



The Whistle Stop



A Publication of the Irving Heritage Society

April 2024

A Word From the President

President's Note and Thanks

Happy Spring, Irving Heritage Society members! Though "thanksgiving" is more typically associated with fall, it's the driving emotion I'm feeling about all of you this spring. From members and Board members to volunteers and new visitors, you all made our 46th Annual Vintage Valentine Tea in February quite a success! Thank you for making it so special and fun.

Thanks are also in order for the volunteers who ensure all of our other work gets done, from our First Sunday Tours and related special events to the less fun but still necessary tasks such as preparing and cleaning up the Heritage House and Mary's Playhouse before and after those events. We could not do all we do without you!

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the excellent administrative support Mary Higbie and Carla Morgan have provided the Board and our volunteers in recent months. Transition and change are never easy, and they are even more difficult when transitioning from one long-time administrator to a new one. To you both, thank you for the many hours spent ensuring that the Feb. 1 transition went

smoothly not just for the two of you but also for the Irving Heritage Society as a whole. Without those efforts, this year's events could have easily been a disaster, and thanks to the two of you and so many, many others, we've instead carried on with business as usual, encountering many smiling, happy faces along the way.

Finally, I'd like to close with a big THANK YOU to all of you who have recently said "YES" to President-Elect Judy Pierson's inquiries to some of you about your possible interest in Board service in the quickly-approaching new fiscal year that begins June 1.

I look forward to hearing about the new slate of officers and directors Judy and the Nominating Committee will propose and to electing our new Board members at our general meeting in May.

With gratitude for all of you,

Susan Motley
2023-2024 President

www.irvingheritage.com

(972) 721-2655

Upcoming Events

First Sundays of the month, March-December Heritage House and Mary's Playhouse Tours 303 S. O'Connor Road

Free public tours are held on the first Sundays of the month and are open to the public. Invite family and friends to socialize and get an in-depth look at Irving's history, or volunteer as a docent. Contact irvingheritage@gmail.com or (972) 721-2655.

Sunday, May 5, 2 p.m.

General Meeting

Election/Installation/Ice Cream Social

Heritage House, 303 S. O'Connor

Join the Irving Heritage Society's annual election and installation, and then indulge your sweet tooth at the ice cream social. Heritage House tours will be 3-5 p.m.

Friday, May 10, 4:30-7 p.m.

The 17th Annual Fish Fry and Cake Auction

Heritage Park, Main and Second Street

Downtown Irving

All ages are invited to this annual dinner and cake auction. Advance tickets for the dinner (before May 4) are \$17.50 each for adults, \$10 each for ages 6-10, and free for ages 5 and under. A limited number of tickets will be available at the event for \$20 each. Buy tickets from a Heritage Society member, the Mustang Museum, Joe's Coffee Shop, the Monkey Junkie, or online at www.irvingheritage.com.

Saving the Sign

As of March 2024, the Big State sign preservation campaign raised over \$12,000, surpassing the original goal of \$10,000. The efforts toward saving this local piece of history, which was removed from its longtime site back in February, have been significant at both the community and personal levels. The following essay and photo are courtesy of Allyss Flores, Irving Archives & Museum Advancement Coordinator, and are used with permission.

I've been trying to find the words to express what it was like to witness the Big State sign coming down earlier this week. As someone who wasn't a part of the Irving community until



recently, but now is very much invested in this little part of the world, I feel like a spectator.

Have you ever been invited to someone else's family holiday dinner? It's kind of exciting and freeing, no emotional baggage of your own to sort through, you can observe like a fly on the wall. You might hear the host-family sharing stories you know they've told a hundred times and then having arguments about how past events actually transpired. You might see family members take sides and communicate harshly. It might be jarring but then you remember this is how family works and through it all you can feel the deep love they have for one another.

I guess for me, this whole week has felt a little like that. I can see how much love this community has for its shared history and how much you all care.

I snapped this photo on Tuesday (*Jan. 30*), it shows our beloved Oscar Ward (who has been so kind to me) looking on towards the Big State sign as it gets gently placed on a trailer. I can only imagine the different emotions that might be going through his heart as he watches the landscape of his community transform before his eyes. He has shown full support to the Friends of the Irving Museums throughout this unexpected project to Save the Sign, and I hold so much respect for him.

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When I look at this picture, I can feel his love for this community. When I read your emotional comments about the sign, I can feel your love for this community. When I'm notified of a new donation to the preservation campaign, I can feel your love for this community.

And it's really beautiful to experience. So what I'm trying to say is thank you – each and every one of you – for the part that you play here. As a spectator, I'm truly honored to be in your midst, to learn from you, and to listen to your stories. Thank you.

Just the Facts: Irving Trivia



The morning of April 6 began with ten teams at West Irving Library testing their knowledge of all things Irving. After

the suspense of multiple tie breakers, one group prevailed — the Irving Archives and Museum (IAM) Consonants team earned the trophy and accompanying glory. The competition was part of the 17th Annual Celebrating Irving: The City and The Man series. Congratulations to all the teams, attendees, and volunteers for a successful showing. *(Photo: Mark Zeske/Facebook)*

Sweet Tea

On Feb. 18, it was a party right out of 1914! During the 46th Annual Vintage Valentine Tea, retiring administrator Mary Higbie was bestowed the 2024 Sweetheart title. Thanks to all attendees, volunteers, and to Scott Jacob Loehr for providing piano accompaniment. *(Photo: Facebook)*



Administrator's Note

Taking on the role of the new Administrator has felt a bit like the young girl trying on Mom's high heels! I can see my future self, but know I have some growing to do. Mary Higbie has been the cornerstone of this organization for many years, and I count myself blessed to be able to step into her shoes! She has been and continues to be the best mentor anyone could have.

My time started off with a bang, jumping into the planning of the Valentine Tea! I experienced the dedication of the small army of volunteers to ensure that everything was perfectly re-created to the original. But for me, one of the highlights of the day was meeting so many of the members and families of the Irving Heritage Society! Everyone was welcoming and friendly!

Just a brief bit about me: Some of you may know me from my 30 years at Irving Public Library, prior to my retirement in 2020. I loved my library job and the opportunities that came with it. I made many lifelong friends, both co-workers and library patrons! I have two grown daughters and three absolutely awesome grandkids, ages 13, 5, and 3.

I have extensively studied history at Texas Woman's University and this new role fulfills my longtime wish to work in a related field. I am excited about the upcoming events for the Irving Heritage Society and am looking forward to meeting more of you! You can reach me at irvingheritage@gmail.com or at (972) 721-2655.

Carla Morgan
Administrator

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Special Thanks to Corporate Members!



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