

January 2018

PECAN GROVE

monthly

A year in review

2017
2018



Plus: Rachel Lazarou named national qualifier for her performance of Aelaide's Lament from Guys and Dolls

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PECAN GROVE monthly™



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Rachel Lazarou with her older brother Paul, and their grandmother Paula "Cookie" Smith, who is also the theater teacher at Calvary. "It feels pretty good that she will carry on our path of theatre arts," said Paul regarding his sister's accomplishment of being named a national qualifier. Having competed at that same competition last year, he advised Rachel to be "to really be energetic, and keep going even if you're not doing your best."

Last year in the *Pecan Grove Monthly* we featured a story on the accomplishment of Calvary Episcopal Preparatory student Paul Lazarou, who was named a national qualifier at the International Thespian Convention held in Nebraska. Right at the close of 2017 his younger sister Rachel Lazarou, was named a national qualifier for the same national competition, an achievement her family and school are thrilled about. It's clear theater plays an important role in the Lazarou family

Rachel Lazarou Continues a Family & School Legacy

By MARQUITA GRIFFIN

It has been said that lightning doesn't strike twice in the same spot. Well, it does at Calvary Episcopal Preparatory. The school's Junior Thespian Troupe again competed at the Texas State Thespian Festival in Dallas last month — the second time for the school — and once again the school boasts a national qualifier for the International Thespian Convention in June.

In December 2016, the first time the Junior Thespian Troupe competed at the festival, Paul Lazarou shined as the national qualifier and this year his younger sister, Rachel Lazarou, holds that honor.

"It feels amazing that we both accomplished this," said the 11-year-old Rachel. "It feels even better that the [national] competition is the same month as my birthday."

Top Honors at Calvary

At the December competition in Dallas, which featured

roughly 5,000 competitors, Lazarou performed *Adelaide's Lament* — a show tune from the Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls*, written by Frank Loesser that opened in 1950 — and earned a superior rating.

"I most enjoyed her accent and how much I had to be involved in the character," Lazarou said of her chosen piece.

At the same competition, judges remarked on the creativity of Calvary's mask makers who competed for the first time in High School Tech competition. Their artistic rendition of the *Ghost of Christmas Present* received 34 out of 35 points, earning them second place.

The team included high school freshman, Connor Steenbergen, high school Junior Amelia Wang and high school seniors, Jessica Huynh and Autumn Nguyen.

"I am so proud of all of our students," said Headmaster Malcolm Smith, Jr. "And amazed at their talents."

Continued on page 8

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Now, onto nationals

Lazarou will perform Adelaide's Lament from Guys and Dolls at the International Thespian Festival at the University of Nebraska, which is the highest level of competition for thespians. The festival will be held from June 25 through June 30. Lazarou will compete against 576 qualifying acts, 32 of which are from junior high.

"I am not nervous about going on stage," said Lazarou, who has performed in theater for seven years. "I'm nervous about failing."

Headmaster Smith, however, has supreme confidence in Lazarou.

"Everything that Rachel does is with enthusiasm and high energy," he said. "She is obviously very talented, and we can be assured that she will represent the Calvary family well when she performs at the University of Nebraska in the summer."

A legacy of the performing arts

Prior to the nationals competition last year, Lazarou's brother said theater is important to their family. Not only is Lazarou following in her brother's footsteps, her grandmother, Paula "Cookie" Smith teaches theater at Calvary, and her parents praise the benefits of theater as well.

Lazarou's mother, Rebecca, is no stranger to the stage and even as a grown woman with a family, she notes theater is still a constant in her day-to-day living.

"As a theater girl, I constantly evaluate the role of theater in my adult life," Rebecca said. "There is not a day that goes by without being reminded of valuable lessons learned."

Although she recognizes that "everyone doesn't win, nor is there a role for everyone who auditions," Rebecca said theater goes beyond stage performance and recognition.

"Theater is important because it teaches young artists how to exert more effort in order to achieve their goals," she said. "We are very proud of their hard work. We just want Rachel and Paul to have fun and turned into a passion and motivator."

Theater also streams from Lazarou's father, Jacob, as well

considering his sister Beth is also an actress, received a Theater Degree from University of Houston and has performed in shows throughout the city.

"I feel truly blessed and proud to have such talented children," said father Jacob Lazarou. "Not only are they naturally gifted, but they work very hard to be successful."

"I believe it is important for students to have access to theater to help them tap into the creative side of themselves, while being able to express their gifts and talents outside of their academic gift."

The benefits of theater

Theater teacher Paula Smith is known for her appreciation of the performing arts, calling the field an integral aspect of education, so the announcement of how Calvary ranked at the December competition, fills her with pride.

"As their instructor and as an advocate for the Performing Arts, I could not be more proud of the Calvary Episcopal Preparatory attitude for excellence that propels all these students to success," she said.

"However, as a grandmother the emotions are overwhelming that Rachel has perpetuated the family dedication to the craft and put forth amazing amounts of effort to go even farther than her mother and grandmother."

Smith said theater offers lessons beyond what's learned preparing for a performance.


"From any theater experience I hope children learn to become risk takers, have confidence in front of large and small groups of strangers and realize that effort equals reward," she said.

What theater has taught Lazarou is work ethic, and she loves that. Theater pushes actors outside of comfort zones, which isn't always easy, she admits. One must summon a bravery to step on stage.

Once that bravery is acquired, however, the sky is the limit. That bravery, Lazarou said, encourages performers "to keep doing anything [they] can to get on stage."

"I am not nervous about going on stage. I'm nervous about failing."

— Rachel Lazarou



Rachel Lazarou preparing for a performance. The Calvary sixth graders said her favorite performance was an improv a dance because someone missed an entrance. "I did the sprinkler, lawn mower and the shopping cart," she said.



1



2



3

1. Calvary Episcopal Preparatory theatre students at the Texas State Thespian Festival in Dallas.

2. Taking second place kids in mask making at the Texas State Thespian Festival in Dallas are from left, Jessica Nguyen, Autumn Nguyen, Connor Steenbergen and Amelia Wang.

3. Rachel Lazarou in character at a prior performance at Calvary.



“The things I learned at Be Unique gave me the confidence I needed to become a better role model to my little sister and a leader among my peers.”

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TOP STORIES

Looking Back Before Looking Ahead

The new year has arrived with all of its promises and possibilities. But before we step into 2018, we at the Pecan Grove Monthly wanted to remember some of the top stories of 2017. In this special Year In Review, not only will we remind you of all that has transpired over the year in your community magazine, but we will also touch on the top stories around the nation and Fort Bend County.

Quarter I:

The first quarter of 2017 opened with a variety of major events including Ford canceling plans to build a \$1.6 billion plant in Mexico; Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus announcing it will cease operation after 146 years; and the controversy surrounding the U.S. immigration ban.

The top story, by far however, was Donald Trump being sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. His inauguration drew protests, some of which resulted in damaged property and injured people, including police officers.

CRIME: The first three months of 2017, unfortunately, included criminal acts that shocked and terrified, the most prominent of which were the Fort Lauderdale airport shooting by Iraq war veteran Esteban Santiago who killed five people and injured six at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida and the Chicago torture incident where four suspects streamed a video on Facebook showing themselves torturing and scalping a bound and gagged, kidnapped man with a mental disorder. The suspects were caught and faced elevated hate crime charges.

Also dominating headlines was Dylann Roof, who was charged with 33 counts of federal hate crimes and sentenced to death for the murder of nine people at a Charleston, South Carolina church in 2015.

Even locally there were cringe-worthy crimes like that of the 20-year-old Needville woman who was arrested after an investigation that proved she killed her two-month old baby boy and when a Sugar Land man, who was intoxicated, hit Fort Bend County Deputy Crystal Schooler with his vehicle.

NEWS THAT WENT VIRAL: When Sea World officials announced Tilikum, the orca that once killed a trainer, died, the story spread far and wide online, prompting many to question the history of Tilikum and the treatment of animals in captivity. In Fort Bend County, news that 17 Colombia suspects had been arrested in connection with multiple burglary cases around the county and in Houston grabbed plenty of attention, especially when it was revealed that one of the suspects had ties to a South American terrorist group.

INTERESTING & INSPIRING STORIES: Exciting news was abundant in the first quarter, including news from the science community that the cave squeaker (*Arthroleptis troglodytes*), a critically endangered species of frog, was located and captured for the first time since 1962 and in Western Australia the night parrot was sighted — the first time in 100 years.

Closer to home, here were plenty of inspiring stories like the one about residents, history enthusiasts and guests coming from as far as Brazoria, Austin and Galveston counties to gather for the annual Lamar Day celebration at Morton Cemetery in Richmond; the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County hosting its annual Bike the Bend for Literacy; Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to the South Pacific fundraiser proving to be a packed and festive

event; and former NFL and Houston Texans offensive lineman Wade Smith making an appearance at Lunches of Love's "Taste of Fort Bend" fundraiser held at Briscoe Manor.

Plus, the Fort Bend Museum presented the first ever Brazos Cultural Heritage Festival at Decker Park in Richmond. The festival was an outreach event created to spotlight the many cultures that make up Fort Bend County, one of the most ethnically-diverse counties in the United States.

The Richmond Police Department also announced that its first "Coffee with a Cop" event was a success. The event offered city residents and law enforcement the chance to gather and have a cup of coffee to get to know one another, ask questions and voice concerns in a relaxed setting.

MEANWHILE, IN THE PECAN GROVE MONTHLY: It's clear plenty was happening around the nation and the county, but stories were aplenty in the Pecan Grove community. In January we spotlighted Lisa Poynor who was honored by the Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse for her leadership at the agency that grew from a small organization to one that is widely-regarded.

Each year the council serves 15,000 people. "The Fort Bend Regional Council has been blessed to have both excellence and continuity in Lisa's service to and leadership of our agency. I cannot think of another Fort Bend or Houston agency that has been equally blessed with this length of tenure," said the 2016-2017 Board President Linda Schoonmaker, who added the evening was a chance to "celebrate Poynor, the Fort Bend Regional Council staff and many other supporters of the agency and its mission."

The following month love was in the air as we celebrated with a special Valentine's Day edition.

We were thrilled to share local love stories, including an amazing one of two people — Patricia Robb and Joe Vasquez — who received special permission to marry at the George Memorial Library in Richmond, and the love one woman has for writing and pet adoptions — Terri Sobal. We showcased her book "Oscar and Emmy Get Rescued," Sabol's first published work that follows two kittens Oscar and Emmy on their journey from being born to a stray mother cat to being rescued by an animal shelter and then adopted by a loving family. This book not only showcases these two kittens, who will continue in their own Oscar and Emmy book series, but it also educates children and adults on the rescue process and promotes pet adoption. "Adopt, don't shop," Sabol said. "There are many public shelters, as well as private rescue groups in every area. A lot of physical, medical, and emotional care goes into getting these animals ready to be adopted into a loving home."

Come March Paul Lazarou and his grandmother Paula "Cookie" Smith were front and center as both of them earned top honors at the Texas Thespian Festival: Paula was awarded the 2016 Eric

Bailey Outstanding Theatre Troupe Director and Paul was named a national qualifier.

“Theatre arts takes a lot of practice to be able to be good at and to enjoy it. It also takes patience because you won’t get it the first time,” Paul said. “Theater arts helps me to stay focused because there a lot of things going on at once and it challenges me. I think this helps with my education.”

The magazine also featured an inspiring story about a Fort Bend County 10-year-old girl, Lizzie Rule, who encouraged the community through her personal mission to improve her community and the county through her volunteering efforts. Her works earned her the nomination of 2017 National Youth Activist Community Ambassador for the National Youth Activist Awards, a Tennessee-based nonprofit. She did not win in the category — that had 100 competitors — but Lizzie enjoyed the experience. “There were so many deserving nominees,” Lizzie said. “The other competitors were really nice. It was a lot of fun being interviewed on the red carpet and talking about my platform. I was honored to be recognized.”



1 Gabby Snider gets to know Rosenberg Police Officer Jazz Roberts at Coffee with a Cop in February. *(Photo by Averil Gleason)*

2 The Lamar Consolidated varsity baseball and coaching staff celebrates making the playoffs for the first time since 2012.

3 From left, Pay May and Pat Walzel help guide Donna Van Horn sew a vibrant, green, brown and yellow-hued leaf-motif quilt to donate to the OakBend Medical Center. The TEEA (Texas Extension of Education Association) members meet twice a year to create quilts to donate to hospitals. *(Photo By Diana Nguyen)*

4 Sydney Reed and George Lane, who is from Fulshear, meet up at the president’s inauguration. While attending Stephen F. Austin State University, Reed and Lane were members of the College Republican’s club.

5 Roger Kercheva of Incredible Events, also known as Lucky the Leprechaun, greets Little Miss Fulshear contestant Kayla Decharinte, 6, at Fulshear’s St. Patrick’s Day Shamrock Shindig in downtown Fulshear. *(Photo By Diana Nguyen)*

Quarter II:

In the second quarter of the year we reflected on the lives of Emma Morano, the last person living who was born before 1900, dying at the age of 117, and the death of our own Mildred Walker, who was known for her numerous contributions to Fort Bend through her volunteering and leadership works. Fort Bend Museum Docent Judi Vernon, who worked with Mildred in Lamar Consolidated ISD, described Mildred as “a master teacher who touched the lives of many LCISD students.”

CRIME: In May the Manchester Arena bombing injured more than 500 people and killed 23 others including the attacker following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande; the Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurant chain revealed hackers stole customer payment data from most of their stores over a span of three weeks; and in Portland, Oregon, two men are stabbed to death in a train, after they attempt to intervene while a man shouts racial slurs at two teenage girls, one of them wearing a hijab.

In April a Fort Bend County jury convicted a 24-year-old Sugar Land woman of felony theft after a one-week trial. She stole \$42,500 from employer in 2014, and that same month, one woman was arrested when a spa in Fort Bend was raided after an investigation of prostitution or solicitation of prostitution being conducted at the location. Also garnering attention was when the DEA and Fort Bend County Sheriff’s office bust a drug lab in a Canyon Gates at the Brazos home.

NEWS THAT WENT VIRAL: The stories that spread like wildfire online were the United Express Flight 3411 incident in which a passenger was unceremoniously removed from an overbooked flight on April 9; the shooting of Robert Godwin, the 74-year-old man who was senselessly murdered in a video that was posted on Facebook; a second parchment manuscript of the United States Declaration of Independence being discovered by Harvard University researchers; FBI Director James Comey being fired by President Trump; and Army Private Chelsea Manning being released after having her sentence commuted by then-President Obama at the end of his term.

Closer to home, popular news included Governor Greg Abbott signing Senate Bill 4 resulting in ‘Show Me Your Papers’ becoming law; 81 students being selected to participate in the elite LCISD Elementary Honor Choir; the building of a new playground at the Texana Center designed specifically for children with autism; and Morton Lodge No. 72 awarding its Community Builder Award to

Richmond City Manager Terri Vela.

INTERESTING & INSPIRING: Circling online was the news that artifacts from Triquet Island are found to date back 14,000 years, marking the discovery of the oldest village in North America; the New York Daily News and ProPublica winning the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for reporting on nuisance abatement by police targeting minorities; and the state of New York, the first state in the country to do so, announcing it will offer free four-year public college tuition for residents whose families make less than \$100,000.

Around Fort Bend George Ranch Historical Park hosted a Mother’s Day event as well as an old fashioned Easter; Crop Hunger Walk raises \$12,000; construction on the 24th Lamar Consolidated ISD elementary school began; and the 8th Annual US Navy SEAL Danny Dietz Memorial Classic is proudly returned to the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg.

Keeping with its efforts to protect abused and neglected children in Fort Bend County, the Fort Bend Rainbow Room held its 16th Annual Flo Berkman Awards Luncheon; Oak Bend Medical Center’s “Power of the Pur\$e” fundraiser inspires guests to make a difference in the world; and Life Skills students at George Ranch High School participate in Police Day, where students had a chance to meet with officers and learn about policing.

Then there was the fundraiser held for Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Deputy Crystal Schooler who was hit by a drunk driver in February. Following the accident she couldn’t walk or work, so members of the sheriff’s department threw a fundraiser to help Crystal and her family.

“My family, friends and coworkers have been doing so much for me behind-the-scenes. At first, I couldn’t accept the help because my pride got in the way. I had been so independent for so long. But then I realized that they’re doing all this from the kindness of their heart,” she said. “This was a crummy situation, but everyone has really come together to help me and I can’t thank them enough.”

MEANWHILE, IN THE PECAN GROVE MONTHLY: The second quarter opened with the Hands and Hearts Foundation, a local and Christian-based nonprofit that works to improve the lives of individuals and contribute towards other non-profits, holding its 16th annual benefit golf tournament. Plus the *Pecan Grove Monthly* profiled the Rosenberg Symphonic Band, which accepts members from across the county. “We feel it is our responsibility to provide musical entertainment other than what

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people hear on the radio,” Roger Bauer, the trumpet-playing Rosenberg Symphonic Band president, said during an interview. “We want to give them something to dream for.”

Then of course we highlighted Mother’s Day with thoughts about moms shared from *Pecan Grove Monthly* staff and readers, like Jennifer Heath who admitted she never “knew about the millions of little things,” a mother does, that is until Jennifer became a mother herself. Other daughters and mothers chimed in with their passionate and affection recollections of their mothers, to delight of our readers. That same month we spotlighted pastel artist Carolyn Hancock whose work was on display locally and nationally. “Pastel can do everything,” she said. “It always offers something new and a beauty that goes beyond any other medium, and yet it cannot be conquered.”

We ended the quarter with Father’s Day, giving our readers a chance to brag on and honor their fathers. One reader, Rebekah Ramos, shared a heartbreakingly beautiful story about her late father, proclaiming that even though her father is no longer here, she will always and forever be “Daddy’s baby girl.” We also shared a heartbreaking but inspiring story about Pecan Grove husband and father Abraham Aguirre who created memorial scholarships in memory of two of his brothers-in-arms — Jose. M. Reyes and Jarrod A. Odiot — who committed suicide.



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1 PHOTO BY DIANA NGUYEN The Foster High School Culinary Arts practicum team presented their student reports and their involvement with the ProStart Competition to the LCISD school board. Culinary arts teacher Jocelyn Aventurado was named the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation ProStart National Educator or Excellence. Shown from left, are: Jocelyn Aventurado, students Seth Apodaca, Yesenia Arriaga, Kayla Muse, Sky Zeno, Paola Guzman, Olivia Phillips and Shane Castillo.

2 Fort Bend Seniors’ 2017 Prom Queen Comfort Asantewea, in purple, and 2016 Prom Queen Judith Sterling, both from the Hometowne on Belfort senior community center, experience a grand exit in limousine. (Photo By Diana Nguyen)

3 Fort Bend Master Gardeners who meet in Rosenberg every Wednesday for a work day show they have a good time. From front, left are Cathi Poncik, Catherine Pennington, Heidi Czarhopus and Christina Alpat. Pictured from back, left are Arnold Knoche, Linda Evasiuk and Mike Garrett. (Photo by Averil Gleason)

4 Joanne Chiu, George Ranch employees Carie Spiars and Louise Claire, and Taipei Economic Cultural Office Director-general Louis Huang enjoy a day at the George Ranch Historical Park. (Photo By Diana Nguyen)

5 Andi Wallis presented Texana Center’s Lou Larsen Volunteer of the Year award to Tom Larsen in May. The award was named after Tom’s late wife, a dedicated volunteer at Texana Center.

Quarter III:

When we think of the third quarter of 2017, Hurricane Harvey immediately comes to mind. A Category 4 storm, Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in late August and caused \$180 billion in damage, making it the second costliest hurricane in U.S. history in comparison to Hurricane Katrina. The hurricane affected 13 million people in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky and killed more than 80 people. To date, our county is still recovering from the devastation wrought by the hurricane and support has come from all areas of the county including assistance from individuals, nonprofits, businesses and hospitals.

Other top headlines included Representative Brad Sherman filing the first articles for the formal impeachment of Donald Trump in his position of President of the United States; the U.S. Department of Justice charging 412 individuals with health care fraud collectively defrauding \$1.3 billion from the U.S. government; a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, finding 99 percent of the brains donated for scientific research by deceased National Football League players show signs of chronic traumatic encephalopathy the disease identified in autopsies of numerous NFL players who have committed suicide, and the subject of the 2015 movie Concussion; and when more than 143 million people in the U.S. may have had their social security and driver's license numbers compromised due to a data breach on the credit rating firm Equifax.

CRIME: Tragic news in July included a shooting in Cincinnati at a gender reveal party where one person was killed and eight were injured. The unborn child, who was revealed to be a boy also died; Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull demanding answers after an Australian woman, who called 9-1-1 for help because of a suspected assault near her home, was shot and killed by a U.S. police officer who had responded in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and the nine men who were found dead inside a tractor-trailer parked outside a Walmart store in the American city of San Antonio, Texas. Thirty people, many in critical condition and suffering from heat stroke and exhaustion, were removed from the non-air conditioned trailer which also lacked a water supply.

Locally a Fort Bend County native was killed along with six others at a house party in Plano, Texas due to a domestic dispute. The gunman was killed after exchanging fire with a Plano Police Department officer; a 30-year-old Rosenberg woman being charged with assault with a vehicle; and a 16-year-old boy was charge in the accidental shooting of a teenage girl.

DISASTERS & TRAGEDIES: A natural gas explosion at college prep school Minnehaha Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota, killed two staff members and injuring nine others and Hurricane Irma, which became a Category 5 hurricane pushed Puerto Rico and Florida to issue states of emergency. In Richmond, a teenage drowned in the Brazos River. "It's a sad, sad situation," Richmond Police Lt. Lowell Neinst. "Our hearts go out to the family."

NEWS THAT WENT VIRAL: There was no shortage of viral news including President Trump tweeting that transgender Americans will not be allowed to serve "in any capacity" in the United States Armed Forces, resulting in five transgender United States military personnel sue President Donald Trump and top Pentagon officials over the President's policy change; several Confederate monuments that were taken down overnight in the

city of Baltimore, Maryland; and the national anthem protests that started in 2016.

In Fort Bend, the news that caught attention include when the Fort Bend Museum unveiled items hidden to public in over 20 years; Fort Bend County residents rallying for the inaugural March for Babies; and when Texas Gov. Greg Abbott visited the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management in Richmond to strategize disaster relief with state and local leaders.

INTERESTING & INSPIRING: The Food and Drug Administration approved the first treatment that genetically engineers patients' own blood cells to destroy acute lymphoblastic leukemia. The approval makes Novartis the proprietor of the first gene therapy to hit the U.S. market.

At home the 4th Annual Downtown Stomp returned; Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey announced he would not seek re-election; the Texana Center receiving a \$1million grant from the George Foundation for the Fulshear campus; and a local mother started the I Matter Foundation, which was her response to the rise of suicides in the community.

This quarter also saw local nonprofit Lunches of Love celebrate serving its two millionth lunch; LCISD thespian showcasing their talents at an international festival; Fort Bend County attorney Rehan Alimohammad named chair of State Bar of Texas Board of Directors; Texas State Technical College held its first commencement ceremony; and Richmond native Mary Sarah being named as the 2017 Grand Marshal for the Fort Bend County Fair Parade.

MEANWHILE, IN THE PECAN GROVE MONTHLY: With the warm days of summer on us, we created a fun-filled package of local events and summer fun ideas for our readers who would be enjoying some much deserved time off from the day-to-day hustle and bustle of society. Also in July we showcased the Fort Bend Boys Choir of Texas, which has been running for 35 years. The profile was a significant one, detailing not only what the choir does, but dispelling myths and getting insight into how equality and empowerment are some of the choir's strongest assets. "When I first started the choir, I just wanted to see if it would fly," said William "Bill" Adams, founder of the Fort Bend Boys Choir of Texas. "And it flew."

In August we shared an informative and inspiring collection of back-to-school news, including a highlight on Pecan Grove's Noor Mohamed who is so besotted with science that it earned her a spot in the JASON Learning Argonaut Program as the 2017 Fort Bend ISD Student Argonaut. While STEM — Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics — subjects should be priority for all students, Mohamed said she hopes more girls take an interest in these vital areas.

"I think it's important for everyone to be interested in STEM, but girls specifically because there are a small percentage of girls in STEM," she said. "We are under-represented and I know that girls could bring so much to the table."

We closed the quarter with news about the 81st Fort Bend County Fair & Rodeo and the accomplishments of local student athletes at Fort Bend Martial Arts Academy who took top honors at the 2017 AAU National Taekwondo Championships held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The academy boasted a national team roster — the largest ever for the academy — of 29 athletes in three youth divisions. Of the 16 male and 13 female athletes three earned gold medals, three earned silver medals and one athlete won a bronze medal.

"This was an historic year for the academy," said Chris Martinez, the academy's head coach of the Developmental Teams.



1 From left, Monica Mendez, Blanca Quinones and Kingdom Church Pastor Miguel Quinones carry boxes of water bottles at the vast Lamar Plaza building where they stored five-truck loads of donations from Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The 10,000 square foot building was filled to capacity thanks to the generous Johnstown community and hardworking truck drivers who drove almost 3,000 miles help Rosenberg with Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. (Photo By Diana Nguyen)

2 Guests listen in as past board presidents of the Fort Bend History Association, once known as the Fort Bend Museum Association, share their experiences serving during the Presidents' Circle Dinner. From left, are board secretary Keely Knipling, trustee Sharon Wallingford, treasurer Billie Van Slyke, trustee Lynne Humphries, and former board president Bettye Anhauser. (Photo By Diana Nguyen)

3 PHOTO BY DIANA NGUYEN Foster High School senior Nkechinyere "ChiChi" Nwankwo was awarded at the LCISD school board meeting with a certificate of recognition. From left, is: mom, Yolanda Harris, ChiChi Nwankwo and stepdad, Corey Harris. ChiChi won the U.S. Marine Corps Girls Junior Folkstyle Nationals at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. She is a two-time state champion, winning at 205 pounds in 2016 and in the 185-lb. division in 2017, and won nationals on March 25.

4 Herald photo by Averil Gleason Quintin Bernard and his mom Trina enjoy a sugary sweet breakfast at Pecan Grove Elementary School's Muffins with Mom.

5 Lorenzo Lerma and son Ian take a look at the solar eclipse at City Hall on Aug. 21.

6 April Thompson (left) and Sara Rivera (right) are the only two women enrolled in TSTC's Welding Technology. They want to let other women know that there is no need to feel afraid or intimidated when pursuing a male-dominated career.



Quarter IV:

The final quarter of the year opened up with plenty of controversy, primarily around what is known as the Weinstein Effect, stemming from American film producer Harvey Weinstein answering allegations made by a report in The New York Times that he had settled eight sexual harassment claims made over three decades. Also catching attention was the U.S. House of Representatives passing legislation (Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act) which would criminalize abortions made 20 weeks into a pregnancy, except for cases endangering the mother's life, rape, or incest. In Fort Bend the most controversial story of the quarter was when Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls posted a photo of a truck with an obscene decal regarding President Trump on his Facebook page and initially wanted to bring charges against the driver. The post went viral, drawing attention from across the nation with people passionately divided between agreeing with the sheriff and disagreeing with him. Sheriff Nehls ultimately removed the photo and did not charge the driver, who was later arrested for an outstanding warrant.

CRIME: In October the Las Vegas shooting terrified the nation after the death toll continued to rise, making it the deadliest mass shooting in recent U.S. history. The 64-year-old shooter killed himself before police arrived at his room in the Mandalay Bay casino and hote. Police found 23 guns in the shooters hotel room, and 19 more at his Mesquite, Nevada, home.

News that shocked and angered the Fort Bend community included a traffic stop in Richmond netting 56 pounds of methamphetamine; a 27-year-old Sugar Land man who plead guilty to the distribution of child pornography; a 56-year-old Needville man who pleaded guilty to murdering his estranged wife in front of his young children in 2011; and a Fort Bend County sheriff's deputy who was fired after her arrest on a driving while intoxicated.

DISASTERS & TRAGEDIES: Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló's office reported that the number of deaths related to Hurricane Maria has risen to 34 and the death toll in the October Northern California wildfires grew to more than 20 people with hundreds still missing.

Here in Fort Bend, nearly two hours before it was set to open, the Shogun restaurant in the 7300 block of the Grand Parkway in Fort Bend County was shattered when an 18-wheeler crashed into it shortly after 9 a.m. It was reported hazmat gasses were in the trailer and the building was evacuated. Injuries were

NEWS THAT WENT VIRAL: Fort Bend had news spread across social media including when patrolling in the hallways of George Ranch High School increased after three students

brought a Confederate flag to campus; the LCISD 2017 \$445.4 million bond election — which was ultimately passed — sparking quite a bit of controversy; and 25 children being adopted on National Adoption Day at the Fort Bend County Justice Center.

INTERESTING & INSPIRING: The Boy Scouts of America announces that girls may join as full members of the Cub Scouts beginning in 2018. Young women may join as full members of the Boy Scouts and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout beginning in 2019.

Local neat news included, Fort Bend Museum hosting its 2nd annual Black & White Masquerade; the Chamber celebrating a grand opening of nonprofit Fort Bend Hope in October; Lamar Consolidated High School's Mighty Mustang band hosting its first Holiday Bazaar; Hope for Three's Golf "Fore" Autism exceeding expectations by raising more than \$50,000; OakBend Medical Center raising \$341,000 through "Patchwork of Life" fundraiser; Fort Bend Toyota donating \$5,000 for flood recovery at Brazos Bend State Park;

And while the county was still reeling from the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, nonprofit Child Advocates of Fort Bend demonstrated its strength when it announced it wasn't cancelling its Christmas Home Tour — "Over 1,200 children in foster care along the Texas Gulf Coast were displaced by Hurricane Harvey and their needs haven't gone away," Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford said.

MEANWHILE, IN THE PECAN GROVE MONTHLY: The last quarter of the year always brings fun and advice-filled highlights on Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, and this year was no different. We included round-ups of local events, recipe ideas and we tossed in fun games that could be played during holiday gatherings for good measure. The more localized stories included the accomplishments of Pecan Grove artist Charlie Weiss whose work was included in a short dramatic film called "Save Me," which is available on YouTube and Pecan Grove poet Terry Miller who earned him recognition at 2017 National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

"It whirls within me and keeps me upright and balanced in challenging times," said Miller who has been a poet for eight years. "Poetry is the conduit between the sensory world and that part of us that is beyond the corporeal. All of us know we are more than the flesh and bones we carry around, and poetry helps us tap into that separate self. When we know ourselves, we are then able to know others, feel their joy and pain."

And as you probably recall with ease, Inspiration Stage's The Sound of Music production which included loads of local talent.

"A show like The Sound of Music is difficult to replicate — it's touching without being overly sentimental. It's family-friendly but set against dark undertones of World War II. Its message overall is one of finding each other, bonding together, and overcoming impossible circumstances," said Sarah Patterson to the *Pecan Grove Monthly*. "As our community is recovering from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, I hope audiences see some of themselves in a story like this — we too found strength and unity in each other during difficult times. Our greater Houston story is similarly one of bonding, hope, and pride."

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1 Ehi Esemuze and senior Hrutu Chadhary wait in excited anticipation for the water rocket to go off, created with water and Alka-Seltzer tablets, at Friends of North Richmond's Riveredge Fall Festival & Family Feast at Clay Park.

2 OAKBEND RN Sharlett Lightfoot explodes in laughter with her friend, RN Rebecca Atlan, at "Patchwork of Life 2017" at the Safari Texas Ranch. (Photo by Diana Nguyen)

3 Foster High School's Jocelyn Aventurado was named a National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation ProStart National Educator of Excellence in April

4 PHOTO BY DIANA NGUYEN Frost fifth-grader Skyla Riedel plays around with a NASA microphone and pretends to interview Carter Stein at the 2017 Mars

Rover Celebration at the University of Houston.

5 Jenna Lindemann, 15, earned the grand champion banner for her AOB steer at this year's Fort Bend County Fair & Rodeo.

6 Fair Bees dancer Dee Adams square dances at the George Ranch Historical Park Texian Market School Day in October.

7 U.S. Air Force member Samantha Field, aunt of first-grader Emilia Miller, gives a thumbs up as she enjoys a donut during a Veterans Day reception in November. (Photo by Diana Nguyen)

8 Brissa Molina, Patty Molina, Ali Reyes and Jiaana Stevenson dress up an Egyptian, a golden skeleton, a Dia de los Muertos lady and Wednesday Addams at the T.W. Davis YMCA's Trunk or Treat in October. (Photo by Diana Nguyen)

Pecan Grove Women's Club to focus on Alzheimer's

By Sheryl Fairchild

The January meeting of the Pecan Grove Women's Club will be held on Tuesday, January 9 at the Pecan Grove Plantation Country Club.

We welcome you to join us at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and visiting.

The program will follow at 10:30 a.m. after our 10 a.m. business meeting.

At our January meeting we will host a speaker from the Alzheimer's Association of Houston and Southeast Texas. The basics of identifying Alzheimer's as well as other forms of dementia will be discussed. One in 10 people age 65 or older has Alzheimer's disease, come learn more with us.

Please join us for lunch by calling or emailing Kay McNinch at 281-238-4002 (kkmcninch@yahoo.com) or Linda Saad at 281-342-8575 (lindasaad@gmail.com) to make reservations. Reservations need to be made by Friday, Jan. 5. The program is free and the cost for lunch should you like to stay, is \$13.

Please note: A country club membership is not necessary to visit or join the Women's Club. We welcome all women in the Pecan Grove area who enjoy laughter, conversation and who want to become further involved in their community.

25 children find homes on National Adoption Day

BY AVERIL GLEASON

One year ago, Fort Bend County residents Laurie and Michael Byerly adopted their first son, Levi.

In November Levi's brother Josiah joined the family.

November presented National Adoption Day, and 25 children between the ages of 0 and 16 were adopted at the Fort Bend County Justice Center.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend decorated the third floor of the building with face painting stations, balloon animals, book giveaways and a Wizard of Oz meet and greet for the children getting adopted.

"This is fantastic," Child Advocates CEO Ruthanne Mefford said with a smile.

"I mean it is absolutely incredible.

"This year, things have really grown. We wanted it to be a real celebration."

Mefford said she chose the Wizard of Oz theme because Dorothy also wanted to find her family.

"It's all about finding a forever home," she said.

"That's what it's all about. These kids have gone through abuse so this is big that they're finding families."

Child Advocates of Fort Bend provides a voice, heals the hurt and breaks the cycle of abuse and neglect for children in Fort

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This nonprofit serves child victims of sexual and physical abuse.

“We’re the ones exposing the issues of child abuse,” Mefford said.

“We’re hearing about all these celebrities speaking out about sexual assault and they’re getting the word out. They’re raising awareness and that’s helping raise the awareness of child abuse too.

“I want children and people of all ages to feel empowered.

“There is help available. We are available.”

Set up outside of the Justice Center was a petting zoo, a bounce house, and more than a dozen motorcycles.

The motorcycles, belonging to the Bikers Against Child Abuse, showed their support by escorting children and their parents to the courtrooms before the adoption process began.

Also in attendance was Matthew Martin, organization leader of the Thankful Ones.

The Thankful Ones is a non-profit organization that provides financial support to the families in the process of adopting a child of addictive parents. The organization bring awareness to the topic of adoption and addiction and how children are affected by both.

“We’re raising money for Child Advocates of Fort Bend because we know how time consuming and costly it is to adopt,” Martin said.

“We want to help in every way we can because we don’t want

children to be stuck in a situation where they don’t have a family who loves them.”

Of the 25 children adopted, seven of them were CPS adoptions, while the other 18 were products of private adoption.

“We’re strengthening our community by holding this event,” Mefford said.



LAURIE BYERLY holds her son before he is officially adopted into her family at the National Adoption Day event. (Photo By Averil Gleason)



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Hope For Three Golf "Fore" Autism Exceeds Expectations Raising Over \$50,000

“It was a glorious day on the greens as sponsors, underwriters and golfers galore raised a tremendous amount of awareness and funds for local families and children living with autism. Today, autism is the leading developmental disability in the United States, affecting one in 45 school age children,” said Darla Farmer, Hope For Three Executive Director.

The event surpassed expectations, with over 105 players present and funds raised exceeded \$50,000. Proceeds benefit Hope For Three’s Family Assistance program, directly impacting children on the autism spectrum with services, therapies and support they might otherwise go without.

“We are thankful our community recognizes the importance of our cause and mission and for making a difference in the lives of so many children,” added Farmer.

To learn more about Hope For Three programs and resources or volunteer opportunities, call 281-245-0640 or visit: www.hopefortthree.org.



The Honorable Judge Hebert and Hope For Three Executive Director, Darla Farmer, present Marshall Dujka and Steve Dujka (L to R), General Partners of Landmark Industries (Timewise), a token of appreciation for serving as Presenting Sponsor for the Second Annual Golf “Fore” Autism Charity Tournament. General Partners not pictured: Bob Duff and Kent Brotherton

Fort Bend County Jigsaw Puzzle Competition Raises Awareness for Autism

The first-ever Fort Bend County Jigsaw Puzzle Competition, presented by LearningRX Sugar Land, is slated for January 20, 2018 at Constellation Field Insperity Club.

Hope For Three Autism Advocates and Corner Sponsor, Fort Bend Teen Service League, invite novice and experienced puzzlers, ages 10 and up, to an exciting and challenging two-hour timed competition. Teams of four, or individual players, rally together to raise awareness until all the pieces fit.



LearningRX Sugar Land Center Director, Syndee Howgate (right), students and staff with Hope For Three Executive Director, Darla Farmer, sharpen their skills and plan to play in the first-ever Fort Bend County Jigsaw Puzzle Competition, until all the pieces fit.

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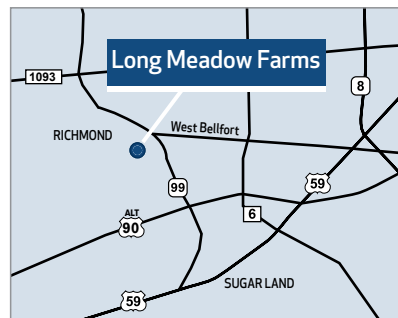


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From left, the Honorable Judge Joel Clouser, grandson, Marshall and Mom, Lynn Clouser-Kelly, with proud grandmother, Gloria Clouser, pull up their boot straps to help others gain understanding and acceptance about the leading developmental disability in the United States today, autism. (Photo by Brenda Perry)

Prizes, awards and bragging rights guaranteed! The puzzle piece is the International symbol for autism and, since every piece is unique, it adequately represents a uniquely different person with autism. To learn more, register your team (\$100), or sign-up for individual play (\$25), visit hopeforthree.org/ or call 281-245-0640.

Saddle Up! It's "Round Up for Autism" Annual Luncheon

Hope For Three Autism Advocates encourages families, friends and supporters to Saddle Up! for the Seventh Annual Awareness Luncheon, "Round Up for Autism," February 8, 2018 at Safari Texas Ranch, Richmond.

The event, presented by Daugherty Insurance, is an opportunity to hear first-hand from Fathers and Honorary Chair, Judge Joel Clouser, on the real-life challenges and rewards of living with autism.

Hope For Three Board member and Father, Deon Minor shared, "It was extremely hard on me as a father because most, if not all, fathers would like for their sons to grow up healthy and play sports, or do whatever they dream of. I was in denial for a very long time and finally, several years ago, had to accept the reality..."

In the past decade, Autism Spectrum Disorder has risen 289 percent, more prevalent than childhood cancer and diabetes combined. Because of this, the need to raise awareness and funds is tremendous. Hope For Three organizes the annual luncheon to empower communities and share the importance of empathy and increased knowledge.

Cowboys and cowgirls, in their western wear, are welcome to support local families with a scrumptious lunch and enjoy live music from Launch Academy Band. Line dancing and entertainment from Cookie Joe's Dancin' School are sure to have cow pokes two-stepping to the table.

For more information about these events or Hope For Three call 281-245-0640 or visit hopeforthree.org.

Literary Council of Fort Bend Reception and Driveway Dedication Ceremony Honoring Lucia Street!

The Literacy Council of Fort Bend held a Reception and Driveway Dedication Ceremony honoring Lucia Street.

Naming rights were generously purchased by Debbie and Chris Patton at the 2017 Reading between the Wines. Generously underwritten by Gena and Paul Horak and H-E-B. Commissioner James Patterson attended the ceremony and shared a few words for Lucia.

Lucia Street served as the Literacy Council's Executive Director for 14 years.

When Lucia took the position, the Literacy Council was one classroom center and quickly expanded to the current standalone building now located on Emily Court in Sugar Land. Upon retiring from the Literacy Council, Lucia continued her passion for community service and has not stopped giving back to Fort Bend County.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Street are also Honorary Chairs for the Literacy Council's 2018 Reading between the Wines on Friday, March 23, 2018 to be held at Safari Texas Ranch.

Sponsorship opportunities are available and range from \$500 to \$15,000. Benefits include admission to a VIP party, reserved premier seating, and more.

Individual tickets are \$125 and include live music, wine, a "restaurant stroll" featuring tastes from local chefs and restaurants, the opportunity to bid on exciting auction items, music, and dancing! Book Clubs have the opportunity to attend at a Special Book Club rate of \$1,000 for a table of ten guests.



Larry and Lucia Street

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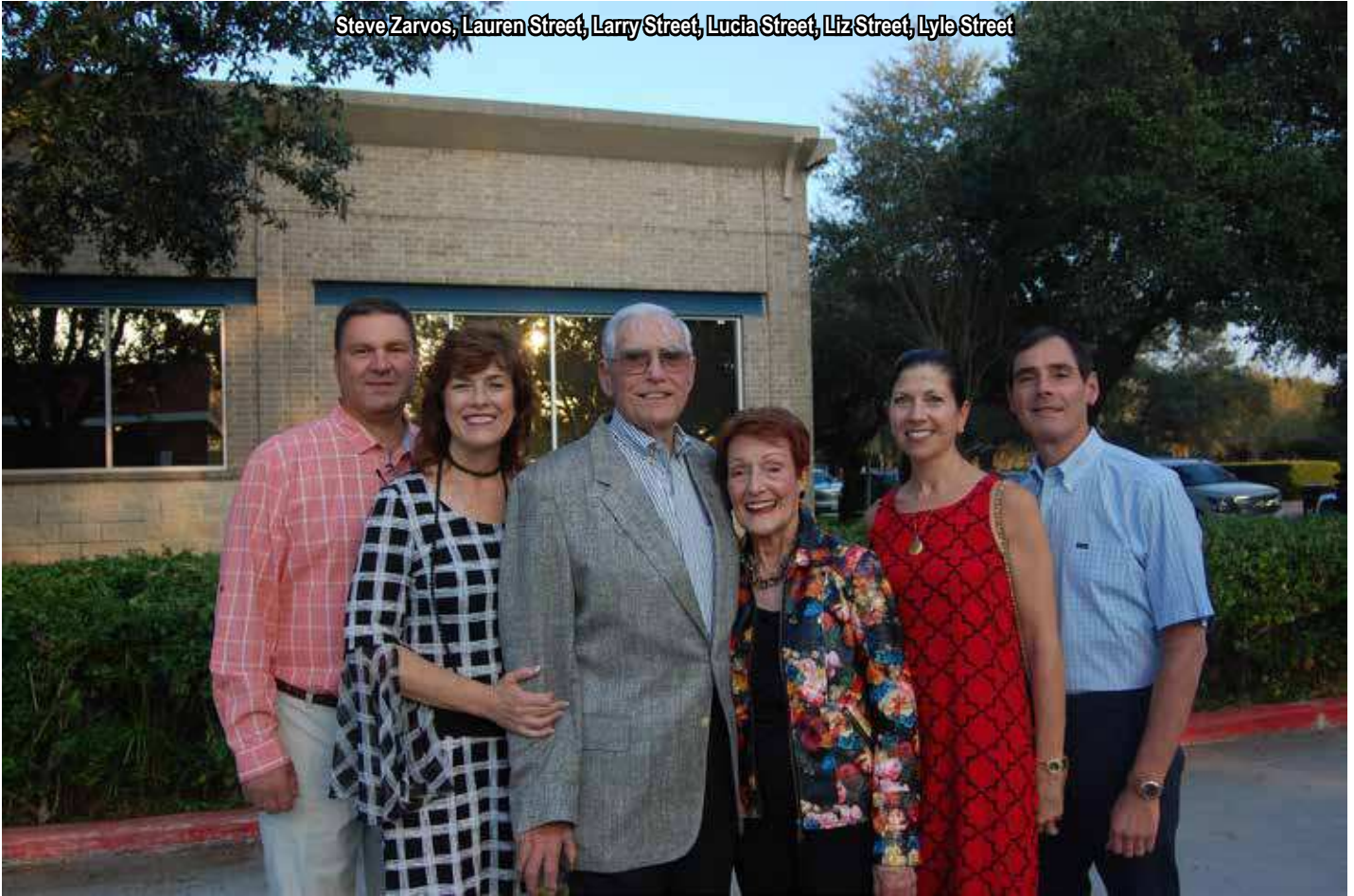
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Holidays Around the World

The Literacy Council of Fort Bend County hosted its annual Holidays Around the World party on Dec. 6. Volunteers, supporters, board members, students and their families came to celebrate the Holidays at the Literacy Center.

Steve Wells, Club President, with Exchange Club of Missouri City attended the event and presented the Literacy Council with a check.

Students were asked to bring a homemade dish from their native country, which ranged from Venezuela to China to India.

To make the party more festive, students, tutors and a Literacy Council board member provided a variety of enjoyable entertainment for all. Plus, kids enjoyed arts & crafts, wrote letters to Santa and were given reindeer food to take home.

For more information on Tutor Training for the Literacy Council, please contact Alisba Procter, Program Director, at 281-240-8181 or aprocter@ftbendliteracy.org

About the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County

Since 1987, the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County has been Changing Lives through Literacy. The mission of the Literacy Council is to improve family, community, and professional lives through adult literacy education. The Literacy Council provides several programs for its students: Basic Literacy, English as a Second Language, GED Preparation, U.S. Citizenship Preparation, Computer Skills and Job Readiness Skills.



Pictured from left to right are: Literacy Council Staff: Ranett Montemayor, Nicola Johnson, Colleen Mayer, Kelli Metzenthin



Literacy Council student Gilda Pericchi



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Kelli Metzenthin, Executive Director, Beth Wolf, Literacy Council Board President, Steve Wells, Club President, Exchange Club of Missouri City, Lee Ivey, Literacy Council Tutor



Literacy Council student Zeba Dostyar, Kelli Metzenthin, and student Frozan Dostyar



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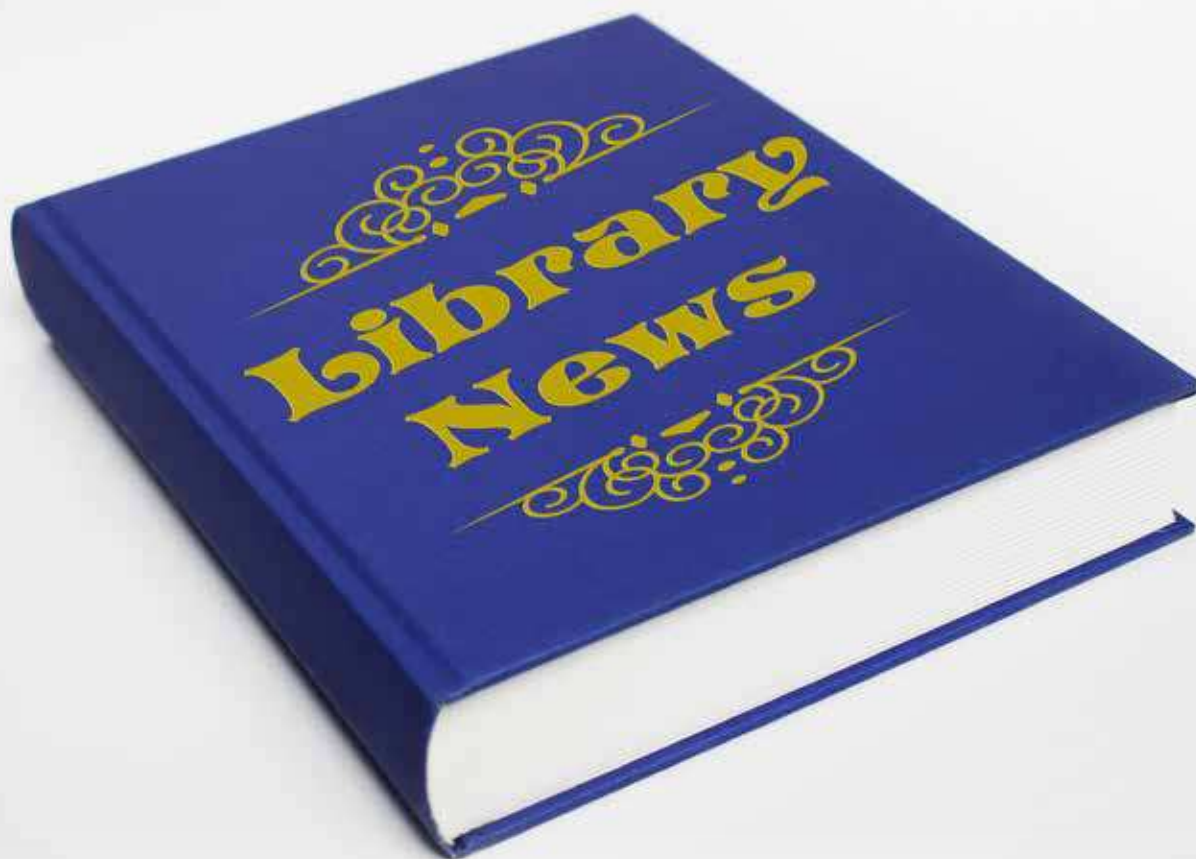
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NEWBORNS RECEIVE SPECIAL WELCOME DURING CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK

In celebration of Children's Book Week, January 21-27, Fort Bend County Libraries (FBCL) will continue its annual tradition of welcoming newborns to the wonders of books. Every Fort Bend County baby born during this week may receive a special baby book bag, courtesy of the Friends of Fort Bend County Library. Each bag contains a book, a bib, a special certificate, a list of suggested reading for children, and information on parenting and on library services. These bags represent the library system's commitment to providing library services for county residents throughout their lives, beginning at birth.

"We hope to start every child born in hospitals in Fort Bend County on a successful road to life-long learning," says Susan King, Coordinator of Youth Services for FBCL. "We distribute the baby book bags to babies born during that week at area Fort Bend County hospitals, but ALL Fort Bend County babies who are born during Children's Book Week are eligible to receive one, while supplies last."

Families of Fort Bend babies born at other locations during Children's Book Week should call the Youth Services department, at 281-633-4762, to receive their book bag.



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Not only is reading to a child a wonderful opportunity for bonding between parent and child, it has also been shown to stimulate brain development. Even the youngest baby can benefit from the chance to develop eye focus by looking at the page of a book, while being comforted by the familiar voice of a parent. Reading aloud to children exposes them to the sounds and cadences of a human voice, resulting in an earlier and stronger grasp of vocabulary skills.

Parents may introduce infants to the library by bringing them to Mother Goose Time, a free weekly parent/infant activity program that takes place at many of the branches in the Fort Bend County library system. As the children mature, other programs with age-appropriate activities are designed to interest older children.

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

Library staff member Jamie McKenna shows some of the items in the Baby Book Bags



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LIBRARIES ANNOUNCE FAMILY READING CLUB THIS WINTER

The popularity of Fort Bend County Libraries' Summer Reading Clubs for children, teens, and adults inspired the library system to add a similar program for families during the winter season. The Family Reading Club will begin on Sunday, January 21, and will continue for six weeks through March 3, at all branches in the Fort Bend County library system.

This six-week program is designed to encourage families to read, learn, and have fun together. Families participate in the program by reading books and completing optional "challenges" that can be done at home. All Fort Bend County families are eligible to participate.

"The best way to help children learn new words and to build a larger vocabulary is to talk and read with them," says Susan King, Coordinator of Youth Services for the library system. "Children hear more new words when you read books to them."

Families that complete the program by reading 36 books - 6 books per week - are eligible to receive a book bag for the family, and will have their name entered into a drawing for a \$50 dining gift card, donated by the Friends of the Library. The drawing for

the gift card will take place on March 5, and one winning family will be selected from each branch library.

A single registration is required for each participating family. An adult (parent or guardian) is asked to register the family online by going to the library's website (www.fortbend.lib.tx.us) and clicking on the "Family Reading Club" image, which will become available January 21. Families may also register at any of the libraries in the Fort Bend County library system. Upon registering, families will then have their own online page on which to record their books or reading time.

There is no charge to join the Family Reading Club. The program is sponsored by Fort Bend County Libraries and the Friends of the Library organizations that support the county library system.

VISIT US ONLINE!

FOR the details on the all of the special events, computer classes, book clubs as well as the teen and children's programs at the George Memorial Library in January visit:

www.fbherald.com/monthly_magazines

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'My Unsung Heroes'

By DIANA NGUYEN

The poem penned by Foster High School sophomore Iris Ung in honor of her grandparents, who were refugees from Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge incursion that killed millions, was submitted to the American Library of Poetry Student Poetry Contest and chosen for publication in the 2017 "Treasured" poetry book.

"I was astonished and felt honored on behalf of my family who went through the Khmer Rouge tragedy," said Iris after learning her poem would be published.

"Humbled, I immediately informed my family members of the news. They were more proud that I got published than realizing that the poem was a tribute to them."

The inspiration for "My Unsung Heroes," Iris explained, came from her "family and the people who I hold dear to my heart," but particularly, her grandparents who experienced the Cambodian genocide.

"They never fail to inspire me to be grateful for the privileges that I have, such as my admirable parents and family members, an education, and a safe, healthy

environment in which I am fortunate enough to live in every day."

Iris noted she has always maintained an interest in poetry and writing ever since she learned how to read.

"In elementary school, I used to create poems that I used for my weekly broadcast called '411 with Iris.' I especially enjoy expressing my thoughts and writing about the topics and people I care about most."

She discovered the American Library of Poetry through her high school librarian, Kara Day. Prior to the contest, Iris participated in a poetry slam in her class in which she received first place.

When asked what her favorite line of "My Unsung Heroes" is, she answered it is the concluding line: "You are my Unsung Heroes."

"Not only does it have a play on words by incorporating 'Ung,' my family's last name, but it showcases that my grandparents are heroes in my life," she explained. "Their experiences during the Khmer Rouge never fail to leave me in admiration.

"A hero is someone who demonstrates behaviors and decisions that are ethically and emotionally worthy of awe; this accurately depicts my grandparents.



Continued on page 32

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When your world turns upside down because of someone's disrespect for life
When you choose others and value your existence even less
When you nearly died but take one last breath for what is important
You willingly gave your all and soul for the ones you love
Where your spirit has no fear and your ambition is your drive
Where tirelessness and exhaustion consume your energy
Where the Killing Fields paved your vision of what may become of you
You trudge along the darkness in hopes to find light
Who you are is someone that is courageous and selfless
Who you helped save was my father—who conceived me into a new world
Who you inspired will last for generations to come
Who you are in everyone's eyes is a legacy
You are more to me than just my Papa and Mama
You are My Unsung Heroes.*

LCISD students can take dual credit courses

Lamar Consolidated ISD students now have the option to take dual credit courses at either Lone Star College or Wharton County Junior College.

The LCISD board of trustees approved two partnership agreements with WCJC and the Lone Star College System (LSCS) for dual credit.

Students may take dual credit courses either at the LCISD site with teachers who are certified through WCJC or at the college sites on a more flexible schedule.

For students who wish to pursue the LSCS route, three options for credit will exist for the fall of 2018:

1. Dual credit taught by a certified LCISD teacher,
2. Dual credit taught virtually by a LSCS teacher and an LCISD teacher from the content area.
3. Dual credit in which a student chooses to take an online course.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL PREPARATORY 65 Years of Excellence

By Krista Kuperus

While outstanding academics are a trademark for Calvary's reputation of excellence for 65 years, its pride as Fort Bend County's premiere Christian school is how students and faculty treat each other and grow in their understanding of God's expectations for them.

The Calvary 3 R's: Reverence for God, Respect for others, and Responsibility for self are the cornerstone for every aspect of the

child's educational journey. In addition to a rigorous and accelerated academic environment, the Calvary experience includes service learning, leadership opportunities, and enrichment programs for student creativity and expression.

These programs include a successful athletic department, Student Council, National Honor Society, and visual and performing arts that encompass a Thespian Troupe, a National Arts Honor Society, and competitive band. Calvary consistently wins district competition against other private schools in Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA) for lower and middle school. Upper school students compete in Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), sending many students to state each year.

Small classrooms and individualized attention assure that students enjoy a safe and nurturing environment, regardless of the grade. Christian Character classes, Bible instruction and three chapel services weekly foster an emotionally safe environment. This also translates into classrooms that are free from other distractions such as bullying.

Calvary is unique in that students learn to “live together” regardless of age, as the school enters PK-4 year olds and graduates students in grade 12. Students freely interact, with the older students mentoring the younger in a diverse student body that is accepting of all faiths and nationalities. (Calvary is an international school and issues the F-1 visa.)

The lower and middle grades accelerate the curriculum so that students are instructed a grade above the national average. This results in median achievement test scores that range from 2 to 4 grades above. High school students are encouraged to take Advanced Placement courses, Dual Credit courses and graduate with a distinguished diploma. Students meet regularly with a career and college counselor who helps the student determine college and career decisions as well as assist in developing college portfolios and scholarship applications. CEP students consistently graduate with multiple scholarship offers; last year's top graduate was offered over \$300,000 in scholarships.

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory incorporates Christian character education, Bible class, Spanish, and library lessons into the learners' experience. To schedule a tour of the campus, call 281-342-3161 and bring this ad for \$100 off the registration fee.



There is always something new and fascinating afoot in the Calvary Episcopal Preparatory Pre-Kindergarten classroom, and recently, one of these things had a lot of feet, as Alex Delange brought a caterpillar to show the class. Alex Delange inspected the caterpillar while Zola Manual waited her turn.

Annual Golf Tournament

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory hosted their 12th annual "Teeing Off for Teachers and Technology" golf tournament at Pecan Grove Country Club on November 6th. With nearly 80 golfers and countless sponsors the event was a success, profiting \$18,000 which goes directly back to the students. Thank you to the Blue & Gold Sponsors The Fleur De Lis Group LLC, Cadence Bank - Trust Services, McAlister's Deli, Intrua Financial, Rago Enterprises and Calvary's Best Friend.



Christian & Gilbert Jalomo take 1st place in the 1st flight at CEP's annual golf tournament



Pre-K students Emma Cottle & Lawson Stavinoha.

HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

By Pam McCarthy

Catholic Schools Week

The spring semester at Holy Rosary Catholic School is always greeted with excitement and anticipation of all of the wonderful activities and events to come. From the Science Fair to the 5th graders week long trip to the environmental camp, Camp Kappe, to the Theater Arts Department's spring productions, students and staff eagerly look forward to all that lies ahead. One of the most anticipated weeks of the semester is Catholic Schools Week. During the last week in January, Catholic schools across the nation celebrate Catholic education through special events, community service and promotions. Through these events, HRCS focuses on the value Catholic education provides to its students and its contributions to the church, our communities and our nation. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed."

During this week, Holy Rosary Catholic School will hold a Prospective Parents Night. We invite you to come and see what Holy Rosary Catholic School has to offer for your child. Join us for our Open House on Tuesday, January 30th at 7:00 in the Joerger Lindsey Parish Hall.

For more information, please contact our school office at 281-342-5813 or email our Development Director, Pam McCarthy, at pmccarthy@holyrosary-school.org

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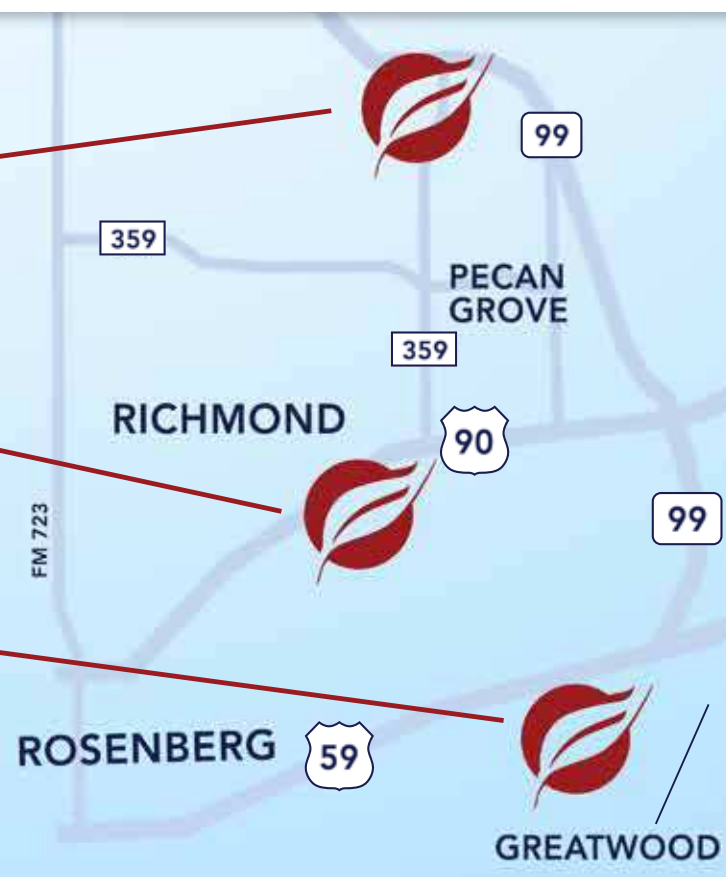


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