THE LIBERTY GAZETTE

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AGENDA

ANNUAL GIVEAWAY

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church invites all area families to a FREE clothing (all sizes), household items and backpack giveaway. This event will be Thursday, July 23, through Saturday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. Mt. Calvary is located at 2988 Hwy. 105 East (three miles East of Moss Hill). For more information, call 936-346-6244.

ADOPT, DON'T SHOP! GIVE A DOG A SECOND CHANCE!

DAYTON - The dogs and puppies at Dayton Animal Control are waiting for their forever homes and they can't wait to meet you! From playful puppies to gentle adult dogs there's a perfect match for everyone. Each dog deserves a safe, loving home and you might just find your new best friend! Call 936-258-7621 for more information on available dogs and adoption details.

MEAL ON WHEELS OF SOUTHEAST LIBERTY COUNTY

LIBERTY CTY. - Do you have time to lend a hand for others? Meals on Wheels of Southeast Liberty County is in need of volunteers in all of their service areas. Drivers are needed for all routes and it only takes 1.5 hours to deliver hot meals to area seniors. If you have time to lend, call 936-641-2846.

CLOTHES/FOOD PANTRY OPEN SATURDAY

LIBERTY - The clothes and food pantry ministry of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church is open every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The pantry offers food and clothing free of charge to all those in need who qualify. The pantry is located in the ministry building across from the Liberty-Dayton Regional Medical Center Hospital, next to the hospital helipad. Clothing donations are always accepted. For information, call Sister Williams at 409-208-1073 .

RU OK? PROGRAM

LIBERTY - RU OK? is a free service provided through the Liberty Police Department to check on the welfare of senior residents who live alone or may not have someone to check on them. Personnel from the Liberty Police Department will call at regular intervals to check to make sure all is well with the resident. To sign up for the program, contact Officer Whitehurst with the Liberty Police Department at 936-336-5666 or mwhitehurst@cityofliberty.org. The program is offer to all senior residents of Liberty.

From Illustrated Press of Liberty County, Thursday, April 11, 1968 –

"Three Men on a Horse," Valley Players play in 1953, featured Joe and Kalita Burson, who were a guiding force in local drama then. They were killed shortly after this pictures in a plane crash. L-R: (on horse) Charles Hubbard, Murl Carlton and Joe Burson; standing: Kalita Humphreys Burson, Mayor Vernon Poole and Dale Alford.

Valley Players' history to be featured at LCHC

LIBERTY - The Liberty County Historical Commission will meet Monday, July 20, at 6 p.m. in the A.J. "Jack" Hartel Building, 318 San Jacinto Street, in Liberty. There will be a short business meeting before introducing the guest speaker for the evening, Jackie Hartel Smith, well-known educator and key member of The Valley Players, a treasured community theater in Liberty.

The Valley Players was co-founded in 1953, by Kalita Humphreys Burson and husband, Joe Burson. Kalita, a native of Galveston, was involved in the Galveston Little Theater and the Dallas Theater. Joe Burson was an actor and director. Both had been involved in productions on Broadway. The Bursons relocated to Liberty in 1951 after marrying to be closer to Kalita's mother, Mrs. Geraldine Humphreys, living in her ancestral home on Sam Houston Street. A small group of like-minded volunteers gathered to form a community theater, which was named The Valley Players. The group began production even though they did not have a permanent home. The group moved wherever they could find an available building to stage their productions. In the early years, many plays were presented at the Sam Houston Elementary auditorium, which was incredibly old and had the disadvantage of not having restrooms backstage. Challenges did not dampen the spirit of this group, and they performed many shows, creating sets and dismantling after each production. They also performed at Liberty High School, city hall and other makeshift venues including an old building on Main Street with no stage and an abandoned poultry and rabbit barn at the fairgrounds.

Just one year after the group formed Joe and Kalita were killed in a small plane crash near Lenhartsville, PA, while en route to New York. Kalita was

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Hebert-Donatto STEM Scholarship fund names two recipients

The founders of The Hebert-Donatto STEM Scholarship are proud to have awarded scholarships to each of their inaugural recipients, Leslie Lule and Luis Montano, two promising scholars whose achievements embody the spirit of excellence this program was created to uplift.

This scholarship is rooted in a remarkable legacy: all three founders graduated as Salutatorians of Liberty High School. This mother-daughters trio – Tonya M. Hebert Donatto (Class of 1985), TaNia Donatto (Class of 2019), and Nailah Donatto (Class of 2023) – represents a multigenerational commitment to academic and artistic distinction, community service, and the advancement of STEM education.

TaNia, working as an engineer in startups, in aerospace, and currently in the nuclear energy sector, earned both her B.S. '23 and M.S. '24 in Materials Science and Engineering from Stanford University. Nailah is following in her sister's footsteps, pursuing a Chemical Engineering degree at Stanford with a focus on pharmaceuticals/therapeutics. Tonya continues her nearly three decade career collaborating with engineers in the oil and gas industry, bringing invaluable real world experience to the family's shared mission.

Together, they created this scholarship as a way to help open doors for future STEM leaders, giving back to the community that shaped them.

The Hebert-Donatto STEM Scholarship is for graduating Liberty High School students pursuing a career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) who also demonstrate active participation in extracurricular activities, especially in the arts. Multiple recipients may be selected for this award.

HEBERT-DONATTO STEM SCHOLARSHIP FIRST RECIPIENTS

Left to right: Luis Montano (recipient), Tonya Hebert Donatto (founder), Leslie Lule (recipient); Not pictured: TaNia Donatto and Nailah Donatto, founders.