Bissonnet Reconstruction Moves Toward Completion

After over a month of in-activity on the Bissonnet Reconstruction Project between Kirby and Buffalo Speedway due to a contractor dispute, work is now moving extremely quickly.

While the project will ultimately run west to Buffalo Speedway, the Upper Kirby District has brought in a new contractor to restore the impacted lanes and driveways along the north side of the road and complete the southern half of the Kirby/Bissonnet intersection. The goal is to get all lanes and driveways open and unobstructed in December.

The contractor has been moving fast and may have already poured concrete on Bissonnet from just east of Kirby to just west of Dinmans by the time of publication. That means crews will be able to begin curb work and driveway reconstruction next week and could have the roadway open to traffic before Thanksgiving.

Once the westbound lanes have been opened, workers will continue —over the weekends only —to restore the southern half of the Kirby/Bissonnet intersection in segments. During this time, crews will mobilize in the intersection between the end of rush hour on Fridays and reopen the intersection by the start of rush hour on Mondays over several weekends leading up to the December holiday break.

At this pace, Bissonnet and Kirby will be unobstructed for the holiday season, the Houston Marathon in January and the Super Bowl activities in early February. At that point, the remainder of the project will be completed to include storm work on the north side of the roadway west to Buffalo Speedway, concrete work on the south side of the roadway between Buffalo Speedway and Kirby and sidewalk and pedestrian enhancements through the duration of the project.
The HurriCan Sisters CAN make a difference, but they need your help! Eight-year-old Isabella, six-year-old Juliana, one-year-old Audrey, and proud mother, Melissa Denena, started the philanthropic group The HurriCan Sisters in November, 2015, to help fight hunger locally. Isabella and Juliana currently attend Horn Elementary, and Audrey currently attends School for Little Children at Bellaire United Methodist Church.

Bellaire residents of five years, the HurriCan Sisters hope to “start in our little community and watch it grow,” says mother Melissa.

The sisters gather cans of food and other non-perishable items at donation points around their neighborhood. Donations may be left Dec. 1 – 15 at:
• Jami’s Fine Foods, 5209 Bellaire Boulevard (77401), Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
• K&N Business Sales, 1401 Shepherd Dr. (77007), Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
• SEARCH Homeless Services, 2015 Congress Avenue (77002), Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

You may also arrange a drop time! For that, contact Melissa at mmdenena@yahoo.com, or send a message on their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HurriCanSisters).

Items donated are then given to SEARCH Homeless Services – a Houston, non-profit organization dedicated to helping children, men, and women off the streets and into safe housing with a job. Learn more about SEARCH at www.searchhomeless.org.

“(The girls are) very aware the people we’re donating to don’t have enough money to buy food… Giving back will make them more aware of their surroundings,” says Melissa with a smile in her voice.

These young sisters are not only philanthropic, but also creative! Their name (HurriCan Sisters) came about when they noticed there were unused hurricane food supplies after hurricane season in Texas. Isabella, the oldest, is also the mastermind behind the HurriCan Sisters’ logo!

One small can of food could make a big difference to a hungry family!

Bellaire Holds Recycling Event

The City of Bellaire and the Bellaire Environmental Sustainability Board is hosting a free Recycling Event on Saturday, Dec. 3 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Data Shredding will be on hand for secure on-site paper shredding - staples and paper clips allowed! No more than 5 bags or boxes of paper per visitor will be processed. This service is provided for the shredding of secure documents. Items such as junk mail, magazines, newspapers, etc., can and should be placed out with your regular curb-side recycling.

JD Metals will collect all types of scrap metal including old car batteries, water heaters, metal lawn furniture, stainless steel sinks, and more.

CompuCycle will collect computer equipment, radios, stereos, televisions up to 27”, and more.

American Textile Recycling Service bins will be available to recycle textiles, clothing, and small household items.

There will be a convenient drive through for easy drop off. Enter off S. Rice Avenue. You can find a list of accepted items at bellairetx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1823. For more information contact Public Works at (713) 662-8170 or pw@bellairetx.gov.

E-Mail your news and photos to:
MyNews@Village-Southwest-News.com
**Beware of Roaming “Porch Pirates”**

**By Anna Demmier**

“Porch Pirates” is the name given to thieves who steal packages from your doorstep.

While it’s a funny name, package stealing is not. It has increased as consumers increase their online shopping. Bellaire Police Chief Byron Holloway says online shopping is “great. Everyone does it. I do it whenever I can… It’s convenient.”

The drawbacks to online shopping, however, are an increase in packages being left unattended and being stolen. It also is attracting more thieves into your neighborhood. “When you start your Christmas shopping, they start theirs,” says Holloway.

Thankfully, this can all be avoided with these simple tips:

- Ask your boss if you may have your packages delivered to your workplace.
- Ask a neighbor, who you know will be home when you will not, if you can send your package to their house, or if they will watch your house for when your package is delivered.
- If your vendor offers an instructions page, let them know where the shipping company should put the package. For instance, under the bushes.
- If the company allows it, insure your package.
- If you are buying someone a gift, let them know when they should watch for it.
- Closely monitor your packages online.

If you noticed your package has not come by the due date, contact your vendor and shipping company to make sure it is not on back order and simply running late. If the vendor and shipping company confirm the package was sent on a specific date and time to a specific location, contact your local police department to tell them your package has been stolen.

Sometimes the vendor will correct the mistake and send your item again. However, it is important to let your local police department know because “even if we don’t make an offense report, if you just call, have an officer come out, what that does is it tells us that yes, in this neighborhood we’ve got a package thief lurking. We can cruise control, and maybe link it to other things,” says Holloway.

Some Porch Pirates get creative! They will use a stolen credit card to order an item, and send it to another address to pick it up. If you notice a package on your doorstep has your address but is not addressed to you, take it inside, and call the vendor and the shipping company to confirm they made a mistake. If they did not, notify the police of the suspicious activity, and give the package to your local police department. If someone knocks on your door asking for the package, let them know you were unsure of why it was sent to you, but that it is now at the local police department where they can pick it up.

See Pirates page 11

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**'Tis the Season... Local Law Enforcement, FBA Warn That the Holiday Grinch is Waiting!**

**Beware Online Shopping Scams**

With the holiday shopping season underway, criminals are also gearing up to do a little “shopping” of their own. The FBI reminds you to look out for scams designed to steal your money and personal information, especially while shopping online.

If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers often scheme to defraud consumers by offering too-good-to-be-true deals via phishing e-mails or advertisements. Such schemes may offer brand name merchandise at extremely low discounts or promise gift cards as an incentive to purchase a product.

Other sites may offer products at a great price, but the products being sold are not the same as the products advertised. Steer clear of suspicious sites, phishing emails, or ads offering items at unrealistic discounts. You may end up paying for an item, giving away personal information and credit card details, and receive nothing in return except a compromised identity.

Bottom line, do not open any unsolicited emails and do not click on any links attached. Avoid filling out forms contained in e-mail messages or social media ads that ask for personal information.

Verify any requests for personal information from any business or financial institution by contacting them using the main contact information on their official website. Log on directly to the official website for the business identified in the email instead of clicking on the link provided in the unsolicited e-mail.

When shopping online, research the legitimacy of the individual or company you are purchasing from. If you purchase or receive theater, concerts, or sporting event tickets as a holiday gift, do not post pictures of the tickets on social media sites.

See Online page 11
Destinations:

### German Christmas Concert and Reception: Flavors of the Season

To believe that there should be a winter wonderland is one thing; to sing it in German will certainly put a smile on your face. The Houston Saengerbund’s motto - Komm Sing Mit Uns! – Come sing with us - will have a special meaning for the German Carol sing-a-long. Then follow the singers into the gracious parlor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church for seasonal German refreshments, some even home-made such as Christstollen and cookies. The highlight will be the Feuerzangenbowle, a hot red wine with spices. A rum soaked sugar loaf is set on fire and the caramelized sugar drips into the hot wine.

### Voices of the Spirit VI

A concert celebrating devotional music from Houston’s diverse faith communities

Each year Houston Arts Alliance’s Folklife + Civic Engagement program in partnership with Asia Society Texas Center shines a light on Houston’s diverse cultural landscape through a concert of devotional music of selected faith communities. Now in its sixth year, Voices of the Spirit has yet to repeat an artist in this eye-and ear-opening lineup.

This year’s program will range from the beautiful Adhan (Muslim call to prayer) and hypnotic Cambodian temple music to mariachi songs for the Virgin of Guadalupe and thunderous percussion evocations of Garifuna spirituality. Set for Saturday, December 3, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 4, at 3 p.m., both performances will feature the same program and take place in the Brown Foundation Performing Arts Theater at Asia Society Texas Center, 1370 Southmore Blvd.

Whether through the synchronized beat of the drums and chorus, devotional alabanzas for the Feast Day of the Virgin, traditional Khmer sacred ensemble music, or a cappella intonations of the Q’uran, each religious tradition featured in the concert expresses its specific devotional perspective through a distinctive style and long history. Voices of the Spirit will begin with an Islamic call to prayer by Mu’ezzin Ameer Abuhalimeh from the Da’wah Islamic Center, followed by Mariachi Estrellas de Mexico with a repertoire of alabanzas in adoration of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the most important holy personage in Latino Catholicism.

The program will conclude with the Neak Porn Ensemble performing the portion of their repertoire that is traditionally only performed in Cambodian Buddhist temple settings. The Garifuna group, Wagalante, who combine percussion, chorus and dance in a traditional spiritual invocation, will punctuate the end of the concert.

Admission is free and open to the public with reservations at asiasonline.com/texas, limit two per person. For additional requests, call (713) 496-9900. Unclaimed tickets will be released ten minutes prior to the event.

One of the important holidays in Mexico is El Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe on Dec. 12. This important religious figure is honored and celebrated every year, right before Christmas, and has become a special and joyous occasion in Mexican communities.

To believe that there should be a winter wonderland is one thing; to sing it in German will certainly put a smile on your face. The Houston Saengerbund’s motto - Komm Sing Mit Uns! – Come sing with us - will have a special meaning for the German Carol sing-a-long. Then follow the singers into the gracious parlor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church for seasonal German refreshments, some even home-made such as Christstollen and cookies. The highlight will be the Feuerzangenbowle, a hot red wine with spices. A rum soaked sugar loaf is set on fire and the caramelized sugar drips into the hot wine.

### “Moana”

Disney’s 56th animated feature film, “Moana” (PG), was inspired by the folkloric cultures of the Pacific Islands. Set on the Polynesian island of Montunui, the title character (voiced by newcomer Auli’i Cravalho) is the daughter of the tribe chief. When her village is in danger, she embarks on a quest to locate a fabled island to restore balance. At her side is the demi-god Maui (Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson). “Moana” is largely computer animated with a hint of hand-drawn animation. Overall, it looks great: colorful, vibrant. The hand-drawn sequences jump out and are literally a feast for the eyes. Veteran directors Ron Clements and John Musker (“The Little Mermaid,” “Aladdin”) have whipped up a frothy, fun, exciting and funny film that will entertain youngsters and the young at heart. I wasn’t bored once! Vocal talents are fine. Songs are easy forgettable, however. **3/4** (out of four)

### “Bad Santa 2”

If done right, humor aimed at adults can be quite funny. In 2003, I laughed throughout the naughty and not so nice “Bad Santa.”

Now more than a decade later we have “Bad Santa 2”. Billy Bob Thornton returns as Willie and Tony Cox is once again Marcus. They team-up to rob a Windy City children’s hospital, and Elsa Pataky enjoys. He begins as a volunteer at the Da’wah Islamic Center in 2002. He continues as the center’s Mu’ezzin and also serves as its executive director, using his position to further understanding of the rich history and culture of Islam by establishing a library and a museum, the first of its kind in the United States.

The super-star trio heading up a multi-star cast include Loretta Young and Celeste Holm as French nurses on a mission to build a children’s hospital, and Elsa Lanchester as their reluctant aide. Hugh Marlowe is notable as their frustrated songwriter neighbor. The movie will be shown on Wednesday, Dec. 14, from 1-3 p.m. For more info call Terri Mote, Reference Librarian, at (713) 662-8166.

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Falling just before Christmas, the season of Advent is a time of contemplation and introspection. While the pipe organ is often associated only with being loud, Rick Erickson and Christopher Holman, the organists at Christ the King Lutheran Church, will show a different side of the king of instruments with a series of 30-minute organ recitals every Friday at 12:15 p.m. from December 3–17.

“Don’t get me wrong, we’ll have some loud music too!” says Holman. “But we want these programs to let people take a break from the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season and relax with some nice music in Christ the King’s meditative space.” Audiences are also welcome to bring a brown bag lunch; water will be provided.

The instrument at Christ the King Lutheran Church, commonly referred to as the “Bach Organ,” was built by Fritz Noack in 1995, and was closely modeled after the eighteenth-century organs that Johann Sebastian Bach played. Erickson and Holman will perform, music by Bach of course, but also works by Mendelssohn, Buxtehude, and other lesser-known composers that were well-known in Bach’s day.

Christ the King is located at 2353 Rice Blvd. at Greenbriar.

Organists Offer Free Reflective Concerts

Share some Holiday Cheer at Breakfast with Santa in Hermann Park!

Come to Hermann Park on Saturday, December 10, at 8:30 a.m. for a special breakfast and train ride with Santa. Tickets are $10 for adults and $6 for children. The event includes breakfast, train ride, and special gift from Santa. After breakfast attend the Holiday Party in Kinder Station at 10 a.m. with face painting, crafts and more!

Adult breakfast includes scrambled eggs, biscuit with country gravy, choice of bacon or turkey sausage, choice of apple juice, orange juice, coffee, or tea; kids’ breakfast includes pancakes; choice of bacon or turkey sausage; choice of pastry, juice box.


“All Things Wonderful: A Holiday Market”

Houston’s Friends of Down Syndrome invites the public to a festive afternoon of shopping from noon-5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Down Syndrome Academy, 5200 Mitchelldale, Suite D4, Houston. Featuring an array of vendors, refreshments and gifts made by our very own Down Syndrome Academy students, you can do your holiday shopping for friends, family and teachers while also helping Friends of Down Syndrome. For more information on the market or Friends of Down Syndrome, call (281) 989-0345 or e-mail rosarocha@att.net.

E-Mail your news and photos to: MyNews@Village-Southwest-News.com
Schwartz

Robert (Bob) Jay Schwartz passed away November 19, 2016, in Houston, Texas. Bob was born March 23, 1929, in Houston, Texas to the late Dr. Abel and Ella (Abrams) Schwartz.

He graduated from Lamar Senior High before attending Rice University, where he received BS EE and MS EE degrees. He served on active duty during the Korean War with the Marine Corps Reserve as a 2nd Lt., 1st Lt., and Captain. After the war, Bob moved to Washington, D.C. to work for the government.

There he met and married Miriam Cloder, the love of his life. Their son, Jeffrey, was born the following year. They later moved back to Houston, where their second son, Steven, was born.

Bob was very active in civic affairs. He was President of the Men’s Club of Congregation Beth Israel, President of the local chapter of the IEEE Geophysical Section, President of the Marilyn Estates Association, and Corresponding Secretary of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy. The Schwartz Gazebo at the Willow Waterhole Greenway was recently named in Bob’s honor for his dedicated service to the community. His name also appears on 14 patents.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 47 years, Miriam Schwartz. Bob is survived by his sons, Jeffrey Schwartz and Steven Schwartz (Julie); grandchildren Kylie and Dylan; sister Aileen Gugenheim (Milton); brother William Schwartz (Barbara), as well as numerous nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

Private Interment was at Woodlawn Cemetery (Beth Israel Garden). Memorial Service was at Temple Beth Israel.

Legal Advice for Veterans

The HBA’s Veterans Legal Initiative (VLI) provides free legal services to veterans throughout the year, in Harris County and in many surrounding counties, thanks to grants from the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation, the Houston Bar Foundation and the Texas Veterans Commission. The VLI hosts a clinic at the DeBakey VA Medical Center every Friday, from 1-5 p.m., and sponsors Saturday clinics at VA Outpatient Clinics in Galveston, Conroe, Richmond, Tomball, and Lake Jackson, among other locations.

Legal issues may include family law, wills and probate, consumer issues, real estate matters and tax law, as well as disability and veterans benefits.

For more information on the VLI, contact the Houston Bar Association at 713-759-1133 or visit www.hba.org.

Constables File Charges on Thieves Preying on Elderly

Last week the Harris County Precinct 1 Constable’s Office warned residents about a team of thieves who stole jewelry, money and other items from inside homes after luring elderly residents outdoors to discuss supposed tree-trimming or construction projects in their backyards. In reality no such work was taking place or even planned.

The “workers” were thieving scammers who were just trying to get the resident to walk out of their homes without locking all of their doors. In each case, with one thief doing his act in the backyard, another slipped into the residence and took jewelry, money, etc.

Precint 1 Deputy Constables filed burglary charges in three such cases against John Thompson, 40, and Paul Frank 42, and Sonny Frank, 57.

Pct. 1 Constables Office contract patrol deputies in Shepherd Park Plaza and Garden Oaks did excellent work on this case. They believe that the people charged are responsible for most if not all of these scams in northwest Houston, Braeswood Place, Tanglewood and beyond.

An alert resident took a photo of a truck used by the scammers last week. Deputies used information in the photo to track down the scammers. Deputies will continue to investigate and may be able to file additional charges.

AARP Chapter 4418

On Thursday, December 1, at 1 p.m., AARP Chapter 4418 will enjoy the music of the Lovett Elementary School Hand Bell Choir. These young people will help kick off the Christmas season with some old favorite Christmas cards.

Everyone over 50 is welcome. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, and refreshments are served following the meeting.

Join the group on Monday, December 5, for a tour of Moody Garden’s Festival of Lights and enjoy a bountiful buffet. Fee: $25, includes buffet. Bus leaves at 3 p.m.; board bus at 2:45 p.m. For more information, call Martha Lee at (713) 666-5858.

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Candidates & Issues: HUSD District VII Trustee

Public service is a calling. What made you want to serve on the HUSD Board of Trustees?

I’m interested in serving on the Houston’s Board of Trustees for the same reason that I am a classroom teacher, and that I now continue to work in education at a non-profit. I have benefited from the public education system. I’m a product of Houston ISD’s schools. I have had tremendous opportunities in my life because of the education I got. I’m very passionate about making sure every kid gets a quality education.

I’ve seen how sometimes decisions made in our district can be wonderful for students and can also be very harmful for students. I felt called to bring my experience working in schools and working in our community to our Board so we have people on our Board who really knows how schools can be successful, and can make decisions with that in mind.

What is the most important issue in this election for you?

The most important issue to me is the quality of education students are getting in their schools. Making sure our schools are organized so students and teachers can focus on learning and on teaching, so teaching and learning can be as high quality as possible.

I understand you would like HISD to move away from standardized testing, and go towards a stronger curriculum. Could you tell me why you’d like to see that shift, and how, if elected, you plan on working with the Board to ensure that?

I agree with our new Superintendent, Richard Carranza, when he says the pendulum has flown too far towards standardized testing. It’s picking up far too much of our time in school, not just standard testing itself, but the practice tests for the standardized tests, and all the preparations for those practice tests that are preparing for the test, not preparing for the learning. I think the best preparation for students for success in life is quality teaching and learning. If we do that, standardized tests will come out okay.

I put the emphasis back on helping students really become masters of the curriculum and really develop critical thinking skills.

What employers I work with are looking for, graduates of Houston schools are: creativity, critical thinking, and education. Some kinds of skills can be promoted and developed in all of our classes, and should be.

While there’s not specific rigid curriculum that I’m pointing towards, there are certain qualities we can look for as markers for a rich curriculum that is helping students learn as much as they can in school. That’s what I’m promoting. It’s not a particular curriculum, but if we take the approach to education that says let’s begin with the end in mind, let’s make sure our students are learning as much as they can in school, not just to pass a test, but to develop the critical thinking skills and knowledge that they will need to be successful beyond school in college and in life.

You said you’d like HISD to consult with finance and auditing professionals before HISD is properly using their money. Is there a program you feel is being given too much money, or maybe too little?

We have had in Houston ISD, for example, the Apollo program, which is a very expensive, failed program that instead of raising standards at schools that need help, it actually lowered standards and led to many students choosing to leave struggling schools. Some Apollo schools closed.

That is an example of a very expensive program in HISD that didn’t make sense. It was apparent after the first year it wasn’t working out. We need to evaluate programs in HISD both in their infancy and also as it proceeds to make sure we can be improving qualifications as we go along and not continue spending money on programs that aren’t successful.

If you put the emphasis back on helping students really become masters of the curriculum and really develop critical thinking skills. What employers I work with are looking for, graduates of Houston’s schools are: creativity, critical thinking, and education. Some kinds of skills can be promoted and developed in all of our classes, and should be.

The other big issue is of course our bond. Which is not academic, but again I think it is an example of where we have spent a great deal of money on HISD and perhaps not have the controls in place to make sure our spending was responsible.

You want to expand early childhood education. I know you are for a full-day of pre-kindergarten, and also for mandated recess. Are there any other issues in early childhood education you’d like to change if elected a Trustee?

To me those are separate things: the recess and early childhood education. I do support early childhood education. All the research that we know says that it is absolutely closing the gap and readiness for school between students of higher and lower economic status. I think our district needs to do as much as we can to promote early childhood education, and make sure we offer full day pre-k, which we do. That is something we currently do, and I’d like to see continue.

As far as recess goes, the research is very clear. In elementary schools, children learn more and they have fewer disciplinary issues if they have recess. I think the move to limit student activity is short-sighted. You might get a little bump in the verse of one week if you keep kids inside, and have them studying for an extra hour instead of playing. But in the long term, it’s not beneficial to learning or to the health of children.

Public service is a calling. What made you want to serve on the HUSD Board of Trustees?

I’ve done a lot of public service over the years. When Harvin recently said he was stepping down, we started discussing the education we’ve been involved with in schools. My wife has been very involved with a lot of the education around town here, different programs. We started talking about it, and thought it would be a good idea to do it. Time to come out of the political fire and into the political fire, if you will. I’ve been around politics for quite a long time, and thought this would be a good opportunity to represent the kids, represent the district, and it’s over here where Harvin left off.

What is the most important issue in this election for you?

I think accountability. Making sure there’s enough money being given to neighborhood schools. Partnerships with businesses and making sure there’s enough certificate type programs make sure kids who don’t go to college go into the work force with the tools they need.

There has been more and more talk about changing the testing. I understand you are for standardized testing because it measures a student’s and a teacher’s process, but you would like to see different kinds of testing. Could you tell me a little bit more on that?

I’m an advocate of teacher compensation being based more on metrics and how kids are doing than tenure based. I don’t believe we need more testing. I think we’ve had our fair share of standardized testing over the years. I think we need to stay focused on the testing that shows kids are progressing from the beginning of third grade to the end of third grade, as an example. I think it’s fair to ask every other business, to hold teachers accountable for how they’re doing. Do we know how as taxpayers and parents what the students are doing? Do they enter the workforce. Being able to have their skills, whether it’s computer or programming that local businesses help with, or being an electrical contractor and learning those types of skills, we need involvement. I know there are businesses letting schools know what they need and helping out. I think that’d be a great partnership for HISD and the local economy.

Lottvet Named One of The Best

Lottvet Elementary has been named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School. Lottvet Elementary is one among 279 public and private schools receiving this honor.

National Blue Ribbon Schools are on education’s cutting edge, pioneering innovative educational practices from professional learning communities and project-based learning to social and emotional learning and positive behavior systems. Schools are nominated by the state department of education and then complete a comprehensive application about school practices. Schools may be nominated as Exemplary High Performing among the top schools in a state—or Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing—schools making the fastest progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

Principal Dawn Thompson and Assistant Principal Heather Gaines represented Lottvet Elementary at a two-day awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., where they shared best practices and celebrated their hard-won achievements.
Pirates from page 3

Things to look out for:
• A person wearing clothing
out of the ordinary from
what your neighbors wear.
• Cars driving slowly, and
possibly reversing. If the
neighbors notice an easy-
grab, they will quickly jump
out of their car and grab what
they see at the doorstep.
• A car parked haphaz-
dardly. If the parking job looks
rushed (possibly parked
crooked and horizontally at
the end of a driveway) the
driver may be a thief want-
ing a quick getaway.

Packages are stolen when
there is easy access for crimi-
nals. Avoid leaving valuables
in your car in plain sight as
you shop for the holidays,
and keep your purse close
to your side.

“People are busy, they’re
not paying attention,” says
Holloway. “They’re walking
through parking lots, they’re
fumbling with their keys, so
they’re subject to thefts and
robberies.”

Voices from page 4
throughout Houston.
Many legendary artists have recorded and dedicated
alabanzas (songs of praise) to the Virgen de Guadalupe.
Every mariachi group worth its salt has these traditional
songs in its repertoire. Mariachi Estrellas de México is
no exception. Led by Arturo Torres, and formed in
2000, Mariachi Estrellas de México is full of seasoned
mariachi musicians who come from a long line of
mariachi professionals from their respective families.

Neak Por Ensemble
When a pair of friends of
Houston’s Khmer Kandal
community met in 1983, one
played the khim and the other
the tro. They started playing
music together with other
musicians in 1986. Their
popularity within the Khmer
Kandal community grew via
their performances at the
Texas Cambodian Buddhist
Temple, at weddings, and
other auspicious ceremonies.
Eventually their repertoire
越來越, and the present
incarnation of the group was
established in 2005. The
instrumentation consists of a
tro (liddle), khim (hammered
dulcimer), skor (barrel
drum), thon (snake-skin
drum), krapeur (three-string
tin), remeat (xylphone)
and ching (chimes). Using
these instruments, they cre-
layered harmonies and
hypnotic melodies that are
central to most traditional
Cambodian gatherings.

Walagante
Started in 2014, Walagante evolved from
a group of friends from Hon-
duras. Many of the key mem-
bers of the group either par-
ticipated or had family mem-
bers who were a part of the
Ballet Nacional Folclorico de
Honduras. Many members of
the Garifuna community
in Houston hail from Hon-
duras. They are Afro-Caribens
and often tri-lingual speak-
ing Garifuna, Spanish and
English. The music they play is
mainly sung in Garifuna.

For them, music is a ma-

or aspect of ancestor ven-

eration and connects the
Garifuna with their ancestral
roots. The primera (tenor
drum) is used to embellish
and excite, while the segundo
(bass drum) keeps time and
drives the music. Much like
blues music, Garifuna music
expresses emotional content,
indispensable in preparing students for in-demand, highly-paid career opportunities in computer science.” RUSMP Director, Anne Papakonstantinou, added that “RUSMP was proud to be able to partner with Houston ISD to promote such an important international event for Houston-area students and their parents and teachers.”

The Houston ISD schools represented at the event at Rice were Carnegie Vanguard High School, Clifton Middle School, Eastwood Academy, Garden Oaks Montessori Magnet, Hidalgo Elementary School, Horn Elementary, 10th Ward Elementary, Roberts Elementary, Sharpstown International High School, T.H. Rogers School, and Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy.

Donations for Seafarers’ Ministry
First Christian Church’s Disciples Women’s Ministries asks that you support its ministry of the Houston International Seafarers’ Center at the Port of Houston by donating items for the Christmas boxes that are given to the seafarers that visit the port during the holidays. Each year approximately 1,000 Christmas boxes are given as gifts to visiting seafarers. Some donation ideas: disposable razors, small shampoos, pens, decks of cards, hard candy, gum and postcards. No perishable items, please. All donations are due by December 18. Donations may be brought to First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset. Call (713) 526-2561 for information.

Lamar QB Owen Holt proves he can do it all, not only completing 21 of 27 passes, but rushing 35 yards in the game.

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