

March 2019

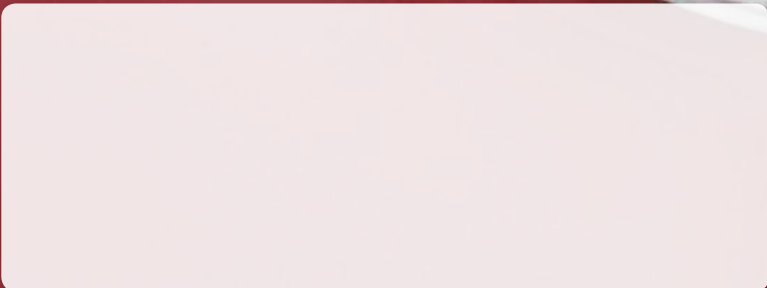
WEST FORT BEND

Living

*The 5th Annual
LCISD AutoFest
is all about
cool cars &
boosting
careers*



PLUS Author Marcus
Luttrell to speak
at a special Literacy Council
of Fort Bend fundraiser



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CONTENTS & STAFF

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WEST FORT BEND *Living™*

GENERAL MANAGER
Lee Hartman

leehart@fbherald.com

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Marquita Griffin

mgriffin@fbherald.com

ADVERTISING

John Oliver

joliver@fbherald.com

Stefanie Bartlett

sbartlett@fbherald.com

Ruby Polichino

ruby@fbherald.com

COMPOSITION & GRAPHICS MANAGER

Alfred H. Dubé

adube@fbherald.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Melinda Maya

mmaya@fbherald.com

Rachel Cavazos

rcavazos@fbherald.com

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The 5th Annual LCISD AutoFest provides lessons for life

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

If there is one thing students appreciate, it's being able to take what they learned in class and having it easily translate into their adult lives.

For Amaya Chavez, a Foster High School junior, this one of the many aspects she respects about Lamar Consolidated ISD's Automotive Technology program, which offers auto tech classes at all of the district's high schools.

"If you have a passion, or just want to learn about cars, I say feed your passion because that's what I did," said Chavez, who has been an auto tech student for the past three years.

"I always grew up around cars so when I found out there was an automotive program I was excited."

In addition to the lessons about working on cars and machines, Chavez has also competed in Skills USA, a professional organization that teaches technical, academic and employability skills which help high school and college students pursue successful careers.

"This program," Chavez said, "is vital to the scholastic environment because what we learn in this class can be applied to real life."

The district's Automotive Technology program is ASE certified training designed to prepare students for an entry-level career or to excel in further education in the field, said Allen Deon Wilson, the automotive tech instructor at Lamar Consolidated High School.

Through the program students learn a series of skills, separated by year. In the first year students learn about energy, power and transportation; in the second year maintenance and light repair is the focus; by the third year students engage in the automotive

service; and by the fourth year students enter practicum in Transportation Systems - Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES), which is paid on-the-job training.

"Good technicians are hard to find so we're growing ours through the Lamar AYES program," said Crystal Anderson, Service Manager for SW Kia on the district's Automotive Technology website.

Outside of the classroom, auto tech students compete in Automotive Skills USA (VICA) and Ford AAA contests, allowing them to demonstrate the skills they learned in school.

Plus, Wilson adds, students can also earn college credits through Texas State Technical College and earn ASE student certifications.

B.F.Terry High School auto tech student Brianna Martinez said the program "gives students an idea of what working on cars is like in the real world."

Martinez has been in the program for three years, and since 2017 has competed in various competitions. Her accolades include winning 1st place at the February 2017 Automotive Refinishing District; 7th place in April 2017 at the Automotive Refinishing State; 2nd place in the February 2018 Automotive Refinishing District; 1st place for the February 2018 Estimating District; 5th place at the April 2018 Automotive Refinishing State and 3rd place at the April 2018 Estimating State.

"This program creates job opportunities," Martinez stressed. "For me, as well as others in the classroom."

The perks of participating the Automotive Technology Program are aplenty, said George Ranch High School junior Faraz Hasan who has been in the program for three years. And for students,





like him, who have “a strong passion for cars,” the auto tech classes offers students the opportunity to “pursue their passion while getting educated.”

And this is why Wilson, along with students and volunteers, created the annual AutoFest, a unique benefit specifically to encourage support for the district’s auto tech students.

CARS FOR A CAUSE

“The AutoFest was started, and continues, to fund educational fields trips, competitions cost [such as] membership, uniforms, transportation, equipment and training material,” Wilson said. “We strive to one day to be able to consistently raise enough funds to offer yearly college and tool scholarships.”

The 5th Annual LCISD AutoFest will be held March 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the LCISD Natatorium, 1011 Horace Mann Ave. in Rosenberg. Spectator admission is free.

At the center of this event will be showcase collection of automobiles that will compete in 15 Best of Show Categories — Trucks, Motorcycles, Student, Custom, People’s Choice, Best Engine, Low Rider, Modern Muscle, Classic Muscle, Off road/Jeep, Pre 1960, 1960 & above, Best interior, Imports and People’s Choice — and plaques or trophies will be awarded.

Anyone interested in entering their vehicle in the car show can register online and donate \$20 per vehicle. The registration is available on the LCISD Automotive Technology Facebook page at @lcisdautotech. Vendors are also welcomed to register for the event with a \$20 donation per booth, however, food items will not be permitted without prior approval. Sponsorship packages are also available.

Beyond a look at impressive cars, the 5th Annual LCISD AutoFest will also feature food and family-friendly activities.

G’s Catering will provide barbecue brisket, chips and drink combo for \$9, which can be purchased pre-sale and at the event. The chicken leg quarters, bread and a drink combo is also going for \$9, but will only be available pre-sale, and Just Chilled Ice will sell snow cones.

Additionally, students and adults can sign up in five-member teams for a tug-of-war competition for \$5; a dunking booth will be provided if the weather permits; there will be adult tricycle races; and a Swap Meet will be offered, which is where anyone can bring automotive related parts to sell or trade.

The day will also have activities for children including: face

painting, two bounce houses; carnival style games and a trackless train.

Plus “a bash vehicle will be available to release your pent-up frustrations for a small donation,” Wilson added jokingly.

At the heart of all the fun, however, is one important cause, Wilson stressed. And it’s simply that skillful students receive the support they deserve.

Proceeds from the AutoFest, he noted, are used for college visits — like to Texas State Technical College Fort Bend, San Jacinto College and Wharton County Junior College — securing attendance to the Houston Auto Show and the Houston Auto Rama and the NHRA Youth & Education Services (YES) Program career day in Baytown, Texas.

Students also get the opportunity to visit dealerships like Legacy Ford, Finnegan Auto Group, Lamar Transportation and Momentum BMW and participate in the tour of the Toyota plant in San Antonio, Texas.

Lee Villalobez, a B.F.Terry High School senior who has been an auto tech student for two years said, the Automotive Technology program is key to helping students secure future jobs and Alejandro Lizarraga, a Foster High School junior, concurs, adding not only does he get hands-on experience with learning how to engineer s a car, he appreciates that students also learn life skills in the process.

FOR THE FUTURE

Hunter Mckibben, a sophomore at George Ranch High School who has been in the program for two years said while cars has always been a pleasurable part of his life — “My dad has always worked on cars and I’ve enjoyed helping him” — being a auto tech students goes beyond the joy of working on a passion.

In February he participated in his first Skills USA competition, partly in efforts to meet an important demand. “The world needs leading technicians in this industry,” he said.

Fellow Longhorn Daniel Conde, a junior who has been in the program two years, agrees.

“I hope to join the [Skills USA] team next year,” said Conde, who works on a team that diagnosis and repairs vehicles. “The program is important to me because it gives me a head start on my future ... it’s a national certified program preparing students for a career.”





Sponsorship Levels

100 MPH Club: \$1000 – AutoFest T-Shirt, Booth (2) 10'X10', Business name, large logo on all marketing materials, social media and recognition at event.

80 MPH Club: \$500 – AutoFest T-Shirt, Booth 10'x10', Business name, logo on all marketing materials and social media.

60 MPH Club: \$250 – AutoFest T-Shirt, Booth 10'x10' Business name on all marketing materials and social media.

40 MPH Sponsor: \$125 - Booth 10'x10' and social media.

All Contributions Welcome: \$100, \$75, \$50 and \$25

For more information contact Allen Deon Wilson at 832-223-3187 or adwilson@lcisd.org. You can also visit www.lcisd.org/departments/academics/cte/programs-of-study/automotive-technology or follow the LCISD Automotive Technology Program on Facebook at [@lcisdautotech](https://www.facebook.com/lcisdautotech) or Twitter at [@Auto_Tech_LCISD](https://twitter.com/Auto_Tech_LCISD)



Current LCISD Automotive Technology students recruiting at Reading Junior High School.



Auto tech students at the recent Houston Auto Show.



LCISD Auto Tech students touring the Texas State Technical College Diesel program in Fort Bend County.



Foster High School auto tech student at Briscoe Junior High recruiting students.



Auto tech students learning their craft.



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an evening of awareness

The 7th Annual Reading between the Wines helps battle illiteracy

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

The Literacy Council of Fort Bend knows literacy is not limited to being able to read, but that it is also vital to critical thinking as well as speaking and writing clearly — all of which are the crux for success in personal and professional lives. And this is why the council has been at the forefront of addressing illiteracy in Fort Bend County since 1987, offering programs geared toward preparing adults to earn their GED, US citizenship, learn basic computer skills and even progress to post-secondary education.

Former Literacy Council student Frozan Dostyar shared her experiences with the nonprofit which she called “an amazing organization for any adult who wants to improve their life.”

Doystar, who is originally from Afghanistan, studied English in India and completed high school in Pakistan, but when she came to US in 2016 she began studying at the Literacy Council.

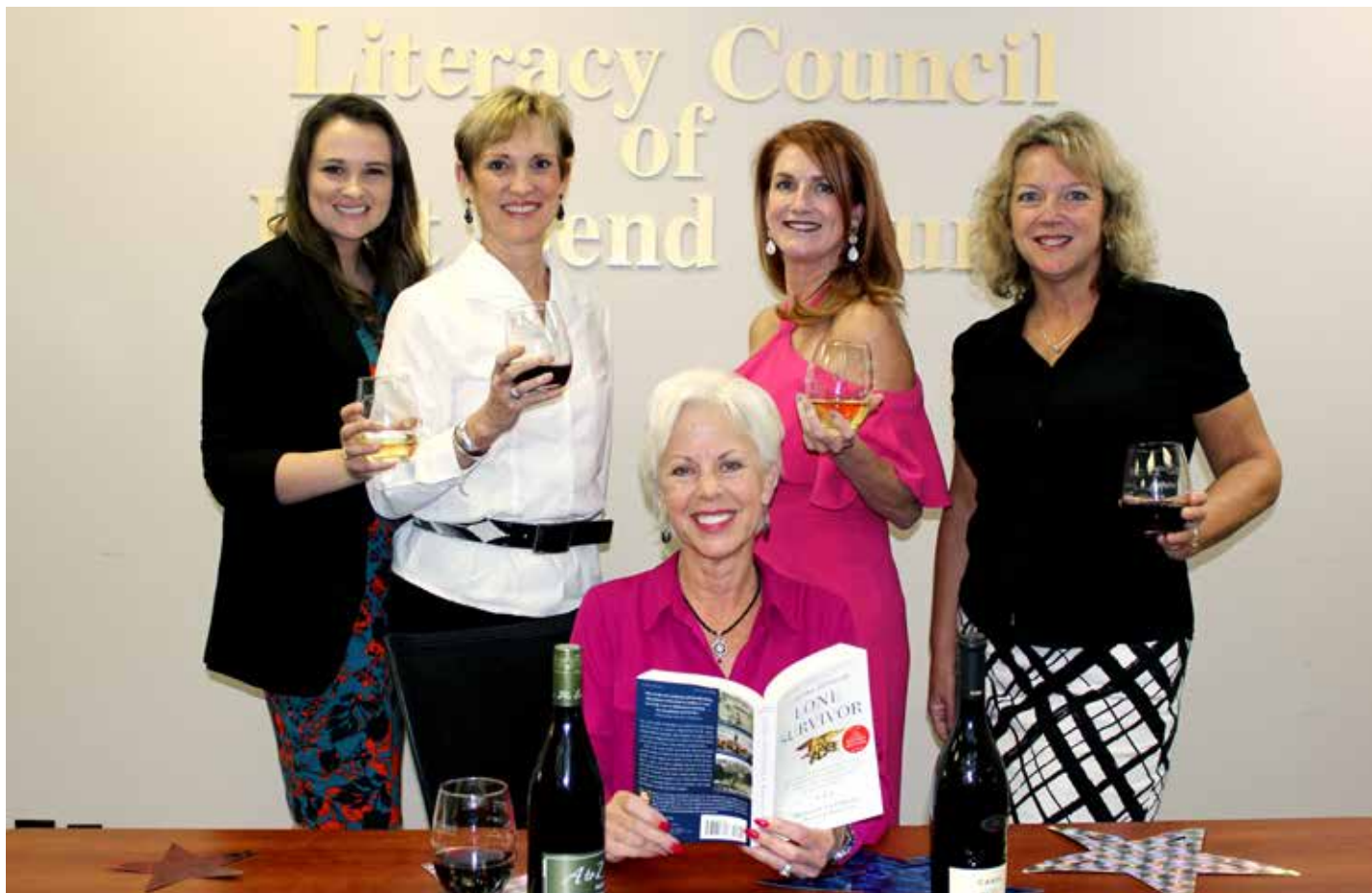
“I could speak and understand English when I arrived in the United States, but not properly,” Dostyar said in the council’s 2017-2018 annual report.

Dostyar participated in online classes as well as those on-site and when she wasn’t in class, she studied from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. watching YouTube videos and using the ESL programs provided in the computer lab.

Following two years of dedication, Dostyar, who is a manager at a fast-food restaurant, completed all five levels of ESL and proceeded to her GED courses. She is currently enrolled in the Medical Business Office Professional certification program through the Houston Community College and Literacy Council partnership and in December took her National State Exam.

“I am thankful for the Literacy Council because I have been able to improve my English-speaking skills which helped me to get a job, a promotion, pass the Texas driver’s license exam and buy a car,” Dostyar said, adding that she has taken classes at the University Houston Downtown and earned two certificates in Retail Management and Soft Skills Management.

“It is because of everything that I have learned at the Literacy Council that I have been able to improve my life in so many ways.”



From left: Event Chair Camille Brewer, Literacy Council of Fort Bend Executive Director Kelli Metzenthin, 2019 Reading Between the Wines honoree, Mary Favre, Event Chair Helen Bow and Event Chair Dr. Rebecca Deurlein



Excited about the annual Reading between the Wines event, are committee members from left; front row: First co-chairs of the event include Camille Brewer, Helen Bow and Dr. Rebecca Deurlein; and standing: committee members Veronica Triplett, Leticia Lowe, Erin Miles, Caprice Bruckschen, Nicola Johnson and Anna Kaplan.

Ending Illiteracy Cycles

The council reports that in comparison to Harris County, which has a illiteracy rate of 21 percent and the Texas average of 19 percent, 24 percent of Fort Bend County is illiterate.

With statistics that cannot be ignored, the Literacy Council of Fort Bend continues to put forth strong efforts to ending cycles of inter-generational illiteracy by improving adult literacy programs and increasing literacy awareness through a variety of efforts, including fundraisers and community events.

One of its major fundraising events, Reading between the Wines, is scheduled for later this month.

The reasons behind illiteracy vary, said Nicola Johnson, the Literacy Council's development director. From the lack of resources and exposure, to a low value placed on literacy, the students who come to the Literacy Council of Fort Bend, arrive with a variety of valid explanations.

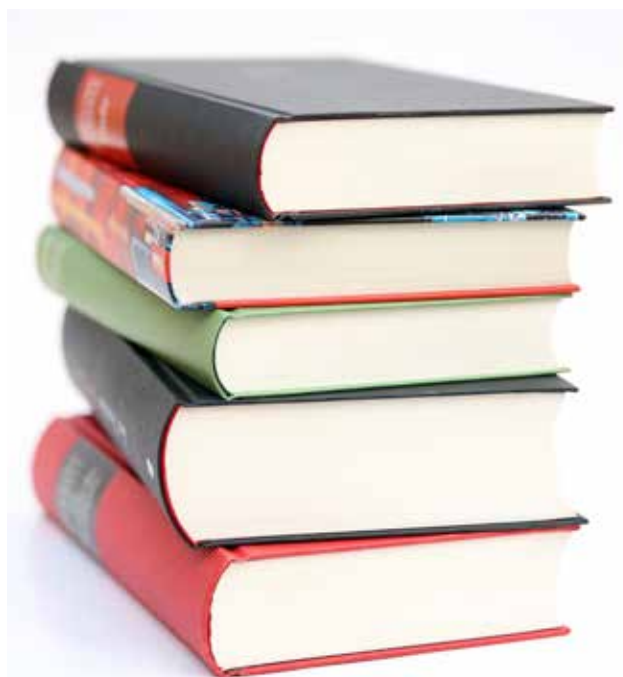
But there are many myths about illiteracy, she stressed.

"We want to dispel the myth of illiteracy being an issue for individuals that are low income," she said. "Illiteracy is more than speaking the English language. It's also about the inability to read and write the English language. Many immigrant ESL learners, [although] not all, are well educated in their home countries, and upon immigrating to the US, their education, degrees or certifications are not accepted. Many start in an ESL program, learn the language, join our GED programs, obtain their GED, and then choose a post-secondary pathway into a two to four year college

program."

In a figurative sense, literacy is part of the road on which people travel throughout their lives, and this is why the council pushes to make illiteracy a publicly-discussed and reviewed topic.

"Literacy awareness is important because impacts every area of a person's life and the community," Johnson said.



An Evening of Awareness & Support

In addition to focusing on literacy awareness, the council seeks support for its programs, and this month the spotlight is on the council's 7th Annual Reading Between the Wines event. Proceeds from this fundraiser will serve as a means to build financial support so the council can continue offering adults its free literacy services.

The council strives to raise \$150,000 at this year's event. As of press time more than \$110,000 was already raised.

Presented by the Fred & Mabel R. Parks foundation, The 7th Annual Reading Between the Wines will be held at 6:30 p.m. on March 29 at Safari Texas Ranch in Richmond.

The event is being co-chaired by Helen Bow, Camille Brewer and Dr. Rebecca Deurlein. Khambrel Marshall will serve as emcee and James Paterson will serve as auctioneer for the evening. Mary Favre, who is, as the council describes, "a longtime friend and supporter of the Literacy Council and many other community organizations," has been named as this year's honoree.

Favre, the council notes, has devoted her time to the Literacy Council by serving as a sponsor, event photographer, advisory council member as well as an ambassador for adult literacy in Fort Bend County.

The evening will also present featured author Marcus Luttrell.

Luttrell is the author of "Lone Survivor," which was turned into the 2013 film of the same name, featuring actors Mark Wahlberg — who plays Luttrell — Taylor Kitsch, Emile Hirsch and Ben Foster.

The "Lone Survivor" story surrounds events on June 28, 2005, when Luttrell and SEAL Team 10 were assigned to a mission to kill or capture Ahmad Shah, a high-ranking Taliban leader responsible for killings in eastern Afghanistan and the Hindu-Kush mountains. Luttrell was the only survivor.

Badly wounded, he managed to walk and crawl seven miles to evade capture. He was given shelter by an Afghan tribe, who alerted the Americans of his presence, and American forces rescued him six days after the gun battle. Following his physical recovery from Operation Redwing, Marcus returned and completed one more tour before being medically retired.

He then wrote the book, "Lone Survivor," to share the story of his brothers.

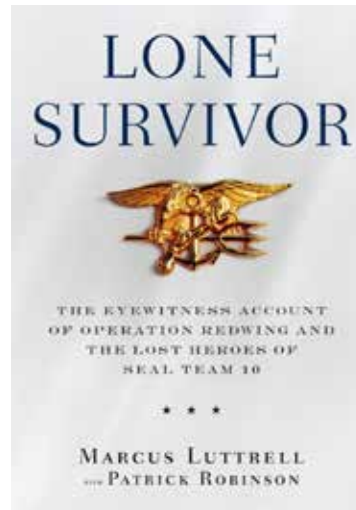
"We feel honored to feature this American hero at our event," said co-chair Rebecca Deurlein. "Marcus embodies what it means to sacrifice for others. He overcame obstacles to come out a survivor. Likewise, at the Literacy Council of Fort Bend, we see people fighting their own obstacles every day to become literate and make their own contributions to America."

In addition to hearing from Luttrell, guests will also have a chance to meet other guest authors including: Chris Bridge, award-winning children's book author, artist and literacy advocate; Ray W. Luce, author of "God Said Let There Be Light and There Was 'Ilumo'; Timothy Lucik, author of "Away From The Nest" and "Please, Don't Call On Me;" and Matt Minor, author of "The Representative" and a 2016 IPPY Gold Medalist, Southern Fiction.

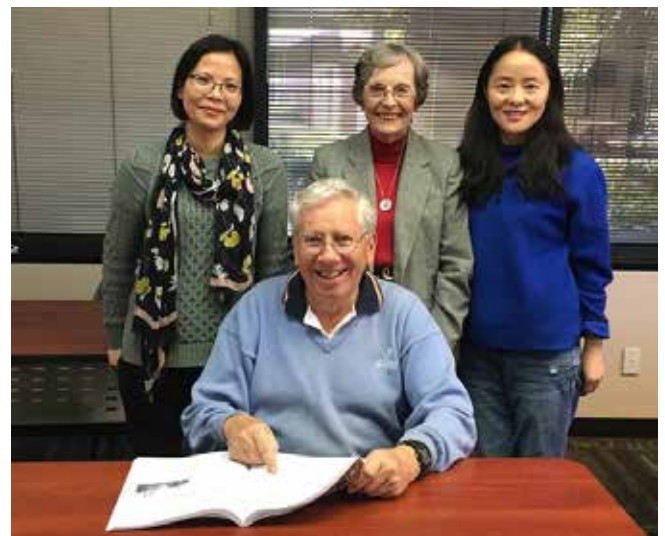
The evening will also include live music, wine and, what the council calls, "a restaurant stroll" that will offer tastes from local chefs and restaurants, as well as the opportunity to bid on exciting auction items and the chance to win a cash raffle.

Tickets are \$125, with Book Club and Young Professionals discounts available. Sponsorship opportunities for Reading between the Wines, which range from \$500 to \$15,000, are also available. The sponsor benefits include additional perks, such as reserved and premier seating and signed copies of "Lone Survivor."

For more information about the Literacy Council of Fort Bend and the 7th Annual Reading between the Wines event, visit www.ftbendliteracy.org.



The 7th Annual Reading between the Wines event will feature "Lone Survivor" author Marcus Luttrell.



From left, student Liz Wu, tutor Bente Davies, student Qin and tutor Allan Davies.



tutor training

For those interested in becoming tutors for the Literacy Council of Fort Bend, tutor training will be held on March 18, April 18 and May 13 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Through training, volunteers are equipped to teach basic literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL) and one-on-one tutor sessions to adults. Tutors are prepared to organize and compile lesson plans and to understand the purpose of the Literacy Council's program. For more information about becoming a tutor visit www.ftbendliteracy.org/prospective-volunteers

Lamar's lasting legacy

by **SCOTT REESE WILLEY** | swilley@fbherald.com

They loaded their muskets too slowly to have been much use at the Alamo. But the present day Texas Army successfully fired a 21-gun salute in honor of Texas' second president Mirabeau B. Lamar in January at his gravesite in Richmond.

The annual Lamar Day ceremony is organized by the Fort Bend County Historical Society, the city of Richmond, local chapters of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and Sons of the Republic of Texas and other civic organizations.

A small but appreciative crowd of spectators filled chairs at Lamar's gravesite in historic Morton Cemetery to watch the proceedings.

Charles Kelly, chairman of the Historical Commission, kicked off the event by recounting Lamar's life, from birth in Georgia in 1798 to his heroic actions in the Battle of San Jacinto, to his election as Texas' second president and his death in Richmond.

Lamar owned and operated a plantation in Richmond in the later part of his life. His business partner was Jane Long, known as the Mother of Texas, and whose gravesite is only yards from Lamar's.

A proclamation was read honoring Lamar, and spectators were reminded that 180 years ago President Lamar signed an act that reserved three leagues of land in each county in the Republic of Texas to provide revenue for the creation and maintenance of a public school system.

The Act also reserved 50 leagues of land for the creation and maintenance of two universities.

The oil revenue from those leagues still provide revenue to the University of Texas and Texas A&M University, and the public school system.

The city of Richmond is committed to honoring the Texas icon and statesman each year.

After the proclamation, members of the Fort Settlement Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas placed a red, white and blue wreath at the foot of Lamar's granite marker.

Connie Buckingham, president of the chapter, said The Daughters offer scholarships to local students and invited the audience to learn more about the organization or even join.

Participating for the first time was the newly formed Lamar



Members of the Texan Army are, from left, Tom Green, Tom Houston, Carl Hill, Michael Bailey, Robby Roden, Scott Leopold (loading his weapon) and Jim Glover. The group presented the colors and fired a 21-gun salute in honor of Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of Texas. See On The Fort Bend Scene on page 32 for more photos from this event.

chapter of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, located in Richmond.

Tom Green, a member of the SRT, said the event came on the anniversary of Lamar's signing of legislation that created the present day Texas flag.

He said the SRT also offers scholarships to high school students who write essays on Texas history, and he encouraged school children in attendance to compete. Students from other countries often enter the contest, he added, "but they have Texas history all messed up."

Bruce Kelly read Lamar's 1838 presidential campaign speech after which the Texas Army fired a 21-gun salute in honor of Lamar.

Members of the Stephen F. Austin Elementary School choir then sang a medley of songs about Texas.

Cody Cockroft, a past worshipful master with Morton Masonic Lodge 72 in Richmond, spoke of Lamar's Masonic ties and his efforts to promote the tenets of Freemasonry.

Monty Montiso, a chaplain with VFW Post 3903 in Rosenberg, played Taps on the bugle to end the ceremony.

Garden Club of Richmond hosts annual caladium bulb sale

The Garden Club of Richmond is again hosting its annual Caladium Sale.

Bulbs can be pre-ordered and will be available for pick-up from 10 a.m. through 4 p.m. on April 3 and 4, and April 5, from 10 a.m. to noon at Joseph's Coffee Shop, 202 Morton Street in Richmond.

The bulbs are No. 1 "fancy-leafed" caladium bulbs and are available in the following colors: red (Red Flash), pink (Carolyn Whorton), white (Candidum) and variegated (Tapestry), which is the club's popular newest offering.

Prices are \$30 for 25 bulbs; \$55 for 50 bulbs; and \$100 for 100 bulbs. To order, please call Nancie Rain at 281-341-0588, email nrain@comcast.net or Roberta Terrell at 281-343-9932, email robertaterrell@gmail.com.

The last day to place an order is March 21 and all orders must be paid for in advance.



Native to the banks of the Amazon River in South America, caladiums are tropical plants that are grown from a tuberous root often called bulbs. They come in a variety of colors and combinations that include red, pink and white.

Adding a lush, exotic touch to summer gardens in the area, most caladiums are at home in shade or partial shade, but the varieties recommended by the Garden Club of Richmond — Red Flash, Carolyn Whorton and Tapestry — tolerate full sun. Candidums thrive in shade or filtered sunlight and mix beautifully with ferns and impatiens.

Caladiums are also a wonderful way to enhance shady areas, provide a focal point for a sunny garden, or show off in stunning patio containers.

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ADVOCATES FOR AWARENESS ARE “KEEPIN’ IT RENAL”

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

For the sixth consecutive year, Ritchie Johnson of Sugar Land is encouraging the community to gather at Sugar Land Memorial Park to remember loved ones lost, support those fighting and to increase awareness and funds for research on renal medullary carcinoma, a rare kidney cancer that took her adult son, Chris “CJ” Johnson almost seven years ago.

Before he died, CJ stressed to his mother his hopes for a foundation that would increase awareness of renal medullary carcinoma, encourage pre-screening for people who can be at risk for the cancer and raise funds for continuing research.

Kidney disease is the ninth-leading cause of death in the United States, and according to the CDC, 4.9 million adults are diagnosed with kidney disease.

A year after she lost her son, Johnson honored his wishes and created Chris “CJ” Johnson Foundation, Inc. and since then, the foundation has networked with people throughout Fort Bend County and beyond.

The primary goal of the foundation, Johnson said, is to increase awareness of renal medullary carcinoma, while focusing on those individuals with the sickle cell trait, who may potentially be at risk for it. She explained that donations and grants awarded to the foundation are used to inform the public and provide financial support to people with medical costs related to a diagnosis of renal medullary carcinoma. Additionally, the foundation will donate funds to MD Anderson Cancer Center —

where CJ received his treatments — to further the research of renal medullary carcinoma.

“We can and will make a difference,” Johnson said.

Although the foundation hosts fundraising events throughout the year, its prominent event is the Annual Keepin’ It Renal Run/Walk, which will be held this year on March 23 at Sugar Land Memorial Park, Large Pavilion, 15300 University Blvd. in Sugar Land. Registration opens at 7:15 a.m. and the race will begin, promptly, at 8:30 a.m. Following the race, refreshments will be served in the Pavilion.

In addition to walking or running, participants will also hear the latest updates about renal medullary carcinoma from Dr. Pavlos Msaouel with MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The entry fee is \$30. Children 10 years old and younger — accompanied by a registered participant — may walk for free. Shirts for the children may be purchased for \$10.

Awards will be announced post-race at the Pavilion. Awards will be given to the top three male runners, the top three female runners, top three female youth runners and the top three male youth runners, ages 11 through 16 years old.

“Walk or run for a great cause,” Johnson announced in a post on the foundation’s Facebook page where she shares medical industry updates in regards to the cancer, as well stories about people across the nation enduring the debilitation of renal medullary carcinoma.

“Let’s show up and show out ... our voices will be heard.”

Johnson said she has noticed that each Keepin’ It Renal event supersedes the previous year and that the increase is due to the foundation’s sponsors, donors, volunteers and race participants. So to that note, she said the foundation is also seeking sponsors for the 6th Annual Keepin’ It Renal 5K Run/Walk. “If you know someone that may be interested, please share our information with them,” she said.

“Without advocacy, there is no awareness. Without awareness, there is no change. Without change, no funding. Without funding, we will not have research. Without research, we will not have clinical trials. Without clinical trials, no treatment modalities. Without treatment, decrease in cancer survivors,” she stressed. “Advocacy brings change.”

For more information about the foundation, how to become a sponsor and the 6th Annual Keepin’ It Renal 5K Run/Walk visit chrisjohnsonfoundation.org or email chrisjohnsoncancerfoundation@gmail.com. Follow the foundation on Facebook at @Chris “CJ” Johnson Foundation, Inc



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Ritchie Johnson, a retired nurse and founder of the Chris “CJ” Johnson Foundation. In 2018 Johnson released her book — “Mama I’m Tired” — about the journey she took with her son Chris “CJ” Johnson, who died in 2012 from renal medullary carcinoma.

ANNUAL 'SOUPER-DUPER' FUNDRAISER DRAWS HUNDREDS

story & photos by **TYLER JOHNSON** | sjohnson@fbherald.com

The line for hot soup at the Czech Heritage Society's annual Soup Tasting Supper fundraiser stretched across the polka dance floor. From Leon and Bettye Anhaizer's potato soup to Dorothy Kaspar and Marian Matula's famous vegetable and beef soup, there were over eight kinds of soup to go around.

For the second year in a row, the soup supper was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall off of SH 36 in Needville. Chapter President Linda Pavlicek said it's the perfect venue because of the space it provides to the guests, especially the senior citizens.

"It's excellent because there's so much parking space outside, and it's easier for everyone to get around," she said.

And with over 250 Fort Bend County soup and polka fans in attendance, the space was needed.

"The turnout is great," Pavlicek said. "It looks like everyone is enjoying the soups and having a good time."

And for \$7, diners could eat all the soup they wanted.

While volunteers in the kitchen rotated soups in and out of the line, Dan Pavlas & The Boys polka and Czech performed music on the stage. Before returning to a second or third helping of soup, there was a raffle and silent auction that people could bid on.

Prizes ranged from Patsy Mourel's Apple Strudel to a 12-pack of Shiner Bock to a hand vacuum to a couple bottles of whiskey.

Pavlicek said the money raised during the fundraiser benefits a number of different charities and provides scholarships for

students.

"We also teach Czech heritage classes at Blinn College," she said.

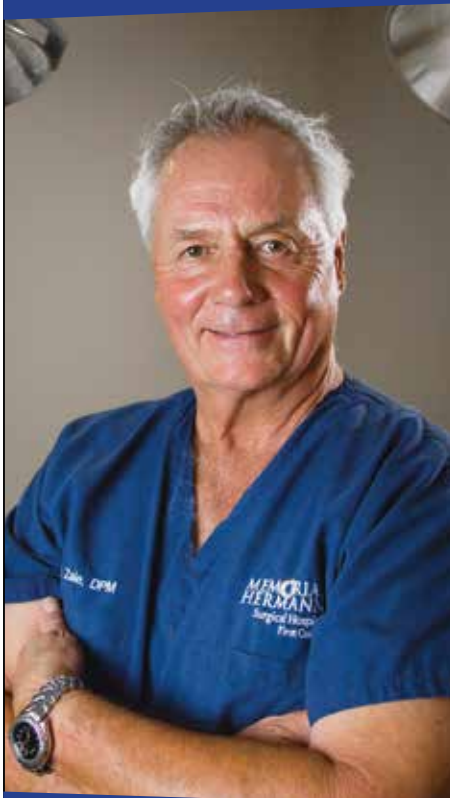
Some of the other soups at this year's soup supper included Tommy Stavinhoa's chicken and noodle soup, Aurelia LERNY's sauerkraut soup, Helen Peter's broccoli and cheese soup, as well as Gloria Mican's broccoli and cheese soup, Andrew and Sherie Liebmann's goulash and Dennis Vacek and his girlfriend Marian Stavinhoa's chicken and dumplings.



Dorothy Kaspar serves a bowl of her vegetable and beef soup at Fort Bend Czech Heritage Society's annual Soup Tasting Supper fundraiser.



Tommy Stavinhoa's chicken and noodle soup was a big success. By the second hour of the soup fundraiser, his pot was almost empty.



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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.



MORTON MASONS CONTINUE THEIR TRADITION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Morton Masonic Lodge No. 72 has a long tradition of community service.

During this Masonic year — June 24, 2018-June 24, 2019 — the lodge completed two important charitable events and are planning two more.

During the months of October and November, Worshipful Master Chip Entz led the lodge's first annual CAN'paign Food Drive.

Over 310 pounds of canned goods and foodstuffs were donated just before Christmas to the Helping Hands Emergency Food Pantry, located in Richmond. Helping Hands provides food to the at-risk families in the community.

Helping Hands Program Director Mary Matheny, was on hand to receive the delivery made by Worshipful Master Entz and was most appreciative.

She said the delivery would greatly help them meet the significantly higher demand during the holidays.

"Continuing a tradition at Morton Lodge, we were able this year to bring Christmas joy to eight families," Entz said. "Using money raised at Miracle on Morton Street, a collection from the members, generous donations [including bicycles from Brother Mike Hammons' La Familia Motorcycle Club], you can see on these kids' faces that it was all worth the effort."

Once again, the effort was led by Brother don Hernandez, also known as "Poncho Claus", Entz said.

On March 1, the lodge will hold its 29th annual Morton Masters

Charity Golf Tournament. The proceeds from this event are used to fund the A.J. Ramos Memorial Scholarships awarded in June to deserving seniors in Lamar Consolidated and Needville ISDs.

The seventh Annual Gumbo and Chili Cookoff fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, May 20. This high-profile event benefits a selected local community non-profit charity as well as the Morton Hall Preservation Society.

The event includes craft vendors, live music, the Houston Rockets and/or the Houston Dynamo, cooking teams, carnival games and TONS of family fun.

Details on both events can be found at mortonmasons.com along with entry forms for teams, sponsors, and vendors.



Helping Hands Emergency Food Pantry Director Mary Matheny with a portion of the food collected by Morton Lodge No. 72.



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'Don't be complacent,' says local fire chief

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Following a recent battle with colon cancer, Pecan Grove VFD Fire Chief Joe Woolley is fighting for his health once again.

"2018 was a hard year," he said, exhaustion heavy in his voice.

As 2018 opened, Woolley was diagnosed with Spindle cell tumor, an extremely rare form of colon cancer with only 900 documented cases in the world. He had the tumor successfully removed and was only required to have check-ups every six months.

It was during one of those appointments toward the end of the year, however, that Woolley's doctors realized something was amiss.

"I found out in November that my PSA levels jumped up," he said, referring to prostate-specific antigen, an enzyme released by the prostate. When found in abnormally high concentrations it's an indication of prostate cancer.

"They were turning me inside-out because of the colon cancer and if I hadn't been getting my PSA checked regularly, I may not have known this early."

Prostate cancer, he noted, is subtle. There aren't any red-flag warnings in the beginning. Usually by the time a man knows there is a problem, it is dangerously late and the cancer has spread to other areas, notably the liver and bones, with the bones being the worst place. And Woolley would know. Some of his colleagues he worked with while a firefighter in Sugar Land are all diagnosed, like him, with prostate cancer.

Two of his friends have the cancer in their bones and both of them have been categorized a terminal.

“That’s the saddest part about this whole ordeal,” he said. “So many of us are dealing with this.”

A CONCERNING CONNECTION

Woolley, whose cancer is contained to the tissue surrounding his prostate, began radiation treatment on Feb. 22 — every single day for nine weeks.

“The cancers are completely unrelated, which just feels crazy,” Woolley said of his prior bout with colon cancer and his current diagnosis of prostate cancer. “And although it is hard to prove it, I know its cause is occupational. There are studies showing the correlation between cancers and being exposed to the elements of combustion.

“I asked my wife: ‘What’s next? What will I have to deal with after this ... I hope nothing,’” Woolley added. “So far they haven’t found anything else, and I will be getting checked again every six months.”

Last year, following his colon cancer surgery, Woolley spoke



Photo courtesy of Blake Thompson, Pecan Grove VFD | Pecan Grove VFD Fire Chief Joe Woolley (third from left) with his family, from left: son Jacob, wife Marie, and son Jesse at a recent benefit to support Woolley who is again battling cancer.

out about the dangers of being a firefighter that exist beyond the traditional duties of the job, sharing that 86 percent of firefighters will develop occupational cancer during their career. This devastating statistic, he said, is because of the toxins the firefighters are exposed in and off the field.

“This [concern] is really in the eye of the fire service industry,” he stressed. “Everyone is honed in on occupational cancer.”

Continued on page 29



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INSPIRATION STAGE TAKES TOP HONORS AT ATLANTA'S JUNIOR THEATRE FESTIVAL

At the 2019 Junior Theatre Festival held in Atlanta, Inspirations Stage received an Outstanding Performance Award — the highest honor that could be given — for its production “Once on This Island, Jr.” which was originally performed for the Fort Bend community in November 2018.

An Outstanding Performance award indicates the recipients received the highest praise in all areas of musical theatre, including dance, music, acting and ensemble work.

Only nine of 133 companies performing at the 2019 Junior Theatre Festival earned the top honor.

Inspiration Stage, a national award-winning performance arts studio that consistently features the talents of youth around Fort Bend County, took 31 musical theatre students, who ranged in ages from 9 years old to 18 years old, to the festival with a 15-minute cut of the popular musical.

Along with the other Outstanding Award recipients, Inspiration Stage presented a number from their award-winning performance at the festival for more than 6,500 attendees from 28 US states, Washington D.C., and five other countries, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and China.

Inspiration Stage closed out the Outstanding Award performances at the Freddie G Awards Ceremony with its energetic rendition of “Why We Tell the Story,” to a standing ovation.

“We love [the Junior Theatre Festival], its mission of spreading

the universal benefits of artistic expression, and its dedication to reminding us ‘why we tell a story,’” said Inspiration Stage’s artistic director, Mandy Seymore-Sensat. “Since Inspiration Stage’s inception, annual JTF participation has become an integral high point of every season for our students, parents and staff. Being surrounded, supported, and challenged by thousands of like-minded peers and professionals during JTF’s immersive theatre-centric celebration is rewarding and exhilarating.

“Art is heart,” Seymore-Sensat continued. “iTheatrics’ stellar organization creates an invigorating, supportive environment of artistic enthusiasm and rejuvenation.”

RECOGNIZED FOR ‘EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE’

Inspiration Stage’s pod of performers included six other theatre companies, each performing its own 15-minute cut of a different musical.

The panel of professional adjudicators selected two Inspiration Stage actors to receive the pod’s Award for Excellent Performance, for Female and Male. Mya Bryant, playing Ti Moune, received the female award and Evan Blackwell, playing Tonton Julian, received the male award.

“Winning an award for my role as Tonton in Once on This Island was also incredibly rewarding, and made this year’s Junior Theatre Festival one to remember for the rest of my life,” said Blackwell, 16.

Emily Adams, cast as Papa Ge, and Danny Terrier, cast as company, were also selected as the Inspiration Stage company All-Stars by the adjudicators.

AN EXCEPTIONAL FINALE

The festival ended with a special concert by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul — Tony, Academy and Golden Globe award-winning composers and lyricists — known for their writing and musical contributions in movies such as “The Greatest Showman,” “La La Land,” and on Broadway in productions like “Dear Evan Hansen,” and “James & the Giant Peach.”

During the concert, Inspiration Stage’s Bryant was asked to sing The Greatest Showman’s “This is Me” in a duet with another JTF festival attendee, accompanied by Pasek and Paul, bringing the crowd to their feet.

“This was such an unexpected way to end my time at Junior Theatre Festival,” Bryant, 17. “I cannot thank the iTheatrics staff enough for trusting and believing in me.

“It was truly an honor to get to perform with such amazing and talented people. Thank you Mandy and Sarah for introducing me to the festival and walking beside me every step of the way.”

Additionally, nine Inspiration Stage students were selected to sing with special guest, Tony, Grammy and Emmy award-winning singer and actor Cynthia Erivo, alongside Pasek and Paul. Together with other selected students, Inspiration Stage’s Adams, Blackwell, Bryant, Abigail Cooney, cast as Andrea Devereux; Rayevin Johnson, cast as Asaka; Cameron Krouch, playing Daniel; Andrew Sackett, who was cast in the company; Trent Soto, cast as Agwe; and Reese Warren, playing Mama Euralie, performed “You Will Be Found” for the show’s big finale.

“This has been one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my theatre career,” Blackwell said. “The opportunity to perform in front of Broadway legends of such talent has been nothing short of an honor.”

“Our initial involvement, which began as attendees-only, has blossomed into treasured invitations to perform in special JTF



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Mya Bryant (second from left) sang The Greatest Showman's "This is Me" with a fellow JTF attendee, accompanied by the song's composing power duo, Benj Pasek (left) and Justin Paul (right), at their Sunday night concert performance.



Five Inspiration Stage students (Annalicia Teel, Gentry Claire Lumpkin, Jackson Champion, Jane Delahoussaye and Danny Terrier) made it to the ultra-competitive third round of auditions for the opportunity to appear in MTI instructional guide choreography DVDs distributed with MTI's Broadway Jr. series of shows.



Inspiration Stage won the Outstanding Performance award at JTF in Atlanta for its performance of *Once on This Island, Jr.*



Nine Inspiration Stage company members were invited to sing with Broadway star Cynthia Erivo (not pictured) at the Pasek and Paul concert finale. Pictured are Trent Soto, Emily Adams, Mya Bryant, Abigail Cooney, Reese Warren, Rayevin Johnson, Andrew Sackett, Cameron Krouch and Evan Blackwell.

events, rare opportunities to pilot new shows under development, and professional networking that frequently allows iStage to offer its family unique possibilities," said Seymore-Sensat.

'GOLDEN TICKET' INVITATIONS

Eight Inspiration Stage youth also received Golden Tickets, which are special invitations to audition for the opportunity to appear in MTI instructional guide choreography DVDs distributed with its Broadway Jr. series of shows.

Five iStagers received callbacks for the third, ultra-competitive round of auditions, including Jackson Champion, Jane Delahoussaye, Gentry Claire Lumpkin, Annalicia Teel and Danny Terrier, all of whom were cast as company.

Final winners will be contacted in March if they are invited to film in New York City.

In February Inspiration Stage took a different company to Junior Theatre Festival West in Sacramento to perform *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Jr.* for adjudicators. They will also be giving the West attendees a first look at the new junior adaptation of *Frozen*, being released this year for community and school theaters, during the Saturday evening New Works Showcase.



Inspiration Stage's Mya Bryant (second from left) with the composing/lyricist team of Benj Pasek (left) and Justin Paul (right), and Broadway star Cynthia Erivo.

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COMING SOON: 24 THEATRE SUMMER CAMPS

Inspiration Stage is excited to announce 24 youth summer camps, for ages four through 19, held at the historic Sugar Land Auditorium, starting the Tuesday after Memorial Day. The 2018/2019 season includes youth and adult productions, as well as acting and production classes. Tuition assistance is available to qualifying participants. Sign up at inspirationstage.com/Summer/.

WILLY WONKA: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 28 - 31. For ages 6 through 16 years old.

ANNIE: 8 a.m. to noon, June 3 - 7. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

JUNGLE BOOK: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 3 - 7. For ages 4 through 14 years old.

ALADDIN: 8 a.m. to noon, June 10 - 14. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 10 - 14. For ages 8 through 18 years old.

SEUSSICAL: 8 a.m. to noon, June 17 - 21.

For ages 7 through 17 years old.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 17 - 21. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

LITTLE MERMAID: 8 a.m. to noon, June 24 - 28. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

PETER PAN: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 24 - 28. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

INTO THE WOODS: (See the website for exact camp hours), June 24 - 28. For ages 9 through 19 years old.

WIZARD OF OZ: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., July 1 - 3. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

SLEEPING BEAUTY: 8 a.m. to noon, July 8 - 12. For ages 4 through 14 years old.

WILLY WONKA: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., July 8 - 12. For ages 6 through 16 years old.

JUNIE B. JONES: 8 a.m. to noon, July 15 - 19. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

CAMP ROCK: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., July 15 - 19. For ages 8 through 18 years old.

ARISTOCATS: 8 a.m. to noon, July 22 - 26. For ages 4 through 14 years old.

LITTLE MERMAID: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., July 22 - 26. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

BROADWAY NOW!: (See the website for exact camp hours), June 22 - 27. For ages 10 through 18 years old.

ALADDIN: 8 a.m. to noon, July 29 - Aug. 2. For ages 5 through 14 years old.

LEGALLY BLONDE: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., July 29 - Aug. 2. For ages 8 through 18 years old.

MAMMA MIA: (See the website for exact camp hours), July 29 - Aug. 3. For ages 10 through 18 years old.

ANNIE: 8 a.m. to noon, Aug. 5 - 9. For ages 5 through 15 years old.

PETER PAN: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Aug. 5 - 9. For ages 7 through 17 years old.

WIZARD OF OZ: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Aug. 12 - 14. For ages 4 through 14 years old.



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BALLETFORTE PRESENTS COMIC BALLET COPPLIA'

BalletForte, Fort Bend County's nonprofit, pre-professional ballet company will present the light-hearted and timeless ballet, "Coppélia," April 6-7 at the Stafford Centre, 10505 Cash Rd., Stafford.

Coppélia, one of the most frequently performed and well-loved romantic comic ballets, is a story of a young couple in love and their battle between idealism and realism.

Watch BalletForte's "Coppélia" come to life in two shows only: Saturday, April 6, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 7, at 2 p.m.

Directed by Michael Banigan and Dianne Jarrell, BalletForte provides a training ground and professional quality performance opportunities for serious dancers from the Houston area. BalletForte Company members audition for and are accepted into summer programs offered by professional ballet companies nationwide.

BalletForte, which includes more than 40 area dancers, has been performing "The Nutcracker" every December since 1996. As a member of Regional Dance America, the company will be attending the Regional Dance America-Southwest festival in Albuquerque in March and then return to present "Coppélia" to their local fans in April.

Group rates are available for "Coppélia" by calling 281-799-7554. Students, seniors and military pay only \$10 for any seat. Visit www.balletforte.org for more information or to buy individual tickets.



Carley Franklin in BalletForte's Coppelia.

LATINO EXHIBIT SHOWCASES THE ARTWORK OF 29 LATINO WOMEN

Fort Bend County Libraries' George Memorial Library announces the opening of a special exhibit, "Color Outside the Lines: Latino Art Now!," on Friday, March 8, in the Bohachevsky Gallery of the library, located at 1001 Golfview in Richmond. The public is invited to attend an artists' reception for the exhibit on Sunday, March 24, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The exhibit, which showcases the artwork of 29 Latino women, will be on display through May 19.

Presented in collaboration with CAM Fort Bend, the exhibit features exquisite artwork created by members of Latin American Women Artists, Houston (LAWAH) from the Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

LAWAH was established by Glassell School instructor Arielle Masson to give a more powerful voice to the artists, and to enable them to connect with and support each other. All members of the group are students of the Glassell School of Art.

Award-winning Venezuelan artist Lorena Morales will jury the exhibition. Morales' artworks have been exhibited nationally and internationally.

The exhibit is curated by CAM Fort Bend founder and director Ana Villaronga-Roman. A member of Texas Women for the Arts and The Association of Art Museum Curators, Villaronga-Ramon was named Woman of the Year for Art 2018 by *Sucesos* newspaper and *Solo Mujeres* Magazine.

The exhibit is part of Latino Art Now! 2019, a signature event of the Inter-University for Latino Research (UPLR) consortium

and hosted by the University of Houston Center for Mexican-American Studies (UH-CMAS). The initiative explores and celebrates Latin American visual artists in the United States. The Bohachevsky Gallery at Fort Bend County Libraries' George Memorial Library is one of a number of galleries throughout the Houston area that will be participating in the prestigious collection of exhibitions.

The exhibit may be viewed during regular library hours. For more information, call the library system's Communications Office at 281-633-4734.



THE GLOVEMAKER' AUTHOR TO OFFER SPECIAL READING AND BOOK SIGNING

Award-winning historical novelist Ann Weisgarber will read from and sign copies of her newest book, *The Glovemaker*, at Fort Bend County Libraries' Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library on March 7 at 2 p.m., in the Meeting Room of the library, located at 8100 FM 359 South in Fulshear.

The event is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library organization, which will be selling Weisgarber's book. All proceeds will benefit the library.

Weisgarber's first two novels, "The Personal History of Rachel DuPree" and "The Promise," received critical acclaim and awards in their debuts in 2009 and 2014. Her newest novel, "The Glovemaker," is already garnering rave reviews.

Set in the inhospitable Utah backlands in the depths of winter in 1888, "The Glovemaker" makes effective use of early Mormon history. Deborah Tyler is a young frontier woman who is forced to make a split-second decision that could shatter her family and her entire fragile community - or redeem them all. She struggles to hold her faith in the face of religious persecution and her fear of the law. Tension-filled and suspenseful, "The Glovemaker" is a beautifully written novel of moral complexity and the dilemmas of having to choose between loyalty and love, courage and conscience.

Continued on page 30



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The 4th Annual Fashion Show & Luncheon, hosted by GiGi's Playhouse, will take place from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The show will be featuring lady's fashions provided by CAbi, men's clothing provided by Lululemon and Kendra Scott will be styling the model's jewelry and donating a 50 piece jewelry pull of their current season's styles. Visit gigisplayhouse.org/sugarland

SECOND

SPRING FLING TODDLER FAIR

Hosted by Sienna Plantation by Johnson Development the fair is free and open to the public from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Sienna Plantation Model Home Park, 9803 Cameron Way, in Missouri City. Train rides, swings, big top play land inflatable, caterpillar craze inflatable, caterpillar crawl inflatable, wacky castle, photo booth, face painting and food trucks will be featured.



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SEVENTH

UP & OUT: RESUMÉS, APPLICATIONS, & COVER LETTERS

Richard Prather from Texas Workforce Solutions will share tips on how to make the most impact with prospective employers by completing professional applications, resumés, cover letters, and thank you notes that truly stand out among the rest at the George Memorial Library at 1:30 p.m. in the meeting room. Another class is set for March 23 at the same time and place.

REDUCING YOUR PLASTIC FOOTPRINT

The Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists will host its free program "Reducing Your Plastic Footprint: Straws Are Optional" at 7 p.m. at the Rosenberg Civic Center, 3825 Texas 36 South in Rosenberg. The social part of the program starts at 6:30 p.m. Natalie Joliecoeur, Manager Member Relations and Conservation Action Specialist for the Houston Zoo, will describe how the zoo has over several years eliminated many plastic items, particularly single-use bottles, bags and straws, adopted alternatives to plastic. She will talk about staff successes in reducing plastic in their day to day processes, as well as some of the local projects they created. Chapter Program Vice President, Debby Wendt and State Representative, Andrea Morgenstern will demonstrate the serious impact of plastic waste on the land and ocean environments. They will suggest ways we as individuals can reduce plastic use and pollution.

EIGHTH

JUNK HIPPIY SPRING 2019

Junk Hippy will come to Rosenberg on March 8 and 9 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. Shop for vintage finds, midcentury and retro decor, handmade goods and boho style pretties for you and your home. Admission always just \$5 at the gate, 13 & under free. Friday, March 8 from 9:00-5:00 Visit junkhippy.com/shop.

NINTH

5TH ANNUAL RUN TO ATTACK POVERTY

This annual event will be held from 7 a.m. to noon at Friends of North Richmond, 1305 Clay St in Richmond. The presenting sponsor, The Kinne Group at RE/MAX Fine Properties and Attack Poverty staff have something special planned this year, and you will not want to miss it. Contact Race@AttackPoverty.org with questions. Visit AttackPoverty.org/5K.

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS: ROME

In this third of three programs on different ancient civilizations at the George Memorial Library at 1 p.m. in the meeting room, architecture professor Sheba Akhtar will talk about the Roman Republic and the assassination of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire and Augustus Caesar, and Emperor Constantine and the rise of Christianity. Learn about different Roman achievements, such as city-planning and government, art and literature, engineering and architecture, and military and cultural conquests.

TENTH

HARVEST GREEN CHEF FEST

Hosted by Chef Fest Houston, this event will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Harvest Green Village Farm's 3rd Annual Chef Fest will kick off the spring season with a feast of freshness from 12 - 4 p.m. at Harvest Green Village Farm, 8939 Harlem Road in Richmond. Ten local chefs will use seasonal produce to create festival style dishes that celebrate the Houston terroir. Beyond the inten-

tional eats, our attendees will enjoy full pours of craft cocktails, local wine and beer, listen to live music, and steep in the system of a working farm, all while benefiting nonprofit beneficiary — I'll Have What She's Having.

GOODNIGHT MOONSHINE FEAT MOLLY VENTER

Fulshear House Concerts is hosting this musical event from 4:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. in Fulshear. Visit www.goodnightmoonshine.com, www.redmolly.com or www.christyhays.com.

TWELFTH RESUMÉ WORKSHOP

Learn the basics of putting together a resumé at the George Memorial Library at 2 p.m. in the computer lab. Those attending this informal program will receive one-one-one help formatting a resumé. For assistance on a pre-existing resumé, please have a digital copy available on a usb flashdrive, saved to the cloud, or have access to it via email. Registration required.

TWENTY-THIRD KATY TASTE FEST 2019

The 3rd Annual Katy Taste Fest is a family-friendly outdoor food festival will showcase the diversity of Katy's dining community. Katy Taste Fest will feature a variety of servings from the city's favorite restaurants, sampling a variety of cuisines like American, Indian, Mexican, Italian, and more. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Villagio Town Square, 22764 Westhiemer Parkway in Katy. Visit www.eventbrite.com and search "Katy Taste Fest."

TWENTY-FIFTH

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR

Start your week off by sharing a cup of coffee, exchanging news or a corny joke, and chatting with friends at the George Memorial Library's monthly social hour — at 9 a.m. in the meeting room — celebrating the multitude of diverse cultures found in Fort Bend County. People of all nationalities are invited to this informal gathering to get to know one another, share cultural experiences, and learn something new and fascinating about each other in a casual and comfortable environment. The International Coffee Hour will take place on the last Monday of every month.

TWENTY-SIXTH

CACHE YOUR MONEY: CHARGE IT RIGHT

John Rebeles, Jr., will talk about ways to make the best use of credit cards for maximum benefit at 7 p.m. in Room 2A of the George Memorial Library.

THIRTIETH

2019 MORALES PIG ROAST & CRAWFISH BOIL

Hosted by Commissioner Vincent Morales, the seventh annual Pig Roast & Crawfish Boil will be held from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 Highway 36 S in Rosenberg.

APRIL First

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Garrett & Boyd Orthodontics will offer \$500 off an Invisalign treatment. People do need appointments. No strings attached. Visit lonestarbraces.com

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Theatre Students

stellar performances break school records at the Texas state thespian festival

by RENAE SCOTT

George Ranch High School's Longhorn Players received the highest possible ratings and achieved record-breaking results at the 2018 Texas State Thespian Festival held Nov. 15-17 at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Grapevine, Texas.

Exceptional performances by 22 Longhorn Players, the largest group in school history, earned Superior ratings to advance to the national competition level at the International Thespian Festival in Lincoln, Nebraska this summer.

The Texas State Festival is a state-wide festival, hosted by Texas Thespians and the International Thespian Society, with over 8,000 delegates attending. It is one of the largest annual thespian festivals in the world, where students and their troupe directors celebrate an entire weekend of all things theatre. Troupe members compete in individual and group events, technical events, attend workshops, audition for colleges, learn from nationally acclaimed guest speakers, enjoy performances from other troupes on the Main Stage and relish in the opportunity to meet fellow thespians from all over the state who share their love of theatre.

The festival also attracts Hollywood and Broadway veterans, such as this year's keynote speaker and Tony Award-winning actress, singer and dancer Annaleigh Ashford, whose credits include her Broadway roles as Glinda in *Wicked*, Margot in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, and Lauren in *Kinky Boots*.

"The International Thespian Society is an organization that has been changing the lives of theatre students and educators for almost 100 years," said George Ranch High School Theater Director, L. Jay Edenmeyer. "While there is the opportunity for performance and competition, it is, at its core, an educational organization. There is nothing in the realm of theatre that students and teachers don't have an opportunity to explore and experience at one of these events. With over 8,000 students and educators — and that is just Texas — gathering in one location to celebrate theatre, the importance of the arts in our society is emboldened and we continue to pass on this age-old art form to another generation."

"The Thespian Festival is a magical experience that I'm so grateful to have taken part in for the past three years. I have learned so much from how to nail a monologue to applying prosthetic makeup to the importance of professionalism in an audition," said George Ranch High School senior and Thespian Troupe President, Emma Bolduc. "I would not be the leader or the thespian I am today without the International Thespian Society, and I have made countless friends along the way. The festival is such a loving and creative environment and I would not trade my experiences for anything." During the festival, George Ranch Theatre students competed in events which included prepared theatrical performances and technical design presentations resulting in the following students qualifying for the International Thespian Festival:

- Paige Klase for Solo Musical - "Kindergarten Boyfriend"
 - Reagan Scott for Solo Musical - "Cute Boys With Short Haircuts"
 - Christine Bonaparte, Josie Chi, Marissa Gittens, Trinity Moody, Karli Pierson, Amor Sheffield for Group Musical - "Miss Celie's Pants"
 - Cameron Krouch, Ashley Johnson, Ainsley McGee, Clairam Mangum, Lizzie Tyer, Caitlin Wilson for Group Musical - "It Doesn't Take a Genius"
 - Emma Bolduc and Ethan Brandt for Duet Acting - "Dinner with Friends"
 - Babacar Ba and Cyrus Fontenot for Duet Acting - "Fences"
 - Emily Moore for Costume Design - "Seussical"
 - Riley Halford for Lighting Design - "Seussical"
 - Tate Mangum for Set Design - "Haroun and the Sea of Stories"
 - Charis Christy for Stage Management - "Seussical"
- While excelling at the Texas State Thespian Festival, the

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Longhorn Players also broke school records in the following areas: qualifying 10 of 13 events entered for the International Thespian Festival; qualifying 22 students for the International Thespian Festival; qualifying all six of the individual performance events for the International Thespian Festival; and competing in 13 events, which is the maximum allowed at the competition.

“This process has been an evolution. We have to recognize that our students today have been building on the shoulders of their predecessors. The determination and drive of the Troupe members from the beginning have manifested into the powerful group we have today. They drive each other to be better. They encourage and challenge, support and honor each other in a way only seen in the arts,” said Edenmeyer. “They recognize the

power of family and the need to be each other’s safety net. These students continue to amaze and inspire me. I treasure what I do every day. Because of these students and their passion, I am living the adage that, if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life.”

During the festival, the Longhorn Players were led by GRHS Theatre Director L. Jay Edenmeyer, GRHS Theatre Technical Director Marc Duncan, Music Director Scott Edenmeyer and Reading Junior High Theatre Director Drew Prince.

The Longhorn Players are currently rehearsing for their upcoming competition, University Interscholastic League (UIL) One-Act Play contest, and will be presenting, “Sometimes, Just a Second”, written and directed by L. Jay Edenmeyer. The competition begins in March, and the Longhorn Players will also be performing the play for the general public later in the spring. In July, the Longhorn Players will be traveling to Edinburg, Scotland and will be turning “Sometimes, Just a Second” into a musical to perform at the Fringe Festival, the largest arts festival in the world.

Visit the Longhorn Players’ website for upcoming information, www.georgeranchtheatre.com.

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Continued from page 19

In the past, proper breathing protection wasn't required, but now this is mandatory. Before, a second thought wasn't given to a fire truck being started in the bay and the doors closing, trapping in diesel fumes.

"It used to be that you could smell that diesel through the entire building," Woolley said. "For a few years now, departments have been installing a venting system to protect firefighters."

He also pointed out that now the industry is firmly focused on having two sets of fire gear for firefighters so that they don't continue to inhale harmful toxins from gear used in the field.

"But," he stressed, "doubling gear has a huge financial impact, especially on smaller departments."

Although in the midst of enduring the throes of cancer, Woolley said it gives him hope that the fire industry is learning from past mistakes and is determined to providing a safer protocols for firefighters.

"If what I am going through can help [improve] the industry I can live with that," he said. "My message is to get checked early. Stop it before it's too late. Don't get complacent. Don't think: 'It'll never happen to me.'"

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

In January the community gathered at a benefit for Woolley at the Sportsman Lounge in Richmond. The event, to Woolley's immense gratitude, drew in nearly 700 supporters including Congressman Pete Olson and Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls, as well as friends, family and colleagues.

"The amount of people who showed up ... so many people I hadn't seen for years," Woolley said. "I was deeply touched."

He pauses to reflect on the surge of support he — "a nobody," as he describes himself — received.

The day before the event, the weather had been cold, wet and dreary.

"I told my wife: 'Nobody is going to come out in this weather'" Woolley said. "I asked God, 'What can we do about this?'"

The day of the event Woolley said he received his answer.

"There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the day was just beautiful," he said with a laugh. "He took care of me."

And Woolley is thankful for that because it gave him a chance to be reminded of something important. A message that came by the way of a woman he did not recognize.

"She approached me and said: 'I know you don't know me and that you won't remember me, but you were at my house the day my husband passed away. You stayed with me and comforted me, and I will never forget that.'"

That moment reconfirmed to Woolley the importance of first-responders. Not just as people who answer calls for help, prepared to handle an unnerving crisis. Beyond that they touch lives, even when they don't know they do.

"What she said brought tears to my eyes," Woolley said.

On that Saturday, he looked around at the faces of all the people there to support him.

"It was such a heart-warming feeling," he said. "It's difficult to explain, but it was something I will never forget."

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Continued from page 23

Winner of the Stephen Turner Award for New Fiction and the Langum Prize for American Historical Fiction, Weisgarber was nominated for England's 2009 Orange Prize and for the 2009 Orange Award for New Writers. She was also shortlisted for the Ohioana Book Award, and was a Barnes and Noble Discover New Writer. Her second novel, *The Promise*, was the first book by an American to be shortlisted for the United Kingdom's Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction. Weisgarber was inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters in 2014.

Originally from Ohio, Weisgarber earned her master's degree in sociology from the University of Houston, and worked as a sociology instructor at Wharton County Junior College when she began writing her first novel. She now resides in Galveston.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, please call the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library at 281-633-4675 or the library system's Communications Office at 281-633-4734.



Ann Weisgarber, author of "The Glovemaker."



THE FORT BEND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS THE TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC'

by JC PATRICK

Each spring, families across Fort Bend county enjoy the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra free children's concert. This year's performance is the family favorite, "The Teddy Bears' Picnic," slated for April 6 at 2 p.m. in the George Memorial Library in Richmond.



Photo by Jon Cooper | FBSO Music Director Dominique Røyem and a young audience member.

Children of all ages are invited to bring your favorite teddy bear to join in the fun. Written in 1907, this music has delighted youngsters for well over 100 years.

Words were added to John Walter Bratton's music by the Irish lyricist Jimmy Kennedy in 1932. "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" has been

recorded by dozens of vocalists over the years, including Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Jerry Garcia, John Inman, Anne Murray, and Trout Fishing in America.

There will be an instrument petting zoo in the lobby following the performance, to allow children to examine the orchestra's instruments up close.

FBSO's children's concerts are entertaining, with lots of audience participation. It's a wonderful way to spend an afternoon with the family, while fostering your children's love of music. No tickets are required for this free performance.

Visit www.fbsso.org or by call 281-276-9642 for more information.

MORE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT HAPPENINGS

STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

The George Memorial Library will offer the Fort Bend 4-H Student Photography Exhibit from March 1 through March 15, on the second-floor landing. The exhibit showcases the top entries in the 2018-2019 Fort Bend 4-H County Photography Contest for 4-H students in grades K through 12.

LET'S LEARN ORIGAMI!

Learn how to make an elegant decoration or gift from a simple piece of paper at the George Memorial Library on March 6 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room 2C. Library staff will demonstrate how to create a flying swan and a butterfly by simply folding and twisting paper into whimsical shapes. Materials for this program were provided through the support of the Friends of George Memorial Library organization.



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CROCHET WORKSHOP: BASIC SKILLS

In this hands-on adult craft class at the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library — for individuals aged 16 and above — library staff member Marie Picon will describe essential tools, materials, and techniques used for crocheting on March 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the meeting room. Learn about the different yarns that can be used for varying effects, and how crochet hooks differ from other types of needlework tools. Those attending the program will learn seven essential stitches and understand how they relate to each other. No previous crochet experience is necessary. Reservations are required.

3RD ANNUAL CHEF FEST

Eleven local chefs will transform seasonal produce into a feast of freshness at the 3rd Annual Chef Fest, noon to 4 p.m., Sunday, March 10, at Harvest Green. The celebration of local food and culinary expertise at the Harvest Green Village Farm, 8939 Harlem Road includes all food, craft cocktails, local wine and beer, live music and more. Tickets are \$95 for adults, \$30 for children ages 5 to 16 and free for ages 4 and under. A VIP experience is available for \$130. A portion of the proceeds benefits I'll Have What She's Having, which raises community awareness and funds in support of women's health. Learn more at <https://cheffesthouston.com>

"THE ELIXIR OF LOVE" CHILDREN'S OPERA

On March 11 at 2 p.m. in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, the Houston Grand Opera's "Opera to Go," will perform "The Elixir of Love." This family-friendly performance, sung in English, is a new adaptation of the popular comic opera. A small-town boy discovers that no potion from a quack doctor could impress his sweetheart more than a hearty dose of self-confidence. This high-energy opera is recommended for children in grades 2 through 8. A free hand-stamp is required for admission, and will be

available one hour prior to the performance. Sponsored by the Friends of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library.

FULSHEAR BOOK CLUB

On March 18 at noon of the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, the club will discuss "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet," written by Jamie Ford.

HEAVY INKS GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB

On March 16 at 11 a.m. in room 2B of the George Memorial Library, readers of all ages who enjoy illustrated novels and comic books are invited to join this book club specifically for graphic-novel enthusiasts. The book to be discussed is Nichijou, by Keiichi Arawi.

STORY SPINNERS WRITING CLUB

This month's topic at the George Memorial Library on March 21 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. in Room 2C, will be "Descriptions." From beginning blogger to published novelist, writers of all genres and experience levels are welcome to write, share, learn, support, network, and critique each other's work. Writing prompts, brainteasers, and brief exercises will be available to ignite the imaginations of any and all wordsmiths who wish to hone their craft. This program is recommended for adults and teens aged 14 and up.

BOOK BREAK

On March 21, at noon in room 2A of the George Memorial Library, the book to be discussed is "Some Luck," written by Jane Smiley. Those attending may bring a lunch.

FULSHEAR NIGHT READERS GUILD

On March 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, the guild will discuss "The White Pearl," a novel written by Kate Furnivall.



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10

1 Photo by Amber Leung | Amber Leung of Richmond took these photos of the moon at various times in January to show a rare Super Blood Wolf Moon. Leung works for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County, and she often teaches photography classes.

2 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Members of the Texan Army fire a 21-gun salute in honor of the second president of the Texas Republic, Mirabeau B. Lamar, who is buried in Morton Cemetery in Richmond. The reenactors took part in the annual Lamar Day ceremony. Note the gunpowder blast from one of the muskets.

3 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Jim Glover is a member of the Texas Army. The group presented the colors and fired a 21-gun salute in honor of Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of Texas, during the annual Lamar Day celebration at Lamar's gravesite in Morton Cemetery.

4 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Tom Green, a member of the Texas Army and of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, waits to present the colors during the opening moments of the annual Lamar Day celebration at Morton Cemetery. Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas and "Father of Texas Education," is buried in Richmond.

5 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Members of the Stephen F. Austin Elementary choir sang a medley of songs about Texas during the annual Lamar Day ceremony at Morton Cemetery. The Lamar Consolidated Independent School District takes its name from Mirabeau B. Lamar, known as The Father of Texas Education for his creation of the public school system.

6 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Monty Montiso, a chaplain with VFW Post 3903 in Rosenberg, plays Taps on the bugle following a 21-gun salute by

members of the Texan Army.

7 Photo by Scott Reese Willey | Members of the Fort Settlement Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas placed a wreath at Lamar's gravesite in Morton Cemetery in Richmond. From left are Katie Neely, first vice president, Connie Buckingham, president, and Mary Ann Williams, chaplain.

8 Club vice president Barbara Benes introduced speaker Rose Ann Stepp who presented a program on fruit trees.

9 Presenting a winter wonderland theme for the January Garden Club of Richmond meeting were Lynn Hewitt, Courtney Raska, Keely Knipling, Bobbie Hood, and Deidre Doggett.

10 Laurel Wendt, membership chairman, welcomed new member Roslyn Cavanaugh to her first meeting.



1 Lamar Consolidated High School freshman Sharat Lopez, a member of the school's Leos Club, shows off a German chocolate cake that was auctioned off during the Rosenberg Lions Club's "Roaring into the new Year" dinner and auction at VFW Hall 3903 in Rosenberg. The cake was bought for \$150.

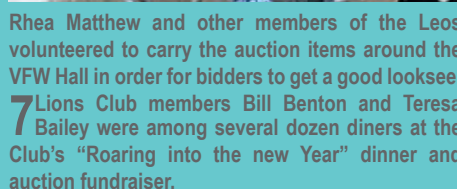
2 Vickie Reeves, left, and Shirley Schotz purchased the \$150 German chocolate cake.

3 Marcia Ramsey and granddaughter Evelyn Payne, 6, at the Rosenberg Lions Club's "Roaring into the new Year" dinner and auction.

4 Rosenberg Lions Club members, Teresa Bailey and Joyce Giese, sitting, and president Vickie Lynn Tonn and Liz Gerstenberger, standing, helped organize the club's "Roaring into the New Year" dinner and auction fundraiser.

5 Houston Lions Club member Ray Adams and his wife Marina check out a stuffed lion and peanut butter brittle to be auctioned off at the Rosenberg Lions Club's dinner and auction. "I told her I didn't want the stuffed toy, I only wanted the peanut brittle," Ray said. "I told him I knew someone who would like the lion, our grandchild," Marina said.

6 Rosenberg Lions Club members Doris Dahse, left, and President Vickie Lynn Tonn explain to members of the Lamar Consolidated High School Leo's Club how they are to display the auction items for bidders. Freshmen Loida Orellana, center, and Sharat Lopez, second from right, and junior



8 Photo by Tyler Johnson | Families from all over visited Rosenberg Railroad Museum's WinterFest. Pictured from left are Houston resident Jake Meyer holding his son Ben, Katy resident Jennifer Brooks holding her son Grayson, Houston



resident Jennifer Kuhn holding her daughter Kuhn, Aubrey Brooks and Kennedy Kuhn.

9 Photo by Tyler Johnson | Rosenberg resident Dimas Romero watches the model train go by at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum's WinterFest.

10 Photo by Tyler Johnson | Rosenberg resident Liam Ochoa, 7, tosses snow on Rosenberg Railroad Museum volunteer Paulette Pecora at WinterFest. Pecora said she's a kid at heart and loves getting in the snow to play with the kids.

11 Photo by Tyler Johnson | Sisters Monica and Miranda Whitten make snowballs at Rosenberg Railroad Museum's annual WinterFest.

**Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service's
tips for healthy living**

Now is the perfect time to establish new goals, habits, and a healthy lifestyle. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service recommends starting this year off on the right foot by getting active and eating right

Lack of time or a busy life doesn't have to stand in the way of healthy habits. According to AgriLife Extension's Walk Across Texas program, 30 minutes a day is all it takes to start the journey of improving your health. Physical activities that increase your heart rate and get you moving can range anywhere from moderate to vigorous, depending on the level of intensity you want to achieve. Every-day activities such as cleaning, gardening, taking the stairs, or even raking the leaves counts as exercise.

Additional exercises include:

- Walking
- Mowing the lawn
- Water aerobics
- Biking on level ground
- Running or jogging
- Swimming laps

Besides aiding in weight loss, exercising regularly can increase energy levels and strength, and reduce stress, says Erica Reyes, health specialist with AgriLife Extension Service. In addition to helping you feel better overall, exercise has also been proven to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke, while helping to maintain or reduce high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes.

If you're new to the active lifestyle, remember to start slow and set manageable goals for yourself. Like losing weight, getting in shape doesn't happen overnight, which • Establish specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals

- Try different workout activities to minimize boredom and increase muscle strength
- Keep your body fueled properly with healthy foods
- Stay hydrated
- Dress for comfort
- Learn proper form
- Get up and stretch at work to prevent being sore or stiff

Continued on page 37

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

QUIT SMOKING

AccessHealth will offer its Smoking Cessation Program March 1 and 15 at 3 p.m. at 400 Austin Street in Richmond. The program is free, confidential and effective. Spanish classes offered every first Friday (March 1) and English classes offered every third Friday (March 15). The initial meeting includes a 30-minute orientation session to discuss readiness to quit. Attendees will also have access to tobacco replacement products – (free nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges); to affordable medication to help cope with nicotine cravings/withdrawal; and to free online and telephone support services.

PRISMA YOGA TUESDAYS

Hosted by Prisma Yoga, which are FBISD community classes, are open to the public. The classes will be held March 5, 19, 26 at from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.. at Sartartia Middle School, 8125 Homeward Way in Sugar Land. Beginners will be introduced to the basics of alignment, movement, breathing, and meditation. Variations will be offered for those with more experience. Bring a yoga mat, water bottle, towel, and blocks (optional). Please try to avoid heavy meals prior to class. Students ages under 16 are welcome with parent if non-disruptive. Visit prisma-yoga.com.

RPC CANCER CARE MEETING

River Pointe Church Cancer Care Ministry is offering a group of cancer warriors, survivors and caregivers who will meet at 5000 Ransom Road in Richmond on March 18 at 6:30 p.m. to pray and encourage one another. Everyone is welcome. Meets every third Monday of the month. Call 281-277-6767 or email info@riverpointe.org

FREE CPR CLASS

Carrus Care Emergency Room will offer a free American Heart Association CPR class on March 23 at 11 a.m. at 8111 West Grand Parkway South in Richmond. Call 832-770-6380 or email rgraves@carrushealth.com.

ENERGY MEDICINE WORKSHOP

Yoga on the Brazos will host an "Energy Medicine: Cleansing the Energy in your Body" workshop at the studio, 936 FM 359 in Richmond on March 24 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Learn techniques to clear the energy in your home, strategies to help keep it clean, techniques to keep your energy body clean (meridians, chakras and aura) and ways to identify when it is time to clean. Visit www.yogaonthebrazos.com

FREE YOGA FRIDAY

The last Friday of each month Iron Moms hosts a free Yoga class from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on March 29. The class is for beginners to advanced. The class is kid-friendly and is held next to the playground at Lost Creek Park to keep the kids entertained. No tickets are required. Bring: Yoga mat or beach towel and water. Visit Facebook @Ironmoms

HEALING SPICES AND SOUPS WORKSHOP

Hosted by Nourish Your Life, this workshop, set for March 31 from 2 -5 p.m. at 1435 Hwy 6, Suite 101 in Sugar Land, will discuss the healing power of functional foods and nutrition. Integrative and Functional Medicine physician, Dr. Manisha Ghei, and Health Coach, Ruchika Behal, will teach you how to use phytonutrients, anti-inflammatory and healing herbs and spices for chronic disease prevention in easy and quick to prepare delicious recipes. Visit www.ruchikabehal.com.

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OAK BEND MEDICAL CENTER

—OakBend patient celebrates 102nd birthday—

Myrtis B. “Tiny” Gates celebrated her 102 birthday on January 8 while recovering in OakBend Medical Center’s newly renovated fifth floor. Originally from Monroe, Louisiana, Tiny now lives in Pecan Grove.

All smiles, Tiny was surrounded by family, friends and OakBend staff while she enjoyed her favorite vanilla cake decorated with pink, her favorite color. Tiny has two daughters, Judy, who lives in Richmond and who was in attendance for her mom’s birthday and Glenda who resides in Dallas.

“Mom is a strong woman, At the age of 85 she had a triple by-pass operation and was out of the hospital in three days, she didn’t want to stick around any longer than necessary,” Judy said. “She also likes to tell dirty jokes but she always forgets the punch line.”

OakBend Medical Center was thrilled to share this occasion with Tiny and wished her many more healthy, happy birthdays.



Tiny Gates celebrated her birthday with family, friends and OakBend staff.

—Fatty Liver Disease could soon be the No. 1 reason for liver transplantation —

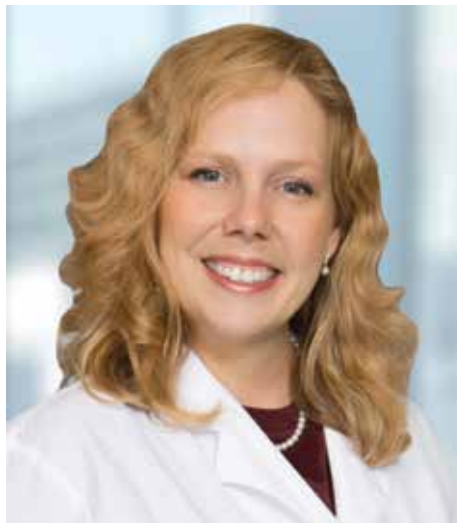
More than 100 million Americans have potentially deadly fatty liver disease and most do not even know it. Overeating and drinking excessive amounts of alcohol could put someone with the disease on the fast track to liver failure.

“There are no symptoms associated with fatty liver disease and no pain, so most people never get checked or treated for it and, over time, if it is not diagnosed the condition can cause severe liver damage,” said Kerry Laursen, M.D., a board certified family medicine physician with Houston Methodist Primary Care Group at Sienna Plantation. “In fact, the disease is so prevalent that it will soon overtake hepatitis C as the number one reason people need a liver transplant.”

Fatty liver disease is fat inside the liver cells. Alcohol, drugs, obesity, lipid disorders and diabetes can all be causes. However, many with this condition suffer from metabolic syndrome, a constellation of factors which includes a large waist circumference (men greater than 40 inches, women greater than 35 inches), high blood pressure, high triglyceride levels and insulin resistance that heighten the risk of heart attack, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Over time, a person might begin to experience fatigue, weakness and loss of appetite. Laursen says even small amounts of binging on alcohol can lead to significant fat in the liver.

“Fatty liver disease, much like type 2 diabetes, will go away with proper diet and exercise. If you lose seven to 10 percent of your current weight, no matter how much you weigh, you can



Dr. Kerry Laursen, family medicine

eliminate some fat from your liver,” Laursen said.

Laursen says avoid supersizing food; use a smaller plate; don’t fill up the entire plate; don’t go back for seconds; limit the amount of sweets and, of course, limit alcohol intake to one or two drinks.”

Vigorous exercise, such as weight lifting, swimming, running or aerobics, between 75 and 150 minutes a week with a heart rate of 120 or above during the holiday season and beyond will help you tackle this problem. Laursen suggests eating fruits and vegetables before attending a family function or holiday party will help a person feel full and avoid foods high in fat.

Between five and 20 percent of people with fatty liver will develop serious liver

disease. Laursen says that number is likely to grow as the nation’s obesity problem continues to get worse.

“If people are concerned about whether or not they have fatty liver disease, they can ask their physician to order liver function testing,” Laursen said. “The good thing is that with a few lifestyle changes this is a disease that is very manageable. Portion control and exercise are the keys to keeping it in check.”

To schedule an appointment online with Kerry Laursen, M.D., or another family medicine physician in your area visit houstonmethodist.org/pcg/southwest or call 281.276.0653. For more information on Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital visit houstonmethodist.org/sugarland or visit fb.com/methodistsugarland for the latest news, events and information.

Continued from page 37

In order to achieve maximum results and become healthier, support is why Reyes recommends those just beginning their fitness journey follow these simple steps:

- Get out of your comfort zone

Implementing your exercise with healthy and nutritious foods is key. AgriLife Extension Service's Dinner Tonight: <https://dinnertontight.tamu.edu/> offers a variety of delicious snacks, meals and desserts that are low in calorie and high in nutrition. Sometimes even small changes in your favorite recipes make tremendous differences in terms of calories and fat. Eating healthy doesn't mean

you have to give up flavor, which is why Dinner Tonight offers some substitutions for healthier ingredients:

- Replace butter with unsweetened applesauce
- Reduce sugar by 1/3 cup or use a natural alternative to replace the sugar by using honey, agave nectar, or dates
- Use 2 percent or fat-free Greek yogurt instead of sour cream
- Use whole grain flour instead of all-purpose

To find more recipes and recipe substitutions, visit dinnertontight.tamu.edu.

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