

Issue 8
Winter 2020

East Texan

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Letter from the Editor

It's 2020! This date has always seemed so far into the future and now here we are. As we put away all of the holiday decorations and find places for our treasured gifts, we say goodbye to 2019 and bring in the New Year! We put away the presents but must remember to live in the present. The days, months and years pass so quickly it so important to experience the moments before they're gone. Some approach the new year with a sense of reflection and renewal, many of us can't believe we are already starting another year. It's almost impossible to begin a new year without starting a list of goals with the inclusion of embracing good health and happiness, enjoying life, losing weight, living in the moment. We reflect on accomplishments, achievements, and the priority of spending more time with family.

This issue of the East Texan focuses on experiences. If learning about new places in East Texas is included on your list, this issue will not disappoint. We have included a few day trips you can add to your list - a winery, brewery, and a music venue. Our DIY experts guide you in repurposing everyday items you may find during your new year closet cleanout, spend some time reflecting in the garden or enjoying family time at the zoo. Set some goals for the new year and take us along with you. Time goes by quickly so no regrets in spending it joyfully.

Hindsight is 2020

~ Debbie Dickerson
East Texan editor



On The Cover



Photographer Kelli Barnes of Woodville, features co-owner of H-Wines in Coldspring, Texas. See full story on page 40.

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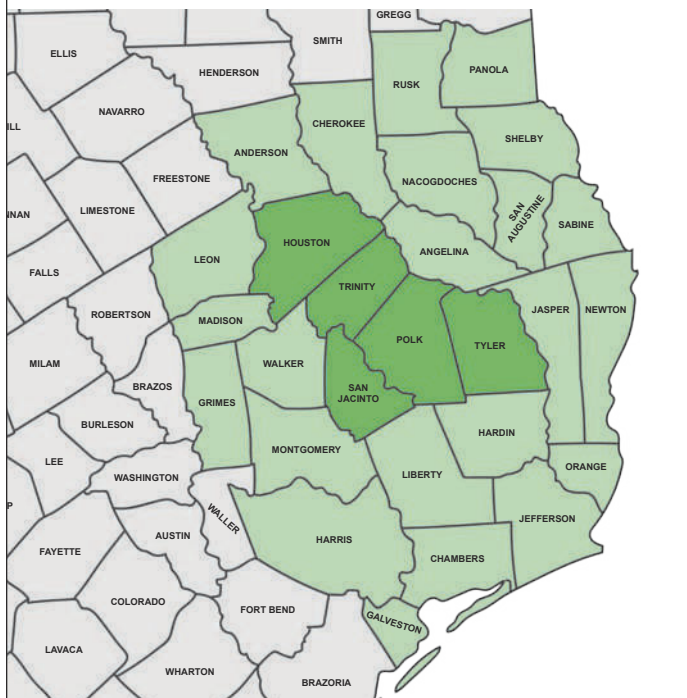


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DAY TRIP

Lufkin



LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS... OH BOY!

Story by Mollie LaSalle
Photos by Chris Edwards

Looking for a fun thing to do on a Saturday afternoon that doesn't cost an arm and a leg? Look no further than the Ellen Trout Zoo in Lufkin.

Ellen Trout Zoo was founded in 1967 by Walter Trout, president and founder of Lufkin Foundry and Machine Company, and named in honor of his mother.

It all began when Trout received a 500-pound hippopotamus as a Christmas present in 1965. Hippie was boarded at a zoo in Monroe, Louisiana until a hippo pen could be built in Lufkin. The zoo was eventually built around Hippie's pen and officially opened in June 1967; a sign at the entrance proclaims: Ellen Trout Zoo Founded & Presented to the Citizens of Lufkin by The Lufkin Rotary Club, 1967. Ellen Trout Zoo has grown from seven acres and 200 animals to 25 acres and over 800 animals today. Ellen Trout Zoo has been accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums since 1983, and participates in several Species Survival Plans.

A walk through the zoo exhibits feature several projects and improvements by the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, two organizations that





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made large contributions.

Ellen Trout Zoo is owned by the City of Lufkin and houses over 800 animals on its 25 acres. Zoo exhibits represent every continent except Antarctica. The hippo-aquarium is by far the most popular exhibit, and young and old alike delight at the sight of the hippos swimming to the glass to greet you.

Some of the animals you can see up close are lions, jaguars, tapirs, flamingos, Alligators, rhinos, giraffes, and fruit bats. The peacocks roam freely around the park, as do squirrels;. Hippie's old pen is now the Koi pond exhibit.

The zoo made headlines around the world in July 2016 with the birth of a rare white lion cub who was named Ashur. Ashur made his public debut in September. A pair of endangered Clouded Leopards arrived at the zoo the same month.

Do not be surprised if you get "followed" along your path by one of the many park's peacocks. It is almost as if they are giving you a personal guided tour. They are beautiful, and not shy.

The Lufkin Lion's Club operates the Z&OO Railroad, adjacent to the zoo. The train ride takes about 10 minutes and runs around the park and across Ellen Trout Lake. The Z&OO Railroad was dedicated on June 13, 1984," to children of all ages for their benefit and enjoyment". Tickets to ride the train are \$2, and children under three ride free. All proceeds benefit various projects and organizations in Angelina County.



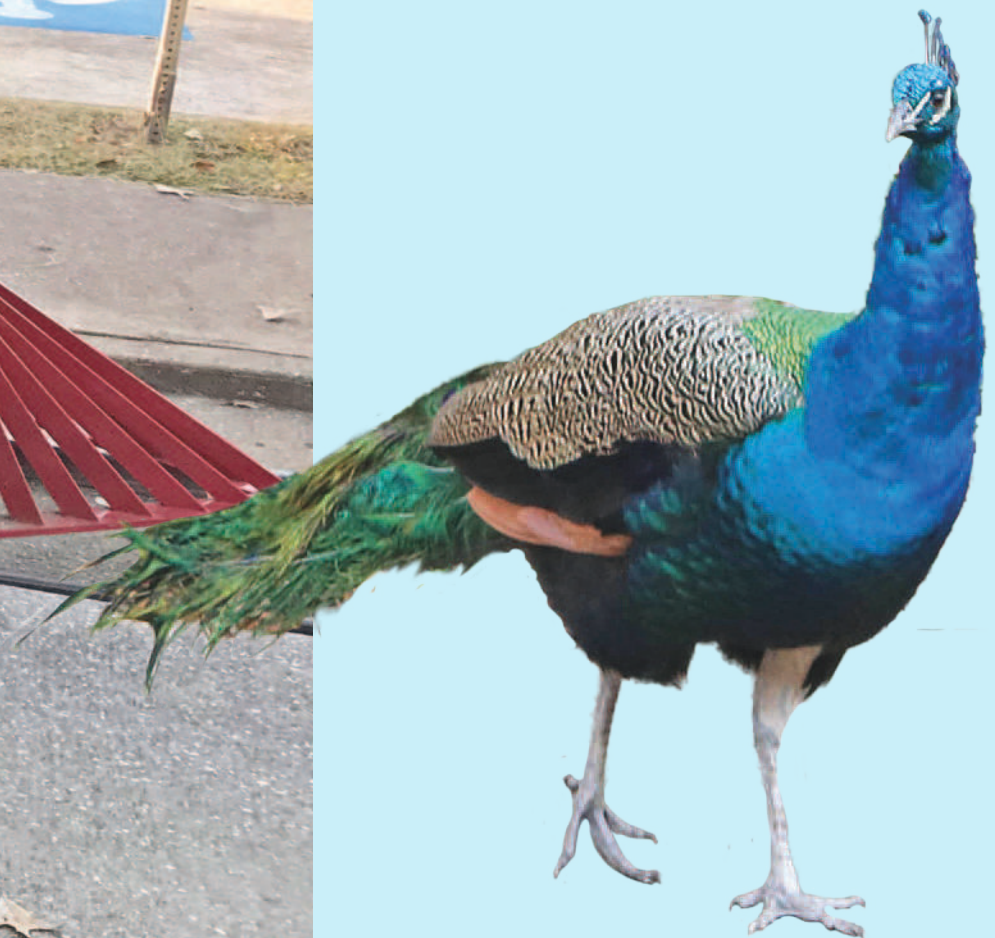




The Zoo plays host to various events during the year. The most popular is the annual fireworks show for the Fourth of July, “Zoo Boo” at Halloween, and “Zoo Brew”, which is held in the spring, usually in late April or early May.

Visitors to the zoo are guaranteed a spectacular afternoon of fun and excitement. Young or old, you will find yourself planning your next visit as soon as you leave the park.

Ellen Trout Zoo is located at 402 Zoo Circle in Lufkin. It is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm, including holidays and weekends. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors 60 and up, \$3.50 for children age 4-11, and children under 4 get in free. Gordon Henley is the Zoo Director. You can also support the zoo by joining the Friends of the Ellen Trout Zoo, and you can call 936-633-0399 or visit their website at www.ellentroutzoo.com for more information.



Garden





WHEN IT'S MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE

Story and photos by Diane Morey Sitton

ABOUT FACE

It's hard to say why gardeners hang sun faces on garden fences, or why they tuck ceramic pixies into pots, or why they display likenesses of Bacchus, Neptune, or other ancient deities on patio tables.

Perhaps it's to set a mood or to strengthen a garden theme. Maybe it's to create surprise... who wouldn't be taken aback when coming face to face with a gargoyle tacked to a tree trunk or half-hidden in foliage and flowers. It's possible gardeners want to create a point of interest in an otherwise lackluster landscape. Like scene-stealing divas, garden faces can steal almost any show.

Or could it be that gardeners welcome garden faces for the companionship they provide. After all, wouldn't the workload of weeding and watering seem lighter under the gentle gaze of Mother Nature or the mischievous grin of a garden gnome?

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(Above) Tin Man. Faces don't have to be pretty to find a place in gardens.

(Right) Here comes the sun. A large sun face adds color and interest to a garden wall.

(Bottom) A long face. A topknot of croton complements this ceramic container.

Whatever the reason, here in East Texas, as elsewhere, gardeners seem drawn to the bold, brazen, and bashful characters depicted on garden accessories such as pots, wall medallions, ornamental masks, mosaic creations, carvings, bird houses, and pieces of metal welded or wired together to form a face.

Objects range from large works of art that dominate garden rooms to coy countenances that peak from pots. The list of materials is equally varied. It includes marble, concrete, hypertufa, wood, ceramic, river rocks, terra cotta, and, of course, any other material that can be painted, carved, cut, or manipulated into a countenance.

Their wide range of characters, materials, and forms make decorative faces suitable for any landscape style. The list below contains popular options.

Face pots (i.e., a face-adorned container with a planting compartment) look their most compelling when crowned with a fern, succulent, or grassy, hair-like plant. Give them a "long-haired do" by planting creeping Jenny or other trailing plant. To fully appreciate their demeanors, display them on tables, pedestals, garden walls, or other elevated platform. Plant directly into the pot, or in order to remove the plant for watering, insert it into the face pot in its original plastic nursery-grown container.



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Wall pots are designed to be displayed on flat surfaces, such as porch walls, fences, and partitions. They require drainage holes and a strong hanger that will support the weight of the pot, plus moist soil. Avoid stains by removing the pot from the wall before watering.

Ornamental masks depict exotic characters. Display a single mask or a collection of masks on brick, wood, or adobe walls. Use tropical plants to play up the mask's bold colors and eye-catching attributes.

Carved faces come in many forms. Beds of ferns or flowers invite freestanding faces chiseled from sections of tree trunk. Pedestals invite art works chipped from stone. Folksy, one-of-a-kind faces carved from wood add whimsy to informal gardens.

Wall sculptures and medallions are best showcased on flat surfaces. Display a sun face at poolside; brandish a Greek goddess plaque on an ivy-covered wall; hang up an original art piece persona on a patio partition. Pressed resin achieves the look of stone, but it weighs far less than stone.

Forest faces. Give a tree trunk a personality by attaching a craggy face to it. The four-piece kits contain eyes, nose, and mouth. Usually, the expressive features are textured to resemble tree bark.

FACE VALUE

Luckily for gardeners, ornamental masks, head-shaped pots, and sculptured faces are readily available at nurseries, garden departments, home decorating centers, and online.

Best of all, whether you are searching for a goddess, warrior, or elf to create a mood, set a theme, or enliven a bland backyard, your new decorative garden face might end up being your new garden friend. ■

Goddess in residence. This classic figure is coiffed with rabbit's foot fern.



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Aiming to spread happiness

Stesti Brewing Company brings Czech style beer to Houston County

Story by Alton Porter

The owners of the only beer brewery in Houston County and the only brewery in a 50-mile radius of itself in Deep East Texas say a big part of their purpose is to spread happiness.

Co-owner Ana Gore of Stesti Brewing Company, which opened for business about four years ago and is located at 1328 FM 2915, on the outskirts of Lovelady in rural Houston County, says they're all about making people happy.

"Me and my husband started this together four years ago," said Gore. Dennis (Gore's husband) was fortunate enough to know the former brewmaster of Pilsner Urquell, which was the leading Czech brewery in the Czech Republic. And he (Dennis Gore) was able to do his classes under him (the former Czech brewmaster).

"And then, after brewing with him and learning how to brew in the Czech style—because it is a very unique style—they were able to share ideas on brews, and actually brewed one of our flagship beers: the Pivo Pils," Gore said. Pivo in Czech translates to beer in English, and Pils is a type of beer: pilsner.

"So, one of our flagship beers is Pivo Pils," said Gore. "And the other one is Bohemian Lager. Bohemia is a region in the Czech Republic. And so, those two recipes—his (Dennis') brewmaster allowed him to bring back here (to America) and brew. So, these are very authentic recipes from the Czech Republic."

Gore explained, "There are German beers. Everybody asks about German beers. Czech beers are a little bit lighter and crisper. And that's what appealed to us, especially Dennis. Dennis is the one who started this business. He likes that lighter, crisper beer, which is what we hopefully will continue to brew here—that Czech-style beer."

The Gores celebrated Stesti's fourth anniversary with friends and guests Dec. 21, 2019. They established the company in December 2015 and started producing beer in January 2016.

Asked how Stesti Brewery Company got its official name, Gore explained, "It started with Dej Buh Stesti. And that is Czech. And it translates to 'God gives happiness.'

"When Dennis went to his brewery class in the Czech Republic, his brewmaster, every morning, would say, 'Dej Buh Stesti.'

"And he (Dennis) finally asked (the brewmaster), 'What are you saying every morning? I'm saying, Good morning. And you're saying, Dej Buh Stesti.' And he (the brewmaster) said, 'It's just a salutation among Czech brewmasters.'

"And so, we thought, 'Hum, that's kind of a cool thing. I think we'll bring it back. And we just shortened it to Stesti. Stesti means

happiness in Czech. And so, we just shortened it to Stesti Brewing Company. Our corporate name is Lovelady Brewing Company, LLC."

Gore said her husband had traveled to the Czech Republic with a friend many years ago, and that's where he fell in love with Czech-style beers and didn't forget about it and wanted to do it here for a hobby.

"As far as we know, we're the only brewery that makes authentic Czech-style beers," Gore said. "And so, that's kind of a nice thing to be able to say. In the state of Texas, we're the only Czech-style brewery. And so, we kind of like that, and I think that's what we try to hold to."

Telling the story of how Stesti was brought into being, Gore said, "It was an adventure and hobby that we developed into a business in this building—as you see is cinder blocks. I have pictures of him (Dennis) and his son, brick by brick, building this building. And the idea was it was going to be a barn for our farm animals."

"And, after it was built, and Dennis was really wanting to brew some beer as a hobby, one day under the tree, we just decided—flipped a coin, I think, basically, and it went from a barn to a brewery. And so, it's an adventure. It's been an adventure."

Asked how she would describe Stesti, Gore said, "I would say it's a very unique micro-craft brewery. We're not trying to be the next Karbach (Brewing Company). We're not trying to be the next Budweiser. We're just trying to brew a good beer."

"The brewery is set up—it's called a 30-barrel system. "So, each tank that you see can hold 30 barrels of beer, which equals 900 gallons," she said. "Now, we have nine of those. So, we have nine 30-barrel fermenters, and then, one 10-barrel. And the 10-barrel is what we do our experiments and our seasonals in. It's a smaller tank."

"The other side (of the facility) is what we call the brewhouse. That's where all the cooking gets done—all the malts and hops and everything gets cooked. That takes pretty much all day. And then, it gets moved into the fermenter, where it will sit anywhere from 21 to 28 days fermenting before it's readied for packaging."

"There are different malts, and we use very high-quality European hops and malts. That's very important in getting the flavors that you want out of your beers."

Explaining how they started the business and brewery after making the decision to do it, Gore said, "Dennis did his research



Photo by Ana Gore, Stesti Brewing Company co-owner and business manager

on all of the equipment (needed). And we decided to have the brewery in this particular building. We liked it because it is 200 yards away from home and he could walk to work.

“We were restricted on the size tanks we could put in here. And so, that was a lot of engineering (that was required), in that he had to find a company out of Wisconsin—they were the only ones that would custom-build him these fermenters because your average fermenter is too tall to fit into this barn.

“And so, we had to have custom-size fermenters made just for Stesti, so that they would fit in our barn. And so, it took a lot of planning. So, it was about a year or a year and half of planning before we even opened up—and then, piping all the things.

“And Dennis (a medical doctor) is a DIY—do it yourself—guy. And so, he took his time and put this brewery together himself on his days off of work from his real job (as a surgery teaching professor at the University of Texas—Medical Branch at Galveston). So, when he’s not doing that (teaching surgery), this is what he’s doing—making beer.


Gore said she’s the other side of the business. In addition to

being a co-owner of Stesti, she’s the brewery’s business and marketing manager. “And so, I worked on marketing our beers to get them into the grocery stores, get them into the restaurants and the bars.” In addition, she said she manages Stesti’s sales force, delivery team, advertising—everything (on the business side).”

Asked what it took to get the brewery started, she said, “I guess we got into this not knowing how much it was going to take because this is more than a full-time job for the both of us. Lucky, we found some good team members to join our company. Like I say, it’s been an adventure in that we’ve had to learn as we go in this business.

“And it’s a very competitive (business). Craft beers, in general—the industry is very competitive. I don’t know if you’ve ever walked into the grocery store and seen all the different types of beers that are available. And so, you need to look at that and go, ‘What is going to make my beer stand out and make people go to my beer?’”

As far as funding the start of their business, Gore said their main financial source was their savings. “And Dennis thought, ‘What better way to (invest your financial resources). You can



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Asked what made them want to locate their brewery on the outskirts of Lovelady, on the southwest side of a town that has a population of about 650 residents in Houston County, Gore laughed and said, “because of its proximity to home since we live right here and planned on retiring here. Dennis likes the short commute.”

She said they owned their Houston County property at the site where they live and built the brewery “for about 20 years before we decided to build here. We just have some very close friends who live in Houston County who recruited us.”

Having the business in that location has been a challenge, she said. “Part of it is we love it. What can you not love? It’s beautiful out here. But we have struggled with the logistics of being so far away from the city. And then, with the county restrictions we had upon us—which now are better—that was a challenge, as well.”

The restrictions Gore referred to were state and county law provisions that prohibited breweries from selling their products directly to the public if they were not restaurants that sold food. Breweries had to go through retail stores to sell those products. However, both the state and Houston County recently abolished those restrictions.

“We’re excited about finally being in a position to do advertising because, with the new laws that passed in September, we’re moving forward to do other things,” Gore said.

A new Texas law, which took effect Sept. 1, 2019, allowed Stesti and other similar breweries in the state to sell beer directly to the public without going through a retail store.

In addition, voters in Houston County passed a proposition in a May 4, 2019, election, allowing breweries to sell beer directly to consumers.

“As a brewery now, the county is allowing us to do that,” said Gore. “And then, with the (Texas) legislature—they allowed brewers, like ourselves, to sell directly to the public (beginning) Sept. 1. So, it was hand in hand. It was just perfect timing that we got that law passed (by the county voters) back

in May. And then, it went into effect Sept. 1, the same date that the legislature passed the law that we could sell directly to the public—and also, beer to go. So, people can actually take beer from here, as well, to go.”

Gore said the brewery has a tap room at its facility “where we do all of that.”

“And so, we got a little slow start because of that (the state and county restrictions),” said Gore. “But we never knew the business was going to grow like it has. We just thought, ‘Oh, let’s just make a little beer. Let’s brew a little beer and sell it.’ Well then, as it kept growing, we thought, ‘Gosh, we need to be able to do more.’”

“And it was the statutes of the county that wasn’t allowing us to do more. And so, we were so happy that the county (voters) decided to change that to allow us and other businesses to prosper in this county.”

“The county, I think—and I think a lot of people think—is in need of new businesses. Hopefully, this will encourage, entice other businesses to come to the county, with the passing of this bill. We were so appreciative of the support in the county that allowed us to do that because I’ve heard other businesses are talking about coming in and doing things here, which is great. That economic boost is what the county needs.”

Gore said Stesti is “in a little growing spurt because we just added two big tanks” that her husband was piping to the facility when the Courier sat down with her for an interview.

Concerning their business plan, she said, “I wish we had a more firm business plan when we started this. But, at this point, with the growth that we’re having, we’re looking to expand our distribution into other areas. That’s the initial plan—expansion.”

As far as marketing is concerned, she said grassroots efforts are important, adding, “We feel that getting people to taste the beer is what gets our customers. Before Sept. 1, we did lots of tours and tastings. So, people were able to come out here, take a tour, learn how the beer is made, taste the beers, enjoy some music outside, which was a great way to market.”

“We also do lots of festivals all over our distribution area in Texas. And then, we do samplings and tastings in H-E-Bs and Brookshire Brothers and Krogers, Spec’s, Total Wine. We’re all in the major stores. So, I think the



Photo by Alton Porter



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grassroots is the best way to put it. We don't have a big budget to do billboards and radio and TV, but maybe one day we will."

Currently, business is steady, Gore said. "I think, right now, craft breweries are seeing a little bit of a steady (trend). There's not an up. There's not a down. I'm not quite sure why that's happening, except I know there's a lot of competition. There are a lot of new breweries that are opening up. Every month, it seems like there's a new brewery. So, there are a lot of choices for people."

"Evolving and growing" is the best way to describe Stesti's current status, said Gore, adding, the company's motto is: "Keep it fun."

As far as the vision for Stesti is concerned, she said, "We tease about becoming well-known enough to be a successful brewery in the eyes of our other peers. It would be really an accomplishment if our little brewery in Lovelady, Texas, could do that."

Asked what motivates her and her husband to keep forging ahead with their brewery, Gore first searched for the best words to use. Then said, "Dennis and I both look at it as almost a game in that, if we do this, then we can accomplish this."

"And so, it's almost a strategy. We like waking up and going, 'Okay, how can we make a better beer?' Or, 'what is going to be our next new beer that people are going to want to drink?' And so, he and I sit and have coffee talking about different kinds of beers we want to make. What's the next seasonal going to be? Who is it going to appeal to? So, is it going to be this audience, or this audience?"

"Because you do—You have your millennials. They like their sours and their tart beers. And then, you have our age. They like the more traditional milder beers. And so, it's a game that we like to strategize together with."

In addition to their two flagship beers, Gore said, "we also have four other beers that we can: Dark Lager, Blueberry Lager, a Hefeweizen style of beer and a Kazbek ale."

"Our Blueberry Lager, believe it or not, is our bestselling beer. We brewed it two years ago. We took our Bohemian Lager, added blueberries that I bought at the Nacogdoches Blueberry Festival. And it became our bestselling beer. And it still is."



Photo by Ana Gore, Stesti Brewing Company co-owner and business manager

For their Hefeweizen beer, Gore said, “For that particular beer, we came up, I think, with a clever name: We combined the words Czech and Texan, and we made Czexan. So, the name of that beer is Czexan Wheat

“We like to use things that are readily handy to us. So, we had oranges off our orange tree. And were thinking about ‘What could make this beer different than all the other Hefeweizens out on the shelf. And we had juniper trees and juniper berries. And so, we took those juniper berries, crushed them and flavored our Hefeweizen with Junipers. And it gave it a very unique tartness. You either love it or you don’t. It is a tart beer.”

Gore explained, “Kazbek is a malt only found in the Czech Republic,” and their Kazbek ale is the last beer that they brewed.

“And then, we do seasonals all the time,” she said.

“People are recognizing us as someone who comes out with very unique quality beer,” she added.

Gore said Stesti currently has five employees and she’s looking for another salesperson.

She said, in addition to purchasing their beers and ale directly from the brewery, people can buy them at such stores as H-E-B, Kroger, Spec’s, Brookshire Brothers, Total Wine, Whole Foods, as well as several hundred restaurants and bars.

“Dennis and I, both, feel honored that we have the support from the community. They come out to our open houses. And they bring their families, their kids. We have a bouncy house that we

got just for the kids. And we have so much fun with them. We put out cornholes and they play games: croquet. They can even go fishing if they want.

“They follow us on Facebook and they can give me a call at 832-452-8575 or check our website, www.stestibrewingcompany.com, and find when we’re having our open houses. They can tour the facility and have birthday parties there. We’re grateful to be in the community, and hopefully, are contributing something back to it.

“At first, we weren’t quite sure how the community was going to accept us four or five years ago. We didn’t know what to anticipate from the community when we said we were going to come in with a brewery, knowing that the laws were what they were.”

Gore went on to say, “And so, we’re just thankful that we’ve been allowed to build our business here. We’re hoping to open a beer garden. We’ve been looking at space in Crockett and in Lovelady, Huntsville. We just don’t know where, yet, to do a beer garden, a family beer garden that people can come to.

“We’re a family business. We always put our family first. And our team that we have here—we always tell them: ‘Family comes first.’ But at the same time, we’re really committed to making a successful business and hope that the community will come out and support it. They’re welcome to come out and see what we’re all about.”

Asked who they want to appeal to, Gore replied, with a laugh: “Enthusiastic craft beer drinkers.” ■



Photo by Ana Gore, Stesti Brewing Company co-owner and business manager



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SMALL TOWN

Jonesville Texas

Story & photos by Jeff Fatheree

One of the more spectacular road trips in Texas can be found in the Caddo Lake area. As you near Waskom, don't miss tiny Jonesville. Jonesville started life in 1847 as Border and William Harrison Jones of Alabama moved to Texas and started a trading post and stagecoach line. The stagecoach operated between the railroad and Swanson's Landing on Caddo Lake and the T C Lindsey and Co.'s Jonesville General Store was the main building in town.

The name of the town was changed to Jonesville in 1849 most likely due to Mr. Jones and his now General Store and cotton gin. The General Store acted as a loan office and banker for many of the local farmers lending seed money for the cotton crop.

The post office was also located in the store and the stage line delivered people and goods to the ferry at Swanson's and back to the train. The town relocated to its present spot following the end of the Civil War when the Texas and Pacific Railroad established a depot. Jonesville was quite the place around 1880 when T.C. Lindsey purchased the store.

By 1884 Jonesville had a population of 60, a steam gristmill-cotton gin, and two general stores. By 1892 the town had grown to around 275 with a Baptist and Methodist church as well as a saloon. In 1904 there were two white schools serving about 35 students and three black schools serving approximately 223 students. With the introduction of automobile travel and the oil boom in the neighboring communities, the population would begin to decline. The store, however, would continue to operate and would be run by Mr. Lindsey and his nephews and then other family members. It is the oldest General Store in the state of Texas and operates as both store and museum today.

When I happened upon the community the first thing that struck me was the number of buildings very similar in construction with only the general store appearing to be open. The building and gin have been kept by the family as a reminder of days gone by. The last cotton bale was ginned in 1973 at the gin across the street. The store is an interesting mix of working general store and museum with no real divide between the two. Some of the stock from the original store is on display and the intrigue of the store will keep you looking for hours. It is a great day trip and a trip back in time.

Today the store is run by Jon Miller who is a descendant of the Vaughn's. These were the nephews that took over from T.C. when he retired. Every December on the 2nd Saturday they have "Christmas in the Country" at the store, giving folks a look at Christmases of the past. They also have hosted several





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film crews in the last 50 years or so. The first being a Walt Disney film in 1970 "Bayou Boy", then in 1974 Antry Studios "Stroke of Murder." Also, in 1974 Walt Disney Studios made "The Pond" followed by Charles Pierce Productions 1979 film "The Evictors".

In 1985 NBC arrived in town with Len Hill Productions starring Don Johnson and Sybil Sheppard titled "The Long Hot Summer". Two more films were made there to date, in 1988 "Big Bad John", A Red River Films production and in 1996 "Renfro's Christmas" by Jim McCullough Productions. The town is not opposed to more movies being made there, and I promise if you need a readymade late 1800 – mid 1900s town this is the spot. The buildings have no names on them, so you simply put up the names you need, well except T. C. Lindsey & Co.

When a motorcycle ride went through the town, the owners knew this would be a good opportunity to get some folks to see the store and spend a little money with them. They invited a man with a chuckwagon to come and make some chili for the riders who happened to be a trick rope artist as well. Two couples from China happened to be at the store that day and struck up a conversation with none other than Burt Hairgrove, manager of the George H. Henderson Exposition Center in Lufkin. The men from China were interested in talking to a real Texas Cowboy and Burt isn't shy about striking up a conversation. Before you know it, Burt was teaching them how to build and toss a loop. You never know who you might see or what you might learn when you go to the store in Jonesville.

Inside the store, merchandise ranges from 1840s vintage to modern-day, and they continue to get things from outside sources to display in the store. One striking observation was that the cost of clothing in the 60s was more than they are today. Other than that, pretty much everything else has increased in price. A pair of overalls that would fit Paul Bunyan, Big Tex or the Stephen F. Austin Statue is on display, and you walk through them to get upstairs. The museum items are not for sale but there are many things in the store mixed among them, so don't hesitate to ask. They have a giant wheel of red wax cheddar with the old-fashioned slicer like they had when I was a very young lad as well as some summer sausage fresh cut as you order. I could go on for days about all that is in the store, but I don't want to ruin the surprise.

Visitors are usually greeted by Gloria Andrews who came to the store in 2016 to learn and then take the position of Syble Elliot that had worked at the store from 1957 until she finally retired after 60 years. She recently celebrated her 95th year at an area nursing facility and still has wonderful stories from her days at the store. Ms. Andrews came to the area with her husband from her birthplace in Wisconsin. Her husband's family is from the area and they had moved back down, and he was working on the store. She was offered the position and accepted. She said she was not nearly as versed as Ms. Elliot but was still learning. Jonathan and Gloria will be glad to give you the tour of the store and regale you with stories from the past. This is a day trip that you will never regret. If you come and visit, but are not sure where to go after, just go on down FM 134 and you will end up in the actual town of Uncertain.

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MAR. 17	12PM	TASTE OF CLEVELAND	CLEVELAND CIVIC CTR
APR. 11	9AM	BUNNY BLAST	OLDE CITY PARK
APR. 17-25	6PM	CLEVELAND LIVESTOCK SHOW & RODEO	STANCIL EXPO & ARENA
APR. 24	4PM	DAIRY DAY BUYERS DINNER	CLEVELAND CIVIC CTR
MAY 7	12PM	NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER	CLEVELAND CIVIC CTR
JUNE 6	TBD	CHAMBER OUTDOOR EXPO	STANCIL EXPO & CTR
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Geneva's Quick Gumbo

Recipe contributed by Barbara White
Photo by Amy Holzworth

I never knew Geneva, but I wish I could thank her for this recipe that was passed on to me by a friend several years ago. It is so easy, and it is perfect for chasing away the winter chill, or getting warmed up for the Mardi Gras season ahead. Serve with some cornbread or hush puppies on the side.

- 1 can (14.5 oz) chicken broth
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 3 cups water
- 1 small bay leaf
- 1 tbsp dried thyme leaves
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped bell pepper
- 1 tbsp dried, minced parsley
- 3 tbsp gumbo file powder
- 1 lb raw chicken breast, cut into chunks
- 3 hot links or Polish sausages, sliced
- Salt, pepper, garlic powder to taste
- 2 cups frozen sliced okra
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 2 cups frozen small shrimp
- hot pepper sauce

Combine chicken broth, tomatoes, water, bay leaf, thyme, butter, onion, green pepper, parsley, file powder, chicken, sausage, salt, pepper and garlic powder in stock pot or Dutch oven. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes.

Add okra and cook at least 8-10 minutes, or until tender. Add cooked rice and frozen shrimp. Turn off heat and let stand for 5 minutes, or until heated through. Add a few dashes of hot pepper sauce if desired.

(8-10 servings)



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Living some songs, singing some life

Cleveland troubadour Zach Aaron readies album number three



Story by Chris Edwards
 Photos courtesy of Zach Aaron

The life of the troubadour, particularly the Texas breed, is one of adventure and challenges aplenty, as well as few concessions to compromise. It is an existence driven by the hope of another day and another gig with hopes of another story to tell in song.

Texas troubadours write and sing of their families, friends, hard work, land, travels and, occasionally, moonshine. They create tunes reflecting the good times and those on the other hand – it's all about joy and pain, as one of the greats, Steve Earle, once distilled it all down to.

Cleveland-based singer/songwriter Zach Aaron is a proud bearer of that tradition. It is beyond cliché to say someone has an “old soul,” but Aaron, who is just a couple of years into his thirties, fits that overused description if anyone does. His elegantly tarnished tenor voice, fingerpicked guitar melodies and mix of raw honesty and abstract sentiments in his lyrics make him seem of a different time than many of his contemporaries, yet timeless, all the same.

The great Hillbilly Shakespeare himself, Hank Williams, once described country music with one word: sincerity. Aaron strives

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for just that in what he does. "I just try to write real, honest songs," he said. "I know that is corny but it's the honest truth, for real."

His rangy appearance and mellow demeanor suggest equal parts puncher and beatnik, and he could just as easily be a character in one of his songs as the man who made them up and sings them. The songs are like conversations and full of characters such as the titular Arizona cowboy (off his *Murder of Crows* album) who "was young and drunk and mean" and could "tame the desert wind," or the wayward narrator of "Vagrant's Lament," which is on the same record.

The sights and essence of the Southwest that factor into Aaron's lyrics and sound are a testament, in part, to his upbringing. He was born in El Paso, then shuffled off to southern Arizona and later wound up among the East Texas pines, all before he was 12 years old.

During his formative years, Aaron discovered the music of the late, great singer/songwriter/rodeo legend Chris LeDoux via his father's record collection. "Chris LeDoux is the only artist that I remember listening to growing up. When I was six or so I overheard my dad telling my mom that I knew all the words to 'Even Cowboys Like a Little Bit of Rock and Roll,' and that made me proud," he said.

Aaron attempted to learn the words to all of LeDoux's songs, and in his late teens began to explore other artists' music and said he began to understand the art of songwriting. "I started playing guitar and singing when I was 18 and shortly after I started writing songs," he said.

Aaron admits that his early attempts at combining melodies and lyrics were not keepers. "I wrote a lot of terrible songs, but I was always listening to real songwriters like Guy (Clark) and Woody



“Some call my music ‘Texas Country,’ some call it ‘Americana,’ ‘Red Dirt,’ ‘Folk,’ or ‘singer-songwriter,’ and I guess it could be all of that. I just hope people dig it.”

(Guthrie), and I believe that is what made me a better songwriter.”

A four-and-a-half-year stint in the Air Force, right after graduating high school, allowed him to further see the world. Thirteen months of his service he was stationed in Korea. While he was in the military, he was able to play music with a band jokingly named The Do What Band.

Now two albums into a career as a truth (and tune)-seeking troubadour, and with a third record in the can, Aaron continues to evolve as an artist. His first album, *Find My Soul*, was released in 2014, followed by *Murder of Crows* in 2017. The newest project, titled *Fill Dirt Wanted* is scheduled to be released on May 15.

The first two albums were recorded in Texas, while the upcoming release was done in Norman, Oklahoma. A change of scenery in recording did not bring out anything different, sound-wise or in his approach, but “Norman is a great town full of amazing musicians,” he said. The quality of the players will certainly “light a musical fire” under one’s posterior, he added.

Fill Dirt Wanted is comprised of all acoustic instrumentation. Aaron calls it “more of a songwriter album” than its predecessor.

The rootsy melodies and lyrics defy any one description. Sure, it’s country and folk-y, but great songs are great songs, no matter how they are presented. Aaron, himself, is not one to spend much time on putting himself into a genre-specific package.

“Some call my music ‘Texas Country,’ some call it ‘Americana,’ ‘Red Dirt,’ ‘Folk,’ or ‘singer-songwriter,’ and I guess it could be all of that. I just hope people dig it,” he said.

The music of Zach Aaron sits comfortably beneath others under the Americana banner, and as far as likeminded artists Aaron would be recommended alongside, there are dashes of Townes, a bit of Adam Carroll, some Doc Watson and a sprinkle of the Turnpike Troubadours’ Evan Felker present in what he does.

Some of those artists, as well as Robert Earl Keen, are influences on Aaron. As far as contemporary artists go, he said he is drawn to Colter Wall. “That guy is the real deal,” he said. “I want to write songs like that.”

Aaron said the upcoming record has a song that he is proud to

count as his favorite original tune thus far and would serve as a great entry point for anyone interested in checking out his music. The song, “Aztec Café,” was co-written with his buddy Jon Dews. “He had a very basic idea for a song and I just took it and ran with it,” he said. “The words played in my head like a movie. It was really fun to write.”

Aaron’s records are a great addition to the turntable of any fan of roots music, and pair well with a nice, cold beverage of one’s inclination, but catching him live is highly recommended. Whether it is solo acoustic, or with other musicians accompanying him, Aaron looks at home onstage, and his live sound is not one whit different from what you’ll hear on record, minus one difference. “A lot of folks tell me they like my sense of humor onstage. I say some pretty dumb stuff to get laughs,” he said.

With a new record on the horizon, the opportunities to catch him live will surely increase, but he has found a steady number of venues to showcase his songs, stories and humor already. His music has taken him across the country, but he is most commonly found on stages here in Texas. From the Hill Country to songwriter-friendly venues in East Texas, Aaron is always ready to share his songs and bare his soul for anyone willing to listen.

One venue at which Aaron is a frequent presence, *Across the Tracks* in Livingston (also profiled in this issue) has a fan in its owner Thom Bruning. Bruning, who met Aaron through fellow singer-songwriter Justin Fulcher, said he has seen Aaron perform on his stage at least a dozen times. “Every time it’s an amazing show,” he said.

A combination of a culture of hard work, family and travel that produced Zach Aaron ultimately led to him choosing the road of the roaming singer-songwriter, but with every gig and every song, there’s more melodies and miles still to come.

“I’m gonna get to you as the crow flies,” Aaron sings in one of the songs off his last record, and after hearing him, you might find yourself humming or singing his tunes (which are bound to stick in your cranium). You’ll realize, then, that he is, indeed, getting to you, in the most endearing way a music-maker could hope for. ■

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— A LOVE FOR WINE —

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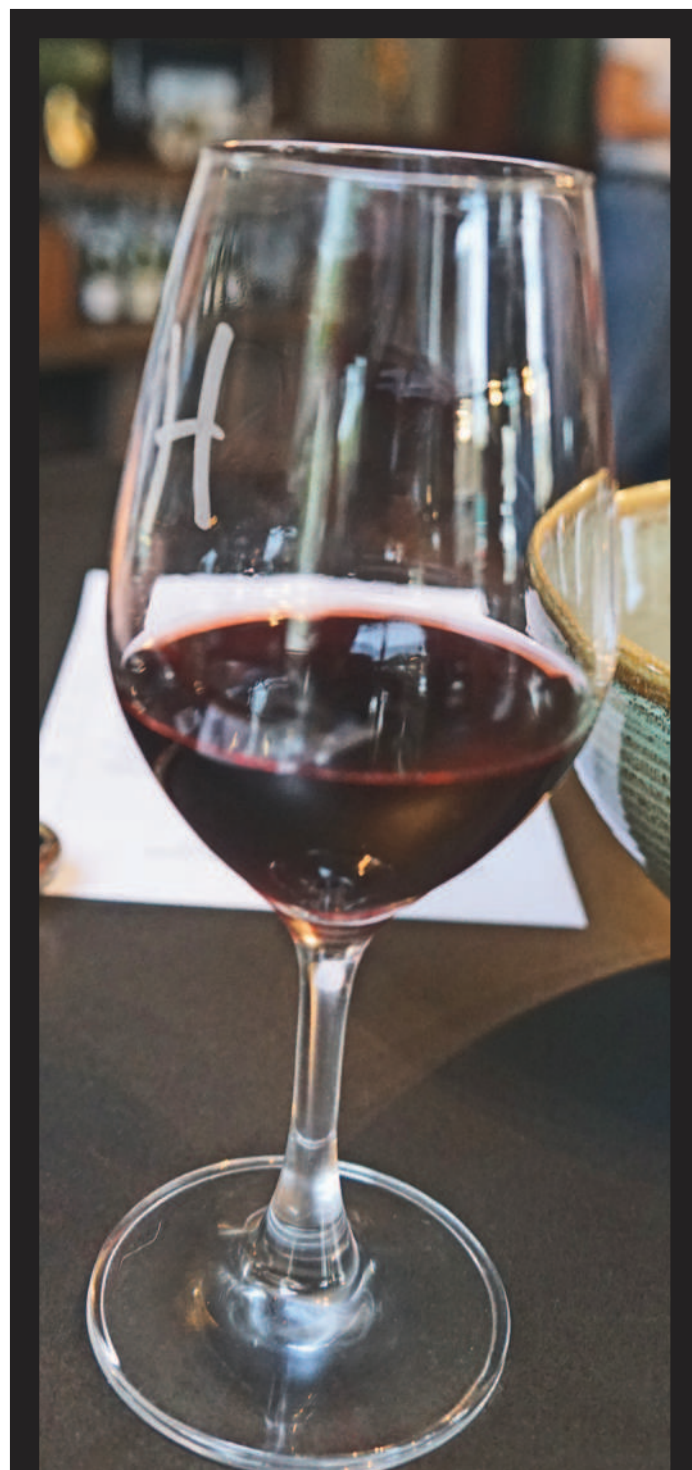
Story and photos by Kelli Barnes

H-Wines, located in Coldspring and also in Montgomery, has a lot going for it.

If you are an East Texan who loves supporting East Texas businesses, this is a great story about two men, Steve Hari and Phillippe Legrand, who met at a party about five years ago. Realizing they share a similar heritage, a love for wine and wine making, they decided to join forces. The journey to start H-Wines (short for Domaine des Hospitalières LLC) became a family affair, with their wives and children supporting, and in some cases, participating in the process.

The tasting room, located in downtown Montgomery inside an old bank building at 211 Liberty Street, adds to the special experience. Instead of just sampling wine, you will receive a beautiful plate of homemade quiche, special cheeses and salami's, and table-side master instruction from the hosts. Philippe spent summers in France as a child delivering wine for his family, who were wine merchants. "I enjoy sharing a glass of wine, having friends discover and enjoy our products, and a good laugh," said Philippe.

The grapes used to make H-Wines are grown by John and Judy Benestante in Coldspring and Bruce and Bridgette Leslie in New Waverly. During harvest time (around June/July), you can volunteer to come to the New Waverly vineyard to help harvest the grapes, and then participate in the grape stomping celebration. Both Philippe and Steve are eager to share their knowledge of wine and wine making with anyone interested.





It is also an option to tour the wine-making facility located at 110 Pinto Lane in Coldspring. Steve will walk you through the production process for reds and whites. “In France, you must have a college science degree to make wine,” said Steve. “In America, just pay fees and have your label approved. This surprises me because wine is a food and there is science involved. If something is not done correctly, it can make you sick, very sick.” Steve has his science degree and over 25 years of wine-making experience.

In addition to wines made right here in East Texas, by wine making experts using local Black Spanish Lenoir grapes for red wines, and Blanc du Bois grapes for the white wines, they carry their favorite and highly recommended French wines.

What are you waiting for? Make plans to start your friendship with Steve and Philippe as soon as possible. The tasting room is open Thursdays from 4-9 p.m.; Fridays 4-10 p.m.; Saturdays 2-10 p.m.; and Sundays 2-5 p.m. They can be reached by calling 832-870-9303. ■

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Story by Barbara White

"I know exactly what is going to happen in 2020," said no one ever. But quotes from some well-known musicians may provide a few clues.

"Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans."
—John Lennon

I can safely predict that the most memorable events of the year will not be the ones marked on our calendars. They will fall into those blank spaces between the major holidays that the calendar people have so graciously provided and your personal memo to make an appointment with Dr. Fang to get Scruffy's toenails clipped.

It wasn't on my calendar, but one of my fondest memories is of sitting on a pickup truck tailgate with two friends on a very hot, very sticky night. Several days of scouting and planning had brought us to this place on the hill, off a curve in a dirt road, far from any city lights. We had found the perfect spot to view a meteor shower that had been billed as a "once-in-a-lifetime" event.

For a few minutes, we sat silently, staring intensely into the heavens, waiting for the show to begin. Then we got to talking.

"I think I saw one!" one of us would say every now and then, and we would briefly return to the task at hand and start staring at the sky again. It went on for a couple of hours... the conversation, that is. We talked about everything that night, but I don't think we saw a single meteor. Still, it was the best meteor shower ever.

"It's not the mountain, it's the climb." —Miley Cyrus

OK, put those Twitter fingers back in the holster, I know that is not the actual quote; I am paraphrasing. "Ain't about what's waiting on the other side, it's the climb" just doesn't work for me, which is probably why there are no multi-platinum albums listed on my resumé.

In keeping with the astronomy theme, Miley's doctored quote brings to mind my first solar eclipse, which I spent standing in the front yard with a cardboard box over my head.

The box idea was something my dad had read about in the local newspaper as a way to safely view a solar eclipse, projected through a small hole in one end of the box. I think there was tin foil involved. He and I spent several hours making one for each member of the family.

So, my memory of that momentous occasion is not of an awe-inspiring image of the moon passing in front of the sun, it is

of me and my dad poking holes in boxes. Of lesser importance was the eclipse itself, of which I remember only standing in the front yard as a proud member of, what neighbors likely came to call us, the cardboard-box-over-the-head family.

Had I been a much brighter child, a decade or two older, or clairvoyant, I would have learned one of life's most interesting lessons that day: As we mosey along through this world, filling our buckets with memories, what gets tossed in there is rarely what we thought it would be. Or, in eclipse speak, we come expecting the moon and leave with a cardboard box.

The memory eclipses any eclipse.

"You can't always get what you want." —The Rolling Stones

It is scarcity, and not absence, that makes the heart grow fonder.

Just a few months ago, there was much frenzy over a fast-food chain's chicken sandwich. There were assaults and arrests made as the sandwich would sell out before those at the end of the line got their turn, which doesn't say much for us as a society. Time magazine described the marketing coup as "a perfect combination of comfort, quality and scarcity."

Many years ago, when I was in college, the closest place anyone could buy Coors beer was Fort Worth. It was so delicate that it had to be kept refrigerated at all times. And the taste? Well, it was just... there are no words. Or so I was told by those who had had the pleasure. I had never tasted Coors beer.

The more we talked about it, the more we had to have it. So, we piled into a car that was old enough to vote and drove from Nacogdoches to Fort Worth. Was it worth it? Of course it was.

We loaded a cooler with all the beer we could afford, which was two six packs.

Now that I can buy Coors in the local grocery store, when I buy beer at all, I walk right by the once-coveted brew and go for one of the seasonal offerings because — you guessed it — I might not be able to find it a few weeks from now.

"...Ride with the tide, and go with the flow."

—Carly Simon and James Taylor

Whatever you toss into your memory box in 2020 — and none of us know what that might be — I hope it is all good and that you make the most of it. Like most other things worth enjoying, this year is only here for a limited time. Carly and James may have had the best advice of all.

Here's hoping that 2020 brings you good conversations, some cardboard box moments and, even if you don't get what you want, you get what you need. ■

VENUE SPOTLIGHT

Up close listening experiences found

'ACROSS THE TRACKS'



Photo by Amy Holzworth

Story by Chris Edwards

*"Maybe she just had to sing for the sake of the song."
—Townes Van Zandt ("For the Sake of the Song")*

At one time, the hottest thing among live music lovers was the intimate experience of listening to an artist perform in a small venue. The listening room concept, whether it was a small bar or coffeehouse, put a premium on the experience of the music itself.

Many performers flourished as solo acoustic acts in these settings – stripped down to the bare essentials of guitar (or piano) plus voice and songs. It was, and is, truly for the sake of the song.

The trend is swinging back toward these intimate listening experiences. Several prominent listening room-style venues have emerged in the past decade, supplying singer-songwriters with places to play, and an alternative to crowds who would rather eschew the production, lights and large crowds of clubs and honky-tonks. One such venue sits, true to its name, across the railroad tracks in downtown Livingston.

In the ground-level floor of a building that sits at a straight line of sight across from the Polk County Courthouse, Thom Bruning has been welcoming music lovers since 2015. First-time patrons of Across the Tracks can expect a laid-back concert experience that is all about the music. "To sit there in a room with somebody and a guitar, and to feel their energy and the stories is just magic," Bruning said.

Bruning, a lifelong music fan, said it was visits to listening rooms in the Houston area, such as the Mucky Duck and Anderson Fair, which gave him the incentive to get the venue off the ground. "I've always just loved that as opposed to a big concert venue," he said. "We've owned this building forever; it just took us about 15 years to get it done."

Prior to visiting such legendary, intimate venues and experiencing the singer/songwriter realm first-hand, Bruning said he did not listen to anything that could be labeled as country or folk. "It changed it all at that point, just getting to see the music being made up close," he said.

Across the Tracks's proprietor listens to a variety of sounds, but many of the artists in his record collection and playlists fall within the country/folk singer/songwriter filing. He named off several perennial Texas and Americana favorites, like Robert Earl Keen, Jason Boland, Ray Wylie Hubbard and Slaid Cleaves as some of his favorites. When it comes to the artists Bruning books to perform at Across the Tracks, many of them fall within a similar vein as those aforementioned legends, and he is insistent on seeing artists perform live prior to booking them, to make sure they will be a potential good fit for the venue and its audience. "Everyone who has played here, I've gone to see them live," he said. During shows at Across the Tracks, Bruning also occupies a spot in the audience.

Laci Kaye Booth, a recent finalist on American Idol and daughter of veteran Texas music singer/songwriter Jody Booth, was the first artist to perform on Bruning's stage. Bruning said Booth gave her recommendations for future artists to book, and those artists had friends they recommended. "Much of it's been word-of-mouth," Bruning said, when discussing some of the artists who have graced

ENJOY THE MUSIC

Across the Tracks is located at 309 North Jackson Avenue in Livingston. For show schedules, call 936-329-4160 or visit the website acrossthetracksmusic.com. Tickets to all shows are \$12 at the door. Seating is limited, so the venue recommends calling ahead to reserve a table.



the small stage stationed near the back wall of the room.

Regional touring artists such as Cole Allen, Hunter McKithan, Wade Tanner, Justin Fulcher and Zach Aaron have found a receptive audience and a great-sounding room to share their songs and stories. McKithan, a longtime presence on the Texas music scene both as a solo artist and with his band The Offenders, enjoys the connection and the ambiance of Across the Tracks and was a bit surprised such a venue existed in the Piney Woods. "I admit it, I had my doubts a venue that catered to the singer/songwriter could even exist in the vast woods of East Texas, but was proven wrong," he said. "Thom managed to fill the place with folks that hung on every word. A listening room in every aspect."

"I see that kind of talent on the stage, and I'm just amazed that this is my place," Bruning said.

The consistent, steady grassroots growth of rootsy acoustic music makes a place like Across the Tracks a wellspring of rewards and magic for listeners, and Bruning said he is committed to keeping a place going for quality music to be showcased. "I'm not going anywhere, as long as people keep coming to see it and the artists keep coming to play," he said.

Bruning ultimately chalked up Across the Tracks' existence to his love of music and the one-on-one experience with the musicians. "The music is always good, and there is always a closeness between me, the artist and the audience. It's always a good feeling." ■

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Book Knife Block

Do you have older books with personality? Find matching books, glue the back of each book together and bind with cord. Cookbooks are great for this project. Use yarn, lace, string, ribbon or even an rustic belt to bind.



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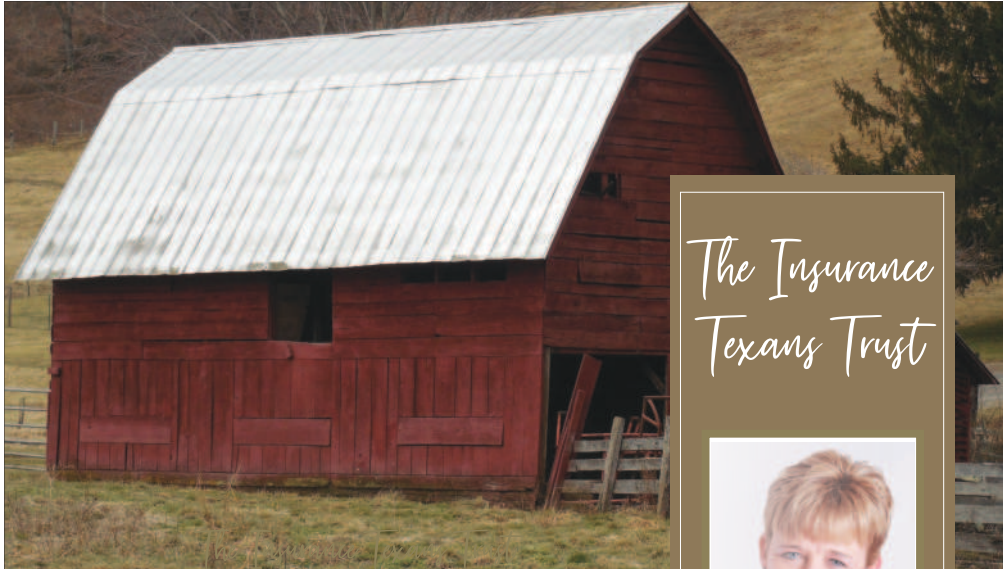
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WEATHERING THE STORM

Regional districts overcome Harvey, Imelda

Story by Jason Chlapek | Photos by Polk County Enterprise staff

Entering his fourth year as the head football coach at Hull-Daisetta, Stan Hodges was conducting practices like many other high school coaches in Texas.

But in August 2017, disaster struck. Its name was Hurricane Harvey.

Harvey's wrath did significant damage to much of Southeast Texas and Greater Houston. Some schools, like Sabine Pass in Jefferson County, were forced to cancel their entire nondistrict football slate and weren't able to take the field until district play started.

Hodges and his Hull-Daisetta team didn't have the same misfortune. The Bobcats just had to cancel their season opener against neighboring Hardin that year.

While the H-D football team just had one game to cancel, the district's elementary school wasn't as fortunate. Fittingly, a neighbor stepped in.

"After Harvey, we had a lot of flooding

at the elementary school," Hodges said. "For more than a year, we had to house our students at the former Hardin Elementary School. Hardin ISD had just built a new elementary school and the old one was usable, so they allowed us to educate our kids there. Every day, we met at the high school, put our kids on a bus and sent them eight miles to Hardin. They were an awesome neighbor and were willing to lend us a hand. We're grateful to them. We didn't miss a beat and were able to stay on course with our educational system. We remodeled and upgraded our elementary school. It looks like a new campus on the inside. Former Superintendent Mary Huckabee worked so diligently with all of those things. She stayed on an extra year so she could see this project unfold."

Hull-Daisetta ISD has three communities that primarily make up the district – Hull, Daisetta and Raywood. According to Hodges, each community

consists of 400-500 residents.

In September, Southeast Texas was impacted by another natural disaster – Tropical Storm Imelda. Like Harvey, Imelda did damage to parts of the region, and H-D was forced to cancel yet another nondistrict game.

"Both Harvey and Imelda affected us about the same, but on different sides of the district," Hodges said. "Imelda brought in a flood on the north end of the district, while Harvey hit us on the south end of the district. We were mostly affected by the flooding. Water rose up and got into houses. That was the devastation most people had."

REBUILDING

Hodges, now the athletic director of HDISD, has been with the district since 2014. After Harvey and Imelda, he said it was common for families to relocate to other homes within the district that did not



HARVEY FLOODING IN EAST TEXAS — *Texas Game Wardens and High Patrol Troopers (left,) joined local fire fighters in pulling children and adults from flooded subdivisions along the Trinity River in southern Polk County. The rain forced the level of Lake Livingston to rise, causing water to top bulkheads at Memorial Point. Holiday Lake Estates and Pedigo Park were some of many areas that flooded in East Texas.*

experience damage.

“Most of our athletes and their families had to move in with someone else or relocate,” Hodges said. “We had kids living in homes with 3 or 4 other families during Imelda.”

Hodges pointed out that the natural disasters did more than just damage to structures.

“Anytime our kids and their families go through suffering, we feel it, too,” Hodges said. “It’s hard for kids to emotionally bounce back from those sorts of things. A lot of times we had kids who couldn’t come to practice because they had to stay at home and tear out carpet or sheetrock. We had one kid who was repairing his roof and a 2x4 hit his head and gave him a concussion.”

STAYING TOGETHER

Andie Myers just finished her fifth season as the head volleyball coach at Sabine Pass. Her school’s football team wasn’t the only athletic program affected by Harvey or Imelda, however.

“We just had to cancel a couple of nondistrict matches,” Myers said. “Imelda forced us to postpone a district match, which forced us to play three matches in one week. We won all three of those in five sets.”

Myers and the Lady Sharks overcame the adversity of Imelda to reach the postseason for the second time in five years. They advanced to the area round where they lost to eventual state runner-up Jewett Leon.

“We stayed together as a family,” Myers said. “We kept going and didn’t let it get in the way of anything. We fought for it and never gave up. We are not defeated. We are the Lady Sharks of Sabine Pass and we are fighters.”

BOUNCING BACK

In the aftermath of Harvey and Imelda, Hodges believes getting back into the routine helped bring his communities back together. He admires the people in his region for the way they persevered, especially his players.

“Once we got back into the ebb and flow of our season, it brought our community back together,” Hodges said. “They had a rock full of guts, stuck through it and fought through it to

rebuild their lives. We’re all blessed. The Lord’s going to take care of us one way or another. He’s not going to give us anything we can’t handle. When you have neighboring towns and communities that will stick their hand out and help pitch in, it’s great. That’s what we’re known for around here. We all pitch in and send prayers. It’s just amazing the outreach of people out there that know we’re going through some tough times. It means a lot to us. We’d do the same thing (for anyone else affected in a similar manner).” ■



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The **RAPID GROWTH** of Cleveland ISD

Catapulting from 2A to 5A UIL classification in five years

Story and photo by Jeff Fatheree

Take a trip down US 59 I69 south of Livingston and you come upon what once was the small town of Cleveland and home to the Cleveland Indians of CISD. The school was your average 2A school a few years ago and has now grown, with the expansion in Plum Grove Community. That and the introduction of Toll Road 99 has given an infusion of life into what was a community that had great pride but little else to offer. They did have some business as most small towns do and a very loyal population of citizens determined to survive. The school had some athletic success but was academically not a school of choice for many parents. The citizens of the community were not satisfied with this outcome and the school board brought in a new Superintendent to improve the standing of the school.

With success in academics growing, Cleveland ISD began to attract new students that had moved into the area away from the hustle and bustle of the big city of Houston. Cleveland is a short drive to Houston on the toll and US59 so it became an attractive alternative for some parents that wish to have the values of a smaller community taught to their children. Five years ago, they had approximately 3,800 students and grew to a population of 6,719 in 2018. A current snapshot reflects 7,565 with a projected growth to 13,500 students. They currently have three elementary schools and have all the portable buildings they can fit into the area. They have acquired new property with the ability to increase the size of the North side campus and plans to open two additional elementary and one additional middle school. The big question is how do you react and develop to not only provide adequate educational facilities and maintain the quality of education to stay as one of the preferred schools and bring in more students?

Master planning for growth not only in a 5-year plan but also 10-year, and 20-year master plan to maintain the facilities and instructional staff to allow Cleveland ISD to be a school of innovation. One of the things that has been put in place is that commitment to be a school of innovation. There is a unified effort from both the school district and the city and county leaders. The school is committed to providing the training for industry and commerce coming into the area. Once a month the schools

in Liberty County meet to create a level of cooperation. The flooding of Harvey created a spirit of “Cleveland Strong” out of the storm. Cleveland came together as never before, but also with the surrounding area. With the rapid growth, building has lagged behind the school and student body. The school has spent 5 million dollars on portable buildings. These have become a part of the permanent landscape of the district while trying to catch up with the construction of facilities. The 4th elementary campus is in the process of construction and should be in use in the Fall of 2020. The projection is to have a total of 6 campuses with 2 middle schools in time.

A developer came in and created a new development, Colony Ridge, which was a part of Plum Ridge but has been de-annexed and is now part of the county. This is a 25-acre development located on I-69 corridor and Toll 99 intersection. This development brings many students into the area as parents that both work in Houston as well as the Cleveland area. The development will bring approximately 250,000 people and their children will be included in the Cleveland ISD. With the Santa Fe and BNSF junction giving Cleveland North-South and East-West train service as well as a growing regional airport and many pipelines as well as I-60, US 105 and Toll 99 Cleveland and its area are becoming a preferred area for industrial, and commercial manufacturing as well as warehousing of goods for deployment to final locations. 800 acres on the west side has been purchased by railroad interest and will likely become the primary depot area for the two train companies. The growth of the industrial parks around Cleveland have brought great interest in the area with a growing future. To evolve with the rapid growth of the area brings unique challenges.

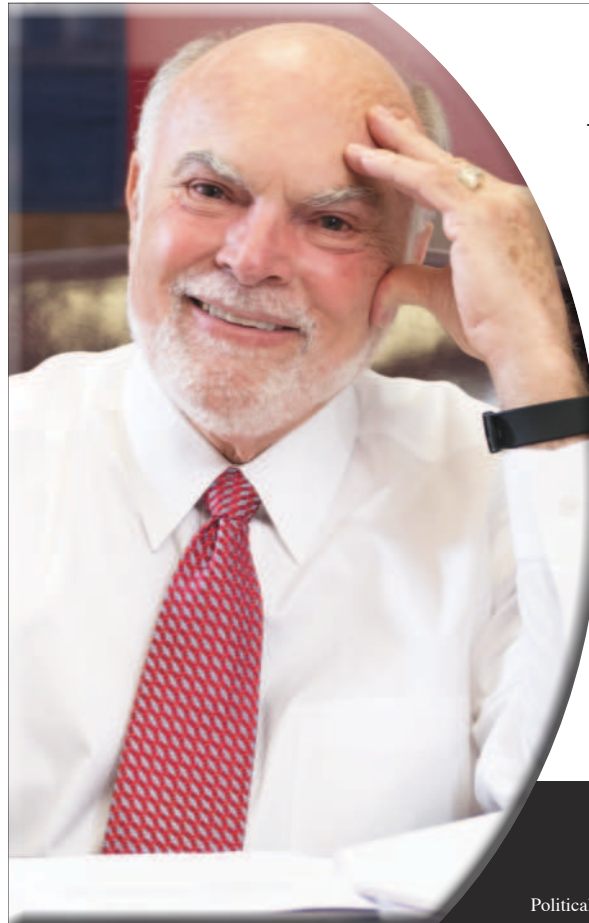
Creation of an Economic Development Committee and changing the mindset from a retirement community to a multi-purpose community have helped the city be an effective partner with the school to keep up with growth and development. The city holds a spot on the Economic Development Board for a school board member and the School Board has a seat for a member of the EDB. This allows communication as well as input from both sides to meet the needs of a hyper-growth area. This was a benefit



to the district with the passage of HB3 that allowed them to take advantage of the sweeping legislation. County Judge Jay

Knight was instrumental in establishing communication and interaction of the county city councils and mayors to work as a unit rather than against each other. If an entity is looking to relocate to East Texas but is not a fit for one community, they recommend another in the county promoting the growth of the county and the tax base. This has had a great impact on the number of industrial and commercial manufacturing businesses looking at the county. Communication is one key to providing for all the needs that rapid growth brings.

The school district itself has modified many of its offerings and as Superintendent Trotter gets his feet solidly planted in the district, he took the position in May of this last school year and is evaluating the needs of programs. Many programs and curriculum offered at the higher classification are not traditionally available at the 2A level. One of the needs was to improve the football facility to hold the number of fans that come with rapid growth. The school was able to shift some funds from other nonacademic areas to pay for the remodeling. The facility is simple but effective for the needs of the community with the ability to grow the available seating in the future at a reasonable cost. A \$189,000,000 bond issue was recently passed that will provide for renovation



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of the softball and baseball facilities as well as building new elementary facilities. The school places a priority on the education of every student over all other needs. This includes making sure that each student is put on track to graduate. Recognizing that not only does every student not desire to go to college, but not all are academically inclined to succeed in that route, Cleveland has focused on trade school and community college with dual credits available to the students. Students that desire can graduate with up to 30 credit hours of college and in the last year CISD graduated 70 Certified welders and CNAs as well as 2 Pharmacy Techs. These types of innovation are the paths needed to not only help students succeed but also to provide the qualified workforce needed for growth.

The cooperation between schools and the community's high level of commitment by both City leaders and school administration make this beneficial to each. Mr. Trotter takes a day to teach seniors their civic responsibilities and starts with the responsibility of volunteering in the community. Students in high school are encouraged to volunteer 40 hours a year for all four years of secondary education. Those students that complete the 4 years with 160 hours of volunteerism with civic organizations and the city/county are given a special service cord to wear with their graduation gown. Mr. Trotter personally funds the cost of these cords. He insists that each member of the faculty and staff prepare for "quality first encounters" with students. He explained this meant, to him, that every student would receive the very best preparation by the staff member for their lessons as well as teaching them good decisions, behavior, and readiness. Students are expected to act properly and with respect to the faculty and staff and the community has embraced this idea and provides support to the administration in the implementation of discipline to achieve these goals.

One of the other things that are required to keep up with the rapid growth of school districts and communities is to meet the medical needs of the increased population. The Health Center of Southeast Texas, a Federally funded and accredited health care facility, started by Dr. Jasmine Sulaimand, has been in the area for many years and survived the closing of the local hospital as well as the moving of many physicians out of the area. They

serve everyone regardless of ability to pay and have met the needs of the most impoverished members of the 4 communities they serve. Accepting Medicare, Medicaid, Cash and most commercial insurances they serve Cleveland, Shepherd, Livingston and Liberty with clinics. They had positioned themselves perfectly for the influx of people as they had tripled their Cleveland office this last July to 17000 square feet. They employ 18 mid and upper-level health care providers meeting the family practice, pediatric, behavioral health and telepsychiatry needs of the area. While they have always and will continue to serve the poor and indigent, they are looking to increase their clientele to include the middle- and upper-class socioeconomic groups to allow them to continue to expand the care they can provide those that need assistance. They have a walk-in clinic to allow the same care to any that have injuries or illnesses that are not life-threatening. Cleveland has now acquired two emergency care facilities with one be an Urgent Care Hospital. Those cases needing higher levels of care are transferred there from these facilities to surrounding areas that are equipped for these cases. The mayor indicated that a new hospital with higher levels of care is in the process of coming to the community. With the rapid expansion of the population, the return of physicians to the area has begun. Each of these things has been overseen and encouraged by the EDB. The intent is to provide a full-service community to the residents of the area. I would like to say from a personal standpoint, that if all the care providers in the community will have Dr. Sulaimand's heart for people, the care will be world-class.

The community of Cleveland and the Cleveland ISD have worked together to change the attitude of the citizenry to embrace the growth. Most people that move to Cleveland find that it is a fantastic place to live. If you have the opportunity, come enjoy the community and stop in and see what the school is becoming. I promise that you will be impressed with the young leaders that are coming out of the community. The storm of Harvey became a blessing as it taught the community to come together, embracing their differences, and celebrating their commonalities. No longer do you see division by economics, race, or ethnicity in the community or school. If we can all learn this lesson of pulling together, East Texas will become the powerhouse of the nation.

A red banner with white text and a background of a crowd of people. The text reads: "CLEVELAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS STARTING AT \$55,100". At the bottom left, there is a logo with the letter 'C' and the text "WWW.CLEVELANDISD.ORG FASTEST GROWING DISTRICT IN TEXAS".

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MISSION OF LOVE

WWII vet reflects on marriage & war

Story by Jason Chlappek

Having survived a kamikaze attack on the USS Intrepid during World War II in May 1945, Burke Landry and his fellow Navy Shipmen received 10 days of leave.

This didn't leave Burke with much time on his hands, but he had another mission to accomplish during his leave time. After all, the then-18-year-old was about to be shipped back to the Pacific Ocean to fight against Japanese troops.

"It took me three days to get home and three days to get back to base," he said. "That gave me four days at home and four days to get married."

Mission accomplished. On May 27, 1945, Burke married his high school sweetheart, Lena Lou, which proved to be a mission filled with obstacles.

"Her dad objected to us getting married," Burke said. "But I found out when I got back, her brother made the arrangements. We ran out of gas and had a blowout on the way there but were able to make it to the Justice of the Peace's house and he married us in his living room."

Burke and Lena Lou, who celebrated their 74th year of marriage on May 27, drove from Pasadena to Liberty to get married that day. After an overnight honeymoon in Houston, Burke shipped back out to the Pacific Ocean.

"I was on the aircraft carrier and we were in the middle of the fleet, but we still had to fight off planes and kamikazes," Burke said.

While Burke was away at sea, Lena Lou still showed her husband how much she cared.

"She wrote me every day," he said. "I wrote when I could, but I got more mail than anyone in my division."

Fortunately for Burke, he didn't have to fight the Japanese too

long. WWII ended in August 1945.

When Burke came back from the Pacific, he worked in construction and for the post office for a few years in the Houston area. He also was a fire safety inspector for Shell Oil and an infectious disease control officer for a hospital in Houston.

Burke earned a bachelor's degree from Sam Houston State and had a trio of stints as an educator. He taught at Kilgore Junior College, the Houston Community College system and the Windham School system.

Along the way, Burke and Lena Lou raised three children — Glenda, Vic and Elizabeth (deceased). The couple also has three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

"Our children and grandchildren are the highlight of our marriage," Lena Lou said. "They've truly been a blessing from Heaven, as has our marriage."

Burke and Lena Lou moved to Bedias in the 1980s where Burke worked for the Ferguson Unit and Lena Lou worked at Sam Houston State. Both eventually retired before moving to Madisonville in the 1990s.

Both Lena Lou and Burke have a theory as to why their marriage has lasted, albeit in a humorous manner.

"I was going to get a divorce, but the kids like him better than me," Lena Lou scoffed.

"There can only be one boss in the family, and that's her," Burke quipped.

Burke and Lena Lou are heavily involved in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Madisonville.

Burke serves as a deacon and is a charter member of the local Knights of Columbus chapter. ■



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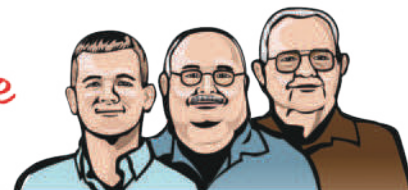
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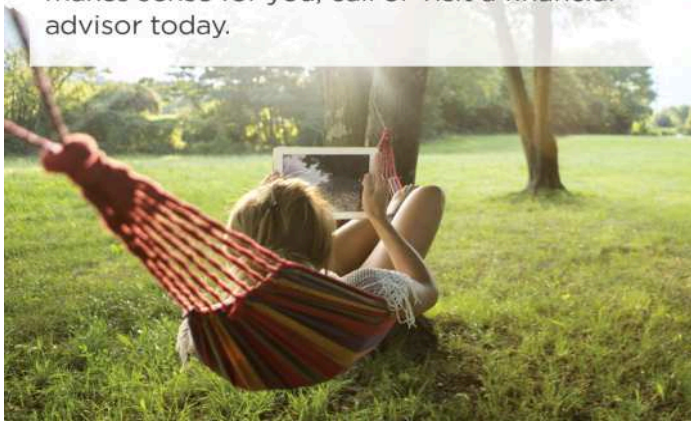
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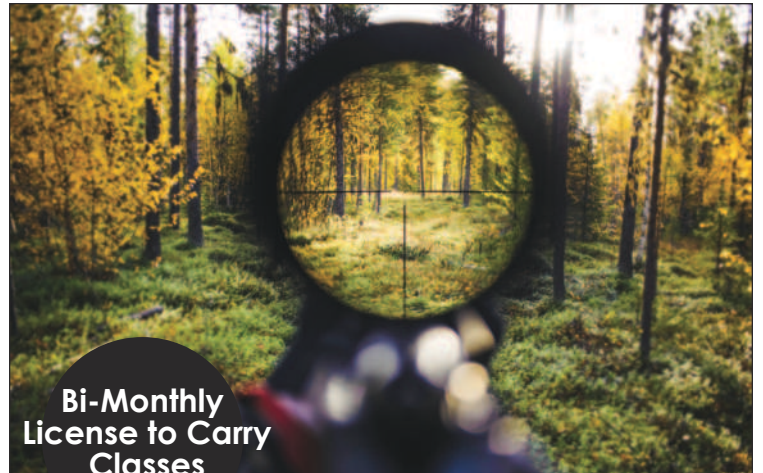
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CALFENNDAR

JANUARY

GALVESTON

23rd Annual Townes Van Zandt Wake/Old Quarter Acoustic Café
JANUARY 1

KINGWOOD

Sawblade Texas Marathon & Half-Marathon
JANUARY 1

GALVESTON

New Year's Day Open House/1892 Bishop's Palace
JANUARY 1

NEW CANEY

A Holiday to Remember Skating Event
JANUARY 1

GALVESTON

Gingerbread Polar Express
JANUARY 1-2

LUFKIN

Festival of Trees/Museum of East Texas
JANUARY 2-5

HOUSTON

Houston Boat Show 2020/NRG Stadium
JANUARY 3-12

HOUSTON

Who's Bad-The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience/
House of Blues
JANUARY 3

HUNTSVILLE

Doug Stone/Old Towne Theater
JANUARY 4

GALVESTON

Battle of Galveston
JANUARY 4

SILSBEE

Jon Wolfe/Honky Tonk Texas
JANUARY 4

BEAUMONT

2020 Bridal Traditions Show/Civic Center
JANUARY 5

LUFKIN

Popovich Comedy Pet Theater/AC Temple Theater
JANUARY 5

GALVESTON

Happy New Year, Vienna Style/Grand 1894 Opera House
JANUARY 5

HOUSTON

Gladys Knight/Arena Theater
JANUARY 9

CROCKETT

Patsy Cline Tribute/Civic Center
JANUARY 10

BEAUMONT

George Lopez Live in Concert/Julie Rogers Theater
JANUARY 10

TYLER

Cash'd Out-Johnny Cash Tribute/Stanley's Famous Pit BBQ
JANUARY 10

HOUSTON

Bridal Extravaganza 2020/George R. Brown Convention Center
JANUARY 10

THE WOODLANDS

Texas Flood at Dosey Doe
JANUARY 11

GALVESTON

Ice Land: Christmas Around the World/Moody Gardens
JANUARY 11

BAYTOWN

6th Annual "Baby It's Cold Outside" Vendor Market
JANUARY 11

PORT ARTHUR

Real Texas Gun Show/Bob Bowers Civic Center
JANUARY 11-12

BEAUMONT

119th Anniversary of Lucas Gusher/Gladys City-Spindletop
JANUARY 11-12

LUFKIN

East Texas Bridal Fair/Pitser Garrison Civic Center
JANUARY 12

GALVESTON

Yaga's Chili Quest and Beer Fest
JANUARY 17-18

HOUSTON

Black Laughs Matter/NRG Arena
JANUARY 17

LIVINGSTON

Trade Days at Pedigo Park
JANUARY 17-19

ATHENS
Athens Chamber of Commerce Gala/Common
Area Market
JANUARY 17

BEAUMONT
Rodney Carrington in Concert/Jefferson
Theater
JANUARY 17

GALVESTON
2020 Galveston Island Winter Beach Blast
JANUARY 17-19

HOUSTON
2020 San Jacinto River Winter Nationals
JANUARY 18

CROCKETT
PWFAA Winter Gala/Spring Creek Country
Club
JANUARY 18

THE WOODLANDS
Wayne Hancock/Dosey Doe Big Barn
JANUARY 18

GALVESTON
West Bay Big Trout Tournament/West End
Marina
JANUARY 18

BEAUMONT
Beaux Arts Ball 2020/The Art Studio,
Downtown
JANUARY 18

LUFKIN
Farewell Angelina/Pines Theater
JANUARY 18

HUNTSVILLE
Johnny Rodriguez/Old Towne Theater
JANUARY 18

GALVESTON
The Oak Ridge Boys/Grand 1894 Opera House
JANUARY 18-19

HOUSTON
Chevron Houston Marathon
JANUARY 19

19th Annual Battle of the Bands Competition/
W.W. Thorne Stadium
JANUARY 19

LIVINGSTON
Multi-Cultural Festival
JANUARY 20

HOUSTON
MLK Grand Parade/Midtown
JANUARY 20

SPRING
Josh Abbott & William Clark Acoustic/Big
Texas Spring
JANUARY 20

LUFKIN
Ladysmith Black Mambazo/AC Temple Theater
JANUARY 21

HOUSTON
Houston Auto Show/NRG Stadium
JANUARY 22-26

HOUSTON
Dwight Yoakam/Arena Theater
JANUARY 23

BROOKELAND
Fishing League Worldwide Tour/Lake Sam
Rayburn
JANUARY 23-26

CLEVELAND
2020 Annual Awards Banquet/Civic Center
JANUARY 24

NACOGDOCHES
Pine Knot Music Co-op/Millard's Crossing
JANUARY 24

LONGVIEW
East Texas Boat and RV Show
JANUARY 24-26

HOUSTON
Monster Jam/NRG Park
JANUARY 25

BEAUMONT
La Soiree Serengeti Cancer Benefit 2020/Civic
Center
JANUARY 25

GALVESTON
Moody Mansion Music: Classical Trio/Moody
Mansion
JANUARY 25

ORANGE
"Farewell Angelina", Directors Choice Show/
Lutcher Theater
JANUARY 25

HOUSTON
2020 Lunar New Year Festival/Chinese
Community Center
JANUARY 25

NACOGDOCHES
Kids Fish 2020/Lakeside Park Pond,
Nacogdoches
JANUARY 25

CONROE
Exotic Reptile and Pet Show
JANUARY 25

LUFKIN
Carvin Jones/Pines Theater
JANUARY 25

LIVINGSTON
Children's Pow Wow/Alabama Coushatta
Indian Reservation
JANUARY 25

HOUSTON
Branford Marsalis Quartet/Wortham Theater
Center
JANUARY 25

NACOGDOCHES
Cody Jinks/County Expo Center
JANUARY 25

GALVESTON
Galveston Restaurant Week 2020
JANUARY 25-FEBRUARY 8

HOUSTON
Chance the Rapper/Toyota Center
JANUARY 26

BEAUMONT
Memorial Concert for Yu Zhou Gu/Julie
Rogers Theater
JANUARY 26

HOUSTON
WWE Royal Rumble/Minute Maid Park
JANUARY 26

LIVINGSTON
84th Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet
JANUARY 30

TYLER
Rita Moreno/ Ut Tyler Cowan Center
JANUARY 30

BEAUMONT
TOBYMAC Hits Deep Tour/Ford Park
JANUARY 30

HOUSTON
Beethoven 7/Houston Symphony Orchestra
JANUARY 30

CALFENNDAR

FEBRUARY

COLDSPRING

Coffee, Cars, and Donuts/
Courthouse Square
FEBRUARY 1

CROCKETT

Asleep at the Wheel/Civic Center
FEBRUARY 1

NEW CANEY

Piney Woods Trail Fest 2020/Lake
Houston Wilderness Park
FEBRUARY 1

HOUSTON

Celine Dion Courage World Tour/
Toyota Center
FEBRUARY 1

TYLER

East Texas Bridal Expo
FEBRUARY 1

HOUSTON

Chaka Khan/Arena Theater
FEBRUARY 1

GALVESTON

"Finding Neverland"/Grand 1894
Opera House
FEBRUARY 1-2

HOUSTON

Pinot in the City Houston/Minute
Maid Park
FEBRUARY 4

BEAUMONT

Radney Foster/Courville's Catering
Company
FEBRUARY 6

LUFKIN

"We Shall Overcome", a
Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr./Pines Theater
FEBRUARY 6

HOUSTON

International Piano Festival/
University of Houston School of
Music
FEBRUARY 6

LOVELADY

Lovelady Love Fest 2020
FEBRUARY 6

HOUSTON

Sara McLachlan/Hobby Center
FEBRUARY 6

LONGVIEW

East Texas Builder's Association
Home and Design Show
FEBRUARY 7

KEMAH

Van Halen & Foreigner Tribute
Bands/Jackie's Brickhouse
FEBRUARY 8

GALVESTON

Galveston 50K Beach Run
FEBRUARY 8

HOUSTON

Bach's Concertos: A Feast for the
Season/Museum of Fine Arts
FEBRUARY 8

LUMBERTON

4th Annual Cupid Shuffle 5K, Kids
K/Lumberton High School
FEBRUARY 8

HENDERSON

G&S Henderson Gun Show/Rusk
County Expo Center
FEBRUARY 8

HOUSTON

The Schumann Festival/Houston
Symphony
FEBRUARY 8

NACOGDOCHES

Cody Johnson/Expo Center
FEBRUARY 8

SPRING

B.J. Thomas/The Big Barn at Dosey
Doe
FEBRUARY 8

LUFKIN

The Choir of Man/AC Temple
Theater
FEBRUARY 8

HITCHCOCK

2nd Annual Galveston County Car
Show (Saturday)
2nd Annual Motorcycle and
Slingshot Show (Sunday)
Galveston County Fairgrounds
FEBRUARY 8-9

CROCKETT

Davy Crockett Classic Bike Race
FEBRUARY 8-9

PORT ARTHUR

Rotary Taste of Gumbo/Bob
Bowers Civic Center
FEBRUARY 9

GALVESTON

Galveston Marathon
FEBRUARY 9

BEAUMONT

Lyle Lovett/Jefferson Theater
FEBRUARY 10

HUNTSVILLE

Muddy Gras 2020/General Sam's
Off-Road Park
FEBRUARY 13

TYLER

East Texas Auto and Cycle Show
FEBRUARY 14

GALVESTON

Mardi Gras Galveston 2020
FEBRUARY 14-25

HOUSTON

Marty Stuart/The Heights Theater
FEBRUARY 15

STAFFORD

Greater Houston Train Show/
Stafford Centre
FEBRUARY 15

BEAUMONT

Mardi Gras Nationals-Bead Fest/
Ford Park
FEBRUARY 15

HOUSTON

Tracy Lawrence/Arena Theater
FEBRUARY 15

BEAUMONT

Harlem Globetrotters/Ford Park
FEBRUARY 17

TOMBALL

Chely Wright/Main Street Crossing
FEBRUARY 20

TYLER

The Pointer Sisters/UT Tyler Cowan
Center
FEBRUARY 20

NACOGDOCHES
Nacogdoches Film Festival/Fredonia Hotel
FEBRUARY 20-22

HOUSTON
Texas Americana Festival
FEBRUARY 20-23

PORT ARTHUR
PALT Presents: "A Chorus Line"/Port Arthur
Little Theater
FEBRUARY 21

VIDOR
Music by the Stars, featuring Neal McCoy/The
Oaks Event Center
FEBRUARY 21

GROVETON
"Battle of Blackjack Grove"
FEBRUARY 21-23

CONROE
Lone Star Throwdown 2020/Convention and
Expo Center
FEBRUARY 21-23

BEAUMONT
Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas
FEBRUARY 21-23

LIVINGSTON
Trade Days at Pedigo Park
FEBRUARY 21-23

HOUSTON
Peking Acrobats/Jones Hall
FEBRUARY 22

PASADENA
3rd Annual Strawberry Festival Throwdown/
Pasadena Fairgrounds
FEBRUARY 22

CROCKETT
"One Night in Memphis"/Civic Center
FEBRUARY 22

SURFSIDE
Surfside Beach Marathon
FEBRUARY 22

LUFKIN
31st Annual Lufkin Bull Bash
FEBRUARY 22

HENDERSON
Mardi Gras Gumbo Cook-Off
FEBRUARY 22

LAKE JACKSON
The Texas Tenors in Concert/The Clarion
FEBRUARY 22

BEAUMONT
Cajun Zydeco Festival
FEBRUARY 22

PALESTINE
Mardi Gras on Main Street
FEBRUARY 22

CORSICANA
Steven Curtis Chapman in Concert/Palace
Theater
FEBRUARY 22-23

HOUSTON
Mardi Gras Houston 2020/Downtown
FEBRUARY 22-23

HOUSTON
Rodeo Uncorked! & Best Bites Competition/
NRG Park
FEBRUARY 23

GALVESTON
Fat Tuesday Parade
FEBRUARY 25

BEAUMONT
An Evening With Los Lobos/Jefferson Theater
FEBRUARY 26

HUNTSVILLE
Prison City Film Festival
FEBRUARY 26-29

HOUSTON
The Sleeping Beauty/Wortham Center
FEBRUARY 27

HOUSTON
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo World
Championship BBQ Cook-Off
FEBRUARY 27-29

NACOGDOCHES
Pine Knot Music Co-Op/Millard's Crossing
FEBRUARY 28

PORT ARTHUR
Golden Comic-Con/Bob Bowers Civic Center
FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1

BAY CITY
Matagorda County Fair
FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 8

HOUSTON
Reverend Horton Heat/House of Blues
FEBRUARY 29

BAYTOWN
Jail Break Run Half Marathon
FEBRUARY 29

HOUSTON
2020 Rodeo Run in Downtown Houston
FEBRUARY 29

TOMBALL
Already Gone (Eagles Tribute)/Main Street
Crossing
FEBRUARY 29

HOUSTON
Roger Creager/NRG Center
FEBRUARY 29

GALVESTON
"An American in Paris"/Grand 1894 Opera
House
FEBRUARY 29

HOUSTON
Bad Company & Judas Priest/Acadia Bar and
Grill
FEBRUARY 29

MARCH

HOUSTON
9th Annual Kosher Chili Cook-off
MARCH 1

KILGORE
KilGogh Arts Festival/Texan Theater
MARCH 2

HUNTSVILLE
Texas Independence Day/Sam Houston
Birthday Celebration
MARCH 2

HOUSTON
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo/NRG Park
MARCH 3-22

HUNTSVILLE
Wayne Toups/Old Town Theater
MARCH 6

HOUSTON
The Eagles Hotel California Tour/Toyota
Center
MARCH 6-7

CALFEDAR

WINNIE
Marsh Fest 2020
[MARCH 6-8](#)

HOUSTON
Black Heritage Festival/Midtown
Park
[MARCH 7](#)

LUFKIN
"An American in Paris"/AC Temple
Theater
[MARCH 7](#)

HOUSTON
2020 Run Houston/Minute Maid
Park
[MARCH 7](#)

COLDSRING
Coffee, Cars, and Donuts/
Courthouse Square
[MARCH 7](#)

HOUSTON
Houston Margarita Festival/
Firehouse Saloon
[MARCH 7](#)

THE WOODLANDS
The Woodlands Marathon
[MARCH 7](#)

SUGARLAND
Dancing with the Stars Live! 2020
Tour/Smart Financial Center
[MARCH 7](#)

BEAUMONT
"We're off to see the Wizard"/Julie
Rogers Theater
[MARCH 7](#)

BUNA
Buna Redbud Festival
[MARCH 7-8](#)

NEDERLAND
Nederland Heritage Festival
[MARCH 10-15](#)

LUFKIN
Funny Car Chaos at Pine Valley
Raceway
[MARCH 13-14](#)

VIDOR
SETX Cruisers Tour 2020
[MARCH 14](#)

GALVESTON
42nd Corvette Chevy Expo/
Galveston Island Convention
Center
[MARCH 14-15](#)

ORANGE
"Beautiful", the Carole King
Musical/Lutcher Theater
[MARCH 19](#)

MADISONVILLE
Madison County Fair
[MARCH 19-28](#)

NACOGDOCHES
Nacogdoches County
Championship Rodeo
[MARCH 19-21](#)

WOODVILLE
Festival of the Arts/Heritage Village
[MARCH 20-22](#)

KINGWOOD
Kingwood Annual Festival 2020
[MARCH 20-21](#)

TYLER
Azaela and Spring Flower Trail
[MARCH 20-APRIL 5](#)

LIVINGSTON
Trade Days at Pedigo Park
[MARCH 20-22](#)

RUSK
Hogg Fest, Jim Hogg Park
[MARCH 21](#)

JASPER
Azalea Festival 2020
[MARCH 21](#)

CROCKETT
Roger Creager/Piney Woods Music
and Arts Festival
[MARCH 21](#)

KINGWOOD
2nd Annual Lone Star Jeep Invasion
[MARCH 21](#)

HOUSTON
2020 Space City Beer Festival/
Midtown Park
[MARCH 21](#)

HUNTSVILLE
Walker County Fair PRCA Rodeo
[MARCH 21-23](#)

BEAUMONT
YMBL South Texas State Fair/Ford
Park
[MARCH 26-APRIL 5](#)

TYLER
"Beautiful", The Carole King
Musical/UT Tyler Cowan Center
[MARCH 26](#)

PALESTINE
19th Annual Old Time Music &
Dulcimer Festival
[MARCH 26-28](#)

CONROE
Montgomery County Fair and
Rodeo
[MARCH 27-APRIL 5](#)

NACOGDOCHES
Pine Knot Music Co-Op/Millard's
Crossing
[MARCH 27](#)

WOODVILLE
Western Weekend Trail Ride and
Rodeo
[MARCH 27-28](#)

HOUSTON
Bayou City Art Festival/Memorial
Park
[MARCH 27-29](#)

TYLER
Tyler Quilt Show/Harvey Hall
Convention Center
[MARCH 27-28](#)

KATY
Katy Taste Fest 2020
[MARCH 28](#)

GROVETON
Davy Crockett Bear Chase
Marathon
[MARCH 30](#)

ORANGE
"Fiddler on the Roof"/Lutcher
Theater
[MARCH 30](#)

CROCKETT
Houston County Fair and Livestock
Show
[MARCH 30-APRIL 4](#)

APRIL

HOUSTON

Houston Zydeco Festival
APRIL 1

DAYTON

Faux Real Easter Extravaganza/Community Center
APRIL 1

CONROE

Easter Egg Hunt & Vendor Market/7 Acre Wood
APRIL 1

SPRING

Texas Crawfish and Music Festival
APRIL 1

HUMBLE

Good Oil Days Festival
APRIL 1-2

NACOGDOCHES

23rd Annual Blueberry Golf Bash
APRIL 3

WOODVILLE

77th Annual Dogwood Festival and Parade
Dogwood Dash, 5K, 10K
APRIL 4

THE WOODLANDS

Waterway Arts Festival
APRIL 4-5

SPRING

Texas Wine and Art Festival
APRIL 4-5

GALVESTON

2020 Memorial Hermann Ironman/Moody Gardens
APRIL 5

HUNTSVILLE

Walker County Fair
APRIL 9-18

EVADALE

Outlaw Fuel Altered at Evadale Raceway
APRIL 10-11

LONGVIEW

Longview PRCA Rodeo
APRIL 11-12

PITTSBURG

Pittsburg Art and Wine Festival 2020
APRIL 11

BEAUMONT

Neches River Festival
APRIL 14-25

BEAUMONT

Disney Dance Upon A Dream/Julie Rogers Theater
APRIL 16

KIRBYVILLE

Magnolia Festival
APRIL 16-18

HOUSTON

Houston Art Car Parade
APRIL 16-19

LUFKIN

Angelina County Fair
APRIL 16-20

HOUSTON

Aretha: Queen of Soul/Houston Symphony
APRIL 17

CARTHAGE

Piney Woods Quilt Festival
APRIL 17-18

GLADEWATER

35th Annual East Texas Gusher Days
APRIL 17-18

LIVINGSTON

Trade Days at Pedigo Park
APRIL 17-19

LINDALE

Piney Woods Wine Festival
APRIL 17-19

KEMAH

Kemah Crawfish Festival
APRIL 17-19

HITCHCOCK

Galveston County Fair and Rodeo
APRIL 17-25

BEAUMONT

8th Annual International Cultural Festival/
Lamar University-Montagne Center
APRIL 18

CENTER

Shelby County Grill Off
APRIL 18

KATY

Wild West Brew Fest 2020
APRIL 18

BEAUMONT

SETX Cajun Crawfish Festival
APRIL 18

GALVESTON

The Texas Tenors/Grand 1894 Opera House
APRIL 18

PORT ARTHUR

Cajun Heritage Festival
APRIL 18-19

GALVESTON

Divas Half Marathon
APRIL 19

HOUSTON-

Latin Fest 2020/Downtown
APRIL 19-23

LUFKIN

Angelina Benefit Rodeo
APRIL 22-25

COLMESNEIL

Castlemania III and the Holy Grail/Jones Country
APRIL 23-26

TYLER

"For King and Country"/The Oil Palace
APRIL 23

NACOGDOCHES

Pine Knot Music Co-op/Millard's Crossing
APRIL 24

BEAUMONT

Liverpool Legends: The Complete Beatles Experience/Jefferson Theater
APRIL 25

HOUSTON

Luke Combs/Toyota Center
APRIL 25

LONGVIEW

Longview Wine Festival
APRIL 25

TATUM

9th Annual Pecan Pie Festival
APRIL 25

HOUSTON

The Who: Movin-On Tour/Toyota Center
APRIL 30

ORANGE

"Rent"/Lutcher Theater
APRIL 30

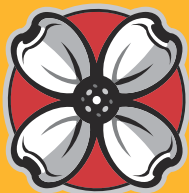


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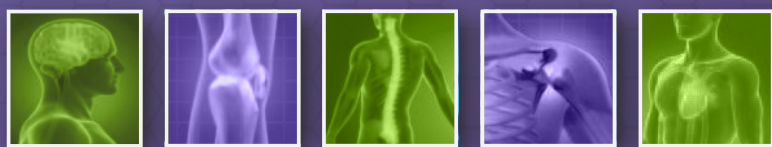
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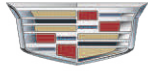
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