

The Gazette

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BOWIE HOMECOMING

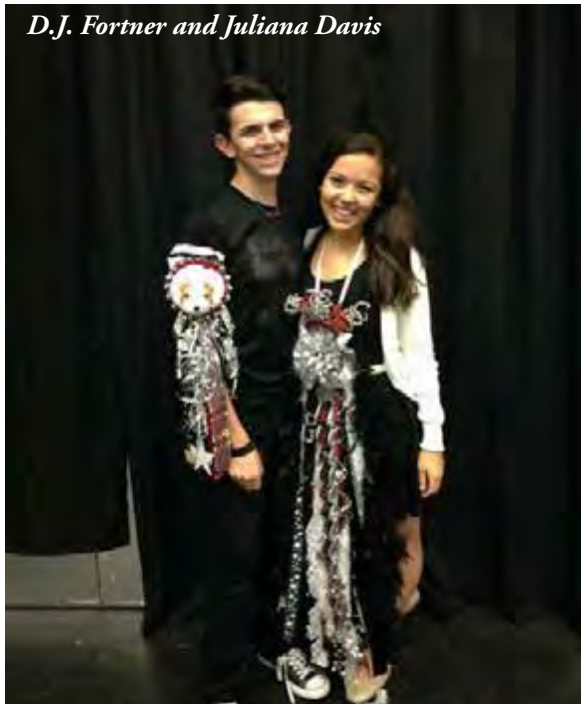
For many Southwest Austin families, fall is a time when many routines resume - back to school and football being among the favorites. Bowie High School makes the most of both of these traditions with its annual Homecoming football game and dance. But this hasn't always been the case. That's right, Bowie, Austin ISD's largest comprehensive high school, went without a campus Homecoming dance for years. Let's take a look at this tradition, and how it returned to Bowie.

The tradition of Homecoming was invented in the early 1900s, when colleges created celebrations welcomed alumni back to campus and increase attendance at football games. As time passed, other activities, including bonfires, parades, pep rallies, tailgates, Homecoming courts and dances, came to be associated with Homecoming.

One of the more interesting Texas Homecoming traditions is the mum - short for chrysanthemum. While this tradition once involved students giving each other flowers to commemorate Homecoming, it has morphed into much more than flowers. Now, the elaborate crafts (girls get mums and guys get garters) include everything from stuffed animals to photos and even LED lights!

Bowie High School's football program has an amazing track record - with graduates playing for top college programs

D.J. Fortner and Juliana Davis



and even the NFL. In fact, they've made the state playoffs for the past 8 years in a row. So while the school's support for its Homecoming football game has never faltered, over time the traditional Homecoming dance was abandoned at Bowie. Dwindling attendance had made the event impractical to host, and the school went without the dance for at least 7 years.

I spoke with Robin Walton, who was Bowie's Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) President in 2013, the year Bowie brought back the Homecoming Dance. Walton says that the PTSA board felt strongly that the school needed to revive the tradition of the Homecoming Dance. "At that time prom was the only dance for Bowie students, and it was mainly for seniors. We felt that having dances the students could participate in was an important social aspect of high school."

Walton says that several parents told her they would only participate in PTSA if she promised to champion bringing the Homecoming dance back to Bowie. The goal was to put on an event that was student driven and that the students would get excited about. Mr. Ellenbrock, Bowie's Student Council advisor, played a big role in making sure the PTSA and students worked together. Perhaps the

(Continued on Page 2)



(left to right): Ilona Poole, Bridget Alvarez, Avery Logan, Allie Wells

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(Continued from Cover)



biggest challenge was financial - with no starting budget, even the most basic decorations and the D.J. were significant expenses. Still, the PTSA was committed to making ticket prices affordable for all students - they remain just \$10 per ticket.

“It was the most incredible feeling when we started doing our ticket sales that first year...and the students actually bought them! Our goal was to sell 300 tickets. We ended up having 1,500 students attend that first dance.” Walton credits the entire PTSA board, especially Joanna Willard, Stacey Jo Petrash, Susie Blagdan, and Jessica Martone, in taking a stand to make the Homecoming dance a success.

Bowie has had 3 Homecoming dances since the tradition was revived, each better attended than the previous one. Last year over 2,000 students attended, wearing everything from jeans with cowboy boots and hats to formal dresses and tuxes - a real cross section of Southwest Austin. According to Walton, “Some Homecoming traditions are limited as to who can participate. But the dance is open to all students from shy kids to football stars. Kids come with dates, in groups, and even solo. It is wonderful to see the kids enjoying their school and being a part of this tradition.”

This year’s Homecoming football game is Friday October 21st against Anderson High School at Burger Stadium. The PTSA will host this year’s dance at Bowie on Saturday October 22nd. If you are interested in making a personal or corporate donation to ensure this tradition remains strong at Bowie, please email BowiePTSAPresident@gmail.com or visit www.BowiePTSA.org.



Meet Your Contributing Editor: *Theresa Bastian*

I am a longtime Southwest Austin resident who currently lives in Villages of Western Oaks. A former teacher, I volunteer extensively with Austin Independent School District and am currently the PTSA President at Bowie High School. I am the broker and owner of Let's Move Austin, a boutique real estate company which focuses on providing exceptional representation to its clients. My son

is involved in the JROTC program at Bowie, and my daughter cheers at Gorzycki Middle School. Go Tigers! Go Bulldawgs!

I look forward to covering topics that are important to us in Villages of Western Oaks and Southwest Austin. If you have an idea for something you'd like to see included in an upcoming issue, please email me at villagegazette@peelinc.com



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SAGE TIPS FOR SOWING CENIZO

By Brad Wier, Courtesy www.gardenstylesanantonio.com



Cenizo is a stalwart in the natural Texas landscape. On a rocky western outcrop on a scorching August day, its blooms cover hillsides and valleys with pom-poms of pink flowers, all the way to the horizon — and it

can do this with no help from sprinklers or hedge trimmers. Even on a winter day, it retains the silvery leaves that earned it the name Texas sage.

So if you're adding a watersaver garden to the home landscape cenizo is one of the easiest plants to use in an unwatered setting. (For fastest growth, though, give it some extra water in spring.)

Since it became commercially available, the ever-popular cenizo may have been overused a bit in San Antonio landscapes, especially in shade — it is frequently found fully irrigated under live oaks, looking weird and leggy. (Leggy plants can always be cut back and restarted.) But over-use doesn't detract from cenizo's essential advantages: it needs no water or trimming, and it's one of the very few evergreen

native hedges for south central Texas.

For long-lasting shrubs and other architectural plants, why would you use something that needed to be trimmed and watered? For a scorching inferno strip on a big lot, cenizo provides year-round screening — so you can save your water for something, or someone, that needs it.

For my watersaver gardens, I always try to find a way to include cenizo, whether as a single specimen (in a 200-square-foot watersaver coupon, a single cenizo can fill 16 to 25 square feet!) or as an entire hedgerow — a drought-hardy native substitute for Burford holly, xylosma, and red-tipped photinia. Pair it with a couple of mountain laurels, silver sotol and a scattering of bluebonnets, and you've got a watersaver landscape worthy of a Texas patriot.

Many varieties are available; all are native to the Chihuahuan desert, and none require irrigation to thrive. 'Compacta' grows to about 5' in height and width, with that perfect 'evergreen meatball' shape so loved by landscape architects and homeowners alike. As its name suggests, 'Green Cloud' is well-loved for its large and richly colored leaves.

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FINDING BALANCE ONE ROOM AT A TIME

Taking a Systematic Approach To De-Cluttering & Organizing Your Home This Fall

Now that the kids are back in school and the hotter days of summer are over, it is a good time to focus on your home. While it may seem like a daunting task, an easy place to start is fall cleaning, the counterpart to spring cleaning. This includes both de-cluttering & organizing.

De-cluttering-Before you begin, have the right mindset and tools in place. I always find it helpful to have 5 labeled containers ready to go. The labels should read 1) Use 2) Store 3) Donate 4) Sell and 5) Trash. As you move from room to room or closet to closet think about the cooler temperatures and pull out those items that will come in handy like winter clothing and bed linens. Also, you might want to take out spring and summer colors in your décor and place those things in your “store” bin. The benefit to taking this systematic approach is that it can be much easier to make decisions on items when you only have the 5 choices right in front of you as well as a place to put items rather than on the floor in several piles. Using the right types of containers is also helpful-plastic bins for use and

store, cardboard boxes for donate and sell and trash bags for trash. That way, no more thought goes into how it gets to the right place, it's all ready to go.

Organizing-After cleaning out unnecessary items, it's time to organize the things you want to keep. I love to containerize my things. What containers you use depend on what it is for; jewelry, make-up, seasonal clothes, purses, books, magazines, toys, etc. All types are available at a variety of stores. The key is to determine what you want to place in bins and make a list of what size, shape and material you need before you head out to shop for the containers. A place for everything and everything in its place is a smart motto.

From here, you will have a clean slate and can create a warm and inviting home this fall for you to enjoy with family and friends and be ready for all of the upcoming holidays.

Article by Rita Lopez, business owner and creative designer. If you would like more home organization and/or design tips, please contact rita@tarragonadesigns.com



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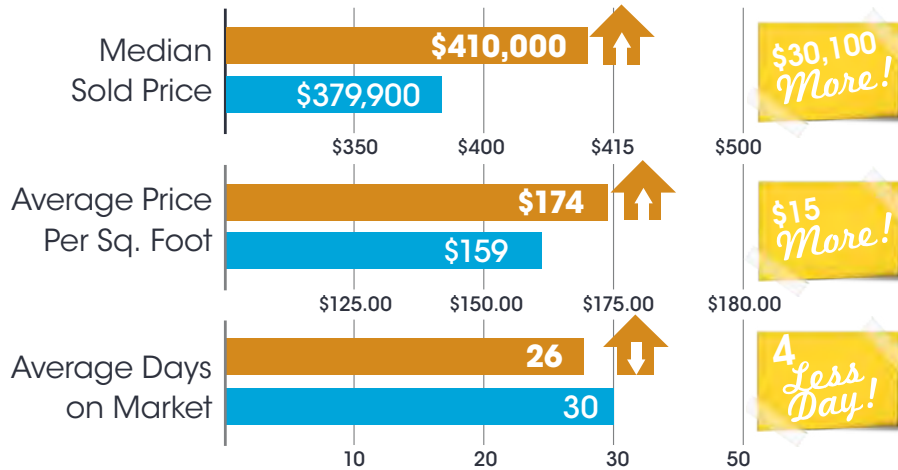
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Partnership For Children

Submitted by Megan Ransom

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There are no fees to adopt from the foster care system regardless of which agency you work with. There is only one pool of children, and they are all in care of the state, every licensed agency has the ability to assist in adoption of any foster child in Texas. Child placing agencies are also foster care providers. The first step is to choose a child placing agency to begin your journey. Learn more about starting the adoption process and the children waiting for forever families at www.heartgallerytexas.com.

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