

THE ORACLE

Herod King Ellison - A Retrospective by Stewart Dale Spencer

Herod Ellison passed away over the Labor Day weekend when his heart gave out. He had been performing with a band, as he often did, and was reported to not be feeling well but evidently did not feel that he needed medical intervention. He died in his home sometime after the performance. He will be missed by many San Martians, including residents and employees of the Housing Authority, where he lived from 1995 to 2012.

Stricken with polio as a child, Herod learned to rise above physical limitations and the prejudices of the time. His presence was such that, once I got to know him, I saw his wheelchair as just another characteristic, like his dreadlocks and his booming voice. He got around on his own, rarely needing help. He had a modified van with hand controls instead of foot pedals but he refused to use a motorized wheelchair, saying he needed the exercise.

Herod experienced a metamorphosis during his time at the Housing Authority, taking advantage of the opportunity to attend Texas State University where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Arts with a minor in Science. He brought his unique perspective to an internship in the Office of Disability Services at Texas State University, where he worked to improve handicap accessibility on that hilly campus.

He went on to become a Master of Arts in Speech Communication in 2001, which seems fitting to anyone who ever heard him speak. If you closed your eyes while listening to him, you might think you were hearing James Earl Jones. People often told him, "With a voice like that, you ought to be in radio!"

Well, he was in radio for a few years. He was a radio personality at three different stations in San Antonio in the 70's. I think he did some voice-over work as well. Ultimately, he became dissatisfied with the working conditions and left radio. He also once told me that he did not like how the radio business had changed as large corporations like Clear Channel began acquiring local stations.



Herod applied his leadership skills as the President of the Allen Woods Resident Assembly, where he advocated for the residents in many ways including securing improved drainage from the City on one side of Allen Woods and recruiting volunteers to improve the Allen Woods playground. He also arranged for free cable television for the Meals on Wheels dining room at that site. In 2006, the City Council appointed Herod to serve on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, where he was the Resident Commissioner, later becoming its Chairman.

After 18 months of service, Herod resigned from the Board to accept employment as one of our Service Coordinators after the Housing Authority was awarded two major grants from HUD. In that position, Herod helped us through a big transition. Our Resident Services Program was expanding. We were adding employees, vehicles, and services. We also had a change in leadership. It was an exciting time, filled with challenges and changes. Herod helped expand and adapt our existing self-sufficiency program to all of public housing. He started out at the Chapultepec office but later moved to the PODER Learning Center.

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ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

Paisaje

De Federico García Lorca

La tarde equivocada
se vistió de frío.

Detrás de los cristales,
turbios, todos los niños,
ven convertirse en pájaros
un árbol amarillo.

La tarde está 6tendida
a lo largo del río.

Y un rubor de manzana
tiembla en los tejadillos.



www.spanish-learning-corner.com/short-spanish-poems.html

Kickin' Back with Kelly!



Kelly Salas is a new Kid's Cafe Monitor at PODER. She is from Humble and attends Texas State, majoring in Communication Studies with a minor in International Studies. Kelly lives by the words of Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world." She puts a lot of energy and enthusiasm into planning activities for the kids. Her goal is to bring creative ideas that will generate good memories for the kids. She says that although dealing with all the different personalities of the kids is a challenge for her, the rewards of seeing the children's excited faces during an activity and the relationships she has built make it all worthwhile! Her dedication to the program showed when she recruited many volunteers during a recent Organization Fair at Texas State. She also got her sorority to help with events. We are very fortunate to have her on our team!



The Karate Kids!

At the Housing Authority, we believe every child should have the same opportunities as their classmates, regardless of their income, and karate class is just one example. One of the kids, Antonio, exclaims, "It costs \$68 to take the class in school and we get it for free!"



Instructor Rana Zeidan is a 2nd level black belt and has been in the A.S.K. (American Society of Karate) for a little over 14 years. In her last semester at Texas State as a Communications major and a Coaching minor, Rana wanted to make her internship count because after graduating, she wants to work with kids in a nonprofit setting, so she chose PODER to try out her program. In addition to self-defense, the kids are learning to show respect and discipline in and out of the class. Hiyah! and Hooray! for these young students developing some important skills!

PODER HAUNTED HOUSE



Thursday

October 30th

3:45—5:45 PM

Enter the
Costume Contest!

Springtown Villa



Thank You

Ladies from Springtown Villa are always ready to lend a helping hand. Thank you Arleen, Karen, Ramona, & Mary for helping get The Oracle ready for delivery to all the Housing Authority sites!



ProGressive
Home Health Agency



On September 24, a fall prevention class was provided by Progressive Home Health Agency. Physical activity can go a long way toward fall prevention. Activities such as walking, water workouts, and gentle exercise can help improve strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.



RESIDENTS ARE GETTING READY FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT!

BINGO, LOTERIA, BALLOON DARTS, AND A SCOOTER RACE WILL ALL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7.



Springtown Villa residents Janet Jones, Eric West, and Resident Council Secretary Bill Cruz were able to share their concerns during a recent Street and Sidewalk Accessibility Open-House meeting held at the Allen Woods Homes. Residents expressed their concerns about the condition of sidewalks along Springtown

Way and at the intersection of Thorpe and Robbie Lanes. They also decried the lack of sidewalks along the IH 35 access road and places where pedestrians have to travel on the road itself. Evidently, areas in need of attention get points based on the location of pharmacies, medical clinics, etc. but these areas had no points. At the next meeting, held at the Activity Center, residents went armed with maps showing the location of nearby facilities to correct the City's information. Springtown Villa residents were the only citizens at both meetings. They made sure their concerns were heard. When citizens get involved, good things happen!



C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



Kappa Delta Chi

The lovely ladies of Kappa Delta Chi are back! They will continue to be a positive influence on our kids as they help with homework, engage them in play, and serve as mentors, molding the next generation.

"Leading with Integrity, United through Service"



"¡Corre y se va corriendo!"

Juanita from Bee First Primary Home Care hosts games of Lotería for our residents. Everyone has a great time!

Who said Buenas?!



Family Science Night

October 9 ~ 6:30 to 8:00 PM



Alyna and Kaylee enjoy taking pictures during their free time at the KAD after school program.

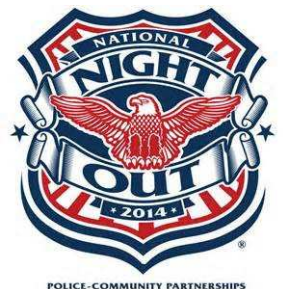
Texas Night Out 2014

Tuesday, October 7

6 PM — 8 PM

Supported by:

- SM Fire Dept./SM Police Dept.
- HCCADA
- Crescent Dental
- Bee First Primary Home Care Agency
- San Marcos Power House Church
- Texas State Kappa Delta Chi, Inc. Sorority
- Hombres Unidos



CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER

Janis Hendrix, Community Initiatives Administrator for the City of San Marcos, presented information to Chapultepec residents recently about the Community Development Block Grant process, including how funds are appropriated and how they benefit the residents of San Marcos. The residents were able to share their opinions on how the money should be used.



Halloween is fast approaching! Participate in the Chapultepec Halloween Door Decorating Contest! Doors will be judged on October 23 and the 3 favorites will be chosen and notified immediately! Gift cards & candy baskets will go to the winners!



Help prevent crime! Texas Night Out is October 7. The Resident Assembly is planning a fish fry this year. We need your donations to make this event a success. Contact the office to see how you can help!



Don't give crime an opportunity!

Retrospective - Continued from Page 1 He also worked two days a week at the C.M. Allen Homes. Over the years, he worked with many residents, encouraging them to persevere and bringing them hope.

Herod also took on the after-school program at PODER, bringing his creativity and energy to make it so much more than just tutoring and recreational activities.

After three years, changes in HUD funding required us to reduce personnel in that program from three to one. Herod chose not to re-apply for the new grant, moving on to other interests and eventually moving to Martindale.

I didn't see much of Herod after that but his successor, Maria Calcaben, has built upon his legacy, expanding the comprehensive nature of the services and activities coordinated out of PODER.



I had the pleasure of accompanying Herod on a trip to Galveston to accept an award from the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for his work on The Oracle, which he created and inspired. On that trip, I got a chance to get to know him better and we talked about the major issues of the day. He had some interesting insights on the social and political changes during the years of the Vietnam War. You can read his Master's thesis by going to the Alkek Library on the campus of Texas State. Ask to see "Changing an image in turbulent times : strategies of the 1969 Black Panther party" by Herod King Ellison, published in 2001. It is not available for check-out but if we can arrange to have a copy made, we will make it available to residents who are interested in reading it.

You can also read an article about Herod in the [August 2009 issue of The Oracle](#), available from the newsletter link on our website: www.smpa.org.

The following comments and memories from residents who knew Herod are a fitting tribute:

"Herod affected my life because he shared his talent and humanity. He didn't let his disability [limit] him; his laughter was infectious. He was full of hope. The fact that he held a masters degree has inspired my drive to educate myself. My favorite memory would be one of the frequent conversations we had as I was walking and I would see him outside. The subject might be a Texas State professor we both knew, the Housing Authority we were both former employees of, being disabled, which we had both experienced, or many other things. We didn't always agree, either. But we could speak intelligently as friends. I miss him." - Catherine Welsh

"I have known Herod for at least 11 years. I loved the way he talked, sang, and joked around with everybody. When I first met Herod, I used to put my head against my wall just to hear him sing. He was the most smartest, greatest and sweetest friend and we love and miss him forever." - Lola Bell

"He was an inspiration to me especially when I first got my foot amputated and he told me to never give up. He will definitely be missed." - Beatrice Pacheco

"He was a good person and a happy man. He did a lot of things for me. He pushed me to vote and he invite me everywhere he goes where he played. He was funny" - Pablo Gomez



SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY

**CHECK OUT
THESE FREE
OCTOBER
ACTIVITIES!
CALL FOR
MORE INFO.**

Computer Basics

Call 512.393.8200 to add your name to the waiting list.

COLLEGE GOCENTER

Questions about College? Need a Resume or Job Search Help? Call 512.393.8200 for an appointment.

Storytime

Tuesdays and Fridays! Ages 0 to 2 are invited to attend at 10:00 a.m.; ages 3 to 6 at 11:00 a.m.

Lego Mania

Children ages 4 and up are invited to the San Marcos Public Library Monday, October 6 at 10:00 a.m. for Lego Mania!

Music at the Library: Willow Creek Project

Wednesday, October 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Mobile Device Advice

Call 512.393.8200 or email smpl@sanmarcostx.gov to sign up for an appointment.

Celebrate National Archives Month at the San Marcos Public Library!

Scan Your Family Archives

October 13 through October 18

Humanities Texas Exhibit

"The Way Things Were: Texas Settlers and Their Buildings, 1860s-1930s" will be on display at the San Marcos Public Library from October 15 through November 15.

Conservation of Family Treasures

Dr. Susannah Flores Worth - Saturday, October 18 at 2:00 p.m. - a mini-workshop on the Conservation of Family Treasures.

How to Write Your Life Story

Saturday, November 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Affordable Care Act

Informational presentation - Wednesday, October 15 (10:00 a.m. in English; 11:00 a.m. in Spanish).

Plant Family Patterns

Thursday, October 16 at 7:00 p.m. - interactive workshop on easy plant identification using plant family patterns as your guide.

Friends of the Library Book Sale

Friday October 17 through Sunday, October 19 at City Park Rec Hall.

Fall Reading Festival

Saturday, October 18, from 10:00 to 11:30 am.

Puppet Show: Big Pumpkin

Tuesday, October 21 and Friday, October 25. Ages 2 and up.

Free Hatha Yoga

Friday, October 24 for all skill levels - 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Creation Station

Saturday & Sunday, October 25 to 26

11th Annual Texas Author Day

Sunday, November 9 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.



On August 29, Albert Sierra and Maria Calcaben received a donation of \$250 from Richard Cruz and AMVETS POST 104 in support of our after-school programs. We love our vets!



FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

• October 11 ~ San Marcos Education Fair

San Marcos Activity Center, 10 AM - 3 PM. Register for free prizes!

• October 11 ~ PET FEST

San Marcos Plaza Park, 10 AM - 5 PM. Admission is free but donations of dry pet food welcomed. This family friendly festival includes a 5k fun run/walk, vendor booths, pet rescue booths, live entertainment, pet contests, kids activities, a silent auction and dog races! Restrained animals with nice manners are invited. Costumes are encouraged!

• October 11 ~ Sacred Springs Pow-wow

The Meadows Center at the San Marcos Springs, 10 AM - 6 PM. Festivities include Native American dances, arts & crafts booths as well as a 32-foot teepee featuring Native exhibits and presentations.

• October 23 ~ GSMYC Halloween Carnival

Greater San Marcos Youth Council, 5:30—7:30 PM. Haunted Hallways, games, & prizes!

*For more October events go to: <http://www.toursanmarcos.com/events/index.html>



WHAT WE DO

The San Marcos Housing Authority has provided decent, safe, and sanitary housing for San Marcos Residents since 1950. We have three housing programs: Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher, and Project-based Section 8. These programs provide housing for 574 low-income families and individuals, including the elderly and disabled. Our Resident Services Program consists of several initiatives designed to support Self-Sufficiency & Family Development, Elderly & Disabled Services, Youth Services, and Resident Organization & Community Development. All Resident Services initiatives are united in the overall goals of improving the quality of life for public housing residents, reducing dependence on the welfare system, and empowering our residents to take charge of their lives and of their environment.

WHO WE ARE

Board of Commissioners

Rose Brooks—Chairperson
Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson
Susan Tilatitsky—Resident Representative
Gloria Salazar—Commissioner
Frank Arredondo—Commissioner

Administration

Albert Sierra
Executive Director
Lana Bronikowsky
Accountant/Programs Manager
Albert Hernandez
Maintenance Supervisor
Rose Miranda
Public Housing Manager
Gene Martin, II
Resident Services Director
Frances Garcia
Section 8 Coordinator
Amanda Ramirez
Springtown Villa Manager

HOUSING OFFICES

Allen Woods Homes (Main Office)

512-353-5059

C. M. Allen Homes

512-353-1116

Chapultepec Homes

512-396-3364

Housing Choice Voucher

512-353-5061

Springtown Villa

512-396-3363

RESIDENT SERVICES CENTERS

Chapultepec Adult Learning Center & Family Self-Sufficiency

512-396-3364

KAD Korner Store

512-392-6273

PODER Learning Center

512-396-3367

Springtown Villa

512-353-7343