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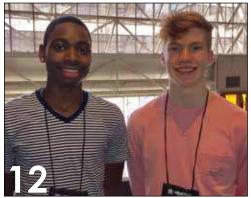
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Marcia Simmons brings love of arts, dance, theatre to Fulshear



Two Fulshear High students shine at state competition



**Outdoor food, wine festival** set for April 30



Wilson to perform April 23



**Family Fun Day** set for April 29



**Annual Bike for Mike** ride scheduled

#### FULSHEAR LIVING monthly"

The Fulshear Living Monthly is a publication of the Fort Bend Herald and the Katy Times.

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If you are interested in advertising in the Fulshear Living Monthly, please call the Times at 281-391-3141 or the Herald at 281-342-4474 for rates, information and deadlines.

#### **PHOTO & ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS**

We are looking for fresh story ideas and enjoy publishing your articles in Fulshear Living Monthly. If you have a story idea or photo to publish, please send your information to news@katytimes.com with "Monthly" in the subject line.

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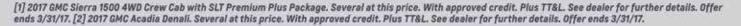
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#### COVER STORY

# Art, dance, and theater ... Arts Fulshear

By Tom Behrens

**M** arcia Simmons is a Fulshear resident for seven and a half years. She is also the executive director for Arts Fulshear, a communitycentered non-profit organization. The mission of Arts Fulshear is to offer classes and events for all ages to further the mission of bringing art events, art education, and public art to Fulshear and the surrounding area. (artsfulshear.org).

She says she has no skills in art or theater, has a small amount of dancing skills, while chuckling. She taught journalism and English at Cinco Ranch High School before she retired. Her Arts Fulshear specialty is in leadership and networking ... putting the right people in the right place so they can make things happen.

The idea for Arts Fulshear began while attending an outdoor musical event in one of the Fulshear developments. "I walked up to the developer and I told him I thought these were great," said Simmons. "But, we needed some sort of arts organization to perpetuate these sort of events, expand on them, bring in films, more concerts, community theater, etc.. He said great idea. You start that and I'll be there. That's how we got started."

The developer was Doug Konopka, the developer for Fulshear Run. According to Simmons that was about five years ago.



#### COVER STORY





When the program first started, the focus was on adults, kind of a meet and greet for adult artists at a gallery that used to be in downtown Fulshear... "a place for artists to show and sell some of their work."

The decision was to focus on arts education for children. After school classes at Huggins Elementary was the first class location.

"We began with art classes, and then right away added theater classes," said Simmons. "They were such a big hit that when Randolph Elementary was built in Cross Creek Ranch we approached them. Now we are in three elementary schools—Huggins, Shafer and Randolph."

She said further expansion is planned for the fall of 2017 with five or six more elementary schools.

Arts Fulshear also has some classes at the Irene Stern Community Center and the at the Cross Creek community room.

"We teach junior musical production and dance at these locations," Simmons said. "All of our teaching is done either in the schools or other public facilities that we generally rent at a pretty low fee."

She explains everything is tuition based, but scholarships are available to "at need" students. Last year Arts Fulshear awarded over \$7,000 in scholarships.

# Why offer arts curriculum?

"The schools offer art in their curriculum, but in both Katy ISD and Lamar Consolidated ISD it is what we think of as electives, one class every six days. If you are a child that really loves to draw and paint and get to do that for less than an hour once every six days, that's not enough for you. You want to do it more; you want to go home every day and do it. The parents understand how the arts are important in developing the brain.

"As far as theater, there is no theater for elementary, no theater until they get to sixth or seventh grades. There is choir, but again, it's once every six days."

#### For the kids

At Huggins, Randolph, and Shafer Elementary, Arts Fulshear offers after school art and theater. The art classes are six weeks long; theater classes are generally eight weeks long. Programs are designed for grades K through fifth grades. Teachers work to adjust so it's simpler for the small children, and a little more difficult for the older children.

There are a maximum of 20 students per class.

"In some of the schools we fill the classes every time. Depending on the semester, classes start in mid September; spring semester starts a couple of weeks after the kids go back to school," Simmons said. "Parents leave their kids at school and the teachers bring them to us where classes are taught either in an art classroom or other common area such as the auditorium. The students sit and have a snack with us: then we start the class which lasts about an hour-and-a-half."

Simmons said she has some really good art teachers who try to teach the children different art techniques.

"I was in a class Monday or Tuesday and they were pencil drawing a castle, using water color pencils, and then water colors. I was in a class last week and they were making



#### COVER STORY





mosaic castles with pieces of paper," Simmons said.

There is a theme in each class. Students will do at least one canvas piece. At the present Simmons is working with a fiber artist to bring her in with her spinning wheel.

"We have little hand looms that we work with, and we will bring those in for that class. We try to make it interesting; we try to make it art, not just crafts for the kids," Simmons said.

She describes the theater classes as musical theater. They are fairly simplistic by nature, easy to learn, repetitive lines, a lot of rhyming, so even the little ones can do it, but with a variety of parts

"My theater director is a dancer, singer, actress who teaches choreography to them also. We also teach junior musical theater in the Irene Stern Community Center, open for ages nine through 18...a little more intense as far as the singing, dancing and lines," Simmons said.

#### Starting adult classes

"We used to teach some adult classes when we used a facility in downtown Fulshear," said Simmons. "It was a little house, but not cost effective. Classrooms were only good for adult classes, and Fulshear wasn't big enough at the time to get enough students."

Fulshear is growing so fast that she thinks Arts Fulshear can now fill classes. There was a floral arranging class at Fulshear Floral Design in November.

"I just talked to another local business owner about implementing some classes in her store. We are branching out a little bit," Simmons said. The Irene Stern Community Center is the primary location for the adult classes.

> Simmons' future plans

"Our vision is a visual and performing arts center. We want to go back and address local artists ... lots of local artists in the West Katy, Fulshear, Brookshire, Simonton area ... adult artists. We want them to have a place to show and sell their work. We have had an art walk for the last four years, basically an art show that is outdoors. We have done Community Theater. We envision a performing arts center as having theater space, not just for the kids, but also for adults," Simmons said.

Presently Arts Fulshear has two part time staff people— Simmons and her programs director. Four contract teachers—dance, art and theater, are paid hourly and then a lot of great volunteers.

"We have had such success. We have grown. Five years ago, our first year budget was \$5,000. Our budget this year is almost \$200,000. About 25-30 percent of our budget this coming year will come from donations because we are a non-profit. Part of the 30 percent is grants," Simmons said. "The rest comes from programs; our programs are doing very well, which includes our plan to give about \$15,000 in scholarships. The donations help pay for the scholarships."

More information about Arts Fulshear can be found at **artsfulshear.org** 

The mailing address is: Arts Fulshear, P.O. Box 1073, Fulshear, TX 77441.

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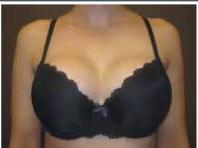
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#### SCHOOL NEWS

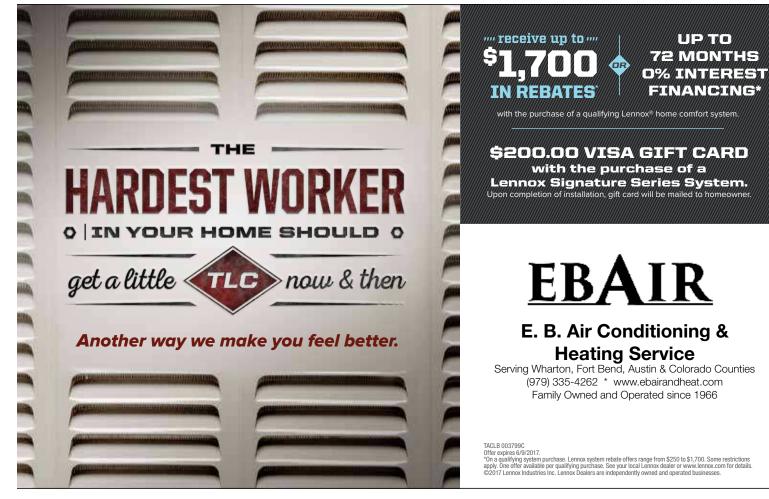


Mark Simmons & Aaron Hart

# Two Fulshear High sophomores shine at state competition

By Valerie Sweeten

oing your best in what you love is a great feeling, but finding out you've qualified for the 4A All-State Band competition at the Texas Music Educators Association 2017 convention is even better.



Fulshear High School 16-year-old sophomores, Aaron Hart and Mark Simmons, are embracing their passion for music and it shows. These sophomores held their own at the event. Hart placed 2nd Chair in Oboe, and Simmons placed 2nd Chair in Drums.

Simmons was the only student in Lamar Consolidated ISD representing the district in the Jazz Band division and noted as the district's second student in their history to be invited to participate with the All-State Jazz Band.

The TMEA convention, held in San Antonio in February, is an annual fourday event and is the largest of its kind in the nation. To be chosen to participate, as an All-State qualifier is the one of the highest recognitions band students can be given. More than 1,700 students are chosen from over 64,000 entries across the state.

Playing the oboe began in sixth grade for Hart, who had both his mother and brother play in band. His choice to play an instrument was made in Third grade. His decision has exposed him to a memorable moment in his life.

"It's giving me a chance to see places I would have never seen and given me opportunities to play with fantastic groups. I love the emotion and creativity. (Being chosen) was super exciting and probably one of the happiest moments of my life," Hart said.

Simmons learned drums in First grade and enjoyed watching the audience react when he would see professional drummers in action. Improving on his talent is something he truly enjoys.

"I like to lay down a groove that makes people groove," Simmons said. "What influenced me to join band is making art with other people. I'm driven to do my best by playing for God mainly and to have fun."

Andrew Lee, Fulshear High School Band teacher of the Charger Band, couldn't be more thrilled for his students.

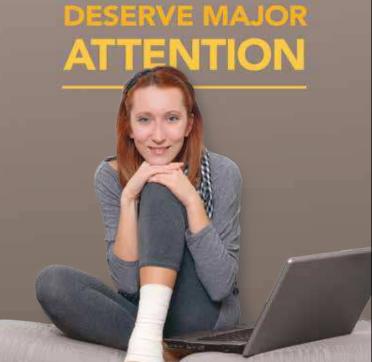
"We have simply amazing students at Churchill Fulshear High School," Lee said. "I'm thankful that I get to teach them every single day."

With Hart and Simmons' being chosen, it was even more exciting.

"In the entire state of Texas, there were literally THOUSANDS of students who competed for the opportunity to be part of the



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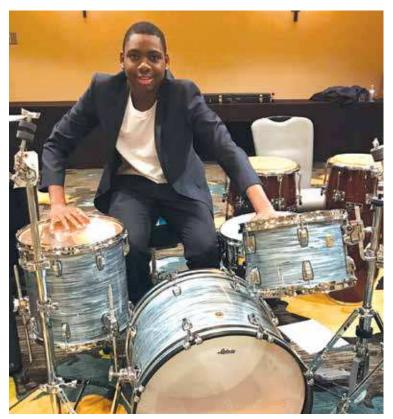
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#### SCHOOL NEWS



Mark Simmons



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All-State Band and Jazz Band. By qualifying for the All-State Bands, Aaron and Mark are now part of the top one percent of musicians on their instruments in the State! This a huge honor for both of them, and I couldn't be any prouder of them or the students of the Charger Band."

Lee added that the band continues to excel in numerous areas of competition.

In a recent UIL Marching Contest, the band received a Superior Division 1 rating as well as winning outstanding percussion at two contests, outstanding soloists twice, and outstanding drum major once.

In addition to this achievement, the Charger Band had three students qualify for the Region Jazz Band, 15 students qualify for the Region Band, 9 students who advanced to Area and two who qualified for the All-State Band. The community had the chance to experience their excellence also at the December 2016 Fulshear Holiday Parade.

"These lessons allow our students to excel in the concert hall, the classroom and in our community."

Andrew Lee, Fulshear High School Band teacher Seeing the efforts of his hard-working students is an inspirational time in Lee's teaching career and has only one word to describe his feelings toward their recognitions.

"Proud," Lee said. "I felt proud to see these students work as hard as they did and be rewarded. What I hope to teach is how to be the very best they can in

everything they do through participation in Band. I think that Band provides students the opportunity to learn about responsibility, hard work, and time commitment. These lessons allow our students to excel in the concert hall, the classroom and in our community."

FHS's band continues to grow, as does the community. Lee said he expects the band will double in size in the upcoming year. He estimated that there will be around 90 kids in Band and Guard with only 9th through 11th grades and will reach well over 100 the following year.

Get more details on the Charger Band, the Heartbeat of Fulshear, at www.chargerband. org.





Aaron Hart

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# Fulshear's Hughes in attendance for Trump's joint address to Congress

ep. Pete Olson (TX-22) shared photos and reaction from Fulshear resident Sarah Hughes' attendance at President Trump's Joint Address to Congress. She enjoyed the surreal experience of witnessing a historic moment.



Sarah Hughes and Rick Perry



United States Capitol subway system

"Sarah Hughes was an important inspiration for me as we worked to pass the 21st Century Cures Act last year," Rep. Olson said. "Congress passed that bill, which was signed into law. It will go a long way to help folks like Sarah impacted by rare diseases find a cure. Thanks to life-saving adult stem cell therapy, Sarah is a living a fuller, healthier life. It was an honor to invite her as my guest at the president's speech.

"President Trump also had a guest with a rare disease as his guest tonight, on National Rare Disease day; it's encouraging to know that the President is focused on the need to do all we can to support research to find cures. I was pleased to hear his message of working with Congress to secure our communities and get our nation on track," Olson added.



# Three Fulshear Women Win Free Trip to Arizona from Plexus Worldwide

hristine Hewitt, Cami Svitenko, and Jennifer Yates of Fulshear earned a free trip to Arizona thanks to the success of their home-based business through Plexus Worldwide.



The women were flown to Scottsdale, Arizona with a friend, where they received the royal treatment: luxurious accommodations, a spa visit, lunch with the Plexus events team, dinner with Plexus executives, and a tour of the corporate offices, plus \$300 spending money. They are pictured with Plexus' President Alec Clark. Plexus Worldwide is a leading directselling health, wellness and weight management company of products such as Plexus Slim, ProBio5 and Accelerator+.



#### LOCAL NEWS



Last month, the Fulshear-Simonton Lions Club provided breakfast for Fulshear First Responders. The Fulshear-Simonton Lions Club meet on the second Thursday of the month at Fulshear City Grill in Fulshear at 7 p.m. There's plenty to do in the community and the Lions Club welcomes new members to come and assist with their projects.

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During the First Responder Display at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Fulshear Police offices Scott and Zieschang were honored to be asked to part of this event.

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#### LOCAL EVENTS



# April Programs At Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library



Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, 8100 FM 359 South in Fulshear, presents a variety of free children's programs, adult computer classes, book clubs, and special programs for people of all ages each month.

All programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library at 281-633-4675 or the library system's Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.

The April schedule is as follows:

LIBRARY CLOSINGS April 14-16 – Easter

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

#### Income-Tax-Preparation Assistance Friday, April 7, 1-4 pm; Meeting Room

Representatives from the AARP will provide free income-tax preparation assistance for low-income taxpayers. Patrons should bring the following information to the session if possible: photo ID; Social Security card(s) for self, spouse, and all dependents; last year's tax return; W-2, 1099s, and any other compensation received in 2016; unemployment compensation statements; and any other documents that are necessary to complete your return. This service is free and open to the public on a firstcome, first-served basis. Income-tax forms will no longer be available at the libraries, but patrons may use the libraries' computers and printers to download and print out the forms from the IRS website, www.irs.gov, during regular library hours. A library card is needed to use the printers, and the cost to print is 10¢ per black-and-white page.



#### Vegetarian or **Vegan Curious?** Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m.-12 noon, **Meeting Room**

Get an overview of vegetarian and vegan lifestyles. Learn the difference between vegan and vegetarian diets, reasons people make these dietary decisions, and how to find healthy and delicious alternative foods. Those attending the program will get ideas on how to create meals that are tasty and easy to make, and that provide the nutrients and protein one needs for a healthy diet. A sample menu of a week's worth of meals and recipes, as well as local grocery resources, will be available. The presenters will offer suggestions on how to get started with this new alternative diet, gradually eliminating dairy and meat from one's diet. Learn about support networks in the area and how to maintain the diet while dining out.

#### **Growing & Using Herbs** Monday, April 17, 6 p.m., Meeting Room

Fort Bend County Master Gardener Tricia Bradbury will provide an overview and general information on growing herbs on the Texas Gulf Coast. Learn how to preserve herbs for later use by drying or freezing them, or by using them to flavor oil and vinegar. Bradbury will also share tips on cooking with fresh and dried herbs.

#### **Creating a Mindful** Life for Families Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m., Meeting Room

Bill M. Wooten, PhD, will present a basic introduction to the practice and healthful benefits of mindfulness-based stress reduction for families. Those attending the program will learn how to incorporate elements of mindfulness into

their parenting role and family life to increase the entire family's ability to relax, focus, improve cognitive functioning, handle stress more easily, decrease an anxious child's fears, and promote family happiness. Dr. Wooten will also share tips on fostering a healthy sense of teamwork and reducing sibling squabbles.

#### BOOK CLUBS

#### **Fulshear Book Club** Monday, April 17,

12 noon, Meeting Room

The book to be discussed is Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster, written by Jon Krakauer.

#### **Fulshear Night Readers Guild** Monday, April 24, 6:30 p.m., Meeting Room

The book to be discussed is Everything I Never Told You, a novel written by Celeste Ng.

#### WEEKLY **CHILDREN'S** PROGRAMS

#### **Toddler Time** Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m.

Caregiver/child activities, stories and songs for older babies, from 12 to 36 months of age.

#### **Story Time**

#### Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m.

Stories, movies, and ageappropriate craft activities for children three to six years of age.

#### **After-School Break** 2nd Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

Crafts, movies, stories for school-aged children in grades one through five. The program on April 13 will be "Welcome Spring Chickens." Make a "Spring Chicken" complete with nest and egg!



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# Second Annual **Farm & Vineyard Faire Sunday, April 30**

Popular outdoor food and wine festival returns with a world of flavors

rganic food, wine and a countryside bursting with flavor will be featured at the second annual Farm & Vineyard Faire hosted in the prestigious Fulshear Run community, Sunday, April 30 from 2 to 6 p.m.

Proceeds from this farm-tofork outdoor festival will benefit the Friends of Fort Bend County Historical Commission, a non-profit organization that supports projects to preserve the county's historical and cultural heritage.

"Our inaugural event attracted 450 guests and was a huge success," says Doug Konopka, event host and president of DHK Development, developer of Fulshear Run. "Fulshear Run's natural landscape is the perfect backdrop for food and wine lovers to relish savory fare as they spend the afternoon sipping and strolling under a canopy of oaks and centuryold pecan trees."

The family-friendly outdoor festival features an afternoon of gourmet "farm-to-fork" bites prepared by top chefs, award-winning wine pairings, locally crafted beer, cooking demonstrations, and entertainment for all ages.

Honorary Event Chairs are Richmond Mayor Evalyn Moore, and local civic and business leaders Carole McCann, Robert Crosser, and Ken Stubbe. Event chairs are Doug and April Konopka.

Event sponsors are Trendmaker Homes, Fulshear Run, Land Rover Southwest Houston, Fairmont Homes, NewFirst National Bank, Prime Living, and Avenu.

Tickets for the Faire are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the gate. Children 12 and under are free. Advance VIP Tickets are \$100 and \$125 at the gate. VIP tickets include VIP tent access, with premium food, wine tasting and valet parking.

Fulshear Run is one of Fulshear's newest masterplanned acreage communities – the only Fulshear community offering oversized lots with city utility services -- and is located at 9035 Bois D'Arc Lane, at FM 1093.

To become a sponsor, or get tickets and information visit www.farmandvineyardfaire.com

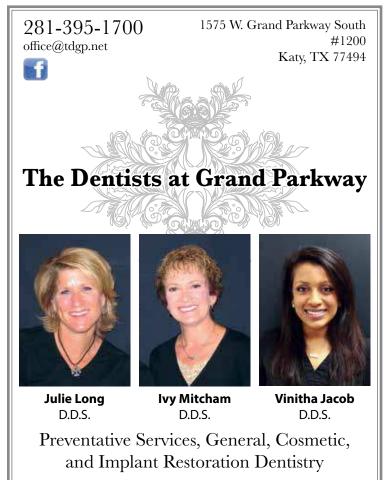




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#### LOCAL EVENTS





# Wilson to bring her talent to Fulshear's House Concerts April 23

amie Wilson grew up in Sealy and has become one of the biggest names in Texas music. As a solo act and with her band The Trishas, she has played to sold-out audiences throughout the US and Europe, and now she's coming to Fulshear.

Wilson will perform Sunday, April 23 at the Fulshear House Concerts.

If you still have not been to one of our shows, you won't want to miss this one. Our last four shows have been waitlisted, so make sure and donate early to reserve your spot.

A \$20 donation per person is suggested for this show and all proceeds go to Wilson.

Doors open at 4:30 p.m., music begins around 5:15 p.m. -- there will be two 45-minute sets with a break in the middle for dinner and artist meet and greet.

Bring a pot-luck dish to share and BYOB. The concert house will have water, tea, coffee, ice, some soft drinks, and plenty of chairs. The show is inside in the living room

CD's and other merchandise will also be available at the show.

When describing Jamie Wilson's voice, two aspects come to mind: that honeyed tenor twang that's become known as one of the sweetest instruments in modern folk music, and that poignant, poetic, down-to-earth point of view she brings to her songwriting. The spotlight shines brighter than ever on both with Holidays & Wedding Rings, her upcoming January 2015 release. Even fans may be surprised to realize it's the first full-length solo album from one of brightest and busiest stars in her recent years amid the folk/ Americana/independent country music scene.

An artist of singular talent and restless creativity, she broke into the Texas country/ folk scene as one of the co-lead vocalists of the Gougers before the band gradually gave way to not only Wilson's solo work (the fine EP "Dirty Blonde Hair" was released in 2010) but also higher-profile musical adventures with The Trishas, an all-female singer-songwriter band that has toured through some of the state and nation's best venues. Scoring one of the best albums of 2012 with "High Wide & Handsome," the Trishas lit up the genre for a few years while always leaving Wilson room for solo gigs, guest spots on over a dozen albums by now, and songswaps with like-minded artists all over Texas and beyond.

Both deeply personal and solidly collaborative, Holidays & Wedding Rings is an evident labor of love from the sort of songwriter who can delve into the sweetness of family life without hitting sap. Someone who can dig into heartache without wallowing in it, go slow and subtle and still leave a listener rapt. Someone who can share the spotlight with top-flight musicians: veteran Texas music hands John Ross



Silva, Scott Davis, Cody Foote and Reckless Kelly's David Abeyta are all in the mix here, along with alt-country star Wade Bowen on a spinetingling duet/co-write. Wilson's home life as a wife

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and mom come through often in her music (and are known to many of her fans through her humorous social media profiles) but creatively, she can portray lonesome and restless with the best of them. Multiple approaches, countless gigs, several years and nearly a million miles into what promises to be a grand career, Jamie Wilson not only runs with a good crowd: she never fails to stand out.

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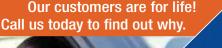


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Cross Creek Ranch is hosting a Hit the Trails Family Fun Day noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 29. The event is free and open to the public.

# *Hit the Trails* Family Fun Day set for April 29

un is in Cross Creek Ranch's nature and families can learn more about it during the community's Hit the Trails Family Fun Day, noon-4 p.m., Saturday, April 29.

The first 500 families visiting the Fulshear masterplanned community's Welcome Center, 6450 Cross Creek Bend Lane, will receive a complimentary Cross Creek Ranch backpack filled with goodies.

Everyone will enjoy an afternoon of radio-controlled

model boat races, kite flying, music, bounce houses and trolley rides to model homes.

Food trucks will be on hand or attendees can purchase sack lunches from Italian Maid Café. The event is free and open to the public.

For details, visit www. crosscreektexas.com.



# Bike for Mike

9th annual Michael T. McCann Memorial Bike Ride

he 9th annual Michael T. McCann Memorial Bike Ride will be held at the Union Chappell Vineyards/Bar O Ranch Saturday, May 6.

The ride will run throughout the community and this BP MS 150 recommended ride will feature 68, 51, 35 and 19-mile routes beginning at 7:30 a.m. All proceeds from this family event will directly benefit the Fulshear community.

All rides of Bike for Mike will include law enforcement, first aid, support vehicles, ride marshals and motorcycle escorts. Rest stops will be provided with restroom facilities as well as mechanical support offered by Bike Barn.

Breakfast by the Kolache Factory and post ride lunch are included for all participants. T-shirts will be provided for the first 250 registrants.

All riders will leave from the Bar O Ranch/Union Chappel Vineyards, located at 8426 Wallis Street at the corner of Wallis and First Street in Fulshear. The ride then will head directly down from Wallis State Bank and Ray's Grill in Fulshear Town Center. The ride begins at 7:30 p.m. with the longer distance and fastest riders leaving in front. Helmets are required and no headphones will be allowed. This event is rain or shine.

Designated parking will be well marked in Fulshear with spaces available at the Harris and 2nd Street, the First United Methodist Church, the TxDOT lot located at 1093 and FM 359 and city hall and Metro parking lots.

To register for Bike for Mike, packet pick-ups are available at Bike Barn, Thursday, May 4 from noon to 7 p.m. with a fee of \$40. Register onsite the morning of the ride will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a fee of \$45. Online registration is \$40 and open through Thursday, May 4 at 10 a.m.

Dr. Mike McCann passed away after a long, battle with cancer in 2007. He will be remembered as a family man, veterinarian, sailor, grape grower, friend and mentor, who also served as chairman of the Fulshear Planning Commission for many years, dedicating much of his time to the development and growth of the city. An avid bicyclist, he spent many hours each week cycling all while undergoing treatments, a true testament to his strength and abilities. He was an ambassador and statesman who epitomized what Fulshear means to many. A friendly town in a beautiful region, which if all work together, will grow into a prosperous community that cherishes the simple, good things in life.

Bike for Mike is proud to support Fulshear, with all proceeds directly benefiting special projects and beautification of the city. To date over \$140,000 has been

Flooring

donated to the city with ongoing support to many deserving organizations including the public library, Arts Fulshear, Family Hope, the Fulshear Simonton Volunteer Fire Department. the Fulshear Police Foundation. Fulshear Outreach and Development, the Brookwood Community, the Texana Center, Operation Enduring Brotherhood, the Fulshear elementary and middle schools, the local Boy and Girl Scout troops.

After the ride, the post-ride celebration will feature the music of the Bourbon Street Band.

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