

Chalkboard Notes

FRIENDS OF GILLESPIE COUNTY COUNTRY SCHOOLS, INC.

Tag der offenen Schulhaus

October 12, 2024 — Crabapple School

11:00 to 4:00

Fall Festival with drinks/snacks from the Concession Stand. Cornhole and other games in the School Yard

October 26, 2024 — Rheingold School

11:00 to 4:00

Hunting and Preserving Meat

design: nelda roessler rbzniz@gmail.com

Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools, Inc.

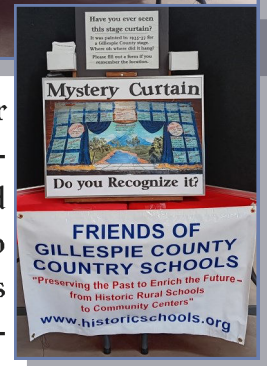
Volume 13:

Issue: FALL 2024 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Successful Fair Display



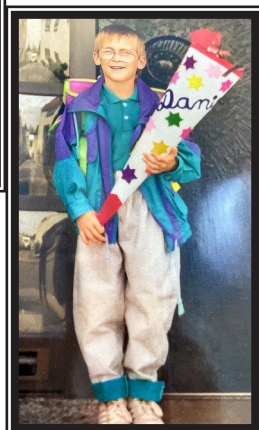
The FOGCCS's display at the Gillespie County Fair on August 22-26 was a hit! All 12 schools participated with their colorful and informative trifold boards. At each end of the display, a large photo of the "mystery curtain" was featured and fair goers were asked to help with the identity. The most suggestions received were the Meusebach School curtain and the Palace Theater curtain. If you have a suggestion, please let us know, and in the meantime, our research continues. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the display.



Endowment Update
Balance at the end of
August 2024: \$24,457.44.
You can contribute by mail
at: Community Foundation, 241
Earl Garrett St, Kerrville, TX 78028
or online at
www.communityfoundation.net



Jane Woellhof's penpal of 40+ years from Germany, Christine Bruehl, sent a picture of herself on her first day of school and of her son, Daniel, on his first day of school.



The **Inaugural Fredericksburg Book Festival** will be held at **Pioneer Memorial Library, 115 W. Main Street, Fredericksburg, Texas** from **9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday, January 18, 2025.**

Schultüte

The "Schultüte" tradition is a long-standing practice in Germany that has been celebrated for generations. This unique tradition involves the creation of a cone-shaped container, which is then filled with treats and school supplies, and given to children on their first day of school. *Einschulung*, the first day of school, is considered a rite of passage for a child, the start of one's academic life, and it is celebrated by the presentation of gifts, the snapping of photos, and then the exploration of what the school cone holds. [Click here for more information.](#)

News from Schools

The Abracadabra Pavilion Stage at Cherry Spring School by Eileen Whited

Those who attended country schools remember with fondness the excitement of school closing day, and recently many have shown interest in the curtains which were lowered between acts of the dramatic performances given on those Saturdays in May. The Cherry Spring School boasts one of those curtains, but there is another secret in the Cherry Spring pavilion.

In the early years, Cherry Spring school closing dramas were presented in a rather low-key manner. An area encircled with low limestone stones was situated under the live oak trees west of the school building. A wooden framework provided a temporary stage, and benches provided seating. In later years, a temporary outdoor stage was erected abutting the north side of the limestone school building, with the floor of the stage approximately the height of the bottom of the three windows on that side of the building. Actors popped in and out through the windows, with “backstage” being in the school room.

Then in the mid-1930’s, despite being in the depths of the Great Depression, the trustees and residents of the Cherry Spring community decided to build a permanent pavilion. The main part of the pavilion was built with cedar poles and a galvanized sheet metal roof, with sheet metal walls added in later years.

During these years the student population was so large that the little limestone school building was figuratively bulging at the seams. A second teacher was hired and a wooden wall dividing the schoolhouse into two tiny, cramped rooms was constructed. The situation for the approximately 28 students packed in elbow-to-elbow was really less than ideal.

Then, during the last years of World War II, the school trustees very cleverly and frugally addressed the problem of the severely overcrowded school building. They transformed the raised stage of the pavilion into a second classroom for the lower grades. Moveable beadboard walls closed the proscenium (stage opening). Two sets of wooden steps led up from the pavilion floor to doors on the right and left, and another door at the back of the stage led to the outdoor playground, where new swings and see-saws were built at this time. Trustee Edgar Feuge had connections at a lumber yard in Austin and was able to procure materials in this time of rationing and shortages, and a friend in the U.S. Navy procured some paint.

When the time came to practice for the school closing plays, the desks were all moved to the floor of the pavilion. The moveable beadboard walls were unscrewed from the brackets that held them in place and were fastened into their new positions, with ceiling and floor brackets anchoring them at an angle at the rear sides of the stage. Lightweight frames covered with canvas concealed the backstage area between the angled walls. The two doors at the proscenium edges swung inward and became stage right and left entrances. And just like that, the classroom became the stage!

Reminder: Cherry Spring School will host our annual membership meeting on Monday, Oct. 7, 2024 AT 6:00.

History Lesson: Painted stage curtains date back to Greek and Roman Theaters. Early curtains were used primarily for functional purposes, such as dividing the stage or concealing actors and props. We would like to know when the first “painted stage curtains” were documented. If you have the answer, please let us print it in the next Chalkboard Newsletter. In the meantime, enjoy our local Album of Painted School Stage Curtains at: <https://historicschools.org/school-curtains.html>

Contact Directors-at-Large, Jane Woellhof at 830-990-8059 or Jim Lindley at 830-997-2103 to submit newsletter items.

The Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools, Inc. P.O. Box 55, Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Friends’ website: www.historicschools.org

OUR MISSION: Preserving the past to enrich the future.

+To further the preservation and maintenance of historic community school buildings in Gillespie County

You receive this newsletter as a Friends’ member or member-at-large. If you wish to unsubscribe, please e-mail Jane at

jane423@austin.rr.com