



No. 9, April 2015

What's Happening in LG

A Free Local Newsletter

Sponsored by the Locust Grove Arts Alliance

Easter is April 5



Second art tour scheduled April 18

The LGAA Spring Art Tour will take visitors to three unique art destinations in town on its second annual Art Tour from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 18.

Enjoy a visit to the textile art workshop of Fern McFarland, the Willard Stone Museum, and the Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry (ROMP).

Tour guide Pam Quantie will again be driving the tour bus if visitors prefer not to drive their own vehicles. Pick up a map at the VFW from 9 a.m. to noon on the day of the show. The tour bus will leave at 10:30 a.m.

No fee will be charged, but donations may be given at any of the sights.

First stop on the tour will be at McFarland's sewing studio. In a 90-minute presentation, visitors will view several demonstrations, including how to make a ten-minute table runner, a purse on a square, a quick-as-a-wink pillow, a satin stitch appliqué, and a pirate messenger bag.

Jean Giesecke will con-



ART PROJECT. . . Local textile artist Fern McFarland holds up one of the projects, "purse on a square," which visitors to her studio will be instructed on how to make during their visit to McFarland's studio, a part of the LGAA Second Annual Art Tour.

struct sewing projects. Donna Gwartney will teach the "make it take it circle" in which visitors will construct a fabric flower from materials provided to use as a lapel pin or hair ornament.

Lunch will be served in McFarland's sunroom overlooking Lake Hudson. For \$5, visitors will enjoy turkey, ham, or chicken

salad sandwiches, served with chips, desserts, cranberry punch, and tea. The lunch is ongoing during the tour times.

While lunching, take a look at the Home Community Education (HCE) hope chest stocked with linens, flatware, dishes, a quilt, and much more, and enter the drawing to win it. Tickets are \$1 each and 6 for

\$5. The winner will be notified in September. Proceeds go to the scholarship fund for two Mayes County seniors.

The second stop on the tour will give visitors a chance to interact with poetry at ROMP. Check out the various stations and exhibits: alliteration altar, poetry poker, block poetry, poetry chairs, door poetry, Craig's List poetry, poet tree house, and the Walt and Emily porch.

There also will be a poem treasure hunt and cookie refreshments available.

Visitors will also be able to see the posters created for National Poetry Month by Mayes County students. The posters were judged at the annual ROMPFest held April 4.

The final stop on the tour is the Willard Stone Museum.

View the works of world-renowned sculptor and Oklahoma Hall of Fame artist. On display also are the works of his son Jason Stone, master artist.

ROMPFest Saturday

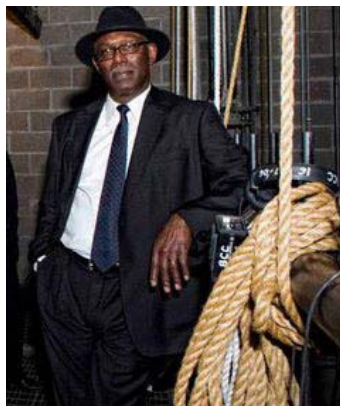
The Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry presents ROMPFest from 2-5 p.m., April 4, at the museum in rural Locust Grove.

The festival is in its second year and celebrates all things poetry during National Poetry Month. The winners of the annual poster contest will also be announced on this day.

A special guest this year is Bartlesville poet and actor Morris McCorvey. He will entertain festivalgoers with some of his poetry, talk about poetry, and be the Grand Marshal of the ROMPFest Prairie Poetry Parade across the meadow.

McCorvey's one-man portrayal of Paul Robeson received widespread critical acclaim. His poetry has won many awards and he will be reading from his "Bus Station" poems collection. He is the founder of the Dustbowl Players and Westside Players, a student theater group.

In 2002, McCorvey was



MORRIS MCCORVEY, poet and actor, will be the ROMPFest 2015 special guest.

commissioned by the Oklahoma County Metropolitan Library to write an original one-man play about the life and work of Oklahoma City native Ralph Ellison, most known for his novel *Invisible Man*.

This is a free event, although donations are always welcome. The museum is nonprofit, and donations are tax exempt.

Directions to the museum and other information can be found at the website rompoetry.com or by calling director Shaun Perkins at 918-864-9152.

Library Friends meet April 21

The Friends of the Locust Grove Public Library will meet at 5:30 p.m., April 21. Anyone interested in the library is invited to attend.

An Easter Egg Tree will be on display from March 19-April 4 to solicit donations for books.

Patrons can pick an egg from the tree, fill out the form inside, make a donation, and dedicate a children's book to the library.

The group is also accepting donations of gently used books for its 2nd annual Fall Book Sale. Books should be dropped off at the library at 715 Harold Andrews Blvd.

LGAA meets April 8 at VFW

Members of the Locust Grove Arts Alliance will meet at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 8, when they make final plans for the LGAA Second Annual Art Tour.

The art tour will be April 18 from 11 am. to 4 p.m.

Anyone who is interested in getting involved with the group is invited to attend the one-hour meeting.



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Meet LGAA President Jennifer Henson

By Roxann Perkins Yates

"Art is in the numbers."

The recently-elected president of the Locust Grove Arts and Alliance Jennifer Henson firmly believes this to be true.

Henson has been an accountant at Refrigeration, Air conditioning, and Engineering Corporation (RAE), located in the Mid-America Industrial area in Pryor, for more than 16 years.

"Math is my passion. The corporate accountant position has been very beneficial for me in rounding out my experience in all aspects of business, such

as, payroll taxes, 401k administration, and financial reporting," Henson said.

Henson uses her creative energy to support work events.

RAE Family Foundation is a non-profit organization "I donate my time to. The employees of RAE Corporation developed this as a way to give back to our own coworkers when they are in a time of need. We started with a home remodel project for one of our engineers who had been diagnosed with cancer," Henson said. She added that RAE Family Foundation will pay for groceries, rent, or utility



President Jennifer Henson prepares to lead another meeting of the arts alliance.

bills for employees in need on a confidential basis.

"Company fundraising has now grown so much that a \$500 scholarship is granted to a graduating senior," Henson said.

"We participate in the annual DAM JAM bicycle route hosted by the Pryor Area Chamber of Commerce, and I have met people from all over the world at our rest stop located at the Low Water Dam Store."

She has mastered her art on the job, and the business

is thriving, but she believes there's an art deficit in Locust Grove—the community she calls home.

"Our town was once a thriving community. Stores were open all along Main Street. We have an amazing community, but no one on the outside knows it. Main Street looks run down. The business owners do what they can, but they need our help," Henson said.

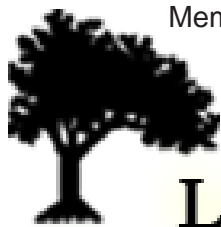
"Unfortunately, Founder's Day is the only town-lively day. We should be hosting more community events and selling ourselves.

"This community supports four large schools, yet we can't offer more variety in our own community. I would love to see this town grow and embrace more entrepreneurial individuals," she added.

In a town of just over 1,400 residents, visitors will see many closed store fronts and a beautiful (but incomplete) mural of city founder O. W. Killiam.

On May 12 in 1912 he purchased 160 acres, held an auction, and by the end of the day, all lots were sold. Locust Grove was described as "The Wonder City on the Grand River."

Yet, the mural is in decay. Killiam's eyes are
(Continued on Page 4)



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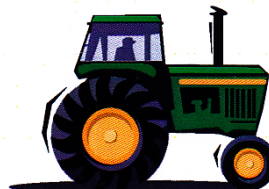
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*"LGAA Kid
Programs
are great!"*

Jennifer Henson continued...

(Continued from Page 3)

missing.

From an early age, Henson viewed the town mural and understood the need for creative endeavors.

"I have always been taught that you don't get something for nothing. I have lived in Locust Grove all of my life, and my parents have encouraged me to give back to the community. It's an aspect I want my children to learn," she said.

Henson believes that small towns should invest in the artistic and enterprising talents of their residents.

"Arts enriches lives and communities. If we don't start offering other diverse opportunities, we will be overlooked by many business ventures. If we want to offer a future for our kids, we need to broaden our horizons. Art is not just something to be looked at. It should be experienced," she said.

For the past year, Henson has been a member of the Locust Grove Arts Alliance (LGAA), an organization that promotes "small-town heart with big-town art" awareness and events. Recently elected president of the alliance, Henson has many plans for generating a cre-

ative spirit in town.

"I am blessed to be a part of LGAA. We are making positive impacts in our community. We have so many talented people in Locust Grove, artists, poets, singers, actors/actresses, and crafters, and we believe they deserve promotion and recognition," Henson said.

"Members hold events, such as, art shows, holiday home tours, and workshops so our artists may teach their crafts. Our next event will be a Spring Art Tour with three venues on the schedule.

"We would love to see our town beautified. Hopefully, in my role as president, we can begin to build a team of people willing to be a part of our cause. I believe our town is worth saving from decay. We want people to not just visit but have a reason to stay for a lifetime."

She infuses that same spirit in her household.

"We love to do projects together. We love to sit around a campfire in the evening to listen to music and chat or have family game nights of playing Yahtzee, Uno, and Monopoly," Henson said.

"Though it takes a lot of planning, we love to travel. Traveling can be difficult at times with our daughter

Calleigh, who has cerebral palsy," she said.

As parents, the Hensons have instilled a love of action and discovery in their children.

"Our children are our greatest success stories. They have their own unique qualities," she said.

"Daniel is going to college to be a math teacher and coach. He works hard on his golf game so he can one day attend a school in Dallas.

"Calleigh loves children and wants to work in a daycare and have lots of kids of her own.

"Jacy, the youngest, is getting ready to start cos-

metology training, but she also wants to be an engineer or designer. She has an eye for design. The sky is the limit for these kids," she said.

The Hensons and many other Locust Grove residents have the selfsame hope for their children and their town—that The Wonder City's people multiply their efforts in building a cultivated, business-flourishing place.

Art is in the numbers. A community's "grasp should exceed [its] reach." Residents want Killiam's eyes restored. They want people to see what can and should be.



NEW LGAA OFFICERS. . . Jennifer Henson, left, was elected president of the Locust Grove Arts Alliance during a regular meeting of the group. Other officers pictured are Kelly Palmer, secretary; Betty Perkins, treasurer; and Marea Breedlove, vice-president.

Four Feet and Feathers

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A teacher's story: benefits, challenges

By Roxann Perkins Yates

When I was ten, my mother, who was fulfilling her dream of getting a teaching degree after we four kids were school age, brought home a cardboard egg box covered in azure blue contact paper. It contained projects for her college art class.

Most of the paper-filled file folders were of no interest to me, but in the spaces between rested creations— a shimmering crepe-paper butterfly, a story of creating beauty with words and images, and a grown up finger painting mini-mural. I wanted to hang the art above my bed.

Mom became a teacher,

principal, bus driver, cheerleading sponsor, and an inspiration.

In 1990, I got a job at a little high school. I was already 30 years old and not nearly as tough as I thought I was.

For the first year I couldn't eat or sleep. Cried a lot and threw student papers into the air when the final product wasn't satisfactory. Expecting quality work and improvement is not a bad thing. A teacher should expect the best in everyone, including herself.

In the beginning, I had the mind-set that I had to know everything and was in control of every circumstance. I finally learned that

that's not what teaching is about. Empowering others means giving responsibility to others. Many believe that 90 percent of educating is the duty of the teacher, and 10 percent is the obligation of the students. Not so.

If young minds are going to function as mature productive members of society, they have to take the wheel and drive. The same is true for adults in the classroom, board room, living room.

We are all teachers. But many people don't actually consider themselves as teachers. If we all did, there may be less dissatisfaction from those at the teachers' desks and those at the students' desks, waiting to be inspired or just waiting for the bell to ring.

Teaching eats you up. Most educators care enough to give their best emotionally, physically, and intellectually everyday.

The same drain happens to anyone who gives all to

a profession. But families suffer the costs. I raised three boys—productive, loving young men now. They experienced what was left of my life force.

However, teaching in a small school had many benefits. My sons were involved in everything that I was. Decorating a dilapidated gym into a gossamer paradise for prom night, cooking hotdogs and popping popcorn in the concession stand to raise money, bussing students to the capitol and zoo and museums for learning outside the school walls, were all intricate parts of their lives too because they helped and they participated in efforts to keep a small public school alive.

I taught all three and expected as much productivity and creativity from them as of the rest of the class. I'm glad I did.

What happened in my third year didn't change that commitment to the

(Continued on Page 6)

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Teacher's story continues...

(Continued from Page 5)
honor of teaching.

A student walked into my classroom, his friends' classroom, pumped a loaded shotgun and put it between my eyes. I tried to get him outside the room, but he wanted to be in charge. Forced to leave the students, I felt guilt for years. He was eventually tackled by a teacher and two principals and later put

in a psychiatric facility. Fortunately, no one was hurt. This happened on a Friday. I made sure I was back in the classroom on Monday and didn't miss a day of work for weeks.

My six-year-old at the time wanted to know if the guy knew where we lived. I assured him that he didn't.

Years later, going-with-the-gut practices that showcased students' tal-

ents and revealed their communication skills were overpowered with testing experts' influence in public education. Multiple-choice testing became more important than reading, writing, creating, speaking, and presenting. The students and I knew that the real world didn't care how they scored on an *abcd* test. They cared, and still do, about critical think-

ing, problem-solving, project-minded adults. So we kept right on working that way.

We made Civil War mini-museums and Renaissance theme parks. Students wrote their memoirs. They gave speeches and put on plays. I once convinced my students to use vocabulary words to create songs and rap, dance, and sing them out to the entire high school.

I was fearful that it wouldn't work, but it resulted in a serendipitous event. Everyone joined in, including a teacher that did some break dancing. The meekest to the most gregarious students did their parts—pieced the puzzle together—together.

Even though I was afraid of what would happen in a big production, it turned out to be an academic highlight. It would not have happened if I had not invested confidence and interest in the students.

None of my success would have happened without my supporters—family, students, colleagues, and the example and support of Mom.

Everyone needs a blue box. Draw from it often. Add to it. Put what works back into it. Share its contents, even when it scares you or exhausts you.

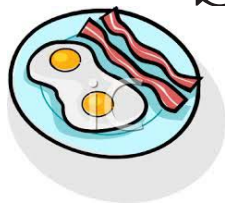
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