



Someone's little angel came home with red paint on their hands after making their mark on fresh paint at Wier Park.

**Wier Park Re-Opens, But Touch Up Painting Still Ahead**

West University was able to re-open the Wier Park playground a day earlier (Dec. 26) than anticipated so there was time to get out there and play before the cold rainy weather rolled in.

But... someone disregarded the fencing and signage and unsecured the gate off of Sunset. They left behind lots of handprints on the metal and plastic playground equipment.

The contractor will have to come back and touch up the paint on the 5-12 equipment again, but the next closure is scheduled for after the kids are back in school. The south side of the park will remain open including the tennis courts and basketball court.



Farber at Auden

**Southside Decorating Winners**

The City of Southside Place holds an annual holiday decorating contest, with winners from the previous year serving as judges for the next year. The contest results in a plethora of beautiful lighting as residents vie to be winners. Above is the winner of the Overall Prize for decorating. Below is the winner of the prize for the Best Door decor.



3707 Carlon

**No Decision Yet on New City Manager**

By Ben Ballanfant

West University City Council is closing in on hiring a new City Manager. Council members completed their interviews with finalists the week before Christmas.

Current City Manager Chris Peifer retires on January 22 and council has been

preparing to fill the vacancy by having Strategic Government Resource do a search for quality candidates.

Many of SGR's executives are former government officials, which they believe gives them perspective and expertise to help their clients. They have 300 local government clients in 41 states. West U.'s

search is spearheaded by Mike Tanner of SGR, who is also a former city manager of West U.

Council met Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 18 and 19. When they didn't come to a decision by the end of those meetings, they then scheduled another for Monday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

morning, in an effort to come to a decision. Still, no decision.

They still have a few weeks to make a decision and despite the slew of executive sessions for interviews and deliberations, one would think they can't be too far from a decision with only the finalists to consider.

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**New Medical Specialty Seeks to Change Lifestyles, Emphasizing Wellness Not Illness**

By Charlotte Ehlers

A relatively new medical field has recently been taking the world by storm. It may hold a cure for several chronic diseases, yet requires no pills.

Welcome to the world of Lifestyle Medicine, which, according to the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, "involves the use

of evidence-based lifestyle therapeutic approaches" through the study of how mental, physical, and emotional aspects of a person affect their health. It uses lifestyle therapeutic approaches, such as a predominantly whole plant-

based diet, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substance use, and other non-drug modalities, to prevent, treat, and, oftentimes, reverse non-communicable disease, sometimes referred to as degenera-



Dr. Bandana Chawla



Dr. Munish Chawla

See Lifestyle page 10

**Sharpstown's PlazAmericas Has New Owner**

One of Houston's oldest shopping malls—and the first one to be fully air-conditioned—has changed ownership again, this time from New York investors to a locally owned real estate firm.

PlazAmericas, nee Sharpstown Center and Sharpstown Mall, was purchased by Houston-based Baker Katz. Although they now own the 850,000 sq. ft. "heart" of the center, the 10-story building on the property plus the former locations of Montgomery Ward, JC Penney and Macy's are

all owned by other entities. The outparcels closer to the road are also under different ownership.

The property is located on 37 acres at the northwest corner of I-69 and Bellaire Blvd. and has more than 175 retailers and restaurants.

"PlazAmericas is a staple in the community, a home to local businesses and a neighborhood gathering place, and we are thrilled to be adding this property to our portfolio," said Baker Katz Development Partner Neal Wade. "The history of this mall is

meaningful to the community, and that will inform our plans when making necessary structural and cosmetic enhancements to ensure the mall accurately represents the character of the neighborhood."

Baker Katz purchased PlazAmericas from Philadelphia-based RAIT Financial Trust. The current property management team at PlazAmericas will remain in place with general oversight provided by Baker Katz Management.

"Careful consideration

and planning went into the purchase of PlazAmericas, and we are excited to enhance the experience for both business partners and consumers by building on the momentum of sales and occupancy growth at the mall," said Kenneth Katz. "We have the best interests of PlazAmericas, its retailers and restaurants in mind, and are thrilled to be embarking on this journey partnering with them for years to come."

"As Houston natives, we are advocates of this neigh-

See Mall page 10

# Palmer Episcopal Church Helps Incarcerated Parents Bring The Joy of Christmas to Their Children

The gifts that parishioners give vary as far as the imagination can go – stuffed animals, Power Ranger figures, stylish leggings, magnetic rocks and baseball bats – but there is one consistent gift from Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church’s participation in the Angel Tree ministry that is at the heart of every gift: the experience of a loving connection between a parent and a child.

About 30 children experienced that connection this season as Palmer Church members went out to Houston area neighborhoods to deliver a Christmas gift with a loving message from a parent in the

Texas prison system. It is the message on the tag, as much as the gift inside the package, that brings such joy to children who miss their parent.

Angel Tree is a national movement started 36 years ago by a woman who was incarcerated herself. She saw her fellow inmates treat an item as simple as a bar of soap as precious treasure when it could be presented to a son or daughter as a gift. Whatever they could find at Christmas time to send home to their families held extra special meaning because it helped them to maintain a presence

in their children’s lives – a prized opportunity for mutual joy.

The program operates under the auspices of Prison Fellowship, an organization that believes there is not enough rehabilitation taking place in the prison system, making reintegration into society difficult upon an inmate’s release. There are 2.7 million kids in the United States who have one or more parent incarcerated, which equates to one in 28 children in U.S. classrooms. Studies show that these children often isolate themselves due to shame, and ensuing socialization difficulties devolve into the same prob-



lems that led to their parents’ troubles with the law.

Palmer Church has participated in Angel Tree for more than two decades. Parishioner Jenn Vaughan leads the program, assisted by Parishioner Johnna Kincaid who has done so for the past four years. The effort behind the scenes is extensive. The Angel Tree organization works with chaplains in the Texas prison system and in October provides lists of children – called “angels” – to its network participants, including Palmer. Palmer, like its fellow providers, then goes about managing the long, intensive string

of logistics necessary to complete the process: establishing contact with the children’s caregivers, setting up a Christmas tree on the parish campus with gift suggestions, managing the inventory when gift givers bring packages to the church, and delivering to caregivers’ homes at agreed-upon times. If there are additional children in the home, Angel Tree makes sure that no one goes without.

“When you read the notes these inmates write, they are filled with love,” said Vaughan. “Working with these families is heart warming and heart breaking and all of the above.”

Recalling David, a little boy she visited for past three years, Kincaid said the boy’s mother would answer the door and announce that the Angel Tree lady was there. “If the kid could have smiled any bigger his face would have split,” Kincaid said. Last year David was no longer on the list of Angel Tree children. “I like to think maybe Dad was home,” she said.

## Bill Would Restore Local Governments Rights to Ban Plastic Bags

State Representative Gina Hinojosa of Austin has filed HB 514, a bill which would restore the right of local governments to restrict single-use bag pollution in their communities. The Texas Supreme Court struck down at least 10 such ordinances in communities across the state in June 2018, HB 514 would undo the pre-emption they found in Texas law.

“Single use bags kill livestock and wildlife, ruin Texas agricultural products, damage stormwater and recycling infrastructure, and cause persistent blight and litter,” Robin Schneider, Executive Director for Texas Campaign for the Environment said. “Local ordinances were very successful in reducing this pollution and reducing these harms, so we are thrilled that Rep. Hinojosa has taken the lead on this crucial issue.”

Despite voting to strike down existing ordinances two Texas Supreme Court Justices—Justice Eva Guzman and Justice Debra Lehrmann—issued a concurring opinion which urged the Legislature to take action on this issue. Hinojosa’s bill addresses the concern the two Republican justices

expressed in the opinion.

“Having expressly reserved the power to make such decisions, the ball is sequestered in the Legislature’s court,” Guzman wrote in the opinion Lehrmann also endorsed. “I urge the Legislature to take direct ameliorative action or... create a specific exception to pre-emption of local control. Standing idle in the face of an ongoing assault on our delicate ecosystem will not forestall a day of environmental reckoning—it will invite one.”

HB 514 would be the very sort

of specific exception the Justices called for. Numerous business, cities, and community advocates filed briefs to the Supreme Court urging them to uphold single-use bag laws because of the negative impacts of bag pollution on their interests. These included:

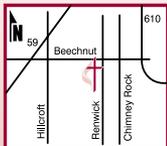
- Texas Cotton Ginners’ Association
- Black Bass Unlimited
- Bicycle Sport Shop
- Natural Grocers
- Bee County Judge and former

See Bags page 6

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# Hour of Code 2018 Events Demystify Coding

**By Dr. Susan Troutman  
RUSMP Director of  
Secondary Programs**

Hour of Code is a global movement reaching students in over 180 countries by providing activities in over 48 languages to celebrate computer science, provide opportunities for students to discover that computer science is fun and creative, and demonstrate that computer science is accessible for all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic group. Over 100 million students worldwide have participated in Hour of Code since 2014.

The Rice University School Mathematics Project (RUSMP) is a Code.org Regional Partner and has been instrumental in promoting computer science education in area schools. During this year's Computer Science Education Week, December 3-7, RUSMP hosted in partnership with Code.org and area schools Hour of Code events. A few of these events are highlighted here.

Carolyn White, RUSMP's Director of Elementary Programs, launched an Hour of Code event

for Houston Independent School District's Burrus Elementary School students with challenging activities from a multitude of learning activities offered by Code.org. She invited Houston City Council Member Karla Cisneros to participate. Council Member Cisneros is a passionate supporter of public education and spoke with students about the importance of computing and pursuing careers in computer science. HISD's Adrian Acosta encouraged students to explore the

multitude of Blocks and Scratch activities on the Code.org website. Anne Papakonstantinou, RUSMP's Director, and Richard Parr, RUSMP's Executive Director, participated in the Hour of Code event at HISD's The Rice School/La Escuela Rice. This event kicked off twelve days of coding at the school. HISD's Raul Alanis also participated in the event which was organized by Toni Hill-Kennedy, assistant principal and STEM coordinator. Andrew Kennedy and



Above - Houston City Council Member Karla Cisneros watches a Burrows Elementary student during Hour of Code.



Left - Rice School students enjoy a coding exercise.

Huifang Zhang of Bluware, a technology company that supports digital transformation initiatives, spoke to students about coding and led students in coding activities.

Susan Troutman, RUSMP Director of

Secondary Programs, and Shaina Glass, Aldine Independent School District Computer Science/STEM Coordinator and RUSMP Code.org Facilitator, planned the Hour of Code events for students in AISD. Groups of students from all of the AISD middle schools facilitated Hour of Code activities for elementary students.

Middle school students also explored coding through Code.org's Transformation Puzzles and The Coordinate Plane. A group of elementary students also explored coding with Sphero robots at the Woodland's Apple Store and participated in an interactive coding event at the Woodland's Microsoft Store.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and the Harris County Commissioners Court honored the events with proclamations declaring December 3-7 as Computer Science Education Week. Mayor Turner commended RUSMP and Code.org for sharing the City of Houston's vision of offering opportunity for all; celebrating diversity of people, ideas, economy, culture and places; and promoting resilient communities through education.

In their proclamation, Harris County Commissioners Court encouraged all residents of Harris County to celebrate Computer Science Education Week by participating in Hour of Code.

The Hour of Code activities, designed to demystify coding, are nurturing problem-solving skills, logic, and creativity and are creating a foundation for success in any 21<sup>st</sup>-century career path.

### It's Cookie Time!

Fond of Girl Scout cookies? They're on sale now! Added to the 2019 lineup: Caramel Chocolate Chip, which joins classics like the Thin Mints®, Caramel deLites®, and Shortbread varieties. Caramel Chocolate Chip features rich caramel, semisweet chocolate chips, and a hint of sea salt in a chewy gluten-free cookie. To find a scout selling cookies and make a pre-order, visit [girlscoutcookies.org](http://girlscoutcookies.org).

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Becky Wheeler, Lisa Barnes,  
Charlotte Spradley and  
Jane Straw (l-r)



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# Destinations:

## Try a Belly Dance Workshop!

Start the New Year off with the magic and mystery of Belly Dance with Sahira. Try an Introduction to Belly Dance Workshop on Sunday, January 13, from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston. Learn the ancient art of Belly Dance while getting a great low-impact workout!

In this introductory class, participants will learn a bit about the world's oldest dance and its beautiful and powerful movements. International performer and instructor Sahira will take dancers on a journey through the basics of the dance and share a short routine so they can go home shimmying! Participants should bring a water bottle and a hip scarf (some will be provided to borrow).

"For this workshop no previous Belly Dance knowledge is required," stated in-

structor Sahira. "Just wear comfortable clothes (gym clothes)."

Sahira was practically born on stage, having studied music, drama, and dance since the age of two. The musicality instilled within her as a classically trained flautist and singer infuse her dance with a sophisticated quality that is admired by dancers around the globe. Her extensive training in Middle Eastern as well as Tribal, Modern, and West African dance gives her performances an intense and earth energy that has captivated audiences' hearts and minds.

In 2005, Sahira released her first instructional DVD, "Arabian Spices" and has since been invited to teach and perform across the USA as well as Mexico, Indonesia, Australia, Germany, Canada, and Taiwan. In 2006 Urban Gypsy had

the honor of being the first tribal instructor ever invited to teach at the largest belly dance festival in the world: Ahlan We Sahlan, in Cairo, Egypt.

In 2007 Sahira released two more instructional DVDs: "Ali" and "Bella Donna Ya Helwa." When in Houston, Sahira performs with Bella Donna, voted Houston's Best Belly Dancers by the *Houston Press*. She is founder and director of Urban Gypsy.

In addition to dance, she performs regularly on flute and vocals with the award-winning world fusion music group Moodafaruka, as well as early music ensemble Istanpitta.

The fee for this workshop is \$12 pre-registration online or \$16 at the door. To register online visit [erjchouston.org/dance](http://erjchouston.org/dance) or call (713) 551-7217.



Experience the magic and mystery of Belly Dance with Sahira.

## Miss a New Year's Toast? More New Year Celebrations Await!

New Year's Eve has come and gone, but if you missed your chance to welcome in 2019 by crossing Monday's midnight bridge to the New Year, you aren't too late! Those who celebrate the New Year on Jan. 1 are observing the Gregorian calendar, but there are many cultures who observe the New Year on a different date. You have another chance to celebrate!

Originally, the New Year was celebrated at the Vernal Equinox in mid-March. The Babylonians did a bang up job

of celebrating too, with celebrations that might last 11 days. The Romans picked up on this custom, but in 153 BC changed the New Year celebration to Jan. 1.

There are still many cultures that observe the New Year on different dates. Probably the most well known of these are the Chinese New Year, which falls between Jan. 20-Feb. 20 depending on the lunar calendar, and the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, which falls in September or October.

The Babylonians started the custom of making New

Year's resolutions, a tradition many cultures still observe. The New Year is considered a time of renewal, so it's out with the old (last year's problems) and in with the new (our goals for the new year). There are other interesting traditions common in other countries;

In Brazil, the equivalent of our Times Square celebration is a giant party on Copacabana beach, where up to three million people gather to say goodbye to the outgoing year. Celebrants are supposed to **See New Year page 10**

## Bellaire's Desi Community Makes Donation to Evelyn's Park



The Evelyn's Park Board with representatives of Bellaire's Desi community.

Representatives from Bellaire's Indian community met with the Evelyn's Park Conservancy Board before Christmas to present a gift, a check for \$1,500 raised through the group's annual Diwali celebration.

This year, Diwali was held at the park. More than 450 people attended the celebration despite cold, wet weather. Attendees were treated to food stations representing five areas of India as well as a variety of entertainment, including Indian music and dancing, both classical and Bollywood style.

G.V. Krishnan, who chaired the event this year, says Bellaire's Diwali event started about 10 years ago with a small group gathering in a private home to celebrate.

The event has increased in attendance every year, moving to the Bellaire Civic Center, where some 300 attended two years ago. But the event was canceled last year following Harvey's devastation.

The 2018 event was truly a celebration of light over darkness, good over evil, the traditional intent. People from throughout Southwest Houston came to be part of the event.

Krishnan notes: "Diwali brings universal compassion, inner joy of peace and love with the awareness of oneness to all. Diwali is a great opportunity to share our culture that we bring to Bellaire. This is also an opportunity for us to give back to the community on the occasion of the Diwali celebration."

The 2019 Diwali celebration in Bellaire is scheduled for the second week of October at Evelyn's Park.

# Recycling Holiday Plants

By Elayne Kouzounis

If you were one of the lucky gardeners that were gifted with Christmas Cactuses, Cyclamens, Norfolk Pines or Poinsettias over the Holiday Season, they can have a second act with the proper care.

## Christmas Cactus (Schlumbergera)

Small genus of about 6 species. Epiphytic (like orchids and bromeliads) are plants that like to be tightly potted and kept in partial shade. Stems will turn reddish if it gets too much sun.

Watering: do not over water, use the pencil test if not certain. Using a pencil or your finger poke it into the soil, 1 or 2 inches down. If dry, add water, then let it drain.

Repotting: use a commercial cactus mix or soil that is well-draining, porous and organic. Or, the latest expanded shale, a fantastic soil amendment.

Fertilize: keep in a bright covered sunny area. Apply liquid fertilizer.

Prune: when plant has finished blooming, remove one or two of the flattened segments to encourage branching and future blooms.

Rebloom is triggered by the length of daylight and cool temperatures, budding when the days have fewer than 12 hours of light and night temperatures are 50 to 60 degrees. Small buds appear in two or three weeks after days shorten,

with full bloom in about two months.

## Cyclamen (spp. Cyclamen)

Their gorgeous mottled and marbled green and silver leaves are so pretty until late spring.

Watering: Water plants carefully taking care not to wet their leaves.

Repotting: Usually they do not need repotting. Hardy in zones 6-9.

Fertilize: Provide a top dressing of leaf mold. Likes partial shade, no afternoon sun.

Prune: Pull off dead flowers complete with their stems when they have finished blooming.

Rebloom: Laying the pot on its side to dry out, it possibly can rebloom in the fall. Tolerates cold but not summer heat.

## Poinsettias

### (Euphorbia pulcherrima)

The green leaflike parts at the base of the flowers in some species are not sepal but modified leaves called bracts.

Watering: Give your plant some water when the soil is dry.

Indoors: Leaves will drop when temperature drops. Freezing weather can kill the plant. Keep it indoors in bright light that is around 72 degrees during the day and 60 at night. Mist occasionally, they love humidity.

Additional information: They are safe plants to have around children. They are not poisonous. Animal testing at high doses disproves

the old wives tale.

Conditions: use poinsettia blooms for arrangements by cutting the stem and burning the end.

## Norfolk Pines

### (Araucaria heterophylla)

Norfolk Pines are living Christmas trees that grow in our Gulf Coast gardens and can handle salt water. They are not true pines. Many have survived category 4 hurricanes in Galveston.

Watering: Likes normal humidity; water moderately while growing, sparingly, in winter.

Repotting: In the wild it can become a (220 foot) tall tree, but in containers grows to about (6 feet) tall.

Temperature: Minimum (40 degrees Fahrenheit) needs plenty of ventilation to lower the temperature to below (80 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer, if possible.

Fertilize: Only needed if grown in soil-less compost, from mid-summer.

Problems: Leaves falling or discoloring from too much warmth, sun, or dry atmosphere, although the lowest branches fall naturally on old plants.

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Burpee—The Complete Flower



Elayne Kouzounis

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## Hannah Golub of Bellaire Named a Bates College Community Liaison

Hannah Golub of Bellaire, a sophomore at Bates College, has been named a 2018-19 Community Liaison for Strange Bedfellows, an impro-visational comedy group. In this role, Golub will lead community engagement efforts, developing activities, programs, and partnerships that encourage civic learning and action for Strange Bedfellows.

Golub, the daughter of Mr. and Ms. Andrew S. Golub of Bellaire, is a 2017 graduate of Emery Weiner School.

Established in 2013, the Bates College Community Liaison Program is supported by the Office of Campus Life and the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships. The Harvard Center for Community Partner-ships at Bates is recognized as a national leader in community engage-ment. Each year, Bates students perform more than 80,000 hours of volunteer and community service work in the surrounding community.

“Through this program, students develop as leaders as they build strong partnerships across their community and see the meaningful results of their work,” said Darby Ray, director of the Harvard Center. “These experiences plant the seeds of lifelong civic responsibility.”

Located in Lewiston, Maine, Bates is internationally recognized as a leading college of the liberal arts, attracting 2,000 students from across the U.S. and around the world. Since 1855, Bates has been dedicated to educating the whole person through creative and rigorous scholarship in a collaborative residential community.

Cultivating intellectual discovery and informed civic action, Bates prepares leaders sustained by a love of learning and zeal for responsible stewardship of the wider world.



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**City of Bellaire Jail • 5110 Jessamine St.**

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**10:50 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service**

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# Have Items to Donate?

The Sunshine Resale Shop can offer help to those grieving the death of a loved one.

If you, or someone you know, need to find a new home for the cherished belongings of a loved one, supporting a good cause can provide comfort knowing that the

items will help fund the programs of Christian Community Service Center.

Sunshine Resale Shop can also help with estate sales. The dedicated volunteers will review donations with you and select items for the resale shop. Sunshine Resale is

recognized by visitors and customers for the quality of items in its showroom.

To arrange for donations or consignments, contact Shop Manager Yolanda Gaxiola at (713) 665-4000. The Shop is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Bags from page 2

State Representative Jose Aliseda (R)

- Senator Judith Zaffirini (D)
- City of Houston
- City of Galveston
- Texas Municipal League
- Rio Grande International Study Center

- Texans for Clean Water
- Texas Campaign for the Environment

“Bag pollution is bad for Texas, and if the state government isn’t going to take action to eliminate it, then they need to stand out of the way of local governments ready to lead on the issue,” Andrew Dobbs, Legislative Director for Texas Campaign for the Environment said. “Texas businesses and taxpayers foot the bill for these unnecessary products, and HB 514 will help our local leaders save us those resources.”

A similar bill filed by Rep. Hinojosa in the 2017 session, HB 3482, passed out of committee and out of the House Calendars Committee on bipartisan votes. It did not get a House vote because of procedural deadlines.

# Tips on Cybersafety

Forty members and guests of the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Houston Section, gathered at Bayland Community Center recently to celebrate Hanukkah with a program on Cyber-Safety presented by Dena Marks, senior associate director of the Anti-Defamation League’s Southwest Regional Office. The ADL tracks not only anti-Semitism, but all forms of racial and ethnic hate.

Marks reported that 4.2 million anti-Semitic Tweets were sent between January 2017 and January 2018, double the number from the previous year, and the problem is getting worse, not better. Marks advised that the first thing anyone should do when they encounter anti-Semitism online or elsewhere is to report it to the ADL. “It may be a small thing, but it’s better to address a problem when it’s small than when it grows,” she stressed.

The ADL is best equipped to deal with online hate as well, and the most important thing is NOT to react. Engaging in dialogue just makes it worse. Remember that

what you say on line will follow you; be careful not to engage in any kind of speech you wouldn’t want your mother—or your employer—to see. And when online behavior violates the rules of media sites and cell phone service providers, report them. Consequences could even involve law enforcement.

NCJW members are modern-day Maccabees, fighting for justice. To commemorate that and the season, everyone got a silver hammer charm, along with cookies and latkes and material from the ADL on Navigating A Digital World.

NCJW is a volunteer organization, inspired by Jewish values, that works to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families and to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all through its network of 90,000 members, supporters, and volunteers nationwide.

# AARP Meetings

## Chapter 50 AARP

Chapter 50 AARP will meet on Tuesday, January 8th at 1:30 at Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet St. The program will be Barbara Jennings, Singer and Entertainer.

## Bellaire AARP

The Bellaire AARP Chapter #1374 will meet Monday, January 14, 2019 at 10:30 a.m., in the Parlor of Bellaire United Methodist Church, 4417 Bellaire Blvd. We will welcome John Edwards from the Bellaire Police Dept., who will teach us how to keep safe and tell us what is going on in Bellaire.

The meeting is free and people over 50 are welcome. Parking is at the front and rear of the church. For additional information contact Pat Zuchniewicz, vice president, (281)-467-8784.

## Bayland AARP

On Thursday, January 3, at 1 p.m., Bayland Park AARP will welcome Melissa Collins, Volunteer Engagement and Outreach Coordinator with Interfaith Ministries for greater Houston and Galveston counties. This program provides home-delivered meals to disabled adults and home-bound clients over 60.

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 St.

Refreshments are served following the meeting.

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# Italian-Inspired Dishes

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The ease and simplicity of shared dishes like Marinated Roasted Portobello Mushrooms with Olive Oil Agrodolce – a traditional Italian sweet and sour sauce – focuses on quality ingredients inspiring quality memories. The artistry behind the olive oil shines in Creamy Potato Leek Soup with Olive Oil Pistou and Sicilian Lamb Meatballs with Whipped Feta-Olive Oil Spread, each recipe celebrating the embodiment of Italian cuisine.

Celebrate the best of Italy in your own kitchen by incorporating Italian artisan-inspired dishes ideal for memorable moments with loved ones. Find more Italian flavors and recipes at [carapelliusa.com](http://carapelliusa.com).



### Marinated Roasted Portobello Mushrooms with Olive Oil Agrodolce

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 30 minutes  
Servings: 4

**Roasted Mushrooms:**  
2 lbs Portobello mushrooms  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 tsp fresh sage, minced  
2 tsp fresh rosemary, minced  
kosher salt, to taste  
ground black pepper, to taste

**Agrodolce:**  
1/2 cup red wine vinegar  
2 Tbsp honey  
extra virgin olive oil

To make Roasted Mushrooms: Clean and destem mushrooms, cutting large mushroom caps in half.

In large bowl, toss mushrooms with olive oil, fresh sage and fresh rosemary. Let mushrooms marinate 1 hour, tossing occasionally to absorb oil.

Heat oven to 400 F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Spread marinated mushrooms on baking sheets, making sure mushrooms are in single layer and not crowded. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.

Roast 30 minutes until mushrooms are crisped and golden brown at edges.

To make Agrodolce: In small saucepan over medium-low heat, bring vinegar and honey to simmer, stirring occasionally until honey dissolves.

Continue simmering 15-20 minutes until vinegar is reduced by half and is thick and syrupy.

To serve, place roasted mushrooms on platter and drizzle generously with Agrodolce and olive oil. Serve with choice of side.

### Sicilian Lamb Meatballs with Whipped Feta-Olive Oil Sauce

Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cook time: 15 minutes  
Servings: 4

**Sicilian Lamb Meatballs:**  
1 lb ground lamb  
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1/3 cup panko breadcrumbs  
3 Tbsp pine nuts  
2 Tbsp golden raisins  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
3/4 tsp kosher salt  
1/2 tsp ground black pepper

**Feta-Olive Oil Sauce:**  
1/2 lb feta cheese, crumbled  
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
2 Tbsp plain Greek yogurt

To make Lamb Meatballs:  
Heat oven to 375 F. Line large

rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In large bowl, mix lamb, olive oil, panko bread crumbs, pine nuts, raisins, egg, salt and pepper. Use hands to mix all ingredients together.

Roll mixture into approximately 36 meatballs about 1 inch in diameter and place on baking sheet.

Bake 15 minutes until sizzling and golden brown.

To make Feta-Olive Oil Spread: In food processor, blend feta cheese, olive oil and yogurt 30-45 seconds until creamy.

Serve Lamb Meatballs with Feta-Olive Oil Sauce for dipping or scooping.



### Rustic Tuscan Potato Leek Soup with Olive Oil Pesto

Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cook time: 50 minutes  
Servings: 6

**Potato Leek Soup:**  
3 medium-large leeks  
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 large garlic clove, coarsely chopped  
1/2 tsp kosher salt, plus additional, to taste  
2 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, peeled, diced 2-inch cubes  
6 cups chicken or vegetable broth

**Pesto:**  
1 packed cup fresh basil  
1 packed cup flat-leaf parsley  
1 medium-large garlic clove, roughly chopped  
3 Tbsp pine nuts or 1/4 cup walnuts  
1/2 tsp kosher salt  
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

To make Potato Leek Soup: Trim bulb ends and tough, dark green stems off leeks. Slice tender white and light green stems in half lengthwise then soak in cold water 10-15 minutes to remove dirt. Drain leeks, rinse well and slice into thick half-moons.

Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven or stockpot over medium-

low heat. Add leeks, garlic and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are soft, about 10 minutes.

Add potatoes and broth. Cover and increase heat to medium. Bring soup to simmer then uncover and continue cooking 30 minutes.

Using immersion blender, puree soup until smooth, or carefully ladle into standing blender to puree in batches. Taste and add more salt, if desired.

To make Pesto: In food processor, pulse basil, parsley, garlic, pine nuts, salt and olive oil to make chunky herb sauce.

To serve, ladle soup into bowls and spoon Pesto on top of each serving.



# Westbury UMC Troop 455/Pack 705 Continues the Tradition for the 2018 Deck the Halls Christmas Parade

On Dec. 15, neighbors and friends lined the streets of the small Westbury neighborhood, surrounded by Chimney Rock, Hillcroft, and West Bellfort.

The Deck the Halls parade is an event initiated in 1998 by Ember Mandell, as a multicultural neighborhood holiday celebration. It has grown from a block party, to a one street procession of kids on bicycles, to a 15 block parade which includes bands, art cars, floats, costumed characters, and community groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Deck the Halls Parade and Toy Drive. The event is coordinated by the Mandell family, which includes David, Ember, Noelle, Lyric, Sonnet, and Barbara Atkinson. The 2018 parade theme was Celebrating Life's Magical Moments.

The parade began with a baby shower and thrown parties down the route showcasing the highlights of their lifetimes. All of the participants are real people sharing their real moments, like a birthday, quinceanera, bar mitzvah, graduation, engagement, wedding, promotion, pet adoption, retirement, and more. This year a real wedding was included as Risa

and Rudy said their vows on the route!

For the 8th consecutive year, Boy Scouts from Westbury UMC's Troop 455 and Cub Scouts from Pack 705 participated as the official color guard in leading the 2018 Deck the Halls Parade. WUMC scouts along with Troop 455 Scoutmaster Larry Langlois, WUMC Charter Representative Donald Scherer lead this neighborhood parade of decorated floats, bicyclists, Leprechauns, Girl Scouts, Nativity characters, Hanukkah Harry, Pancho Claus, with mermaids, unicorns, griffins, fairies, costumed participants, local school bands, Westbury Civic club and many others along the one mile parade route.

It was a cool afternoon and all enjoyed the parade as hundreds of families lined the streets along the parade route to watch this spectacular parade.

Contact Westbury UMC at (713) 723-0175 for more info on how you can get your child involved in one of the great Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs sponsored by Westbury UMC for the past 62 years. The Westbury UMC scout room is located at 5200 Willowbend and West Bellfort.

The troop keeps the "outing" in Scouting 12 months a year. Come join the fun in 2019. All boys from the Parker Elementary, Kolter Elementary, and Meyerland Middle School area surrounding Westbury UMC are welcome to join Troop 455, Pack 455 or Pack 705. Email Tatankadon1@yahoo.com for info on how to join the scouting family, celebrating 62 years of scouting at WUMC.

*Troop 455 prepares to lead the holiday parade in Westbury.*



*Pack 705 marching in the Deck the Halls Parade.*



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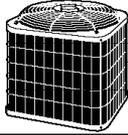
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**Mall from page 1**

borhood and are excited to make a long-term investment in local partners with our purchase of PlazAmericas," said Jason Baker. "We are purchasing this mall to build on a successful model to enrich the shopping experience, increase occupancy and enhance this important community gathering place. This is a complex project, which takes patience, and we are committed and dedicated to making it a one-of-a-kind experience for Houstonians."

Constructed in 1961, the mall opened only days after Hurricane Carla devastated the area. Future Sen. Ted Kennedy was the speaker at the opening ceremony. Pre-dated only by Gulfgate Mall and Meyerland Plaza, Sharpstown Mall was perched on the edge of Houston's suburbia. The area grew with the addition of Houston Baptist University, Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital, KPRC TV headquarters, and apartments housing thousands of young professionals.

The mall suffered a downturn as young professionals left the area to buy homes in the suburbs. The once "swinging singles" apartments turned to lower rent tenants to maintain occupancy. Crime increased in the area as well.

But the crowning blow was the opening of First Colony Mall just down the road in Sugar Land. Both Westwood Mall and West Oaks Mall succumbed to the pressure, but Sharpstown Mall soldiered on, reinventing itself in order to stay rel-

evant to both tenants and shoppers.

PlazAmericas has been expanded and renovated over the years since opening, including a second level addition, an 83,000-square-foot Mercado Marketplace anchor filled with numerous stores, entertainment, children's play areas, and more. PlazAmericas offers a diverse variety of retailers providing unique items and services, dining options, entertainment and kiosks. The mall offers monthly seasonal and cultural special events to engage with the community.

**New Year from page 4**

wear white for luck; at midnight, they jump seven times on the beach and throw flowers into the water. Boats filled with scented candles and flowers are put out to sea to honor the Brazilian goddess of the sea. Rice and lentils are eaten for good fortune.

This year, the Chinese will celebrate year 4716, using ancient traditions to welcome the year. Many of the traditions involve cleaning rituals – as in cleaning the house or your clothing or your car. The cleansing gets rid of bad fortune and ensures a new year filled with good luck. Eating oranges is said to bring good luck, and a fruit called Buddha's hand is often displayed in the home for good luck.

Aggies would be proud of a tradition in the Netherlands, where old Christmas trees are used to form bonfires, meant to get rid of the old and welcome the new.

In Spain, celebrants eat

12 grapes at midnight, one for happiness in the coming months. A sweet grape means a lucky month, a sour grape – not so lucky.

In Japan, "forget-the-year" parties are held, and at midnight Buddhist monks strike temple gongs 108 times representing the riddance of 108 human frailties. Buckwheat noodles are eaten to symbolize long life, so you want to find the longest noodle in the pot, then eat it without breaking it!

The Greeks hold a religious celebration featuring St. Basil's cake, reminiscent of our King's Cake. Vassilopitta is baked with a silver or gold coin inside, and the person finding it will have a particularly lucky year.

Fireworks have been part of the celebrations in many cultures, believed to chase away evil spirits and bring good luck.

In the southern United States, blackeyed peas and greens are popular, with the peas symbolizing good luck and the greens representing paper money. Cornbread signifies wealth.

Probably the most famous tradition worldwide is the dropping of the ball in New York City's Times Square. The ball was originally wood and iron, but the current "ball" is made of Waterford Crystal, weighs 1070 pounds and is six feet in diameter. It starts its descent at 11:59 p.m., arriving at the bottom of the tower at precisely midnight. Millions watch the symbolic descent, count down the seconds and cheer

when the midnight point is reached.

**Lifestyle from page 1**

tive chronic disease.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death globally, responsible for 38 million (68%) of the world's 56 million deaths in 2012. More than 40% of them (16 million) were premature deaths under age 70 years. Almost three quarters of all NCD deaths (28 million), and the majority of premature deaths (82%), occur in low- and middle-income countries. (Source: WHO GB NCD 2014)

Lifestyle medicine is emerging as the fastest growing medical specialty around the world. The American Association of Colleges of Medicine has recognized the Lifestyle Medicine physician as one of the top five emerging careers in medicine today.

"Gone are the days of diagnosing the ill, prescribing the pill and sending the bill, which has worked so well in combating communicable disease, but is hopelessly inadequate in the fight against chronic disease," said ABLM Executive Director Stephan Herzog. "Nourishment, movement, resilience and social connectedness are becoming the focal point of physicians and health professionals in addressing the underlying causes of chronic disease, with increasing numbers of medical schools starting to train their students in the principles of lifestyle medicine."

Bellaire resident Dr. Bandana Chawla, and her husband, Dr. Munish Chawla,

became board certified in this field in October.

Dr. Bandana Chawla graduated from UT Southwestern Medical school in 1998 and completed her residency at the Texas Medical Center. She is board certified in internal medicine. For the last 20 years, she has been at the Bellaire Clinic. During this time, her interest in Lifestyle Medicine piqued.

Similarly, her husband, Dr. Munish Chawla, who is board certified in Diagnostic Radiology, specializing in interventional and vascular radiology, also began showing an interest in Lifestyle Medicine.

"For 20 years, I've been watching my patients slowly progress with the chronic diseases that they have, in terms of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart diseases, to where we just kind of manage it and don't treat things," Dr. Chawla explains. "And so recently I've gotten interested in Lifestyle Medicine, because it actually allows me to reverse disease. I actually have patients with diabetes who I get to watch get off of insulin and decrease their medicine." Similar stories have inspired her to implement her practice into her own life, the lives of her patients, and, ultimately, the community through their nonprofit organization, Peaceful Planet Foundation, and their blog, embeepantphysicians.org.

Dr. Munish Chawla explains that there are six focuses within the field. Several are well-known, such as getting between 7-8 hours of sleep at night, exercising regularly, and avoiding risky behaviors

like drinking alcohol; yet others are more foreign. Mindfulness, which Dr. Munish Chawla clarifies as "bringing emotional well-being into your life, whether that means doing meditation, or yoga, or even gardening. Something that allows you to be mindful and present," maintaining healthy relationships between both family and communities, and keeping a plant-based diet are the other focuses. For a better idea of what a mindful life looks like, the doctors recommend watching the documentary *What the Health*.

"All of these things that they cover are evidence-based." Dr. Munish Chawla continues. "There's research showing that if you do mindfulness activities, it reduces your stress hormones. And when that's reduced, it influences your physical health and your emotional health." He believes that more people will follow Lifestyle Medicine, as it reduces the intake of pills and therefore has no side-effects. But people are largely unaware of the benefits, as they're not as frequently advertised as pills and other traditional medication.

Both doctors are excited to be a part of this emerging field of medicine. "Now, more than ever, we are realizing how interconnected everything is – our emotional health and physical health," Dr. Bandana Chawla says. They both agree that every doctor should have some background in Lifestyle Medicine, no matter which field they specialize in.

Lifestyle Medicine has the potential to significantly improve health for everyone.

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of Guy Neil Belden, Deceased, were issued on December 17, 2018, in Cause No. 467314, pending in the Probate Court No. 3 Harris County, Texas, to: Susan Elaine Belden.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: Susan Elaine Belden  
5726 Warm Springs  
Houston, Texas 77035

DATED the 26th day of December, 2018.

Kathleen Wiesenthal  
Attorney for  
Susan Elaine Belden  
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Continued on next column

## Houston Methodist Pilot Bridges Electronic Gap for Case Reporting

In collaboration with the Houston Health Department and Epic (electronic medical records company), Houston Methodist is the first hospital system in eight U.S. pilot sites to successfully test and launch an approach to electronic case reporting (eCR) that can automatically send case reports directly from a hospital to public health agencies. Reporting such cases is critical for disease surveillance and detection of possible outbreaks and trends.

Local and state health departments require hospitals to report cases of certain communicable and/or infectious diseases that are regu-

larly tracked. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with members of the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists, chose five initial reportable conditions for the pilot sites to electronically report - chlamydia, gonorrhea, pertussis, salmonella and Zika.

"We've worked tirelessly with city health officials and our electronic medical records vendor to improve public health surveillance. Digital Bridge partners have created an innovative approach that allows our hospital system to reduce the burden on our health care providers for meeting public health reporting

requirements," said Roberta Schwartz, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Vice President, Houston Methodist Hospital.

The eCR approach was designed by key stakeholders in health care, public health and health information technology under the Digital Bridge collaborative. Prior to electronic case reporting, communication between hospital systems and various levels of health departments was not as timely or streamlined.

Other locations that partnered with Digital Bridge to pilot electronic case reporting are in California, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Utah.

### Biodiversity Loss & What You Can Do

Christ the King Lutheran Church invites you to participate in a monthly environmental education web meeting series whose theme in 2019 is environmental issues and what you can do. On Sunday, Jan. 27, at 6 p.m., Kerri Crawford, assistant professor at the University of Houston, Department of Biology & Biochemistry, will speak on biodiversity loss. Biodiversity loss has been deemed one of the most significant environmental issues facing North America by the U.N.'s Global Environmental Outlook, the U.N.'s flagship environmental assessment. Professor Crawford will educate on the importance of biodiversity as well as the latest findings on biodiversity loss, so that you can understand the issue. She will also explain the actions you can take to preserve biodiversity. Please register for this talk. Contact Lisa Brenskelle at [gcs.lrc@gmail.com](mailto:gcs.lrc@gmail.com) with any questions about this talk.



Professor Kerri Crawford

### Republican Women Meet

Memorial West Republican Women will meet on Monday, January 14, at Ninfa's Restaurant, 14737 Memorial Drive. Come at 10:30 a.m. for coffee, speaker at 11 a.m. and lunch at noon. Steve Radack, HC Commissioner, Precinct 3, will be the speaker.

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### DEA Teen Leadership Academy

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Houston Division Office is proud to host its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual DEA Teen Leadership Academy. The exceptional group of teenagers who will be selected to join this program will gain firsthand knowledge about the many harms of drugs, drug addiction and a rare insight into what it takes to become part of the DEA team.

The Teen Leadership Academy will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, January 23-24 from 4-9 p.m. Only 30 high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 will be selected for the Academy. All applications must be submitted by January 9. All attendees will be required to undergo a limited criminal background check in order to participate.

The application can be found at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019DEAHoustonTeenLeadershipAcademy](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019DEAHoustonTeenLeadershipAcademy). Contact Reid Reichle at [Reid.c.reichle@usdoj.gov](mailto:Reid.c.reichle@usdoj.gov) with questions.



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