Director Dominique Røyem selects a program filled with both familiar carols and new holiday-themed music.

This year's holiday standards include O Holy Night, Variations on Jingle Bells, Sleigh Ride and We Wish You a Merry Christmas. Leroy Anderson's A Christmas Festival brings new life to carols such as God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Good King Wenceslas, Silent Night and others.

New to this year's program are three selections by Gary Fry - Christmas Morning, an original song for children and chamber orchestra, about the excitement of discovering gifts (and a red-coated visitor) on Christmas morning. Next are Believe and The Song in Your Heart.

From the silver screen comes John Williams' Somewhere in My Memory from "Home Alone". Christmas on Broadway is a sparkling medley of holiday tunes, including It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas, My Favorite Things, We Need a Little Christmas and four other selections from Broadway musicals. And finally, there is the haunting Spanish melody, A la Nanita Nata, which is often sung as a carol during the holiday season as a lullaby to the baby Jesus.

Special guest artists for "Deck the Halls" are the talented students from the Katy Youth Orchestra and the Katy Youth Chorus. Both full ensembles will join FBSO and FBSOC on stage for the concert. The junior Katy Youth Symphony will perform a pre-show concert, and the junior Katy Youth Chorus (Prima Voce) will entertain the audience during intermission.

Prior to the performance and at intermission, patrons will enjoy shopping at the FBSO Holiday Marketplace. Each year, FBSO members create a variety of handmade items for your gift-giving needs. Selections range from jewelry to tree ornaments to wearable items and more. All proceeds benefit FBSO.

Single tickets begin at \$15 for adults. Children 12 and under are \$5 each, and teens are \$10 per ticket. Discounts are available for college students, seniors 55 and over, military personnel, and groups of 10 or more.

More information about special season ticket pricing and performances visit www.fbsoc.org or call 281-276-9642.



FROM LEFT: David Flores and Stacey Tharalson. Photo courtesy Susan Lynch

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The Pecan Harvest Festival returns

by **AVERIL GLEASON** | agleason@fbherald.com

The Texas AgriLife Extension Office is ready to crack, shell and weigh pecans from all over Fort Bend County, because on Nov. 18, the second annual Pecan Harvest Festival will be held from noon to 8 p.m. at Decker Park, 500 Preston St. in Richmond.

Pecans entered in the show must be from this year's crop and grown within the county.

Growers must enter 50 nuts of a single variety. The finest nuts should be carefully selected in preparing an entry, according to Extension Agent Boone Holladay.

Nuts should be uniform in shape, size and general appearance and entries with nuts that have been cut, sanded, polished or otherwise altered will be disqualified.

Entries must be submitted by 3 p.m. on Nov. 14 at the Fort Bend County Extension Office, 1402 Band Road in Rosenberg.

This year's pecan festival will feature live music at the Gazebo in Wessendorff Park, a beer garden, a car and bike show, kids' activities, a hay ride, vendor booths, a bake-off contest, food trucks and AgriLife education.

Last year, more than 5,000 people attended the festival.

Attendees will find 40-plus varieties of award winning pecans, submitted by many of the established pecan growers of Fort Bend County.

The pecan education portion of the festival is supported by a partnership with the Texas Pecan Growers Association and Fort Bend County Farm Bureau, cooperatively investing in agricultural education.

AgriLife will be providing educational workshops about pecans, locally and regionally, at Decker Park near historical downtown Richmond.

Decker Park houses several historical homes where attendees can also find activities such as a pecan bake-off and children's activities. The event is free and open to the public.

For Pecan Harvest Festival information, contact AgriLife Administrative Assistant Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034 or visit the Fort Bend County Extension Office, located at 1402 Band Road in Rosenberg.

For more information, contacts, applications, and entry forms, visit www.pecan-harvest-festival-tx.com.



Melanie Belland and Jewel Schexander of Richmond had a blast the Pecan Harvest Festival at Wessendorff Park last year.



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Fort Bend History Day: Get a peek into 19th-Century Living

In conjunction with the Fort Bend County Museum, Fort Bend County Libraries will host "Fort Bend History Day" from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Nov. 10, at George Memorial Library, 1001 Golfview in Richmond.

Staff from the George Ranch Historical Park will be in costume as they present this portal to the past, providing glimpses of the lifestyles experienced in an earlier period of Fort Bend County. Demonstrations showing what life was like in Fort Bend County from 1827 to the 1940s will take place in the Bohachevsky Gallery and the fountain plaza of the library.

Children will get to visit a "classroom" from a bygone era and play games that were popular in the 19th century. Visitors will have an opportunity to observe spinning and weaving demonstrations, candle dipping, butter making, and blacksmithing. Visit the "Print Shop" to discover how to print a land grant or create a thaumatrope.

Families with children of all ages will find something for everyone in this interactive experience, sponsored by the Friends of the George Memorial Library.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call the library system's Communications Office at 281-633-4734.

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First

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING

The University Branch Library will host a “Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Series” 5:30-8:30 pm. from Nov. 1-Dec. 3. This 9-part series will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the final certification session on Monday, December 3. Participants should plan to attend all nine sessions. CERT is organized by the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management. It is designed to prepare individuals to help themselves, their families, and their neighbors in the event of anticipated disruptions and potential hazards before and after a disaster. In this series, learn how to prepare for and respond to life-threatening events in the community. The workshop is presented by CERT Coordinator Kaila Williams and a team of experts from the community. Registration required. Call 281-633-5100 for more information.

Second

FREE FITNESS

Visit Sugar Land Town Square every Friday in November for free fitness in the plaza with Zumba from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and CIDA Fitness from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Third

FARMERS MARKET BY THE LAKE

On the first and third Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Farmers Market By The Lake will be held at 2700 Lake Olympia Pkwy in Missouri City. 40 vendors, food trucks, kids lemonade stand and more will be featured.

Eighth

AUDIOBOOKS FOR BOOK LOVERS & WRITERS

Get an insider’s look into how books go from the traditional hardback form to being narrated for an audiobook version at 6:30 p.m. in meeting room 1 at the University Branch Library. Professional voice actor and audiobook narrator Charles Olsen will talk about the advantages of audiobooks, and how writers can pursue having their books converted to audio form. Participants will have an opportunity to win a free audiobook.



Ninth

TAKE A BITE OUT OF FRIDAY NIGHTS

Rolling restaurants will be serving up everything from burgers to Brazilian food from 6-9:30 pm at The Club at Riverstone, 18353 University Boulevard. Subsequent events will be held Dec. 14. A DJ and a bounce house for the kids will be featured. Food trucks rotate monthly and are subject to change. Note: Not all food trucks accept credit cards.

Tenth

THE HISTORY OF CONVICT LEASING IN TEXAS

From 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Room 2C of the George Memorial Library, Houston Community College history professor, Dr. Theresa Jach, will talk about the history of convict leasing in Texas and in other southern states between 1867 and 1912. She will also talk about the shift to state-owned prison farms and the Texas prison-farm system, with particular focus on Fort Bend County. Dr. Jach is the author of *Incarcerated Women* (2017) and *Huntsville Penitentiary* (2013), and she has also written articles on the history of the Texas prison system.

AUTUMN AT HARVEST GREEN

Visit the free fall festival at the community’s Farmhouse, 3400 Harvest Corner Drive, featuring music, adorable farm animals, food trucks, a pie-eating contest, bouncy houses, a balloon artist, face painters, a farmers market, model home tours and harvest-themed activities.

MOVIE UNDER THE MOON

First Colony Church of Christ will present *Movie Under the Moon* at Sugar Land Town Square Plaza from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Bring your family, friends and lawn chairs to the Plaza to enjoy a free showing of “The Star.”

Fourteenth

‘FIX IT & FORGET IT’

The University Branch Library’s Culinary Book Club will meet at 1:30 p.m. in meeting room 2 and this month’s theme is “Fix It & Forget It.” Cooking enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels – from beginners to advanced – are invited to join. Those attending are welcome to bring their own cookbooks and recipes, or they may browse the library’s collection of cookbooks. Share tips, get ideas, and enjoy the camaraderie of other individuals who have an interest in cooking and good cuisine. The club meets on the third Wednesday of every month and different cooking genres are explored each time.

GET CREATIVE AND LEARN ORIGAMI

Learn how to make an elegant decoration or gift from a simple piece of paper from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Nov. 7 in room 2C at the George Memorial Library. Staff will demonstrate how to create a gift box and a crane by simply folding and twisting paper into whimsical shapes.

BOLLYWOOD DANCE LESSON

The University Branch Library will teach guests basic dance steps to popular Bollywood songs at 3 p.m. Nov. 10 in Meeting Room 1. This program is intended for adults and young adults in grades 9 through 12.

EXPRESS YOURSELF AT OPEN MIC-NIGHT

Want to showcase your talents? The George Memorial Library is hosting its Open Mic-Night from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Nov. 14 in the meeting room. Open-Mic Night is a casual event for amateur performers to take the stage and express themselves. Step into the limelight to share original poetry, music, comedy, or one-act plays, or to showcase any other unique talents. Performances are limited to five minutes or less, and they must not contain any profanity or other insensitive topics. This event is for adults and teens aged 14 and above. Only performers are required to register. Call 281-633-4734.

JOIN THE HEAVY INKS GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB

Readers of all ages who enjoy illustrated novels, manga, webcomics, and comic books are invited to join this book club — specifically for graphic-novel enthusiasts — at the George Memorial Library. This month, readers will talk about Tokyo Ghoul, Volumes 1 and 2, by Sui Ishida at 11 a.m. Nov. 17 in room 2B.

CREATIVE CONNECTION: ORDER OF MAGIZOOLOGY

From 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Nov. 19, students in grades 4 through 8 who visit the University Branch Library can test their knowledge of magical creatures from “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” and the world of Harry Potter.

FAMILY LEGO DAY

Families with children of all ages can get creative with LEGO building blocks from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Nov. 20 in meeting room 1 at the University Branch Library. Different-sized LEGO pieces will be provided for varying ages in attendance.

HOLIDAYS IN THE PLAZA FT. HOUSTON SHOW CHOIR

From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Dec. 1 at Sugar Land Town Square, the Houston Show Choir will take the stage to sing favorite holiday tunes. HSC is an auditioned adult show choir committed to producing entertaining musical selections in a variety of genres.

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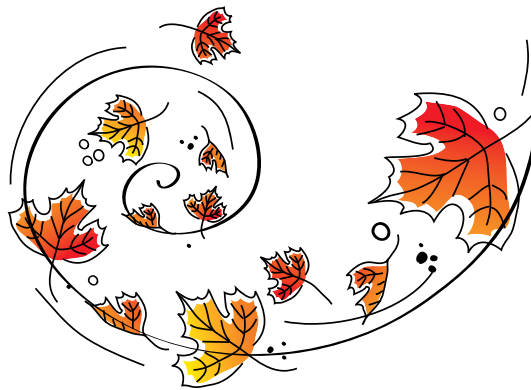


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Seventeenth

MARRIAGE MATTERS

Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension of Fort Bend County, Family and Community Health, will be offering a Marriage and Relationship series (Marriage Matters) designed for those preparing for marriage from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the University Branch Library. Those who are engaged, seriously dating couples, and married couples are encouraged to attend. RSVP by Nov. 9. Call 281-342-3034 for more information.

BEGINNING AFRICAN-AMERICAN GENEALOGY

Researching African-American family histories may present special challenges for the genealogical researcher so the George Memorial Library will host "Family-History Research: Beginning African-American Genealogy" at 10 a.m. in the computer lab. Daniel Sample, manager of the Genealogy and Local History department, will discuss many of the resources that are available to family-history researchers, with special focus on tools to help individuals who are researching African-American family histories. Get tips on how to extend family-history research into the years before the American Civil War took place. Reservations required.

THE CHEROKEE INDIANS OF TEXAS

Dr. Nicholas Cox, a professor of Texas and U.S. History at Houston Community College, will provide a brief overview of Native American cultures in Texas, with particular focus on the Cherokee experience at the George Memorial Library at 1:30 p.m. in room 2A.

STORY SPINNERS WRITING CLUB

For National Novel-Writing Month in November, the Story Spinners Writing Club at the George Memorial Library will meet from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in room 2C to assist aspiring novelists who want to participate in this novel-writing initiative by connecting with fellow writers, talking out ideas, and receiving feedback. Recommended for writers of all genres and experience levels aged 14 and up, this monthly group normally meets on the third Thursday of every month.

Twenty ninth

FREE PHOTOS WITH SANTA

Enjoy a free holiday photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus in the lobby of 16190 City Walk in Sugar Land. Since it is the season of giving, we will be collecting new and unwrapped stuffed animals for the Fort Bend Rainbow Room's Christmas Project. All donations will go to children and adults referred by caseworkers from Texas Department of Family & Protective services. Also, drop your letter to Santa in his mailbox and get a return letter in the mail for a donation of \$5. The last photo will be taken at 5 pm. Please arrive before then to secure your spot in line. Chances for more photos will take place Dec. 2, Dec. 9 and Dec. 16.

"COOKIN'THE BOOKS" BOOK CLUB

This George Memorial Library monthly book club is for people who enjoy cooking and would like to expand their culinary experience by sharing their interest with other food lovers. The theme for November's meeting — set for 7 p.m. in room 2C— is "Festive Feasts & Holiday-Worthy Treats." Members are invited to select a cookbook from a display at the library, try out a recipe or two, and report back on whether it was liked or disliked. Samples of the dish may be brought to the meeting for others to try. Cooking enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels — from beginners to advanced — are invited to join. Meets on the fourth Thursday of every month and different cooking genres are explored each month.



December First

MIRACLE ON MORTON STREET

The Historic Richmond Association's 16th Annual Miracle on Morton Street will feature family-friendly activities from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Live entertainment, ranging from schools to local artists, will be participating at the street celebration. Unique vendors will be available and Morton Street will be lined with a market area that will include many types of crafts, art and other unique gifts. Plus food trucks will be included in this year's event. For more information visit Facebook at @MiracleonMortonStreet.

It's Cool to Care works to end bullying against those who are different

It's Cool to Care, presented by Hope For Three, is a program intending to bring bullying to a halt through the education and empowerment of students and educators.

Having already been presented to more than 14,000 students and educators throughout the Greater Houston area, ICTC educates through its key concepts of patience, empathy and anti-bullying.

The 45-minute presentation raises autism awareness and educates and empowers students to volunteer and develop friendships with their differently-able classmates.

The typical demonstration to K-12 graders uses age-appropriate handouts to illustrate and define what autism is, and interactive exercises and videos depict the daily struggles and experiences of those living with autism.

If a school is interested in creating a more empathetic environment that aims to decrease bullying, it can contact Hope For Three to schedule an It's Cool to Care presentation by calling at 281-245-0640 or email contact@hopeforthree.org



Dulles Middle School PALs — Peer Assistance Leadership Students — class of 2017-2018. Each school year, Jessica Knox, PALs teacher, in partnership with Hope For Three, raises autism awareness and educates and empowers students to volunteer and develop friendships with their differently-able classmates.

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CALVARY EPISCOPAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

by KRISTA KUPERUS

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory students honored Grandparents and Special Friends at a Chapel Service and Program on September 7. The entire student body started the Chapel Service by serving as a 180 voice choir to Amazing Grace and signing to "Lift Up My Hands."

Following the Chapel Service every grade level, band, choir,

praise team, speech and performance masters contributed to a part of the program and sixth grade students wrote touching quotes of love to share with all of the grandparents.

A highlight was Pre-K through first grade students who presented Herman The Worm and Skidamarink. Students also presented flowers to grandparents and shared in a reception followed in the performance.



Grandma Gina Treadwell with granddaughter Kodi Treadwell



Ali McCroskey with grandfather Roger Maxwell



Mrs. Donna Estrada leading Advanced Band

ANNUAL LIBRARY REVEAL IS A HIT

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory’s library gets a new theme every year and this year’s was as big of a hit as ever; biographies.

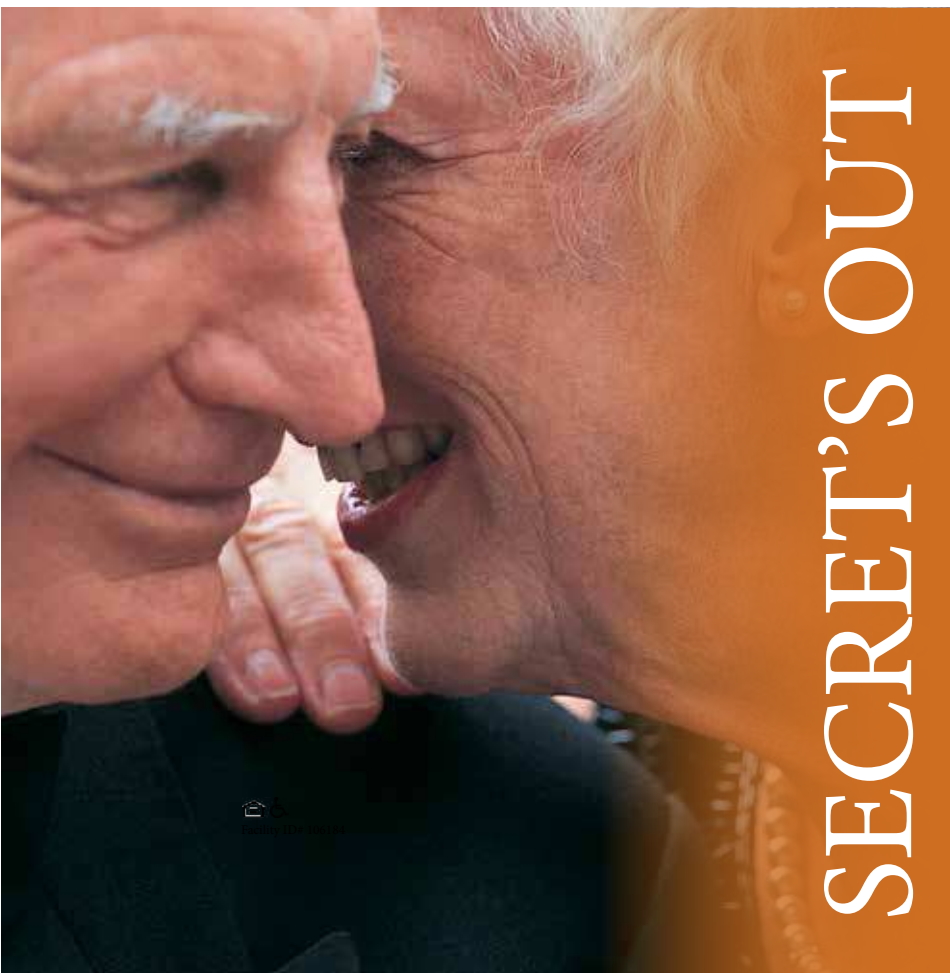
With a travel through time and interactions with living biographies, students were delighted to see the realistic settings for each person and their time period. Performers included: Ernest Shackleton, Bessie Coleman, Trung Sisters, Christopher Columbus, William Shakespeare, Jane Goodall. Studetns and

teachers loved the “Biographies” reveal and are excited to kick off a great year of reading.

Another great announcement from the CEP Library is the naming rights to the 2019-2020 Library: The Elliana Shogren Library. Elliana was awarded this honor in Chapel this week as the top Calvary reader for the 2018-2019 school year, she earned just under 900 Accelerated Reader points.



Niki Douglas reenacted the story of Jane Goodall.



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Choir students preparing to sing "A Million Dreams" left to right: Aubree Kuperus, Rachel Lazarou, Presley Delcamp, Sara Williams, Dori Soward, Emily Mandery, Niki Barnhart, Kate Wheelless, Haley Nichols



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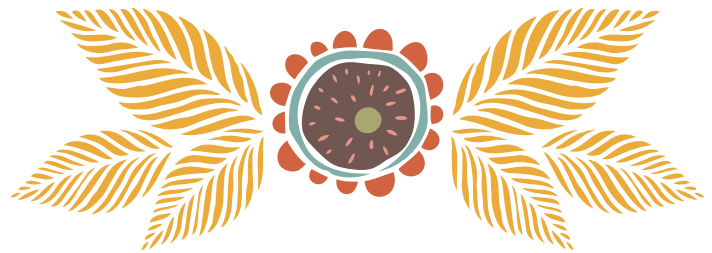
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Dean of Student, Troy Menn put on a theatrical performance of Christopher Columbus



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THE GINGERBREAD MAN

In what has become a beloved annual tradition, Calvary's Kindergarten students recently were surprised by the antics of the gingerbread man, who seemed to have just left every place

they search for him, only to beat them back to their classroom and leave them cookies.

This adventure creates excitement and enthusiasm as they search for the gingerbread man.



Headmaster, Mr. Smith shows his look of shock as he tells the students that they just missed the gingerbread man



Dean of Students, Mr. Menn tells the students that the gingerbread man told him he was running for children.



Zara Chinwuba one of the 6th grade speech students leading the program



Librarian Christine Wheeless awarding Elliana Shogren with her plaque for the "Elliana Shogren Library."

Local Events for your little scholar

YOUNG ADULT BOOK CLUB

On Wednesday, Nov. 14 at 5:00 p.m., in room 2B, teen readers in grades 9-12 will have an opportunity to meet with others who share the same love for good books, and have a lively discussion on the reasons a book or its characters were liked or disliked at the George Memorial Library. This month, readers will talk about the book *Court of Fives*, written by Kate Elliott.

YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY COUNCIL

On Wednesday, November 21 at 5 pm in room 2B at the George Memorial Library, teens in grades 9-12 who are interested in an exciting new leadership opportunity and volunteer-service hours are invited to attend this meeting of the Young Adult Advisory Council. Members will have a chance to share ideas about library programs, to help out at events, to give suggestions for teen services, books, and movies, and to meet new people.



AFTER-SCHOOL BREAKS

Crafts, movies, stories, and more for school-aged children in grades kindergarten through 3 will be offered at the George Memorial Library on the third Thursday of every month beginning at 4 p.m., in the meeting room. The program on Nov. 15 will be "DIY Games."

THE CREATIVE CONNECTION --

activities specially designed for kids in grades 4 through 8 -- are planned for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month, beginning at 6:00 pm, in the Middle Grades department. The schedule for November is as follows:

- November 14 – Captain Marvel
- November 28 – Ironman

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM -

1st & 3rd Mondays at 6:00 pm in the Middle Grades department. Activities for youth in grades 6 through 8. The schedule for November is as follows:

- November 5 – Game Day
- November 19 – Thanksgiving Crafts

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A delegation of 12 from the Ugandan Parliament and Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development visited Lamar CISD's Foster High School to learn about the school's STEM programs. This visit was part of a Texas tour for delegates on the Nuclear Power Industry coordinated by Texas A&M University and Nuclear Power Institute.

During their visit, delegates were joined by State Representative John Zerwas and heard from Foster students in the Powerful Opportunities for Women Eager and Ready for Science, Engineering and Technology and Workforce Industry Training programs. Students shared personal insights on the benefit of STEM opportunities at Foster High School through academics and student organizations. Teachers Adam Frenzel, Paul Guevarra and Valerie Brooker also shared their goals for the students in each of their courses.

This opportunity was made possible by Dr. Lee Peddicord with Texas A&M and Dr. Valerie Segovia, director of Outreach and Development for NPI. Foster High School has worked with NPI and the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station for the past six years promoting STEM through student organization.



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LAMAR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

LJHS Cheerleaders lead by example

The 2018-19 Lamar Junior High cheerleaders are making a difference on the campus of Lamar Junior High and in their community.

"These 23 young ladies have worked extremely hard this year taking "Best Cheer" at the Lamar Consolidated ISD Cheer Camp as well as coming together to raise \$1,005 to contribute to the

Lamar Consolidated ISD Make a Change Campaign to help raise awareness for Childhood Cancer," said Lamar Junior High principal Creighton Jaster.

"Whether they are cheering on the sidelines or taking care of business in the classroom, these ladies show what it means to be a Mustang and how to lead by example."



LAMAR CISD INVITES COMMUNITY TO HELP CREATE FIVE-YEAR VISION FOR THE DISTRICT

Lamar CISD is hosting a series of Strategic Planning Listening Tour meetings across the district to get input from parents, students, staff and community to create a five-year vision for the District.

All Strategic Planning Listening Tour meetings will be from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Meetings, which started last month are scheduled for:

- Nov. 5: Ryon Middle School
- Nov. 26: Adolphus Elementary School
- Nov. 27: Foster High School
- Nov. 29: Ray Elementary School
- Dec. 3: Hutchison Elementary School

In addition to the Listening Tour meetings, the Lamar Consolidated ISD community can take the Strategic Planning survey at www.lcisd.org through Dec. 3..

For more information, visit www.lcisd.org/about/strategic-planning.

LAMAR CISD

Texana Center partner to provide mental health first aid to educators

Lamar Consolidated Independent School District is partnering with Texana Center during the 2018-2019 school year to provide Mental Health First Aid training to Lamar CISD secondary staff. Representatives from Texana Center trained all high school teachers before school began and additional staff will be trained in February.

Mental Health First Aid is considered one of the premier mental health and suicide prevention programs in the nation. Training consists of an eight-hour course that teaches educators to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders.

The training gives LCISD educators the skills to reach out and provide initial help and support to students who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

“We are investing in our students by investing in our teachers through training,” said Dr. Jennifer Roberts, director of Student Services with Lamar CISD. “The goal is to equip our teachers to make an informed, positive impact around both mental wellness and suicide prevention.”

Mental Health First Aid began in Australia in 2001 and also includes risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems; information on depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and addiction disorders; a five-step action plan to help someone developing a mental health problem or in crisis; and professional, peer and self-help resources.

Texana Center is a nonprofit organization that provides behavioral healthcare and intellectual disabilities services primarily to residents of Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Matagorda, Waller and Wharton counties. Texana Center started providing Mental Health First Aid training in 2014 and has trained educators in five other school districts as well as many others outside of the education field.

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1 Foster High School senior Hannah Hunt of Richmond was crowned the 2018 Fort Bend County Fair Queen. Ten young ladies competed for the tiara, sash and \$5,000 college scholarship this year. Hannah will represent Fort Bend County in state and national events over the next 12 months. *Photo by Scott Reese Willey*

2 Lamar Consolidated High School head football coach Rick LaFavers holds up the "Battle of the 'Berg" trophy after the Mustangs defeated Terry High School 26-23 Sept. 14 at Guy K. Traylor Stadium. It was the first victory for the Mustangs since 2013. *Photo by Rhonda Taormina*

3 Travis High School seniors Zach Zimos and Alyssa Nguyen were named the Tigers' 2018 Homecoming king and queen during halftime of the Dulles game.

4 Richmond resident Ebwinae Bayewu can't be thrown off of the mechanical bull at the county fair. *Photo by Tyler Johnson*

5 Sugar Land residents Red Binford and his 3-year-old son Wyatt share a laugh while riding the carousel. *Photo by Tyler Johnson*



1



2



3



4



5

1 Chidero Kalaji and Bryce Posadas play blow-up basketball at National Night Out. *Photo by Averil Gleason*

2 Juan Arriaga is the winner of Our Lady of Guadalupe's 2018 Bazaar quilt raffle. The homemade-quilt was donated and designed by parish member Margaret Gonzales. From left are Deacon Albert Yanez, Father Lee Flores, Margaret Gonzales and Betty Contreras, fundraiser chairperson with quilt.

3 Twins Abby and Sarah Preece celebrate their third birthday at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum's Fall Fun Fest. *Photo by Averil Gleason*

4 Photographer Russell Autrey and his wife Kathy pose for a photo during an exhibit of his photography at George Memorial Library. Although retired from the newspaper business, Autrey continues to take photographs and share them with nature lovers.

5 Members of Needville High School's first-ever Certified Nursing Assistant program celebrated passing their state exams by holding a pinning ceremony in which they were presented with roses. Front to back are CNAs Crystal Horner, Taylor Ann Laman, Charlie Mehrens, Katherine Pitts, Neyda Saldierna, Hallie Schmitt and MaryJo Stavinoha.

HOUSTON METHODIST SUGAR LAND HOSPITAL

—Introducing new product to prevent amputations—

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital is creating a multi-disciplinary service to help patients avoid limb amputation due to severe vascular disease and wounds in the foot or leg.

The new Limb Salvage Program enables specialists from the hospital's Wound Care Program and its cardiovascular and general surgery services to coordinate and expedite the diagnosis and treatment of patients who have wounds in the foot or leg, or ulcers due to diabetes or vascular disease.

Foot and lower leg amputations are a serious health issue in the U.S., with more than 180,000 performed each year. About half of the major amputations are performed without any prior diagnostic evaluation.

Amputation patients face an increased risk of depression, significantly higher lifetime medical costs and high revision or re-amputation rates. In fact, statistics show that 5-10 percent of below-knee amputees - and 15-20 percent of above-knee amputees - die in the hospital following their procedures.

"The majority of these amputations are not the result of trauma; they become necessary after patients suffer infection and severe tissue loss due to inadequate blood flow caused by damage to blood vessels from diabetes or blockages caused by vascular disease," said Charlie Cheng, M.D., a board-certified vascular surgeon with Houston Methodist Cardiovascular Surgery Associates and the Director of the Limb Salvage Program.

"Skin tissue requires adequate blood flow to heal properly, and for patients with diabetes or an underlying vascular issue, even a small cut or scrape on the foot or leg can quickly become serious because there simply isn't enough blood flow to the wound to allow healing," he said.

"For these patients, time is of the essence, and getting the proper diagnosis and treatment quickly can be the difference between recovering from a wound or losing their toe, foot or leg."

Cheng says that for many patients, simply treating the wound itself without restoring blood flow to the affected limb is not enough. Through the Limb Salvage Program, wound patients immediately receive diagnostic ultrasound studies to evaluate for arterial and/or venous disease in the affected limb.

If necessary, they are promptly scheduled for treatment, such as an arteriogram and endovascular procedures for balloon and stenting, open surgical bypass, or venous interventions. The entire process - from initial visit to revascularization - can now be completed within a few days rather than weeks or months, thereby saving valuable time.

Once blood flow is restored, physicians with the Houston Methodist Wound Care Program at Sugar Land continue to help the patient with a variety of leading-edge treatments, including compression wraps, antimicrobial dressings, bioengineered skin substitutes and hyperbaric oxygen therapy, Cheng said.

Patients typically benefit from a dramatic improvement in their wound once revascularization is complete and reduce their risk of further wound development.

While patients with diabetes are often instructed to take special precautions with their feet and legs, individuals with vascular

issues may not recognize they have an issue until they develop a wound or ulcer that won't heal, Cheng said. It is estimated that 18 million people in the US have peripheral arterial disease. One of the goals of the limb salvage program is to educate people about vascular issues and encourage early identification and treatment.

"If a patient has pain in his or her calf, thigh or buttocks after walking a short distance, or at night in bed, it could be a sign of a blockage or narrowing of the blood vessels in the legs," said Jean Bismuth, M.D., a board-certified vascular surgeon with Houston Methodist Cardiovascular Surgery Associates and a member of the Limb Salvage Program team.

"And while the patient may not have a wound or ulcer yet, the conditions are in place and the likelihood of a problem is much greater. Our goal is to help these patients before they find themselves at risk of amputation."

Cheng says that studies have shown that revascularization is the appropriate initial treatment protocol in approximately 70 percent of patients who suffer from severe vascular disease, compared to just 15 percent who require amputation.

Patients with symptoms of vascular disease in their legs should schedule an appointment with Houston Methodist Cardiovascular Surgery Associates by calling 832.522.8616.

Patients with an active wound or ulcer should be examined by a wound specialist at the Houston Methodist Wound Care Program at Sugar Land.

To schedule an appointment, call 281.275.0770. Visit houstonmethodist.org/wound-sl to learn more about our services. Visit our Facebook page at fb.com/methodistsugarland for the latest news, events and information.



Dr. Jean Bismuth and Dr. Charlie Cheng, vascular surgeons

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