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West Austin News

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AUSTIN SPEECH LABS *Gala*

Stroke Survivors Share their Stories

Over 400 generous guests gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel Austin on Friday, May 6th, for Austin Speech Labs' 13th Annual One Word At A Time Gala. It was a gorgeous evening full of food, drinks, and inspiring stories.

Shilpa Shamapant, President & Co-Founder of Austin Speech Labs, began the program by sharing her journey from being a young speech-language pathologist to co-founding Austin Speech Labs to help stroke survivors receive the therapy they desperately need to regain their communication skills. "Stroke survivors are our heroes," said Shamapant. "Stroke is devastating, but you know what? When I work at Austin Speech Labs, their positive attitude, their willingness to work hard every single hour...they teach us not to give up."

A highlight of the night– stroke survivors **Candace Barrow, Tom Leonardis,** and **Jocelyn Harris** shared their stories and urged audience members to "donate, donate, donate" to Austin Speech Labs. Silence fell over the room as each speaker took to the stage. Guests were completely captivated by the stories, honoring each speaker with a well-deserved standing ovation.

After the three survivors shared their stories, emcee and Austin Speech Labs Board Member **Jody Rudman** invited guests to fill out donation cards as Keynote Speaker and Austin Speech Labs Board Treasurer **Robert Hollingsworth** drove home the organization's impact and assured donors that their contributions would be well spent.

Carolyn and **Jack Long** and **Miriam** and **Jim Mulva,** along with an anonymous donor, generously matched the first $100,000 raised at the event. With 59 event sponsors, this year's Gala went a long way to helping Austin Speech Labs provide affordable services to those in need.

Clayton Schaefer and Candace Barrow with children Casey and Calvin Schaefer

Tom Leonardis

PHOTOS AND ARTICLE BY ZOE THOMPSON

Sangeeta Sethi and Shelley E. Adair

Andre and Dr. Jussara V. Woiler

Christy Oliver and Dick McCarroll

Lindsey Palmer, Winona Bacud, and Francis Schorgl

Regent's Troop 25 Eagle Scout Court of Honor

By Anne DeVries

This spring, a Court of Honor was held at All Saints Church in Austin to celebrate the promotion of 11 young men to the rank of Eagle Scout. The ceremony included family, friends, Eagle Scout Charge Mr. Scott Chapman, officiating minister Rev. Josh Eby, and special guest speaker, Representative Chip Roy, US Congressional District 21.

During his speech Congressmen Roy told the audience, "There are about 60,000, give or take, Eagle Scouts across the country this year of about 4 million and change, High School graduates". He placed them in an "elite company". Congressman Roy also referenced that over the history of our country there have only ever been "about 2.6 million" to reach the rank of Eagle Scout. He spoke to the boys about the need for leadership in our country. He told them, "The world expects us to lead because we are leaders". His parting words to the new Eagle Scouts were:

"You are blessed to be scouts, you are blessed to have gone to Regents, you are blessed to have grown up in the greatest state in the greatest country in the history of the world. Take that forward and make us proud".

The journey to becoming an Eagle Scout is a long and arduous. Steps include fulfilling 21 merit badges, assuming leadership roles within the troop, personal references, and completing an Eagle Scout Service Project. Requirements must be met by age 18.

Troop 25 Eagle Scouts and their corresponding Service Project include:

Coley Cowden: Table Settles for Refuge Ranch

Elijah DeVries: Remembrance Garden Restoration for Austin Pets Alive

Caleb Eby: Chicken Coop for Burke Center for Youth

Russell Feller: Fire Station Display Board

PHO EAGLE SCOUT PROMOTION

Front row: Isaac Nowrasteh, Coley Cowden, Charlie Valdez, Russel Feller, Caleb Sewell, Congressmen Chip Roy. Second Row: Ethan Sigmon, Jackson Hames, Cutter Knauth, Caleb Eby, Elijah DeVries, Grant Piercy

Jackson Hames: Wooden Picnic Tables and Bird Bath for Burke Center for Youth

Cutter Knauth: Equipment Garage for Burke Center for Youth

Isaac Nowrasteh: Compost Bins for Burke Center for Youth

Grant Piercy: Fitness Course for Burke Center for Youth

Caleb Sewell: Picnic Tables for Burke Center for Youth

Ethan Sigmon: Wooden Benches for Burke Center for Youth

Charlie Valdez: Truck for Burke Center for Youth

Regents troop 25 was started in 2010 by John Childers, Mark Franz and James Long. In 2014, Dr. Kurt Knauth became the Scoutmaster and his wife Laura assumed the Advancement Chair position. The vision and commitment of these founders to building the troop have engaged and enriched the lives of numerous young men who have, by their commitment, provided the Austin Community with countless service contributions.

Current leadership for Troop 25 includes scoutmaster Steve Davidson, Advancement Chair Debbie Lowe and

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WESTSIDE STORIES

Claude with his wife Susan at a Symphony Ball

Claude Ducloux

BY FORREST PREECE

Claude Ducloux is a Renaissance man. He is a fantastic singer and pianist who could have had a performing career, but he opted for the law, and he has excelled in his profession.

To say that Claude grew up in a cultured environment is an understatement. Both of his parents – Walter and Gina -- were virtuoso musicians, pianists, and educators, and they were multilingual. The atmosphere in his childhood home was one of constant intellectual and musical input and stimulus, accented by the international circle of friends that surrounded his parents. It was normal to hear foreign languages being spoken on the phone or to company. Claude says, "We had wonderful dinner parties with fascinating people from all walks of life." Gina was the consummate host, "who could plan and throw a dinner party in just hours." His father was a conductor, author, translator for Gen. George Patton, and music director for the Voice of America from 1948-1953; was educated at the University of Munich, where he earned a Ph.D.in 1935, and then a conducting diploma from Vienna Academy of Music in 1937.

Claude and his siblings began their lives in Los Angeles, in a house where classical music was constantly in the air. His father was on the faculty of the University of Southern California, which had one of the two best student symphonies and the finest student opera department in the nation. It was a demanding job, even for a man with Walter's formidable talent, and he would occasionally work his way through a difficult musical score on their home piano as he prepared for a concert.

No story about this remarkable family and their time in Austin would be complete without mentioning the lasting effect Dr. Ducloux had on our town's arts scene. During his time as a professor at UT, he joined with opera enthusiast Joseph McClain in pursuing what many thought was an unattainable goal – starting and maintaining a professional opera company in Austin. With the backing and sage advice of the legendary philanthropist and arts lover Alfred King, these men and some other key players "dared to dream" and in 1986, the curtain went up on the first production of Austin Lyric Opera (now called Austin Opera).

His mother had a cadre of voice students which Claude and his siblings overheard from behind the closed curtains of their living room. He listened often, and learned vocal techniques which were a part of her curriculum. Looking back on his childhood, Claude says that his ongoing piano lessons were the most important part of his life, along with acquiring the discipline of daily practice.

Much of the mental tenacity that Claude needed to excel in the legal field came from his training in music as a child. His father would often lie on the couch listening to Claude practice on piano and often made him stop and play a particularly difficult passage ten times. "It was brutal, but the process taught me concentration and discipline which I am sure still influences all my work today," Claude says.

His training was strict, but couched in a positive atmosphere. Both his parents encouraged Claude by insisting that he had a special talent for piano, and that encouragement got him over the early-teens hump when most kids quit their music lessons and go on to other pursuits. Now, he really appreciates what he learned. He avows that playing the piano has brought him more joy than any skill he has ever acquired. "And it has lasted a lifetime," Claude says.

It was an idyllic West Coast life – music, fine schooling, and teenaged fun -- and the family was thriving. But in 1968, the University of Texas at Austin began recruiting Dr. Ducloux to take over their symphony and opera programs. It took some time and there was a good deal of back and forth on the negotiations, but eventually, UT made him a deal he couldn't refuse, and they moved.

When that happened, Claude was 16, heading into his senior year in high school, and Los Angeles was the center of his universe. To say that he was concerned about leaving his friends and trading his home in one of the biggest, most urbane cities in the nation for a smallish town in Texas is putting it mildly. However, when the family arrived here and Claude enrolled at McCallum High, he got over the initial shock and found out that Texans are welcoming, the city had more to offer than he thought, and he became acclimated in short order, actively participating in school activities, the drama club, and the school chorus.

Claude graduated from high school in 1969 and enrolled at UT, where he graduated in three years. After enlisting and completing his service in the US Army 1st Cavalry Division, Claude entered St. Mary's Law School in San Antonio, earned his degree, and started his career.

Given all the intense training Claude had in music, I had to ask him if he had considered making it a profession. He instantly said, "Oh, my gosh, yes! I thought growing up I was absolutely going to be some sort of professional entertainer/actor/singer."

He had been in "Oklahoma" in Los Angeles opposite Lucy Arnaz, sang in Longhorn Singers at UT, and then played the piano five nights per week in San Antonio at The Old San Francisco Steak House in law school. "I loved going to work at night. I never tired of it!" But Walter was at odds with that career direction for his son. He came from a long line of lawyers, and really wanted Claude to take up that mantle. In retrospect, Claude agrees that being a lawyer has allowed him to have the absolute best of both worlds. He has performed all over the country, played piano for a living early on, and entertained at hundreds of events. But he also enjoyed the financial benefits of a thriving law practice. "So, in summary - dad was right." And to be honest, a good trial lawyer has to be an adept performer, so it all worked well.

Opening number for a Bar & Grill Show 2002. They had adapted a song from "Grease," so the costumes included letterman jackets and poodle skirts. Claude is far left, front row.

Claude's parents, Walter and Gina, in 1978

Claude is licensed in Texas, California, and Colorado and almost all his work has been as a trial lawyer and appellate lawyer here in Texas, with a broad general practice as well. He is board-certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in both civil trial and civil appellate law. The State Bar of Texas has rewarded him with numerous accolades for speaking, writing, pro bono service and legal ethics. His writings have been published more than 120 times.

Like most lawyers, his favorite cases and appeals were those where no one gave his client a chance of winning. One was a sports injury that happened during a national track meet at Memorial Stadium. In that case, he had the formidable task of suing UT Austin for damages. Claude chuckled and said that four of the 12 jurors actually had season football tickets for the Longhorns. But his client won a unanimous verdict and was awarded every penny Claude had asked for.

In another trial in Dallas, his client was ordered to pay $1.8 million on a claim Claude believed was illegal. When the winning party offered to settle for less, Claude told his client not to accept the deal. It was a tough battle, but he took an appeal on the matter all the way through to the Texas Supreme Court. The appellate courts agreed with him and reversed and rendered a "take nothing" judgment absolving his client. Now Claude can relax and look back on that one with pride. But at the time, his stress level was off the chart. "I lost a lot of sleep during that case," he says.

Another way Claude has merged his talents is the part he has played in creating the Bar & Grill Singers. He had always enjoyed doing parody songs and in 1991, in preparing for a large Bench-Bar conference, he met Paul Carmona and Alan Waldrop, lawyers with similar musical talents. They formed a seven-person group with some other attorneys, and that was the start of a long and fruitful association, which has generated funds for good causes. They did a full "Bar & Grill Show" at the Paramount Theatre every fall from 1992-2006 and performed in 16 states over two decades. For three years (1992-94), the State Bar of Texas sponsored a contest at the Annual State Bar Convention pitting the five biggest bar associations to deliver their best 15 minutes of entertainment at the black-tie dinner. The winners received $5000 for their home bar association. Claude says, "It got intense, but The Bar & Grill ran away with 1st Prize every year, and (predictably) the contest was discontinued."

Looking back on how much mentoring and instruction Claude received during his childhood, it is understandable that he would want to do the same for younger members of his profession. Helping fellow lawyers through difficult practice situations, teaching them to avoid mistakes, and how to improve their skills has been the most satisfying part of his most recent career. Over the past six years, he has had the opportunity to present Continuing Legal Education for lawyers across the nation. Claude makes a national webcast presentation to all 50 states on the third Wednesday of the month, and he has created about 40 different presentations covering ethics, writing, trial and appellate skills, as well as how to run a law office.

"I have had the joy of traveling to speak live to Bar Associations in more than 30 states," Claude says. In fact, while we were communicating, he was in Missouri to speak at their annual meeting the next day.

As we were finishing our conversation, Claude made a statement about our country's current situation. "In this particularly difficult time in our country's history, I am certain that the legal profession, and our dedication to the rule of law, is crucial to the survival of our nation. In a time of massive disinformation, the one American institution that needs to survive is our courts: the place that requires you to bring evidence and tell the truth. If we want this 250-year experiment in democracy to survive, we need ethical, vigilant lawyers to be its guardians."

By the way, just after I finished my draft of this story, the St. Mary's Law School Alumni Board had a meeting and elected Claude as "The 2022 Distinguished Law Graduate." He was "pretty excited" about

Photo of Bar & Grill Singers from 2012

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Bart Stephens

General Manager
Rachelle Topete

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Granite Media Partners

Staff Writers
Alana Mallard,
Forrest Preece,
Zoe Thompson

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Mary Ellen and Roger Borgelt, Ernest and Sarah Butler, Kilyong and Paul Natho, Jason Jarl

Dr Ernest Butler, Dr Robert Butler

Austin Symphony's Ambassadors Council Hosts Spring Fling

On May 26, the Austin Symphony's Ambassadors Council celebrated the success of the Austin Symphony's 111th Concert Season with a "Spring Fling" held at the home of **Roger** and **Mary Ellen Borgelt.**

More than fifty Symphony supporters welcomed and mingled with the Ambassadors, a new group of donors committed to the ASO and its mission.

ASO Board Member **Roger Borgelt** introduced the Ambassadors, delivered written remarks from **David Pratt**, Austin Symphony CEO, and explained how classical music has served as witness to historic times through the ages.

"Where diplomats now brag about the size of their summits or warships, in the 17th and 18th centuries, ambassadors then compared the grandeur of one another's concerts and competed to showcase their best symphonic performances in honor of their monarchs," Borgelt stated. "It is impossible to think of music through the ages as simply entertainment; history shows it bears witness to our times."

New Ambassadors attending were **Janice Abrams, Dr. Robert Butler, Pat Cherico, Andrew Heller, Jeanne Hoisington, Andrea Horner, Brandon Hunt, Jason Jarl, Gail Kodosky, Jeff Kodosky, Judge Lora Livingston, Dr. John McFarlane, Kilyong Natho, Jonathan Sessler** and **Melanie Walters.** Unable to attend were **Joy Authur, Chris Cheever, Kathryn Grube, Joe Holt, Nicholas Martinez, Robin McKeever, Rachel Sibley** and **David White.**

Danny Powell, WSL President Katie Kaighin, Jim Kaighin

David Bock, Ambassador Jason Jarl

Knight Alex Pettitt, Knights Chancery Wroe Jackson

Jeanne Hoisington, Jeff Kodosky, Sarah Butler, Gail Kodosky

Dale and Larry van Sickle, Mary Ellen and Roger Borgelt, Pamela and David Bock, Katie and Jim Kaighin, Brandon Hunt and Leslie Schiemann

Ambassadors Kilyong Natho, Claudette Hartman

Ambassador Andrew Heller and Mary Ann Heller

Melanie Walters, John Fibiger

New Leaf Agriculture:

New Leaf farmers Pierre, Gaudance, and Esther with volunteer Cailin Caven and farm manager Matt Simon

My CSA share from New Leaf Agriculture

A CSA with a mission

By Alana Moehring Mallard

Matt Simon and New Leaf's weed-eater flock of hens

I've enjoyed getting my vegetables from a Community Supported Agriculture local farm for years. For about a decade my vegetables came from Johnson's Backyard Garden, and for the last year from Good Apple and then New Leaf Agriculture.

I fell totally in love with New Leaf Agriculture when I learned that the farm is part of Austin's nonprofit Multicultural Refugee Coalition and provides "dignified, fair-wage work" to refugees, most of them farmers in their homelands. Multicultural Refugee Coalition also has a textile side, called Open Arms Studio that provides advanced sewing training and fair-wage employment for refugees.

But about this farm where I get my vegetables. New Leaf Agriculture is a 20-acre sustainable, organic farm off a rural road between Manor and Elgin. Matt Simon has been the farm manager since 2020, coming from Green Gate Farms where he got lots of sustainable farming experience.

"I like manual labor," Simon told me, and added that he founded a start-up recycling service for downtown bars and restaurants and that he worked for Compost Peddlers for awhile.

Simon explained to me the farm's use of its moveable chicken trailer/coop to eliminate weeds organically and prepare the soil for planting. About 60 hens help the farm this way and give the farm eggs as add-ons for CSA members like me.

New Leaf Agriculture plans a new program in the fall, called Traditional Provisions, which will allow refugee farmers and their families to have plots to grow their native vegetables to sell in their communities.

Multicultural Refugee Coalition's goals for 2022 are these: to have 40 refugees, asylees, and immigrants employed in fair-wage, dignified work; to have 20 refugees, asylees, and immigrants advance their skills through industry related trainings; and to have 30 refugees, asylees, and immigrants mentored in life skills such as English, digital literacy, financial literacy, and more.

Jessica Graham is MRC's board chair, Steve Moakley is vice chair, Eric Kaufman is treasurer, and Michelle Monroe is secretary. Board members are Sandep Gyawali, Kumail Hasan, Rakhee Jain, David Neff, Lindsay Burnette, and Haris Hadziselimovic. Meg Erskine is CEO and co-founder of Multicultural Refugee Coalition.

And if you're interested in getting New Leaf vegetables every week or two, go to MRCaustin.com and put your name with mine on the Fall 2022 CSA waitlist. Pickups are Thursdays or Sundays at locations all over town. If you want to volunteer at the farm, you can do that, too, by signing up at mrcaustin.com.

PHOTOS ALANA MOEHRING MALLARD

Peter AND *Rebecca* HAS A NICE RING TO IT!

Rebecca and Peter

Richard and Nancy Jennings of Austin, Texas are pleased to announce the engagement of their granddaughter Rebecca Ann Jennings to Peter Nicholas Zekany of Atlanta, Georgia.

Peter Zekany is a Certified Public Accountant with PricewaterhouseCoopers in Atlanta and a graduate of Kennesaw State University. A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Peter is the son of Donald and Barbara Zekany of Ann Arbor.

Rebecca Jennings, a graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington, is a Compliance Lead with ClinOne in Phoenix, Arizona. Born and raised in San Diego, she is the daughter of Richard, Jr. and Marie Jennings of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The wedding will be held at the Westlake home of Rebecca's grandparents, Richard and Nancy Jennings.

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The Tarrytown Patriotic Parasols group was ready for action in the parade. Left to right: Lori Holt, Tammy Johnson, Susan Phillips, Elizabeth Williams, Karol Boes, Alden Sutton, Penny Sutton, Lisa Thomas, Corry Johnson

Sal and Pam Uglietta had their car in festive form.

Richard Luciano had a red, white, and blue theme going with his restored T-Bird.

Scout the pooch heard that treats would be thrown along the way!

Tarrytown Fourth of July Parade was a BIG SUCCESS

BY FORREST PREECE

The weather was sunny and bright, and the 2022 Tarrytown July Fourth Parade had an enthusiastic turnout. **Zach Knight**, the main organizer, was much in evidence at the formation site, Tarrytown Texaco. Starting at 8:15 a.m., with his megaphone in hand, he maneuvered all the vehicles and dance groups into marching order. At 9 a.m., he gave the signal, and the lead vehicles started west on Windsor, went over to Pecos, and then turned north to Reed Park.

To add to the excitement, participants played stirring marches and other tunes through car speakers. Wrapped candies were tossed to the crowds along the route and children of all ages grabbed them. Many people in the parade had beautifully restored and decorated vintage cars—including an Imperial, a Mustang, a Continental, and a sky-blue Thunderbird. **Chris Uglietta** was proud to be driving his Deep Eddy Racer, which will soon be racing at the Circuit of The Americas.

Knight said that he was especially grateful to their sponsor Tivity (Book a Chef Online). This local business paid for roughly $1000 in printing and outreach. **Clare Frizzell**, an outstanding community volunteer, helped with making Official Tarrytown Parade commemorative merchandise. Cub Scouts and leaders from Pack 20 were valuable community support volunteers. Other supporters included West Austin Neighborhood Group, Charisse Sayers, Tarrytown Texaco, Heritage Title, Casis Elementary, Peter L. Pfeiffer of Barley|Pfeiffer Architecture, and Beerplant.

Dance groups were a big part of the fun. **Karol Boes**, an organizer of The Patriotic Parasols, talked about how their troupe came

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Anonymous driver with Craig (front seat) and Candace Lill and their sons Cole and Liam in a magnificently restored Continental

PHOTOS BY LINDA BALL AND FORREST PREECE

Michael, Linnie and Bates McCown

Misty and Clare McCarthy

Vance and Layla Harkness with Justin (in stroller) and Hendrix

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Stephanie and Todd O'Neill with their decorated Mustang.

Debbie and Grant Willson

Front seat: Ann Moody, Martha DeGrasse (driver). Back seat: Sara Marler, Andy DeGrasse, and Lacey Schmelzle

PHOTOS BY LINDA BALL AND FORREST PREECE

Zach Knight, the organizer of the parade (standing, far left, with megaphone) and his crew

Chris Uglietta with his Deep Eddy Racer

Pull right in for the Parade!

TARRYTOWN PARADE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

to be. On July 4, 2019, she and the others were enjoying their Tarrytown United Methodist Church Sunday School party, discussing the holiday. She mentioned that she would like to put together a group for the Tarrytown Parade the following year, like the lawn chair teams in other parades. But she was thinking of umbrellas -- so the idea of "The Patriotic Parasols" was born. She went online, found umbrellas she liked in the White House Gift Shop, and bought all that they had in stock.

Covid-19 canceled the 2020 parade and when she heard about the 2021 parade, there wasn't enough time to put a routine together. This year she solicited help from church friends **Shannon** and **Dan Kennedy**'s high school-aged daughter, **Victoria**, who choreographed and taught them a routine with their parasols. "We had a blast today," Boes said. "Most of us have no dance experience, but the crowds in the Tarrytown Parade were so welcoming to us, which made us feel good!"

Oliver Ring (holding Winnie) with Lillian and Shannon Ring and Elizabeth Williams

These socks made a fashion statement for the special day.

This dog's feet needed protection on the pavement.

The Bike Brigade led the way.

Tarrytown Dance Force strutted along in fine fashion.

Highland Park neighborhood celebrates *Independence Day*

Complete with a truck and firefighters from Station 19 on Balcones, about 200 Highland Park neighbors gathered at Highland Park Elementary and then strolled, pedaled, wagoned, cycled, skated, drove, scootered, and walked a four-block area back to the school. Bikes, cars, trikes, scooters, strollers, wagons, people, and dogs were all decked out in lots of red, white, and blue to celebrate July Fourth.

The annual event was sponsored by Highland Park Balcones Area Neighborhood Association, and neighbors visited on the shaded play pad south of the school afterwards to enjoy popsicles, breakfast tacos, and cold drinks while kids enjoyed making chalk drawings.

Naumann family

PHOTOS AND ARTICLE BY ALANA MOEHRING MALLARD

Lottes and Temperton families

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Jennifer Smith, Susan Rauch, Parvi Shah

Spillman family

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Marcie Golliher and Jennifer Smith

Highland Park neighborhood celebrates *Independence Day*

Kunkel family

Behara and Saenz families

MacWatson family

Chalk art under the play shade

Ryan family

Michael with Owen and Tyler

Golden family

Marcie Golliher with Collins and Merritt Ley

Harper and Cooper Spillman

Dena Houston

Doermann family

PHOTOS AND ARTICLE
BY ALANA MOEHRING MALLARD

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Anurekha Chadha, Harish Gagneja, Punit Chadha, Sunena Gagneja

Michelle Brandl, Mary Katherine Stout, Veronica Hernandez, and Hillary Cumberworth

Chris and Tricia Moose

Toast of the Town Fundraiser KICKS OFF

A few months back, on Thursday, May 5th, Toast of the Town kicked off their month-long series of fundraiser events at the historic Commodore Perry Estate. The party was made possible by a team of 12 hosts, including **Megan & Chris Cobb, Ericka & Justin Freels, Mary Katherine & Stephen Stout, Jessica & Justin Taylor,** and **Dianne & Joe Wade**.

An intimate crowd of 25 guests arrived at the estate's grand entrance just after 6. Upon arrival, guests were treated to elegant drinks, desserts, and light refreshments that perfectly complemented the party's gorgeous setting. Guests were also treated to an exclusive viewing of artwork by local artists **Will Klemm** and **Hillary Cumberworth**.

Guests also heard from Neal Kocurek Scholarship recipient **Quinton Pham**, who graduated from the University of Texas in 2021, and is well on his way to achieving his dream of a career in medicine. Proceeds from the party go toward the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship, a college scholarship, and mentorship program that helps passionate students like Quinton pursue their dreams of a health-related career.

Hosts Mary Katherine Stout (Vice-Chair), Dianne Wade, Jessica Taylor, Erica Freels, and Megan Cobb

Justin Taylor and Cara Abazari, with Kathy and Randy Taylor

PHOTOS AND ARTICLE BY ZOE THOMPSON

Justin and Erika Freels

Joan Admirand and Shawn Cox

Jennifer and Jane Flieller

Dianne and Joe Wade

Chair Chandra Hosek and Husband Chris

Michelle Brandl and Hillary Cumberworth

Quinton Pham

Craig and Felicia Hester and St. David's Foundation Vice President of Community Programs Julian Huerta

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Cara Abazari, Quinton Pham and Erica Salinas

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512.663.8881 | JONNA@REALTYAUSTIN.COM

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West Austinites celebrate Independence Day in Leakey on the Frio River

By Alana Moehring Mallard

Fifty years ago this summer, Herb and Judy Wilson joined some friends at River Haven on the Frio River just south of Leakey, Texas, for a weekend. The next year they invited their friends Art and LaNell Coltharp to join them. Every year the Wilsons and Coltharps invited a few more folks to join them, mostly from their Sunday School class at then Highland Park Baptist Church, and pretty soon the weekend morphed into a week-long stay that always ended with Leakey's July Jubilee parade, celebrating July Fourth.

This year the group included about 80 people over the week-long stay at River Haven and nearby Leakey Springs – newcomers and old timers alike. Some, like LaNell Coltharp and Herb and Judy Wilson's daughter DeeDee Wilson with husband Gregg, have decades and decades of the tradition.

LaNell led the early morning parade in River Haven for all the bike-riding and scootering kids, but she handed off walking in the July Jubilee parade down U.S. 83 in Leakey. This year Katalina Neas, Bell Morton, and Katie McCann took over carrying the banner in front of the group's lawn chair brigade, and Rusty Shelton led the lawn chair brigade marchers.

And full disclosure here -- my grandson Zach Mallard-Schobey and I have gone to Leakey with this group for 15 years, and my 10-year-old granddaughter Katie McCann has come with her parents Scot and Kimberly for eight years. It's a tradition of tubing and lolling and group meals and memories that we have come to love.

LaNell Coltharp leads July Fourth parade at River Haven above the Frio River

Rusty Shelton leads River Haven's lawn chair marchers in Leakey's July Jubilee parade