

KING WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

Volume 8, No. 5

www.kingwilliamassociation.com

June, 2012

More about the Meerscheidt Family

In last month's newsletter, Belinda Molina wrote about the Axel Meerscheidt house that once stood next door to her house on E. Guenther. Sadly, the Meerscheidt house burned in the 1950's. Belinda has communicated with Neale Rabensburg, a descendent of the Meerscheidt family, who has generously shared excerpts from the memoir of Erna Meerscheidt. Erna, daughter of Axel and Olga Meerscheidt, grew up in the house.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

By Erna Meerscheidt
Weeks Bouillon

".....but after my grandfather's death [Dr. O. Remer of New Braunfels], grandmother [Franciska Schleier] moved to San Antonio where several of her children had settled. My father [Axel Meerscheidt] had a darling little house built for my grandmother across the street from this large home in the Meerscheidt Addition [515 E. Guenther, later changed to 101 Crofton]. Our home was really a mansion, built in red brick with white rock, around curved windows, and the curved entrance door. It had a marble foyer and beautiful, stained glass windows. The mansion has now been turned into a chapel by the Catholics. It was of French architecture, located in an exclusive residential district named after my father, the Meerscheidt Addition.

"You see, my father had studied architecture at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He had been sent from Texas, where the schools were very poor at the time, to live with his Aunt Emma Koerber and his Uncle Karl, an attorney. Their home was in the Black Forest in Germany, Bad Harzburg. He was around thirteen or fourteen years old

when he went over [to Germany from Texas] and remained about ten years. He did not practice as an architect in San Antonio but used his knowledge of it by opening up exclusive residential districts and having a beautiful house or two built in each to encourage others to buy property and settle in these districts. He did very well, and traveled to Europe with his whole family every few years.

"In the evenings in the summer when it was so very hot, we children were allowed to stay up late. It would have been impossible to sleep anyway. With mother and father, we would sit on the upstairs long gallery and sing. The southern skies on a warm night were very dark with many stars twinkling like lightning bugs. Father often went down to the little corner beer parlor two blocks away and brought back a little pail of beer. Mother and father would each have a large glass of beer so it was real cozy. I don't remember that we children had anything to drink, although we might have been given lemonade.

"The property of the estate ran down to the river about one hundred feet back. Large pecan trees grew in the back. There was a steep drop to the river. We had a heavy rope with a huge knot at the end on which we took turns sitting. The other children would run way back, give a push and out we would swing over the river's bank. This was fun, and we could hardly wait for our turn.

"We had a great deal of help—in the house and yard—and German cooks my father imported from Germany when on a trip there. Dressmakers also came into our home in those days since clothes were made at home and not in factories as now.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Michael Shearin Guarino

It has been a busy and intermittently wet spring for all of us, but the rain is the herald of good news.

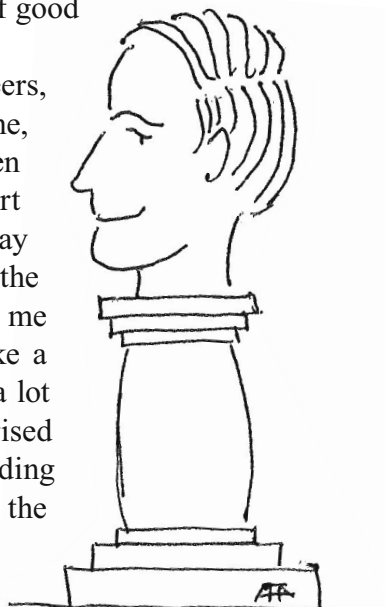
Thanks to the army of dedicated volunteers, and the forbearance of everyone in the Fair zone, the King William 2012 Fair appears to have been a smashing success. There will be more to report when final accounting is completed, but I can say that the Fair topped last year's proceeds, so all the effort truly was rewarded. The Fair staff made me an ID badge on a lanyard (making me feel like a belled cat) but the label allowed me to receive a lot of first-hand feedback from visitors. I was surprised by how many out-of-towners there were, including an entire family from Houston who'd piled into the car on a whim and come to try the Fair. I ran into an attorney from Bermuda who tells me she came last year and now will make a visit to King William an annual event on Fair day.

Even the parade seemed to be moving more smoothly, partly due to its reduced bulk, and partly, no doubt, to the lack of interference from speeding fire engines. The only one in the parade this time was an antique, the one we expected. Not that there was anything wrong with the arrival of the SAFD last year - as usual they were doing their competent and careful best to minimize damage.

We now have an Executive Director, Cherise Bell. You'll be seeing Cherise with more regularity after she starts full time with us the first week of June, but she has been in and out ramping up for the job, and spent Fair day looking at that complex operation from inside out. Cherise has the ideal blend of talent, experience and qualification for this important new position. She was second in command to Anne McGlone at the Office of Historic Preservation; she's written a number of National Register nominations; and she has come to us from her most recent job as planner and preservation officer for New Braunfels. She's also managed staffs, dealt with real estate and insurance issues, and teaches yoga. We might need a group rate for the Board.

We have a new Board member too. Andrew Sherwood has joined us to fill out an unexpired term. Andrew and his wife and daughter live on Cedar Street, as it turns out just around the corner from yours truly. He is an attorney, and we look forward to his able service for King William.

Summer is being signaled already, not so much by the heat as by Janice De Lara's wonderful concert series. The first, in case you missed it, was on Mother's day, featuring the Austin Piazzolla Quintet playing lush tangos in the gathering dusk. Picnics on the green grass, light reflected out of the sky on the rippling river, popping corks and strawberries. I agree with the herons circling the concert: King William is a wonderful place to be.



CONTRIBUTORS Susan Athené, Lupita Barrientos, Alan Cash, Bill Cogburn

LAYOUT Angela Martinez

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion(s) of the Board of Directors of the KWA.

Editorial guidelines are available online at kingwilliamassociation.org.

KING WILLIAM ASSOCIATION

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San Antonio, TX 78210
210-227-8786

OFFICE HOURS

Wednesday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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In the fall of 2002, the King William/Lavaca Tree Project was established as a cooperative program between the two neighborhood associations.

Since that time 489 project trees have been planted along street curbs throughout the two neighborhoods in an area roughly from I-37 on the east, S. Flores on the west, what was then Durango on the north, and the railroad tracks that cross the S. St. Mary's underpass at Brackenridge High School. The City of San Antonio recently planted 42 oak trees along Carolina St. from S. Presa to I-37. These are irrigated by bags around each trunk that need to be filled periodically. These were added to those watered by the tree project during last year's drought bringing the total number of project trees to 531.

Project funding has been provided by the King William and Lavaca Neighborhood Associations, and contributions from neighbors, local businesses, and organizations such as the Mission Trails Rotary Club. In addition, many trees were also provided by the City of San Antonio through its Parks and Recreation Department.

The initial planting began in 2002 with 42 trees planted along S. St. Mary's St. from Pereida St. to the S. St. Mary's St. underpass as part of the Mission Trails National Parkway. Tree wells were installed as part of the Parkway and the tree plantings were adopted as a local contribution. Private contributions from generous residents of both neighborhoods paid for the trees. Residents also planted the trees with help from probationers.

And the rest is history. Over the last 10 years trees have been planted along street curbs in any space large enough to dig a hole. Residents have helped a core project committee in both planting and maintaining the trees. Maintenance included putting mulch around the trees and watering each weekly for up to two years.

The 2012 planting season just ended may be the last. There are still many trees being maintained but the number of potential planting sites has gotten smaller. This is because underground utilities, overhead wires and traffic signs limit planting sites.

There have been a couple of high points over the years. As the result of a cooperative effort between both neighborhoods, the City, and the service station at I-37 between Florida and Carolina Sts., 13 trees now border 3 sides of the station. This effort was spearheaded by Lavaca resident Michelle Stress and her husband Brian. They organized volunteers to help with planting and Brian arranged for equipment to dig the holes. Also thanks to brothers Oscar and Robert Alvarado, Lavaca residents, and their construction equipment, holes were cut in the parking lots at the Goodyear garage at S. St. Mary's and S. Alamo and at Beethoven Hall at 422 Pereida, and a total of 12 trees were planted.

Although planting activity is decreasing, you will see trees being watered and mulched for some time to come and perhaps a new tree now and then.

- Alan Cash

CALLING ALL NEIGHBORHOOD ARTISTS

Artists living within the boundaries of the King William Historic District (tinyurl.com/kwdistrict) are invited to apply to exhibit their work at the KWA office. Exhibits run for two months. Email king.william@sbcglobal.net or drop by the office for an application.

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Jump-Start Performance Co.

27 years of theatre in your community

As snazzy apartments go up and new businesses open shop, it feels like a great time to be a part of a neighborhood with a rich history of restoration, re-visioning & strong community ties! It also feels like a good time to re-introduce a flagship organization that has been proudly rooted in the 'hood for well over a decade.

Many of you have visited the Blue Star Arts Complex from time to time... maybe you've even ridden your bike down past the beautiful River extension. But if you haven't visited Jump-Start Performance Co. in a while, maybe you should! I moved to the neighborhood in 1994 to intern with Jump-Start and loved it so much that I've stayed ever since. I can't imagine living and working anywhere else.

Did you know that Jump-Start Performance Co. (JSPC) has been around for 27 years? We are a theatre company that is homegrown in San Antonio and well regarded nationally and internationally. There are several things that make us unique in a city that is increasingly loving and investing in its arts, and we are one of your neighbors!

JSPC was one of the first local theatre companies to make and stage original work, and remains one of the very few SA theatres committed entirely to the creation of new work today. Our ensemble of multi-talented company members have created over 500 original pieces: musical plays about San Antonio history, multi-media film noir plays, solo shows about politics and culture, ensemble pieces about personal history, international issues

and performance evenings that are just plain fun. We create work that is family-friendly sometimes and at other times controversial and necessary. We premiered an adaptation of Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* that toured nationally and is still performed



today. Many of our shows regularly make the San Antonio Express-News' Top Ten Best of Theatre. We keep our ticket prices low (\$12-15) and we have a great volunteer program.

Another big piece of our mission is our dedication to arts education. These are the programs most of you may be familiar with and they are just as important to us as our artistic work. Bonham Academy was one of the pilot sites in 1991 for our unique after-school program *Historia y Cuentos*, in which a small group of students (sec-

ond through fifth grade) are selected to work with us once a week over the course of their elementary school life, gaining skills in self-expression, creativity, problem-solving and teamwork through a multi-disciplinary approach to art. "Miss Shimi" also comes to classes during the school day to work with students on syllabus-based creative projects that promote learning. Bonham Academy is also the only school that has an Arts Day with us at the end of the school year, thanks to the PTA and Friends of Bonham. We are proud to have helped "raise" several generations of Bonham Academy kids and hope to raise more! We work at several other elementary schools, residency programs and even with a program for adults with chronic mental illness.

We also showcase a local artist in our gallery monthly, run a dance-lab program that is the envy of other cities, and host Celebration Circle and Classic Theatre in our funky industrial space. We get a lot done with our resources and are proud to contribute to the Cultural Arts District that our neighborhood has become.

So check out our website www.jump-start.org, friend us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. Please consider making a tax-exempt contribution to us - the City of San Antonio will match every dollar! Finally... don't be a stranger! Come take in a show. There's always something for every taste. See you at the theatre!

- S.T. Shimi

OUT IN THE GARDEN

with Alan Cash

At this writing we are still in Stage 2 water restrictions, but in "down-town" King William I have recorded 4 1/8 inches of rain in my gauge since May 1. That is to be celebrated but is no reason to be wasteful. Considering the level of the aquifer and area lakes, we are still in a drought. Go to www.saws.org to keep up with current restrictions.



Crepe myrtles are beginning to bloom and if you need a tree that comes in any size you need, it is a good selection. There is a list of 50 varieties and their characteristics in the bottom of the bulletin board on the front porch of the King William office. These are good choices for our area. Select a tree to fit the place it will be planted. If you already have a crepe myrtle, cut off the shoots sprouting from the base. These take nutrients from the upper limbs.

If you need a good ground cover for a space that is on the shady side, try mountain pea. Some is growing along the front sidewalk at 410 Madison. You may need to call around to find a nursery that carries it.

With the warm and damp weather, fleas are becoming a problem. Consider putting out beneficial nematodes. These are small organisms which are mixed in water and then sprayed over the lawn. They come packaged in a sponge, literally by the millions. Most good nurseries should carry them.

Since the weather has continued to be mild, summer blooming plants can still be planted. Periwinkles, zinnias, butterfly weed and salvias prefer sunny locations. Pentas, coleus and impatiens do well in bright shade and even some morning sun. All of the above plants will attract butterflies to the garden.

The Landa City Library has undergone renovation and is a pleasant place to spend some time. Besides the usual services provided by the library, the grounds have been beautifully landscaped with garden paths and a large playground for children. There is also a very artistic arbor created by King William neighbor, Carlos Cortes. The Landa Library is at the corner of Shook and Bushnell Sts. just west of Trinity University.

Garden Note:

If you want to be happy for a lifetime, plant a garden.

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friends of bonham



The school year is winding down in a busy fashion. On May 5, Friends of Bonham held a successful Fourth Annual Book Fair at Barnes & Noble at San Pedro Crossing. Ballet Folklórico performances by kinder, first and second graders, Chess Club demonstrations, art activities, science demonstrations and storytelling entertained and informed the diverse crowd. The highlight was a reading by San Antonio's first Poet Laureate, Carmen Tafolla. Events also included a raffle for a teacher prize, featured Spanish and English books for summer reading, and more. Students who attended got a free dress day. A portion of Barnes & Noble sales that day earned books for Bonham's dual language library collection.

Cocktails!

Friends of Bonham is having a final fundraiser before summer on June 2, emphasis on the fun. Cocktails! will be held in the elegant interiors and on the leafy grounds of Craig and Allison Clingan's beautiful King William Manor Bed & Breakfast. The Clingans will provide a plentiful array of delicious appetizers displayed on Peter Zubiato's handmade pecan tables, and the cocktails and a cocktail-making demonstration will be provided by retired legendary San Antonio bartender Michael Campbell, PhD, of Liberty Bar fame. The fabulous eclectic jazz sounds of Royal Punisher will provide the soundtrack. Tickets are \$50 per person, which includes food and, of course, the Cocktails!

Come out and join the Friends of Bonham for a good time and a good cause on Saturday, June 2 from 7-11 p.m.

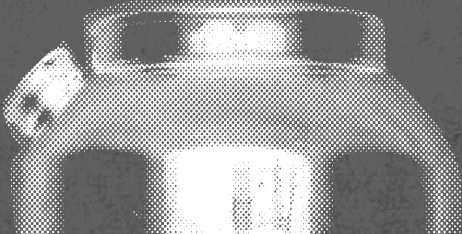
With a view toward fall

Plans are being made for a full slate of fundraisers in the fall. In the meantime, you can support Bonham through Fund a Bobcat. Your contribution of \$45 will go directly to providing weekly art lessons for grades K-5, weekly dance lessons during PE for grades K-8, and drama, music and educational field trips. We greatly appreciate your support.

- Michael Campbell




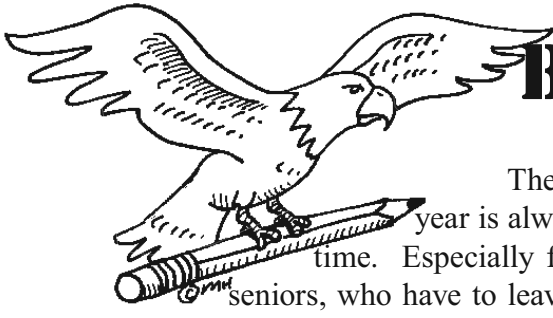
San Antonio's first Poet Laureate (and Bonham parent) Carmen Tafolla reading poetry at Friends of Bonham Fourth Annual Book Fair at Barnes & Noble.



Join **FRIENDS OF BONHAM** for a cocktail!
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BACK AT BRACK BY LUPITA BARRIENTOS

The end of the school year is always a bittersweet time. Especially for Brackenridge seniors, who have to leave home but will have bright futures ahead of them thanks to their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

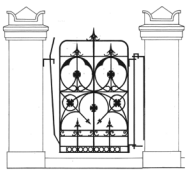
A wall in Brackenridge's science wing is graced with a multitude of circle construction paper cut-outs. On each paper is the name of a student, the name of a college, and the amount of grant and scholarship money the student has received from that school. In the fast few months, the thirty foot long wall has gotten very crowded, and has hardly any room left. This colorful wall is a tribute to not only the seniors and their accomplishments, but the dedication of teachers, counselors and advisors who have worked so tirelessly to fill the wall and make sure every number is well into the thousands. Four seniors in particular - Diego Solis, Juan Flores, Diana Luna and Itzel Rosales - have received close to full rides to Texas A&M, Connecticut College, Middlebury and Dartmouth, respectively.

Meanwhile, the underclassmen are a little less joyous. Thanks to the new STAAR test, the past months were filled with endless exams and field tests, not to mention the occasional AP, ACT and SAT test. These tests occur on Saturday mornings and during school, pulling students out of classes close to four times a week in some cases.

Students are stressed and have even resorted to completely guessing on field tests that do not affect their grades, focusing on the future-determining SAT, ACT and AP exams instead. No one can blame them, as spoken by a sympathetic administrator, "With all this testing, who has time to actually learn?"

Nevertheless, I can safely say every Eagle is looking forward to the glorious day of June 6, the last day of school. Summer camps, programs, jobs, and volunteer opportunities are on the schedule for most students. A special opportunity is being granted to seven students who will be given paid internships at CPS Energy, where they will have a guaranteed job after they graduate. Juniors have many college camps to choose from, and a few are already signed up for summer sessions at A&M, Princeton, Dartmouth and West Point.

Freedom is almost within grasp, and the anxious shoe tapping and pencil biting seems to be getting louder daily. The official countdown has been placed in the center of the school and as the number gets smaller, the smiles on students' faces get wider. It's only a matter of time until that final 4:15 p.m. bell rings and the unanimous screams of joy will sound throughout the campus, and the doors will seem to shudder as teenagers rush to liberation in a powerful wave.



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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER: Andrew Sherwood

Andrew Sherwood has been elected to the KWA board of directors to fill the remainder of the term of Charles Schubert, who resigned. Andrew, his wife Sara and their daughter Lottie have lived in King William for the past six years.

Andrew was born and raised in the medical center area. He attended Trinity University and the University of Texas School of Law before returning home to practice law at Cox Smith, where he has focused his practice in the areas of real estate and corporate finance for the past 11 years. Andrew has a strong interest in urban development and historic preservation. He participates in the Downtown Alliance through Cox Smith and is a member of the Urban Land Institute. Sara and Andrew lived in a downtown condominium for four years before moving with their new baby to their house on Cedar Street in 2006. Andrew and his family enjoy the proximity of their home to Southtown restaurants, the Mission Reach and Bonham Academy, where Lottie is in kindergarten.



NAME THAT FUNGUS!

The recent rains have encouraged all kinds of new growth. Here's a strange "brain" fungus that we haven't seen before, growing on the remains of a Chinese Tallow tree. Christopurr, 15 lbs. of feline sweetness, gives some perspective on its size.



Newsletter Submissions Wanted: Do you have a story to tell? A neighbor to praise? News to share? A general interest column to launch? Submissions and contributions to the KWA Newsletter are welcome! Please send to king.william@sbcglobal.net.

Advertising: Promote your business directly to your King William neighbors by advertising in this newsletter! Rates, sizes and details are in the newsletter section of our website at kingwilliamassociation.org, or call 227-8786, or email king.william@sbcglobal.net.



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San Antonio River Authority Presents at River Rally 2012

The River Rally 2012 was held in Portland, Oregon from May 4 – 7, and the conference organizers, River Network and Waterkeeper Alliance, have claimed it was the largest gathering ever of clean water advocates. Over 750 attendees from 16 countries attended to participate in over 95 educational workshops and intensive training sessions. The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was represented by Steven Schauer, Manager of External Communications, and Lee Marlowe, Assistant Manager of Watershed Operations, who together gave a presentation on the Mission Reach Project.

The audience for the Mission Reach presentation came from across the United States, including Oregon, Wisconsin, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, New Mexico and California. Shelly Backlar, Executive Director of the Friends of the Los Angeles River, had this to say following the Mission Reach presentation, “So often in Los Angeles, people refer to our creating something similar to the San Antonio River Walk, a destination with mass appeal. Seeing what you and your team [SARA and its project partners] have done in San Antonio is just about the perfect combination of designing for both urban and more natural environments. The Mission Reach stretch is truly an inspiration. The way you have created a naturalized habitat using wild-flower seeds, woody vegetation and trees using GPS to guide your plantings and the decision to use adaptive management to let nature take its course is just amazing. I am looking forward to sharing ideas with you, not only with regard to your revitalization and programming successes, but also to gain a better understanding of how the San Antonio River Authority model might be adapted and used in Los Angeles.”

The River Rally 2012 was a great experience for Schauer and Marlowe, providing an opportunity to raise international awareness about the Mission Reach Project and the other wonderful work being done in the San Antonio River Watershed. SARA is already considering presentation proposals for the River Rally 2013. For more information on the River Rally, please visit: www.rivernetwork.org/programs/national-river-rally.

Playing in the Dirt

We are fortunate to have a National Trust Home Museum in King William. As you may know it is Villa Finale, home of Walter Mathis, at 401 King William St. It is only one of two homes in the neighborhood open on a regular basis that allows visitors to see what life was like when it was first established. Although there is a permanent staff, many functions are done by volunteers. I am a grounds volunteer and usually spend a few hours each week helping to maintain the garden, doing what I call "playing in the dirt." It is relaxing and satisfying.

Few organizations have enough volunteers. The purpose of this article is to solicit volunteers to help with the grounds at Villa Finale. You don't have to be a gardener to help, just give a little of your time. The work is not difficult, and Orlando Cortinas, who is in charge of the garden, provides guidance on what needs to be done. A remake of the grounds is presently underway adding an irrigation system and new trees and plants. When completed we will be gardening and not doing yardwork. There is a difference. So if you would like to help, call the Villa Finale Visitors Center at 210-223-9800 and sign up.

- Alan Cash

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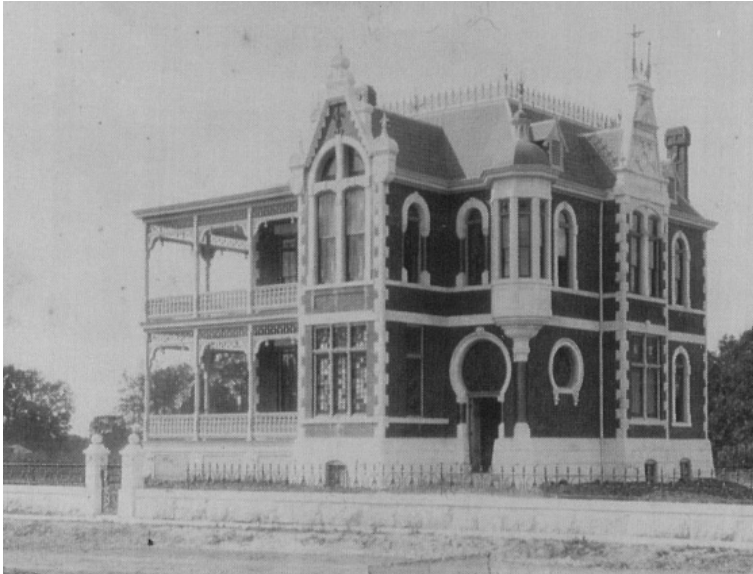


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More about the Meerscheidt Family

continued from page 1



“I wore white dresses until I was four or five years old. The ironing woman would hang rows and rows of beautifully ironed frocks and petticoats and panties on lines in the 'ironing kitchen' as it was called. It was a beautiful sight to behold. It was a kitchen because there was a stove to heat the irons—no electric irons in those days.

“We went to Germany when I was five years old, then the next summer we traveled through many parts of Europe bringing to me additional unforgettable memories. I shall never forget sitting with my sister Emita and a tutor, a young, energetic teacher, on three wrought iron chairs with a wrought iron table very near the Radau River's edge, studying arithmetic, Bible study, German reading and the writing of German script.

“When we returned to my Aunt Emma's home after the following summer's travel to say good-bye to her, the tutor asked my father to take him back to San Antonio. He offered to pay all of his own expenses and father took him.

“Not long after we returned to San Antonio, my father heard at the German social club he belonged to that the Menger Hotel on the San Antonio River needed a greeter to meet all travelers. The tutor applied, got the position, and did so well that he soon became the manager of the social activities of the hotel. He made many new plans such as serving meals outside along the river bank at noon and in the evenings. At night the Japanese lanterns, which he instigated, lit the river bank. This became a tradition continuing to this day all along the San Antonio River as it winds through the city.”

Pack 765: Good Citizens



Local Scout Pack 765 recently visited City Hall and met Mayor Julián Castro, City Manager Sheryl Sculley and Police Chief William McManus. The Mayor presented each boy with a 'Good Citizen' badge.



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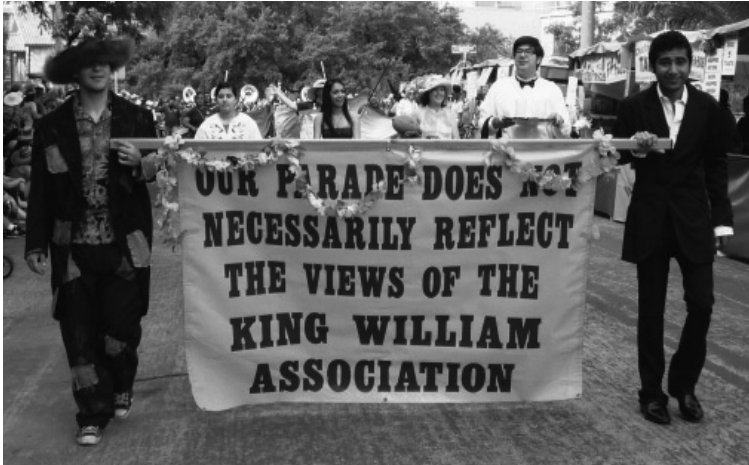
All Y Early Learning Centers are licensed by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services and a CCS Vendor.



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KING WILLIAM *fair*

Glimpses 2012





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KW Fair Chief Parade
Wrangler Sue Duffy

June Calendar

- 6 KWA General Mtg - 7:00 p.m. - Blue Star Brewery
- 13 Deadline for July newsletter submissions
- 13 KWA Board Mtg - 6:30 p.m.
- 25 Newsletter mailing prep - 6:00 p.m. - KWA office