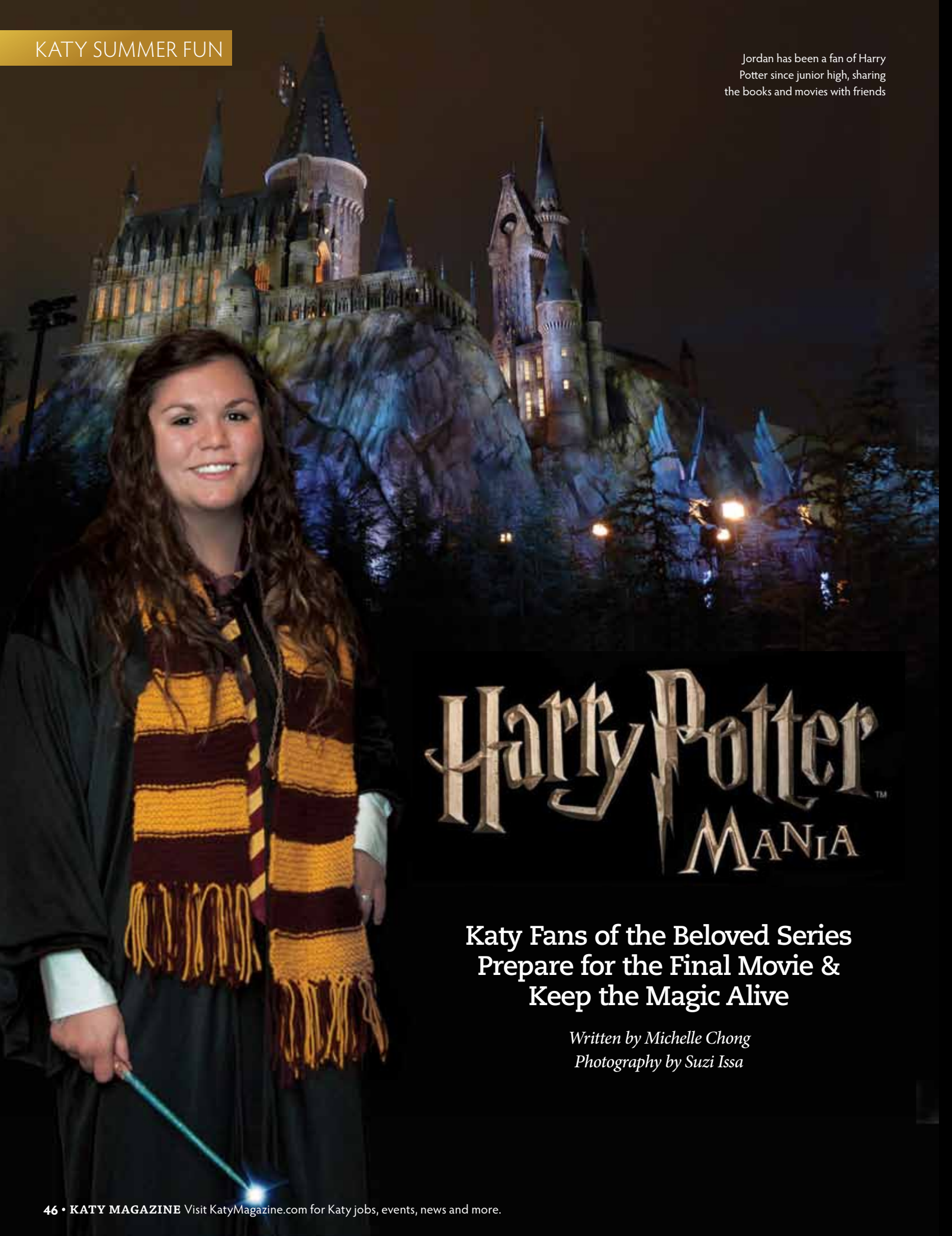


Jordan has been a fan of Harry Potter since junior high, sharing the books and movies with friends



Harry Potter MANIA

**Katy Fans of the Beloved Series
Prepare for the Final Movie &
Keep the Magic Alive**

Written by Michelle Chong

Photography by Suzi Issa

It is the beginning of the end. This summer, Katy Harry Potter fans will flock to theaters to say their final farewells to the beloved “boy who lived.” The magic does not stop there, though. Katy fans are keeping the magic alive by doing everything from playing the popular wizarding sport of Quidditch to visiting Universal Orlando’s Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Conjuring up Creativity

Some Harry Potter fans choose to make the magic live on in a more permanent way. Sisters-in-law Nancy Sabino and Julissa Bittle have certainly proven their devotion to the Harry Potter series. In April, the pair went together to get identical Golden Snitch tattoos as a way to remember the series.

“We wanted to have something to remember Harry Potter and have it with us forever, especially with the last movie coming out since it is the end of the series,” says Sabino. “We did not want anything too obvious. Only the real fans would be able to figure out what the Golden Snitch meant.” They chose the Golden Snitch, because it was especially symbolic as it foreshadowed the ending of the series early on, says Bittle. “Sometimes, you have to go back to the beginning to have an ending,” she shares.

Along with getting tattoos, Sabino and Bittle have also attended midnight premieres together and played games like Scene It: Harry Potter with their families, even though no one else is as big of a fan. Despite this, Bittle says the series has helped her to be a better parent to her children. “It makes me more of a playful parent,” says Bittle. “I’m more apt to having fun and not being uptight. You have to have an imagination to enjoy these books. I have a 10- and 9-year-old, and they just started reading them last year. It’s so much fun, having them ask questions.”

The Quest for Quidditch

In recent years, students around the country have gotten in on the fun of playing the wizarding sport of Quidditch. Cinco Ranch High School graduate Jennie Griffin is among the many Muggle fans to have played the magical sport. “I did participate on the Quidditch team [at] CRHS, and that was loads of fun,” she says. “We played over the summer. It was awesome seeing some hardcore fans coming out and having fun. [We] had other players from other schools play with us to have more competition.”

Quidditch at CRHS has continued on, and Kenny Loveall is the current leader of the team. “Muggle Quidditch is a combination of rugby, dodge ball, tag, and soccer, and takes a few rules from each of them,” he says. “We have tried to make it as close to the ‘real’ version

described in Harry Potter as possible; however, we had to come up with some creative ways to do things, because we obviously can’t fly.”

Of course, the members of the Katy Quidditch team are mostly fans of the Harry Potter series, but it is not required to be a fan in order to partake in the game. “Most of us are fairly big fans of the series,” says Loveall. “Just about everyone I know who plays has read the books and seen the movies. We plan on seeing the second part of the seventh [movie] when it comes out this summer, at midnight, of course.”

The Magic Lives On

J.K. Rowling’s dedication in the final book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, reads: “And to you, if you have stuck with Harry until the very end.” For super fan Andrea Acosta, the last movie’s summer release definitely doesn’t mean the magic has to end. “I’m going to the midnight premiere,” she says. “It is never going to end in my life. I’m planning to re-read the books, and re-watch the movies, and I know I want to read the books to my kids when I’m older.”

Acosta, like many others, has also grown up with the series and has felt the lasting impact on her life from the powerful messages Rowling conveys through the journeys of Harry Potter and his friends. “In the beginning, I didn’t realize how big it would be,” says Acosta. “I started reading the books because everyone else got in, and then I realized what an amazing world it was when I got in to it. It is my childhood. Reading Harry Potter made me

a happier person, and it holds a special place in my heart. I feel a special connection. I know how [it feels] sometimes not having a parent, and I relate to that. Love overpowers everything.”

For many Katy fans, the chance to visit Universal Orlando’s Wizarding World of Harry Potter is also a way for the magic to live on. Yolanda Gilbridge and her husband have been fans of the books for 10 years and recently visited the theme park with their son Gabe. “The intricate detail in everything from the store fronts to the rooftops was amazing,” she says. “We loved Zonko’s and Honeyduke’s, and the food at Three Broomsticks was surprisingly good!”

Gilbridge, who became a fan of Harry Potter because of her love of the classic TV show *Bewitched*, says her family is already making plans to return to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Once her son is older, she also looks forward to being able to share the books and movies with him.



Andrea Acosta plans on seeing the final Harry Potter movie this summer

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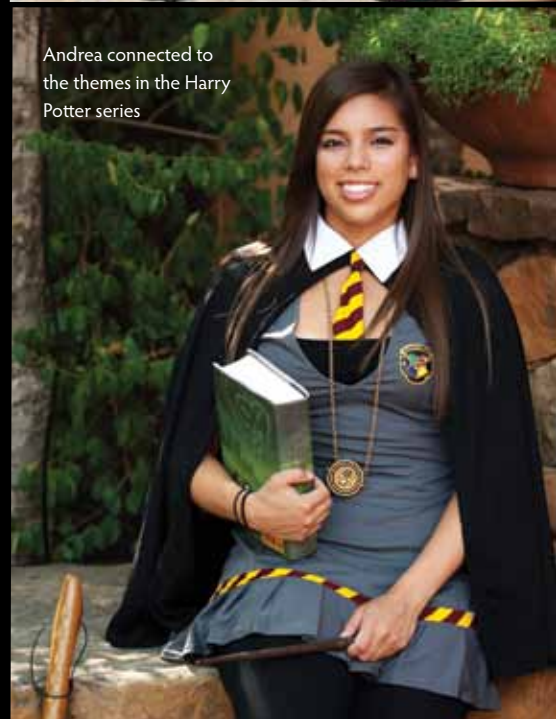
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Sisters-in-law Julissa and Nancy celebrated Harry Potter with matching Golden Snitch tattoos



Andrea connected to the themes in the Harry Potter series



When she was a student at Cinco Ranch High School, Jennie played on the campus Quidditch team



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Positive Potter Values

Even with the end of the series, the universal themes expressed in Rowling's books continue to unite the many fans in Katy and around the world who enjoy reading her books and watching the movie adaptations. Sparking the imagination, her tales promote values of respect, self-worth, and positive morals. "I think she is basically telling children that everyone is special in their own way," says Sabino. "It is okay to have the courage to be more different." **KM**

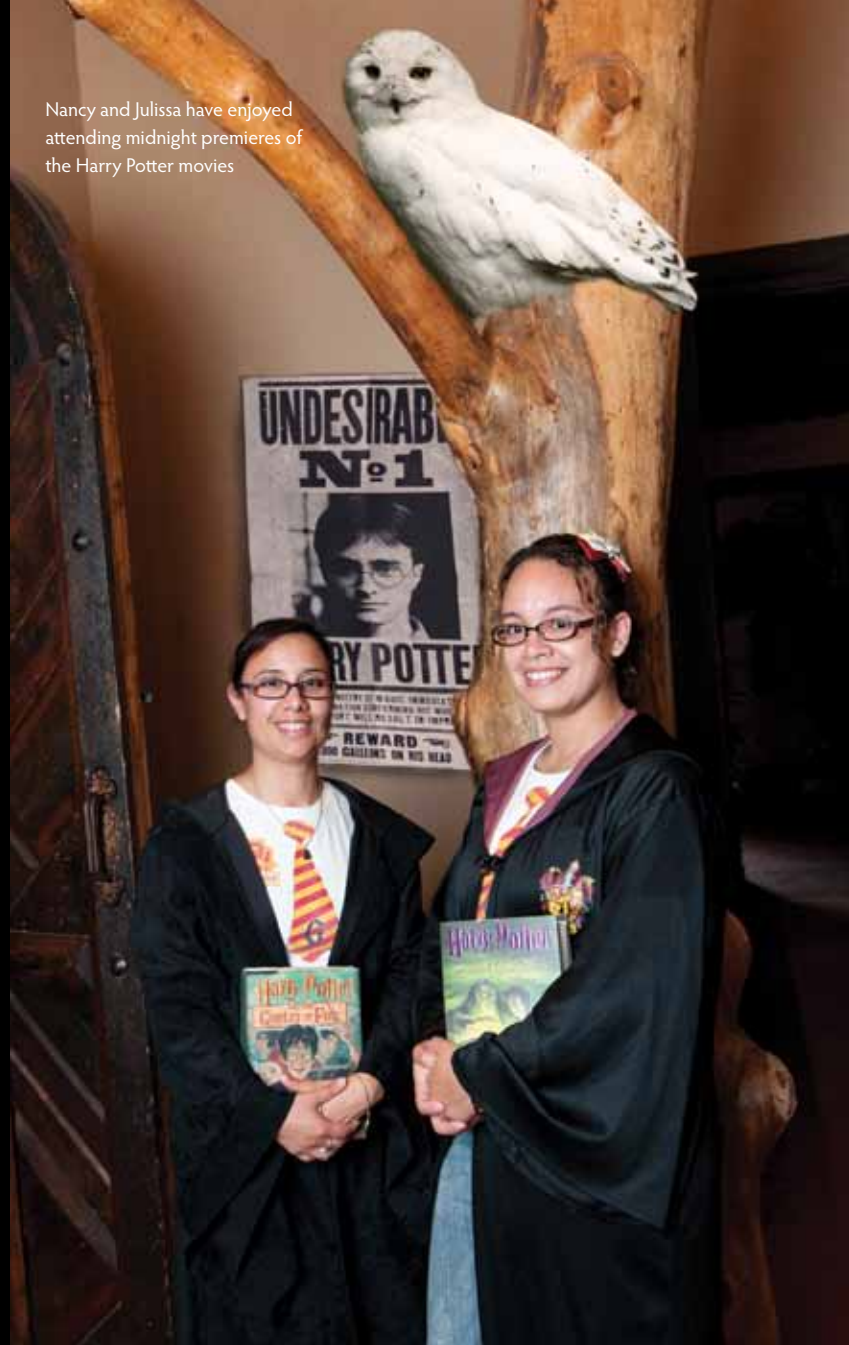
MICHELLE CHONG is a junior at Cinco Ranch High School and is also, quite sadly, a Muggle.

SPECIAL THANKS to Agave Road for providing us with an enchanting location for this photo shoot.



Jennie sports the red and gold of Gryffindor, Harry Potter's house team

Nancy and Julissa have enjoyed attending midnight premieres of the Harry Potter movies



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Andrea acts out her favorite character from Harry Potter



Jelisa and Nancy enjoy collecting Harry Potter memorabilia



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