

December 2017

NEW TERRITORY

monthly



Merry
Christmas

Sip your way into the spirit
with 10 simple holiday
drinks. Need a Christmassy
book? We've got you
covered.

Plus

Enjoy 'The Sound of
Music' this Christmas
season

Holiday Special: New Territory
& Telfair dancers will shine in
'The Nutcracker'

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NEW TERRITORY

monthly™



FEATURE STORY

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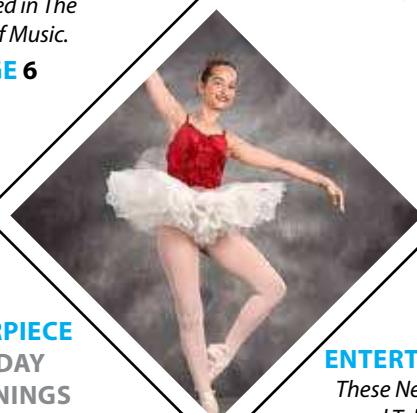


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Visit us online at www.fbherald.com/monthly_magazines for more New Territory news, photos and events!

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What better way to get into the holiday spirit than watching one of the most acclaimed shows: *The Sound of Music*?

But we're talking about viewing a local live performance. Featuring a youthful and talented cast — a few of whom are from New Territory and Telfair — this show, produced by Inspiration Stage, is not one to be taken lightly. "The level of [the cast's] talent was so stellar ... I'm so excited by this immensely talented group of young actors," said Director Sarah Patterson. So purchase your tickets now, and be prepared to absorb an impressive, charming and nostalgic performance, perfect for your entire family.

Inspiration Stage's AUDREY cast of *The Sound of Music*. Marta (Megan Marlowe), Kurt (Ethan Pickle), Liesl (Madison Willet), Maria (Olivia Goodman), Friedrich (Drew Doyle), Brigitta (Anna Baden), Louisa (Madeline Font) and Gretl (Audrey Hensley)

THE SOUND OF MUSIC:

A unique and uplifting story

By MARQUITA GRIFFIN

They needed something classical, something timeless. Something that would meld well with a traditional American holiday. So the answer was relatively simple for Mandy Seymore-Sensat and Sarah Patterson, two directors with Inspiration Stage, an award-winning performance arts studio in Sugar Land.

They needed *The Sound of Music*.

"When Mandy and I were collaborating on the 2017-18 season, we were interested in staging a classic musical during the holiday show slot," said director Sarah Patterson of discussions with Inspiration Stage Artistic Director Mandy Seymore-Sensat.

"*The Sound of Music* is a piece that has proved ageless across multiple generations: beginning with its development as a Broadway show in the 1950s and incredibly successful screen adaptation in the 1960s. Watching *The Sound of Music* became a part of American tradition with its nearly annual family-friendly television specials," Patterson said.

"Based on a true story and real-life characters, the heartwarming story of an unconventional family gathering together in the toughest of times proves relevant even today," she added. "It's so associated with this time of year that many assume the show's classic "My Favorite Things" is a Christmas song."

The Sound of Music offers four evening shows and four matinees on weekends from Dec. 8 through Dec. 17 at the historic Sugar Land Auditorium at 226 Lakeview Drive in Sugar Land.

"Easily my favorite thing about directing is participating in the journeys of our young actors throughout the process," Patterson said. "Together as director and actor we discover something new about these characters and this story as we begin to embody them."

Bringing characters to life

This Inspiration Stage production will feature young actors,

ranging in ages from 9 years old to 18 years old, including a few from New Territory and Telfair: Ethan Pickle, 10; Olivia Goodman, 17; and Sofie Marino, 13.

The actors will portray the full, beloved cast, including Maria, the Captain and the von Trapp children. The roles of the von Trapp children were double-cast, with each cast performing in four of the eight shows.

Ethan Pickle, who will play the role of Kurt, has been acting for two years but will make his debut with Inspiration Stage in *The Sound of Music*, “[his] favorite musical.”

“I’m very happy and excited,” he said about performing. “I enjoy bringing characters and stories to life.”

Older actor Olivia Goodman, who will play Maria, said she, too, enjoys “the process of acting,” from learning about her character’s habits and life to “really understanding them.”

“It is so fun to become someone else for a period of time,” she said.

For seven years Goodman has blossomed in the acting realm and has been in nearly 20 productions at Inspiration Stage, either onstage or as part of the production team.

“I have grown up over the last five years at Inspiration Stage, and I can truly say there is no better place not only to learn more about the theatre, but also to find a family,” Goodman said. “Each production is a new chance to grow alongside the community that is Inspiration Stage.”

Playing a major role in *The Sound of Music* sits well with the Fort Bend Christian Academy student because she has the chance to portray a “wonderful person.”

“I have watched the movie countless times since I was little, and it has always been at the top of the list of my favorites,” Goodman said. “Maria is such a wonderful person to get to become every time we rehearse



or perform.”

“I love the joy it brings with it,” she continued. “The show draws audiences in with its unique and uplifting storyline.”

Overcoming pressure, a stellar cast

Since October, when auditions were held, Inspiration Stage has been grinding away at learning the choreography, music, and blocking the show, which means placing actors on stage, scene-by-scene, line-by-line. But sketching the design and creating the vision for *The Sound of Music* began as early as this past summer for Patterson.

“I have a tremendous production team including choreographer Hannah Pickle, technical director Jeff Sensat, set designer Adam Patterson, stage manager Brianna Escobedo, and student assistant director Maddy Marlowe, who have been at my side along the way to talk through the intricacies of realizing this vision,” she said.

“It can be a lot of pressure to tackle such a classic piece that naturally carries high expectations.”

And this production will meet those expectations, Patterson said.

“Because this story has become such a part of American tradition and popular culture, it’s hard not to have a soft spot for the plucky Maria or one of the seven charming von Trapp children,” Patterson said. “Our Inspiration Stage production captures many of the beloved moments from the film version, and our terrific young actors delight with their own extensions of these timeless characters.”

Patterson said the popularity of the musical was clear considering the performance arts studio saw the highest audition turnout for a youth show in Inspiration Stage’s history.

“The level of talent was so stellar, it was



Continued on page 8

TOP PHOTO: Sarah Patterson is directing Inspiration Stage’s *The Sound of Music*. “The script, music, and motion are brought to life by [the cast’s] unique choices,” she said. “Even a classic, familiar story like *The Sound of Music* feels new to us as we together dive deeper into the heart of this show. I couldn’t be prouder of this fearless cast and their power to wow me at every turn.”

MIDDLE PHOTO: Homeschooled New Territory student Ethan Pickle will make his debut with Inspiration Stage in *The Sound of Music*. “The people at Inspiration Stage have been very nice and welcoming,” he said. “Ms. Sarah has been the best director. Rehearsals are so much fun and I’m learning a lot.”

BOTTOM PHOTO: Telfair student Olivia Goodman, who is playing Maria in *The Sound of Music*, has been involved in almost 20 productions with Inspiration Stage, including recent shows like *Godspell Jr*, *Seussical Jr*, *The Lion King Jr*, *High School Musical*, and *Xanadu Jr*.

Continued from page 7

unbelievably difficult to cast the show. I'm so excited by this immensely talented group of young actors," Patterson said. "The music, choreography and storytelling are challenging, but these talented kids continue to amaze me with their ability to make it look easy and natural."

A timeless story

Destined to be the world's most beloved musical, *The Sound of Music*, was the final collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

Based on Maria von Trapp's memoir, "The Story of the Trapp Family Singers," *The Sound of Music* tells the story of a woman who, after proving too high-spirited for the religious life, is dispatched to serve as governess for the seven children of a widowed naval captain. Maria's growing rapport with the children, coupled with her generosity of spirit, gradually captures the heart of the stern captain.

When Maria and Captain discover that Austria has been invaded by the Nazis, who demand the captain's immediate service in their navy, the family narrowly escapes over the mountains to

Switzerland on the eve of World War II.

Considered one of the most thrilling and inspirational finales ever presented in the theatre, Patterson said *The Sound of Music* features songs like "Do Re Mi," "My Favorite Things," "Edelweiss," "Climb Every Mountain," and others that have nostalgic appeal to even non-theatre patrons.

In fact, the motion picture version remains the most popular movie musical of all time.

"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," Patterson said.

This is a show in particular quite relevant to the community, right now, at this moment, she stressed.

"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."

"The Sound of Music is a piece that has proved ageless across multiple generations."

— SARAH PATTERSON, DIRECTOR

DON'T MISS OUT!

A preview of some of the musical numbers will be shown at **Miracle on Morton Street, Saturday, Dec. 2 at noon in Downtown Richmond and at the Sugar Land Christmas Tree Lighting event Thursday, Dec. 7 from 5pm - 8pm in front of City Hall in the Sugar Land Town Square. For ticket prices for the Sugar Land Auditorium performances visit www.inspirationstage.com/shows.**

The shows for
THE SOUND OF MUSIC
are set for:

Dec. 8: 7:30pm

Dec. 9: 3:30pm & 7:30pm

Dec. 10: 3:30pm

Dec. 15: 7:30pm

Dec. 16: 3:30pm & 7:30pm

Dec. 17: 3:30pm

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Holiday TRADITIONS



The origins of some beloved holiday traditions

Christmastime is here. The presents are being purchased and wrapped. The stockings will soon be hung on the fireplace mantle. Mistletoe is pinned above the front entryway, and poinsettias add rich color to home decor.

Tradition is integral come the holiday season. Throughout the month of December, traditions fill people's days and comprise the many reasons why individuals decorate, celebrate and dine the way they do this time of year. But few may know the origins of some of the most beloved holiday traditions.

Christmas stockings

The Christmas stockings of today may be a byproduct of various traditions. One such tradition dates back to a Dutch custom in which children would leave shoes full of food to feed St. Nicholas' donkeys, and then St. Nicholas would leave small gifts in return.

Another origin story of Christmas stockings can be traced to the 12th century, when nuns would leave socks full of nuts, fruit and tangerines for the poor. This is why some people still put tangerines in Christmas stockings.

Christmas tree

Christmas Trees are everywhere this time of year. The use of evergreen trees predates Christmas and is associated with the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which celebrated the agricultural god Saturn with partying and gift-giving. During the winter solstice, green branches served as a reminder that spring would arrive anew. Germans are credited with first bringing evergreens into their homes and decorating them.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus' origin story can be traced to St. Nicholas, a Christian bishop who lived during the fourth century. St. Nicholas was very generous and gave away his fortune to help the needy. He also did various other good deeds. St. Nicholas became infamous and began to be known by various names around the world. The Dutch called him Sinter Klaas, which was eventually transformed to Santa Claus. The jolly persona came later when 20th century advertisers - especially the artists responsible for Coca-Cola ads - portrayed Santa in a red suit with a big smile.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is hung in doorways, and couples who stand beneath are encouraged to share a kiss. The tradition of hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. Mistletoe was thought to bring good luck to a household and ward off evil

spirits. The custom of kissing under mistletoe can be traced to England. Originally, a berry was picked from the sprig of mistletoe before the person could be kissed. When all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing.

Christmas bells

Church bells ring for many special services, including Christmas mass. During Christmas midnight mass in the Catholic Church, the altar bells may be rung while the priest says the "Gloria." Bells are part of caroling, and jingling bells are associated with sleighs and Santa's reindeer.

NEW TRADITIONS YOU NEED TO TRY

1. The New Year's Prediction Jar

On Christmas Day invite your guests to write down what they think will happen in someone else's life or in their own lives and put them in a jar. During next year's celebration open that jar and have someone read the predictions aloud.

2. Carol for the Elders

Spend Christmas Eve visiting a retirement home and singing Christmas songs to the elderly. It is an easy, fun and inspiring way to spread the holiday cheer throughout the community.

3. Sponsor a Foster Child

The stark truth is that some children do not have a holiday season like most. So this year make a difference and sponsor a foster child (or children) by purchasing gifts and giving them to those in need.

4. Sing Santa, Sing!

This one is for the guys: Get a group of guys who dress up as Santa and go caroling around the neighborhood. When the caroling is done, hold a little get together with refreshments and bask in the day's events.

5. Give, give, give

Consider including the entire family on this one. From Dec. 25 through Jan. 5 (also known as the 12 Days of Christmas) collect or buy school supplies, toys and personal care products to donate to disadvantaged children. Visit a soup kitchen or see what you can do to help the elderly in your community.

6. Check out a Tree Farm

Get into the holiday spirit by taking a little family trip to a tree farm. Make it extra special by packing up hot cocoa, coffee or cider. Visit the National Christmas Tree Associations website (www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/All-About-Trees/Tree-Locator) to find the closest tree farm near you.

7. Toy Giveaway

Have your child pick a few toys — in like-new condition — to give away to charity before they receive new toys for Christmas. This simple gesture can teach your children the importance of taking other people in consideration during the holidays.

8. Personal holiday greetings

Take some photos and make your own Christmas cards to send to relatives near and far. In the digital age, we often forget the magic of snail mail. Trust us, your relatives will love it!

9. Create a digital holiday

We love snail mail, but since this is the digital age, create a digital scrapbook for family that you can share online. Take those fun, silly and hilarious candid photos and share them with your family and friends

10. Donate Food

Visit local food bank and donate as many nonperishable items as you can. The food banks are extremely busy this time of the year, so you can make it a family tradition to help those less fortunate.



Have a sing-a-long this Christmas

Christmas carols became part of holiday celebrations roughly 200 years ago. Initially gaining popularity in England before becoming holiday traditions in the Americas, carols are part and parcel of modern holiday celebrations.

One popular holiday party theme is a sing-a-long. Although door-to-door caroling has long been a holiday staple, celebrants can enjoy staying in and singing as well. To make your sing-a-long party unique, include some of these ideas in the celebration.

Rent or borrow karaoke equipment

Increase the performance factor by securing a karaoke machine. Many are preprogrammed with holiday standards. Various karaoke services exist online as well. For a small fee you can sign up for an account and access lyrics and music that can be streamed over a computer or any device with an internet connection.

Pair picture-drawing with singing

Combine singing sessions with a game of "guess the picture." Guests select a holiday title out of a basket and then have to draw their interpretation so others can guess what song is being drawn. Afterward, everyone joins in to sing the tune.

Provide bound carol books

Give each guest a custom-designed book of Christmas carols, complete with sheet music or just lyrics that they can use to follow along while joining in singing. Afterwards, this book can be a take-home present and memento.

Book live accompaniment

Singing along to live music can be a treat. Find someone who is proficient on the piano, guitar or another musical instrument who will come and guide the musical interludes. Guests will gather around and offer their own voices. If the goal is to hire an accompanist, note that the holiday season can be a busy time for performers, so book early.

Highlight a singing virtuoso

Chances are there is someone in your group of friends or family who is adept at singing. Ask this person if he or she would be willing to perform a special solo.

Set the mood

Dim overhead lights and sing by candlelight or by the twinkling lights of a Christmas tree. Guests may feel less inhibited if they aren't on full display.



Word Find

Using Christmas words —Christmas, poinsettia, candy cane, etc.— have each person make as many smaller words from it as possible before the timer runs out.

Two truths and a lie

Each person tells two stories about themselves, two of which are true and one that is not. A great Christmas twist is to name their three worst Christmas gifts; two would be true and one would be false.

Pin the red nose on Rudolph

The Christmas version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey.

Pass the Ornament

Pass the paper ornaments down the line, teammate to teammate, by inhaling and exhaling on the straw to hang on to or release the ornament. No hands! (Supplies: *Straw for each child, ornaments cut out of tissue paper (tree, bell, star, etc.)*)

Ornament guess

Have guests guess the total number of ornaments on the tree as they come into the party. The closest guess wins.

Holiday ABC's

Give each child or team a piece of paper with the alphabet written vertically from A to Z. Have them write a holiday word



that starts with each letter. The first one to complete the list wins.

Christmas 20 Questions

Someone starts by choosing a Christmas related person, place or thing and then says: "I'm thinking of something." The children try to guess what it is by asking no more than 20 questions that can be answered "yes," "no," or "I don't know." The child who guesses correctly is next up.

Name that carol

Make a list of lyrics from songs that only provides 3-4 words from each song (not the title). The person who names all - or the most - songs in a certain amount of time wins.

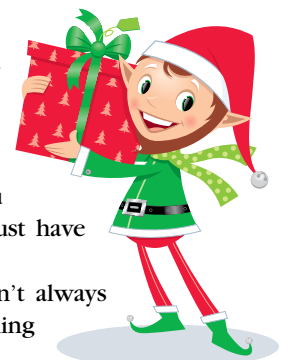
Gift hot potato

Pass around one unwrapped gift at a time. When the music stops, whoever holds it is out of the game, keeping the gift they are holding.

The Good Elf

Challenge the children to do random acts of kindness for others for one day. Tell them that they are not to reveal that they have done these nice things and if someone should ask them, "Did you make your sisters bed?" they can reply, "Must have been a good elf."

This game helps children realize we don't always have to be recognized when we do something for someone else.



55 Christmas Movies to Get You in the Holiday Spirit

Drinks? Check.

Snacks? Check.

Comfortable blanket? Check.

Now just grab a spot on the couch with your loved ones and put in one of the following Christmas movie for one simple, yet magical, evening.



Holiday Inn (1942)
 It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
 The Bishop's Wife (1948)
 Miracle on 34th Street (1947) (1994)
 White Christmas (1954)
 Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (1964)
 A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)
 How the Grinch Stole Christmas! (1966)
 Frosty the Snowman (1969)
 The Bear Who Slept Through Christmas (1973)
 The Year Without a Santa Claus (1974)
 Bugs Bunny's Christmas Carol (1979)
 The Snowman (1982)
 A Christmas Story (1983)
 Mickey's Christmas Carol (1983)
 Ernest Saves Christmas (1988)
 Prancer (1989)
 National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989)
 Home Alone (1990)
 The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)
 The Santa Claus (1994)

Jingle All the Way (1996)
 Jack Frost (1998)
 Elf (2003)
 The Polar Express (2004)
 Christmas at the Kranks (2004)
 The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
 Bah, Humduck! A Looney Tunes Christmas (2006)
 Shrek the Halls (2007)
 Kung Fu Panda Holiday (2010)
 Arthur Christmas (2011)
 Saving Santa (2013)

The following are for more of the adult crowd:

The Apartment (1960)
 Trading Places (1983)
 Lethal Weapon (1987)
 Die Hard (1988)
 Scrooged (1988)

Die Hard 2 (1990)
 Batman Returns (1992)
 A Midnight Clear (1992)
 The Ref (1994)
 Mixed Nuts (1994)
 Trapped in Paradise (1994)
 The Best Man Holiday (1999)
 8 Women (2001)
 Reindeer Games (2000)
 About a Boy (2002)
 Love Actually (2003)
 Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (2005)
 The Family Stone (2005)
 The Holiday (2006)
 The Perfect Holiday (2007)
 In Bruges (2008)
 Four Christmases (2008)
 A Christmas Tale (2008)

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The Best Books to Get You in the Christmas Spirit

Sometimes what you need to get the entire family into the holiday spirit is a good read. Here are our picks for the top Christmas-themed books for you to enjoy. Let us know what your favorite holiday tale is by visiting our Facebook page!



1 **The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg**

One Christmas Eve many years ago, a boy lies in bed, listening hard for the bells of Santa's sleigh, which he has been told by a friend do not exist. Later that night he hears not bells but a very different sound. He looks out his window and is astounded to see a steam engine parked in front of his house! The conductor invites him to board the Polar Express, a train filled with children on their way to the North Pole.

2 **How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss**

The Grinch, a grouchy, solitary creature who attempts to put an end to Christmas by stealing Christmas-themed items from the homes of the nearby town Whoville on Christmas Eve. Despite his efforts, Whoville's inhabitants still celebrate the holiday, so the Grinch returns everything that he stole and is the guest of honor at the Whos' Christmas dinner.

3 **Dream Snow by Eric Carle**

It's December 24th, and the old farmer settles down for a winter's nap, wondering how Christmas can come when there is no snow! In his dream he imagines a snowstorm covering him and his animals—named One, Two, Three, Four and Five—in a snowy blanket. But when the farmer awakens, he finds that it has really snowed outside, and now he remembers something! Putting on his red suit, he goes outside and places gifts under the tree for his animals, bringing holiday cheer to all.

4 **The Nutcracker by Susan Jeffers**

Marie, Fritz, and the intriguing Nutcracker himself, go on a magical adventure only possible on a night like Christmas Eve. Behold the frightful Mouse King, the elegant Sugar Plum fairies, and the entire Land of Sweets in this dazzling, gorgeously-illustrated holiday classic. With spare text based on the story in the ballet, this book offers a front-row seat to the charming tale that is a perennial favorite of children and adults alike.

5 **The Snowman by Raymond Briggs**

After an English boy makes a snowman on Christmas Eve, it comes to life to take him on an adventure to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus.

6 **The Wild Christmas Reindeer by Jan Brett**

This year, Santa asks Teeka to get his reindeer ready to fly on Christmas Eve. She's happy but a little worried, too. She's never worked with the reindeer before and she's not sure they'll want to come in from the tundra, where they run wild and free. Once

she finds them, Teeka's strong hand does more harm than good, and soon the reindeer are wilder than they were before she began training them. How will she ever get them ready to pull Santa's sleigh on time?

7 **The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski**

Jonathan Toomey is the best woodcarver in the valley, but he is always alone and never smiles. No one knows about the mementos of his lost wife and child that he keeps in an unopened drawer. But one early winter's day, a widow and her young son approach him with a gentle request that leads to a joyful miracle.

8 **A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens**

A novella about Ebenezer Scrooge, an old man, who is well-known for his miserly ways. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts, starting with his old business partner, Jacob Marley.

9 **Carl's Christmas by Alexandra Day**

Carl the big black dog is babysitting once again, this time on Christmas Eve while his owners go to church. Carl takes the baby downstairs to "decorate" the living room, then out for a round of Christmas carols, and home in time to meet Santa.

10 **The Night Before Christmas by Clement C. Moore**

It is the night before Christmas, in a house so cozy and colorful, so filled with expectation, and dusted with Christmas magic. Shhh. A mouse is asleep in its snug den and children are dreaming as sugarplum fairies flutter around their bed ...

MORE WORTHY MENTIONS

- The Little Match Girl by Hans Christian Andersen
- Olive, the Other Reindeer by J. Otto Seibold and Vivian Walsh
- The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree by Gloria Houston
- Room for a Little One by Martin Waddell
- Snowmen at Christmas by Caralyn Buehner
- Angelina's Christmas by Katharine Holabird
- The Legend of the Poinsettia by Tomie dePaola
- Morris's Disappearing Bag by Rosemary Wells
- Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus by Francis P. Church
- The Crippled Lamb by Max Lucado
- The Story of Holly & Ivy by Rumer Godden
- Humphrey's First Christmas by y Carol Heyer
- The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry



DECEMBER 1

Candlelight Ball & Tours

The Fort Bend Museum Docents present this year's Candlelight Ball and Tours at the 1883 John & Lottie Moore Home. The Candlelight Ball will be held from 6 - 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1. The cost is free for members and \$50 per person for non-members. The evening will include a special candlelight home tour, heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and a silent auction. Black tie optional. The Candlelight Tours will be held 1-3p.m. and 6-9p.m. Dec. 2 and 3 - 6 p.m. Dec. 3. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors. From "Little Women" to "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas," guests will enjoy reminiscing and experiencing their favorite holiday stories come to life. *Visit www.fortbendmuseum.org.*

DECEMBER 2

801 Scout Holiday Market Day

Unique gift items, food items, handmade gifts and more will be featured at the BSA Scout Troop 801 Holiday Market Day. Proceeds will be used to send children to summer camp and high adventure camp in the Summer of 2018.

The market will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the KC Hall, 2007 Kay Cee Hall Drive in Rosenberg. *For more information visit www.brazostroop801.org*

Holidays in the Plaza

From 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. get into the spirit with the Houston Show Choir, which will take the stage to sing popular holiday tunes in Sugar Land Town Square.

Christmas in the Park

On Dec. 2, 9, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 at the George Ranch

Historical Park, 10215 FM 762 Rd. in Richmond, you can enjoy Christmas in the park in all of its historical glory. Explore the customs and decorations of the 1830s through the 1930s. *For more details visit www.georgeranch.org.*

15th Annual Miracle on Morton Street

Downtown Richmond will be transformed into a Christmas Wonderland filled with the sounds of the season. Miracle on Morton Street will be set in the Downtown Historic Richmond District (between 2nd and 5th Streets) from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and will feel like an old fashioned, small town Christmas like you remember when you were growing up. *Visit www.historicrichmond.org for more information.*

DECEMBER 3

Photos with Santa

From 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. patrons can take a free photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus in the lobby of 16190 City Walk. You can also donate new and unwrapped toys for the Fort Bend Rainbow Room's Christmas Project. All donations will go to children and adults referred by caseworkers from Texas Department of Family & Protective services. You may also drop your letter to Santa in his mailbox and get a return letter in the mail for a donation of \$5. ***You will have another chance to take photos Dec. 10 and Dec. 17 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.***

DECEMBER 7

City of Sugar Land's Christmas Tree Lighting

The steps of City Hall will light up with holiday cheer and entertainment as Mr. and Mrs. Claus bring their holiday magic to Sugar Land Town Square from 5p.m. - 8p.m. This event is free and open to the public. The fun will include holiday crafts and activities, face painting, performances by local artists and choirs, photos with Santa and food and beverages will be available for purchase. As the night comes to an end, gather with family and friends around the spectacular 40-foot Christmas tree located in the middle of Town Square plaza to help Santa and Mrs. Claus usher in the holiday season with the annual lighting of the tree. A free shuttle service will run from Mercer Stadium at 16403 Lexington Blvd. to Sugar Land Town Square. Limited parking is available in Town Square and all traffic will need to enter from Town Center Blvd. To avoid traffic delays, the use of shuttle service is strongly encouraged. Event attendees are asked to use the Sweetwater Exit if traveling from US 59. Admission and all activities are free and open to the general public. *For more information, visit www.sugarlandtx.gov or call 281-275-2885.*

DECEMBER 9

Campfire Christmas

On Dec. 9 and 16 at 9 a.m. and journey back into time to Christmas's Past with this one of kind immersive program at the George Ranch Historical Park. Start your evening with a merry greeting at the Visitor's Center and hot chocolate and coffee to warm your soul. Then enjoy a classic, holiday meal featuring the best and most scrumptious recipes from Christmas pasts. Enjoy this delicious festive feast and then take a turn on the dance floor to the music of the ever popular Pat Gavin and the Buckaroo

Band. After your hearty Christmas meal, hop on our magical, time-traveling tram that will take you back to Christmas Eve's pasts.

1st Stop: Travel back to Christmas Eve 1836 and join the Jones Family as they celebrate Texas independence from Mexico with a Christmas Eve Celebration. Take a turn in the stock farm yard and talk with the newly independent Texans as they chart a new course.

2nd Stop: Next stop, visit a cattle camp on a Christmas Eve 1870 and learn about the booming cattle industry post-Civil War. Chat with the cowboys and sing some tunes out on the lonely range while sipping hot coffee and cider by a roaring fire.

3rd Stop: On your last stop, call on the Davis Victorian Mansion on Christmas Eve 1893. The Davis family is entertaining and the family children are staging a special Dickens production.

Reservations are required. Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$45 for children, seniors and groups of 10 or more. This event is recommended for adults and children age 8 and up. (**Please note: Reservations are non-refundable. Campfire Christmas is held regardless of the weather condition.**) Visit www.georgeranch.org.

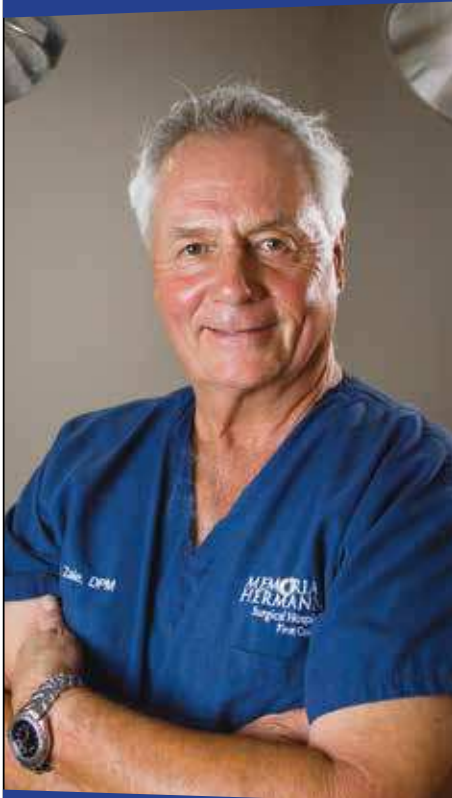
DECEMBER 16

Fulshear's Festival of Lights 2017

This year's Festival of Lights will be held from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Dec. 16 on Main Street in Downtown Fulshear. The evening will include food trucks, a children's area, vendor booths and the 1st Annual Christmas Parade Float contest.



VISIT US ONLINE at
www.fbherald.com/monthly_magazines
for updates on local Holiday Happenings!



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Dr. Zale has been chosen four times by Fort Bend Herald readers as Best Podiatrist in the annual Readers Choice poll.





Consider these tasty holiday drinks as a way to complement your holiday feast this year.

10 Sweet Sips for Your Holiday Gathering



Eggnog from scratch

Ingredients

- 12 jumbo egg yolks
- 1 pound granulated sugar
- 1 quart whole milk
- 1 quart heavy cream, lightly whipped
- 1 liter spiced rum
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Beat yolks in a large mixing bowl. Gradually add sugar. Beat until mixture thickens. Stir in milk and rum. Pour into a large punch bowl and chill for 3-4 hours.
2. Fold in whip cream before serving. Garnish with freshly ground nutmeg.



Caffeine-free Pumpkin Latte

Ingredients

- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 quart milk
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Combine pumpkin, milk, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla in a large saucepan over medium heat. Use a whisk to blend well. Heat to a simmer; do not boil. *Add whipped cream for a final effect if you'd like.



Slow-Cooker Mulled Wine

Ingredients

- 1 bottle red wine
- 1 c. apple cider
- 1 c. cranberry juice
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1 c. fresh cranberries
- 2 oranges, peels and juice
- 2 whole cinnamon sticks
- 1 tbsp. whole cloves
- 1 tbsp. star anise

Directions

1. Combine wine, cider, cranberry juice, sugar, cranberries, the peel from 1 orange, the juice of 1 orange, cranberries, cinnamon sticks, cloves and star anise in a slow cooker. Stir to combine. Cook on high until warm, about 30 minutes.
2. Serve warm and garnish each glass with a piece of orange peel.



Hot Apple Cider

Ingredients

- 6 cups apple cider
- 1/4 cup real maple syrup
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 6 whole cloves
- 6 whole allspice berries
- 1 orange peel, cut into strips
- 1 lemon peel, cut into strips

Directions

1. Pour the apple cider and maple syrup into a large stainless steel saucepan.
2. Place the cinnamon sticks, cloves, allspice berries, orange peel and lemon peel in the center of a washed square of cheesecloth; fold up the sides of the cheesecloth to enclose the bundle, then tie it up with a length of kitchen string. Drop the spice bundle into the cider mixture.
3. Place the saucepan over moderate heat for 5 to 10 minutes, or until the cider is very hot but not boiling.
4. Remove the cider from the heat. Discard the spice bundle. Ladle the cider into big cups or mugs, adding a fresh cinnamon stick to each serving if desired.



Hot Buttered Rum Batter

Ingredients

- 1 pound butter
- 1 pound brown sugar
- 1 pound confectioners' sugar
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Directions

1. Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat. Blend in brown sugar and confectioners' sugar. Remove from heat, and whisk in the ice cream, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Pour mixture into a plastic container, seal, and freeze.

2. In a coffee mug, measure 1 tablespoon Hot Buttered Rum Batter and 1 fluid ounce of rum, then fill cup with boiling water. Stir, and sprinkle top of drink with nutmeg.



Cranberry Martini

Ingredients

- 1 (1.5 fluid ounce) jigger vodka
- 1/2 fluid ounce orange liqueur
- 1/2 fluid ounce dry vermouth
- 2 (1.5 fluid ounce) jiggers cranberry juice
- 1 cup ice
- Cranberries

Directions

1. Combine vodka, orange liqueur, vermouth, cranberry juice, and ice in a cocktail shaker. Shake vigorously to chill. Pour into martini glasses, and serve. 2. Garnish with cranberries.



Gunline Coffee

Ingredients

- 2 cups powdered non-dairy coffee creamer
- 1 1/2 cups instant hot chocolate mix
- 1 1/2 cups instant coffee granules
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Directions

1. In a large bowl, stir together the coffee creamer, hot chocolate mix, instant coffee, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

2. To make 1 cup, spoon 2 heaping tablespoons of the mix into a coffee mug, and add 1 cup of boiling water. Stir until dissolved.



Rudolph-Tini

Ingredients

- 2 fluid ounces vodka
- 1 fluid ounce hazelnut liqueur, such as Frangelico
- 1 fluid ounce coconut flavored rum
- 1 fluid ounce half-and-half cream
- 2 (4 inch) cinnamon sticks
- 1 maraschino cherry

Directions

Pour the vodka, hazelnut liqueur, rum, and half-and-half into a cocktail shaker over ice. Cover, and shake until the outside of the shaker has frosted. Strain into a chilled martini glass; garnish with the cinnamon sticks to look like antlers, and the cherry on the rim to look like a nose.



Conquito

Ingredients

- 2 egg yolks, beaten
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1 (14 ounce) can cream of coconut
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup white rum
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. In the top of a double boiler, combine egg yolks and evaporated milk. Stirring constantly, cook over lightly simmering water until mixture reaches a temperature of 160 degrees F (71 degrees C). The mixture should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.

2. Transfer mixture to a blender, and add cream of coconut, sweetened condensed milk, rum, water, cloves, cinnamon, and vanilla. Blend for about 30 seconds. Pour into glass bottles and chill overnight.



Cranberry Sangria

Ingredients

- 1 cup white sugar
- 4 cranberry-flavored tea bags
- 4 slices fresh lemon
- 6 whole cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 (750 milliliter) bottles white wine
- 4 apples, cored and cut into chunks
- 1 1/2 cups dried cranberries
- 2 fluid ounces apple brandy

Directions

Place the sugar, tea bags, lemon slices, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and water into a saucepan, and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let mixture cool. Strain out and discard the spices, lemon, and tea bags.

Pour the white wine into a large jar or covered container, and mix with the tea mixture. Stir in apples and cranberries; mix in the apple brandy. Chill in refrigerator 24 to 48 hours. Serve cold.

HOPE FOR THREE

Give where you live

Hope For Three provides help and creates hope through various programs/resources and awareness events. Since 2011, it has assisted thousands of families in Fort Bend County and the surrounding areas; yet there are still so many families to help.

“The day to day living with autism is a feat with annual costs estimated at \$60,000 per year for one child,” said Darla Farmer, Founder and Executive Director. “Factor in Hurricane Harvey and the numbers catapult with hardships many cannot begin to imagine. We need this community more than ever.”

As the Holiday Season begins, Hope For Three suggests you, “Give Where You Live” by pledging a one-time year-end donation or an on-going gift through the Circle of Hope Gift-Giving Program. Hope For Three is a 501c3 organization.

To pledge your gift, call 281-245-0640 or visit www.hopefortbree.org. You can also find numerous ways to give time or talent, as well as, information and resources for autism families.



Deputy Constable and Volunteer, Nick Kaminski and Hope For Three Development Director, Caroline Bordelon, gather toys to help families during the holiday season.



GREATWOOD VETERINARY HOSPITAL

At Greatwood Veterinary Hospital, we are dedicated to providing excellent and compassionate care for your furry, family friends. We offer full veterinary services in our new, spacious 6,500 square foot facility. Our experienced and caring veterinarians and staff strive to provide the best quality care available for your pets, with an emphasis on client education and an understanding of your pet’s specific needs. We would like to be partners with you in ensuring your pet’s good health and well-being. In addition to full medical, surgical, and dental veterinary care, we also offer boarding, grooming, and cremation services. Greatwood Veterinary Hospital has been providing affordable and quality veterinary care to the Fort Bend area for over 15 years. It is our hope that we can meet all your animal’s health care needs with our warm, friendly, and knowledgeable services.

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NEW TERRITORY & TELFAIR TALENT FEATURED IN BALLETFORTE'S 22ND ANNUAL "THE NUTCRACKER"

BY MARQUITA GRIFFIN

Pre-professional ballet company BalletForte presents its annual full-length Nutcracker ballet at the Stafford Centre Dec. 8-10, featuring a cast of more than 100 dancers from the local area — including a few from New Territory and Telfair.

New Territory's Sarah and Nour Alameddine are thrilled to perform in The Nutcracker.

Sarah, who called her chance to play Soldier and one of the Arabian Dancers "a dream come true," is excited to have made the BalletForte Company, just like Nour who also stressed performing allows dancers to hone their skills.

"The Nutcracker is really an opportunity, as a dancer, to improve technically from season to season," Nour said.

Another New Territory resident, Chloe Roberts, 15, said although this is her seventh year dancing in The Nutcracker, she's "especially excited about this [year's performance]" because she is dancing the role of Clara, as well as Mirliton, Flower, and Soldier.

Considered the perfect family outing during the holiday season, BalletForte's The Nutcracker will show at the Stafford Centre, 10505 Cash Road in Stafford. Performances will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8; 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9; and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10. Tickets, which start at \$12, are available at www.balletforte.org.

Directed by Michael Banigan and Dianne Jarrell, BalletForte provides a training ground and professional quality performance opportunities for serious dancers from the Houston area.

"It is such a great opportunity to be a part of BalletForte's The Nutcracker because there is so much that you can gain from it, not only including improving your technique, but also celebrating the holidays with our dance friends, sharing our talents with Houstonians, and most important having fun and making memories," said New Territory resident Lexi Pisano, 13, who is also looking forward to performing for schools in Fort Bend ISD.

In addition to the public performances, the Company offers two performances for students from Title 1 schools in the area during the school day on Friday, Dec. 8.

"It brings me such joy when we light up their faces in the crowd," she said. "These students at the school performances are so happy to be able to attend the Nutcracker Ballet and I am so blessed to be a part of this special outreach service project."

BalletForte Company members audition for and are accepted to attend summer programs offered by professional ballet companies nationwide.

"When I was 3 years old I can remember watching BalletForte's Nutcracker and being mesmerized by the beautiful and graceful dancers," Pisano said. "I looked at my mom and said: 'When I am 6 years old, I am going to audition to be an angel — you had to be six to audition for the role.'"

Pisano has been dancing for 11 years and this month's show will be the eighth time she has performed in The Nutcracker.

"I love ballet, I love The Nutcracker and look forward to performing in it every year," she said.

Telfair sisters Juliette Van Dijk, 13, and Lisa Van Dijk, 15, enjoy the perks of performing a childhood favorite.

"It allows us dancers to create many new memories together, and it's a way for us to give back to our community," said Lisa. "I hope everyone comes to see the Nutcracker and experience this beautiful holiday event."

"This performance has always been one of my favorites and has been a major part in the bonding of everyone in the BalletForte family. I hope everyone who experiences the holiday themed ballet enjoys it as much as we enjoy performing it," echoed Juliette.

The BalletForte Guild also presents its annual Clara's Tea from 3 to 5 p.m. Dec. 3 at Safari Texas in Sugar Land, featuring "The Nutcracker in a Nutshell," refreshments, a meet-and-greet with members of the cast, a silent auction and boutique.

Tickets are \$30 per person for the tea and must be purchased in advance.

BalletForte is a nonprofit organization and all donations to the organization are tax-deductible. For more information or to buy tickets, call 281-799-7554 or visit www.balletforte.org.

Photos courtesy of BalletForte



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1



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5

PHOTOS:

1. Chloe Roberts, who is dancing four roles in *The Nutcracker*, is a sophomore at Austin High School.

2. Juliette Van Dijk will dance in the party scene — her favorite — and as a petite fleur in the *Waltz of the Flowers*.

3. Nour and Sarah Alameddine will play Rat and Cook and Soldier and one of the Arabian Dancers, respectively.

4. Lexi Pisano said after watching her first BalletForte's *The Nutcracker* when she was three years old, she immediately knew she wanted to be an angel in the production. When she turned six, she earned a spot as an angle. "My mom, my best friend, and her mom would watch *The Nutcracker* every year," Pisano said. "It was our tradition until the year we auditioned and became Angels and then our moms would get to watch us perform!"

5. Lisa Van Dijk is performing as the Columbine Doll in the party scene as well as numerous other roles.



LIBRARY NEWS



DECEMBER PROGRAMS AT UNIVERSITY BRANCH LIBRARY

Get all the details on what's happening this month at University Branch Library, 14010 University Blvd., on the UH campus, in Sugar Land. All programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call the University Branch Library (281-633-5100) or the library system's Public Information Office (281-633-4734).

SPECIAL EVENTS

"SCORE: Small-Business Legal Issues"

Friday, December 1, 10:30 am, Meeting Room 1

SCORE mentor and retired corporate attorney Rita Leader will provide an overview of legal requirements for anyone thinking about establishing a new business or trying to grow an existing business. Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of operating under different business structures, such as a sole proprietorship, a partnership, a corporation, or an LLC. Get a better understanding of various government rules and regulations, including legal and tax requirements, trademark and copyright protection, and the application of federal, state, and local business regulations. Leader will also talk about business insurance.

LIBRARY NEWS Continued on page 24



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JOSEPH FULLER JOINS THE FORT BEND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S "DECK THE HALLS" CONCERT

Seats are filling quickly for the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra's annual holiday concert, traditionally their most popular performance of the year.

FBSO is honored to welcome renowned pianist Joseph Fuller to the stage for the first half of this year's concert.

Fuller released his first holiday album, *Christmastime*, in 2013. His various albums have received over 15 million plays on Pandora Radio, and he has performed with conductors across the nation.

The Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra Chorus joins the orchestra for the second half of the program.

"Deck the Halls" features traditional holiday favorites, including *Let it Snow*, *The Christmas Song*, *Three Kings of Orient*, the rollicking *Frosty the Snowman*, Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*, and more.

Each year, FBSO members create a variety of handmade items for gift-giving needs that are sold prior to the performance and

at intermission at the FBSO Holiday Marketplace. Selections range from jewelry to tree ornaments to wearable items and more. All proceeds benefit FBSO.

This year's performance begins at 2 p.m. Dec. 3 at the Stafford Centre.



Ingle Tree

Our six-day on-line auction of fabulously decorated trees lets you invest in science education in Fort Bend. Choose your favorite dazzling tree at any of our three showcase events, then let the bidding go wild!

For more information, visit hmns.org/sugarland

VIP Tree Lighting Ceremony

Friday, Nov. 10

Honoring Seeju & Dr. Charles Dupre

Decorating Demo Day

Tuesday, Nov. 14

Honoring Pat Hebert

Happy Hour and Auction Close-out

Thursday, Nov. 16

Cookies with Santa

Saturday, Dec 2

Honoring Jaiden, Farrah & Himesh Gandhi

the Houston Museum of natural science
at Sugar Land

LIBRARY NEWS Continued from page 22

“Merry Morsels - Healthy Holiday Food”

Monday, December 4, 6:00 pm, Meeting Room 1

Want to impress your guests this holiday season with simple culinary dishes that are a healthy and festive addition to any table? Registered Dietician Dianne Gertson will demonstrate how to make various holiday dishes that taste great and are easy to make. She will also provide tips on healthier options for ingredient substitutions, portion versus serving size, and holiday meal-planning. Learn how to add flavor while decreasing sugar, sodium, and fat in recipes. Materials for this demonstration were made possible by the generous support of the Friends of the University Branch Library.



North America Youth Chinese Orchestra Performance

Saturday, December 9, 2:00 pm, Meeting Room 1

The North America Youth Chinese Orchestra consists of talented young Chinese-American student musicians who are

passionate about their culture and its music. Using the violin and clarinet, as well as Chinese instruments such as the pipa, guzheng, and zhong ruan, the musicians will perform a variety of traditional Chinese musical pieces.

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check out, along with seasonal music CDs and movies. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the University Branch Library.

“Culinary Book Club”

Wednesday, December 13; 1:30 pm, Meeting Room 2

This month, the group will have a cookie exchange. Bring and share holiday treats and recipes. Cooking enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels - from beginners to advanced -- are invited to join. Those attending are welcome to bring their own cookbooks and recipes, or they may browse the library’s collection of cookbooks. Share tips, get ideas, and enjoy the camaraderie of other individuals who have an interest in cooking and good cuisine! Meets on the third Wednesday of every month; different cooking genres are explored each month.

“Holiday Open House”

Saturday, December 9, 3:00-4:00 pm, 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

“Adult Coloring”

Wednesday, December 27; 2:00 pm, Meeting Room 1

Try out adult coloring – the latest trend in relaxation and stress-

LIBRARY NEWS Continued on page 26

HOLIDAY CLEANERS

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LIBRARY NEWS Continued from page 25

reduction techniques. Coloring has been shown to lower heart rates and is thought to lower blood pressure as well. The creative process of coloring can also be a way to exercise the brain. Unwind and relax while re-discovering this favorite childhood activity and creating a personal piece of art. All coloring materials will be provided.

SPECIAL FAMILY EVENT

“Winter Craft Corner”

Friday, December 29, 2:00-3:30 pm, Meeting Room 1

Spend an afternoon enjoying fun crafts during this come-and-go event. This program is geared toward preschool and elementary-aged children, but all ages are welcome to attend. Materials for this program were made possible by the generous support of the Friends of the University Branch Library.



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LIBRARY CLOSINGS

December 22-25 - Christmas

January 1 - New Year's Day



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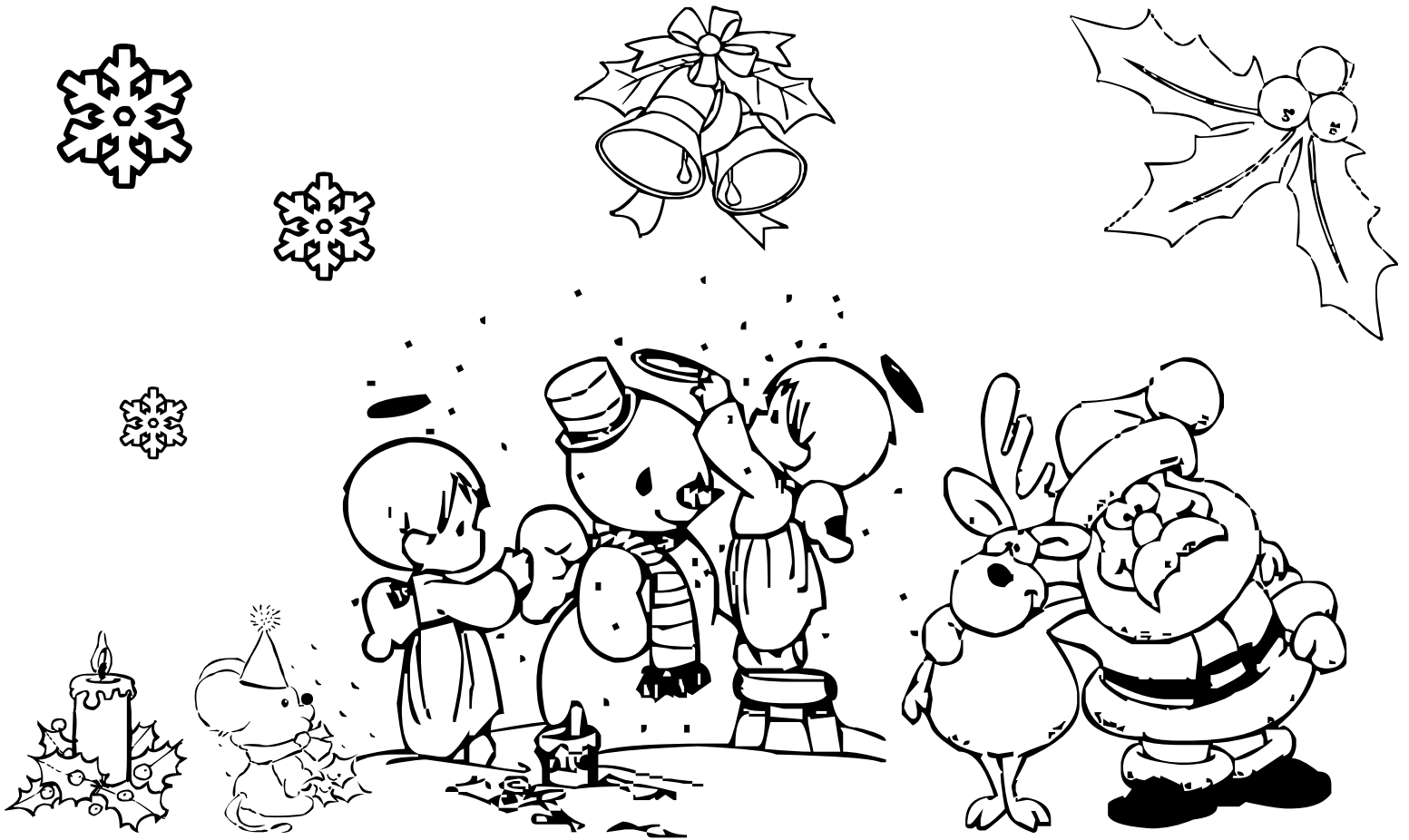
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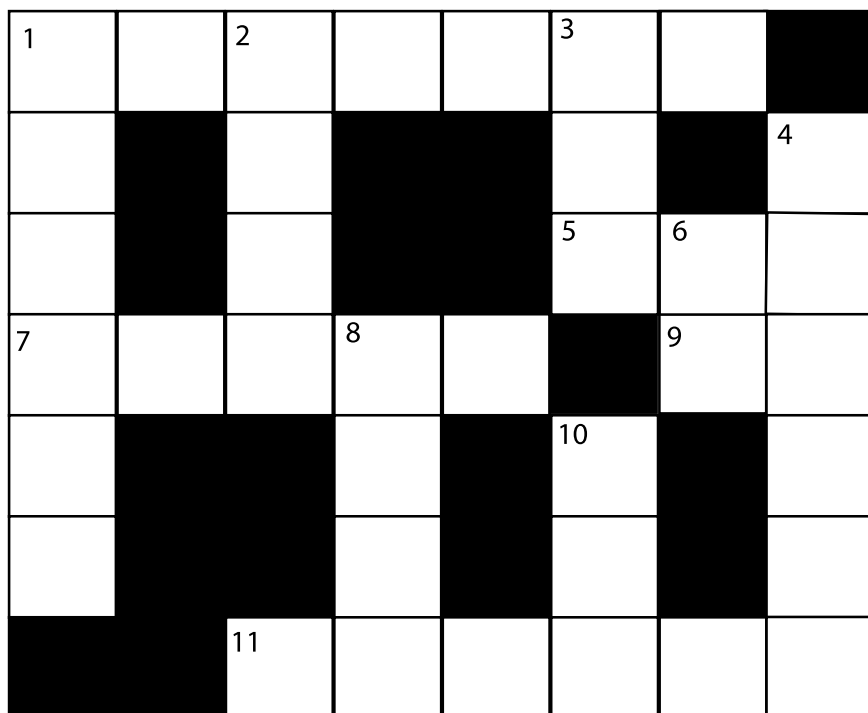
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Winter Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 1. Heating up
- 5. Was victorious
- 7. Ground
- 9. Negative
- 11. Cleared away

DOWN

- 1. Cold season
- 2. In back
- 3. Currently
- 4. ___ in: blocked by snow
- 6. Opposite of "off"
- 8. Not fake
- 10. Line of things

Answers:
 Across
 1. Warming 5. Won 7. Terra 9. No 11. Plowed
 Down
 1. Winter 2. Rear 3. Now 4. Snowed 6. On
 8. Real 10. Row



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Fort Bend ISD Board Trustee Jim Rice named Second-Vice President of Texas Association of School Boards

Fort Bend ISD Trustee Jim Rice has been named the second vice-president of the Texas Association of Schools Boards (TASB).

The organization recently elected its 2017-18 officers during the Association's annual Delegate Assembly and Convention in Dallas. The Texas Association of Schools Boards was established in 1949 and is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide education association that serves and represents local Texas school districts. Rice was elected to the TASB Board of Directors in 2012 and chaired the Legislative Committee during the 84th Legislative Session.

Rice also served on the Nominations and Planning Development Committees, and is a 2014 graduate of Leadership TASB.

Since 2010, Rice has served as an FBISD board trustee for Position 3. Previously, he served as the Board President and Board Secretary. He has been a resident of Sugar Land since 1981 and is the president of Rice &



Gardner Consultants, an engineering and construction management firm. He is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America and is currently serving on the Sam Houston Area Council Board of Directors.

He has extensive experience working directly with youth in the Boy Scouts and church, and all three of his sons are Eagle Scouts. In addition, Rice has served on the Fort Bend Chamber of

Commerce Board of Directors since 2005 and is currently serving a second term as Vice Chair of the Chamber's Education Division.

Rice is also a 2005 graduate of the Fort Bend Chamber's Leadership Forum Class. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County; the Fort Bend Regional P16 Council, which is dedicated to supporting student achievement; and is co-founder and current Chairman of the Board of Directors of Fort Bend Cares - a 501 c(3) charitable foundation.

For a full list of TASB's 2017-18 elected officers, visit the Texas Association of School Boards website at www.tasb.org



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