

November 2018

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FULSHEAR LIVING *monthly*™

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Annual Fort Bend Co. Fair

Brings entertainment to local community

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**



The carnival-like fair featured rides, games, food, and live music.

Usually when students are given the day off of school, it's for a national or religious holiday. Many might argue that the Fort Bend Co. Fair meets both those criteria, but regardless, it is an indication of the cultural significance of the fair that both Fort Bend ISD and Lamar CISD gave students Sept. 28 off of school to attend.

There's no arguing the importance of the fair. Each year thousands of fairgoers flock to the event. The annual fair has run for 82 years now, making it the largest fair in Fulshear, Richmond and Rosenberg combined.

This year the fair was open from Sept. 28 through Oct. 7. On Sept. 28, the day all schools in the districts were closed, students were offered free admission. Gemma Waller, age 9, was excited to have the day off school and free admission to the fair. "I really wanted to go to the fair, and we got off school for it, and then it didn't cost any money to come, so it was perfect," she said. Her mother Michelle added, "She looks forward to this all year. Everyone does."

Each morning lines for the fair trailed through the fairgrounds as visitors eagerly awaited admittance to the carnival-like fair. And it's no wonder: with attractions like roller coasters, ferris wheels, games and rides, the fair brought a pop-up theme park to their backyard.

There were plenty of less adrenaline-inducing activities as well. More than 500 vendors set up booths at the fair. For patrons interested in arts and crafts, there was an indoor showroom with jewelry, apparel, baked goods and decor.

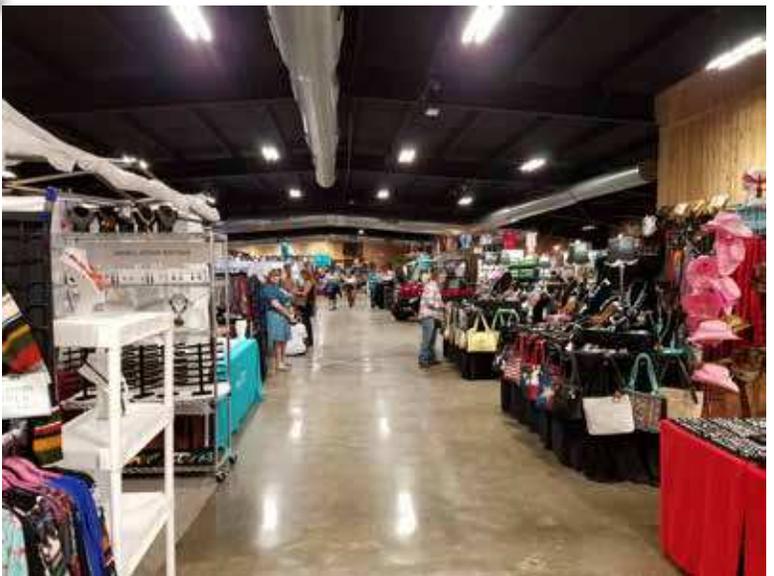
The fair also had live music in every genre from country singers to 80s cover bands. Popular country music station 93Q was on-hand as well, playing music for patrons queued at the gate.

While the fair is best known for the fun it brings the community, it has a noble purpose. Funds from the Fort Bend Co. Fair support local youth programs, agriculture and education. Since 1979, the Fort Bend Co. Fair has given out \$1,953,000 in support of education and scholarships.





The fair had an indoor market for vendors selling arts, crafts, apparel, decor and home goods.



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The carnival-like fair featured rides, games, food, and live music.




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LEFT: The 'Honky Tonk' was actually an obstacle course for kids in disguise.

ABOVE: Country music station 93Q played their radio broadcast for visitors waiting at the gate.



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Visitors to the AG'tivity Barn watched as chicks hatched from their eggs.

Youngsters learn about agriculture in AG'tivity Barn

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

The Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension program has a commitment to teaching young children about all things agricultural and aquacultural.

AgriLIFE set up an area at the Fort Bend Co. Fair to display animals and educational resources. The "AG'tivity Barn" featured more than 20 agricultural, farming industry and aquacultural exhibits. Ducklings clustered together in a simulated duck pond. The Texas Parks and Wildlife donated a "touch tank" filled with local fish and aquatic animals.

In one pen, children watched chicks as they hatched from their eggs. In the next exhibit over, chicks hopped around under heating lamps. And at the end of the row, full-grown chickens clucked in a fenced-in corral. The three exhibits explained the life-cycle of chickens and poultry.

The AG'tivity barn was both educational and fun. Agricultural experts were on hand to answer questions about the animals and local wildlife, but the children also got to hug the AgriLIFE Extension mascot pig.

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Ducklings soak up warmth under their heat lamp in the 'duck pond' exhibit.



The AG'tivity Barn was educational but also fun. The AgriLIFE mascot walked through the 'barn' greeting and hugging children.



The Texas Parks and Wildlife set up an aquaculture fish tank featuring local fish and aquatic animals.



Children enjoyed seeing the chicks in an exhibit on poultry life cycles.

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Children could read about bird life-cycles in the quail exhibit, which featured live quail and a poster explaining the egg-to-adult process.



The AG'tivity Barn featured more than 20 exhibits on agriculture, aquaculture, wildlife and farming.



The AG'tivity Barn is part of the Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Program.

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Hard work pays off for FFA & 4-H youths at **FORT BEND COUNTY LIVESTOCK SHOW & AUCTION**



FROM RIGHT: Abi Navarre, Allison Pavlik, and Madi Navarre show off heifers Autumn and Callie at the Fort Bend Co. Livestock Show and Auction. The girls hoped to sell the animals for scholarship money.

Story & Photos by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

The Fort Bend Co. Livestock Show and Auction is the largest scholarship program in the area. The 82nd Annual Fort Bend Co. Livestock Show and Auction took place Sept. 28 through Oct. 6. Every farm animal in the spectrum was judged, from one pound chickens to one ton steers.

In the program, children from local FFA and 4-H clubs purchase a baby or young animal and raise it for several months. They raise the animal with meticulous care and attention. When the annual show rolls around, the livestock is judged. The animals are then sold, and the children get to keep the money for scholarships or the purchase of another animal.

Madi Navarre, age 13, and her sister Abi, age 12, each raised a heifer for the fair. Madi got her heifer, "Callie" in May. She explained, "It's a lot of work. You have to get up every morning to take care of them, and then in the afternoon you have to walk them. You have to make sure you have a good bond with them. Then you get them ready for the show."

Abi hopes that her heifer, "Autumn" will do well in the judging and earn her money for a scholarship. "The scholarships help you later in life, or you can put them towards another animal for next year," she said.

The children know they will make a profit from the animals. The question is how much. The animals are auctioned, and the bidding depends on how the animal ranks when it is judged. Madi said, "You're going to make sale anyway because someone will bid on them and you get to keep the money. The fair keeps a part of that money, and then the rest you get to keep."

Raising a bovine from a calf is no small task, but the girls embraced the challenge and take pride in their work. They're adolescents, but their knowledge of the care and training of the animals is extensive. For Madi, the hardest part of raising the heifer was getting her used to being in a halter. "Once they're halter-broken, you can walk them on a leash, and that's really important. But they don't like the halters at first," she said.



Even one-pound chickens were featured at the show.

The reward for their hard work comes at the fair. "My favorite part is definitely this part, when you get to go to the fair and show off all the hard work," Madi said.

Madi and Abi's friend Allison Pavlik is not a member of the 4-H club, but she still loves coming to the fair, especially since it means supporting her friends. "I've been to their house and seen all the work they do with the cows. It's really great to come see their hard work pay off," said Pavlik.

There were many other animals represented at the fair as well. Wyatt Boyd, age 16, is a member of the Foster High School FFA. Boyd showed his goat, "Patches" at the fair. Patches only has one eye, but Boyd was not concerned about his chances of winning with a one-eyed goat. "There was an accident when he was born," Boyd said, "but I still chose him to be mine because I just loved him." He added laughing, "I'm glad they don't judge him based on his head. He will be judged on his body and how big he is and just generally how well I've taken care of him."

Patches was meticulously groomed for the competition. Boyd spent nearly two hours preparing Patches for the show. He was washed, brushed, and even blow-dried before the competition, but the prize is worth the effort. Boyd planned to use the money he earned from the sale of Patches to put towards another animal for next year.

Raising a heifer or goat is a considerable amount of work and requires a certain degree of experience, but many of the animals at the fair are good for beginner-level future farmers. Brooke Hydo, age 12, showed her rabbits at the fair. Brooke and her mother, Terry,



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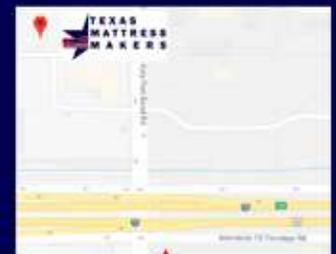
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snuggled with some of the rabbits after the judging, where Brooke was unfortunately eliminated. "The judge based her decision on meat quality, but she was bred for show, so I got taken out really quickly," Brooke said with a light-hearted shrug. "I'll still make money from the sale, just not as much as I was hoping."

Raising rabbits presents different struggles than raising cattle, but many might argue that the small, cuddly animals are a harder creature to care for, given that the children are not allowed to bond with them. Brooke explained, "The hardest thing is not petting them."

Once judging ended, Brooke and Terry were able to snuggle the rabbits, but for the many months leading up to the competition, Brooke couldn't give them affection. "One of the things you get judged for is whether or not the rabbits 'startle' when the judges grab them," she said. "If the rabbits have been held and cuddled, they won't react when a judge grabs them. So that's how the judges tell if you've done your job raising them without showing them any love."

To help Brooke stay emotionally disconnected from her rabbits, she did not name them. "This is 'Rabbit B'," she said, holding up the small creature. "Not naming them helps me not get attached to her."

Terry acknowledged her daughter's hard work and the responsibility she learned from the experience. "She gets up at 5 a.m. to take care of them every day. She did all the work herself. We never did any of it for her," Terry said.

And there is much more to the FFA program than just raising an animal. "She has to keep a log every day where she recorded how much they weigh and how much she feeds them. It's her responsibility, and it's part of the FFA program."

The Fort Bend Co. Livestock Show and Auction gave out \$180,000 in scholarships in 2018. To date, the program has given \$1,953,000 to FFA and 4-H youth participants.



The show also featured unique and carefully bred variations of typical livestock, like this white turkey.

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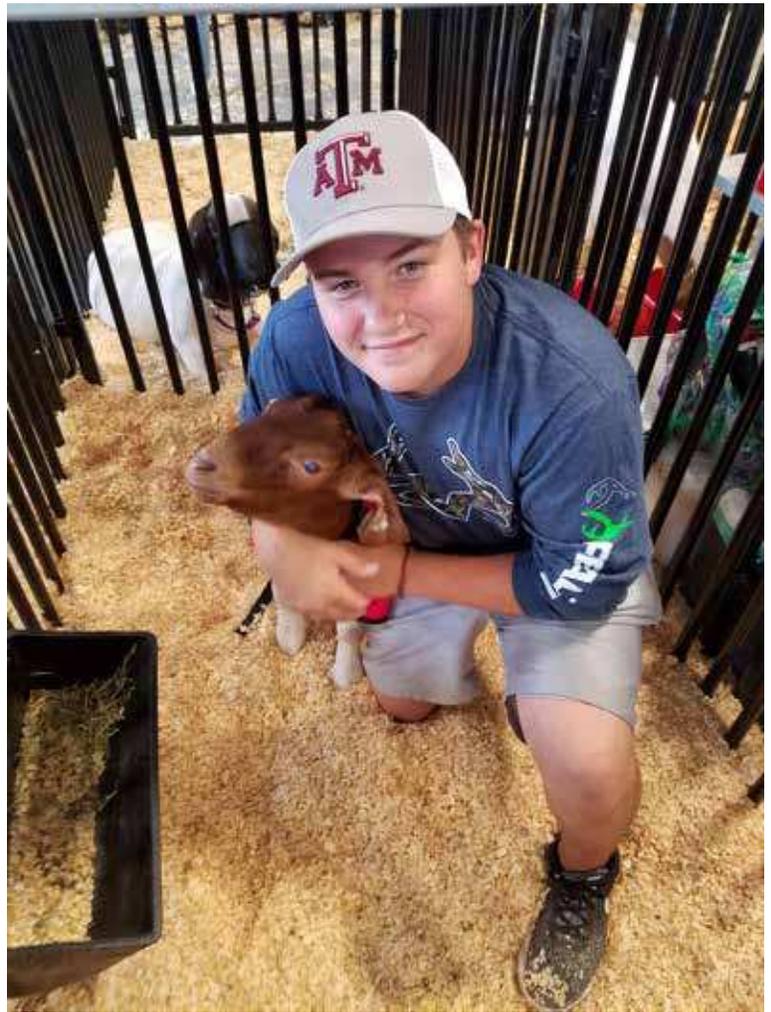


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Brooke Hydo exhibited 'Rabbit B' at the show. The hardest part of raising rabbits was not getting attached to them.



Wyatt Boyd and his one-eyed goat, Patches waited for the goat judging. Patches was injured at birth, but judges only consider the body of the animal in the contest.



Judges look over the rabbit who made it to the final round of judging.



The meticulously-groomed goats awaited their turn for judging in small pens.

ROTARY CLUB *partners with* CHARITY — to help single mothers out of homelessness —

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

After the devastation of Hurricane Harvey in 2017, Mely *, found herself without a place to live. Her home was destroyed in the storm along with all her family's belonging.

Afraid and uncertain, the single mother of four turned to Abigail's Place, a local charity that provides displaced single mothers with emergency or temporary housing or helps them rebuild their homes. "I was fearful of the future; not knowing how I was going to provide shelter, food, clothes, safety and necessities for all five of us on my part time income," she recalled.

The organization took her in, helped her with a downpayment on a rental property, furnished the new home and helped provide the family with food and other necessities. "My children now thrive in the safety and comfort of our own home. Shortly thereafter I was able to successfully finish school and am now able to provide for my children and myself," Mely recalled.

Shereen Sampson founded Abigail's Place in January of 2016. Sampson saw a need in her community for a place where single mothers could turn in times of need. Some women come to Abigail's place when they are displaced due to unforeseen circumstances like Hurricane Harvey. Other times they are seeking help in a financial or emotional crisis. Some are even fleeing domestic violence. Whatever the circumstances, Abigail's Place serves single mothers in Fort Bend County who are facing homelessness.

Nancy * came to Abigail's Place after she was laid off from her job in the oil industry and could not find another job. "I kept paying my mortgage for a long time, and eventually I ran out of



FROM RIGHT: Shereen Sampson, founder of Abigail's Place, Sussan Martinez and Larry Pittman from the Richmond Rotary, Jose and Vilma Penate, owners of Viva Plus Furniture and Karen Bell of Richmond Rotary. The Rotary club purchased \$5,000 in furniture and home goods for single mothers displaced in Hurricane Harvey. *Photo courtesy of the Richmond Rotary Club*

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PARK DEDICATION HELD GENEROUS DONATION

by **VALERIE SWEETEN**

Generations of the community will soon have the chance to enjoy the generous donation of 68 acres of land for the Abe and Lizzy Daily Park that was dedicated in early October 2018.

Dr. Harold Daily, his wife, Joyce and their daughter, Laura generously donated the land in Simonton in north Fort Bend County. The dedication was held at 4026 Nails Road in Simonton and is the first step in park construction. Multiple generations of the Daily family were attendance for the event. The donation of the land was made two years ago.

Daily, a native of Simonton, gave the land for the specific intent of establishing a nature preserve and park. Daily stated he has many sentimental recollections of growing up in his hometown with family and friends.

"I have a great attachment to the spacious outdoors that provided me with everyday adventures," Daily said. "The mystery of watching crops being planted, and then watching their growth until harvest time. The good times and fond memories while having picnics on this land with its beautiful pecan and oak trees, both with family and with fellow physicians while in training."

The Abe and Lizzy Daily Park dedication is a wonderful tribute to his parents and their dedication to family Daily stated.

"I realize I will not live forever. I want keep this land with our

name as a memorial to my loving parents who gave of themselves to see that I had the opportunity to grow into the person I am today," said Daily.

It was the early 1900's when Abe and Lizzie Daily emigrated from Eastern Europe to escape persecution and seek a better life in America. By 1915, they married and settled in Simonton. Abe Daily operated the Daily Brothers General Store, and also farmed the land. Together the Dailys raised five children in Simonton. Their children are Sylvia, Robbie, Harold, Abe Jr. and Dorothy.

Carol Beck-Edgar, APR with Edge Communications said the donation of the land is an important asset for the community.

"It provides recreational opportunities that are currently not available, especially sports fields, which will make it so much easier for local families to participate in organized sports. Everyone we have talked to is very excited about the new park," Beck-Edgar said.

The park is slated to include numerous baseball diamonds, a nature preserve along the land bordering the Brazos River as well as two soccer fields.

Among the many attendees for the dedication were Mayor of Simonton, Laurie Boudreaux, County Judge, Robert Hebert, Commissioner W.A. "Andy" Meyers, State Representative, John Zerwas, Fort Bend County Sheriff, Troy E. Nehls, and Major Chad Norvell, Sheriff's Office were present for the dedication.

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LOCAL CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR

educates kids on pet ownership & supports animal welfare charities

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**



Terri Sabol and her husband Bret adopted Oscar and Emmy from a local animal shelter. All four of them are characters in Sabol's books.



Terri Sabol, a former teacher, is dedicated to educating children and helping them become compassionate people.

As a retired Fort Bend ISD teacher, Terri Sabol has a natural desire to want to educate children and help them grow to become compassionate adults. As an animal-lover, she knows the importance of teaching future generations about kindness to animals and responsible pet ownership. Her children's book series blends the two as she chronicles the lives and adventures of two rescue cats, Oscar and Emmy.

The feline characters are based on and named for Sabol's personal cats, who are also Oscar and Emmy. Sabol's first book, "Oscar and Emmy Get Rescued" was released in 2016. The book tells the story of how the cats were found as stray kittens, taken in by an animal shelter and then adopted into loving homes.

Sabol told their story exactly as it happened. As a frequent animal shelter volunteer, she came upon the brother and sister kittens one day when she was working. "I was doing a volunteer shift at Sugar Land Animal Services, and I saw them and just immediately fell in love with them, and I knew I had to adopt them together," said Sabol.

Her Oscar and Emmy were found and rescued in the same manner as the cats in the story. The cats in the book even get adopted by a couple named "Terry" and "Bret" (Sabol's husband's name). Sabol only made one change: she added two children characters to the story.

"I don't have any children," she explained, "but I knew that if I used kids in the story, children would find it more relatable." So the twin brother and sister characters "Abby" and "Charlie" joined the story as part of the family that adopts Oscar and Emmy.

Sabol's years of teaching enabled her to write the story in a way that tells the often-harsh truths about animal rescue in a way that is appropriate and educational for small children. "The book not only showcases these two kittens, it also educates children and adults on the rescue process and promotes pet adoption," said Sabol.

Because animal rescue and welfare is so important to Sabol, she donated a portion of her book sales to local animal rescue groups such as Jamie's Animal Rescue in Richmond and Save a Purrfect Cat Rescue in Houston. She also donated a portion to Angel's Haven Animal Rescue in Alabama. For her efforts in animal services, Sabol was presented with "The Hensley Award" by the City of Sugar Land.

Sabol often visits local schools to read her book to students and to do book signings. When Hurricane Harvey hit, Sabol donated one dollar from every book she sold back to the schools that had been flooded.

On Sept. 27, Sabol's second book in the Oscar and Emmy saga debuted. Her newest book is called "Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane" which follows Oscar and Emmy as they endure the trauma and upheaval of a hurricane with their family. Sabol was inspired by the devastation of Hurricane Harvey to educate children and their families on hurricane preparedness and pet safety. Sabol attended numerous educational events like the Fort Bend Pets Alive Hurricane Preparedness Pet Symposium for the most complete and up-to-date information on natural disaster preparation post-Harvey.

"Hurricane Harvey hit when I was planning to write a second Oscar and Emmy book," said Sabol. "The storm was so horrible and left so many pets separated from their owners and displaced. So I know that was going to be the subject for my next book: To try to help educate people on what to do in a natural disaster."

"Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane" is dedicated to Friends for Life, a no-kill animal shelter in Houston. The inscription reads, "For any individuals or animal welfare groups that go above and beyond during natural disasters, especially Friends for Life during Hurricane Harvey." Friends for Life was instrumental in the Hurricane Harvey animal rescue efforts. The rescue sheltered over 2,500 animals at the George R. Brown Convention Center

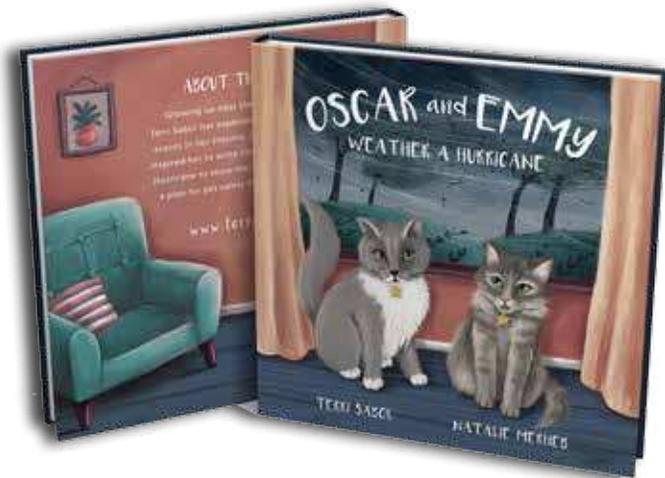
during the storm.

Sabol is also donating one dollar from the sale of every book to Friends for Life. She also had a book signing at the shelter on Oct. 28 as part of her commitment to supporting animal rescue.

Sabol plans to write many more books in the Oscar and Emmy series. “There are just so many topics you can cover when it comes to owning a pet and animal welfare. I want to teach kids about compassion towards animals and the importance of adoption. When it comes to educating kids, there’s really no end to the stories. There’s so much for them to learn,” she said.

Sabol has retired from teaching, but she is still educating children in a classroom setting. Sabol is currently working on a curriculum supplement to go along with her books for teachers who want to integrate it into a science lesson. “Teachers can download the lesson to accompany a weather unit to go with the book,” she explained.

Both Sabol’s books, “Oscar and Emmy Get Rescued” and “Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane” are available for purchase on Amazon.com.



Sabol was inspired to write 'Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane' after Hurricane Harvey.



Terri Sabol won the Hensley Award from the City of Sugar Land for her work in animal welfare. A percentage of all her book sales benefit animal shelters.

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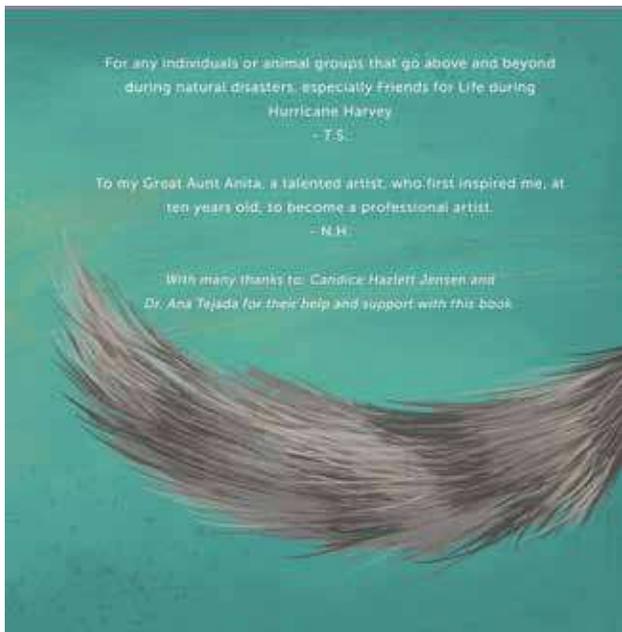
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That night, Mom and Dad take out two emergency kit boxes. The twins read the lists of items out loud, while Mom and Dad replace the expired food. Abby says, "I love that Oscar and Emmy have their own emergency kit. Animals have to be prepared too!" As Emmy sniffs one of the boxes, Oscar jumps in the other.

Sabol's newest book details how to prepare pets for a hurricane.



Sabol dedicated 'Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane' to Friends for Life Animal Shelter, a no-kill shelter that spearheaded the pet relief work at the George R. Brown Convention.



Sabol reading her book. Sabol's newest book, 'Oscar and Emmy Weather a Hurricane' teaches kids how to prepare their pets for a natural disaster.



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SOCIAL CONNECTIONS CLUB

helps teens with autism thrive in social settings

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**



The Texana broke ground on their new facilities earlier this year. While the buildings are still under construction, the center has still been able to impact the lives of people with autism due to the support of the Fulshear community.

Daily social interactions are challenging enough for teenagers, but for teens with autism, navigating social situations is even more daunting. People with autism often struggle with social settings because they lack a natural ability to socialize.

The Texana Center is a non-profit organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities or autism, and it recently broke ground on a new location in Fulshear. There are approximately 10,400 children in Fort Bend County with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and these children are woefully underserved due to a lack of treatment facilities. The new center will accommodate the needs of people with autism in Fulshear, but construction on the new facilities is still under way.

The building is not yet complete, but the lack of facilities hasn't stopped the Texana Center from meeting the needs of teenagers with autism in the Fulshear area.

The Social Connections Club is a special program through Texana designed to enable teens with autism to thrive in social settings. The teenagers meet once a week under the guidance of a licensed behavioral therapist and work through social scenarios that are normally a challenge for people with autism.

Andi Wallis, Community Relations Manager at Texana explained, "Teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 who have an autism diagnosis or related condition can attend this new program. They work on conversation skills, they make friends, they go on outings, and they've even taken field trips."

While the Texana Center facilities are still under construction, the Fulshear community has stepped in to offer support- and meeting locations - for the program. Even though the building isn't completed yet, the community is helping Texana improve the lives of its clients. Parkway Fellowship church is letting

Texana use two of its classrooms until Texana can open the first building of its new campus. Cross Creek Ranch also donates its conference room for Social Connections Club to meet.

Wallis credits the Fulshear community for their support. "We've been very fortunate to have community partners who will help us while we're still completing our building. We're able to start the programs because of our partnerships with Cross Creek Ranch and Parkway Fellowship. They've enabled us to do what we want to do in the community even though we don't have a building yet," she said.

The Social Connections Club is designed to be fun for the teenagers, but it is an edifying experience as well. David Whitcher is the manager of the Behavior Improvement Center at Texana.

One of Wallis' favorite success stories from the program is one of a young man who never wanted to leave his home because of his discomfort in social settings. "At the end of program he actually coordinated to have a party at his house. He invited everyone from the program. He made a list, and set up bringing food and drinks. And he invited the whole group over to have a party, which was the kind of thing that would have been way out of his comfort zone. And he was able to do it as a result of this program," Wallis said.

One of the biggest problems people with autism have is their struggle with social skills. In the Social Communications Club, Texana therapists work to help their clients become comfortable in a group setting. Interactions that seem mundane to people without autism can be extremely challenging to individuals with the condition.

So while getting together and playing games, watching sports or carrying on light conversation may seem simple to most people, for people with autism, these are difficult social situations.

Licensed behavior analyst Brandt Kail is in charge of facilitating the Social Connections Club. Kail said, "Lately we've been covering dealing with difficult people. We're teaching them how to tell the difference between 'justified anger' and 'unjustified anger'. We're learning to be assertive instead of aggressive. Later we're going to start talking about job skills."

The main focus of the program is meant to be educational, but Kail noted that if the experience is not also fun, the youths won't want to attend. "They're high school kids, and like any high school kids, if they didn't want to be there, I doubt they'd continue to show up. So it's got to be entertaining to them," he laughed.

Kail has been impressed by the improvements he has seen in his young charges. Kids who started the program with a reluctance to speak to anyone quickly form bonds and friendships with other teens in the program. Said Kail: "It's really great to see a kid who first made remarks like 'I don't want to be here' later become the kid who's saving seats for his friends."

Kail is grateful to the Fulshear community for enabling Texana to help teens with autism even though Texana's facilities are under construction. Said Kail: "The response from the Fulshear Community has been fantastic. Everyone we've seen since we've been out here has just been really welcoming and very appreciative of the work we're doing here."

Wallis agreed, "The entire community of Fulshear has been

really welcoming."

As the Texana Center expands, Kail looks forward to the opportunity to help more teens with autism live more fulfilling lives because of the social skills they learned through the Social Connections Club. "The reward is when you see all the lives that you change. And it's not just the people you work with whose lives are impacted by the work we do. It's their families and the whole community," said Kail.



The Texana Center presented Cross Creek Ranch with the 'Community Supporter of the Year' award for their contributions to the center. In addition to offering their meeting space for the Social Connections Club, they've also raised money for the non-profit.



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IMAGINATIVE DISHES

fueled from chef's passion

by **VALERIE SWEETEN**



There's no denying your life's passion, which is exactly what Chef Bradley Pitre has shown over and over again in cooking and creating dishes for local residents.

From Fulshear at the now closed Mockingbird Texas Grill to his former stint at Clancy's Public House in Richmond, Pitre has been entertaining palates for quite a while. Before that diners enjoyed his creations at La Escondida Mexican Grill in Missouri City and Bee's Creek Bar and Grill in Sienna Parkway.

His latest foodie outreach endeavor is with his food truck, CajunMadeFood.com that is currently getting a makeover for a new rebranding into *Geaux Texan*. Pitre and partner Jeff Heil's new concept will showcase Cajun and Texan style foods classics.

"We'll have Tex Mex, barbecue, gumbo, and etouffee. Classic dishes that are popular. I go big or go home when I cook. I try to be as crazy as I can be," Pitre said.

At Mockingbird Texas Grill, some of his more well-known dishes were Shrimp and Grits, Shrimp Pitre and Cajun Chicken Cordon Bleu.

Pitre, who was born and raised in Sugar Land, grew up with a family that was always in the kitchen. He happened to join alongside and soaked it all in which led to his education at the Art Institute of Houston to study Culinary Arts.

His goal was to see folks dive into his food wholeheartedly, and that's how he became inspired.

Working his way up through various restaurants gave Pitre insight into restaurant management, supply and demand of products and dishes, and the long hours of dedication needed to

make a restaurant a success. Through all of this, he wasn't ever deterred.

"It's more than a passion for cooking," Pitre said. "I love serving people and seeing people happy with the product."

So, what is the secret behind Pitre's imaginative dishes? It's his love for high quality ingredients packed with incomparable taste.

"It's all about flavor. I love to use pork products. I like the wow factor. When you take a bite of it, it's like 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe the flavors in my mouth.' Those are the things I live for. I'm definitely known for my Shrimp and Grits. It was my first Special, but then I couldn't take it off the menu," Pitre said.

His Shrimp and Grits includes Aidell's Tasso Ham, which Pitre said has a heavy spiced crust that melts into his gravy. He also said he makes a really good Chicken Fried Steak, and that's from his long used finessed technique with the flour and breading.

With his *Geaux Texan* food truck, Pitre is striving to bring even more to the table with his creations.

"I'll continue to be innovative. I'm definitely going to come with new ideas and play with things over the holidays, mostly because food is involved. I'll be at all the Fulshear events. We're very excited," he said.

Find Pitre at upcoming community events, the Fulshear Farmer's Market and all his social media at Instagram @ [cajunmadefoodsfoodtruck](https://www.instagram.com/cajunmadefoodsfoodtruck), Facebook @ [mockingbirdcajunmadefoodtruck](https://www.facebook.com/mockingbirdcajunmadefoodtruck) and through email at cajunmadefoodschefbrad@gmail.com.



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KEEP TEXAS BEAUTIFUL

awards \$8,885 grant to Weston Lakes

by **TOM BEHRENS**



Members of the Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful Board are busy looking for ways to beautify Westin Lakes.

A year after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Weston Lakes community, Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) has recognized Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful as a recipient of the Rebuilding Texas Grants program. Through KTB's partnership with Keep America Beautiful and sponsorships from Revolver Brewing, Waste Management and Chevron, KTB will provide nine affiliate communities with funds to continue to rebuild and restore their public spaces after the destruction caused by the storm.

The grant for Weston Lakes is \$8,885.

"With all the news stories focusing on the anniversary of Hurricane Harvey, this award is most certainly a bright spot for us all" said Carol Fairbanks, executive director of Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful.

The funds will support Weston Lakes efforts to restore and

improve Pecan Park by planting Live Oaks and Grape Myrtles within the park and walking trail, as well as Louisiana Irises along the banks of Pecan Lake to slow down the erosion process.

Pecan Park was flooded during Hurricane Harvey. "Our wildflower garden was over there," said Fairbanks. "We will also be putting in a monarch butterfly way station, planting trees. We will be basically just cleaning it up, a lot of debris, planting trees, putting in a lot of plants, putting in artificial fish habitat in Pecan Lake."

Fairbanks said Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful will be working with Fall Sweep (www.ktb.org), a program connected to Keep Texas Beautiful. "Last year we did our Fall Sweep for the houses affected by the Hurricane," said Fairbanks. "This year we will be using Fall Sweep and the grant, putting the two together."

Fall Sweep supplies include trash and recycle bags, nitrile and

work gloves.

According to Fairbanks there are two lakes within Weston Lakes; Pecan Lake on the west side of Weston Lakes and Oxbow Lake on the east side. Oxbow Lake is shared with the Fulshear community of Fulbrook. "Pecan Lake Park is a beautiful, tucked away park," said Fairbanks. "It has softball backstop, a walking trail, picnic benches and a gazebo, but it's been beaten up by the hurricane."

The artificial fish habitat is described as recycled material in five-gallon recycled buckets. "We have fish in our area," said Fairbanks. "We need a place for the small fish to be safe. With our plants being swept away from the banks, the fish have no place to hide. The buckets are kind of alien looking ... really interesting."

The five-gallon bucket sinks to the bottom of the lake. In the bucket will be reclaimed PVC, like a plastic tree. "It will enable small fish a place to hide. It helps aerate the water, increase fish habitat ... many benefits," said Fairbanks. "Our plan is go in and give the entire park some love."

Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful is a 501(c)3 volunteer organization, co-sponsored by the Weston Lakes Women's Association and Garden Club, whose goal it is to reach into every segment of the City of Weston Lakes. The volunteers are residents of all ages, youth groups, community clubs, the POA, and civic, public and private sector organizations.

"Our goal is to organize, as volunteers, and implement cleanup and educational programs to prevent litter, reduce trash, and beautify our community and natural environment, all to raise the pride level of our community," said Fairbanks. "We are simply a group of caring resident volunteers pulling together to make our community environment even better."



This photo shows Pecan Lake and Park before and after. Pecan Park will have trees and plants planted. Pecan Lake will have artificial fish habitat placed in the lake.

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Huggins Elementary & Leaman Junior High

Growing, Learning & Having Fun

by **TOM BEHRENS**



Huggins and Leaman have both grown in attendance this school year. Huggins from 630 to 705 and Leaman from 975 to 1,140.

Growth means hiring more staff while keeping classes small. Leaman is now offering more different class selections for the students. “Now I have two Spanish teachers instead of one,” said Leaman Principal, Michael Semmier. “I have two theater teachers, three band teachers. I have two art teachers. We are offering business classes, offering career classes in hospitality, how to run restaurants and hotels We create our own yearbook. We can offer Spanish 1 and 2. We share a French teacher ... all at a junior high school and class sizes are smaller.”

Several learning and fun activities are planned during the fall, especially at Huggins Elementary

Principal Janice Harvey at Huggins shared that Texas Recovery Together visited the school. “The kids learned about what normal reactions are to a disaster,” said Harvey. “Our school had displaced families from Hurricane Harvey. The kids saw a lot of that in the neighborhoods and friends, even if they didn’t evacuate.”

The Fun Run, Sept. 27, is a yearly major fund raiser for the school campus. This year it was different from events in past years. It was completely 100 percent volunteer. Huggins parents and friends put together the run and managed it. In the past, a company put together the event, worked at it, and charged for their services.

Ms. Harvey had the unenviable assignment of kissing a pig if the kids made their fund-raising quotas in the Fun Run. She also promised to ride a tricycle through the campus if the goals were met. The Kiss the Pig goal was \$35,000; ride the tricycle goal was \$25,000. Along the way as they secured their promises from

parents, friends, grandparents, etc., the kids earned different individual rewards. Crazy hair day was the first one.

Do the students usually make their fund-raising goals? “Oh yes,” responded Harvey. “They make their quotas every year.”

The kids have fun; it’s a big day for them. There’s music, they are cheered on as they complete laps. Said Harvey: “The kids have enjoyed it. It was implemented before I got here, but this is the first year to do it all through the parents. All the proceeds go to Huggins. We will not pay anybody for anything.”

Another fun and money raising attraction is the carnival, this year on Oct. 20, sponsored by the PTO. The kids wear costumes, there’s a dunking booth and a rock-climbing wall. “Last year we had a mechanical bull and some more of the traditional carnival games, throw rings and a dunking booth,” said Harvey.

Is there a wet dunking for Harvey? “I don’t know yet,” said a laughing Harvey. “There will probably be four different people taking their turn, probably teachers.”

Individual attention, at the student’s level, grow at their pace:

Principal Michael Semmier of Leaman Junior High said Leaman grew in a very good way. In the past school year, the high school and junior high shared a lot of teachers because maybe there wasn’t enough students to have the class. “Maybe the high school had a journalism teacher, and because maybe they didn’t have enough kids, the journalism teacher also taught journalism at Leaman,” said Semmier.

“This year the journalism grew enough that now they have a full-time teacher, and I had to hire a teacher to cover journalism at our level. We started small and grew,” said Semmier. This year, Leaman gained 24 new staff positions. One was a receptionist,



the other were teachers.

“The district was great as they gave me a number of positions in April,” said Semmier. “When we had job fairs and teachers looking to transfer from other schools, I was able to hire the best of the best.”

With the number of new teachers, you might think that Leaman must have lost a few teachers. “We only had two people that left through promotions or moving,” said Semmier. “Twenty-two are new positions, and two were people that left. Most of the new teachers have taught in Katy or Lamar Consolidated at existing campuses.”

Some of the new faculty will be involved in the Science Night at Leaman. “When I was the principal at Brisco Junior High, every year we held a science night where the teachers would put together fun engaging demonstrations and booths to engage parents and students. “Both loved it. We want to continue it here.”

Once a Charger, Always a Charger:

More classes, Science Night, and now Leaman has new art work at the school. Through money from Cross Creek Ranch, the school has two wall Charger paintings this year. “We paid for a company named An Eye for Art to paint the Charger logo on the walls. Everything is hand done, airbrushed,” said Semmier. The painting says, “Once a Charger, Always a Charger.”

“It’s on a huge wall. As you look at it your looking at the High School across the way, a very similar Charger logo is at the High School, looking back at the Junior High. We planned it out so the kids who go to the High School can look at it, and then look back at it from the high school to the Leaman painting, thinking about where it all began. Another one in the Library, has the Charger logo in the middle of a wall, and all around it are words that state exciting in different words.”

Growth is always good. “When you have a lot of kids, you can offer a lot more options.”

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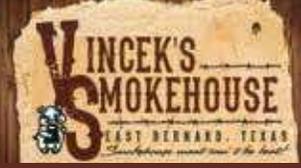
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