

"I've done the calculation, and your chances of winning the lottery are identical whether you play or not."

— Fran Lebowitz

March 19, 2011

# Irving Rambler 50¢

"Irving's weekly community newspaper"



Pausing to pose and gather his thoughts, Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Jeff Wells) oversees his landscape of madness.

## Horror and Broadway descend on Column Awards

By Jess Paniszczyn

The Rocky Horror Picture Show was brought to life once more on the Carpenter Hall stage. Magenta sang the opening number between a giant pair of red lips. Some of the lyrics may have been changed to protect the innocent, or more likely to accuse the naughty.

Newly wed and naive, Brad and Janet made their way to the stage only to be greeted by Riff Raff. But Dr. Frank-N-Furter stole the show as he strutted across the stage in lingerie and platform boots.

And that was only the beginning of the 12th annual Column Awards presented on March 14. Co-hosts Max Von Essen,

Tyler Maynard and John Garcia added their humor and exuberance to the show which included musical performances by Donna McKechnie, as well as seven choreographed interludes by local theater companies from shows nominated for awards.

"The Rocky Horror Picture Show worked perfectly, because we were able to plug in modern music and tweak the script to add

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The original 'Cassie' from A Chorus Line and Broadway superstar, Donna McKechnie performs Music in the Mirror live in Carpenter Hall.



One big, happy, theater family gathers on stage during the Column Awards. Hosts, John Garcia, Tyler Maynard, Max Von Essen (front), keep the momentum rolling as Christine Atwell and Luke Hunt present an award to Delvin Pollack (back right).

Photos by John Starkey

## Bypass pump failure causes sewer overflow

A sanitary sewer overflow occurred the morning of Mar. 15 in the area adjacent to De Zavala Middle School. The spill has been contained, cleanup activities are ongoing and the site will continue to be monitored.

Students and faculty have not been impacted due to spring break. This overflow does not pose a threat to the city's drinking water or public supply, but the public is advised to avoid contact with surface water near the school and the ponds on school grounds.

The incident occurred during construction of the Delaware Creek interceptor between Grauwlyer Road and Second Street. During construction, the contractor set up temporary bypass pumping to maintain sewer service. One of the bypass pumps failed causing the sanitary sewer overflow.

The contractor estimates that the overflow totals 60,000 to 75,000 gallons of sanitary sewer. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has been notified as required. However, local government officials and the general public are being notified as a precaution.

The City is working with the contractor to resolve this issue to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents.

Source: City of Irving

## Health foundation recognizes patrons

By Jess Paniszczyn

The Irving Healthcare Foundation hosted its annual Citizens Who Care dinner in the Las Colinas Country Club on March 10.

During the evening, John Drake, the Irving Healthcare Foundation (IHF) President, shared a story with the audience which demonstrated the benefits of raising money for continuing and advanced education for nurses working at Baylor Medical Center at Irving.

"Donna Morhead is the manager of our ICU," Drake said. "She noticed some of our patients had pressure ulcers or bed sores.

"The IHF had paid for a problem solving class she was taking. Through the class, she developed a protocol for addressing pressure ulcers where nurses would check and turn the patients twice a day. This happens every 12 hours during the shift change. Instead of having 40 percent of the patients developing pressure ulcers, the number went to zero. We've had one pressure ulcer since 2007 in

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## Musicians flock to steel guitar jamboree

By Jess Paniszczyn

The Texas Steel Guitar Association (TSGA) hosted its 27th annual Texas Steel Guitar Jamboree in Irving's Sheraton Grand DFW March 10-13.

"The jamboree is a steel guitar show for beginners through advanced players," said Albert Talley, TSGA president. "It was a great show filled with family entertainment. We also had seminars where people could learn how play steel guitars or how to improve their playing.

"When most people think of steel guitar, they think of country music, and they have been a big part of country music. But you can also play pop music, jazz and rock-n-roll. Robert Randolph is an example of someone who plays the blues on a steel guitar. Steel guitars have been around for a long time.

"The steel guitar is such a pretty, sweet sounding instrument. It actually has its roots in Hawaiian music. It is a very unique and versatile

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# Column Awards bring Horror and Broadway to Carpenter Hall

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our references," Garcia said.

"It was easily the most complicated opening number we have ever done. There were a number of components to it. The number incorporated a live orchestra and several set pieces that moved in and out. There was a lot happening."

Each year, the Column Awards recognizes distinction in both equity and non-equity theater throughout the area

"There is no other awards organization in the Metroplex that does this. There used to be the Leon Rabin Awards, but they only honored Dallas theaters. They left, which was really unfortunate," Garcia said.

"Our goal is to honor excellence in theater throughout the entire Metroplex. This is the only night where the entire theater community is invited to join in like a big family reunion. As I walk around on awards night, I see so many hugs and squeals of glee from people who are happy to see each other. It is a beautiful thing. It is such an evening of love, friendship and unity within the community for one night.

"Besides honoring our peers for excellence in theater, the event is also a major fundraiser for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. We raise money for our brothers and sisters in the theater community who need our help."

Three Broadway stars traveled to Irving to help celebrate the Column Awards.

"Having Max Von Essen and Tyler Maynard as co-hosts was like a dream come true," Garcia said. "We could not have asked for better co-hosts. They brought the house down with their songs and their chemistry."

"You could feel the audience in complete awe of Donna McKechnie. Tyler, Max and I and several people in the wings watching her perform



Hiding from the mob, Josephine (Steven Tyler Howell) and Daphne (Calvin Roberts) [center] fit right in with the rest of the girls in the production of *Sugar* by ICT MainStage.



On the fifth anniversary of his death, Rudy Seppy's wife, Maria, Michael Sylvester, Andrew Guzman take the stage to present the Rudy Seppy Award.

Music in the Mirror were all in tears. You don't see that kind of Broadway, mega-watt quality any more. We don't have those Broadway legends. It is so rare now, which is so sad. She's one of the few left. As people who have loved theater, especially musical theater, watching this triple

threat right in front of us performing the number that made her a star, where do you go from there? We were just so lucky.

"I can honestly say this year was the biggest high I've had in several years. It was such a great, great night. I am so proud of it."

Among the inherent dangers of award shows are the shows' length and complexity.

"No awards show can be short. We went three hours and ten minutes, but at least we kept them entertained," he said.

"The Column Awards has a board of 24. The show honestly takes a year of planning. Monday night we held our gala. We will meet in April

to start it all over again.

"For example, the fashion runway had 65 people on stage. I had to stage and direct that within one hour. But that group of people was so patient and professional. It took a long time to block the runway. Once that was done, we ran it twice, and everything worked perfectly. That is how great this community is. They know what to do, and they make it work perfectly.

"When preparing the musical numbers, the companies have to regroup the original cast, restage the number and bring back the original costumes. That is a lot of work on their part. Yet they are willing to go



The cowboys and the farmers can be friends as the Artisan Center Theater cast presents a musical number from *Oklahoma*.

## Alex Palencia passing on his "Folklorista" inheritance

By Elvia Wallace-Martinez

Maestro "Polo" Palencia transmitted to his son Leopoldo "Alex" Palencia his incredible vision: to educate and share the music and dance traditions of México, with the sole purpose of preserving the Mexican Folklore for future generations and to help them, through a didactic program to maintain the essence and identity of Mexico.

Mexico 2000 Ballet Folkórico has presented more than 450 performances in the last 11 years. With more than 60 years of combined experience as dancers, instructors, choreographers and directors, Alex and his wife Mary started the dance company. In its 11 years, the ballet paid tribute to different Mexican geographical regions through colorful settings while preserving the traditions of a multicultural nation.

Based upon their success and the demand for the Mexican traditions education and preservation, Mr. Palencia and his wife created an organization called: "Mr. Folklorico." "Mr. Folklorico" is dedicated to the memory and mission of Mr. Palencia's father who understood the specific needs of teachers, directors,

students and volunteers involved or interested in the Mexican Folklorico education. This subsidiary corporation aims to educate in the "Art of Dance" in a positive way.

"Mr. Palencia and his wife are taking upon the opportunity to enrich with their knowledge students that might have experienced a low self esteem or loneliness as who could not before express the love and passion for their culture," said Elvia Wallace-Martinez, president of the Texas Association for Hispanic Dance and Culture. "They have tremendously contributed to the preservation of Mexican dance traditions. The spirit that Mr. Palencia and his wife instill is living in their new "Mr. Folklorico" institute. They want to pass on cultural pride, historical perspective, dance techniques and artistic interpretation to all Mexican Folklorico students. Most of them are children and youth.

During the past 11 years, Mr. Palencia explored the need to transmit heritage and culture and invites all Folklorico students to combine this with their American citizenship.

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Photos by  
John Starkey

through all of that just to entertain our audience. Every number was just outstanding."

The popularity of the Column Awards will make finding another venue for the awards more challenging.

"Our audience doubled this year alone. We broke all box office records by over 200 audience members. On Sunday night, 80 percent of the house was sold. Then came a sea of last minute ticket buyers on Monday evening. We only had 72 seats in Carpenter Hall empty for this event. Those were the seats in the balcony. The growth makes us nervous about next year when we go to another facility, because we are worried that we will not be able to fit everyone in.

"I hope we come back to the Irving Arts Center in 2013. Next year unfortunately, the Column Awards can't be there, because of the Genghis Khan exhibit. So we won't be there next year, which just broke our hearts.

"On behalf of myself and the board, we thank Richard Huff, the executive director of the Arts Center, as well as the staff and crew. They are the most professional, incredible group to work with. We hope to return in two years, because we consider Carpenter Hall and the Irving Art Center our home now," Garcia said.