

December 2019

FULSHEAR LIVING

monthly

*Merry
Christmas*

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for a jolly holiday

Plus

Hana Mae Brown needs
support to continue
helping people with
special needs



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FULSHEAR LIVING
monthly™

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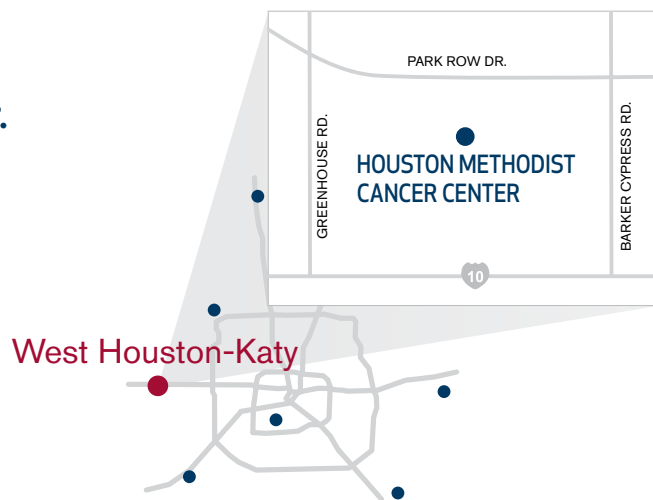
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Ride On Inc. helps young people with special needs

by DENISE ADAMS | dadams@fbherald.com



Hana Mae Brown offers a cube of sugar to one of her therapy horses.

Mornings start early on a farm. There are horses to brush, cats to feed and saddles to polish. It's a familiar ritual for those living on a farm. At one farm near Fulshear, the land is primarily used for therapy for youngsters with autism and special needs.

In 1984, Hana Mae Brown established "Ride On Inc.," a nonprofit hippotherapy program that uses horses to help children with special needs improve their muscle tone, confidence and to give them an opportunity to interact with horses.

Brown worked two jobs and took in rescue horses at her 23-acre farm to keep the program going. She had dedicated volunteers, and people often donated food for the animals. But the main load was Brown's, and she handled all aspects of the facility for over 25 years.

The long hours were worth it when seeing a child with muscular dystrophy riding a horse around the corral or a non-verbal autistic child smiling.

"Each child is different, and I use critical thinking to see what's scaring them," she said.

She worked with children from Royal ISD and those in the Richmond/Rosenberg and Katy areas. She describes her successes with love and pride - a child who was afraid of cats and people but, after nuzzling horses and being led around a pen on a horse, the child could interact with people and was able to handle new situations.

A licensed physical therapist, Brown was floored when she was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer three years ago.

There was no history in her family of breast cancer, but she and her doctors treated the cancer aggressively, resulting in fragile bones and numerous fractures. That same year, she was forced to close Ride On because in addition to cancer treatments, she was in chronic pain and afraid of falling and breaking even more bones.

More than the illness, Brown was sick at heart because she couldn't help children she knew would benefit from the hippotherapy program.

TIME TO REOPEN

After three years of treatment, Brown is now cancer free. A few months ago, Brown decided children needed a program like hers, and made a decision to reopen Ride On. However, she was lacking continuing education hours, CEUs, due to her years of battling cancer.

She asked the Texas Physical Therapist Board if she could get an extension to re-establish her license, but the state declined her request.

"I called the board as I've been a member since 1962, but they said they don't give extensions. They only take your license away," she said. "I told them they can take away my license but not my expertise."

The only way to reopen is to have a licensed occupational therapist or physical therapist head up the organization.

She also needs volunteers who have the physical ability to make sure a child is safe while riding Sammy. Only one child at a time is on horseback, but volunteers must be able to get a child off the horse quickly or help children who cannot move on their own get up on the horse.

Brown plans to serve as an adviser.

"It's so hard when you love what you do but can't do it," she said.

Volunteers are also needed to help with the routine chores associated with horses, such as cleaning the stalls and equipment.

This almost 80-year-old still has the passion and desire to help children who often have few opportunities to interact with animals. Her more than 50 years of experience and expertise can help guide a program that's proven to help children.

All that's needed are partners who believe, as she does, that experience, education, a gentle horse and patient handlers are the keys to unlocking an autistic child's confidence.

"Just having a child on a horse is beneficial," she said.

To help, contact Brown at 713- 416-9848.

Holiday Happenings

A home tour, miracle and festival of lights Christmas celebration are abound in Fort Bend and beyond

Since August the Child Advocates of Fort Bend's Christmas Home Tour Committee was devotedly preparing for its 28th annual Christmas Home Tour happening this month for a simple, but important, reason — because the children need them to.

For the past 28 years, Child Advocates of Fort Bend, a nonprofit agency that advocates for and provides services to abused and neglected children in the county, has acted on its mission to end the cycle of child abuse by providing its Court Appointed Special Advocates Program, Children's Advocacy Center and more than 200 trained community volunteer advocates to children in need.

Since its opening, Child Advocates has served more than 16,500 children.

The agency's home tour event started 28 years ago as a means to raise money to keep the agency's doors open and has since become a Fort Bend County holiday tradition.

"A group of volunteers, many of whom are still involved, opened their homes, decorated them for Christmas, baked some cookies and charged admission in an effort to keep Child Advocates of Fort Bend's doors open," said Lisa Moore, Child Advocates of Fort Bend Development Officer and event chair. "Thanks to those generous ladies and many others who have participated through the years, this event not only kept the doors open, but it has allowed the agency to increase its programming and staff in order to meet the needs of the Fort Bend community."

Since its inception, the Christmas Home Tour has raised more than \$4 million. This year's tour will take place Dec. 13 and 14.

Over the two days of this event, more than 2,000 guests will tour private Fort Bend County homes all decked out for Christmas. The homeowners included in the tour are from Alkire Lake, Sienna Plantation, Sugar Creek and Sweetwater.

"Homeowners are so special to us," Moore said. "We wouldn't have a tour without them. Each year we are able to showcase an assortment of neighborhoods, displaying the variety of Fort Bend County. We try to find a new twist each year to keep the tour fresh. This year, nearly all of the homes are completed renovated."

One ticket allows entry to all homes during tour hours. The Tour runs Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a candlelight showing from 6



Shown with the door swags that she donated for the 6th Annual Wreath raffle is Lin Wooten. From left are Irene Wisner, Wooten and Lisa Moore. Participants in the wreath raffle can choose the wreath that they hope to win.

p.m. to 9 p.m. and Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

More than 1,000 volunteers will help as hosts and hostesses in the homes, serving as entertainers or by baking cookies. While the Home Tour is a spirited community event, it is foremost a fundraiser, with 94 percent of all of the money raised going directly to programs and services that benefit the children served by Child Advocates of Fort Bend.

In 2018, the agency served 2,586 children and families, which was 23 percent higher than the prior year due to a huge increase in reports of child abuse. Nationally, one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the age of 18 and it is estimated that only 1 in 10 ever tells anyone.

"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," said CEO Ruthanne Mefford.

Sponsorships of \$100 - \$10,000 are available. To become a sponsor or for more information, contact Lisa at lmoore@cafb.org.

For more information about Child Advocates of Fort Bend visit www.cafb.org.

—MORE HOLIDAY EVENTS TO ENJOY—

Festival of Lights

The City of Fulshear and the Fulshear Katy Area Chamber of Commerce will be co-hosting the annual "Fulshear Festival of Lights" on Dec. 7 at Fulshear High School from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. The location has been changed from prior years due to the construction in the downtown area and other mobility issues.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will feature Santa Claus, vendors and live music from the band, Nick and the Groove. The band started with a group of teenagers who played together at the



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Story Ideas?

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School of Rock in Clear Lake. All of the band members are between 16 and 19 years old, and in less than a year have garnered the attention of major area events, radio and television outlets, as well as hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube and beyond.

The Festival of Lights Parade will begin at 6 p.m., traveling south on Charger Way, and Santa will arrive during the parade. Festival patrons can meet Santa afterwards.

The YMCA is sponsoring and featuring a large children's area, plus event will also feature vendors — crafts, clothing and jewelry — food trucks and a short Christmas themed fireworks presentation during the evening.

For more information visit www.FulshearKaty.com.

Miracle on Morton Street

The Historic Richmond Association is inviting the public to its 17th Annual Miracle on Morton Street. Taking place Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Richmond, the event will feature family-friendly activities throughout the day. There will be live entertainment, shopping opportunities at unique vendors in the area and the chance to grab a bite to eat at one of the food trucks. The Gingerbread House Display and a kids' zone will be on site. Plus, the association is offering tours of historic Richmond.

The day before — Friday, Dec. 6, at 6 p.m. — the association's Tree Lighting ceremony will take place at City Hall Park and Morton Street. Following the lighting, the public is encouraged to join the community Christmas Walk, complete with caroling, a Gingerbread House contest and holiday decor tours at local businesses until 8 p.m. For more information visit HistoricRichmond.org.

Rosenberg Christmas Nights

Through partnerships with the Rosenberg Main Street Program and the Rosenberg Cultural District the city of Rosenberg will hold its Rosenberg Christmas Nights Dec. 6 and Dec. 7.

The holiday celebration is a weekend of nightly activities to enhance the magic of the season. Set against a backdrop of spectacular holiday lights, the city invites the public to explore downtown Rosenberg's

eclectic shops, cultural exhibits and restaurants during the special season, and throughout the year. The public will also get the chance to view the works of the Deck the Downtown decorating contest. There will be 20 life-size wooden trees decorated by local artists on display in the downtown area.

Additionally, on Dec. 6 of Rosenberg Christmas Nights, the Dinner Under the Stars event will commence at 6 p.m.. Cast Theatrical Co. will provided the performance and Ol' Railroad Cafe, Old Main Street Bakery and Bob's Taco Station will cater the meals. Tickets to the performance are \$50, with limited seating.

For more information visit rosenbergtx.gov

Project Noel

For more than 40 years, the Richmond State Supported Living Center has been delighting visitors of all ages with Project Noel, a collection of holiday displays featuring favorites from Santa Claus to Rudolph. These celebratory lighted displays again can be viewed starting Dec. 6, through Jan. 6, 2020.

Children who first saw the project blossom in the early 1970s now bring their children and grandchildren to see the more than 40 holiday scenes that adorn the 241-acre SSLC campus, which is located at 2100 Preston in Richmond. This festive family outing is free and will be open daily from 6 to 9 p.m.

Santa and his elves will visit this event the first two weekends in December. Give Santa your wish list and have a picture made to remember the wonderful evening. Printed pictures will be available for \$5 each — or you can bring your own camera.

Sugar Land Holiday Lights

The sixth annual Sugar Land Holiday Lights returns to Constellation Field through Jan. 5, 2020. This sparkling wonderland features more than three million lights, a carnival and numerous themed displays throughout the ballpark. You can also get some holiday shopping done with a variety of vendors, enjoy great food, and even meet Santa Claus himself.

The hours are: Sunday through Thursday: 6 - 9 p.m.; Friday through Saturday: 6 - 10 p.m.; and on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day: 6 - 10 p.m. It will be closed Dec. 2.

Tickets available online and at the TDECU Ticket Office at Constellation Field. Ticket discounts available for kids, military (active & retired) and seniors. All tickets are general admission and prices vary by night.

Carnival admission is not included with ticket purchase. Full schedule and ticket prices available at SugarLandHolidayLights.com

Christmas Tree Lighting 2019

Sugar Land Parks and Recreation will host its tree lighting Dec. 6 from 5 - 8 p.m. at Sugar Land Town Square Plaza. Families are invited to enjoy some of the community's most popular musical performances and theatrical acts at this magical holiday celebration. The evening includes: holiday crafts and activities; face painting; performances by local artists and choirs; photos with Santa; and food and beverages will be available for purchase. The event is free and open to the public. www.sugarlandtx.gov/918/Christmas-Tree-Lighting.

Campfire Christmas

The Fort Bend History Association and George Ranch Historical Park will host the annual Campfire Christmas at the George Ranch Historical Park in Richmond Dec. 14 and 21 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., with the last entry at 8 p.m.

Journey back in time to experience Christmas celebrations of the 1830s through the 1930s. This family-friendly holiday evening tour culminates with cowboy songs, stories and hot cocoa around the campfire.

Unlike previous Campfire Christmas events, this year's format will feature holiday tours at each of the main historic sites.

A tram will be circling the Park at regular intervals so you can hop on and hop off to visit each site at your own pace.

If you've been to Campfire Christmas before, you may notice a few things that are different this year. Based on visitor feedback, the park was opened to include all four of the major historic sites and lowered ticket prices to accommodate a wider range of family budgets. Unlike previous Campfire Christmases, there is no formal dinner aspect, so guests can arrive on their own schedule and tour the park via the hop on/hop off tram.

View our calendar for more holiday themed events!



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THE CRANBERRY UPSIDE-DOWN SOUR CREAM CAKE

Prep: 20 m

Cook: 1h

Ready In: 1h 30m

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups white sugar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon 1 (12oz) bag fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 tbs butter, softened
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Generously grease a 9 inch springform pan. Wrap aluminum foil around the outside of the bottom to prevent leaking.

2 Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in 1 1/2 cups of white sugar, water and cinnamon until sugar has dissolved. Bring to a boil and then add the cranberries. Stir to coat with the sauce, then pour into the prepared pan.

3 Sift together the flour, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a medium bowl, beat the remaining 6 tablespoons of butter with 1/2 cup white sugar and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Mix in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in vanilla and sour cream. Mix in the dry ingredients. Pour the batter over the cranberries in the pan.

4 Bake for about 50 minutes in the preheated oven, or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool on a rack for 10 minutes, then run a knife around the outer edge. Invert onto a serving plate and remove the springform pan.

THE PUMPKIN PECAN CHEESECAKE

Prep: 15m

Cook: 45m

Ready In: 1h

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tbs butter, softened
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup pumpkin butter
- 1 (9 inch) prepared graham cracker crust

DIRECTIONS

1 Combine pecans and 1/4 cup brown sugar; cut in butter or margarine with a pastry blender until mixture is crumbly. Set aside.

2 Beat cream cheese at high speed of an electric mixer until smooth. Add 1/3 cup brown sugar; beat well. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in pumpkin butter. Pour mixture into crust.

3 Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 40 minutes.

4 Sprinkle pecan mixture over pie. Bake for 5 additional minutes, or until butter or margarine and sugar melt. Cool on a wire rack. Cover, and chill for at least 4 hours.

THE FRENCH APPLE PIE

Makes one 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

Raisin Filling

- 2/3 cup raisins
- 6 tablespoons water
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1 1/2 tsp all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 apples (preferably a tart variety)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 1/2 tsp cornstarch

Icing

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons water

- 1 tbs butter, softened

DIRECTIONS

1 To make the raisin filling, combine the raisins, water and lemon juice in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally until the raisins are plump, about 15 minutes.

2 Separately, combine the corn syrup, flour and sugar and mix well, then add to the raisins and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until thick and syrupy, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool until the mixture is just warm, about 10 to 15 minutes.

3 Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a 9-inch pie plate with 1 rolled-out crust.

4 Peel the apples, cut them into thin wedges, and put

them in a large bowl. Separately, combine the sugars, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cornstarch, then add to the apples and gently stir until evenly mixed.

6 Spread the apple mixture in the crust in an even layer, then spread the raisin filling evenly over the apples. Brush the rim of the crust with water, cover with the second rolled-out crust, seal and flute or crimp the edges, and cut a steam vent in the center.

7 Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for 1 to 2 hours, until completely cool. To make the icing, combine the sugar and water and mix well. Add the butter and mix until smooth. Brush over the top of the cooled pie before serving.

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THE RASPBERRY AND ALMOND SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Prep: 30 m
Cook: 18 m
Ready In: 1 h 15 m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2/3 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup seedless raspberry jam
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon milk

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- 2 In a medium bowl, cream together butter and white sugar until smooth. Mix in 1/2 teaspoon almond extract. Mix in flour until dough comes together. Roll dough into 1

1/2 inch balls, and place on ungreased cookie sheets. Make a small hole in the center of each ball, using your thumb and finger, and fill the hole with preserves.

3 Bake for 14 to 18 minutes in preheated oven, or until lightly browned. Let cool 1 minute on the cookie sheet.

4 In a medium bowl, mix together the confectioners' sugar, 3/4 teaspoon almond extract, and milk until smooth. Drizzle lightly over warm cookies.

THE D'AMARETTI BISCOTTI

Prep: 25 m
Cook: 35 m
Ready In: 2 h

INGREDIENTS

- 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup butter, softened

- 1 cup white sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 cup toasted almonds, finely chopped
- 1 egg white

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Lightly grease baking sheet.

2 Combine flour and baking powder; set aside. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the lemon zest and almond extract. Stir in the flour mixture until smooth, then stir in the chopped almonds.

3 Divide dough in two. Shape each portion into a loaf about 12 inches long and 2 inches wide. Place loaves onto the cookie sheet about 4 inches apart, and flatten slightly. Beat egg white until foamy, and brush over tops of loaves.

4 Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until light brown. Cool on baking sheet for about an hour.

5 Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Cut baked loaves diagonally into 1/2 inch thick slices. Lay slices cut side down on the baking sheet.

6 Bake 10 minutes, or until crisp. Cool on wire rack. Make several days before serving. Store in a paper bag to soften slightly. For longer storage place in a sealed container.

APPLE BAVARIAN TORTE

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

INGREDIENTS

Crust:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/3 cup white sugar

- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Cheese Mixture:

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Apple Mixture:

- 6 apples - peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C).

2 Cream together butter, 1/3 cup sugar, vanilla, and flour. Press crust mixture into the flat bottom of a 9-inch spring-form pan. Set aside.

3 In a medium bowl, blend cream cheese and 1/4 cup sugar. Beat in egg and vanilla. Pour cheese mixture over crust.

4 Combine 1/3 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon. Toss the sliced apples with the sugar mixture and spread over the cheese filling.

5 Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and continue baking for 25 minutes. Sprinkle almonds over top of torte. Continue baking until almonds are lightly browned and apples are tender. Cool before removing from pan.

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PROPERTY OWNERS REVIEW PROPOSALS TO WIDEN FM 359

by **Scott Reese Willey** | swilley@fbherald.com.

Dozens of property owners attended a public meeting in October at Briscoe Junior High School to see first-hand how state transportation officials propose to widen a long portion of FM 359. TxDOT printed out large maps of three possible proposals, which it called “alternatives.”

All three plans call for the expansion of nine miles of FM 359 from Pecan Grove to Fulshear.

In an effort to plan ahead for population growth, TxDOT officials say the expansion is necessary to improve traffic flow and increase mobility along the roadway. FM 359 is a two-lane undivided road from Mason Road near Pecan Grove to FM 1093 in Fulshear and has no sidewalks.

“This area of Fort Bend County is planned for continued residential and commercial development; with the forecasted increase in development, the current two-lane road will not be able to accommodate the required capacity associated with the increase in traffic,” TxDOT said. “There are congestion and safety concerns along the corridor.”

TxDOT proposes to improve the roadway by widening FM 359 from two to four lanes with raised grassy median separating the opposing traffic.

Deidrea S. George, a public information officer for TxDOT, said the median will prevent automobile accidents resulting from drivers



A crowd of property owners attended TxDOT's public meeting to see first-hand how the state transportation department planned to widen FM 359 between Pecan Grove and Fulshear. TxDOT had exhibits — including large maps — of three possible ways the highway could be widened.

meaning no formal presentation was offered. Members of the public were invited to review the three proposed alternatives and comment and ask questions to TxDOT staff.

Among those doing so was Joey Lenderman, owner of Enchanted Gardens, which is located along FM 359. He was interested in how TxDOT was planning to handle drainage.

Enchanted Gardens flooded during Hurricane Harvey and also when Tropical Storm Imelda hit the area in September.

Joe Carte, who lives in the Woods Edge neighborhood, wanted to discuss steps to save two historic oak trees growing along the roadway. The trees would have to be removed to accommodate a wider roadway.

Carte said the oaks are 150 years old and used to be the front

making inappropriate U-turns. She said each of the three plans calls for plenty of cross overs to allow drivers to make turnarounds.

The plans also call for major intersections to have right-and left-turn lanes. The proposals also call for re-aligning several curves along the roadway. Estimated construction cost is \$80 million. However, the state has yet to fund the project, George said.

October's meeting was conducted in townhall fashion,



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entrance of a plantation at one time.

Another business owner asked TxDOT officials if they would consider adding a bike lane to the project.

Although the state has yet to fund the project, George said TxDOT will select one of the three alternative proposals at a later date and then call for a public hearing on the plan.

APPEL IS REMEMBERED WITH LIFE-SIZE STATUE

Several hundred family members, friends and associates of the late Herbert W. Appel, longtime president of the Fort Bend Economic Development Council, were on hand for the unveiling of a life-size statue of him sitting on a bench in full fishing attire.

The statue is located in what is being called Appel Park in front of a lake on Lake Pointe Parkway near U.S. 59 in Sugar Land. Appel, who had retired from the EDC, died days before what would have been his 76th birthday in July 2018.

Funds for the creation of the statue were from personal contributions and spearheaded by past and present EDC officers Bill Jameson, Les Newton and EDC executive Jeff C. Wiley. The project was orchestrated by Sugar Land resident Sandy Levine, who promotes bronze public art.

A bronze historical marker describing "Herb Appel, Fort Bend Statesman" is adjacent to the statue.

The project also had the support of the Sugar Land Legacy Foundation, First Colony Community Association, Fort Bend Levee District No. 2 and the City of Sugar Land.

Prior to becoming EDC president, Appel owned the Coors beer distributorship, located between Rosenberg and Beasley, and Trinity Church Construction Co. in Richmond. He was one of the original organizers of the EDC in 1986.

The affable Appel re-wrote the book on volunteerism, showing by example how to help people who were unable to help themselves.

Appel's brother, Gary Appel of Galena, Ill., is almost a spitting image of his older brother, and was used as a model, donning fishing clothes and a big hat for photographs from which the sculpting was done. Friends of both brothers said they were so similar that they have been mistaken for each other.

"They walk and talk the same as well as looking similar," friends and family said.

Gary is two years younger than his late brother.

Appel's wife Emelia represented the large family turnout by thanking those in attendance as well as other contributors.

"We are so grateful and humble that you would do this for our Herb," she said.



Photo Courtesy of Gail Appel Gary Appel, Herb Appel's younger and look-alike brother, actually was a model for the statue that was unveiled on Wednesday. Photos of Gary sitting on a bench, plus close up photos of Herb were used in creating the bronze sculpture.

COMMITTEE FORMED FOR 2020 CENSUS

by CHAD WASHINGTON | cwashington@fbherald.com

In its effort to encourage county-wide participation in the 2020 U.S. Census, the Fort Bend County commissioners have formed a committee to spread the word.

A Complete Count Committee was approved by county commissioners, which will advise and assist Fort Bend County to obtain the most accurate and complete count of the population through a focused, structured program.

The committee will include individuals from local governments, community and faith-based organizations, businesses and the media to educate the public out about the census and why full participation is vital.

It is "so important to us to count every person," County Judge KP George said.

The 2020 Census is key to helping the federal government determine where and how much aid an area receives in many different ways, and an accurate count is key for a rapidly-growing county like Fort Bend.

Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales said that the committee will consist of only volunteers and individuals, since the state has not sent funding to any local areas to assist the census count.

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING LANGUAGE ADDED TO DOCUMENTS

Fort Bend County also officially came against human trafficking after commissioners approved a resolution requiring anti-trafficking language in all contracts.

County Judge KP George said that the county has spent millions of dollars to fight human trafficking.

"The commissioners court and Fort Bend County recognize the serious nature of human trafficking, which is why we're adding this language," George said. "Fort Bend County spends millions of dollars on projects and services, and adding this language to all our documents enforces our vision of a human-trafficking-free future."

The county's purchasing department will post the phone number to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center on its website, and all county procurements and contracts will have a disclaimer that says Fort Bend County is opposed to human trafficking and no county funds will be used with anyone involved in human trafficking.

By adding the language, the county hopes that it can promote awareness about human trafficking and encourage contractors who want to work with the county to follow proper labor laws.

If citizens have any information regarding a possible trafficking situation, they are urged to call the NHTRC 24-hour tip line at 1-888-373-7888.

JIGSAW PUZZLE COMPETITION SET FOR JANUARY 18

Registration for the Third Annual Hope For Three Jigsaw Puzzle Competition is now open. On Jan. 18, 2020 Hope For Three and Presenting Sponsor, LearningRX Sugar Land and Center Piece Sponsor, OCuSOFT, Inc. will gather at Gallery Furniture, 7227 Grand Parkway South in Richmond.

Each team, consisting of four puzzlers, will compete against other teams in an attempt to complete a 500-piece puzzle in two-hours. Competitors ages 10 and up are eligible to participate. The countdown

Continued on page 16

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Frozen JR returns to the stage in a delightful rendition with popular characters

by MARQUITA GRIFFIN & ALISHA MCMILLEN

Ten shows. Two weekends. And a performance perfect for the holiday season — Inspiration Stage's production of Disney's "Frozen JR."

"I am thrilled to be directing Disney's "Frozen JR," at Inspiration Stage this December," said Sarah Patterson, the show's director and music director. "This brilliant adaptation combines the best of the iconic Disney movie and Broadway show into a delightful, all-ages friendly, 70-minute stage production."

The show runs Dec. 6 through Dec. 15 at the historic Sugar Land Auditorium, 226 Lakeview Drive in Sugar Land.

Disney's "Frozen JR", based on the 2018 Broadway musical, brings Elsa, Anna and the magical land of Arendelle to life onstage. The show features all of the memorable songs from the animated film, with music and lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, plus five new songs written for the Broadway production.

"The show brings the fictional kingdom of Arendelle to life with your favorite characters: Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff and more," said Patterson excitedly. "As music director for the show, I'm excited to lead the challenge of presenting well-known numbers like, 'For the First Time in Forever,' 'Love Is an Open Door,' 'In Summer,' 'Fixer Upper,' and, of course, 'Let It Go', with new musical arrangements to our audiences."

"Our young actors are extraordinarily talented and bring fresh energy to familiar material."

The main roles of Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, Olaf and Hans have been double-cast in this group of 61 local youth. Maci Hunt, 13, an eighth grader who lives in Parkway Lakes Estates, is part of the lead ensemble in her fourth iStage show.

"I was scrolling through a ton of Junior Theatre Festival performances one day and Inspiration Stage's showcase of 'Frozen' popped up," Hunt said. "I immediately fell in love with the music and choreography."

"Later, when I saw Inspiration Stage would be performing 'Frozen' at the Sugar Land Auditorium, I knew I had to be a part of it," she added. "And as a bonus, I am excited to share the stage with one of my best friends."

A story of true love and acceptance between sisters, Disney's "Frozen JR" expands upon the emotional relationship



Maci Hunt

and journey between Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood.

"Even though it is somewhat like the movie, it adds all new dialogue, characters, and songs," Hunt said. "I feel audiences of all ages will enjoy this rendition of the classic Disney story."

COMING SOON: INTO THE WOODS, JR

Following its "Frozen JR" production, Inspiration Stage will open the new year with "Into the Woods, JR" Jan. 3 through Jan. 5, 2020 at the Sugar Land Auditorium.

The story follows a Baker and his wife, who wish to have a child; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King's Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the Baker and his wife learn that they cannot have a child because of a Witch's curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone's wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results.

"Into the Woods, JR" is a rare modern classic created by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim who took popular storybook characters and brought them together.

"People will see some of their favorite storybook characters come to life and see a story about how characters journey and adventure in search of their dreams and to have their wishes come true," said Alexandria Gomez, 13, a homeschooled seventh grader. "The lesson for me is to never stop wishing and following my dreams even if my journey into the woods of life is full of obstacles. I need to just keep dreaming and working hard and things will work out in the end."

With a cast of 44 local youth, ages 10-18, "Into the Woods JR" runs four shows over the weekend of Jan. 3, 2020. Showtimes are Friday, Jan 3, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan 4, 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 5 3:30 p.m. Visit inspirationstage.com/shows/into-the-woods-jr/ for more information.

Inspiration Stage will take an abbreviated version of Into the Woods JR to Sacramento for adjudication at the Junior Theatre Festival West, Feb. 7 - 9.

The production staff includes: Mandy Seymore-Sensat, Inspiration Stage artistic director, and the show's director/co-choreographer; Sarah Patterson, music director; Annelea Bootle, co-choreographer; Brianna Escobedo, stage manager; and Courtney Sackett, assistant stage manager.

"I'm so excited for my friends and family to get to see this show," Gomez said. "It's fantastic!"

Alexandria Gomez



Continued on page 17

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Courtesy of Hope For Three | Hope For Three Board of Directors witness how fun and competitive members can be when it comes to connecting the pieces through puzzling. Pictured L to R: Seated: Larry Lobue, Lynn Clouser (Staff) and Tyler Stamm. Standing: Mary Ann Gardner and Samantha Katchy (Staff). Standing Middle: Robin Houston, Kim Overgaard, Mary Ann Hibbeler, Joe Cunneff, Elizabeth Chipinski, and Brenda Lofton (Staff). Standing Back: Deon Minor and Stephanie Burns. Not pictured: Patrick LaRue, Steve Manz, Gerald Freed, Lt. Scott Soland, Jacque Davis, Sandra Stewart, Dana Walker, Darla Farmer and Gayle Kildoye (Staff).

as young and seasoned members work until all the pieces fit. An awards ceremony immediately follows the contest.

Organizers note the annual Jigsaw Puzzle competition is an opportunity to bring autism awareness to the disorder that affects one in 59 children. More than 5,000 students attend Fort Bend County public schools. This number does not include those in private programs or schools. The competition also highlights the autism symbol, the puzzle piece. The autism puzzle piece, ribbon or pattern reflects the complexity of an autism spectrum disorder. The different colors and shapes represent the diversity of the people and families living with the disorder.

"We take the puzzle piece symbolism a little bit further," said Darla Farmer, Hope For Three Founder and CEO. "Since 2011, Hope For Three continues to join autism advocates around the world in efforts to connect. The cause of autism is unknown and there is no cure. Because of this, we will continue to connect autism families with providers and therapies they desperately need."

"We will continue educating our entire community and surrounding areas about autism, acceptance and the many ways they can assist the families we serve," she continued. "We recognize this is a small part in making the puzzle pieces fit, but we are making life-changing connections."

Registration for the 2020 Jigsaw Puzzle Competition is \$125 per team. Sponsorship and Underwriting opportunities available. For more information visit hopeforthree.org/events or call 281-245-0640.

ANNOUNCING ANNUAL AUTISM LUNCHEON

Hope For Three Autism Advocates has also announced Mary and Tom Solcher will return as Presenting Sponsors for its Annual Autism Luncheon on Feb. 13, 2020.

The Mardi Gras themed event will be held at Safari Texas Ranch, 11 a.m. to 1p.m. Guest speaker and honorary chairs, Sarah and Greg Swindell will share their personal journey living with autism. Greg, a former Major League Baseball player and World Series Winner and, Sarah, an actress and author of the recently released book, "Rounding Home," will provide a real, raw look at the challenges and rewards of having a son with severe autism.

For more information call 281-245-0640 or visit hopeforthree.org.



Presenting Sponsors Tom and Mary Solcher.

GOLF "FORE" AUTISM A HIT

Cool weather and peaks of a bright sun made for a good day on the greens.

Nearly a 140 golfers gathered in late October for the Fourth Annual Hope For Three Golf "Fore" Autism Tournament. The event, presented by Timewise, was held at Sweetwater Country Club. Along with swinging the irons, golfers used



Courtesy of Debi Beauregard, Custom Minds Photography | From left: first place winners Team Ocusoft — Steven Orphey, Elijah White, Eric Montgomery and Antonio Biggs.

the power of the pen as various items were up for grabs during the live and silent auctions, as well as, raffles.

Golf "Fore" Autism is one of the many autism awareness campaigns held each year to assist autism families living in Fort Bend County.

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'FROZEN JR' DETAILS

Showtimes:

Friday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 8, 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 11:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 15, 3:30 p.m.

Production Team:

Sarah Patterson — director / music director

Mandy Seymore-Sensat — artistic director/co-choreographer;

Annelea Bootle — co-choreographer

Diamond Morgan — stage manager

Lily Delahoussaye — student assistant stage manager

Reese McGrenera — student assistant director

and Madison Willett — dance captain

Inspiration Stage is offering special holiday appearances by the "Frozen JR" cast on Dec. 6 at The Sugar Land Tree Lighting ceremony; Dec. 7 at Miracle on Morton Street in downtown Richmond; and Dec. 7 at The Sweet Jamboree at the Sugar Land Heritage Museum. For more information visit inspirationstage.com/shows/disneys-frozen-jr

Joy to the World

The Fort Bend Boys Choir's Christmas Musicale

by **TIANA MORTIMER**

Do you hear what I hear? It is the sound of singing boys bringing you good cheer!

Attend the Fort Bend Boys Choir's annual Christmas Musicale concert on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church-Missouri City.

Three treble choirs - Training, Town and Tour - will be showcased along with Music Magic, the organization's class of six and seven year olds.

Tickets are available on the choir website or at the door. Adult admission is \$15 and children 12 and under are \$5. All proceeds from the Christmas Musicale are used for program support, operational expenses and scholarships.

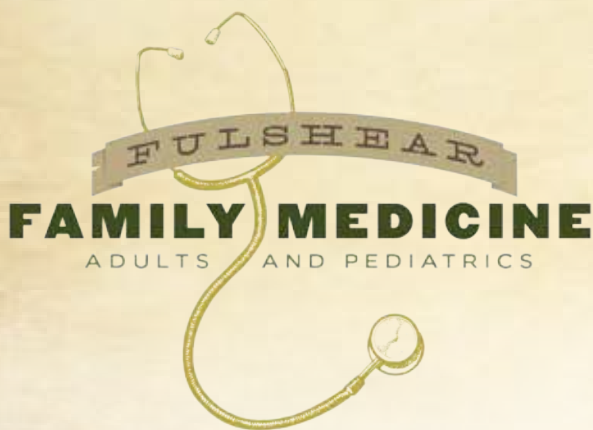
Visit the Fort Bend Boys Choir's website at www.fbbctx.org or call 281-240-3800 for more details.

OPEN AUDITIONS SET FOR THE FORT BEND BOYS CHOIR

Boys 8 years old and older, with unchanged voices who love music and singing, can audition for the Fort Bend Boys Choir. No previous experience is necessary.

Open auditions will be held at the First United Methodist Church

Continued on page 19



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RECIPES Continued from page 10

THE BLUEBERRY POUND CAKE

Prep: 20 m
Cook: 1h
Ready In: 1h 30m

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Grease a 10-inch tube pan with 2 tablespoons butter. Sprinkle pan with 1/4 cup sugar.

2 Mix together 2 3/4 cups flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

3 In a large bowl, cream together 1 cup butter and 2 cups sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the vanilla. Gradually beat in the flour mixture. Dredge blueberries with remaining 1/4 cup flour, then fold into batter.

4 Pour batter into the prepared pan.
5 Bake in the preheated oven for 70 to 80 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack and cool completely.

THE GLUTEN-FREE YELLOW CAKE

Yield: Two 9" cake rounds

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/4 cups King Arthur Gluten-Free Flour or brown rice flour blend
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 2 tbs gluten-free King Arthur Cake Enhancer (optional)
- 13/4 cups sugar
- 16 tablespoons (1 cup) soft butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 tablespoon gluten-free vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup milk, at room temperature

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly grease two 9-inch round cake pans.

2 Whisk together the flour or flour blend, xanthan gum and Cake Enhancer, if using.

3 In a separate bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together the sugar, soft butter, salt, baking powder, and vanilla for 45 seconds at medium-high speed, until smooth.

4 Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl. Still using the mixer, beat in the eggs one at a time; the mixture should become quite fluffy. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl again.

5 Continuing to use the mixer, mix in the milk, at low speed, alternately with the dry ingredients, adding about 1/3 of each at a time, and ending with the dry ingredients. The batter will look curdled after the milk addition; that's okay, it will come back together once the final addition of flour has been mixed in for 30 to 45 seconds.

6 Scoop the batter into the prepared pans. Bake the cake for about 32 to 36 minutes, about 3 to 4 minutes past the point where the cake springs back when touched lightly in the center, and a cake tester (or toothpick) inserted into the middle comes out clean. The finished cake's internal temperature should be 210 F.

7 Remove from the oven, and cool for 5 to 10 minutes before turning out of the pan to cool on a rack.

8 Top with desired frosting, berries, whipped cream, or caramel drizzle.

NOTE: You must use a stand mixer or electric hand mixer to prepare the batter. Mixing by hand will not do a thorough enough job.

THE BLUEBERRY SOUR CREAM COFFEE CAKE

Prep time: 20 mins
Cook time: 1 hr
Total time: 1 hours 20 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 5/8 cups all-purpose flour

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar for dusting

DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9 inch Bundt pan.

2 In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the sour cream and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt; stir into the batter just until blended. Fold in blueberries.

3 Spoon half of the batter into the prepared pan. In a small bowl, stir together the brown sugar, cinnamon and pecans. Sprinkle half of this mixture over the batter in the pan. Spoon remaining batter over the top, and then sprinkle the remaining pecan mixture over. Use a knife or thin spatula to swirl the sugar layer into the cake.

4 Bake for 55 to 60 minutes in the preheated oven, or until a knife inserted into the crown of the cake comes out clean. Cool in the pan over a wire rack. Invert onto a serving plate, and tap firmly to remove from the pan. Dust with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

THE CANDIED YAM CUPCAKES

Prep: 20 m
Cook: 35 min
Ready In: 1h 25m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound yams, peeled and cubed
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 ounces cream cheese
- 1/2 cup butter, softened

MORE RECIPES Continued on page 20



Courtesy of Terri Cannon | Town choirboys performing in the 2018 Christmas Musicale

Missouri City, 3900 Lexington Blvd., Missouri City, TX from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 14.

Special appointments are available if a boy cannot attend the open audition date.

The Fort Bend Boys Choir can help with scholarships and carpool assistance too. Be sure to also ask about Music Magic, the choir's music enrichment class for six and seven year old boys starting March 2020.

Boys from all over the Fort Bend and the Houston metro 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.

Take advantage of this life-changing activity now before your boy's voice changes.

Find out more by visiting our website at www.fbbctx.org; or, call the choir office at 281-240-3800 to schedule an audition time.

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RECIPES Continued from page 18

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

1 Place a steamer insert into a large saucepan, and fill with water to just below the bottom of the steamer. Cover, and bring the water to a boil over high heat. Add the yams, recover, and steam until very tender, about 15 minutes. Remove yams from steamer and allow to cool slightly.

2 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line 2-12 cup cupcake tins with paper liners.

3 Place eggs, oil, sugar, vanilla extract, and cooked yams in a large bowl; beat with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda,

cinnamon, and salt. Stir dry ingredients into yam mixture, mixing just until combined. Pour batter into paper liners, filling 2/3 full.

4 Bake in preheated oven until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cupcake comes out clean, 17 to 20 minutes. Cool in pans for 5 minutes, transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

5 Beat together cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Beat in the vanilla extract and confectioners sugar; mix until smooth. Frost cool cupcakes with cream cheese frosting.

THE OLD FASHIONED COCONUT CREAM PIE

Prep: 20 m
Cook: 30 m
Ready In: 4 h 50 m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 3 cups half-and-half
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 (9 inch) pie shell, baked
- 1 cup frozen whipped topping, thawed

DIRECTIONS

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

2 Spread the coconut on a baking sheet and bake it, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 5 minutes.

3 In a medium saucepan, combine the half-and-half, eggs, sugar, flour and salt and mix well. Bring to a boil over low heat, stirring constantly. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes more. Remove the pan from the heat, and stir in 3/4 cup of the toasted coconut and the vanilla extract. Reserve the remaining coconut to top the pie.

4 Pour the filling into the pie shell and chill until firm, about 4 hours.

5 Top with whipped topping and with the reserved coconut.

THE LEMON MERINGUE PIE

Prep: 30 m
Cook: 10 m
Ready In: 40 m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 lemons, juiced and zested
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 4 egg yolks, beaten
- 1 (9 inch) pie crust, baked
- 4 egg whites
- 6 tablespoons white sugar

DIRECTIONS

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

2 To Make Lemon Filling: In a medium saucepan, whisk together 1 cup sugar, flour, cornstarch, and salt. Stir in water, lemon juice and lemon zest. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to a boil. Stir in butter. Place egg yolks in a small bowl and gradually whisk in 1/2 cup of hot sugar mixture. Whisk egg yolk mixture back into remaining sugar mixture. Bring to a boil and continue to cook while stirring constantly until thick. Remove from heat. Pour filling into baked pastry shell.

3 To Make Meringue: In a large glass or metal bowl, whip egg whites until foamy. Add sugar gradually, and continue to whip until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue over pie, sealing the edges at the crust.

4 Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes, or until meringue is golden brown.

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THE KEY LIME PIE

Prep: 15 m
Cook: 8 m
Ready In: 55 m

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (9 in) prepared graham cracker crust
- 3 cups sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup key lime juice
- 1 tablespoon grated lime zest

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- 2 In a medium bowl, combine condensed milk, sour cream, lime juice, and lime rind. Mix well and pour into graham cracker crust.
- 3 Bake in preheated oven for 5 to 8 minutes, until tiny pinhole bubbles burst on the surface of pie. DO NOT BROWN! Chill pie thoroughly before serving. Garnish with lime slices and whipped cream if desired.

THE ITALIAN CREAM CHEESE AND RICOTTA CHEESECAKE

Prep: 15 m
Cook: 2 h
Ready In: 6 h 15 m

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 (16 ounce) container ricotta cheese
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled
- 1 pint sour cream

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease a 9-inch springform pan.
- 2 Mix the cream cheese and ricotta cheese together in a mixing bowl until

well combined. Stir in the sugar, eggs, lemon juice, vanilla, cornstarch, flour, and butter. Add the sour cream last and stir. Pour the mixture into the prepared springform pan.

3 Bake in the preheated oven 1 hour; turn oven off and leave in oven 1 hour more. Allow to cool completely in refrigerator before serving.



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Tips for baking better Christmas cookies

Cookies are a classic holiday treat, and some families even build entire traditions around baking Christmas cookies.

Novice bakers making cookies for the first time may be a little overwhelmed when perusing recipes. Baking is a science, and sometimes it takes practice to get the results just right. However, there are some tips that can help yield better, buttery bounties.

HANDLE BUTTER WITH CARE

Butter can make or break a cookie recipe, as butter is often the glue that holds the cookie together. Therefore, it is key to follow the directions carefully regarding how to handle butter. Smithsonian.com says to leave butter at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes to properly soften it. This takes patience, but fiddling with butter too much can damage its delectable integrity. While purists may say butter is best, margarine may be acceptable if it has a high fat content; otherwise, cookies may spread out and flatten.

When it comes time to cream the butter with sugar, be sure to do so thoroughly to incorporate air into the butter and remove the grainy texture of the sugar.

MEASURE FLOUR PROPERLY

Measuring flour the right way can ensure cookies come out right. The Cooking Channel says to spoon the flour lightly into a dry measuring cup, then level it off with a knife. Do not dip the measuring cup into the flour or tap the knife against the cup. This will pack too much flour into the measuring cup and result in dry, tough cookies.

SLOW DOWN THE EGGS

Add eggs one at a time to make sure each will emulsify properly with the fat in the butter. Adding eggs en masse may cause the emulsification to fail.

CHILL OUT

Follow recipes that call for chilling cookie dough carefully. This process is important for making sliced and shaped cookies. By chilling, the dough becomes more malleable for rolling and even slicing.

USE A BOTTOM RACK

Too much heat may compromise cookie integrity. The food experts at Delish say to try moving cookies onto a lower rack in the oven if they aren't retaining their shape when baked. Put an empty cookie sheet on the top rack. That will block the cookies from the most intense heat that rises to the top of the oven.

Baking shortcuts for time-pressed entertainers

During the holiday rush, it's easy to get side-tracked or tired, and perhaps even a little bit overwhelmed by all the things to do in such a short period of time. Holiday baking doesn't have to add to seasonal stress. With these tips and shortcuts, there will be plenty of sweet treats for the family.

STICK WITH TESTED RECIPES

Although holiday bakers may want to branch out a bit with their culinary creativity, recipes that have previously been prepared with great success can take some of the work out of holiday baking. Preparing recipes you recall preparing in the past is much easier than trying something new. If you'd like, add sparkle to old standards, such as decorating oatmeal or chocolate chip cookies with colored sprinkles.

COOKIES ARE FAST-BAKING

Did you know that cookies were originally made to test oven temperatures? Culinary historians say that cookies were first made to test if an oven was hot enough to bake other goods. Today, cookies can be whipped up in mere minutes. Make a batch of dough and then freeze or refrigerate it, thawing it when the time comes to bake. Also, think about baking one day and decorating the next if pressed for time.

EMBRACE COLORED CANDY MELTS

Icing can be tricky to master. Simply heating colored candy melts and pouring over cakes or painting onto cookies can add festive appeal to desserts. Candy melts even come in many different colors and can be combined to achieve the tint desired.

KEEP INGREDIENTS IN TOP FORM

Don't let poorly performing ingredients or a lack of supplies be your undoing. Butter can be softened quickly in the microwave when needed for recipes. Eggs can be brought to room temperature by allowing them to sit in a bowl of warm water. Ensure that brown sugar stays soft by putting a piece of sliced bread in the container. Don't forget to stock up on other baking staples, such as vanilla and almond extracts, baking powder/soda, molasses, and confectioner's sugar.

DON'T BAKE FROM SCRATCH

Not all recipes need to be made from scratch. Boxed cake mixes can be embellished and turned into delicious desserts without much fuss. Substitute melted butter for oil, buttermilk for water, and add an extra egg for a rich cake. Mix in chocolate chips or nuts or experiment with garnishes for a festive look.

PARCHMENT PAPER IS KEY

Line cookie sheets or cake pans with parchment paper for easy dessert release and quick cleanup. Parchment paper and even foil can help lift cakes or cookie bars out of pans so they look neat and do not stick.

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Houston Methodist Sugar Land welcomes Dr. Margaret Umah

Dr. Margaret Umah



Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital is pleased to welcome Margaret Umah, M.D., board-certified family medicine physician.

Umah began seeing patients last month at the Houston Methodist Primary Care Group practice located on the hospital's campus at 16605 Southwest Fwy., Medical Office Building 3, Suite 400 in Sugar Land.

She specializes in men's and women's health issues, adolescent health, preventive medicine, chronic conditions such as

diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol disorders, and common illnesses and conditions. Umah also offers wellness exams, annual physicals and adult vaccinations.

Umah earned her medical degree from the University of Missouri School of Medicine and then completed her residency in family medicine at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston. She has been serving the health care needs of the Fort Bend community as a family physician since 2012.

"I have always had the greatest respect and admiration for Houston Methodist Sugar Land and its commitment to high-quality patient care," said Umah. "I share my new colleagues' approach in providing personalized, compassionate care to improve patients' overall well-being through communication and partnership. I am very pleased to be joining Houston Methodist Primary Care Group, where my patients will have access to the full range of technology, expertise and resources that the hospital offers."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Umah, visit houstonmethodist.org/pcg/southwest or call 281-930-6639.

To learn more about Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, visit houstonmethodist.org/sugarland or our Facebook page at [fb.com/methodistsugarland](https://www.facebook.com/methodistsugarland) for the latest news, events and information.

Fighting the Flu

The muscle aches. The fever. The tiredness. No one likes having the flu. If you do catch the bug, it's important to know how to care for yourself. It's also important to learn how the flu virus spreads and how it can be prevented.

FLU BASICS

"The influenza virus, more commonly known as the flu, is contagious and usually spreads through the air, by coughing, sneezing, talking or touching a contaminated surface," said Asisat Ope, M.D., board-certified primary care physician with Houston Methodist Primary Care Group in Sugar Land.

People who catch the flu have different symptoms, but many complain of a fever, cough, muscle aches, headache and sore

throat. Some adults feel better in a week or two, while others, including small children, the elderly and the chronically ill, may have a harder time recovering.

STOP FLU IN ITS TRACKS

You can help guard yourself against the flu. "The best methods are getting a yearly flu vaccination and keeping your immune system healthy," Ope said.

Get a flu shot. A flu shot can lower your risk of catching the virus. It's best to get the shot by the end of October, before the flu season reaches its height. A flu shot is especially important for people at high risk for flu complications, including adults age 65 or older, children younger than age five, pregnant women and those with chronic health problems.

Steer clear of germs. Unfortunately, sick people don't always keep their germs at home. You can help keep yourself flu-free by washing your hands frequently and following a healthy lifestyle. Carry hand sanitizer with you in case you can't wash your hands right away after being around those who are showing signs of being sick. You may also want to use disinfecting wipes to wipe down surfaces or shopping carts when you're out and about.

If you do get the flu, drink plenty of fluids. Your doctor can prescribe antiviral drugs that may make the illness milder and shorten the time you are sick if you go in right away.

If you have questions about the flu shot, talk to your doctor. To schedule an appointment with Asisat Ope, M.D. or another primary care physician at Houston Methodist Primary Care Group, visit houstonmethodist.org/pcg/southwest or call 832-416-1678.

To learn more about Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, visit houstonmethodist.org/sugarland or our Facebook page at [fb.com/methodistsugarland](https://www.facebook.com/methodistsugarland) for the latest news, events and information.



Dr. Asisat Ope

2019 Patchwork Of Life Event Raises \$350K

OakBend Medical Center's seventh annual Patchwork of Life event was another very successful fundraising event for the hospital. The event raised more than \$350,000 and those funds will be used for a 3D Mammography machine for the Women's Imaging Department at OakBend's Jackson Street Campus.

With a crowd of over 650 attendees, this year's live auction brought in more than \$100,000, with popular items like a Tuscan villa vacation, and African Safari and a Houston sports ticket package causing some friendly competition.

"This year's Patchwork of Life event was a fantastically successful evening," said Beth Johnson, event chair. "The Fort Bend community continues to provide great support to OakBend Medical Center. We are so appreciative of those who made it out and for their wonderful generosity."

Guests also had the opportunity to purchase and personalize a quilt

square for the annual dedication quilt made by Pat Hebert. Pat has made a quilt for each Patchwork of Life event since 2013 and this year's quilt will hang in the Women's Imaging Department upon completion.

"Patchwork was energetic and the audience was very generous," said May Tape, OakBend Medical Center Board President. "The personal testimonies from community members in the audience were one of the highlights of the evening for me. I love hearing how OakBend has impacted their lives. I'm proud to be associated with OakBend."



Attendees of Patchwork of Life looking at live auction items.

Four Houston Methodist hospitals recognized by Vizient

Vizient announced that four Houston Methodist hospitals have received a 2019 Vizient Bernard A. Birnbaum, M.D., Quality Leadership Award. Houston Methodist was the only hospital system in the country to receive four awards.

The award recognizes hospitals for demonstrating excellence in delivering superior quality and safety as measured by the Vizient Quality and Accountability Study, which has been conducted annually since 2005.

Vizient recognized Houston Methodist Hospital in the comprehensive academic medical center category; Houston Methodist Sugar Land in the specialized complex care medical center category; and Houston Methodist Willowbrook and Houston Methodist The Woodlands in the complex medical center category.

"Having four of our hospitals on this list is extraordinary. Receiving such national recognition is an honor, but I'm most proud that the reason for these awards is our concerted focus on quality patient care," said Marc L. Boom, president and CEO of Houston Methodist.

This year, 349 participating hospitals were divided into four cohorts for the Vizient Quality and Accountability Ranking.

The ranking measured performance based on safety, mortality, clinical effectiveness, efficiency and patient centeredness. The ranking's composite scoring system uses patient-level performance data from a variety of sources including the Vizient



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Clinical Data Base, core measures data, the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Healthcare Safety Network.

The Vizient Quality and Accountability Ranking helps participating hospitals and health systems understand their performance against their peers and identifies structures and processes associated with high performance in quality and safety across a broad spectrum of patient care activity. The recognition period is for work spanning from July 2018 through June 2019.



Representatives from Houston Methodist accepted the awards for each of our four hospitals at the 2019 Vizient Connections Education Summit in Las Vegas. From left: Chris Siebenaler, regional vice president and CEO of Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital; Janet Leatherwood, CNO of Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital; Diane McGraw, RN, MSN, CNS-CH, CPHQ, CCM, Director of Quality Management, Infection Control, Risk Management, Accreditation, and Patient Safety Officer at Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital; Jeffrey A. Jackson, MD, FAAN, CQO; Marc L. Boom, president and CEO of Houston Methodist.

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital's Survivors Offering Support, a breast cancer support group, will meet at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 19 at the hospital.

This group meets every third Thursday of the month in the Main Pavilion Conference Rooms B and C. Refreshments are provided.

The monthly breast cancer support groups include trained facilitators from Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital help women and men at any stage of diagnosis and treatment, understand that breast cancer can affect them emotionally and spiritually – not just physically.

For more information or to register, email snbowman@houstonmethodist.org or call 281.274.7164.



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December

December 3

Hospice & More: Finding Support for You & Your Family

Representatives from Amazing Grace Hospice, Comfort Keepers, and Hamilton Transitions will talk about the challenging aspects of aging, health-related issues, and life transitions at the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room.

Veteran Financial Fitness

Impact a Hero will host a free introductory course on the principals of financial fitness for veterans at the Mamie George Community Center in Richmond from 6 - 8 p.m. Visit www.impactahero.org.

December 4

Nature Park Bird Hike

A monthly bird hike will be held at 8 a.m. at Seabourne Creek Nature Park, 3831 Texas 36 South, Rosenberg. All ages and levels of birders are welcome. Binoculars and weather-appropriate clothing and footwear are recommended. The next hike is scheduled for Jan. 8, 2020 Visittxmn.org/coastal.

December 6

2019 Holiday Market

Vintage Market Days of SW Houston Coastal Plains will hold its holiday market — "Merry & Bright" — Dec. 6 - Dec. 8, at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg. Visit vintagemarketdays.com.

Sounds of the Season

The Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce will host its Sounds of the Season with Frank Billingsley from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. Visit www.FortBendChamber.com for tickets and to register.

Candlelight Tours

The Fort Bend Museum Docents will hold its Candlelight Tours at the 1883 Moore Home 6 - 8 p.m., Dec. 6 and 4-8 p.m. Dec. 7. Festive tours of the historic home, plus cookies and wassail will be featured. Visit www.fortbendmuseum.org.

Disney Junior Holiday Party

Disney Junior Holiday Party! On Tour will be at Smart Financial Centre Sugar Land from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Nutcracker on Ice

Sugar Land Ice and Sports Center is presenting its 22nd annual production of the Nutcracker on Ice

at 7 p.m. Dec. 6, and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Dec. 7 at the center. Tickets available at www.etix.com.

December 7

2019 Run Houston! Sugar Land

Get in the holiday spirit by taking on the final event in Run Houston! from 5 - 10:30 a.m. at Constellation Field, with distances of 10K, 5K, and a Kids 1K, as well as a virtual option. All registrations include free high-resolution race photos, custom shirt, custom finisher's medal for all distances, custom race bib, and complimentary parking. Participants will also enjoy special access to the Holiday Lights Festival and a post-race party inside the stadium. All ages and abilities are welcome, including strollers. Visit <http://bit.ly/RunSugarLand>.

Jingle Bell Run - Sugar Land

The Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run is the original festive race for charity. The Sugar Land race will be held from 7 - 11 a.m. at the University of Houston-Sugar Land campus. Visit events.arthritis.org.

Winter Book Sale

Discover great bargains on gently-used adult and children's books, magazines, DVDs and videos at the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library from 9 a.m. - noon in the Annex next door to the library.

Winterfest

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays with refreshments, family activities, and festive music performed by the Second Street Brass Ensemble during this fun open-house event at the George Memorial Library from 10 a.m. - noon in the Meeting Room. The performance will begin at 11 a.m. This event is made possible by the Friends of the George Memorial Library.

Cookies with Santa

Houston Museum of Natural Science - Sugar Land will host Cookies with Santa from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Enjoy holiday crafts, the tradition of cookies and milk and a take away photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus. You can also stop at the reindeer station, too, for a fun holiday selfie. \$5 for members; \$5 for non-members plus purchase of \$5 exhibit halls ticket. Jingle Tree Events: www.hmns.org/hmns-at-sugar-land/events/jingle-tree/

FEATURED EVENT:

Blizzard Bash

Cross Creek Ranch's Blizzard Bash will feature 55,000 lbs of snow from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, at the Cross Creek Ranch Welcome Center. The evening will include a snow tube hill and snow play area; pictures with Santa; a petting zoo; bounce houses; crafts with Mrs. Claus; face painting; and a DJ. Food trucks will also be on site. Admission is free. The first 100 patrons to Cross Creek Ranch's Blizzard Bash will receive a free goodie bag. Visit www.crosscreektexas.com/blizzardbash.



Holiday Open House

The University Branch Library will hold a Holiday Open House from 2:30 - 4 p.m. in Meeting Room 2. Music, refreshments, and craft activities will be available for the whole family to enjoy as they catch the holiday spirit. Books on holiday entertaining, decorating, and cooking will be available for check out, along with seasonal music CDs and movies.

Read to a Cat

Fort Bend Pets Alive is hosting a Read to a Cat event at Half Price Books - Sugar Land from 1 - 4:30 p.m. Read to homeless cats and have the option to adopt one for 50 percent off.

Holidays in the Plaza

Two of the groups from Houston Show Choir, Vocal Impact and Vox Evolution, will create a journey through the holidays with pop, country, disco, rock, show tunes, jazz, and more, with fun for everyone from 5 - 7 p.m. at 2700 N Town Center Blvd. in Sugar Land.

December 8

African Hymn Fest & Health Fair

New Wine Chapel invites the public to celebrate "Christmas in Africa" featuring vibrant musical performances from 4 - 7 p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square. You will also have the opportunity to browse through their health fair on site.

December 10

Book Exchange

The Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce will host a book exchange from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wrap your favorite professional book to give away, and share how it has deeply impacted your life. The exchange will run similarly to a white elephant exchange. Lunch is included. Visit www.FortBendChamber.com.

December 11

Fulshear Katy Area Chamber

Fulshear Katy Area Chamber will meet at Parkway Fellowship 27043 FM 1093 in Richmond. Meet and Greet at 7:30 a.m. The meeting starts at 8 a.m.

December 12

Coffee with the Court

The Fort Bend County Bar Association is hosting its 5th Annual Coffee with the Court from 9 - 10 a.m. at the Fort Bend County Justice Center.

Garden Railroad Run Day

The Houston Area G Gaugers will

be running trains on the garden railroad, weather permitting 1-4 p.m. at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum. Regular museum admission required.

December 14

Toy Giveaway

Mountain Top Ministries, 4310 Ave H, Suite #12 in Rosenberg, is hosting a Toy Giveaway from 7 - 9 p.m. All types of toys ages from 3 years to 17 years old. Visit www.mtopm.org

Fulshear's First Annual Suicide Prevention 5K - Run for Life

Fulshear Treatment to Transition will host its 5K to bring the community and the available resources to help support suicide prevention together from 7:30 - 10:30 a.m. at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. The community can also remember and celebrate those they have lost to suicide. All proceeds for the race will be donated to the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention- Houston Chapter. Visit www.fulsheartransition.com/5k-run-for-life/

Holiday Dance Showcase

The public is invited to enjoy a holiday dance showcase by local

dance companies from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square.

Christmas in Katy

Join Common Ground Community Church at No Label Brewery from noon to 5 p.m. to celebrate Christmas. The event includes live Christmas music, food trucks, market vendors, a Kidz Zone and pictures with Santa.

A Christmas Night of Hope

This adult-only second annual gala is being hosted by Project Clothe A Child from 6 - 11 p.m. at a Hilton Garden Inn Sugar Land. A guest speaker, entertainment and giveaways will be featured. All ticket proceeds benefit PCAC and are tax deductible. Visit www.projectclotheachild.org. Holiday Movie Under the Moon "The Grinch" will be shown from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square. Free and open to the public.

December 15

32nd Annual Fort Bend Kia 30K

Join Finish Line Sports for the 32nd Annual Fort Bend KIA 30K Run from 7 - 11 a.m. in Sugar Land

Town Square. Register at www.sfinishlinesports.com/sugar-land-finish-line-sports-30k.

December 22

Photos with Santa

Sugar Land Town Square and Fort Bend Rainbow Room will host a Photos with Santa event from 1 - 5 p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square. Enjoy a free holiday photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus at 2180 Lone Star Drive (former Z Gallerie space). New stuffed animals for the Fort Bend Rainbow Room's Christmas Project will be collected. All donations will go to children and adults referred by caseworkers from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

December 28

Vintage Bike Ride

Handlebar Cyclery will hold a non-competitive, 28-mile, vintage bike ride, 28 miles from 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.. The ride starts at Essence House Cafe located in Fulshear. Visit www.handlebarcyclery.com.



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WHEN HIS HEART MISSED A BEAT WE DIDN'T

A photograph of a man with a beard holding a young child on a beach at sunset. The man is looking at the child with a gentle expression. The child is looking out at the ocean. The background shows waves and a sunset sky.

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