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NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN



Meet Baldwin ? Teacher of the Year!

Submit your favorite photos. See page 4 for more details.





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Meet Susan Stevens, BALDWIN'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Written by Susan Stevens, Submitted by Jacquelyn Waldrop

Scene 1 – Setting: A home in the suburbs with 1970s shag carpeting. There is a mother playing the piano and singing. A little girl is sitting under the piano bench pushing the pedals.

Scene 2 – Setting: 1970s kitchen table with Mother, Father, a little girl and her two older brothers. All are eating except Susan, the little girl. Susan (at 5) singing: "Michael row the boat ashore." Then, Susan (at age 12) singing: "We got the beat – everybody get on your feet. We know you can dance to the beat."

Brother: "Dad, I thought there was a rule that there was no singing at the dinner table."

I always knew I had to have music in my life. It was a way to express myself and a part of who I was. There was always music in my house growing up. My mother played the piano and my father played the stereo. I had dreams of becoming a rock star and starting my own girl band.

My only music as a young child was provided by my family and private lessons. My small Texas hometown school did not have elementary music. As I got older, I learned to play different instruments and my music focus became more classical. My piano teacher and mentor, Leah

King, taught me a great foundation of music theory and an appreciation for classical music. I started playing flute in the fifth grade and I knew that I had found my calling. I wanted to play flute in a symphony orchestra.

Enter Garland Chaisson, the first elementary music teacher our small town hired. He invited me to teach and conduct a song for the spring choir concert. Oh my goodness! I had finally found my true calling. Sharing my knowledge and passion for music with kids was the best thing in the world!

Since my first elementary music job in 1994, I have taught at many different schools in the Austin Independent School District. I have shared my love and passion for music with students of every walk of life and ability level. My goal is to have every child leave my class with a love and appreciation for

music. When Baldwin Elementary School opened five years ago, I started a choir program that has grown from 30 members to 92! We have an ARTS FEST that I organize every year where different music and dance performers come and provide a day of performances. We will have wrist bands this year! I raised money and received matching funds from our PTA to purchase

two outdoor instruments for all of our students to enjoy while they are outside at recess. I also provide performance opportunities for all students. Watching children learn a program from the first note to the final bow is a blessing. I love

to watch students laugh at the funny lyrics, sing with pride once they have memorized a song, and help each other remember where to stand back stage at the final rehearsals. I see the joy of music in their faces when they perform and I hope they share that with the world someday. Music

is a way of bringing people together and a way of expressing ourselves. For some of us this is a natural expression, and for others this is stepping out of our comfort zone. Music brings together language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students are

constantly saying "I thought this was music class." I remind them that music is in everything – rhythm is match, sound is science, lyrics is language arts, and social studies is understanding how certain music came to be.

Scene 3 - Present day at a house in the suburbs – dinner time. Susan (singing): "Players gonna play, play, play, play, play."

Daughter: "Dad, I thought there was a rule that Mom can't sing at the dinner table."

<insert call-out box: A Salute to Mrs. Stevens>

Congratulations on your award. We are a so proud and thankful to have you in our school and community. Your Baldwin Bobcat Family salutes you!

Sincerely

The Students, Parents, Faculty, Staff and Baldwin Community

(Continued on Page 4)

WELCOME

A Newsletter for Meridian residents

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian residents. Each newsletter is filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www. PEELinc.com or you can email it meridian@peelinc.com. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome.

Our goal is to keep you informed!

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NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

(Meet Susan Stevens, Continued from Page 3)







Congrats to the Baldwin Science Fair Participants & Winners

Written and submitted by Jacquelyn Waldrop

Baldwin held their 5th annual Science Fair on January 29th. Students in grades 3-5 were encouraged to create their own individual projects. And, all Baldwin classrooms prepared a class project. Topics included "Amount of Fat in our Favorite Snacks" to "The Importance of Hand Washing" and "How to Best Make a Paper Airplane Fly."

The student and classroom projects were required to follow the Scientific Method:

Ask a question.

State your hypothesis-a guess about the answer to the question.

Select a variable-something you will change/vary

Conduct research.

Map out the procedure, the steps to conducting your experiment. Run the experiment.

Record results.

Explain the conclusion.

Give references and acknowledgments.

In addition, students were asked to identify new vocabulary words and write their definitions for an added learning opportunity.

Individual student projects were judged and there were 14 "best in show" awards given. Congratulations to the following students: 3rd Grade

Marcus L., Kathryn S., Maya A., Ben T.

4th grade

Landon C., Drue D., Tyler S., Coy C., Adam F.

5th Grade

Ethan J., Jackson G., Jason A., Maddie S., Abby B.

These projects will be shown at the Austin Regional Elementary Science Festival, February 19-21 at the Palmer Events Center.

Meet Some of Our Savvy Scientists

Scientist: Joey Comey, 8 years old



Project Title: "Boil, boil, bubble,

Teacher/Grade: Ms. McClure's 3rd grade class

Joey wanted to see if which type of liquid would boil the quickest. He tested regular tap water, salt

water, orange juice and Diet Coke. He found that Diet Coke boiled first, while the orange juice foamed but was ultimately the last to boil.

Joey's project was a family affair. His mom and dad provided support throughout the experiment, and even his cat, Peanut Butter, got in on the action as a supportive observer. Joey enjoyed the experience of creating his science fair project and said, "I thought it was fun, except for the typing [for the presentation board]."

Joey has some great advice for future science fair participants,

"Always check to be sure all your equipment is working right before you start your project. I should have tested my thermometer before I started. I may have gotten different results."

Scientist: Brooke Garner, 10 years old



Project Title: "What is in your water?" Teacher/Grade: Mr. Crowley's 5th grade

Brooke set out to find out what type of drinking water is the cleanest: tap, filtered tap or bottled. She tested each of the three types of water using a standard pool water test kit and learned that bottled water contained the least amount of chemicals, followed closely by filtered tap water. This

smart junior scientist also noted that the City of Austin's tap water may be different than water in other cities, so her experiment is only relevant to City of Austin water users.

As a secondary test, Brooke also enlisted the help of her Nana, Papa and Mom to participate in a blind taste test of each of these types of water. All three concluded that filtered tap water tasted the best! This discovery was an added bonus from her hard work.

When asked if she had any other comment, Brooke grinned and said, "It might seem stressful, but stick with it. It's worth it in the end."

Scientist: Abby Barber, 10 years old



Project Title: "Is stitched fabric stronger than unstitched fabric?" / 1st place Winner

Teacher/Grade: Mr. Crowley's 5th grade class

Abby wanted to find out if stitched fabric was stronger than unstitched fabric because she was interested in

learning more about how fabrics could be strengthened in order to increase their longevity and reusability. She was looking to help protect our Earth's resources and to minimize waste in our landfills. Abby's project was inspired by her mom's sewing hobby, a hobby she has adopted herself.

She compared four different types of material: natural fiber cotton fabric, synthetic fabric, and then added a stitch into the natural fiber and the synthetic counterpart to make four different variations. After rigging up a test lab in her backyard using only materials she had on-hand, this savvy scientist tested these variations over and over again to be sure of the results. But ultimately, she found that synthetic fabric was the strongest.

THE MONITOR

Our Community Cares Monthly Feature

THE CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK (CAFB)

www.austinfoodbank.org

Written and submitted by Jacquelyn Waldrop, information courtesy of Capital Area Food Bank

We expect the biggest football game of the year to change many lives, but probably not in the way you think. The Big Game is also the last day of the Souper Bowl of Caring, a nationwide youth-led food drive to help Americans who don't have enough to eat.

The estimated 62 million football fans who gather to celebrate great athleticism on the field, and yes, eat lots of celebratory foods, were encouraged to help their neighbors in need by purchasing pre-packaged bags of food and donating funds at their local grocery store. The first shipment of food from the Souper Bowl of Caring drive to the Capital Area Food Bank consisted of 20 pallets of peanut butter, 15 pallets of canned corn, 15 pallets of canned green beans, 16 pallets of brown rice and eight pallets of canned tuna. Thank you Central Texas!

If you missed the Souper Bowl of Caring in February, there are still lots of ways you can help.

• Donate funds at www.austinfoodbank.org. The Food Bank can turn every \$1 donated into \$6 worth of food.

- CAFB always needs healthy, non-perishable food items. You can donate them directly to the Food Bank at 8201 S. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas.
- Get your book club, Scout troop, church group or other service organization involved by hosting a food and fund drive yourself, even kids can help the hungry.
- The Food Bank is often short of volunteers to help inspect and sort all



Jackson W.

the food that's been donated. You can pick a time for you or your group to volunteer at www.austinfoodbank.org and clicking on the "Get Involved" button.

For his birthday, Jackson W., who lives on Mitra Drive, asked party goers to

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Cadette Girl Scout Troop #2058

Content provided by Michelle Gonzales, Troop Leader, Written and submitted by Jacquelyn Waldrop

Cadette Girl Scout Troop #2058 formed seven years ago in 2008. The troop is comprised of eight 6th grade girls from Gorzycki, Small, and Kealing Middle Schools, and live right here in southwest Austin. The girls started out as Daisies, or "baby Girl Scouts," their Kindergarten year and have bridged into Brownies, Juniors and now Cadettes-the program designed for Girl Scouts in 6th-8th grade.

Together, they have made a major impact on our community. They have collected food for the Capital Area Food Bank to help feed hungry, food insecure families, made sandwiches for Mobile Loaves & Fishes to help feed the homeless, wrapped Christmas gifts for the Travis County Sherriff's Department Brown Santa program, hand-made pillows for Dell Children's Hospital, recycled items with Ecology Action, created chew toys for Austin Pets Alive and made sock kits for the homeless, bracelets for cancer survivors and dinner for our firefighters and first responders, just to name a few

of their many good deeds. They have even helped a fellow scout earn her silver award by assembling and cutting out kits and games for Alzheimer patients. And, they have funded these projects and more by selling hundreds of boxes of cookies and selling over \$1000 in nuts and candies.

In addition, the girls have enjoyed exploring their world together while participating in many camping trip adventures and field trips all over this great state of Texas. They have attended summer camp and experienced horseback riding, archery, ziplines, and bb gun target practice. And, they were honored to perform the flag ceremony for their Baldwin 5th grade graduation. They have also enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate those most important to them by participating in Mother/Daughter tea parties and Man in My Life dances.

These girls have also done their part to mentor upcoming Girl

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DATE: Wednesday, April 29th

TIME: 11:00 am Registration, 1:00 pm Start

LOCATION: Flintrock Falls Golf Course

FORMAT: 4-person scramble COST: \$165 per golfer*

*Includes lunch, dinner, hat & swag.

REGISTER: WWW.TINYCH.ORG/GOLF

Join us for the 7th annual Colin's Hope Classic charity golf tournament. Enjoy a beautiful course, lunch, dinner, a chance to win a Lexus or RV, and great prizes.

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Questions? Contact:

Kim Flasch: kim.flasch@colinshope.org Sue Hart: sue.hart@colinshope.org

WWW.COLINSHOPE.ORG

(Capital Area Food Bank, Continued from Page 6)

donate items for the Capital Area Food Bank instead of birthday presents. He collected a mountain of canned and dry-goods, thanks to the generosity of his family and friends.

Capital Area Food Bank by the Numbers

Did you know that nearly 46,000 Central Texans across 21 counties rely on the Capital Area Food Bank's services each week - one-third of which are children. In the last fiscal year (FY14), they distributed 31 million pounds of food—5% more than the record-breaking previous year. In the same period they provided 26 million meals and rescued nearly 16 million pounds of nutritious food items from local and national grocery store chains, manufacturers, distributors and farms. In fact, CAFB trucks traveled the equivalent of more than 13 times around the world rescuing and delivering food (that's 333,146 miles!) and over 17,000 volunteers donated more than 88,000 hours of service. Food Bank clients can access food at nearly 300 Partner Agencies and mobile food pantry distributions across a 21 county service area. Two-thirds of Food Bank Partner Agencies saw an increase in client demand in the past year and eighty one percent of Partner Agencies say that without Food Bank support, their ability to serve clients would be jeopardized.

Hunger by the Numbers

More than 1 in 6 Central Texans and nearly 1 in 4 Central Texas children are at risk of hunger. Both figures are above the national average. Data from 2009-2012 show that while the population in Central Texas has grown by 8.0%, the number of food insecure has increased by 14.5%. So, despite a strengthening economy in our service area, a growing number of Central Texans are facing hunger. This means that CAFB needs our community's support now more than ever.

Who benefits from the Capital Area Food Bank?

Many may be surprised to learn that ninety-three percent of CAFB clients are NOT homeless. In fact, nearly two-thirds of CAFB client households had at least one working adult at home in the last year. And, 80% of CABF clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care in the past year; two-thirds had to choose between food and housing. CAFB clients are ethnically diverse, split nearly evenly in thirds among white, African American and Hispanic populations. Over 60% of clients must rely on receiving food from CAFB or a Partner Agencies as a part of their everyday lives.

How Can You Help?

Donate food, funds or volunteer! Or, join us in one of these fun events while giving back to your Central Texas neighbors in need.

- Amplify Austin 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 5th 6:00 p.m. Friday, March 6th
- Join the Austin community as they come together to raise \$7 million in 24 hours for local nonprofits. Last year, this event raised over \$172K for the Food Bank. All donations made to CAFB will be matched by St. David's Foundation. Save the date now and plan to donate online at https://amplifyatx.ilivehereigivehere.org/

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THE MONITOR

(Girl Scout Troop, Continued from Page 7)

Scouts. They have partnered with Daisy Troop #1244, comprised of Baldwin 1st graders, to share their Girl Scout experience. The Cadette mentors invited this Daisy troop to a Cadette-lead meeting, where they developed and led the meeting, including the craft activity. The Daisies really enjoyed interacting and learning from the older Cadette girls. This experience was equally enjoyed by both troops, so they decided to team up for the Brown Santa service project this past December. The girls paired up, in older and

V

younger Girl Scout pairs to select and wrap gifts to make a double impact in the community.

Recently, this troop received the Girl Scout Bronze Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout Junior can achieve. The troop teamed up, planned and created their project together. They choose to hand-sew pillows and donate them to the pediatric oncology clinic at Dell Children's Hospital. The goal of this award is for the girls

to work as a team to plan and execute a project, allowing them to develop confidence and meet new people, all while having



fun and making a positive difference in the community. Way to go, Peyton, Elise, Zoe, Alli, Tayah, Isa, Katherine and Julianna of Troop 2058! Thank you for your good deeds and great efforts. Your Meridian neighbors are proud of you!

Baldwin's Love Your School "No Hassle" Fundraiser

February 11th-20th

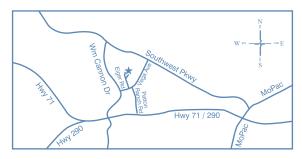
Thank you Baldwin community for donating funds to our "Love Your School" no-hassle fundraiser last month. Your generous support is going directly to programs for our kids.

Where does the money go?

A few of the programs this money supports: Additional classroom iPads, Books for our literacy library, Math manipulatives, Online student software subscriptions, such as Raz-Kids reading and SumDog math skill builders), and Traveling Planetarium that comes to our school each year.



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THE MONITOR

(Continued from Page 8)

CAFBTX/ when the clock strikes 6:00 p.m. on 3/5!

- Cars & Coffee 2nd Sunday every month, 10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m., The Oasis, 6550 Comanche Trail
- Car lovers unite to peruse the aisles of exotic cars in the Oasis parking lot at this monthly event, hosted by John Eagle European. The come-and-go event is free and open to the public. Visitors are encouraged to bring donations for the Capital Area Food Bank. In 2014, this event raised over 17,000 meals for Central Texans in need!
- Gospel Brunch Sundays, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m., Strange Brew, Austin Coffee, 5326 Manchaca Rd.

Join the Purgatory Players (Jeff Plankenhorn, Jon Dee Graham, Scrappy Jud Newcomb, Jon Greene, and Seela Misra) every Sunday as they get down for a good cause with "gospel music for nondenominational folk." This event is free and open to the public. Tips for the band and a portion of the coffee shop's proceeds are donated to CAFB.

What are the most-requested food items?

- Peanut butter
- Canned chicken breast or tuna
- Canned low sodium vegetables
- Canned fruit in its own juice (no sugar added)
- Dry pinto beans
- · Brown rice
- Non-fat dry milk powder
- 100% whole grain cereal

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SAVE THE DATE

"Scoot Your Boots to the Baldwin Bash"

PTA Event and Silent Auction Fundraiser Friday, April 24th @ the Meridian Pavilion from 6:30-10pm Tickets are \$25 each and go on sale March 30th.

Enjoy fun, food and friends at this adult-only event. The festivities include a fantastic silent auction filled with something for everyone: event tickets, birthday party packages, restaurant gift certificates, hotel accommodations, spa treatments and much, much more.

We are still accepting silent auction items. If you would like to see your business featured or to make a donation, contact us: fundraising@baldwinpta.org.



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