

September 2018

FULSHEAR LIVING

monthly

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LATER GATOR

Fulshear Police tackle gator dilemma

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FULSHEAR LIVING

monthly™

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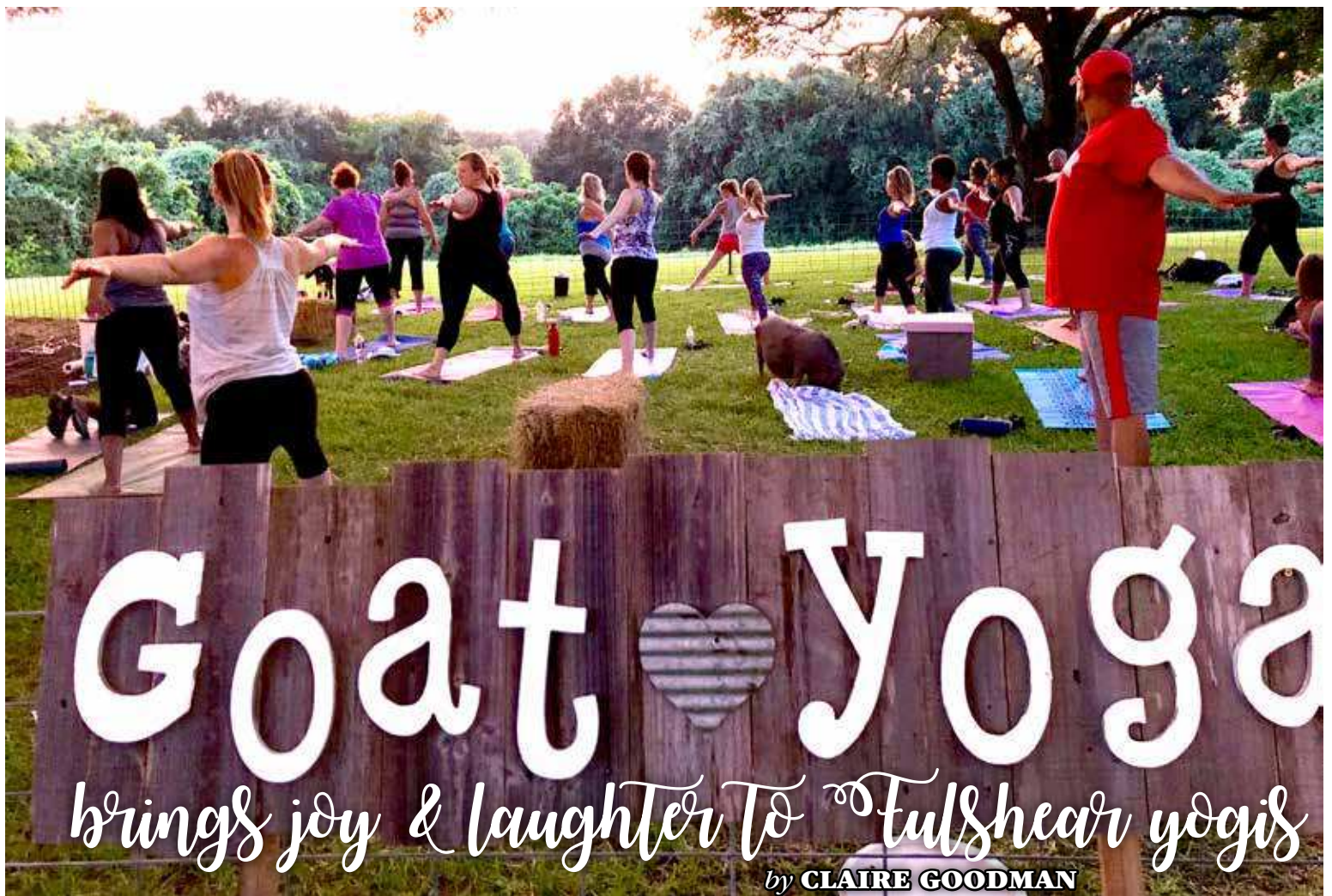
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Tiffany Thompson leads nearly 30 people through a yoga session as part of a night of goat yoga Saturday, July 21. Proceeds from the event benefitted Recovery Houston and Bend the Mend. PHOTO BY JULIE SILVA

For thousands of years, people have been practicing yoga as a way to relieve stress and achieve inner peace.

Tiffany Thompson takes that yogic zen to a new level with her yoga classes. Just as with regular yoga, yoginis in Thompson's class release tension with a series of movements and poses. Unlike regular yoga classes however, participants practice with goats in their laps or on their backs.

Thompson's classes are called "Goat Yoga," and they are aptly named. Each class features a small flock of baby Nigerian Dwarf goats who bring levity and laughter to her classes. "Practicing yoga already reduces stress," Thompson said. "Now add to that adorable baby goats. They have such a chill energy, and they're very mellow, but they also run around and snuggle you and give you kisses."

Thompson's classes are good for all skill levels, but they are especially beneficial to beginners who want to learn yoga in a fun, casual environment. "You're not in a studio where everyone is super-focused," said Thompson. "It's very unintimidating. You're learning 'downward dog pose' with a goat kissing your face. You're challenging yourself, but you're also having fun."

Her pupils agree. Eleven-year-old participant Brennyn Wiese had never been to a yoga class before attending Goat Yoga. "I'm mostly here for the goats," she admitted as she bottle-fed a baby goat. Nicole Nichols is a regular yogini but had never experienced anything like goat yoga before attending Thompson's classes. "I practice yoga regularly and really enjoy it, but the yoga part pretty much takes a backseat to these baby goats," Nichols laughed.

The classes take place outside in the pastoral setting of Thompson's home in Fulshear. Situated on several acres, the space provides a peaceful, quiet area for participants to practice without the walls and ceilings of a studio. Classes take place in the morning to beat the Texas heat, but Thompson joked that the popular practice of Bikram yoga is even more intense than a Texas summer. "Those classes are 106 degrees," she laughed, "and people actually sign up for those on purpose."

Laughter is a constant presence in Goat Yoga. With small goats leaping up on the backs of participants, it is impossible to maintain a serious attitude. Thompson welcomes this joy in her classes. "I want people in my class to walk out smiling. Yoga

makes you feel better, but so does having fun and laughing.” She added, “It’s like adult playtime with a petting zoo.”

Thompson’s inspiration for Goat Yoga came not long after she completed her yoga certification in Morocco earlier this year. In Morocco, yoga is often practiced outside, so Thompson wanted to recreate that experience here. The final revelation came when she met a woman who kept Nigerian Dwarf goats as pets. Nigerian Dwarfs are much smaller and friendlier than common goats, and Thompson was immediately smitten. After getting her own pet goats, “Lil’ Bit” and “Jeffrey,” Thompson decided to open a practice that integrated the joy the goats radiate with the flow of yoga moves.

Thompson’s classes also have a philanthropic focus. During her training in Morocco, she learned the importance of “paying forward” her learning experience. Her training had a strong focus

on using yoga to benefit the community. She now integrates that philosophy of giving into her yoga business. She often hosts classes to benefit local charities. Her most recent class donated to Houston Recovery, an organization devoted to helping individuals recover from addiction.

Thompson’s Goat Yoga classes always sell out, and participants always leave with a smile on their faces. In addition to the goats, Thompson often invites other unusual animals to join her students. Two tortoises and a potbelly pig attended her most recent class. Mendy Moses drove an hour from League City to get to Goat Yoga, and plans to return soon. “I absolutely cannot wait to sign up for my next class,” said Moses.

To find out more about Goat Yoga in Fulshear, visit <https://www.facebook.com/goatyogakaty>.



Izzy the goat stands in the foreground at Goat Yoga Katy on Saturday, July 21. PHOTO BY JULIE SILVA



11-year-old Brenny Wiese snuggles with a baby goat before classes. PHOTO BY CLAIRE GOODMAN



Instructor Tiffany Thompson gets a visit from her goat Lil' Bit while teaching class. PHOTO BY CLAIRE GOODMAN



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Jemma Macmillan plays with a baby goat and pets a tortoise during class. PHOTO BY CLAIRE GOODMAN



Tiffany Thompson leads a goat yoga session on her 40-acre property Saturday, July 21. Proceeds from the evening were donated to Recovery Houston and Bend to Mend. PHOTO BY JULIE SILVA



The class watches as a baby goat stands on Katy resident Ashley Swift's back Saturday, July 21, at Goat Yoga Katy. PHOTO BY JULIE SILVA



Nicole Nichols bottle-feeds a baby goat. PHOTO BY CLAIRE GOODMAN



Katy resident Ashley Swift bottle feeds a baby goat as Paige Zulauf watches. Both attended Goat Yoga Katy on Saturday, July 21, in Fulshear. PHOTO BY JULIE SILVA

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Captain Mike McCoy gained national attention when he peacefully removed an alligator from a McDonald's parking lot.

Officers subdue alligators by covering their eyes, jumping on their backs, and taping their mouths shut.

LATER GATOR

— *Fulshear Police tackle displaced alligator dilemma* —

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

The summer sun draws out all types. As spring wanes and summer approaches, children run through sprinklers, and dogs bask in the warm sunlight.

And alligators wander out of their nests and into nearby Fulshear neighborhoods.

Captain Mike McCoy of the Fulshear Police Department has many years of experience dealing with the cantankerous reptiles. Every summer he sees the alligators emerging from their dormant state and migrating across the Fulshear area. "Alligators are naturally prone to wandering, and as they are able to travel up to five miles a day, they have plenty of opportunities to end up in residential areas where they don't belong," said McCoy. "Fulshear has more than 40 lakes, both naturally-occurring and man-made, and the alligators will meander around the areas between the lakes."

For subdivisions with man-made lakes, this can be especially troubling. "The alligators migrate at night, and then just kind of

show up in a subdivision the next day," said McCoy. "Earlier this week, we got a call that there were two small alligators in a swimming pool. The owners looked outside in the morning, and there they were."

The man-made community lakes that are so appealing to homebuyers are also appealing to the large reptiles, which causes mayhem when a roaming alligator strolls into a subdivision. McCoy and his department have been catching errant alligators in residential areas, and then releasing them safely back into the wild for many years. Roughly 10 to 15 times in any given summer, his department will get a phone call from a frantic citizen with an alligator problem. The giant lizards will end up in pools and garages or even walk directly up to a person.

McCoy is careful to note that most alligators that approach humans are not doing so out of aggression. Rather, they've been fed by humans before, and are conditioned to approach people for food. "Our biggest problem by far is that people will feed them," said McCoy. "People throw food to alligators all the time to watch them eat, which of course is amazing to watch, but then the alligators start approaching all humans, thinking they're going to be fed."

Alligators are naturally shy creatures and typically do not approach humans unless they have been fed by a human before.

Even though it is against the law to feed an alligator, oblivious individuals still throw food scraps to the powerfully-jawed creatures. Feeding alligators propagates the unnecessary encounters between humans and the large reptiles. Said McCoy, "As a result, we now have alligators going straight up to people when they're out walking their dogs or what have you, and people think, 'Oh, it's going to attack,' when really it's just used to being fed by humans."

Thus far, none of the alligator encounters in Fulshear have resulted in injuries to humans, apart from the police who have to

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Mike McCoy and his officers removed this 300-pound alligator from a Fulshear garage.



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trap them. Officers will sometimes suffer superficial injuries like scratches from the alligator's claws or lacerations from their ridged tails, but no civilians have been harmed in Fulshear.

Even though none of the alligators have caused major injuries, the situation is still serious. Alligators in residential areas pose a threat to people, pets and homes. "We had a 12-foot alligator in someone's garage one summer," said McCoy. "He had shoved himself up behind a riding mower. We actually had to call a trapper for that; we couldn't handle it ourselves. Our team worked alongside the trapper, and eventually we got him out, but the gator tore up the garage in the process."

McCoy has had so many encounters with alligators that he has mastered the technique of trapping and releasing them. The process sounds easier said than done, but after years of experience seizing the animals, McCoy related the process with the same air of simplicity one might use to explain changing a lightbulb. "You just cover their eyes, jump on their backs, and tape their mouths shut," he explained.

When an alligator's eyes are covered, they immediately relax and become more compliant. And while an alligator can clamp its jaws shut with a bite-force of over 1,000 pounds per square inch, the muscles that open its mouth are relatively weak. A human hand can easily hold their mouths closed, and tape holds them shut until they can be safely relocated.

He admitted, however, that he was not always so adept at catching the animals. "The first alligator call I got, I had to look up what to do," McCoy laughed, "and then I had my partner hold a

broom over the gator's eyes while I slipped a dog leash around it like a lasso."

McCoy's biggest priority is making sure the alligator is unharmed during the capture and relocation. "I'm a huge animal-lover, and I would never want to hurt one," he said. A few years ago, his respect and admiration for the creatures earned him national attention. An alligator had wandered into the drive-thru lane at a McDonald's.

When McCoy arrived at the scene, people were filming the alligator with their phones. Someone told him to shoot the alligator, but he refused. "They got me on video saying, 'No way. This guy's just trying to get his file-o-fish,' and then I trapped it. The video went viral. A lot of people loved that I refused to hurt the alligator."

The Fulshear police are well prepared for how to handle alligators, and McCoy stressed the importance of calling the police if you see one out of the water.

"If you see an alligator in a public place, call the police immediately," McCoy said. "Don't try to catch them yourself, and please don't hurt them. We know what to do, and we will make sure we relocate them safely."

And above all, McCoy implored that people do not feed the alligators, tempting though it may be to watch the magnificent creatures eat. Said McCoy: "It's definitely fascinating, but when alligators are fed, they end up having to be trapped and removed because they pose a threat. If people leave them alone, they'll stay away from people, and they can live among us more safely."

To report an alligator in a residential area, call the Fulshear police dept. at (281) 346-2202.

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Fulshear Farmer's Market



Shelly Butler, along with her son, Blake tries out some nitro-coffee from Hunter's Beans.

In the heat of a Texas summer, few outdoor events can still draw a crowd. Yet even as temperatures soar into the triple digits, the Fulshear Farmer's Market still thrives. Every Saturday from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., visitors flock to the market for fresh produce and natural products.

On any given weekend there are anywhere between 12 and 20 vendors offering all things fresh, handmade or unique.

Aug. 4 marked the fourth anniversary of the market. The origins of the market are as organic as its produce: it began with the friendship and generosity of the Fulshear community.

Ramona Ridge founded the market and recalled, "There were so many people in Fulshear who grew their own produce. Some had peach trees; others had pecan trees. Some people made their own jams and things like that. And at the end of the summer, we found ourselves with an overabundance of food. It's a small community here, so we were all friends, and we would get together and trade what we had so no food would go to waste. If you had figs you gave them away, and someone else who had fresh eggs gave them to you. Everyone came with their hands full and left with their hands full."

It occurred to Ridge that this open concept could be extended to the entire community, even those who did not grow their own foods. "I thought, 'why not invite everyone to join us?'," said Ridge. So she rented out some land and invited not only her neighbors to sell their wares, but other local vendors as well.

It was important to Ridge to maintain the integrity of the market, so she set boundaries and restrictions on what could be sold there. Ridge was adamant that the market exclusively sell items that are local and agricultural. Everything must be grown or produced within a 200-mile radius of Fulshear to ensure that all the products are local. And only food, agricultural products or crafts pertaining to nature could be sold. Ridge's commitment to



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maintaining the authenticity of the market is reflected in the vendors she welcomes.

Takona Kolbe sells handmade lye soap that she makes from scratch. Hunter Hamilton of Hunter's Beans purveys his own slow-roasted coffee beans and serves up nitro-coffee, a coffee that is flash-cooled in nitrogen for a smoother finish than traditional iced coffees. Ginger Tanagho raises Certified Animal Welfare Approved beef and lamb and sells their meat every weekend for her small business, Cross T Brand.

Vendors can come and go as they please. "A lot of our vendors only have seasonal items," she explained, "so let's say for example, all they sell is peaches. They come during peach season, and then we don't see them again until next peach season." As one season wanes another begins, so there are always different products. The tomatoes of summer fade into the pecans of autumn.

Many vendors are consistent. Kayla Butler sells her handmade soaps and candles at the market every weekend. Her store is located in Old Katy, but she travels to Fulshear every weekend because she always does well in the market. "People come to the market looking to buy the highest quality items, and that's what we sell here," said Butler.

But Fulshear Farmer's Market is not only about the buying and selling of natural products; it also has a commitment to preserving nature. "Forever Fulshear" is a non-profit division of the market dedicated to the preservation of the Fulshear environment. Ridge is a certified master naturalist. She studies the plant, animal, soil and weather patterns of the prairie and advocates for the

conservation of the land. "People will tear up a nature park to put in a gym, but then turn around and try to recreate the prairies they just destroyed," Ridge said. "Why not just preserve the ones we have? We have 300-year-old pecan trees out here and they're ripping them out to pour concrete."

Vendors fees go directly to funding Forever Fulshear, so the market itself is protecting the very land on which it operates. Forever Fulshear regularly hosts the "Keep Fulshear Beautiful" prairie clean-up event where the community comes together to clean trash off the road. Volunteers in the organization grow community gardens outside city hall. They invite speakers to come out and educate the community on native wildlife like coyotes and dragonflies.

The Fulshear Farmer's Market is truly unique in that it not only sells products from the land, but it has a devotion to protecting that land. The zucchini squash that is so popular at the market can only grow in a flourishing environment. Visitors to the market are not only supporting local business; they are contributing to the cause of prairie conservation. The Fulshear Farmer's Market is located at 9035 Bois d'Arc Ln. in Fulshear.



The Fulshear Farmer's Market draws a crowd, even in the heat of summer.



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Takona Kolbe discusses her handmade soaps with Jennifer Beavers, who regularly attends the farmer's market.



Ginger Tanagho's business, Cross T Brand, specializes in grass-fed beef and lamb.

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TOP NOTCH BARBECUE

— *satisfying Fulshear residents* —

by TOM BEHRENS



Fulshear folks know how good Shawn Thomas's BBQ is.



Shawn Thomas' wife, Tamiaka, helps out with the serving, but Shawn handles all the cooking.

What's that wonderful, smoky smell? It could be someone is barbecuing. Shawn Thomas gave up his job as journeyman electrician so could barbecue full time, turning his passion into a full-time job. Actually, calling it a job, is not the correct way describe what he does; it's an art form that comes in different flavors.

By Shawn Thomas' reckoning, he has been cooking barbecue close to 20 years. In Fulshear, you will find Top Notch Barbecue, his food truck and extra pits at 33340 FM 1093. Satisfying customers' desire for good eats began while still working as an electrician. The electrical contractor he worked for knew about his sideline barbecue business and had no problem with him cooking on the side.

His barbecue has not won any awards because he is too busy cooking up brisket, ribs and chicken for his hungry customers, along with a few catering jobs. But, he did have a chance to enter a barbecue cookoff that his electric company had entered. His ribs finished seventh place in a corporation cook off of about 75 different electrical contractors. "I thought that was pretty amazing," said Thomas.

Thomas said he rests on Sunday, and then on Monday spends the day restocking everything he needs for the coming week. He's at his food truck at 3:30 a.m. on Tuesday through Saturday getting ready for the lunch crowd. In the back of the red food truck he has what he calls "a big old monster barrel pit" he calls "Big Bertha."

"I'm rubbing my briskets, ribs," said Thomas. "I make my beans, barbecue sauce everything from scratch."

"I have a closed in food truck that I do all my business in, but then I have another pit which is really big and open where you cannot only smell the mouthwatering smells coming forth, but you also can watch the brisket, ribs and chicken cooking," said Thomas. "Sometimes it gets crazy. I may have catering events going on as well and need both pits going ... one for my everyday customers, the other one getting ready for catering events."

After the charcoal begins burning in earnest, he adds Post Oak wood for the smoke. "At first I don't put any kind of meat on the smokers; you want the heavy smoke to blow out really good," said Thomas. "You want a good nice smoke; you want your meat to look very pretty. Once the cooking temperature gets up to 275

degrees, the smoke has blown itself out, it's time to for the brisket to go on the grill."

Thomas says he always cooks brisket first, mainly because it takes about eight to 10 hours to get the tenderness and the flavor his brisket is known for.

After about the first four hours, he starts adding ribs and chicken to the smoker. "You want your chicken to have a nice golden, pretty brown color, nice crisp to it," said Thomas. "The same thing with your ribs, a nice reddish look. I like my ribs to cook to the point where at the ends have a nice little crunch to them, but not too much. You want the ribs nice and tender."

The chicken and ribs cook for about three hours; the brisket continue to cook for another four hours.

While making sure the temperature is maintained, smoke is still coming up, he's mixing up his secret sauce. Said Thomas: "I have customers ask me if I'm putting black pepper, cherry cola, Cherry Dr. Pepper in the sauce. I tell them I can't tell them."



How about a chopped beef sandwich for lunch?

Continued on Page 22



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Heritage Society Keeps History Alive

by VALERIE SWEETEN

Fulshear and Simonton are moving quickly into the future with expansion in businesses, restaurants, schools and gorgeous homes.

With this progress, it's important not to forget the incredible history behind the area, which is where the non-profit organization, Fulshear Simonton Heritage Society (FSHS) comes together for the community. Keeping the history alive is what they do.

Their formal mission is to collect, catalogue, preserve, curate, prepare, present, and share with future generations, the rich historic heritage, which is found in and around the area of Northwest Fort Bend County.

In addition, with understanding the collective history, they will strive to honor the legacies of those who created the family and cultural foundations.

Board members include president, Kim Stacy; vice-president Gilbert "Herc" Meier, Jr.; second vice-president, Debra Sabrula; treasurer, Terry Crockett; secretary, Rhonda Kuykendall; and assistant secretary, Daniel McJunkin. Honorary board members are Jo Douglass, Viola Randle and Frances Smart.

Tommy Kuykendall, former mayor of Fulshear from 2010-16, is a member of the FSHS and witness to the path of growth and development for both cities. Preserving the heritage and history of the area is his focus.

"One of my goals was to create a historical account of Fulshear and to preserve our history," Kuykendall said. "Our history although similar to other cities is unique. We have thousands of people moving to the Fulshear area every year. Some of those new residents may know a little about Fulshear and Simonton, but many do not. I would like to see a historical account of Fulshear available to all new residents both in electronic and

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Recently, Fulshear Simonton Heritage Society celebrated Fulshear’s 194th birthday to recall their humble beginnings where Churchill Fulshear, a member of the Old Three Hundred, was granted land by Stephen F. Austin in 1824. In 1890, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad was granted the right-of-way through town by Churchill Fulshear.

Kuykendall recounted how the 1890 railroad right of way kicked off a turning point for the city where the town of Fulshear became a center of commerce attracting people on weekends resulting in stories of congested streets in downtown.

“The platting of the Town of Fulshear (now downtown area) and the construction of the railroad literally put Fulshear on the map,” said Kuykendall. “This eventually led to the development of Farm to Market Roads 359 and 1093 being constructed to a crossroad in Fulshear. The town’s population fluctuated in the low hundreds over the early years.”

Kuykendall also pointed out how though fire destroyed historic buildings in downtown Fulshear, what little that remains needs to be preserved, maintained and remembered.

“My role is to support the FSHS to accomplish the goals,” said Kuykendall. “I have had these for a long time and want to insure the Fulshear of tomorrow knows about the struggle and sweat Churchill Fulshear and so many others encountered to bring us to where we are today. Our history cannot be lost.”

Joining Fulshear Simonton Heritage Society is easy and welcome as there’s plenty of work to be done.

“As we develop the program of activities this next year, we will encourage all history lovers to be involved with the FSHS. Also, there will be projects we will be working on and we will need the entire community’s support to accomplish those,” Kuykendall said.

Kuykendall said since their formation, they’ve been busy with focusing on the immediate needs of the Fulshear and Simonton areas with Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the Tax Day floods in 2016 and the 2015 Memorial Day floods. Even with these needs being addressed, their mission didn’t stop.

Since their inception, they attended workshop and training on oral history interviews hosted by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission, chronicled the old railroad switch house move to Frances Smart Park and scanned historical documents and photos from Dozier’s BBQ and local residents. They’ve also participated in the Historical Marker dedication for the Rand & Pennington Land Grant of 1824 with Fort Bend County Historical Commission and joined in the Foster Old 300 Medallion Dedication at the Fulshear Cemetery, and also the Rededication Ceremony in the Randon Bottom Cemetery in Weston Lakes.

Said Kuykendall: “There has been a strategic effort to photograph and scan and catalogue historic photos and items from the Fulshear area. We plan to have a more robust agenda for events and programs in the upcoming year. Please stay tuned to the Fulshear-Simonton Heritage Society Facebook Page.”

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ON AUGUST 3, 1824, DAVID RANDON AND HIS BUSINESS PARTNER, ISAAC PENNINGTON, RECEIVED A GRANT OF 4,428 ACRES LOCATED ON THE BRAZOS RIVER IN FORT BEND COUNTY BETWEEN THE JOHN FOSTER LEAGUE TO THE EAST AND THE CHURCHILL FULSHEAR LEAGUE TO THE WEST. THE RANDON AND PENNINGTON LAND GRANT OFFERED FERTILE SOIL AND VALUED RIVER ACCESS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF CROPS TO MARKET.

DAVID RANDON, A NATIVE OF ALABAMA AND PART CREEK INDIAN, CAME TO TEXAS IN SEARCH OF OPPORTUNITY. RANDON RECEIVED HIS LAND GRANT AS A SINGLE MAN, BUT BY MARCH 1826, HE WAS RECORDED AS HAVING A WIFE, NANCY McNEEL, DAUGHTER OF JOHN McNEEL, A LAND GRANT RECIPIENT IN BRAZORIA COUNTY. RANDON SOON BECAME ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PLANTERS IN AUSTIN'S COLONY. HE DIED IN 1867 AND IS BURIED ON THE DYER MOORE RANCH NEAR THE COMMUNITY OF ORCHARD.

ISAAC PENNINGTON, A NATIVE OF VIRGINIA, SOLD HIS INTEREST IN THE GRANT TO RANDON. PENNINGTON WAS LISTED AS A TEACHER AS EARLY AS 1823-24, MAKING HIM ONE OF THE EARLIEST TEACHERS IN THE COLONY. HE WAS LATER THE MAIL CONTRACTOR ON THE ROUTE BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND MCLAM. IN 1836, THE RANDON AND PENNINGTON LAND GRANT BECAME AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TEXAS AND FORT BEND COUNTY.

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Fulshear Simonton Heritage Society is represented taking part in the Penn Rand Historical Marker ceremony.

Continued from Page 17

After the secret sauce is formulated, he places big pots of the sauce on the smoker fire boxes and waits for them to start boiling. He wants the heat reduced as to where he has a nice simmer going; the sauce changes from a liquid to a thicker consistency.

Meat rub: "I don't put a bunch of pepper corn on my meat," said Thomas, "but of course it has peppercorns in it. When you taste my meat, you taste a nice little spice. Even if you didn't use any sauce, just ate my meat, you would taste the spice. You go to some barbecue places and they want to drown the meat with sauce. People want to taste the meat, and then maybe later will try the sauce, but they love the taste of the meat."

How does he keep up with the schedule? Time management was his reply and cooking talent that has matured over the years. He also has the help of his wife in serving and collecting money for the meals. When they were young, his sons used to help him. "But now that they are older and want no part of it," said a laughing Thomas. "They saw how hard dad worked. As far as the cooking, I do it all."

Scott Bank, a friend, taught him the ins and out of setting up and cooking barbecue. "My momma did a lot of cooking too," said Thomas. "I grew up in the kitchen cooking with my momma. As I got older I began buying a lot of cook books. I love the cooking channel. When they had the Pitmasters on TV, I watched those guys."

"I read, I observe others. I worked for catering companies. I just learned about everything I could about cooking. There's no cooking I can't do. I can bake from scratch."

What advice does he want to pass on to future barbecue masters?

"I've learned all the different ways people barbecue," said Thomas. "Stainless steel barbecues are popular, stainless steel rotisseries. I like the rotisseries; they are not bad, but I want to keep it old school, the big barrel pits, the big barrel smokers."

The next time you are driving down FM 1093 stop by and sample his barbecue, maybe even ask specific questions about the sauce. Shawn is likable guy that loves to talk about barbecue, however he won't tell you his barbecue secrets.



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Seabourne Nature Park

offers Texas Master Naturalists classes

by **VALERIE SWEETEN**

Enjoying the spacious outdoors at Seabourne Nature Park is only a short drive away so why not take advantage of learning from the dedicated Texas Master Naturalists conducting classes there?

Next on the calendar for Sept. 6 at 6:30 p.m. is the Pollinators, Pollination & Pollinator Gardens, presented by Bee Harmony Director Ed Erwin with the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter. Open to the public, the event is free and slated to be held at the Rosenberg Civic Center at 3825 Texas 36 South.

Lynn Trenta, coordinator of the prairie demo garden and part of the prairie restoration project with the Naturalists, said classes like these are to address the importance of pollinators and how people can support them in their landscapes and gardens. Johnson said pollinators enable food production and allow plants to reproduce. Without them, we would simply not have food to eat.

“A reduction in habitat for pollinators, among other factors, is causing their population to decline,” Trenta said. “Besides the well-known honey bee, there are over 4,000 species of native bees that provide pollination, as well as butterflies, birds, bats, and other wildlife. Learning about the behavior and habitat of pollinators can enable and encourage people to provide food, water and shelter in their gardens and landscapes for pollinators.”

An important fact to know is that native plants and pollinators have developed a beneficial relationship together over the years. The chapter has a native prairie demo garden at Seabourne with pollinator plots specifically for this purpose.

Margo Johnson with Coastal Prairie Chapter Texas Master Naturalists said that Master Naturalist programs are offered typically the first Thursday of month with a speaker on a relevant topic. Occasionally, a field trip could be held in lieu of a speaker program. Speakers are experts in their fields.

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Beautiful Seabourne Nature Park is such a special place it received a designation on the Texas Parks & Wildlife's Coastal Birding Trail in 2017.

COMING TO SEABOURNE NATURE PARK

Trenta said her favorite thing about a place like Seabourne is the diversity it offers for visitors. Their Chapter has been transforming the 164-acre central core of a 368-acre park from a typical city park into a true nature park since 2009 according to Trenta.

“From fishing to birding, enjoying prairie plants and flowers to biking, Seabourne offers the visitor a variety of activities to enjoy. In a short period of time, you can walk through the chapter’s butterfly garden and read about the Monarch Butterfly as you take in the beautiful flowers there. You can also walk around the lake lined with trees planted by the master naturalists,” Trenta said.

The Master Naturalists have also had a hand in prairie restoration area, a prairie demo garden, and four habitat plots for birds and insects. There are a wetlands area, bird sanctuary and fishing.

Seabourne is such a special place is that it received a designation on the Texas Parks & Wildlife’s Coastal Birding Trail in 2017 and is also on the latest printed Texas Parks & Wildlife map on the Brazoria Loop of the Upper Texas Coast. More information on this is available at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wildlife/wildlife-trails/utc/brazoria-loop/#utc117a>.

Join the Master Naturalists on Nov. 3 for their Seabourne Nature Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. complete with children’s crafts, carriage rides by Heritage Carriage, bees exhibit, dulcimer music, the Lone Star Strummers, Brazos Bend State Park Outreach Booth, Coastal Prairie Partnership/ Katy Prairie Conservancy, East Texas Herpetology Society and more. Details at <https://txmn.org/coastal/volunteer-projects/signature/prairie-heritage-festival>.

Seabourne is located at 3825 Texas 36 South, Rosenberg. For more information, call 281.633.7033 or visit <https://txmn.org/coastal>.

Photos Continued on Page 30

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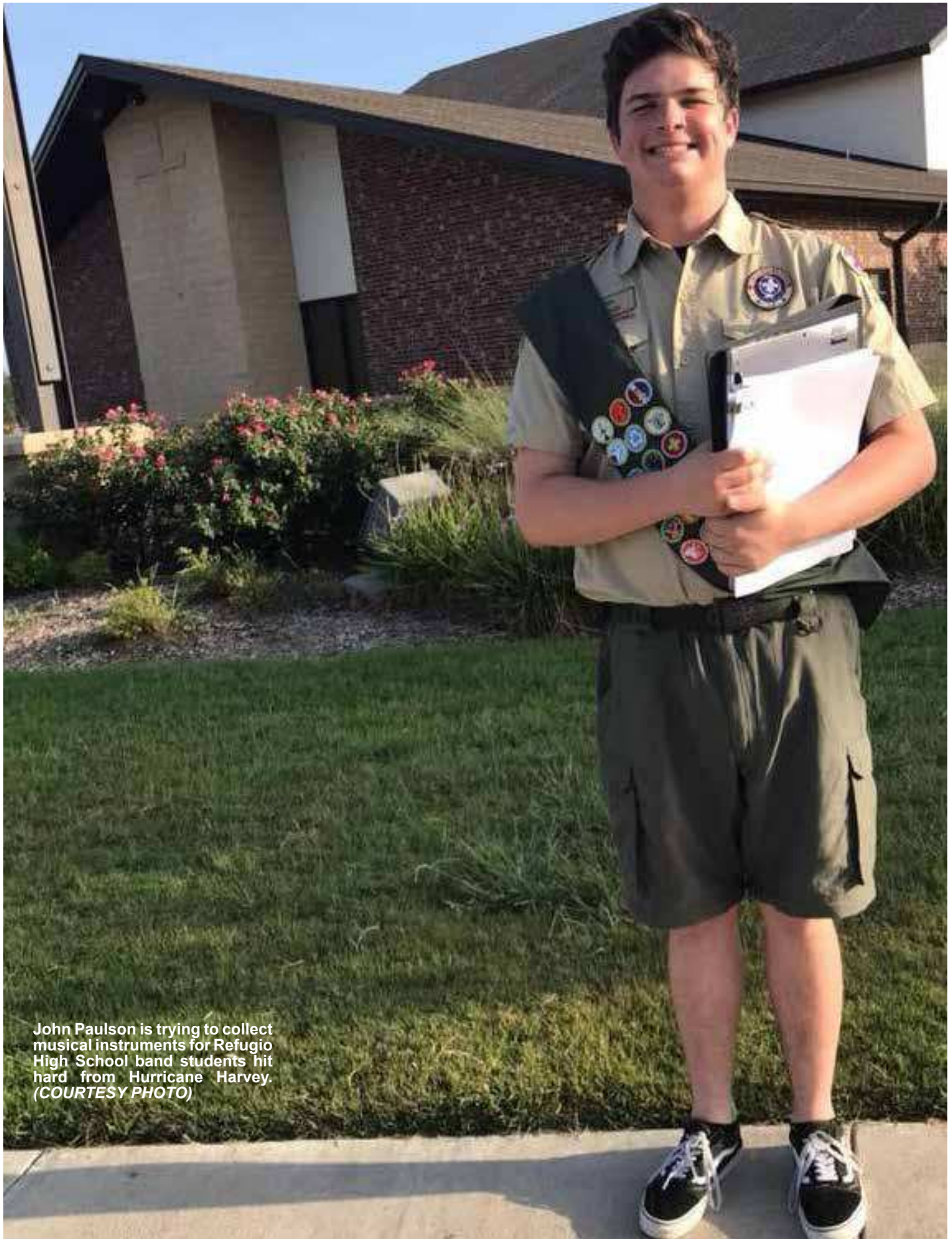
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John Paulson is trying to collect musical instruments for Refugio High School band students hit hard from Hurricane Harvey. (COURTESY PHOTO)

STUDENT HELPING MAKE MUSIC FOR OTHERS — by collecting 'lovingly used' instruments —

by TOM BEHRENS

John Paulson is making a difference. Paulson and St. Faustina Catholic Church of Fulshear have teamed up to help Refugio High School make music this school year. John, 17 years old, is a Boy Scout working on completing his Eagle Scout Badge project – collecting “gently used” musical instruments for the Refugio High School Band. St. Faustina Catholic Church helped as a collection point for the donated instruments from the Fulshear community. John and his family are members of the church.

“We (his family) drove through Refugio all the time going from Corpus Christi to Houston before moving to Houston. After Hurricane Harvey, I saw the damage inflicted upon Refugio, especially Refugio High School,” said Paulson.

One of Paulson’s passions is music. Why not choose as his Eagle Scout project collecting used music instruments for the Refugio High School band? He approached the band director at Refugio High School, explained what he wanted to do for the band. “He was very excited about the chance to receive the instruments,” said Paulson. “The school has a marching band, not very big, but they lost many of the instruments because of Harvey.”

“John approached me if the church would be open to be a collection point for the instruments for one weekend in August,” said Liz Adams, receptionist and facility manager for St. Faustina. “He explained how collecting the instruments was his Eagle Scout Project.”

A second collection facility was the Community Center in Cinco Southwest on Spring Green Ave.

St. Faustina Catholic Church has been in Fulshear for three years, in the present building about a year and a half. “When we began, we celebrated Sunday mass at Hubenak Elementary,” said Adams. The new church building, located at 28102 FM 1093 in Fulshear, was completed about a year-and-a-half ago, Church membership, according to Adams, is a little over 3,000 members.

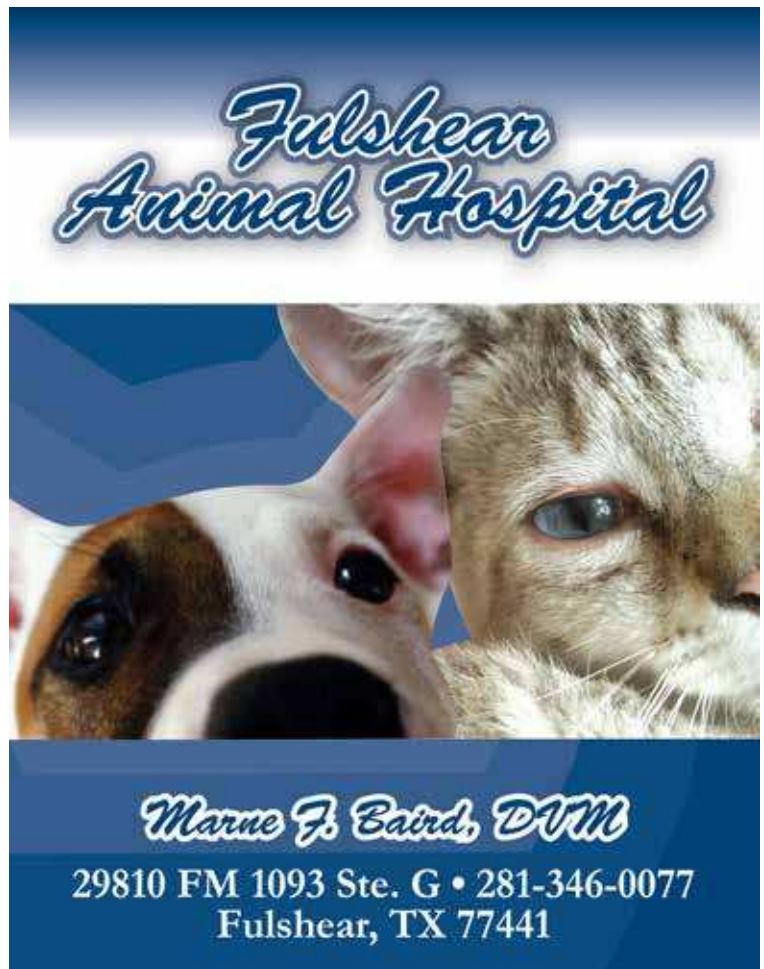
Adams explained that the church has had other scouts, young men maybe two or three from other churches, but live in the Fulshear striving toward their Eagle Scout Badges. “We often

allow them to do their projects here.” St. Faustina sponsors Boy Scout Troop 106, a new Troop that hasn’t had their scouts far enough along to be working on Eagle Scout yet. Paulson is a member of Troop 1103, Trinity Baptist Church.

“He was trying to get the word out to as many people possible,” said his mother, Katy. “It seems like a lot of people have instruments put away they don’t use anymore.” Early on in his instrument collection, he had four instruments given – a couple of saxophones, clarinet and trumpet. John’s music collection officially closed Sept. 15.

Rousing marching band music will again be heard from the football field at Refugio High School because of the efforts of John Paulson and St. Faustina Catholic Church.

“We are presented so many opportunities to help people,” said Paulson. “I don’t want to do it for attention, but just be able to help somebody’s life be better.” More information on donating musical instruments can be obtained by emailing John at johnny.paulson26@gmail.com. Any extra instruments collected will be donated to www.musicdoinggood.org, 4203 Yoakum Blvd., Houston.



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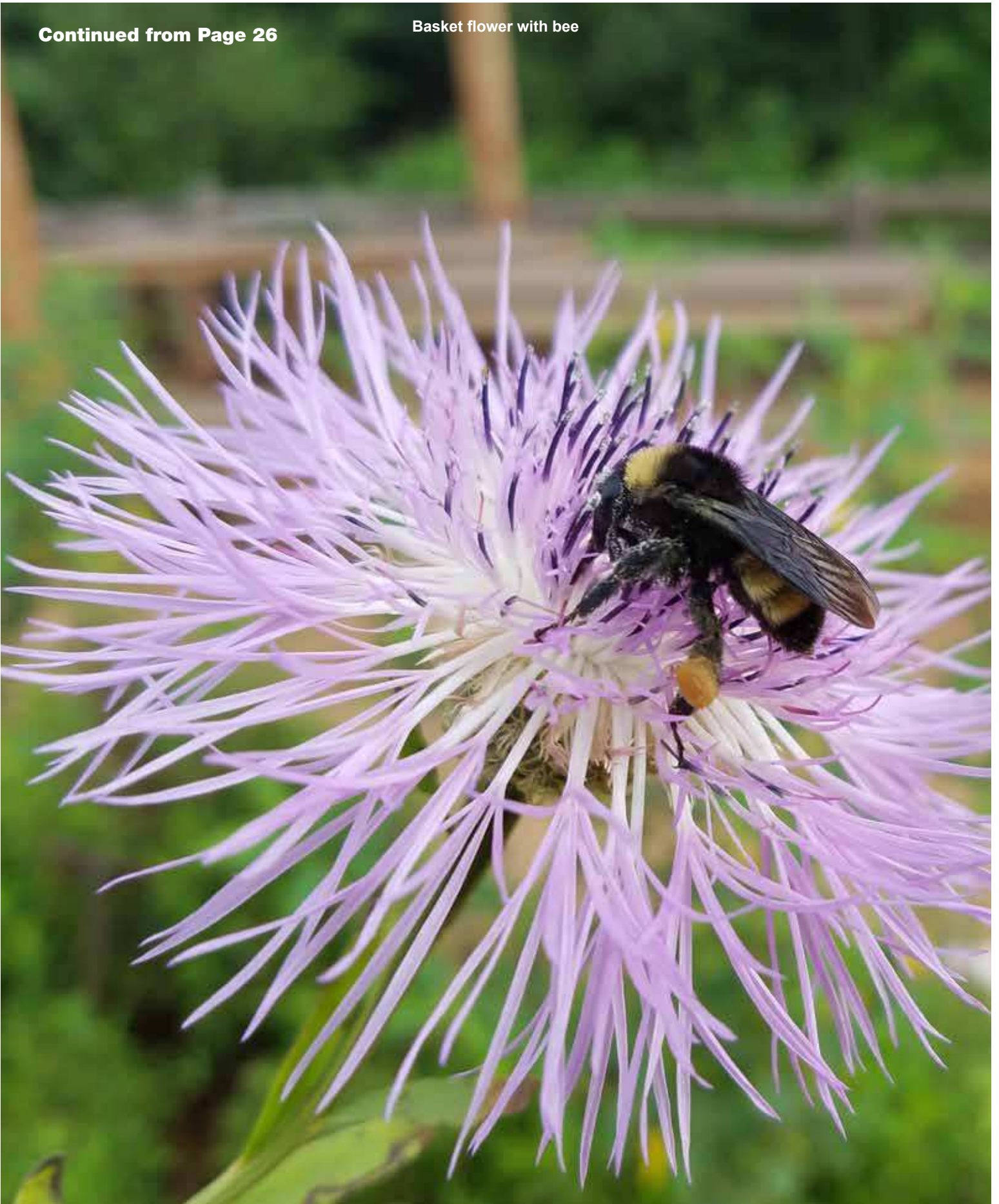
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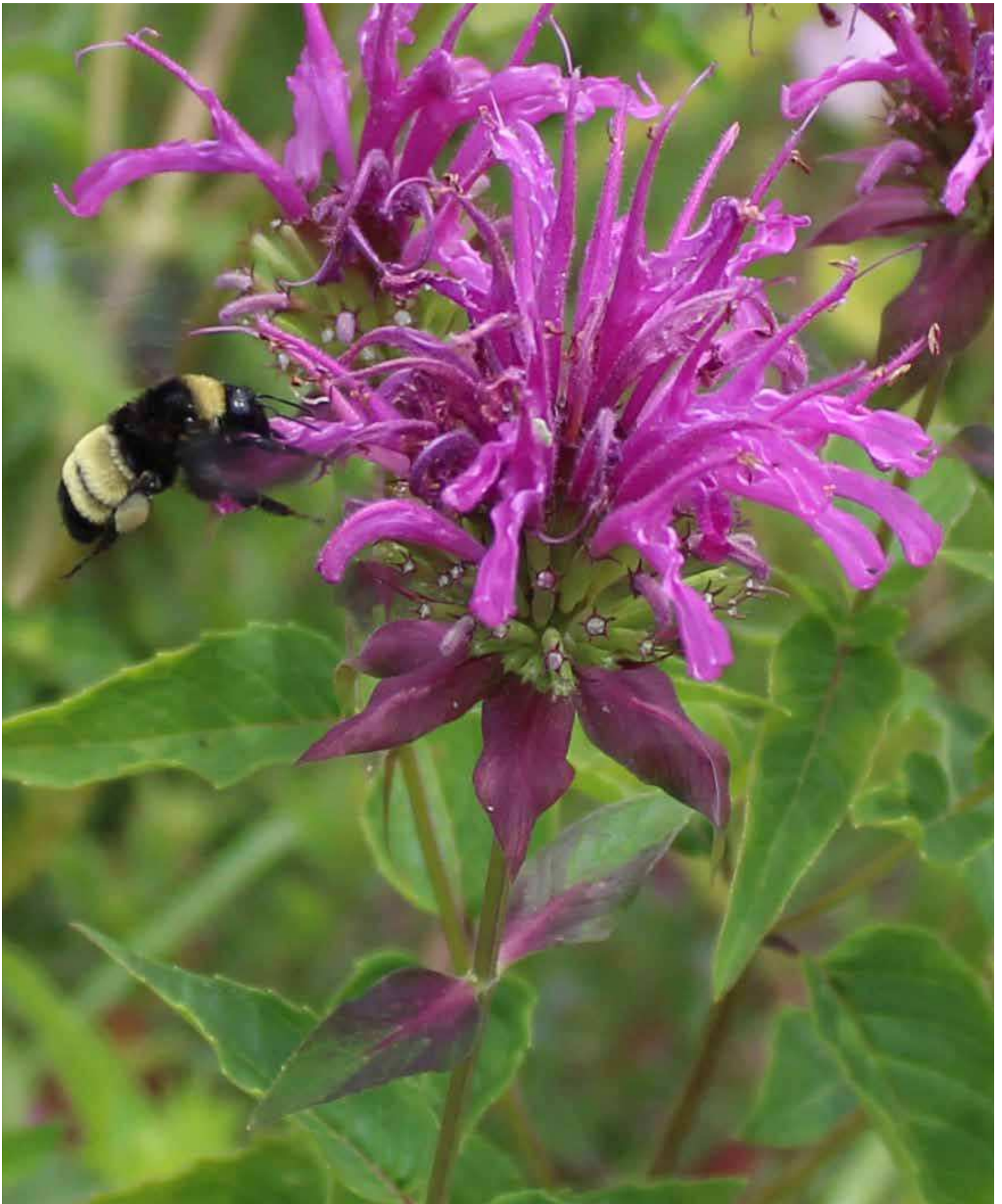


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WHERE ART COMES ALIVE

— KVPAC offers variety of classes at their new location in Fulshear —

by **VALERIE SWEETEN**

Learning the fine arts is a continuous journey, and that's where Encore Arts/Katy Visual Performing Arts Center (KVPAC) comes into play with fall classes offering a wide variety of instruction and experiences.

Coming off a very busy summer, children who attended classes at Encore Arts/KVPAC explored Van Gogh, Minecraft, Dramatic Scene Study, Acting, Playing the Perfect Villian, and participated in The Addams Family-The Musical production.

Encore Arts/KVPAC, which recently moved as a result of Hurricane Harvey, is now located at 7926 FM 359 in Fulshear. Their dedicated management team has a full schedule onboard for the area with dynamic arts-based classes and events all starting Sept. 12.

Registration is currently underway. A minimum of three enrolled for all art and theatre classes is required. This fall's lineup has something for every age group.

Join KinderMusic with Whitney Shelton on Wednesdays with Foundations for 0-1 year old at 11:30 a.m., Level 1 for 1-2 year old at 9:30 a.m. and Level 2 for 2-3 year old at 10:30 a.m.

Looking for art? There are classes for that also in all age ranges, including adults.

On Wednesdays, find classes for 1-2 year old at 10:30 a.m. and 2-3 year old at 11:30 a.m. Ages, 6-18, can come after school once a week Monday through Thursday. A shuttle from Huggins Elementary to their location for after school art classes is being arranged. There will be an additional fee for shuttle costs.

Adult classes, ages 18+, will be offered in the afternoon and evening. Times for these are dependent on professional artist schedule availability.

Home school art classes are also available for \$150 per month for ages, 6-13. These are held on in the Mixed Media Studio during the day on Tuesday and Thursday.

Children can take on stage methods with a assortment of theatre classes.

For \$85 a month, Story Book Theatre Classes are available for children ages, 1-2 and 2-3, on Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Ages, 3-5, are scheduled for Tuesday/Thursdays from 1-3 p.m. for \$150 a month.

Open Enrollment Theatre for Jungle Book with rehearsals is held one night a week. Dates to be determined as of yet. There is also Open Enrollment Theatre with a Christmas Theme available as well. Both of these are \$450 each.



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The company is an audition only performance group with rehearsals once a week in the evenings. Fee for this is \$550.

Gregory Magyar, Executive Artistic Director, said many of Encore's instructors are professional artists with degrees in Arts and Theatre.

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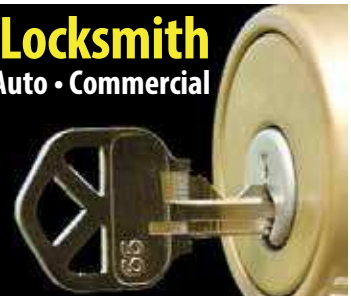
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