

Donkeys dress up for holiday photoshoot

By KATE THURMOND

Berry Springs Park and Reserve's celebrity donkey duo will make a special appearance for a holiday photo opportunity on Saturday, Dec. 5.

The event will run from 9 to 11 a.m. in the park and will be free to attend. Volunteers will be selling wildflower seeds that were collected from Berry Springs. Proceeds will support the park.

The photoshoot will allow families and individuals to take pictures with the two decked-out donkeys in front of a holiday-themed set with hay bales for seating.

Last year, Lil Bob and Pedro drew 40 people for holiday-themed photos at the park. President of the Friends of Berry Springs and donkey carer Karen Schnell said the event was so popular that they decided to hold it again this year.

Donkeys have been a feature of the park for several years and tend to attract amateur photographers on a regular basis.

"They're so popular," Ms. Schnell said. "They're the first



Residents can take holiday photos with the Berry Springs donkeys Pedro and Lil Bob on Dec. 5.

thing people go see when they get to the park. You can't help but want to look at them."

Both donkeys were donated to the park, and live in a special

compound near the historical John Berry mill. Lil Bob was a pet who was brought to Berry Springs by a former employee (also named Bob), while Pedro

eventually made his way to them after being rescued from a kill pen.

Ms. Schnell is part of a team that makes sure the donkeys are taken care of, which entails brushing them and making sure they are socialized and happy. She has also been one of the people training them to wear Santa hats in honor of the event.

"They've been a little uncooperative," she said, but added that she knows they'll be ready for the event, just like last year.

Ms. Schnell said groups will need to maintain six feet of distance from each other, and encouraged people in attendance to wear masks while waiting for their turns. They will also have hand sanitizer and wipes available.

"It's so wonderful we get to do this," she said. "It's so nice to see how much people enjoy the donkeys and get energized to be outside."

Anyone wishing to visit Pedro and Lil Bob may gather at the "Donkey Compound" at the old barn by the first parking lot in the park at 1801 County Road 152.

Nurse honored during pandemic

Covid-19 rates in Texas hit record highs recently, putting a renewed strain on health care professionals.

2020 was designated "International Year of the Nurse" by the World Health Organization,

in honor of the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. Challenges of the pandemic have made it an especially fitting year to honor nurses.

Janet Groner, BSN, RN, CNOR (Bachelor of Science/Nursing, Registered Nurse, Certified Perioperative Nurse) works at Ascension Seton Williamson, a 200-bed, Level II Trauma Center in Round Rock.

The Georgetown resident recently shared insight into nursing at this difficult time.

"As Covid-19 was first seen in other places, Ascension Seton Williamson had time to prepare for the oncoming tsunami, as much as possible," she explained.

An interdisciplinary team was put together and plans were put in place. Extra supplies were received and policies and procedures were developed. Staff education was occurring and special operating rooms were designated for use with Covid-19 patients.

An anteroom, attached to Covid operating rooms, was built and a special air ventilation system was put in place. New lab equipment was purchased to provide rapid Covid testing results.

New responsibilities were created for the perioperative staff when all elective surgeries were cancelled.

Ms. Groner played the assisting nurse role in a video for the anesthesia group, showing the proper technique for the donning and doffing of PPEs (personal protective equipment).

Ms. Groner became a nurse after she received a scholarship from the local Veterans of Foreign Wars in her small Oklahoma hometown.

"It was divine intervention! Nursing turned out to be a true calling and a career," she said. "I fell in love with surgery during my training. I love the organization, planning stage and the team that works to make the procedure go safely and smoothly for the best outcome," she explained. "I love the completion of a successful surgery when you know that you have helped to improve someone's life substantially. I love being a friendly source of knowledge for the family, when they need answers and comfort."

Ms. Groner was recently honored at "Recognizing Nurses" an annual award celebrating Central Texas nurses.

More than 500 nominations were narrowed to 51 finalists in 17 categories. Ms. Groner was a finalist in the surgery category. The final winner in each category is usually announced at a red-carpet gala but Covid restrictions necessitated a virtual presentation November 5. The video can be seen at www.recognizingnurses.org

Ms. Groner pondered the future while reflecting on the past.

"Technology has become very advanced in the OR since I started over 40 years ago," she said. "We have different forms of energy and chemicals used to cauterize tissue/control bleeding. We have complicated machines.

"There are robots to assist with minimally invasive surgeries, navigation systems for complicated spinal surgeries, voice activated video equipment, scopes that peer into the belly or a small cavity, such as a blood vessel or duct, and computerized everything!"

The Daily Nurse, The Pulse of Nursing posted an article Jan. 20, 2020 stating the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the U.S. will need more than a million additional nurses by the year 2026.

The increased use of TeleMedicine for minor illnesses and prevention care has been one change brought on by the pandemic.

"The core of nursing remains the same," Ms. Groner stressed. "Nurses will continue to work hard, every day, to make life better for others."



CONFINED TO QUARTERS

Linda Dwyer

Look to the Valley for sweet, juicy citrus

One of my favorite parts about wintertime is the fresh citrus available. Have you ever received a box

of Texas grapefruit for a Christmas present? Those are a great treat!

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is known for citrus production. Orchards were established along the coast as early as the 1880s. The Ruby Red grapefruit was developed in the late 1920s and patented in 1934, leading to a rise in the Texas citrus industry. At

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

Kate Whitney

its height in the 1940s, the Texas citrus industry had more than 100,000 acres planted throughout the Valley.

Severe freeze is the most limiting factor in citrus production, and Texas has had its share of hard freezes throughout the last half century. A few major freezes in 1983 and 1989, along with economic factors and urbanization, led to a decline in citrus acreage.

Today, Texas has about 27,000 acres of citrus production grown in a three-county area in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Occasionally, I received questions from folks who want to grow citrus in Williamson County. You have to be a little bit brave and stubborn to grow citrus this far north, but it can be done. We have some new varieties now that can handle the colder temperatures, and with the right care you can grow citrus in your backyard.

Satsumas are a type of mandarin orange that can handle cooler temperatures in our area. You can also look for kumquat, calamondin, and Changsa tangerine. Limes, Meyer Lemon, and citrons can also grow here, but will

be severely damaged if temperatures drop to 23-28 degrees.

Try planting citrus in large pots that can be brought inside during cold weather. Citrus plants that have survived a few seasons in Texas might be put in the ground if you can find a sunny location that is protected from northern winds.

For more information about growing citrus, visit the Fruit and Nut page on the Aggie Horticulture website: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut/> or contact Kate Whitney, at the Williamson County AgriLife Extension Office at 512-943-3300.

Library, patrons adapt to changes

The Georgetown Public Library has seen many changes to our service model in 2020 as we

have worked to operate both safely and effectively through the pandemic. We have now returned to offering curbside pickup of reserved materials, and the building is closed to the public at this time. The shift back to curbside-only service follows the Nov. 11 announcement from the Williamson County and Cities Health District that the county had moved into the Orange Phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. The county has since moved into the Red Phase, characterized by uncontrolled spread.

We miss seeing our patrons' faces inside the library — well, we were actually only seeing the tops of their faces, above their masks — but the change to curbside will help keep our library staff and patrons healthy as the pandemic numbers increase, and we appreciate the support we've received from our community.

We are checking items out and bringing them to our cardholders curbside — and our cardholders do love curbside pickup. We are checking out close to 1,000 items

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

per day. We have a new approach to curbside pickup this time.

Here are the steps to using the service.

• Reserve your items by visiting library.georgetown.org and then logging into your account in our online catalog or by contacting the library.

• Wait for notification via email, text or phone, depending on your account settings. Your items are not ready for pickup until you receive the notification.

• Pick up your items during our curbside pickup times: Monday-Friday from 10 a.m.–noon and 2–6 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m.–noon and 2–5 p.m. (closed Sunday). When you arrive, park in a numbered spot in our Ninth Street parking lot, and follow the instructions on the sign to call or text us. Please open your trunk or hatch and remain inside your car. We will check your materials out and bring them to you. This will take a few minutes, and we appreciate your patience. Please return checked-out items in the drive-through book return slot on the Ninth Street side of the building.

Here are the steps to reserving your items ahead of time for

curbside pickup.

• Visit library.georgetown.org, and log into your account in our online catalog using the number on the back of your library card and your 10-digit phone number.

• Search the catalog to locate an item you would like to check out and click on the title. Click "Reserve this Item" and then specify that you would like to pick up the item at Georgetown. Also specify how you would like to be notified when the item is ready for pickup, then click "Place Reserve."

• If you need help reserving an item, just call us at 512-930-3551, and we'll reserve it for you.

• And if you don't know what to read next, and you miss the serendipity of browsing the stacks, try the Your Next Read service. Complete the form at library.georgetown.org/your-next-read or call 512-930-3627, and leave a message with info about what you enjoy. We'll provide some recommendations.

Finally, and with a lump in my throat, I've saved for last the real headline at the library for the month — and even the year: Last week it was announced that Eric Lashley, our award-winning, innovative, compassionate, inspiring director of library services

for the past 20 years, will be retiring at the end of January to become the new executive director at the Central Texas Library System, a nonprofit that serves more than 200 member libraries in the state.

If you are like those of us on the library staff, it will take awhile for that reality to sink in. It is hard to imagine our library without Eric. We are very happy for his success, and we could not ask for more, as he's given the library his all throughout his tenure, but we will miss him terribly. It's very good that we have a couple of months before the change takes place.

And it's very reassuring that we have Sally Miculek, who has expertly served as assistant director of library services for seven years now, to serve as our interim director while the City of Georgetown conducts a search for a new director. Sally will keep us afloat so we can keep offering library services at the same high level the community has come to expect.

Dana Hendrix is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

Palace performers dazzle with Broadway hits

Broadway aficionados enjoyed *Hits of Broadway* presented by Georgetown's Palace Theatre Nov. 15. The Sunday matinee in the Palace Courtyard featured beloved songs from seventeen immortalized Broadway shows.

The stellar cast opened with a song from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Familiar Palace performers singing cherished show tunes was a sweet antidote to coronavirus blues.

Kirk Kelso charmed the audience with a bit of soft shoe as he sang "Razzle Dazzle," from *Chicago*. Wendy Zavaleta perfectly

PLAY TIME

Linda Dwyer

portrayed pent up frustration as she pondered "Whatever Happened to My Part," from Monty Python cult favorite *Spamalot*.

Kendra Banks delivered attitude and sass in "Big, Blond and Beautiful," from *Hairspray*. Ms. Banks reappeared, decked out in a banana-laden island dress to sing "Mamma Will Provide," from *Once On This Shore*. Her creative costumes added punch and pizzazz to the performance.

Cliff Butler wowed the audience with his powerful rendition of "Heaven on Their Minds," from rock opera *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. The troubled words of Judas were sung with heartfelt

passion.

Samantha Watson's snappy "You'll Be Back," from Broadway hit *Hamilton* felt like a promise that we too will be back one day.

Rick Felkins' emotional quest to "follow that star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far" was spine tingling. "The Impossible Dream," from the iconic *Man of La Mancha*, is music magic.

Damon Brown sang "Telly," from *Matilda the Musical* with mischievous glee.

Michelle Cheney brought a fun comedic touch to "As We Stumble Along." The song, from *The Drowsy Chaperone*, seemed especially relevant as we stumble along through 2020.

The Palace tribute to beloved Broadway concluded with the

talented cast coming together to sing music from *42nd Street*. The forced shutdown of Broadway has been devastating and listening to the magic of iconic musicals was bittersweet.

The Palace kicked off their new season with musical cabarets, outdoor movies and an outdoor production of *Steel Magnolias*.

Starting Nov. 27, they opened *A Tuna Christmas* indoors on the Springer Stage

Go to georgetownpalace.com for a schedule of upcoming events. Updated policies and procedures to protect staff, volunteers and audience are in place and can be found here: <http://www.georgetownpalace.com/indoor-safety-protocols>