

Issue 11
Fall 2020

East Texan

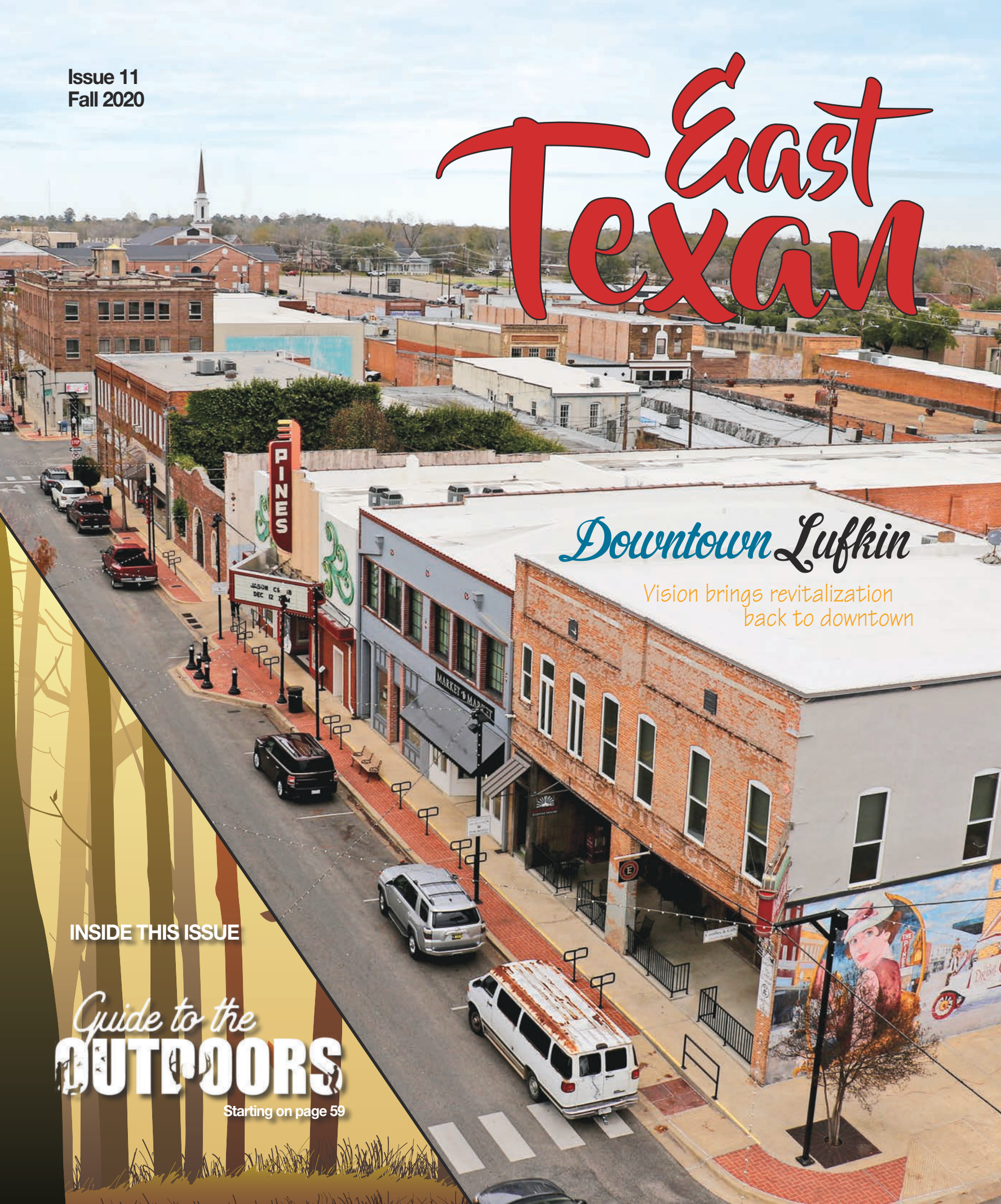
Downtown Lufkin

Vision brings revitalization
back to downtown

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Guide to the
OUTDOORS

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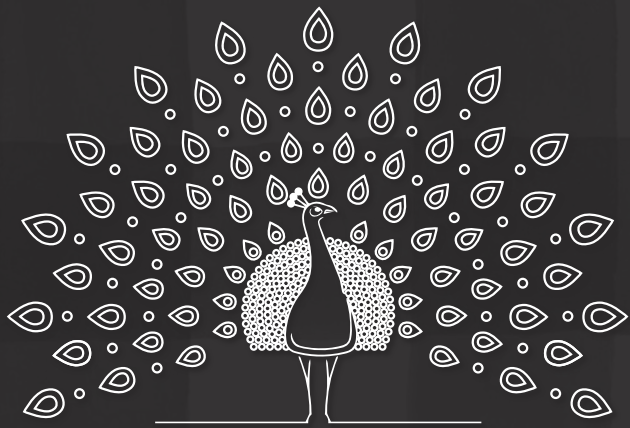
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we enter the final countdown for 2020; I think we all feel a little trepidation regarding what could possibly come next. This year has felt like we are performing in some awful B movie where the outlandish happens at every turn. There would have been no surprise at all if there were actual sharks in the tornadoes this season.

I can offer you this, put away your phones and technology devices, take a deep breath, and spend some time lost in the stories we have gathered for you. Some are simple ones about regular people you may know.

We found a global movie star who came home to the piney woods and found his place in the courtroom.

There are beautiful images and information about the various flowers we see all around our area.

One writer shares the journey of a small town revitalizing its downtown with a return to the mom and pop shops we all loved.

We are also proud to bring you the outdoor guide in this issue which covers feathers, fins, and horns for any sporting enthusiast.

Last, but not least! Be sure to spend some time in our Holiday Gift Guide, where you can find local wares for every person on your list and some things you may have to keep for yourself.

Find happiness as we close out this crazy year and anticipate the good things that are surely headed our way. We can only hope 2020 wasn't the movie trailer for what to expect in 2021.



~ Debbie Dickerson
East Texan editor

On The Cover



Photograph by Megan Whitworth.
See full story on page 8.

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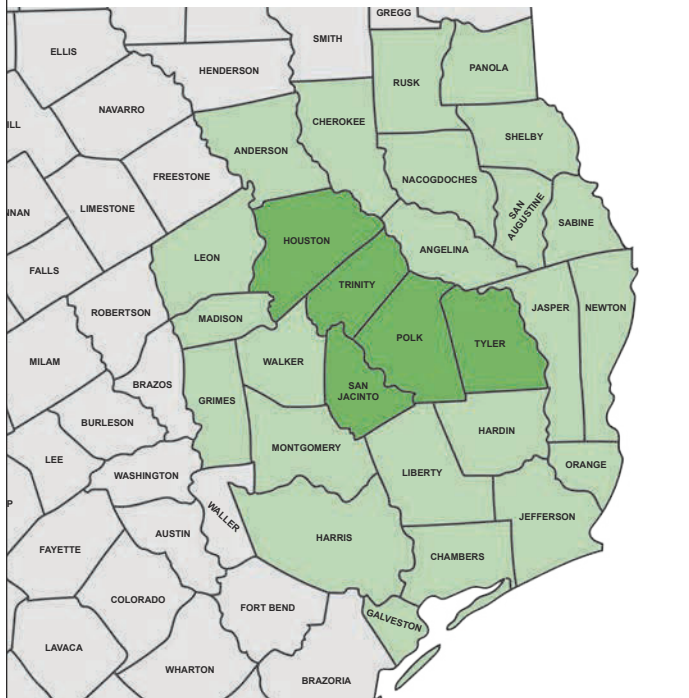


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5 DAY TRIP

Woodville



A scissor phone, (left) hand-crank phone (middle) and telegraph keys (right) are all early communication devices train depots would use and are displayed at the Hillister Depot in Heritage Village. Photos by Betty Zimmerman and Chris Edwards

TALKING TO TRAINS

Day trip to Hillister Depot at Heritage village

Story by Betty Zimmerman

Talking to trains is essential to ensuring safety and success. To meet that need, railroad companies became early implementers of new communications technology. Initially, telegraph messages were sent from one depot to the next to dispatch trains and to communicate hazards along the tracks.

In 1907, railroads began using telephones for communication. The earliest hands-free phones were a headset with an earpiece and a candlestick mouthpiece secured to a scissor-holder. While these early phones were great for communication between depots, how could a station master in a depot communicate with the engineer driving a train to let him know to stop or slow down? There were no cell phones.

The answer is lanterns with colored globes. The station master would wave a red lantern to signal the train engineer to stop; amber to slow down; green to proceed without stopping. You might think that, of course, railroads used the same signal colors as traffic lights. Wait! The railroads implemented the use of these colored lanterns before automobiles were invented. Traffic lights are red, amber, and green because of the railroad lanterns.

The Hillister Depot, reconstructed at Heritage Village, was one of nine depots constructed along the Sabine and East Texas Railroad which ran the length of Tyler County from Sabine Pass in Jefferson County to Rockland in northern Tyler County. The railroad was completed in 1892 and the Hillister Depot dates to that time.

The next time you visit Heritage Village, be sure to step inside the Hillister Depot which hosts elements of all the communications devices described above. There is a telegraph key for sending Morse code messages with a sounder for hearing incoming coded messages. The scissor phone includes the candlestick mouthpiece along with a headset and a ringer box. Beside the hand-crank wall phone is a copy of the first telephone directory published in Texas; few homes are listed. There are lanterns of all five colors as well as a spotlight lantern.

It is amazing to compare all the features of your personal cell phone while gazing on these communications devices of the past! ■



Photo by Chris Edwards



The depot features a ticket booth (left) and colored lanterns (right) that were used to signal the engineer to stop, yield and proceed. Photos by Betty Zimmerman and Chris Edwards.

FEATURE

Lufkin

Downtown Lufkin

Vision brings revitalization back to downtown



Photo by Megan Whitworth.

Story by Jeff Fatheree

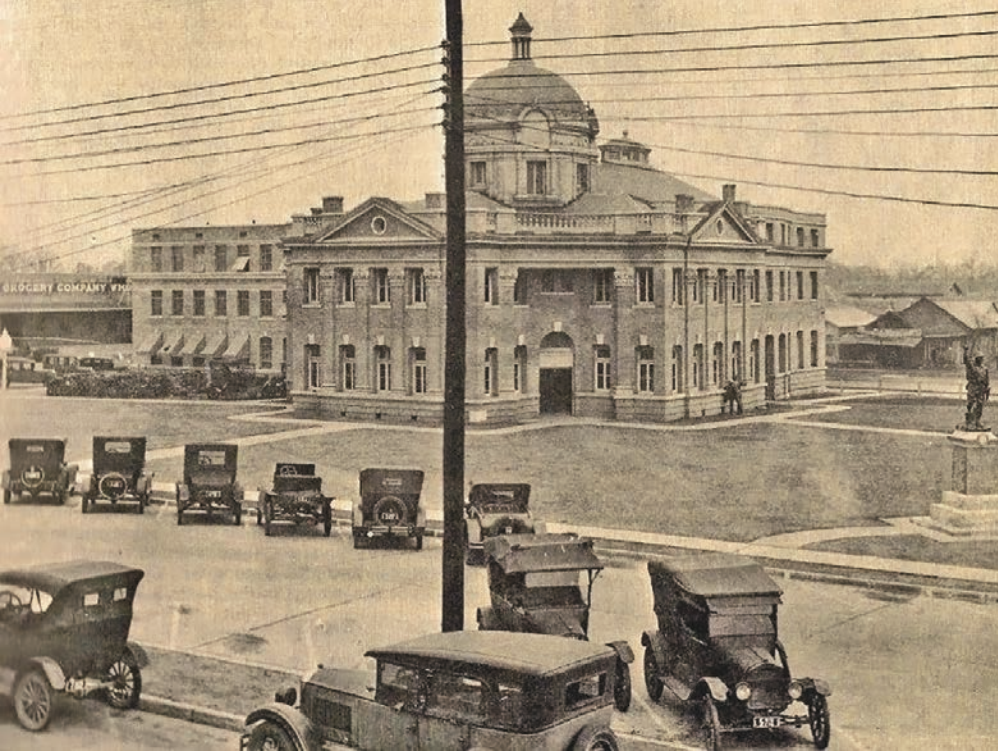
In 1968 my dad got a position with a five and dime you may remember. He was hired as the Systems Analyst for Perry Brothers. Most of you had one in your community and I always loved the fact that the five and dimes had a little bit of everything. We packed up and moved to Lufkin and the adventure began. Downtown Lufkin was a hopping place with The Fair Store, Perry Brothers, Kurth Memorial Library, Clark Ayers Department Store, Brown Shoe Fit, Cavanaugh Jewelry and Gifts, Thompson's Soda Shop, and Holley's Wonderland, the best hobby shop a kid could ask for. Wow, there was so much to do and see. The song "Downtown" by Petula Clark was popular, and the lights and happenings of downtown were as well. The Lufkin National Bank and Angelina Hotel were rocking along with the bus stop and so many things it was hard to name them all. Going downtown meant spending a day not only shopping but also window shopping in the evening. Everyone had glass fronts to display their wares and sodas, burgers, as well as more upscale dining opportunities abounded. War Surplus and the Hop and S and ID Shop were there as well to bring a little bit of everything to the shopper. The Angelina Mall opened and then the Lufkin Mall and then Walmart came in and downtown was a dying game.

Move forward through the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Downtown became the location for legal services, the new courthouse and other financial goods. Denum Piano and Organs was still there along with Bove Sewing Center, Hop and S, and ID shop but downtown had become a sad relic of the glory days. Across America downtowns were drying up and small communities were losing all their commercial and retail shops. The Angelina Mall became a strip mall, the Lufkin Mall began losing stores and Lufkin was appearing to dry up. The paper mill closed,



Photos contributed by Angelina Chamber of Commerce.

the foundry stopped its castings and eventually even Lufkin Industries lost the Trailer plant. When I first moved back to Lufkin in 2003, we had begun somewhat of a small revival in manufacturing and the large box stores moved in around the loop. We liked the convenience of the new places to eat, shop and otherwise hang out but we were missing something. What was it and what could be done to bring Lufkin back to the place to be? We have two hospitals providing great medical care and that community is still growing. But to get the flavor of Lufkin back we had to find a way to create the atmosphere that



has always defined Lufkin: friendly people, friendly service and shopping, dining and other entertainment options that offered fun and local flavor.

Into downtown an idea was born; Stuart and Maricela Doss decided to reinvest in downtown. The old historic buildings needed love and attention and, after all, Maricela was already there with her spa and Forgotten Treasures on the corner of Burke and Third. They bought and began to remodel a shop on First Street and it became Maricela's Day Spa. Unfortunately, the couple did not last but the spa did. Maricela's is a great place to come relax, enjoying some coffee and a massage. Maricela Parker and her crew will be glad to be of service. During this same time, Charlie and Adell Becker decided to buy their current building on First Street and relocate their art studio and shop there. When you go by there you may be able to catch Charlie creating beautiful paintings in his corner studio.

This was the beginning of what would be a revitalization of downtown Lufkin. Around the corner from the spa is now Amazing Grace Antiques and close by is the new shoe store Bills. I know we all look at recycling now and think we are doing something new; however, back in the day we sold antiques refinished and resold furniture and we did not simply go buy a new pair of shoes. We resold and re-heeled them. Bill's moved into downtown recently from Jasper and I had the opportunity to meet him there. He can re-sole dress shoes, orthotics, boots, and others. Bring your shoes to him and see what he can provide. His shop is one of the very few that can do double stitched boots and shoes and he is a real nice gentleman.

In the idea of revitalization many things have been done by the City of Lufkin as well as Brazos Transportation District, now The District, and many investors in downtown. Mark Hicks was one of the men that drove the revitalization and, if you wonder why I said men, it's because many of the shop owners and managers in downtown

(top) Angelina County Courthouse, approximately 1920. The original courthouse was deemed unsalvageable and destroyed in the 1950s, making way for the current courthouse.

(middle) Loggers with their team in the Forest Festival Parade in the 1950s giving a nod to the forest industry that made Angelina County.

(bottom) Current Downtown Lufkin at night. Come enjoy the lights and the classic rock oldies. Photos contributed by Angelina Chamber of Commerce.

are women. Mark had a vision of what downtown could become and bought many of the buildings and began to remodel them. Now there are not only retail spaces, but lofts and apartments are popping up over many of the stores. He also purchased the Angelina Hotel and refurbished and remodeled the first floor to allow retail shopping as it was in the beginning of the hotel. He plans to restore the ballroom and the grand entrance to the building in the future but has spent time lately taking the upper floors one at a time and making lofts and apartments. Around the downtown area are small homes from the 20s through 60s that are being restored to their historic glory and offered for sale as homes or businesses. The City of Lufkin restored the Pines Theater to its original glory and it has both a stage and a screen for movies. The coolest thing I remember from the Pines as a kid was the movies that let live actors interact on the stage with the movie. Apparently before "Talkies" this was common. The debut of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" became a cult classic and at the Pines the interaction was easy due to the stage. Now that the Pines is restored and operating, this gave an opportunity for the Angelina Arts alliance to have an additional venue where the people were rather than being way out at Angelina College in the Temple Theater. If you have not been to their office there you do not realize what cramped means. They have now acquired space in the old Perry's building next to Rubie and Jane and will be moving their offices and the box office downtown. This is an exciting move and should help with visual reminders of all the shows and opportunities the Alliance provides. Remember

folks, "The Blue Man Group" is coming to Lufkin and many of the plays and music that is available in Houston and Dallas now make stops in Lufkin too.

Back to the rest of downtown, Jennings Station became the new bus stop and is built to resemble the original courthouse and is quite beautiful. The original courthouse was demolished before I got to Lufkin, and I've been told that pictures don't do it justice. Downtown has many retail locations and Andrew Harbuck, owner of A Furniture Fetish, is also President of the Downtown Merchant's Association. The Association was in place when he moved his business from the loop into downtown. He was interested in the growing retail areas of downtown and the foot traffic being drawn there. The Association has a sidewalk sale in the Spring and Fall and both have become a fantastic success for merchants downtown. Andrew said he was drawn here by the closeness of the business owners and their support of one another. Lufkin has been known for this togetherness for years. There may be issues between Lufkinites but do not get involved or speak ill if you are from out of town. Color, ethnicity, religion nor gender matter much, they just want all of us to succeed. Now Lufkin has its nuts like everywhere but overall, it is a great community, loving one another and welcoming to all that want to come and enjoy.

Confections is next to A Furniture Fetish and was probably the second or third business to open in downtown. A small diner car was moved in and a kitchen attached to allow baking. If you want a fantastic muffin, cupcake, cookie or sandwich you would do well to stop in. Dawn Cooley, Miranda Dolder, and Felicia

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Triveno-Tetu have run the place since 2009 and it is a Lufkin Staple. In the early 2000s Laura Koch turned the old First Christian Church Education Building into Heritage Antiques, a two-story antique mall packed with an assortment of eclectic collectibles. Jeannie Lowery-Doss and Linda Tier began running Burke Street Antiques when Maricela moved to her new location and quickly outgrew the space. Burke Street Antiques would be purchased and later renamed Amazing Grace Antiques by the new owners. They would subsequently move to the old Johnson Furniture building on Frank Street, down the street from Lufkin Jewelry on the Square owned by Bobby Nichols. A great place for custom made jewelry. Amazing Grace Antiques now have approximately 50 vendors providing antiques. What about Jeannie and Linda, well they moved next to Restoration Bistro and opened Sweet Ethel Mae's. Beside them is the Pink Leopard Boutique, owned by Linda's sister and niece, Brenda and Kaylee Sullivan. Sweet Ethel Mae's took its name from Jeannie and Linda's families; a great grandmother and great aunt combined to make a boutique of clothing and goods as well as jewelry and decorative items for the home. It is a cool store and they are cool people. My good friend Randal Doss used to come in to the Finally Fall sale and make Apple Mimosas for guests. He passed recently from cancer and his sense of humor and quick wit will be missed.

If you go downtown, you will find most of the businesses are owned and operated by women and the customer service you will receive will be a welcome return to days gone by. The White Peacock Olive Oil & Vinegar Store opened last October and provides high quality olive oil and balsamic vinegars not found anywhere else in East Texas. They also have imported mustards, jellies, snacks, and many other unique



(top) Stefany Smith holds one of the beautiful gowns offered at Bluebonnet Bridal. (bottom) Linda Teer (left) and Jeanie Lowery(right) came together as partners in 2008 without having known each other. They now own and operate Sweet Ethel Mae's and are as close as sisters, offering each other support in times of family hardship as well as making the shop a success. Photos by Jeff Fatheree.



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This mural of the Lufkin Conroe Communication Company through the years was painted by artist Lance Hunter in 1988, celebrating 100 years of telecommunications in Lufkin. The mural is located on the old Lufkin Parks and Recreation Building Frank Ave and 1st St. Photo by Jeff Fatheree.

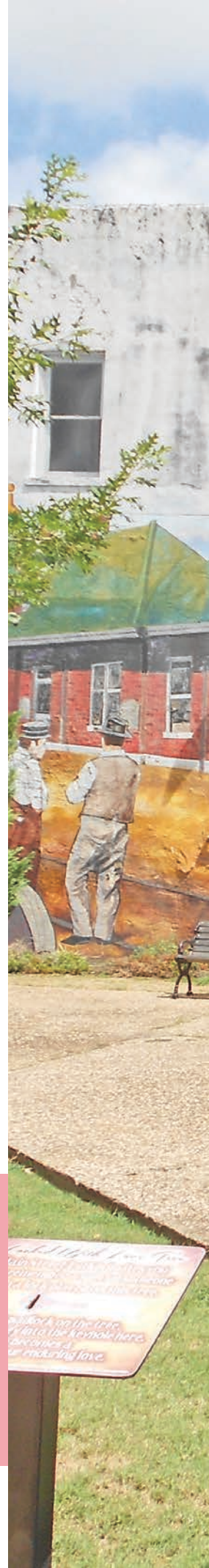
offerings as well as spices, rubs and sauces to offer the shopper. Stop in and see Rebecca, Mary Jane, and the rest of their team. Trust me you will not only love it you will return. They offer samples by request of almost every item they offer and so you get to decide if you really do like that before you take it home. They have an extremely large selection of hot sauces from around the world and try to offer not only unique imported items but work with area producers like Big Bayou and John Henry's to complete the experience.

Froggy Fibers and Gifts offers a variety of handmade items, Bluebonnet Bridal is a consignment store and is about to launch a line of plus sized new bridal gowns as well as the ability to order others. Jesus Mondragon has Angelina Jewelry repair and is glad to be of service. Susan Fuller and her sister have Bella's Salon and next door is Lufkin Med Spa. Spruce is down the street and carries both adult and kids clothes. The Angelina Brewing Company is located in the old Taylor Hardware building and not only offers craft made beers but a full menu as well. Down the street next to Sweet Ethel Mae's is Restoration Bistro, a contemporary restaurant with an impressive wine list. The Standpipe is next to Circle E candles and offers lunch bowls and pastries along with coffee, Italian sodas, and teas to name a few. In the corner of the old Masonic Lodge building lies Texas Coin, a great place to buy and sell gold and silver as well as the premier store for decorating man-caves. The Hanger is a genuinely nice clothing store and Sew Junkies has some cool clothes as well. Lia's Kitchen has an Asian Fusion menu and Manhattan's completes the downtown dining

with steaks, Italian, and Indian food in a fine dining experience. Venues for events are available and if your computer goes south take it to Jay's Computer Service. After a day of shopping, stretch your muscles and relax with a yoga class at Shepherd Street Yoga, owned and operated by Jacqui Johnston.

If you have not been to downtown Lufkin lately you do not know what you are missing. You can spend a full day there dining and shopping as well as kicking back relaxing and enjoying some entertainment. Live music and spoken word is offered at many of the venues and trust me it is a sight to behold when the sun goes down and the lights come on. Music is played on the streets at a level that allows to have normal conversations and yet sets the mood for a great day in "Downtown" where everybody goes. ■

A love lock tree located on Cotton Square at the corner of Lufkin Ave and Cotton Sq across from the old Perry's Building. The City embraces the lovers' tradition of placing a lock with names or initials and dates as a directed piece of art. Many times these are done on fences and bridges and are considered a nuisance. The love of couples, parents and children, or even a beloved pet are locked in eternity. The key is then tossed away. Photo by Jeff Fatheree.





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Community Outdoor Outreach Programs

CO-OP's provide opportunities for Texans to connect with nature

Story and photos
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Texas families will have an opportunity to experience the outdoors thanks to \$822,444 in 20 grants awarded this year through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP). These grants support community-based conservation and outdoor recreation programs and activities such as archery, fishing, camping, hiking, kayaking, nature education and more.

This year's recipients include schools, non-profits and city programs across the state developing life-long conservation and outdoor skills and reach under-represented audiences. Award winning projects include the expansion of outdoor education in schools, a year-long program of camping and paddling for blind and visually impaired youth, a city program reaching autistic youth with sensory-friendly recreational opportunities, and a program teaching fishing to special needs youth, disabled veterans and their families.

Grant recipients also help Texans develop leadership and career skills. An urban environmental education nonprofit hosts conservation camps and service projects and will hire 13 low-income youth for a seven-week paid internship providing conservation and natural resource job training.

CO-OP was established by TPWD in 1996 to

help introduce under-represented audiences to environmental education, conservation and outdoor recreation programs. The program is authorized by the Texas Legislature through the department's budget as a specialized component of the Texas Recreation and Parks Account Program. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 and may be used to pay for supplies, travel, training, food, personnel costs and equipment for ongoing use.

CO-OP grant funding is available to tax-exempt organizations within the State of Texas. Over the last 24 years, these grants have awarded \$21,555,934 around the state to assist in this effort.

The following organizations will receive funding:

Austin

Camp Fire Central Texas — \$50,000 – The Citizen Science and Stewardship Program visits five state parks and holds summer camp at local parks and centers, focusing on canoeing, archery, hiking, orienteering and nature photography. This project expands their afterschool, summer and backpacking clubs and reaches 150 female and minority participants through a variety of environmental education activities, outdoor skills and service projects for state parks.



Fifth-grade students in Coach Melanie Justice's PE class Fabiola Rosas, Ernesto Puga, and Katie Childress are testing out one of the Old Town canoes that were shipped from Maine. A total of twelve canoes were delivered to Creekside Elementary last week. The canoes were purchased with proceeds from a grant awarded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Community Outdoor Outreach Program.



Galveston Railroad Museum

OVER 5 ACRES TO
SPREAD OUT
AND EXPLORE



galvestonRRmuseum.org

Expedition School Fund — \$50,000 – BVI Explore Outdoors! provides a year-long program of weekly and monthly outings for blind and visually impaired youth, including trips to 11 state parks, two natural areas and paddling trails across the state. These experiences build a variety of outdoor skills and include shore cleanups along Mustang Island State Park and Lady Bird Lake.

Brownsville

STEMS Alumni Association — \$49,450 – STEMS Outdoor Outreach Program reaches minority and economically-disadvantaged youth through daytrips and multi-night camping trips at multiple state parks and a variety of outdoor activities in South, West and Central Texas. Youth gather data on wildlife species for a citizen scientist project and past participants have trained as mentors, learning outdoor skills and first aid.

Canutillo

Canutillo ISD — \$49,983 – Wild Eagles 2020 fosters lifetime physical activity to over 2,300 Canutillo ISD students by teaching fishing and archery in their physical education classes across multiple grade levels in all district schools. In addition, they offer air rifle to their 200 Early College students who may then compete for college scholarships in university rifle programs.

Cleburne

Opportunity Resources Services — \$40,092 – Restoring Native Texas, Building Leaders supports their Upward Bound program with environmental service trips for 150 underserved youth. After preparatory workshops, students provide several parks with customized service projects such as building bat habitats, installing pollinator gardens and assisting with oyster restoration at Galveston Island, with opportunities for outdoor recreation at the sites.

Conroe

Twelve Stones — \$50,000 – Back to Basics Campouts host multiple skill-mastery camping trips to train twenty junior camp leaders to assist staff and then lead 100 inexperienced campers in outdoor activities at state parks. Youth and families with little to no experience will get a start on camping, fishing and other outdoor skills with the help of staff and the junior camp leaders.

Dallas

Groundwork Dallas — \$50,000 – Expanding Green Team Recreation and Career Development Opportunities engages 250 Green Team youth ages 14-25 in weekly and monthly activities including service projects, outdoor recreation, and environmental education. Highlights include several weekend camping trips with TPWD's Texas Outdoor Family and two week-long conservation camping trips to Big Bend Ranch State Park. Additionally, they hire 13 low-income and home-insecure youth for a 7-week paid experience providing conservation and natural resource job training.

Desoto

Faith Family Kids, Inc — \$49,710 – Faith Family Academy EXPLORE 360: Big Bend takes 120 at-risk 8th grade students on a five-day capstone trip to Big Bend to study geology, flora, fauna, astronomy and includes hiking, guided canoeing and overnight camping. As preparation for the trip, all 7th grade students study related natural history, science, literature as well



The pond at the campus of Creekside Elementary has been used for fishing and kayaking for the last three years and canoeing will be one of the new activities this fall.

as outdoor and leadership skills in physical education and core content classes.

El Paso

El Paso ISD — \$50,000 – EPISD Archery in Schools Program instructs 21,000 students during a three-week unit in archery at all 20 elementary and 10 high schools. Twenty district physical education teachers certified in TPWD’s archery program train the students. This expands a successful pilot from several elementary schools to all campuses in the district.

Fort Worth

Camp Fire First Texas — \$49,773 – Texas Outdoor Education Center leads day and overnight adventure camps for elementary and high school students in Fort Worth ISD, combining outdoor skills training and nature education. Selected high school students will be trained to help lead activities for the elementary students and participate in additional camping opportunities.

Houston

Buffalo Soldiers National Museum — \$36,046 – Buffalo Soldiers Inner City Youth Outdoor Exploration Program guides 300 youth ages 10 through 17 in outdoor recreation, basic survival and equestrian skills in a year-long series of monthly trainings and travel to historic sites where Buffalo Soldiers lived and fought. Participants help restore prairies and wetlands at Sheldon Lake State Park and put on a Texas wildlife exhibition at the museum.

Citizens’ Environmental Coalition — \$37,199 – CEC Educator Program promotes environmental literacy by combining multiple days of teacher professional development with 27 follow-up school field trips for students to learn firsthand about watersheds and prairies, and then participate in service projects such as seed planting and invasive species removal. More than 1,100 students and 60 teachers are reached in this project. A Student Conservation Association intern is trained to assist in the program.

Nature and Eclectic Outdoors — \$25,189 – Healthy Outdoor Communities partners with inner-city schools to offer field trips to parks, overnight family campouts in state parks and service projects on public lands. Creation of outdoor classrooms coupled with teacher training and career day events help 500 underserved youth gain natural science and outdoor skills.

Lewisville

City of Lewisville — \$21,296 – Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area Field Day provides ten facilitated field days at a nature preserve and park for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder who are residents of an assisted living and transitional facility to equip them with the skills needed to live a healthy and engaged life. The sensory-friendly recreational opportunities include fishing, nature journaling, camping, kayaking and hiking. A Chance to Hike is a monthly nature walk designed for members of the special needs community to safely engage with the outdoors.

Livingston

Livingston ISD — \$39,715 – Livingston ISD Under the Stars at Creekside Elementary teaches outdoor skills to all its students during grade-specific instruction in fishing, archery, camping, canoeing, outdoor cooking, stargazing and camp storytelling. Family evening stargazing and campouts on campus are offered several times during the year. Planting wildflowers and creating a monarch butterfly waystation on campus reinforces

learning about nature and monarch migration. School staff are trained by TPWD to teach archery and fishing skills.

Creekside Elementary PE Teacher Melanie Justice shares, “Livingston ISD Under the Stars project at Creekside Elementary teaches outdoor skills in fishing, kayaking, and archery. With the support of the TPWD grant proceeds, the program is growing to include camping, canoeing, outdoor cooking, stargazing, and storytelling. Creekside has plans to host future family stargazing and campfire events throughout the year.” Justice adds, “The grant also includes a service project. Students with the help of faculty and staff will participate in planting bluebonnets and Texas wildflowers along the driveway.”

Richardson

North Dallas Adventist Academy — \$22,600 – Outdoor Education Project combines three components: leading 50 urban high school freshman biology students to Big Bend to learn about nature and wildlife while camping and hiking the area; an outdoor class and club practice outdoor skills and camp out at state parks for four weekends per school year; and a group of 75-100 high school students assists Groundwork Dallas with a river improvement service project.

San Marcos

San Marcos Consolidated ISD — \$49,323 – Outdoor Education Program 2020 – 2021 provides extensive outdoor skill instruction at all elementary schools and in middle and high school outdoor adventure classes. More than 4,600 students learn archery, fishing, nature photography, camping, orienteering and mountain biking. Additionally, district staff trained by the Texas Outdoor Family program offer students and families free day and overnight workshops at nearby parks. San Marcos CISD expanded its successful high school outdoor education program to all elementary, middle and high schools in the district to provide these opportunities.

Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa ISD — \$49,319 – Santa Rosa ISD Outdoor STEM Youth Leadership Project engages 150 at-risk minority students in a variety of outdoor activities including the Texas National Archery In Schools Program offered at all three elementary, middle school, and high school campuses. Also, students have a chance to participate in outdoor recreation day trips and overnight camping trips to multiple state parks, exposure to natural resource careers and weekend family archery academies.

South Padre Island

Fishing’s Future — \$40,152 – New Adventures for All partners with local organizations serving special needs youth and disabled veterans to offer family fish camps for 500 participants and their families. Fishing skills and conservation are all part of the experience. In addition, they train 40 new volunteer instructors who continue to serve the community.

Tyler

City of Tyler — \$12,597 – Outdoor Adventure Series workshops for area youth teach archery, fishing, orienteering, animal tracking, backpacking/hiking and birdwatching. The series culminates in a Texas Outdoor Family camping trip at Tyler State Park for participants who attend at least three workshops. ■

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PEOPLE

Tyler County



Tyler County's Top Lawman

Journey from
the runway to the
courtroom

Story by Mollie LaSalle
Photos by Caleb Fortenberry

Tyler County's own Lucas Babin has worn many hats in his storied career, taking him around the world, from walking the runway, acting in television and film, and appearing in music videos; but ultimately, at the end of the day, he is blessed to call Woodville, Texas home. These days, you can find Lucas hard at work in the District Attorney's Office after being elected to the position in 2018.

Lucas was born in Beaumont to Brian and Roxanne Babin; he has a twin sister, Kirsten, an older sister and brother, Marit and Leif, and a younger sister Lauren (affectionally known as LaLa). Dr. and Mrs. Babin chose to raise their children in Tyler County and settled in Woodville, where Dr. Babin established a successful dental practice and also served as mayor. Dr. Babin is currently serving as our representative in congress for Texas's 36th congressional district, which includes Tyler, Polk, Newton, Jasper, Orange, Hardin, Liberty, Chambers, and portions of Harris counties.

Growing up in Woodville, Texas is something Lucas looks back on with many fond memories; small town Woodville and Lucas seemingly co-existed; he has nothing but good things to say about his childhood. In past interviews, Lucas often referred to Woodville as "the coolest town in the world". Former Woodville mayor Jimmie Cooley commented that "Lucas was a very grounded teenager. He held a firm balance between family, church, school, and work. He had a very ethical work habit and helped me at my home on several occasions. I can say he also had a great respect from his fellow teenagers, from his younger years at church groups."

Lucas is an alumni of Woodville High School; after graduating high school he took Freshman and Sophomore classes at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. It was at this point that he got the chance to move to Los Angeles to live with his older brother Leif. Lucas was only there for a few months when he was "discovered" by a scout from the Ford Modeling Agency; a couple of Polaroid shots later, and he was off to Europe, quickly landing jobs with Gucci and Versace. Lucas did 18 fashion shows in Milan, and then worked for Versace in their print campaign; all of this happened in less than a year's time.

Lucas was a huge success in the modeling world; other campaigns he has "walked the runway" for include Calvin Klein, Roberto Cavalli, and Louis Vuitton, just to name a few. It was during this time (early 2000's) that Lucas began landing roles in television, films, and music videos. Probably his most notable film role is in "School of Rock", where he played Spider. School of Rock was made in 2003, and he still has fans (even in Woodville) who remember his performance in that movie. "School of Rock is a great movie, he said; I was glad to have a small part in it-it's a rare thing to get a part in a project that lasts; my agent sent me on an audition to Huntsville, where I met Richard Linklater. I had



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a lot of fun on the set, which was in New York City, and met a lot of really great people.” Lucas also commented that he’s still amazed that he gets recognized from this movie.

Lucas eventually began working in South America (Brazil), and almost immediately got hired to act in a telenovela. “America” was a hugely popular series, and, ironically Lucas portrayed a cowboy. He did this for about two years (100 episodes), and picked up the language rather easily; he is fluent in Portuguese. Lucas met his wife, who is Brazilian, in a round -about way, he said they “actually met in Los Angeles”. She was recruited to play volleyball at LSU, they eventually got to know each other and two years later got married; they are now the parents of twin sons. When asking Lucas about the irony of he himself being a twin to being the father of twins, he said “When the doctor said we were having twin boys, I couldn’t believe it.”

Lucas fondly remembered his years in the entertainment industry: “I had a blast, the most fun I’ve ever experienced.” He cannot go to certain places in Brazil, as he still gets mobbed by fans. When asked why he gave up the glamorous life and returned to small town life, Lucas was rather straightforward in his answer: “ I began to question the path my career was taking me, and after meeting a wonderful pastor from a church in Los Angeles, I decided to go back to school and get my degree”. He made his way back to Texas to do that, winding up at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, where he got his undergraduate degree. After that, he was off to the University of Houston Law School, where he received his Doctorate of Jurisprudence. After law school, Lucas worked for the firm of Sutliff and Stout in Houston. Lucas passed the bar exam in 2015, becoming a licensed attorney. Lucas then brought his family home to Tyler County, where he began working for Lindsey Whisenant’s law firm alongside his brother-in law.

It would appear that all of Brian and Roxanne’s children have made them proud: Marit is a successful lawyer, Leif is a decorated ex-Navy Seal and best-selling author, LaLa is married to a successful local attorney, Kirsten is married to a successful dentist, who ironically, bought Mr. Babin’s dental practice when he was elected to congress, and Lucas has returned to his hometown, trading the runway for the courtroom, adding the title of Criminal District Attorney to his resume.

Lucas was approached by colleagues and community members and asked if he ever considered running for District Attorney in Tyler County. Mindful of the “bad experience from the previous District Attorney” (who was removed from office by jury trial), Lucas seriously considered running for the position. With the support of fellow attorneys and his family (“It’s such a blessing to have a great mom and dad....so supportive to grow up with parents who love and support you, no matter what you choose to do”), Lucas decided that the time was right.

When Lucas announced his candidacy for Criminal District Attorney, Ms. Jimmie Cooley wrote a letter to the local paper, explaining why he was the best choice



for the job: “Lucas is a very accomplished man who believes his success is the foundation of faith and family he received in Tyler County...Lucas tells the truth when it may not be the answer you want to hear...I have heard nothing but positive comments and compliments regarding his reputation as a trial lawyer, strong work ethic and long hours on behalf of his civil and criminal clients.” Lucas easily won the Republican primary in 2018, and with no Democratic challenger, he was all set to take office in January 2019.

From the moment he was sworn in, Lucas and his team began clearing backlogged cases off the docket, eliminating last minute plea deals. “Crimes committed in Tyler County will be prosecuted by the DA’s office in a swift and sufficient manner. There will be no more catch and release in Tyler County, no more being out on bond for six or seven years,” he added.

Lucas confessed that his favorite thing to do is jury trials, however COVID-19 has brought that to a halt; the last jury trial was in March, and future trials have been postponed indefinitely. He added that “since I came into office we have been very hard on criminals; we have impaneled more juries than any previous DA, and have set a precedent: “crime doesn’t pay, don’t plead your case, you will be tried.” He also said that “Tyler County Juries are great”. Lucas is blessed to have a great team backing him up; Criminal Assistant District Attorney Pat Hardy and Attorney Morgan Williams assist Lucas in keeping the office running smoothly and efficiently.

Lucas was honored earlier this year by the Tyler County Chamber of Commerce with its prestigious “Citizen of the Year” award. Lucas was surprised, yet thankful to receive it.

“My objective as DA is simply to do the job I was elected to do: see that justice is done in Tyler County. I can’t do it alone. It’s a team effort.” The general consensus around the courthouse is that Lucas is a man of integrity, fairness, and sincerity. He knows what he wants, and he conducts himself in a manner befitting his position. A friend, Chris Edwards, had a few words of wisdom about Lucas: “Lucas is a great example of the maxim of “Be the change you wish to see.” He’s someone who returned to the town he grew up in, and saw a need present, and decided to step up to the plate to take a few swings, and he certainly has. Going from runways to film shoots to law enforcement might seem a strange, yet interesting, career trajectory, but he has been a great asset to Tyler County, and since he doesn’t fit the mold of your typical East Texas prosecutor, he is a great role model to young people in the area.”

Lucas commented before this interview was over that, “Raising a family is as good as it gets; I had a great childhood, I loved growing up in Tyler County and I wanted to raise my family and give them the same type of childhood I had. It’s a great place to be in a position to make it safe for everyone; to interact with so many people, rich people, poor people, and everyone in between.” Lucas brings this positivity and mindset to his work in the District Attorney’s Office.

In closing, if you happen to spot Lucas around the courthouse square on any given day, stop and howdy with him; even if you’ve never met him before, you will be friends for life afterwards. That’s just the kind of down-home person he is; I don’t think he’s ever met a stranger. ■

County Judge Jaques Blanchette, District Attorney Lucas Babin, US Representative Brian Babin, at Chamber of Commerce awards; Lucas receiving “Citizen of the Year” award, 2020. (Photo by Chris Edwards)



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GABE WOOTTON

Makin' good songs

Story by Chris Edwards

Legendary man of letters Jack Kerouac drew from his friend Neal Cassady, upon whom he modeled the free-spirited maverick Dean Moriarity in his classic novel *On the Road*. Moriarity's freewheelin' nature inspires the book's narrator to throw caution toward the wind and seek out freedom.

There's a dose of Dean Moriarity-meets-Jerry Jeff Walker (and some of Jeff Bridges' Jeffrey "the Dude" Lebowski added for good measure) vibes surrounding singer/songwriter and ace raconteur Gabe Wootton.

Wootton, who has been a compelling presence on stages across the state for more than 20 years, recently released his debut record, *Old Quarter Live Sessions Vol. 1*. The release marks two historic occasions: it is, of course, Wootton's long-awaited inaugural dive into commercially available recorded product, and second, it starts a new venture for the venerable Galveston listening room the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe, which has become Wootton's homebase. The Old Quarter's proprietor Joel Mora started Old Quarter Records, and Wootton is the label's first artist. Wootton's record is the first in a series Mora wants to do of different artists recorded live on the legendary Old Quarter stage.

As strong of a presence as Wootton, himself, is, the songs come first and foremost. The history of country/folk/blues is scattered with larger-than-life characters, like the Lightnin' Hopkins, Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark types. Beneath all of the tall tales about those artists, however, are great songs.

No one would give an iota of interest about how drunk Townes Van Zandt had been on any particular night if he had not written gems like "Pancho and Lefty" or "Loretta." It is the same idea behind the truly great rock artists with larger-than-life theatrics: the songs must be there first. Quality songs, that is.

Gabe Wootton belongs in the conversation about great Texas music, and it is because of the power of his songs. *Old Quarter Live Sessions Vol. 1* released in August makes a solid case for Wootton's place at the table. "If I don't believe it, I'm fairly certain no one else will either,"

Wootton said of his approach to crafting songs. "I never want a song that I don't believe, and I never want to have to apologize or make excuses for something that I don't think is a hundred percent."

Many of Wootton's songs are deeply poetic meditations on freedom and travelling, and with his uncanny knack with melody, the lyrics are brought into the realm of fist-raising singalongs. Fellow musician Christopher Smith Gonzalez said that Wootton's abilities as a writer and performer have placed him in the footsteps of many great writers who portray life, love and the unknown to the listener.

"Wootton has an eye for the little details that turn the joyful to melancholy or the lost into found," he said. "[He] does it all with beautiful melodies and making it rhyme." Gonzalez added that it is nearly impossible to capture the full experience of watching a Gabe Wootton live performance but gave props to his friend Mora for releasing Wootton's debut album. "That may be why for the past 20 years Wootton refused to record his songs," he said, and added that the album effectively bottles up some of that experience.

His early years were spent deep behind the piney curtain of East Texas. In one of the stories that pops up in-between songs on the album, Wootton said his upbringing was "so East Texas," that he grew up on a pine tree farm. He spent his formative years in Ponta, which sits northeast of Rusk.

Wootton did not grow up in a musical household, but he said that from listening to the radio, he developed an early appreciation for such powerhouse country legends as Waylon Jennings and Merle Haggard, as well as rockers Ozzy Osbourne and Van Halen. He could also pick up the sounds of Shreveport's Red River Radio Network at night, and through that station, gained his first exposure to artists like Lightnin' Hopkins and Leadbelly, both of whom he'd rediscover later in college (along with many others.) "I think that was the first time the sincerity of music hit me," he said. "Big Top 40 hits with all of their bombast and multi-layer production just sounded vapid and hollow to me after hearing the raw

power of those old blues guys.”

After matriculating to Texas A&M, Wootton fell under the spell of the rich tradition of Texan songwriting, and a couple of years later, found influence in one of Aggieland’s favorite sons before learning how to put together his own songs.

“College Station was everything for me,” said Wootton. The summer before his freshman year, Wootton lived with some older guys who introduced him to the Texas songwriter tradition with artists such as Jerry Jeff Walker, Robert Earl Keen, Willie Nelson and Guy Clark providing the soundtracks for Hill Country road trips to spots like Luckenbach, the Guadalupe River and Gruene Hall.

Wootton said one of his roommates, who had an old guitar laying around, showed him a website that included transcriptions for all of the songs on Aggie alumnus and legendary Texas music leading light Robert Earl Keen’s album *West Textures*. “I’d sit for hours trying to find the correlation between the letters and dashes on the screen and the completely disharmonious sounds coming out of that guitar.”

Despite the learning hang-ups of learning to play and sing simultaneously, Wootton began making up his own words to some of the melodies he was learning to play. “It was immensely easier to make up my own songs than learn someone else’s,” he said.

Before long, Wootton became a part of a group of likeminded, maverick poets and pickers in College Station, all of whom put the art side of songwriting at the forefront. He met singer/songwriter Mike Ethan Messick out one night while drinking. Messick, who found some cult renown early on when his tune “The Everclear Song” was covered by Roger Creager and became a party anthem of the Texas music movement, called Wootton one of his closest friends and favorite songwriters.

“Gabe is a terrific songwriter, but he’s also one of those guys who can nearly get a standing ovation just for the intro. He plays an anecdote, whether real or fabricated, like Miles Davis plays a trumpet,” said Messick.

After Messick introduced Wootton to a songwriters’ night at a Northgate bar, he soon found things clicking for him, and began writing in earnest. Along with Messick, artists such as Ben Hall, Greg Schroeder, Shane Walker, Larry Hooper and Joe Tidwell proved to be influential.

Wootton said they were artists who, to him, had their approach to the art figured out. “I’m completely certain that any level of ability and notion of quality stems exactly from those nights and trying to write songs that I’d not be embarrassed to play in front of them,” he said.

Along with musical peers of a similar age, Wootton is also quick to point out the importance of the late KORA DJ and musician Roy Gene Munse, who was the host of the first songwriters’ night he hit up. Munse moved the Wednesday night event to Zapatos, a place where Wootton said it all started coming together for him, musically.

In addition to his compatriots in rhyme, Wootton also began accumulating influences, such as the late, great John Prine. “With each recommendation, my quality bar was raised higher and higher, and every conversation led me to another name I should check out, which led me to another name and another name,” he said. As he picked up various influences, he also became an advocate for those artists. Messick said that Wootton’s enthusiasm about the music

and art he loves is “infectious.”

“If you’re working and playing with him and he likes what you’re doing, you know you’re in good company. No telling how many young songwriters out there are digging in on Tom Waits or John Prine or Terry Allen or whoever because Gabe suggested that might help round ‘em out a

little,” said Messick.

Wootton’s humble beginnings of writing and performing are not dissimilar to most other musicians’ stories, and even though he admits that in the beginning had no real idea what he was doing, were honed and refined to the point where he became a force to be reckoned with on stages across the land. Along with the charismatic stage presence, the reputation also was built on the masterful songs from Wootton’s pen. They were songs that sound like they’ve been around for many years.

“When Love Ain’t Around,” for instance, sounds like something Hank or Lefty would’ve sang at some roadhouse in country music’s golden era. The retro-leaning act the Broken Spokes made good use of the tune on their debut



album in 2016.

Many of those songs, such as “Wine Drunk” and “Pretty as You Please,” appear on the live record, and although uniquely Wootton originals, they would serve artist or band’s repertoire well. Some already have dipped into his catalogue, such as fellow Aggie Rich O’Toole, who had a hit with “Crickets,” which also appears on Wootton’s album.

There’s a honky-tonk swagger and a high-and-onesome sound in Wootton’s approach, as well as smart pop songcraft instincts and a bit of a New Orleans-style feel. Lyrically, the songs move as lyrics should – something Wootton said should seem obvious with songs. “Songs should never sound like they ever existed as words nailed down to a page,” he said.

Wootton’s songs stand on their own, but the storytelling prowess he exhibits onstage is almost as important. Take for instance the lead-up story to “Sam Corona’s Last Big Hit,” in which Wootton describes an episode when he was an inadvertent accomplice to a forest fire. Hilarious as the tale is, it showcases a little of the bond between he and his grandfather (for whom the song is titled.) The stories can be warm, funny, and sometimes surreal and obscene, but no matter how they are presented, Wootton’s mastery with onstage patter in second-to-none, aside from maybe Todd Snider.

Wootton said he’s always loved listening to old guys sitting around and telling lies. “I think I’ve been in training to be an old guy b.s.-ing at the bar my entire life,” he said. “It’s the same charisma that used car salesmen and preachers employ; I’ve just chosen to use my powers for good instead of evil.”

The focus on constructing quality songs made Gabe Wootton a shoo-in to darken the door of the Old Quarter once he moved to Galveston. He’d been to the club a handful of times, usually as an opening act at his buddies’ gigs. The Old Quarter, which is situated in the island’s historic Strand district, is a room that has witnessed the performances of countless great songs through the years. Its former proprietor, Wrecks Bell, was a close friend of the legendary troubadour Townes Van Zandt, and played bass in Van Zandt’s band for many years. Bell also played with heavies like Lightnin’ Hopkins and Lucinda Williams, and although he sold the venue to Mora, he is still a frequent presence there, and is heard on Wootton’s record serving up a spoken introduction for the proceedings.

Inevitably some listeners might draw a parallel between Wootton’s album and another live album that was recorded at an earlier version of the Old Quarter. Van Zandt’s 1977 solo-acoustic double LP *Live at the Old Quarter*, Houston, Texas is thought by many to be the country-folk songwriting god’s definitive record, and was recorded at Bell’s first incarnation of the Old Quarter in Houston in 1973. Further bringing things around to that “full-circle” effect, Wootton covers the late bard’s “Two Girls” on his album. Van Zandt’s live album was “prominent in my development... definitely a strong blueprint for a live songwriter show,” says Wootton, “but any similarities are merely coincidental, you know, like an episode of ‘Law and Order’.”

Once Wootton hit it off with Mora, and became a familiar face at the Old Quarter, he began hosting a monthly song-swap show, where he invites a guest artist or two to come and play their songs in the hallowed house of songs. “I have gotten to hear some of the greatest songs from the best seat in the house for a couple of years now,” Wootton said.

This year has been a massive kick in the teeth for musicians and venue owners, and while it seems an odd time to release a record due to the lack of promotional opportunities, Wootton is staying optimistic. In spite of a continuing pandemic and dire warnings about everything from “murder hornets” to the recent Hurricane Laura episode, Wootton says he knows he’ll be playing live again sometime, and that music lovers will be able to enjoy live music, in general, once again.

“I do know that in the history of mankind people have always gotten together to play and listen to songs. So, in some form or fashion, I’ll definitely be playing these songs out to people. I’m staying optimistic that venues that host folks like me will survive this mess and we can all have a cool one and laugh about how jacked this year was,” he said.

Unlike the bois’d arc trees on the fenceline which are standing still in his song “Pretty as You Please,” the same can’t be said for Gabe Wootton. He’ll be out on the road somewhere, and bringing his songs to hungry ears before we know it. Until then, listeners can enjoy his record, which is available on all of the major streaming and digital download platforms, or in its physical form via the Old Quarter’s website: oldquarteracousticcafe.com. ■





Ask the Troubadour

Here are some of Gabe Wootton's thoughts on a few pressing topics.

Q: What are three records you'd take with you on a desert island?

A: I guess *Mule Variations* by Tom Waits; *Juarez* by Terry Allen and *Aja* by Steely Dan

Q: What, to you, constitutes a good song?

A: The practical, short answer is: an engaging melody that folks can whistle without much practice, and lyrics that don't sound like they were written down.

Q: Who are some recent artists and bands that you dig on and are the real deal?

A: **James Steinle** – He's a fellow believer in good songs and strives relentlessly to make better and better songs.

Juliet McConkey – She just released a record called *Disappearing Girl* that is fantastic.

Kathryn Legendre – She is out of Austin doing that honky-tonk stuff. I met her through them Mayeux and Broussard boys.

Chris King – He's a traveler on the same road. He's been using his pandemic days a lot wiser than I have, and has non-stop been creating visual art and music. He has a new one coming soon that I'm really looking forward to.

Jacob Furr – He beat me in a "sad song-off" one time and that's enough to earn my respect. He's a fantastic songwriter out of Ft. Worth that I met through my man Larry Hooper.

Q: Any words of advice for those who want to start songwriting and/or performing?

A: Figure out what you sound like instead of trying to sound like who you want to sound like. Find a few songs that you truly love and dissect them and figure out why they move you. Also: Be self-aware. You should be your worst critic. Everybody's mother thinks they should be on "The Voice." Don't listen to your mother.

Q: Finally, to the uninitiated, what is the origin of the "Boo Ballou"?

A: "Boo Ballou" is an old phrase that is simultaneously an indictment of and a charm against bad songs. Instead of wasting any breath on discussing how bad it is, you just declare 'Boo Ballou' and move on. Its exact origin might have been lost forever during the disarray of the 2020 pandemic."

TRACKING THE BLOOMS

Photos, illustrations, and story by Emily Kubisch-Sabrsula

A Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly collects nectar from a Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*).

From a passing vehicle, the rural country highways of San Jacinto county look like swatches of pinks, blues, yellows, whites, and purples painted along the roadside, but a quick stop reveals triangles and ovals and oblong shapes in pairs of threes, and fours or more with hundreds of combinations.

In 2017 when Hurricane Harvey flooded my small town, I packed up what was left and moved East to San Jacinto County. No stranger to keeping myself entertained by the natural world around me, I decided to start a county-wide citizen science project of documenting wildflowers and quickly found myself in a rabbit hole lined with the roots of over 100 flowering plants. Expecting to find a few dozen varieties from the forests to the marshes, I was surprised to discover that pollinators, foliage consumers, and flora enthusiasts alike were in no shortage of discoveries.

San Jacinto county lies in Hardiness

Zone 8b, which boasts a 260 day growing period with an average rainfall of 44" a year. With 60% of the county residing in the Sam Houston National Forest, which sits largely undisturbed except for controlled traffic along the Lonestar Hiking Trail, it easily forms a loblolly maze for an endless hunt of wildflowers throughout the year- no permit required!

Much like in our own communities, diversity in floral populations is essential to a healthy ecosystem. Different flowering plants service different pollinators, which keeps an abundance of wildlife frequenting the area year-round. Vibrant orange American Trumpet Vine flowers (*Campsis radicans*) drape themselves over tree branches and fence lines, providing nectar for hummingbirds all the way into late August, while Bristle Thistles (*Cirsium*

A Carpenter Bee burries itself in the center of a Bristle Thistle bloom.



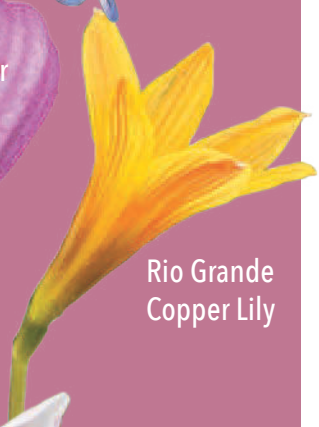
Plains Coreopsis
(*Coreopsis tinctoria*)



Whitemouth Dayflower



Pitcher's
Leatherflower



Rio Grande
Copper Lily



Brazos Rain Lily



Rose Pink Zypher Lily

Spotted Horse Mint
(*Monarda punctata*)

horridulum) double as spiny hostels for weary insects. Broad flowers in the Coreopsis family act as landing surfaces for heftier pollinators, while native foxgloves (family Agalinis) provide hidden spaces for more delicate insects. Blooming under the cover of dark, Carolina Horsenettle (*Solanum carolinense*) produces a small tomato-like fruit that's popular with local raccoons, but its petals wither once the early morning brings to life the Whitemouth Dayflower (*Commelina erecta*). Like most of us, it's mouse ear-like blue petals retract once the summer heat shows itself, continuing the coordinated act of revealing different colors through the day.

So what is a flower? In short, it's classified an Angiosperm, or flowering plant, and is further broken down into class, order, family, all the way down to species and subspecies. Most have colorful petals arranged in a geometric pattern, with its reproductive organs in the center that will go on to either produce exposed seeds or seeds encased in a fruiting body when fertilized.

Without oversimplifying, I've sorted my finds so far into several constantly expanding categories: wildflowers, fruit bearing plants, vines, invasives, aquatic, herbs, and forbs & grasses, with most falling into two or more categories.

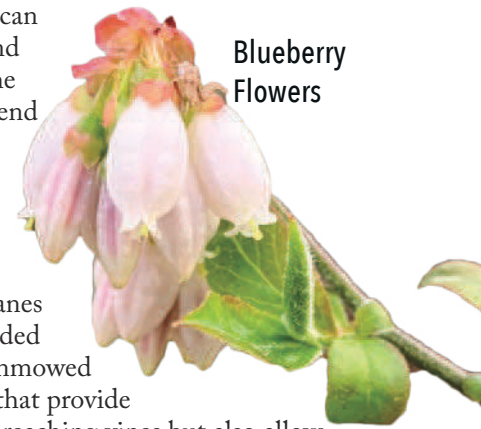
Wildflowers, being the largest group, incorporate all adaptations for the ever-changing East Texas weather and climate. While some flowers are partial to a time of day, the county's plethora of lilies pick and choose the right conditions to present themselves. Red Spider Lilies (*Lycoris radiata*) tend to pop up

at the first signs of cooler fall temperatures while a

good summer rain pushes Rio Grande Copper Lilies (*Habranthus tubispatus*) and the four-inch Rose Pink Zypher Lily (*Zephyranthes carinata*) up from the saturated ground. Other wildflowers are a little trickier to find like the tiny Rough Buttonweed (*Hexasepalum teres*), or have lookalikes within their families like Ruelias or Spiderwort species, both common in the area.

Even autumn orchids like the Nodding Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) and the elusive Pitcher's Leatherflower (*Clematis pitcheri*), which opens downward like a pollen-filled lamp, find their homes along rural red dirt roads.

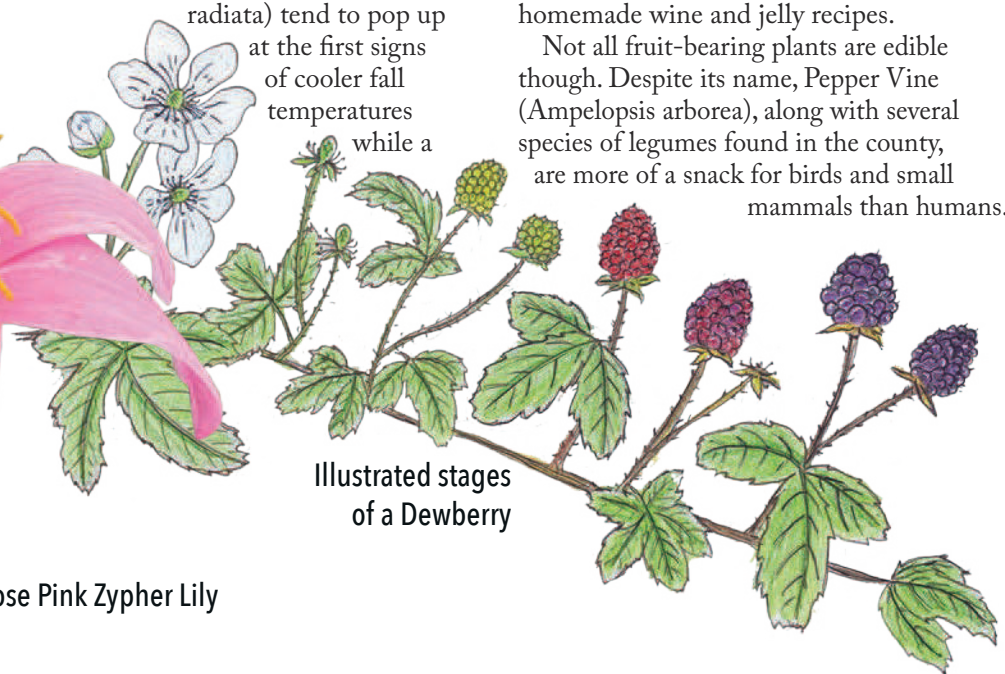
Fruit bearing plants in San Jacinto county include mostly dewberries and blackberries (Genus *Rubus*), but native blueberries can also be found hiding in the forest— all tend to produce around the same time in April-May. Their vines and canes cling to shaded areas and unmowed fence lines that provide support for reaching vines but also allow plants to reseed for the following year.



Blueberry
Flowers

Later in the summer Muscadine Grapes (*Vitis rotundifolia*) climb up towering pines while American Beauty Berries (*Callicarpa americana*) make a home in their shade, acting as a pineywoods-supermarket for those looking to execute homemade wine and jelly recipes.

Not all fruit-bearing plants are edible though. Despite its name, Pepper Vine (*Ampelopsis arborea*), along with several species of legumes found in the county, are more of a snack for birds and small mammals than humans.



Illustrated stages of a Dewberry

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A honey bee gathers pollen from an aquatic Spatterdock flower.



Wild Garlic illustration

When foraging, it's important to take extreme caution and properly ID any plant or seek the guidance of a professional, as some species have poisonous look-a-likes. Wild Garlic (*Allium canadense*) produces an edible underground onion-smelling bulb in the spring but can sometimes be confused with Crowspoison (*Nothoscordum bivalve*), which

looks almost identical but has no scent.

While not as appetizing on their own, populations of herbs line the roadside through the mid and later summer months, including several species of mints (family Lamiaceae). Horse mint and Wild Bergamont (genus *Monarda*) give off a pleasant scent when their leaves are rubbed, and produce easy-to-gather seeds as they dry out in the heat.

Grasses and forbes, which tend to produce some of the smallest flowers found in the county, act as self-maintaining ground cover for native yards and erosion control along the county's sandier areas. These often 1/4" wide flowers can easily be overlooked but thrive everywhere grass can be found, and are some of the first signs of life to return to soil that has been burned or disturbed. They can be seen adding pops of color everywhere, from shaded areas in parks to the grass surrounding your local post office box.

The Trinity and San Jacinto rivers that wind through the county split off into several creeks, which allow for aquatic and moisture loving flowers to take hold of sandy banks and muddy bottoms. Spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*) take root offshore to accommodate water-loving insects while hardy flowering plants like Looseflower Water-willow (*Justicia ovata*) provide habitat for dragonfly nymphs looking to shed and eventually dry their newly formed wings.

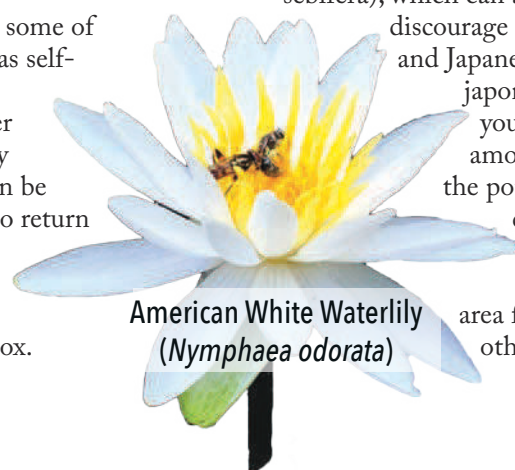
While not totally aquatic in nature, tiny white Primrose-leaved Violets (*Viola primulifolia*) dot the acidic soils on steep creek banks, but avoid drier areas where purple violet varieties claim dominance.

Invasive species found growing quietly in the region include the Chinese Tallow Tree (*Triadica sebifera*), which can actively change soil pH and discourage native plants from taking root, and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), whose vines choke out younger trees. While popular amongst pollinators, they have the potential to wipe out native diversity already present.

Seeds from these plants are often brought into an area from landscaped yards and other means of travel, like birds



Top: Primrose Violet
Bottom: Arrowleaf Violet (*Viola sagittata*)



American White Waterlily (*Nymphaea odorata*)



Chamberbitter



Frog Fruit
(*Lippia nodiflora*)

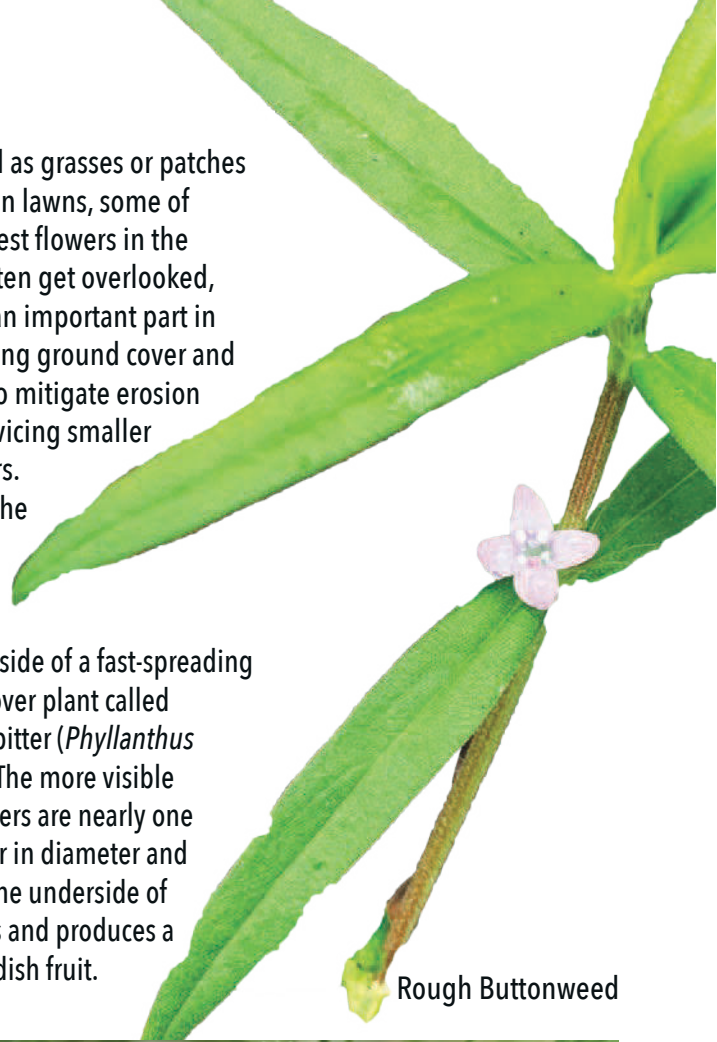


Bur Clover
(*Medicago polymorpha*)



Smooth Tare
(*Vicia tetrasperma*)

Disguised as grasses or patches of clover in lawns, some of the smallest flowers in the county often get overlooked, but play an important part in maintaining ground cover and helping to mitigate erosion while servicing smaller pollinators. Some of the smallest flowers grow on the underside of a fast-spreading ground cover plant called Chamberbitter (*Phyllanthus urinaria*). The more visible male flowers are nearly one millimeter in diameter and grow on the underside of the leaves and produces a small reddish fruit.



Rough Buttonweed



Tainturier's Chervil
(*Chaerophyllum tainturieri*)



Japanese Clover
(*Kummerowia striata*)

or wind, and quickly escape their intended boundaries. With no native predators, these plants are left to spread and take over areas.

While removing invasive species from the East Texas ecosystem is important, so is creating more areas for native flora in already developed spaces. By mowing less, we allow annual wildflowers to cycle through and go to seed, ensuring they'll regrow year after year and provide consistent food and shelter for populations of insects and animals. Even leaving a small patch of unmowed grass in your yard can yield an effortless amount of biodiversity when left for mother nature to decorate with seeds and spores. Encouraging more vegetation growth can even make habitats more enticing to creatures picky about their breeding and living spaces, such as river otters and dragonflies, who can be used as an indicator species to monitor the health of an ecosystem.

With over 95% of the state of Texas privately owned, most of the responsibility of land stewardship falls on private land owners taking initiative to protect their wild spaces. These include sensitive riparian areas along waterways, native prairies, and even fallen foliage among pristine forest floors. Once the reigning pine tree in our region, Longleaf pine savannas are slowly being restored across the south with the hopes creating a safe haven for Texas Black Bears and Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers, who can only make a comeback if their habitats and flowering foods are protected by East Texans like you.

For more local resources on maintaining wild spaces, contact your local Agrilife extension agent or any local wildlife and management agency.

Observations are tracked through a phone app called iNaturalist, which is used by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to track invasive species, ranges of plants and animals, and other information. This app helps to identify flora and fauna, but also shares the finds with a community of biologists and citizen scientists alike who work together to identify their surroundings. For more information on how iNaturalist is used in Texas, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tracker/. ■

TAKE ONLY MEMORIES AND PHOTOS!

Identifying a flower does no good if it's wilting on the ground, and if picked too soon, it isn't able to go to seed, reducing your chances of seeing it again next year. Instead of picking it as a temporary token, take photos instead and try to ID it with these helpful tips.

1. GET UP CLOSE!



The more details a photo has, the more information it can offer! Try to get crisp, in-focus photos with even lighting. Avoid shadows if possible, and don't be afraid to use a flash.

2. OTHER FEATURES



Petals and leaves will often grow in patterns or arrangements, or plants will have other unique features such as thorns or berries. Try and get multiple angles of these!

3. THE BIG PICTURE



Just like an up-close photo is important, so is an all-inclusive one! This can give clues to height, type of plant, and even the type of environment or climate it's growing in.

Pictured above: Looseflower Water-willow

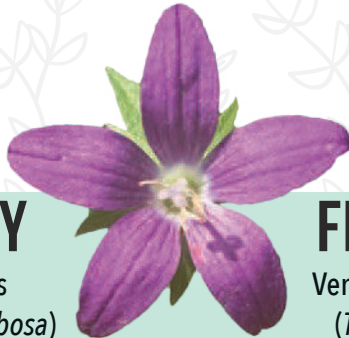
BLOOMS BY THE MONTH

Each month brings new blooms, and while some roll over from month to month, others are only around for a short time. See which flowers you can find throughout the year, and fill in your own observation for December!



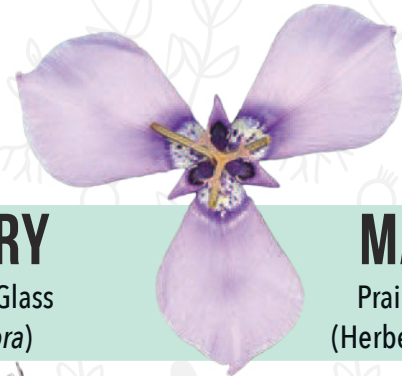
JANUARY

Bulbous Cress
(*Cardamine bulbosa*)



FEBRUARY

Venus' Looking Glass
(*Triodanis biflora*)



MARCH

Prairie Nymph
(*Herbertia lahue*)



APRIL

Common Selfheal
(*Prunella vulgaris*)



MAY

Cherokee Bean
(*Erythrina herbacea*)



JUNE

Wild Bergamont
(*Monarda fistulosa*)



JULY

Pigeon Wing
(*Clitoria mariana*)



AUGUST

Aquatic Milkweed
(*Asclepias perennis*)



SEPTEMBER

Texas Bluebell
(*Eustoma grandiflorum*)



OCTOBER

Ivy-Leaved Morning Glory
(*Ipomoea hederacea*)



NOVEMBER

Ladies' Tresses
(*Spiranthes cernua*)

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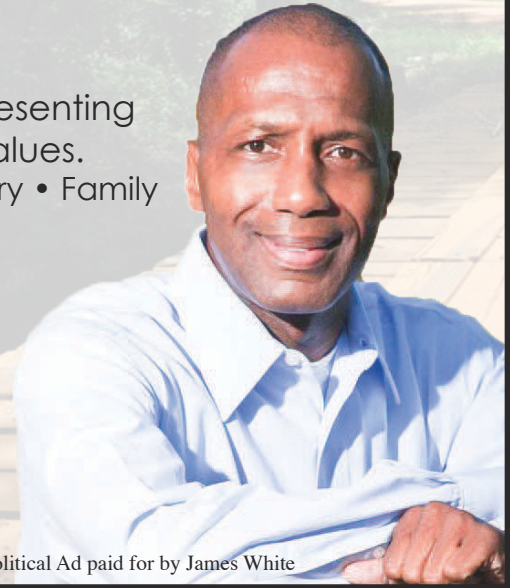


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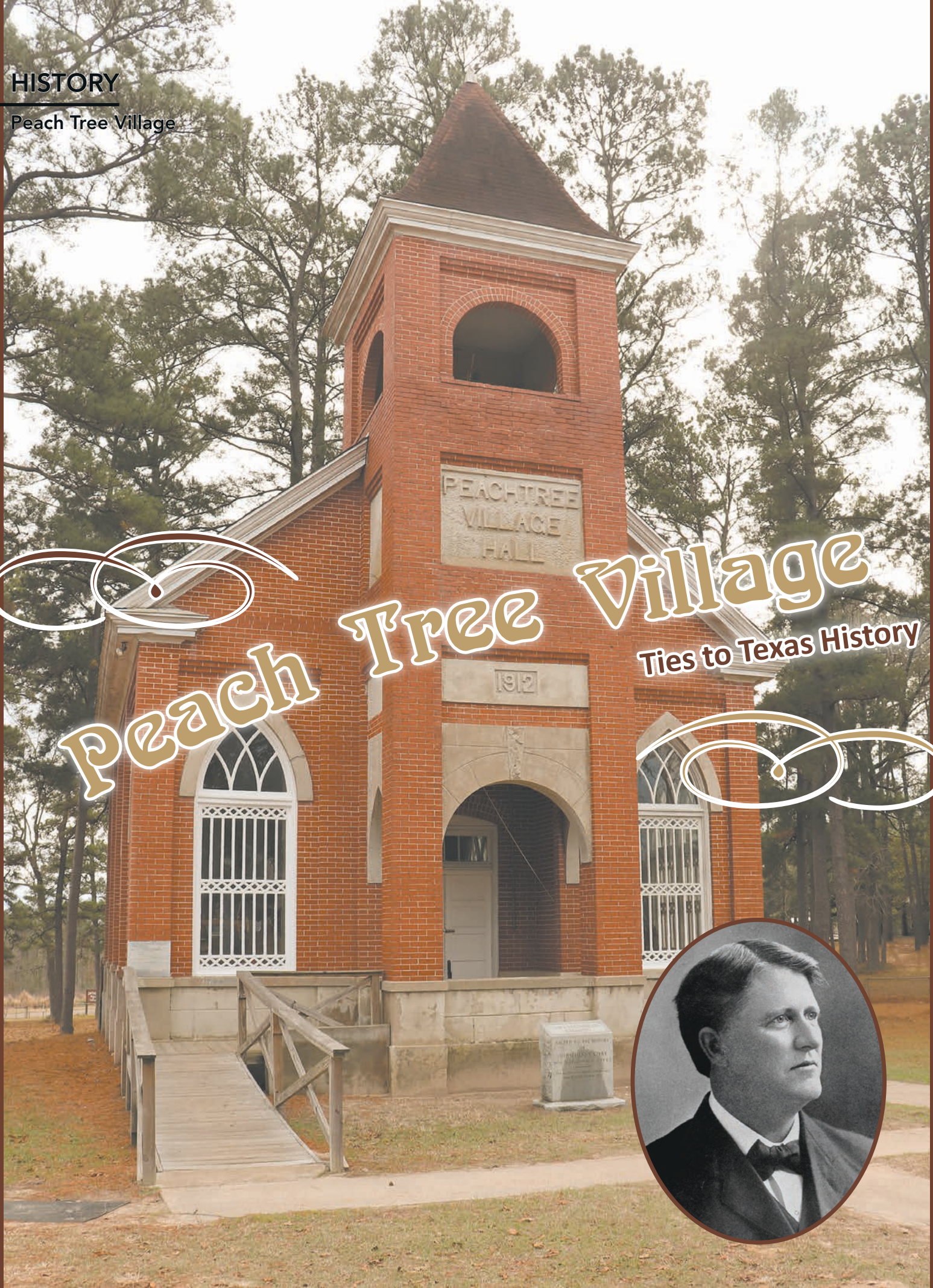
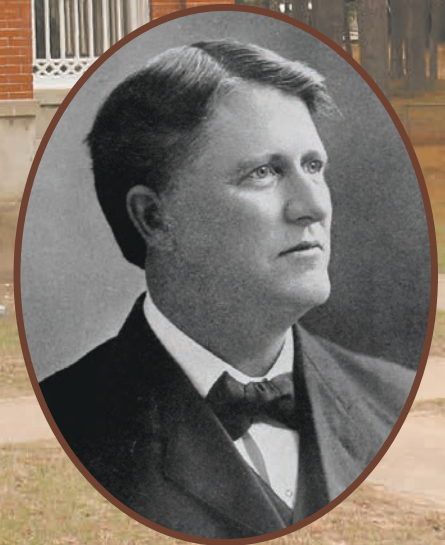


HISTORY

Peach Tree Village

Peach Tree Village

Ties to Texas History



Story by Chris Edwards

The oldest house in Tyler County and a striking, beautiful brick chapel are basically all that remain of Peach Tree Village, which sits two miles north of Chester, off Farm Road 2019. According to historian Henry Chenoweth, Peach Tree Village is classified as a ghost town, yet it is more of a memorial from a son to his parents.

The son in question was born in 1860 as John Henry Kirby. As a lawyer, Kirby earned a reputation for representing lumber companies, and took his fortune to invest in his homeland. He built a railroad and founded the Kirby Lumber Company. Kirby later served in the Texas Legislature for two terms. He also established the Kirby Petroleum Company, and with his many ventures, became known as "The Prince of the Pines," in the eyes of his peers. That moniker would also serve as the title of a biography, written by Mary Lasswell Smith.

As accomplished in the eyes of the world as Kirby became, he never got beyond his raising. He preferred the quiet, rural atmosphere of Peach Tree Village and built his parents a home there, and in 1912, three years after his father died, he erected the red brick chapel in honor of his parents.

While Kirby, whose list of titles stretches longer than most modern "Renaissance men" was the most famous export of Peach Tree Village, the area located near the Neches River, factors into the rich tapestry of our state's history in surprising ways outside of its favorite son.

The village was founded by the Alabama Indians in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The name Peach Tree Village was given to the area by white settlers. Prior to that, it was known as Indian Village, and the white settlers in the region knew of the peaceful Alabama Indians and their trading post there. According to historian Bob Bowman, the Alabamas' claim to the land that comprised Peach Tree Village was contested for the first time in 1834 by Col. Peter Ellis Bean, an American who served in the Mexican Army. Bean, who was stationed at Nacogdoches, applied for and received a grant of 11 leagues of land from the Mexican government.

Bowman writes that the natives who occupied the village were on good terms with the white settlers in the area, who included Peter Cauble and Valentine Ignatius Burch. Cauble,

(Left) The striking chapel at Peach Tree Village. Photo by Chris Edwards.

(Inset) John Henry Kirby, the "Prince of the Pines." Photo used by Creative Commons license.

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who settled at Peach Tree Village around 1831, was Burch's father-in-law. The latter man settled there about 1845 after marrying Cauble's youngest daughter.

Cauble, who was a first-generation American born to German immigrants, was a schoolteacher by trade. In Peach Tree Village, he became so well-known as a teacher that the residents bestowed the title of "Professor" upon him. He and his wife Mary Rotan moved to Peach Tree Village when Mexico offered plentiful parcels of land to homesteaders. The house Cauble built around 1835 still remains.

The dogtrot house's porch faced the Jordan Ferry Road, otherwise known as the Old Beef Trail, and was once used to hail to travelers news of San Jacinto still standing, according to historian Col. Eddie Boxx. The house served as a major milestone, as the road sometimes known as the Old Beef Trail passed through Peach Tree Village along the timbered ridge into Polk County and on into the Brazos Valley.

The house is the oldest known structure still in use in Tyler County, and in 1846 was recognized via legislative action as a locator for pinpointing the common boundary line between Tyler and Polk counties, which is two miles west of the home. It is now owned by the Tyler County Heritage Society, which has taken care of it since 1990.

When Sam Houston began to build his army of Texans to fight for independence from Mexico, Cauble, then 50 years of age, joined up, as did his son-in-law. When the war ended, Cauble, whom Boxx has written about as an "irascible and a larger-than-life figure," returned to Peach Tree Village, where he and his family lived until his death. He served in many roles, including Road Commissioner and Justice of the County Court, after returning. Burch, who fought at the Battle of San Jacinto, also became a leader in the community, and a key figure in the development of Peach Tree Village.

Burch and his wife Helen often hosted travelling Catholic missionaries, and the village thrived during the years of the Republic of Texas. It boasted a store, a cotton gin, saloon, grist mill, church, school and a post office. The Alabamas, who remained neutral during the Texas Revolution, gradually left Peach Tree Village and moved five miles southeast to the Fenced-in Village, an area of land granted to the tribe by the Republic of Texas.

The construction of the Trinity and Sabine Railway in 1883 and establishment of the city of Chester caused a decline in Peach Tree Village, as the post office, school and commercial businesses were moved to Chester. The chapel Kirby built in 1912 still stands, and it, along with two acres





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The historic Peter Cauble House as it appears today. Photo by Chris Edwards.

of land surrounding it, are under the trusteeship of the Tyler County Commissioners Court. Along with the chapel, a donation of 22.4 acres of land was developed into Camp Ta-Ku-La, a non-denominational campsite that is available to churches and groups for activities, retreats and youth camps. According to the site's history, the word "Ta-Ku-La" is an Alabama Indian word meaning "peach tree."

Even though little remains of the once prosperous frontier town, its history is still accessible to anyone who finds their way there. The story of Peach Tree Village, as written by Kirby, is still on display on a sign in the center of the village and the art inside the chapel, which Kirby hired a Russian artist to render, uses images to tell the story of the area and its part in the formation of the state of Texas. ■

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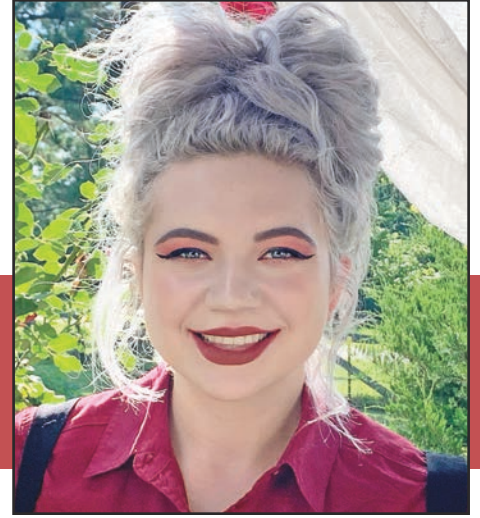
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Glen Radley

Sharing his gift with others

Story by Jeff Fatheree



When I first met Glen Radley of Sour Lake, I could see he was a bit stooped with age, and he will typically have a camera with him. He is quick to greet you with a warm and friendly smile. He always appears happy and loves to give to others. He spent his life providing for his wife, Joyce Thibodaux Radley, who he met when they were in 7th and 8th grade.

Glen shared his family history by talking about his parents, Ernest “Ernie” and Ruth Ferguson Radley. They were both born on the same day in 1906 within twelve hours of each other and would leave this earth on the same day in 1994 within twelve hours of each other. While living in the small community of Hull, Texas, in 1934, they gave birth to a son, Glen, which made their home complete. Glen would be like most babies of the family, a rambunctious youngster that enjoyed life. He would be impacted by the love he saw in his parents and learned the lessons that his dad, Ernie, had to teach. Ernie and Ruth moved to Sour Lake, where Glen would benefit by finding the one woman he would spend almost the entirety of his life.

Ernie worked hard to provide for the family at Gulf States Utilities until World War II started. Later, Ernie would join the Army and become an Electrician. When the war ended, Ernie stepped out on faith and started a little firm called Radley Electric, Inc. Ernie was primarily doing oilfield and industrial work and then the company began to

grow. All of the boys would work for their father’s company at some point in their lives. Howard would purchase the company, and later, Glen would join his brother and take care of the oilfield electrical for their communications.

Glen met Joyce in junior high, and since she lived right around the corner, he began carrying her books to and from school. Glen knew that he liked her but was not sure the feelings were mutual until one day, in the movie house, someone sat down next to him and said, “Glen, Joyce Thibodaux likes you.” He was over the moon and would say that on that day, words carried great weight and trust, that it felt almost like an engagement. Glen, being a typical East Texas boy, about the time they were headed into High School, decided he needed to play the field, and he told Joyce he was leaving. The gravity and weight of her tears would be on his mind for the entire time they were apart. About a year later, Glen was asked to help the Thibodaux’s with their Christmas decorations by carrying electrical cords to them. While he was there, he saw Joyce on the porch and pleaded for forgiveness and Joyce took him back. They would not be separated again until Joyce’s passing on October 7, 2019. Glen says that she was the very one that caused him to have such a love for God and the people he met.

Glen went to work in the oilfield out of high school and would begin his journey into the world

of communications. One year later, he graduated, he and Joyce would marry on June 4, 1953. Glen had gone to Lamar Tech to get an education in heating and air, HVAC, as it is called today, with his parents' support. Once he and Joyce got married, he began working with Sun Oil Company in 1955, climbing towers. His dad's electrical training had come to fruition, and Joyce would write him a letter telling him how proud she was of how he had learned everything he could to provide a good life for her and the girls. They moved from Sour Lake to Prescot, where he would be promoted to pipeline communications engineer. He worked for Sun Oil until 1971. They moved to King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, and after living there for six months and experienced one heavy snow, they were moving back to Sour Lake.

Glen went to work with Howard at Radley Electrical, where he worked until retirement. Working offshore and the climbing that communications engineers did at the time took a toll on Glen's body, and he would later have knee and back surgeries. During his recovery, Glen discovered that he could draw sketches of people. He bought a book on drawing faces and began studying and drawing. He attributes his gift to a lot of hard work, and now he focuses on drawing sketches of those that have had a significant impact on him. Sometimes, his artwork subjects do not even realize that they have made an impact, but Glen will sketch them and surprise these members of the Sour Lake Community with sketches.

Glenn is all about Sour Lake and everything it is. He was named Citizen of the Year in 2011 and is quite proud that the community felt worthy for him to receive the award. Glenn and Joyce traveled throughout the United States in an RV

for many years and through Glen's artwork, he reflects their travels. He spends most of his time on sketches of famous people like President Trump, the physician who cared for Joyce, and anyone else that has impacted others' lives. He also loves to sketch the folks around him, neighbors who help and make a difference in Sour Lake's community. Glen said, come on down when you get the chance. Trust me. He will be more than happy to share a cup of coffee or a glass of tea. You will be amazed at the stories he can tell. I am not saying he is a talker, but I am, and he outdid me. I loved getting to know Mr. Glenn, and if you think you may have heard of him, he has been featured on Texas Country Reporter and other places and having a book or two out about him and Joyce. Come on down to Sour Lake and let Glen tell you why he loves it so.



A sketch by Glen Radley of his daughter, Karen.

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BLACK RAVEN

Pumpkin Bread

Recipe by Barbara White Photo by Amy Holzworth



Whether enjoyed with a cup of coffee for breakfast or topped with a dollop of whipped cream for dessert, nothing says autumn like a thick slice of moist pumpkin bread. This freezes well and may also be baked in mini-loaf pans for individual gifts.

- 3 1/3 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2/3 cup water
- 4 eggs, well-beaten
- 1 (16-ounce) can pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup coarsely-chopped pecans
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 3 (8- or 9-inch) loaf pans. For individual gifts, grease 6 to 8 mini-loaf pans. Sift together flour, baking soda, nutmeg, cinnamon and salt. In a large bowl, combine sugar, oil and water. Stir in dry ingredients.

Add eggs, pumpkin and vanilla, mixing gently to combine. Fold in nuts and raisins. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. (If using mini-loaf pans, bake for about 40 minutes.)

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COMMUNITY

SAAFE HOUSE

Program continues to serve individuals and families facing violence during COVID-19 crisis



“SAAFE House was very encouraging. I was able to tell them everything that had happened that night and how I was feeling. They did advise me to go to the police and press charges. They were very supportive and were there to listen to me when I felt I had no one else I could talk to.”

KIMBERLY DYAN
SAAFE House Volunteer

Story by Linda W. Perkins

At a time when people are being urged to stay home to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, not everyone feels safe there. In fact, studies have shown that domestic violence rates increase during periods of economic hardship and stress. But while businesses are closing their doors, SAAFE House is staying open during the COVID-19 crisis to provide shelter, remote counseling and support services to victims of both family violence and sexual assault.

SAAFE House, which operates shelters in Walker County and Polk County, also offers non-residential services to people in Walker, Polk, Trinity and San Jacinto counties who need someone to turn to for support and guidance in their situations. In addition to offering a 24-hour crisis hotline, the organization provides accompaniment to criminal justice services, legal advocacy, emergency and medical care, counseling, referrals to free and affordable childcare services, provisions to assist victims in obtaining secure and independent lifestyles, job placement services, and referrals to appropriate social service agencies.

“As the COVID-19 crisis has grown here in the United States, SAAFE House has seen a steady increase in the number of clients seeking services,” said SAAFE House Board Past President Cyntia Martinez. “In February alone, we took in seven new families and 15 singles into our Walker and Polk County shelters. In addition to those people, we took 244 calls into our hotline and served 111 clients through our outreach offices.”

One of the greatest challenges SAAFE House faces is that while the economic strain of the COVID-19 crisis increases the preponderance of family and intimate partner violence, that same financial pressure is affecting the organization’s budget as well. Elite Repeat, the resale shop in downtown Huntsville that helps support SAAFE House, had to shut down operations temporarily until they could put safeguards in for the staff and shoppers. A new resale shop SAAFE House planned for Livingston opened briefly but could not be sustained. That means there is even more need for donations from businesses and individuals in the counties SAAFE House serves.

“We feel for the members of our community whose businesses have shut down or who have experienced financial difficulties due to the healthcare crisis,” Martinez said. “With the extra stress that puts on families, it is harder for people to donate, and yet those donations go even further at a time like this.”

SAAFE House Co-Executive Directors Twana Sullins and



The Elite Repeat Resale Shop located within the SAAFE House main office in Huntsville, on the corner of Sam Houston Ave. & 15th Street. The shop is open 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday-Friday. To contact call 936-291-6135.

Alexis Johnson Anderson explained that the SAAFE House budget not only includes client housing and staff salaries but food and basic living essentials for clients: clothing, personal hygiene items, prescriptions, and legal documents such as birth certificates, social security cards and drivers licenses.

“Most people don’t think about all the things that have to be replaced when you’re leaving your home in an emergency situation,” Sullins said. “When you walk out with nothing, that’s all you have.”

Domestic violence is not the only kind of violence that SAAFE House sees going up during times of crisis. Sexual assault rates may also climb, especially during the holiday season when people are typically consuming more alcohol.

Kimberly Dyan, who has served as a volunteer for a number of years and just took over the role of board president from Martinez, first called SAAFE House when she was a student at Sam Houston State University student. She had been sexually assaulted at a party.

“SAAFE House was very encouraging. I was able to tell them everything that had happened that night and how I was feeling. They did advise me to go to the police and press charges. They

were very supportive and were there to listen to me when I felt I had no one else I could talk to,” Dyan said.

After her encounter and the support she received from SAAFE House, Dyan felt compelled to share her story on college campuses across the country. She said a disturbing trend is that sexual assault – especially acquaintance rape – has become so common that many girls just assume it is a normal part of the college experience. SAAFE House works closely with student organizations at Sam Houston State to put on sexual assault awareness programs in hopes of lowering assault rates, as well as offering counseling services to men and women who have been sexually assaulted.

SAAFE House is asking for anyone interested in helping victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to go to www.saafehouse.org to donate financially, or to call the SAAFE House office at 936-291-3369 to arrange for donations of supplies such as toilet paper, paper towels, shampoo, and conditioner, soap and body wash, sanitary supplies, size 4-6 diapers, baby wipes, and cleaning products.

Any members of the community needing help with a sexual assault or domestic violence situation should call the SAAFE House hotline at 936-291-3369 or 936-327-2513. ■

Pictured below are SAAFE House staff members Dena Scott (Community Relations Director), Tracy Szymczak (Sexual Assault Advocate), John Filhiol (Receptionist/Administrative Assistant) at the Huntsville SAAFE House location.



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10 Facts You Didn't Know About

The NATURAL

Story by Alan Peel

My friend, who I have known since college, believes that the best baseball movie ever made was *The Natural* starring Robert Redford, Glenn Close, Robert Duvall, and Kim Basinger. However, there are some interesting side notes that he might not already know about his favorite baseball movie.

10. The movie is clearly set in 1939.

Everything about this movie, or rather the bulk of it, is set in 1939. You can tell for numerous reasons.

The first is the commemorative centennial patch on the New York Knights uniforms. In 1939, baseball commemorated the centennial of the game with a special patch that was part of every uniform.

Second, a scene with Roy Hobbs and Memo Paris that is photographed for a newspaper is clearly taken at the World's Fair in New York which took place in 1939. The two are shown at the General Motors Futurerama Pavilion.

Third, a front page of a newspaper picture showing Hobbs sliding into home plate during a montage near the end of the film suggests the movie is set in 1939. It was that year Harvard won the Grand Challenge Cup, a feat which Harvard achieved in 1914, 1939, 1950, 1959, and 1985. The headline for the news story also runs on the front of the paper.

Finally, the cover of *Life Magazine* profiling the rise of Hobbs's fame is dated August 14, 1939. The actual cover from that date had child actress Sandra Lee Henville, best known as Baby Sandy.

9. All the baseball scenes were filmed in Buffalo, New York.

For most of the baseball scenes, Buffalo's War Memorial Stadium was the setting. Built in 1937, War Memorial Stadium was selected for its look as a pre-World War II ballpark. The stadium was the home of the Buffalo Bisons who were the Double-A affiliate of the Pittsburgh Pirates and served as home of the Buffalo Bills of the American Football League and the National Football League from their inception in 1960 to 1972.

Used as a stand-in for Wrigley Field was Buffalo's All-High Stadium on the campus of what was formerly known as Bennett High School. Notable alumni of the high school include Broadway choreographer Michael Bennett, R&B

legend Rick James, basketball great Bob Lanier, and food-processing magnate Robert Rich.

Coincidentally, Rich Products, founded in 1945 by Rich, has an advertisement for Rich's Whipped Topping at the Knights' ballpark visible during filming. Rich was the owner of the Buffalo Bisons at the time.

8. Roy Hobbs and the stuff of (Arthurian) legend.

Author Bernard Malamud based his novel *The Natural* on Arthurian legend, particularly the story of Sir Percival. Roy, a name which means "king", takes his bat "Wonder Boy" from a tree that was struck by lightning. It is Hobbs in the role of Sir Percival who must rally the Knights to reach their Holy Grail, the National League pennant.

7. Sometimes, you've got to do a job yourself.

Director Barry Levinson had initially planned on bringing in an actual baseball announcer to provide the play-by-play of the Knights radio broadcasts. Levinson's biggest problem was that he couldn't get a voice in time to complete the recording in post-production as Tri-Star Pictures was planning the movie's release in May 1984.

Pressed for time, Levinson decided to take on the role himself and provided the play-by-play. It would not be the last time that Levinson took on an uncredited role in a movie as he would make an uncredited appearance in the 1988 movie *Rain Man* which he also directed.

6. The studio wasn't quite sold on *The Natural*.

Newly formed Tri-Star Pictures had initially planned on *The Natural* being the first movie released. Fearing that a baseball movie would not perform well at the box office, the studio decided to release *The Natural* as their second film after the release of *Where the Boys Are*. The decision nearly proved disastrous as *Where the Boys Are* grossed only \$10.5 million at the box office and received five Golden Raspberry Award nominations including Worst Supporting Actress for Lynn-Holly Johnson which she won.

Meanwhile, *The Natural* collected \$48 million at the box office on just a budget of \$28 million making it a hit movie. *The Natural* currently enjoys a rating of 82% fresh on Rotten

Tomatoes and is considered one of the best sports films ever made.

Tri-Star Pictures would enjoy success in the following months having distributed *Places in the Heart* which received seven Academy Award nominations including Best Picture and Oscar wins for Robert Benton for Best Original Screenplay and Sally Field for Best Actress.

A little more than one year after *The Natural* was released, Tri-Star Pictures released their first blockbuster hit when Sylvester Stallone reprised his role as John Rambo in the movie *Rambo: First Blood Part II*.

5. Barry Levinson's career departure.

In the earlier films associated with his career, Barry Levinson was a writer on every project including an uncredited writer on the 1982 hit film *Tootsie*. Levinson started out writing comedic films which included the Mel Brooks films *Silent Movie* and *High Anxiety* where he had a bit part as a bellboy in the latter.

Levinson finally made his directorial debut with *Diner* in 1982 and received his second Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay. *The Natural* was the first film in which Levinson did not contribute as a writer. Those duties went to Roger Towne and Phil Dusenberry.

4. Barry Levinson and Robert Redford reunited years later.

Barry Levinson and Robert Redford's combined efforts on *The Natural* would not be the only time the duo worked together. When the two worked together again, the roles were reversed. In the 1994 film *Quiz Show*, Levinson played the role of television personality Dave Garroway under the direction of Redford.

3. Go pick me out a beer, Bobby?

At the end of the movie, Roy Hobbs's bat "Wonder Boy" splinters in two on a pitch that he hits foul down the right field line. After telling bat boy Bobby Savoy "Go pick me out a winner, Bobby," the young boy selects a bat named "Savoy Special".

Referring back to the earlier fact about the bulk of the movie being set in 1939, Savoy Special was the name of a 1930's beer that was brewed by the United States Brewing Company. The Chicago-based brewery as well as the beer are no longer available, but the bat as well as the jacket worn by Robert Redford in the movie are on display at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in the "Baseball at the Movies" exhibit.

2. Who shot who?

One of the most famous scenes in the entire movie is a critical plot point that is based on one of two stories that actually happened in real life. Depending on which one you want to believe is the basis, I'll present both of them to you.

The return of Roy Hobbs to baseball 16 years after being shot is said to be borrowed in Malamud's novel from incidents that happened involving Eddie Waitkus or Billy Jurges. While nobody knows for sure, both were shot by women who could be considered mentally unstable such as the character Harriet Bird played by Barbara Hershey.

In the case of Waitkus, the first baseman who played for the Philadelphia Phillies at the time he was shot on June 14, 1949, was wounded by Ruth Ann Steinhagen in a hotel room in Chicago one year after Waitkus had last played for the Chicago Cubs. Waitkus would return later that season as a key component of a Phillies team known as the Whiz Kids that won the 1950 National League pennant. Steinhagen was not charged in the incident though she was committed to a psychiatric institution until her release three years later.

Meanwhile, Jurges was a shortstop for the Cubs when he was shot on July 6, 1932, by showgirl Violet Valli, a woman with whom he was romantically linked. She unsuccessfully attempted suicide and was later charged with attempted murder. He declined to testify against Valli and the charges were dropped. Jurges would return in time to help the Cubs win the National League pennant that year.

1. The ending of the movie is different from that of the book.

If you have never seen *The Natural*, skip to the end of the article if you don't want the spoiler. The book depicts a different Roy Hobbs, a character who is dark and somber after having been shot and missing out on 16 years of baseball. Toward the end, the Judge offers Hobbs money to throw the final game of the season and cost the Knights the pennant. The same scene is repeated in the movie for a Roy Hobbs character who is more protective about his past which the Judge threatens to use against him.

However, the decisions by Hobbs are entirely different between the book and movie. In the book, Hobbs counters with demands for \$35,000 which the Judge agrees to. In the movie, Hobbs returns the offered bribe with the intent to win the game.

It is also discovered that the relationship between Roy Hobbs and Iris is different. In the book, Iris is pregnant with Roy's child whereas in the movie, Iris is the mother of Roy's illegitimate son who is a teenager.

The endings also vary as Roy Hobbs strikes out and cost the Knights the pennant whereas the movie version sees Hobbs hit a game-winning home run and save the Knights franchise for Pop Fisher.

My friend will have plenty to look for the next time he decides to sit down and watch *The Natural*. Knowing him, he's had his fill of Korean baseball and might very well be watching the movie on a continuous loop. ■



I take care to appear happy and especially to be so.

Story by Barbara White

I'm grrrrrrrrreat! Thanks for asking!

I keep coming across this same quote from Saint Thérèse: "I take care to appear happy and especially to be so."

When I say I "keep coming across" it, I mean it is written on a scrap of paper that hangs out with a few dozen other scraps of paper on my bedside table. Those scraps contain bits of information and quotes that I encounter while reading that I may someday want to steal, I mean, use as inspiration to create my very own, very original, never-been-seen-before, there-really-is-something-new-under-the-sun, writing.

I don't think there is any divine reason why the Saint Thérèse quote keeps ending up on the top of the scrap pile. I think it is because I regularly knock the stack over and this particular quote is written on a piece of paper that is thicker and a little larger than most of the other scraps.

Although it seems extremely disrespectful, it is scribbled on a torn fragment of one of those subscription cards that fall out of magazines. You know those cards. They are the ones that self-indulgent people who can find nothing better to do than read magazines and sip wine while taking long, leisurely bubble baths find annoying when they discover four or five of the soggy pieces of paper floating alongside them in the tub. I've heard that can happen.

Anyway, each time I encounter the quote, my first thought is, "Why did I write this down?" I mean, my writing projects rarely involve anything inspirational, positive or, come to think of it, useful in any way.

Then, early one morning, slightly stressed out by a pandemic, an approaching hurricane, polarizing politics, protests and a looming deadline, it dawned on me. Saint Thérèse might be trying to tell us that even she, whose saintly name has become synonymous with all things helpful and positive, sometimes had to put on a happy face. Or, in less eloquent terms, she might have had to adopt the "fake it 'til you make it" mentality that many of us utilize when we, for example, are trapped in a conversation with someone we find extremely unlikable and boring but who is important to our well-being. Like maybe your boss; not my boss, your boss.

I not only did not know why I had written the quote down – a lot of the ideas that seem inspirational late at night turn out to be real head-scratchers in the morning – I did not know where I had read it, although I did have the presence of mind to attribute it to Saint Thérèse.

Many of you, especially if you are Catholic, are probably familiar with her story. I didn't have a clue, although I did know her name because I had read somewhere that Mother Teresa took the name in her honor.

Since I wasn't in the mood to write anyway, I decided if this quote was going to keep ending up on the top of my scrap pile, a quick Google search of the saint's name was the least I could

do. One entry near the top mentioned that Thérèse had made the quote while trying to write.

I am ashamed to say that, as I clicked on the link, I was thinking something to the effect of, "Hey, Sister, you think you have writing troubles? Try writing a humor column during a pandemic, an approaching hurricane, polarizing politics and protests."

As the article came up on my computer screen – a Christmas-themed piece written by Gretchen Rubin that appeared in the Huffington Post – it put my petty challenges in a different light.

It seems Thérèse had been ordered by one of the higher-ups in the church to finish a written account of her childhood memories. It was 1897 and Thérèse, although only in her early 20s, was sitting in a wheelchair in the garden of the convent, weakened by the tuberculosis that would soon kill her. Talk about a deadline. You win, Sister.

So, she is sitting in the garden, in her wheelchair, trying to write about her childhood. Instead, she ends up writing about all of the distractions.

I'm paraphrasing here, but this is how Thérèse describes it.

One of her fellow sisters, thinking it might help, stops by for some friendly chit-chat. She finally moves on, after covering topics that ranged from ducks to doctor visits. Someone else interrupts and, hoping to offer inspiration to the struggling writer, plops some flowers in her lap. Even for someone not using a laptop, it was enough to derail any train of thought she may have had going.

Another sister arrives to offer her sympathies, because she knows how tiring all that writing must be.

"Don't worry," Thérèse tells her, probably without a hint of sarcasm, "I appear to be writing very much, but really I am writing almost nothing."

I can imagine Thérèse rolling her eyes up to the heavens. Even she, someone with the patience of a soon-to-be saint, is starting to get a little perturbed by all of the distractions.

She has to remind herself that these people are only trying to help. She writes, "I don't know if I have been able to write ten lines without being disturbed... however, for the love of God and my Sisters (so charitable toward me) I take care to appear happy and especially to be so." So, now we have a little context for the quote.

Rubin felt the passage emphasized the importance of accepting gifts in the spirit in which they are offered. She is probably right, but I prefer my original premise. So, I put on a happy face, faked it 'til I made it and finished the task at hand: writing a humor column while feeling about as humorous as head lice. I may not have succeeded, but I tried, darn it.

Sainthood was never in my future.

I think my next writing project will be to inscribe the quote on something more permanent than a loose scrap of paper. I may need it again.

Thank you, Saint Thérèse. ■

A silhouette of a fisherman wearing a cap and holding a fishing rod, with a large fish hanging from the line. The scene is set against a vibrant sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon and its light reflecting on the water's surface. The fisherman is on the left, and the fish is on the right. The background shows a calm lake with some reeds or trees in the distance.

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2020 Whitetail Forecast

Experts predict Texas deer hunters will be pleased with the quality in the field this season

Story by Matt Williams

We're still 30-plus days away from the Oct. 3 start of the Archery Only deer season and more than two months shy of the general opener set for Nov. 7. Not surprisingly, plenty of Texans are already dreaming whitetail.

Archery pro shops are bustling with hunters pondering opening day.

Corn sales are brisk.

As always, Internet forums are abuzz with hunters eager to chat about the prospects or show off their latest game cam treasures.

It's always a treat to surf websites like texasbowhunter.com or the Deep ETX Pineywoods Hunting Forum Facebook page this

time of year. Both are filled with threads about everything from wild game recipes to hunting strategies and the latest in useful gear.

I like to look at the pictures of all the bucks with spindly necks and velvet-clad antlers. Though bucks appear less than manly during the summer months, it's only natural to dream what the deer might look like once their calcium crowns fully form, summer coats fade to fall grey and necks swell like prize fighters.

"Velvet" is the expression frequently used to describe the thin layer of hairy skin that covers the antlers throughout

Hunting Season	EcoRegion	# Hunters	Hunter Days	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	% Bucks	% Does	Hunter Success	Kills per Hunter	Hunter Days per Hunter	Kills per 1000ac	Hunters per 1000ac
*2019-20	Blackland Prairies	19,705	249,710	8,175	4,809	12,983	63	37	57	0.66	12.67	4.57	6.93
*2019-20	Cross Timbers and Prairies	109,256	1,365,644	49,172	41,552	90,724	54	46	60	0.83	12.50	7.43	8.95
*2019-20	Edwards Plateau	193,440	1,921,802	132,640	123,263	255,903	52	48	76	1.32	9.93	12.70	9.60
*2019-20	Gulf Prairies and Marshes	13,811	144,799	10,178	11,300	21,479	47	53	76	1.56	10.48	11.59	7.45
*2019-20	High Plains	7,301	66,830	4,408	5,209	9,617	46	54	81	1.32	9.15	5.38	4.08
*2019-20	Pineywoods	116,645	1,775,004	47,526	40,153	87,679	54	46	56	0.75	15.22	6.13	8.15
*2019-20	Post Oak Savannah	115,501	1,495,877	59,594	43,392	102,986	58	42	63	0.89	12.95	6.85	7.69
*2019-20	Eastern Rolling Plains	58,938	653,548	39,511	28,131	67,642	58	42	74	1.15	11.09	7.26	6.33
*2019-20	Western Rolling Plains	40,201	402,506	21,479	14,346	35,825	60	40	69	0.89	10.01	2.51	2.82
*2019-20	South Texas Plains	95,797	1,040,060	72,932	66,681	139,612	52	48	77	1.46	10.86	8.35	5.73
*2019-20	Trans-Pecos, Mountains and Basins	18,737	160,031	10,499	9,858	20,357	52	48	85	1.09	8.54	4.58	4.22
*2019-20	Urban	2,287	21,801	1,042	481	1,523	68	32	65	0.67	9.53	3.13	4.71
*2019-20	Statewide	791,619	9,297,611	460,242	386,088	846,330	54	46	60	1.07	11.75	7.46	6.98

The above chart shows the 2019-20 white-tailed deer harvest by region. Around 790,000 deer hunters shot 846,000 whitetails last season.



Most bucks in eastern Texas are still in “velvet,” but that will change in coming weeks as testosterone begins to flow and bucks begin rubbing small trees and bushes to polish their new antlers and start building neck muscles ahead of the fall breeding season. Photo by Matt Williams

the growing process, which begins in early spring. The soft skin is lined with tiny blood vessels to fuel fast growth of the cartilage until it calcifies into hardened antlers, usually by early September if not a little sooner.

That’s when testosterone begins to flow and the blood supply to the velvet ceases, causing it to dry and peel away from the bone. Bucks help things along by rubbing on small trees and bushes to polish their new antlers and start building neck muscles ahead of the fall breeding season.

Rubbing creates a visual signpost that can be easily spotted by other deer and observant hunters. A fresh rub isn’t the most reliable sign to plan hunting strategies around, but it is solid evidence that a buck has been in the area.

Those bucks that survive the winter will cast their antlers the following spring and the growing process starts all over again. The carryover translates to another year of age that can sometimes mean the difference between the animal growing a good rack or an exceptional one the following summer. Bucks tends to grow their best antlers beyond 5 1/2 years of age with sufficient nutrition.

Looking Good

The upcoming white-tailed deer season is setting up to be a good one for Texas’ 790,000 deer hunters. That’s the word from Alan Cain, head of white-tailed deer program for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Cain is based in Pleasanton, roughly 40 miles south of San Antonio in Atascosa County. He relies on intel from wildlife biologists and other field staff to help monitor white-tailed deer herds from one region to the next.

It’s a complex job. Texas has more deer than any other state, roughly about 5.5 million animals. That’s around five times the number of the other leading states like Mississippi, Missouri and Alabama.

Deer hunting represents a huge cash cow for Texas. Studies have shown that deer hunting generates \$1.2 billion in revenue for the state’s economy each year.

Cain recently released his 2020 white-tailed deer forecast. Though it may not turn out to be the best on season record, the biologist thinks many hunters are going to be pleased with the quality they see in the field this fall.

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Here's a synopsis of his report:

Cain said much of the state saw timely spring and early summer rains in April, May and June that spurred the growth nutrition-rich forbs and an explosion of new growth on shrubs. The succulent goodies should bode well for antler growth on bucks while providing does with critical nutrition for nursing fawns through the summer.

"The spring rains helped many areas of the state, including South Texas, the Edwards Plateau, and areas west recover from very dry conditions that persisted from fall and winter of 2019," he said. "The habitat conditions set the stage for good early antler growth and fawn recruitment numbers are looking good."

Cain added that habitat and range conditions have deteriorated in the last month or so, but the deer still look to be in good shape.

"I've been pleasantly surprised at the trail camera photos of great bucks that a number of landowners have passed along to me," Cain said. "I've seen a couple of bucks that would gross more than 200 Boone and Crockett inches. Overall, antler quality is looking good for the upcoming season."

Numbers Climbing

Cain said the overall population is in good shape showing positive long-term growth that equates to a density of about 49.35 deer per 1,000 acres across the state's eight ecological regions and 44 deer management units.

The Edwards Plateau, located in Central Texas, has historically supported the most deer (about 2.37 million) of any region. Likewise it sees the most hunting traffic and accounts the bulk of the harvest each year.

In 2019, nearly 194,000 Hill Country hunters shot 256,000 deer resulting in a 76 percent success rate. South Texas ran a distant second with a harvest of 138,000 deer, followed by the Post Oak Savannah (103,000), Cross Timbers and Prairies (91,000) and the Pineywoods (88,000).

Edwards Plateau

Cain says he expects the Edwards Plateau population numbers to be down somewhat this year due to a 2019 anthrax outbreak that resulted in localized mortality estimated as high 90 percent on some ranches. The losses may be a silver lining in many respects.

"Such losses provided long-term benefits by reducing deer densities and bringing them in line with natural carrying capacity of the native rangeland," Cain said. "This population reduction should result in healthier deer and hopefully more nutrition to help bucks maximize antler production."

Hunters can expect to see a cohort of bucks in the 4 1/2 to 7 1/2-year-old age classes this year as a result of high fawn production in prior years. Cain said the odds will be particularly good on DMU 4 between Del Rio and Junction and DMU 7 between Hondo to Del Rio and north of US Highway 90.

South Texas

Cain said South Texas' deer herd of about 438,000 animals is stable, but could increase slightly thanks to a bumper fawn crop this season. Hunters should expect to see a good number of 5 1/2-year-old bucks this season as a result of a good fawn crop in 2015, but fewer bucks 6 1/2 or older.

Antler quality is expected to be average or above. Hunter success last year was 77 percent.

Post Oak

Age and antler surveys performed in 2019 indicate that 68 percent of the region's harvest was represented by bucks 3 1/2 years old or older. Hunters should expect the trend to continue in 2020 with some good quality bucks available for harvest.

Cain expects there will be fewer bucks in the 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 age classes due to low fawn crops in 2016 and 2017. Hunters should notice a good number of 1 1/2 to 3 1/2-year-old bucks in the population as well.

Antler quality is expected to be good for the 2020 season.

Hunter success last year was around 63 percent.

Pineywoods

The region's deer population is currently estimated at around 286,000, but the number could jump with plenty of fawns on the ground and good habitat conditions.

Cain says hunters should see good numbers of 2 1/2, 3 1/2 and 7 1/2-year-old bucks in the field this season and he expects some outstanding deer to be tagged. Harvest trends indicate about 53 percent the 47,500 bucks shot in the Pineywoods last season were 3 1/2 years or older, a byproduct of the antler restriction regulation. Hunter success in 2019 was estimated at 56 percent.

Cross Timbers

The North Texas region supports the state's second highest whitetail population with a well-distributed age structure among bucks, thanks to consistently good fawn crops over the last eight years.

Cain says 2020 is expected to be average to above as a result of great range conditions, especially in the eastern portion of the region. Hunters may notice a few additional bucks in the 7 1/2 to 8 1/2-year-old year classes relative to other age classes, thanks to exceptional fawn recruitment in 2012 and 2013.

Harvest trends for 2019 indicate that 70 percent of buck harvest was represented by bucks 3 1/2 years old or older. Hunter success for 2019 was estimated at 60 percent.

Rolling Plains

The eastern and western Rolling Plains maintain lower deer populations compared to the rest of the state. Though population trends are currently stable, things could change in the western plains due to persistent dry conditions that may stifle fawn production this year.

Cain says the number of bucks in the 4 1/2, 5 1/2 and 7 1/2-year-old age classes to be higher relative to other age groups this season. He expects harvest trends of older age class bucks to continue in 2020 due to the region's larger property sizes, relatively light hunting pressure and widespread interest in deer management among property managers.

Hunt success in 2019 in the eastern plains was 74 percent; 69 percent in the western plains.

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com. ■

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A photograph of a light brown donkey wearing a tan hat and holding a fishing rod.

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2020 Dove Preview

Story by Matt Williams



This coronavirus pandemic has made for a trying year that everyone had just as soon forget. Hopefully, Texas' 300,000-plus dove hunters are about to find a little respite.

The 2020-21 dove season gets underway on Sept. 1 in the North and Central zones; Sept. 14 in the South Zone. If this season turns out like most, it should be a good one statewide. Even in a bad year, Texas dove hunting is better than most.

Don't sweat it if weekday obligations force you to sit out the opening act that begins at 30 minutes before sunrise on the first Tuesday of September. Texas has a 90-day dove season divided in two splits.

If you can't shake loose until the upcoming Labor Day weekend, just roll with it and play like the first day in the field is opening day. A late start could add up to some better shoots, anyway. There will likely be more hunters in the field over the long weekend to help keep the birds stirring.

Dove hunting is a fat cash cow in Texas. The last economic impact survey related to Texas dove hunting dates back to 2005-2006. That survey indicated a \$300 million boost to the state's economy, a figure some experts now believe could be laughably low.

Bottomline: Texans love their dove hunting about as much as doves love Texas. The allure is built around an abundance of birds

that are challenging to hit and a wealth of places to hunt them at an affordable price.

There may not be a more enjoyable way for close friends to social distance than spreading out around a croton field or good watering hole and joining in a tradition ushers in another long line of fall hunting seasons.

Doves Galore

Texas hunters may bump into as many as six dove species, but only four of them are legal to shoot — mourning doves, white-winged doves, white-tipped doves and Eurasian collared doves.

Inca doves, identifiable by a scaly-looking feather pattern and tiny body, and the smallish common ground dove, are both protected.

The state's resident breeding mourning dove population is a massive one estimated at around 20-30 million birds with a long-term average of 23.6 million, which is roughly 13 percent of the national population. Add in the 20-30 million northern migrants that pass through the state en route to Mexico and Central America each fall and the number can easily swell beyond 50 million.

Mourning doves are easily identifiable by their brown plumage, black-spotted wings and long, pointed tails. On the fly, the birds are just as prone to dip and dive as they are to zig and zag.

Bigger, blockier whitewings aren't as plentiful as speedy mourning doves, but their numbers and range are growing.

Prior to the early 1980s, the gregarious birds were seldom seen very far north of the Rio Grande. Major freeze events from the 1950s-80s repeatedly killed off region's citrus crops, destroying much of their preferred nesting habitat, according to Owen

Texas' resident breeding dove population is a massive one, including an estimated 20-30 million mourning doves, 10-12 million white-winged doves and 2-5 million Eurasian collared doves (pictured above). Photo by TPWD

Fitzsimmons, head of webless migratory bird program with the Texas Park Wildlife Department.

Not all the birds left, but some did. While the Valley still maintains high numbers, whitewings have steadily expanded their range northward. Along the way they have adapted to the city life and free groceries that come with it.

“The lack of nesting habitat in the Rio Grande Valley prompted birds to begin taking advantage of the rapid urbanization in south Texas in the 80s and 90s, and they have expanded into urban areas throughout the state over the past 30 years,” Fitzsimmons said. “Urban and residential areas often provide large, mature live oak, ash, and pecan trees for nesting and roosting, and plenty of backyard food and water resources throughout the year.”

In the late 1990s, Texas had a white-winged dove breeding population of around 1.5 million. The number has since climbed to 10-12 million, which is likely higher than the rest of the U.S. combined. Some of the heaviest concentrations are found in counties west of San Antonio (Bexar, Atascosa, Medina, Frio, Uvalde), south of Houston (Wharton, Matagorda) and around Rio Grande Valley (Hidalgo, Cameron, Starr.)

Fitzsimmons says the most recent estimates show around

80 percent of Texas’ whitewings occupy urban areas, and their numbers continue to expand.

“Whitewings are now breeding in Oklahoma, and they are ranging across the continental U.S. with sightings all the way into southern Canada,” he said.

So named for a white chevron visible on both wings, whitewings are classy-looking birds with dark lines on their cheeks and crimson eyes framed in baby blue. The square-tailed doves are noticeably larger than mourning doves, yet smaller than palish Eurasians that are frequently found on the same turf.

Another distinguishing trait is the way the birds fly. Whitewings follow a more predictable flight path than mourning doves with significantly less zip. This makes them easier to peg with a scattergun.

“Mourning doves have been clocked at 55 miles per hour, and I would imagine that whitewings might be able to approach that with a really stiff tailwind,” Fitzsimmons said. “Otherwise they probably average around 30-35 mph.”

Eurasian collared doves fly slower and look more like pigeons than doves. They have a white square tail under side with a black collar on the nape of the neck.

Dove hunting represents what is arguably the highest quality, low cost hunting experience available to Texas hunters. The season opens in the North and Central zones at 30 minutes before sunrise on Sept. 1, which falls on a Tuesday this year. Sept. 14 is the opener in the South Zone. Photo by Matt Williams



TPWD estimates the Eurasian dove population at around 2-5 million. Hunters should note that Eurasians are exotics with no state or federal protection. Shoot a collared dove during dove season and it doesn't count towards the daily limit of 15 birds.

Fitzsimmons says the department has no reliable population data on white-tipped doves, mainly because they live a reclusive lifestyle isolated mostly to deep South Texas border counties. Most whitetips are shot incidentally by mourning and white-winged dove hunters.

Big Numbers Bagged

No other state has as many doves or dove hunters as Texas, and nobody shoots more doves. Texas mourning dove hunters make up about 1/3 of the national total and they typically account for about 33 percent of the national harvest on mourning doves and 90 percent of the whitewing total.

Last year, 292,000 Texas hunters spent a combined 1.2 million days in the field and shot nearly 7 million doves, including 4.5 million mourning doves, 1.9 million whitewings, 300,000 Eurasian collared and 113,000 whitetips.

Cheap Thrills

Dove hunting represents what is arguably the highest quality, low cost hunting experience available to Texas hunters. There are dozens of outfitters around the state that offer "day hunts" for around \$75-\$150 per day. Others offer all-inclusive package hunts that may include multiple hunts, lodging, food, dogs, field transportation, bird cleaning and other amenities at a much steeper price.

Either way, the best hunting is always where the doves are, and that can change from one day to the next, often in coincidence with shifts in weather patterns. Places with abundant forage like harvested grain fields, sunflowers or goat weed patches are magnets for doves, as are watering spots like tanks or ponds with plenty of bare ground along the edge.

Hunting in areas of the state with rich histories of holding lots of birds is sure to boost the odds of enjoying a good shoot. Brown, Throckmorton, Coleman, Taylor, Medina, Bexar, Uvalde, Williamson, Bell, Karnes, Live Oak, Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron, Atacosa and Matagorda are among the top dove hunting counties.

Even less costly are the private lands dove and small game leases that are part of TPWD's public hunting program, which includes nearly 1 million additional acres of public hunting land.

TPWD has 101 private lands leases totaling more than 41,000 acres available this year, according to Kelly Edmiston, TPWD public hunts coordinator. The leases, which range in size from 13 to 2,000 acres, are situated in areas with good dove habitat.

Season long access requires a \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit available where licenses are sold. Hunters are required to register when entering or leaving these hunt areas using the My Texas Hunt Harvest mobile app on the department website, tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/hunt-harvest-app/dove.

Edmiston says 23 of the dove leases are within a short drive

Dallas/Fort Worth, seven near Houston/Beaumont, 28 in the San Antonio/Corpus Christi region and 36 in the vicinity of Austin/Waco. Detailed maps are available at tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/.

Season Outlook

TPWD's late spring/early summer breeding dove surveys didn't happen this year due to safety and social distancing protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Fitzsimmons looked to field staff and dove banding metrics to get a feel for what the upcoming season might be like.

"I'm not seeing or hearing anything extremely good or bad out of any one particular area," he said. "Mourning dove production seems to be up in areas of the Panhandle and Central Texas. Most of the state had an average spring in terms of precipitation, and habitat conditions looked pretty good coming into the summer months."

Fitzsimmons believes stage is set for a good season. The missing links at this point are cold fronts.

"Last year we had the hottest September on record and no real cold front until mid-October, and it was pretty obvious that hunting in many parts of the Central and North zones just got really stagnant after opening weekend," he said. "If we can get some cold fronts throughout September it should really turn things on for dove hunting."

Hunting and Corona

Time will if the coronavirus pandemic has any impact on hunter participation this fall. I recently contacted several day hunt operations and none reported a decline in bookings compared to previous seasons.

Mark Roberts, a veteran outfitter and sunflower farmer from Uvalde, says his phone has been ringing throughout August. Roberts said he has enough property to accommodate 150-200 hunters.

"I've got a lot folks coming for the Sept. 1 opener and Labor Day weekend, about half and half," Roberts said. "I'll be splitting them up and keeping them separated. We normally have a big welcoming barbecue before opening day, but we cancelled it this year to avoid putting too many people in one spot."

In Fannin County, Tanner Spencer with Swamp Nasty Outfitters said he has been fielding a steady stream of phone calls and is expecting full house of day hunters through the Labor Day weekend.

"Right now we're about par for where we usually are with bookings," Spencer said. "We usually have about 100 hunters on opening day, but right now about 75 percent are wanting to hunt Labor Day weekend and about 25 percent on opening day."

Fitzsimmons is predicting an uptick in dove hunters statewide this season.

"Honestly, I think we'll see more dove hunters in the field this year than we have in last few years," he said. "People are itching to get to get outdoors do something. Dove hunting is a great family activity."

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com. ■



Pictured above are white winged doves. Photo by Matt Williams



For migratory bird hunting, all shotguns must be plugged to a three-shot capacity. Photo by Matt Williams

Ways to Stay Legal

- **Dove hunters** will need a 2020-21 Texas hunting license, a Texas Migratory Game Bird Stamp Endorsement (\$7) and be Harvest Information Program (HIP) certified.
- **Shotguns must** be plugged to accept no more than three shotshells.
- **Don't co-mingle** your birds with those of other hunters.
- **Don't hunt** around areas that have been baited. If you suspect an area has been baited, go elsewhere to hunt. Ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law.
- **Hunter education** certification is required of all hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971. Carry the certification card with you in the field.
- **Hunters under 9** must be accompanied.
- **Hunters 9-16** may successfully complete a hunter education course, or you must be accompanied.
- **Hunters 17** and over must successfully complete a hunter education course; or purchase a \$10 "Hunter Education Deferral," and be accompanied.
- **"Accompanied" means:** By a person who is at least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born before September 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control distance.
- **Don't litter.** Pick up spent shotshell hulls and trash.
- **Legal shooting** hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset. Know the official sunrise and sunset times.

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Troubled Waters

Angler conflicts around brush piles on the uptick on some lakes



Crappie are a popular sport fish prone to gather in large number around man-made brush piles strategically placed to concentrate the fish. Photo by Matt Williams.

(Background photo) Lake Livingston has several fish habitat structures. To view a map of structures in Lake Livingston visit: www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes/livingston/structure.phtml. Photo by Pam Nobles

Story by Matt Williams

It is no secret among crappie fishing buffs that sinking brush piles far from shore is a great way to forge some really good fishing holes while enhancing the habitat at the same time. Unfortunately, the practice has been known to stir up an occasional feud between fishermen, particularly on public reservoirs shared by lots of other anglers on the hunt for a sweet spot to dunk a shiner or jig.

While most clashes over brush piles lead to nothing more than a few cross words, some get heated and escalate out of hand when they shouldn't. Folks have gone to jail because of altercations over fishing

holes. I'm aware of a couple of incidents where guns were brandished.

Here's the fuel that ignites many of the conflicts:

Building brush piles is labor intensive. Trees must be cut, gathered and hauled to the location, then dropped overboard and secured to bottom using heavy blocks or sandbags. Some anglers have invested in large barges and platforms for use in building fish hotels. It's hard work that takes boat loads of time to accomplish.

Dropped in the right spots and secured correctly, brush piles can be magnets for the cover-loving panfish as well as bass.

TPWD fish structures abundant on Texas lakes

- **The Texas** Parks and Wildlife Department placed numerous artificial fish habitat structures in more than 50 different public lakes.
- **The structures** are known to hold good numbers of crappie and other game fish. Lakes and GPS coordinates of each structure are listed on the department website
- **The website** also provides illustrations of several different kinds of artificial structures currently in use on public waters as a means of improving habitat on aging reservoirs while creating some pretty darned good fishing holes at the same time.



Volunteers prepare to place Georgia Cubes into Lake Livingston as a step toward developing the lake into a better fishery. The devices provide cover to small fish, allowing them to grow and develop. Contributed photo

Artificial structures made from PVC, corrugated drain pipe and other everlasting material also work well.

Crappie are prone to gather around the mazes of vertical cover in significant number, especially during summer and fall. The brush pile bite can be so fast at times that multiple anglers might sack up 25 fish limits in short order.

It is common for reputable fishing guides and serious recreational anglers to build multiple “fish hotels” on the same body of water. This allows for bouncing around from spot to spot and plucking a few fish here and there rather than milking a single brush pile for everything it is worth.

The idea is to leave some fish for seed to attract others so brush piles will continue to replenish from one day to the next. Savvy anglers call it fishing smart.

Years ago, fishermen relied on antiquated paper maps and depth finders to pinpoint underwater humps, ridges, drop offs and other good spots to sink brush piles. Relocating the open water sweet spots typically meant relying on landmarks and other visual objects — a time-consuming process that naturally helped keep honey holes under wraps from other fishermen.

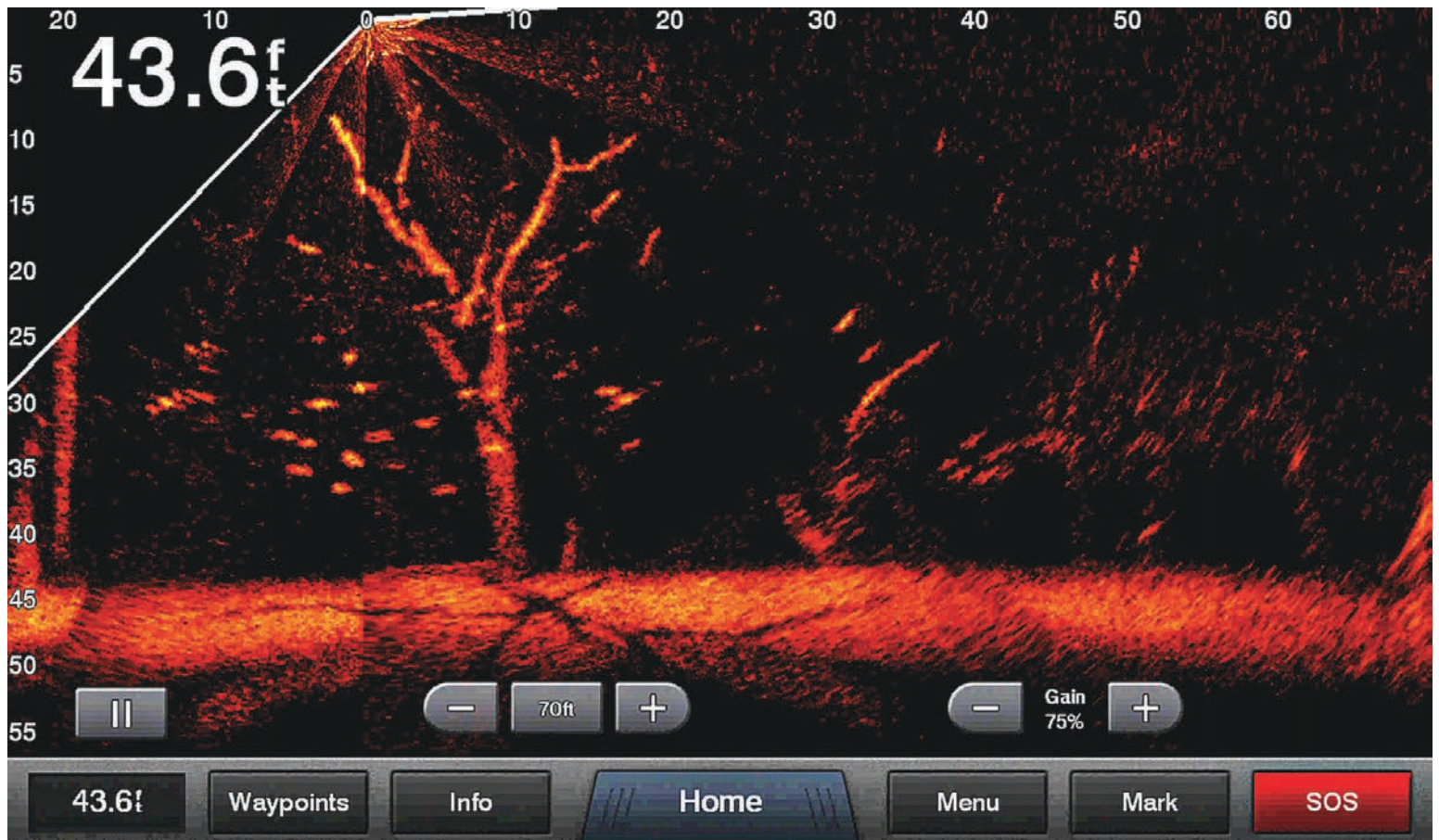
The advent of global positioning satellite (GPS) combined with modern mapping and downscan/sidescan sonar technology introduced in the early 2000s changed all that. Secret fishing spots rarely exist for very long with today’s high-tech electronics.

Modern mapping technology has made it possible for fishermen to find high percentage spots on just about any lake without ever leaving their driveway. Once on the water, anglers can idle over those areas, use sonar to pinpoint brush piles 100 feet on either side of the boat and mark them with waypoints by the push of button.

Technology is a beautiful thing, indeed. But it also has helped fan the nasty flames of confrontation among fishermen more than once.

Frustration sometimes sets in when two crappie anglers collide around a brush pile. This is especially true when the angler who built it arrives and finds a stranger already locked down on the spot and reaping the finny benefits of his or her hard work.

The rub can get particularly raw when both parties are fishing guides who make a living off the resource, but only one of them claims to have had a hand in dropping the pile. Or when an angler waits patiently in the distance for another to leave a productive



Modern electronics are so advanced and simple to use that even novice anglers can use them to pinpoint a wealth of underwater sweet spots on short order. Photo courtesy of Todd Driscoll

pile, then moves in and homesteads the sweet spot until there is nothing left.

Rules of the Road

Opinions are sure to vary as to what is right or wrong with those pictures. Some will say angler ethics, respect and common courtesy could go under the microscope, but in the eyes of the law it really doesn't matter.

Once a brush pile leaves an angler's boat and sinks to bottom of public water, it automatically becomes fair game for anyone.

If someone tries to tell you different, they are wrong. Everyone is entitled to free speech, but if they press the issue too hard or make threats, they could be pushing the limits of state law.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Sec. 62.0125 contains language related to the Harassment of Hunters, Trappers and fishermen, specifically the Sportsman's Rights Act.

According to part 2c. of that law "no person may intentionally interfere with another person lawfully engaged in the process of hunting or catching wildlife." And wildlife includes fish.

A person who violates this section commits an offense classified as a Class B misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000 and up to 180 days in jail, according to Heath Bragg, a Captain Game Warden with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Bragg is a 20-year veteran game warden who helps oversee a big chunk of eastern Texas that encompasses Sam Rayburn Reservoir and the Texas-side of Toledo Bend. Like lakes Fork, Palestine, Cedar Creek and host of others, the crappie fisheries receive significant amounts of fishing pressure.

The warden said he has seen a noticeable uptick in the number complaints related to angler confrontations around brush piles over the last two years. He attributes the increase to more anglers on the water who are better equipped to find fish.

"Boat sales are up and technology is so advanced that it has changed the game," he said. "With the electronics we have now all a guy has to do is spend some time idling and he's going to find brush piles that somebody else more than likely put there."

Bragg reiterated the fact that there is no such thing as private fishing holes on public waters. When it comes to brush piles, it's first come, first served, regardless of who did the dirty work.

"When you put a brush top out there, you have to know that the chances are pretty great that somebody else will find it and fish it, especially with today's technology," he said. "That's something anglers need to learn to accept if they are going to do it. If they aren't willing to do that, then they probably shouldn't be doing it."

Fishermen have been feuding over fishing holes since the dawn of time, and the bickering isn't likely to subside anytime soon.

Making the choice to hunker down on a brush pile erected by someone else is strictly a judgement call. Every situation is different. Just because the law says it is legal doesn't always mean it is the right or smartest thing to do.

Sometimes it's better to look the other way and move on rather than risk getting into a senseless feud.

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com. ■

The Killing Field

Fun fishing day turns into rogue lesson in self defense with hollow body toads

Story by Matt Williams

It was an unseasonably cool morning for late August and there was a touch of magic dancing in the air that every fisherman dreams of. Todd Driscoll and Brian Branum milked the moment for all it was worth.

Driscoll is a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fisheries biologist. Branum is a Sam Rayburn fishing guide and lure designer.

Both are hardcore bass anglers who were out for a Saturday of fun fishing. They got a rogue lesson in self defense, instead.

“There was an 1 1/2-hour window when it all went down,” Driscoll recalled. “We fished back through an area we had already been through without catching much, and it was lights out. For some reason they just turned on. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Most fishermen haven’t. Together the men caught and released 14 bass.

Their heaviest five weighed nearly 28 pounds — close to a 5 1/2 pound average per bass. Included in the mix were a pair of seven pounders. The heaviest weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces.

That’s a banner day of bass fishing by any standard. What made the outing truly remarkable is the fact all of fish were fooled with hollow body toads.

Catching one big bass on a frog is enough to keep most anglers coming back for more. Reeling in more than a dozen whoppers in 90 minutes is the stuff that fairy tales are made of. Admittedly, both anglers have been day dreaming about the rare experience ever since.

“I’ve been doing this for a long time and it was by far the best day of frog fishing I’ve ever had,” Branum said. “It was unreal. A very special morning. That’s the only way I know to describe it.”

A Date With Kermit

Plenty of baits will catch a bass. None dish out bigger thrills than the frog does.

Anyone who has experienced success with a toad already knows the drill. Those who haven’t should try taking Kermit for a stroll.

A bass rarely holds anything back when it wages war on a frog. It’s a love/hate deal that has been getting bloody in nature since the dawn of time.



Todd Driscoll with a solid bass that exploded on the Spro Bronz-eye 65. Driscoll and Brian Branum, both of Brookeland, recently experienced a heavenly morning of frog fishing that produced 14 bass in roughly 90 minutes. Their heaviest five fish weighed a whopping 28 pounds. Photo courtesy of Brian Branum



Most frog strikes are violent and tend to come when least expected. Hits can be so vicious at times the disturbance can be heard from a considerable distance on a windless summer day.

Frogs rank pretty low on the aquatic food chain. Black bass are apex predators and natural born bullies.

It’s in their DNA to kill stuff, sometimes for the mere hell of it. They love to eat toads like kids love to munch candy.

Bass anglers are wolves for excitement and gluttons for punishment. Thus the attraction to frog style baits.

Anatomy of a Hollow Body

The hollow body is just what the name implies. Its hollow body cavity traps air, causing the frog to float when idle.

Most are cradled by a heavy duty double hook strategically placed so the sharp points ride snug against the butt on both sides. This reduces snagging on vegetation or brush. The pliable soft plastic body collapses when a fish eats it, exposing the hooks and allowing for optimum hook penetration.

Some toads are detailed with colorful paint jobs, eyes and other lifelike features. Hollow bodies typically have a weight in the tail section to create a butt down, balanced stance. The angler imparts the action of the bait by making quick, downward snaps with the rod tip.

There are a couple of hollow body styles - walking frogs and popping frogs. Walking frogs usually have a pointed nose conducive to easy navigation around heavy cover. Most will dance side-to-side with the proper rod cadence.

Popping frogs have a cupped nose. Twitching it causes the nose to dig in and sling water like a topwater popper. Some popping frogs will walk, but they don’t come through really heavy cover near as well a walker will.

Frog Country

Hollow body frogs are versatile because they can be tossed anywhere bass live in shallow water, often in places where other baits can't go. They can be cast long distances and worked over open flats to simulate a critter on the move, or skipped into tight spots beneath docks and overhanging bushes.

The hollow body frog also traverses thick vegetation like a 4X4. Driscoll and Branum discovered a killing field around dense stands of lily pads in about 2-4 feet of water.

"They weren't hanging close to the edges of the pads, either," Driscoll said. "Some were 30 feet off the edge, right up in the middle of the thickest stuff. I'm guessing fishing pressure may have pushed them back in there, but who knows."

Talking Toads

The anglers did the damage using a Spro Bronzeye 65. Major League Fishing pro Dean Rojas helped design the popular Bronzeye for Spro soon after using a frog lure to win \$40,000 in the 2004 Bassmaster Classic.

The introduction of the Bronzeye sparked a frog fishing specialty craze that sent dozens of bait, rod, and line manufacturers scrambling to grab a piece of the pie.

Tacklewarehouse.com, a popular online fishing tackle retailer, currently lists about 60 different hollow body walking frogs on its website and nearly three dozen hollow body popping frogs. Some have catchy names like Swamp Donkey, Furbit and Trash Panda.

The baits sell at a variety of price points. One of the cheapest is the Scum Frog Dog Walker, \$5.40. The Deps Slither K is among

the most at expensive at \$19.99. The median-priced Bronzeye 65 sells for \$9.99.

Gear for Bear

Frog fishing demands specialty gear to be most effective. **Here's what you need to get all dressed up to take Kermit for a stroll:**

- **Rod:** The ideal frog rod should be a broom stick and a rocket launcher wrapped into the same package. A good quality rod at least seven feet in length with a heavy action and a fast tip is a good choice. Frog rods should have a long handle for extra leverage to wrestle large fish out of heavy cover and quality line guides that will hold up to the abuse of braided line.

- **Line:** Premium braided line with a breaking strength of at least 65-pound test is the way to go.

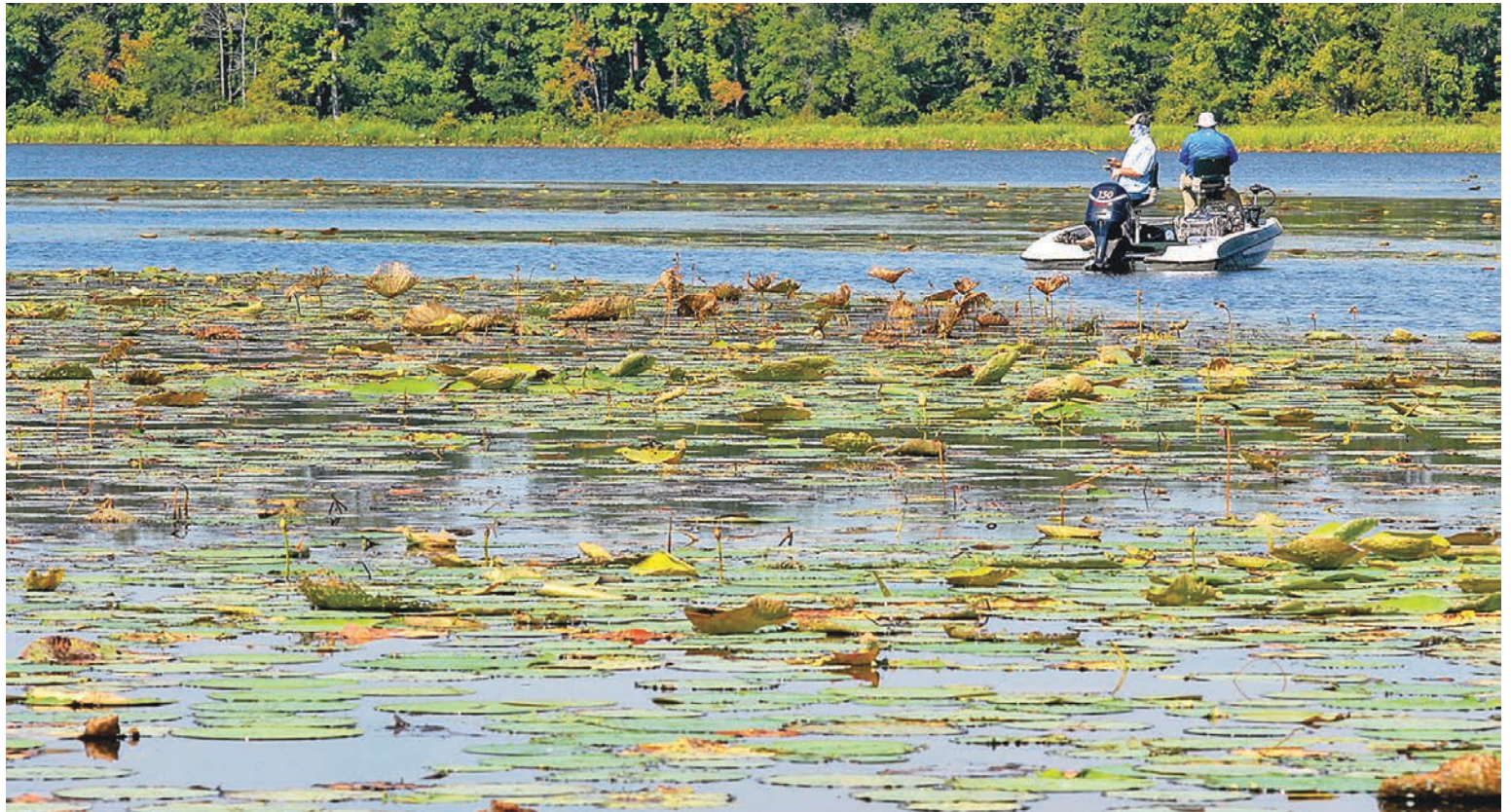
Braided line is strong and resistant to abrasion. It casts extremely well, has no memory or stretch, and cuts through vegetation almost like a knife.

- **Reel:** Think of the reel like a winch. You need a high quality baitcaster built with some guts to withstand the shock of hard hook sets on large fish in heavy cover with braided line. Reels with a gear ratio of 6.4:1 or faster do a good job of gathering line quickly so you can make fast work of a big bass when one comes calling.

- **Right Mindset:** Frogs strikes are violent and many anglers are prone to overreact. It is important to give the fish a second or two to eat the bait before setting the hook.

Frogs don't always work, but when they do the results can be remarkable. Almost magical at times.

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com ■



Stands of lily pads and other aquatic vegetation are great places to start a war with a frog during summer and fall. Photo by Matt Williams

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Paying Your Dues

New hunting/fishing licenses set to go on sale Aug. 15

Story by Matt Williams

It's early August and the clock is ticking down towards another Sept. 1 dove season opener. Dove season in most of Texas gets underway on a Tuesday this year. It's not the best timing for working folks, so some may have to sit out opening day. Fields will probably be much busier the following weekend, when the majority of Texas' 300,000 shotgunners get the chance to hunt in the North and Central zones. The season opens Sept. 14 in the

South Zone.

Regardless of when opportunity knocks, be sure to tend to legal business before you go hunting or fishing next month. Sept. 1 marks the dawn of a new fiscal year for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. It's also the day when new licenses are required for the millions of sportsmen to hunt and fish across the state.



Texas dove hunters will need to be sure to have a new 2020–21 hunting license and a valid Texas Migratory Game Bird Stamp in hand when they head to the field next month. New licenses and public hunting permits go on sale August 15. Photo by Matt Williams



TPWD Hunting/Fishing License Options

Here is a list of the more popular options to consider when it comes time to ante up for a new license for 2020-21:

- Resident Hunting: \$25
- Senior Resident Hunting: \$7
- Youth Hunting License: \$7
- Valid for any person, resident or non-resident, under 17 years of age at the date of license purchase. Exempt from state stamp requirements, except for Reptile and Amphibian Stamp.
- Non-resident General Hunting: \$315
- Valid to hunt any legal bird or animal (including deer). Stamp endorsement requirements apply.

- Stamp Endorsements
 - Archery Stamp: \$7
 - Texas Migratory Game Bird Stamp: \$7
 - Upland Game Bird Stamp: \$7
 - Federal Duck Stamp: \$25
- Resident Combination Packages
 - Super Combo: \$68
 - Senior Super Combo: \$32
- Valid only for residents 65 years of age and older. Valid to hunt any legal bird or animal. Stamp endorsement requirements apply.- Hunting and Freshwater Fishing: \$50
 - Hunting and Saltwater Fishing: \$55
 - Hunting and All-Water Fishing: \$60

Texas Parks and Wildlife saw a spike in fishing license sales during early stages of the coronavirus pandemic last spring as thousands of new anglers flocked to the water in hopes of catching a few fish while practicing their social distancing. It won't come as a surprise if a similar surge in recreational license sales occurs this fall as folks continue to seek respite in the outdoors. Photo by Matt Williams

Most current recreational licenses and permits will expire at midnight on Aug. 31, 2020. If you plan to hunt and fish in Texas after that date you will need to buy a new license and the proper stamp endorsements to do so legally, unless limited exemption requirements are met or you have a "Year from Purchase" fishing license that hasn't run out yet. Also, Lake Texoma fishing licenses purchased in 2020 are valid through Dec. 31.

In addition to a new license, dove hunters will need to purchase a Texas Migratory Game Bird Stamp endorsement before hunting. The stamp costs \$7.

Those who plan to hunt teal during the 16-day early season, Sept. 12-27, also will need a Federal Duck Stamp, in addition to the state migratory game bird endorsement. The \$25 federal stamp is not required of hunters under 16.

Additionally, all migratory bird hunters must be Harvest Information Program (HIP) certified. At the time of purchase, license holders are asked to report how many migratory birds they shot the previous season.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service relies on the HIP data to manage migratory bird populations and set limits from one year to the next. HIP certification is federally mandated for hunting migratory birds in Texas. The letters "HIP" should appear on your license.

As always, new Texas hunting/fishing licenses and annual public hunting permits are set to go on sale on Aug. 15. There are several ways to buy.

The most traditional way is to pay a visit to one of nearly 1,800 license vendors statewide. License vendors run the gamut of large sporting goods outlets like Bass Pro Shops or Academy to rural convenience stores and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department field offices. It's a good opportunity to shop for shotshells or other goodies you might need in the field.

Licenses also can be purchased via TPWD's website, tpwd.texas.gov/business/licenses/online_sales/, or by phone (800) 895-4248, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m to 5 p.m, using an approved credit card.

In 2019, TPWD sold about 3.1 million recreational licenses, stamp endorsements, tags and permits that generated nearly \$103.2 million in revenue used for stocking fish, wildlife management, habitat restoration, funding of law enforcement and other operating expenses.

Approximately 9.3 percent of those purchases were made online, according to Mike Hobson, TPWD license manager.

Buying online is a good way to avoid crowds, and you don't have to wear a mask. It is legal to display an image of information from TPWD's website or a photograph of a hunting, fishing, or combination license on a wireless device for the purpose of verification of possessing a valid license until the license arrives by mail.

The downsides to buying online is doesn't offer much support to local retailers during these tough times, and there is an additional \$5 administrative fee assessed for each transaction. Plus, hunters must wait until the license tags are physically in their possession before taking a deer or turkey, unless they are hunting on a property using managed lands deer permits or another special permit. The same applies to saltwater anglers wanting to tag a red drum over 28 inches. Licenses purchased online or by phone should arrive by mail within 7-10 days of purchase.

TPWD offers a wide range of affordable licenses and packages that allows sportsmen to tailor purchases to suit their specific needs. You can research all of the options in the digital version of the 2020-21 Outdoor Annual, tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/licenses/. The print edition of the popular booklet was discontinued this year to cut costs.

If you need help deciding which license to buy, ask someone you trust to know the ropes. The sales clerk behind the counter may not always offer the best advice.

If you hunt, but don't fish, you can buy a hunting license for \$25, plus any necessary stamp endorsements for the game you intend to hunt. There also are licenses strictly for freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing, or all-water packages that cover both bases.

- Senior Hunting and Freshwater Fishing: \$16
- Senior Hunting and Saltwater Fishing: \$21
- Senior Hunting and All-Water Fishing: \$26
- * Resident Fishing Licenses
 - Freshwater Package: \$30
 - Saltwater Package: \$35
 - All-Water Package: \$40
 - Senior Freshwater Package: \$12
 - Senior Saltwater Package: \$17
 - Senior All-Water Package: \$22
 - Special Resident All-Water License (for legally blind): \$7
 - Year-from-Purchase All-Water Package: \$47
 - One-Day All-Water License: \$11
- * Fishing Stamp Endorsements
 - Freshwater Fishing Stamp: \$5
 - Saltwater Fishing Stamp: \$10

The best deal going for all-around sportsmen is the \$68 Super Combo. It is TPWD's most popular license with nearly 438,000 sold in 2019-20. The Super Combo package includes resident hunting and fishing licenses and all the state stamp endorsements required for fishing in fresh and saltwater, hunting with archery gear and hunting upland game birds and migratory birds. The Federal Duck Stamp required for waterfowl hunting is not included in the Super Combo package.

There are price breaks available on some hunting licenses. To wit: Resident seniors 65 and older and resident/non-resident youths 16 and under can buy a hunting license for \$7; youth only licenses require no state stamp endorsements.

TPWD also offers free Super Combo packages to qualifying disabled veterans and active military duty residents. Nearly 113,000 licenses were issued to disabled veterans and active military during the current fiscal year.

Texas residents 65 and older can buy a variety of hunting/fishing combo packages at discounted prices. Seniors born before January 1, 1931 are exempt from the fishing license requirement. TPWD sold more than 251,000 senior licenses this year.

Hobson says it won't come as a surprise to see a spike in recreational licenses sales this fall as folks continue to seek respite in the outdoors from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

TPWD saw a significant surge in fishing license sales this spring, when many businesses shut down and shelter in place orders were in effect. Thousands flocked to the water with hook and line to practice their social distancing.

According to TPWD figures, 418,259 people bought a Texas fishing license between March 11 and May 20 of this year. During the same time period in 2019, there were 336,019 fishing licenses sold. The figures represent an increase of 82,240 licenses sold over the three-month period.

Matt Williams is freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com. ■



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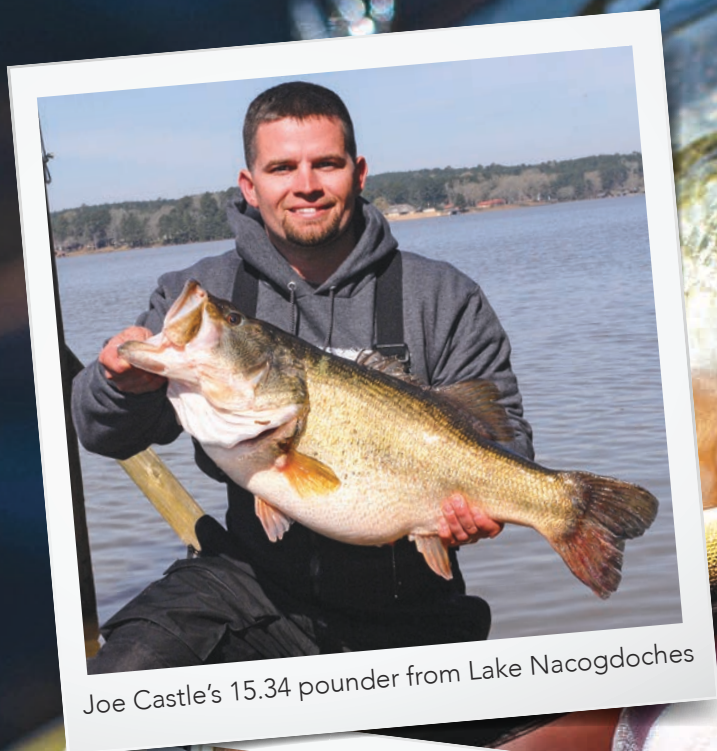




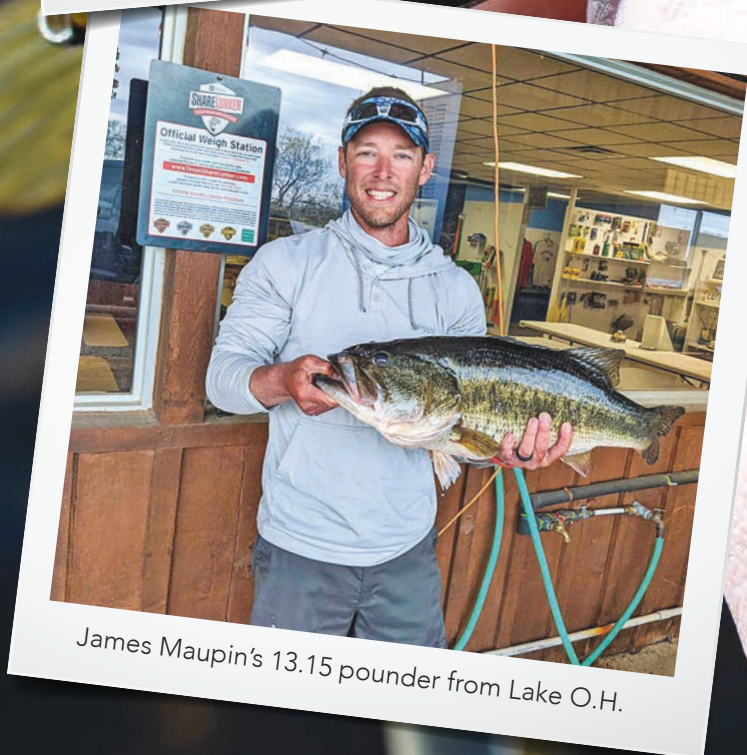

Passing on the Genes

Nearly 43,000 ShareLunker offspring stocked in Texas lakes since spring

Story by Matt Williams



Joe Castle's 15.34 pounder from Lake Nacogdoches



James Maupin's 13.15 pounder from Lake O.H.

(Top) Genetic fingerprinting identified Joe Castle's 15.34 pound Legacy Lunker caught at Lake Nacogdoches in February 2020 as the 12-year-old offspring of 14.50 pound ShareLunker caught from Tyler State Park Lake. The fish was stocked in 2008 as an "advanced-growth" fingerling 6-8 inches long. Castle's big bass is the fifth Legacy class ShareLunker caught from Texas lakes since 2017 to be identified as an offspring from TPWD's selective breeding program launched in 1986. Photo by Matt Williams

(Bottom) James Maupin's 13.15 pounder from Lake O.H. Ivie was the only 2020 Legacy Lunker out of four to successfully spawn this spring. The big West Texas bass produced nearly 30,000 offspring that were recently divided between lakes Nacogdoches, Alan Henry and O.H. Ivie. TPWD Photo

Safety and social distancing protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic helped take a big bite out of Texas Parks and Wildlife's overall freshwater hatchery production numbers this spring, but the setbacks didn't stop one Toyota ShareLunker Legacy Lunker from making a slew of little ones.

Though 2020 wasn't the best year on record for the spawning phase of the 34-year-old spawning and genetics research program, there were a handful of jumbo bass turned in. James Maupin's 13.15 pounder caught from Lake O.H. Ivie in March produced nearly 30,000 fingerlings produced for stocking in select Texas lakes.

Additionally, hatchery staff at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center dipped into their growing ponds and found more than 14,000 advanced-growth ShareLunker fingerlings from 2019 available for release into public waters.

Likewise, nine Texas lakes, including a half dozen impoundments in the eastern half of the state, have been stocked in recent months with thousands of Toyota ShareLunker offspring collected from super-size female largemouth bass.

All of the mother fish — Legacy Class ShareLunkers weighing upwards of 13 pounds — were caught from Texas reservoirs and loaned to Texas Parks and Wildlife's selective breeding program by anglers who reeled them in during the program's official spawning season, which runs Jan. 1 - March 31 each year.

Three public reservoirs including lakes Nacogdoches, O.H. Ivie and Alan Henry produced a total of four Legacy Lunkers in 2020. In June, the donor lakes were stocked with prodigy from the O.H. Ivie bass. Maupin's fish spawned successfully two times in hatchery raceways, resulting in 28,676 fingerlings. It was the only Legacy Lunker from 2020 to spawn successfully.

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center hatchery manager Tony Owens said Lake Nacogdoches received 5,016 of the fingerlings, 4,828 went to O.H. Ivie and 8,933 were stocked at Alan Henry.

Alan Henry received the most fish because it produced two of the program's four entries, a 14.36 pounder and a 13.28 pounder. Both bass were caught less than a month apart by the same angler, Blake Cockrell of Lubbock.

Owens added that 9,899 of the fingerlings from Maupin's fish were retained by TPWD for use in rebuilding the state's Florida bass hatchery program with ShareLunker offspring. In time, the department's Florida bass brood stock will be comprised entirely of fish whose ancestors weighed upwards of 13 pounds.

Several attempts were made to get Cockrell's 13.28 pounder to spawn with different males, but none were successful, Owens said.

Sadly, the two biggest fish turned over to the program this spring died at the TFFC. Among them were a 15.34 pound Nacogdoches lake record caught by Joe Castle and Cockrell's 14.36 pounder from Alan Henry.

Owens said he believes Castle's bass died from stress complications related to a protozoan parasitic infection called white spot disease or "Ich." It is a common disease in fish that results in encysted parasites that appear as tiny white nodules on the body, fins and gills. Owens said he does not know if the fish already had the disease when it was caught or not.

The biologist believes the Alan Henry fish died from stress after injuring its lip injury while attempting to chase down a rainbow trout that had been placed in its holding tank as forage.

Despite the latest mortalities, TPWD says the program maintains an 86 percent survival rate among entries over the last five ShareLunker spawning seasons.

ShareLunker program open year-round to 8 pounders and up

Anglers are reminded that the ShareLunker program is no longer limited to entries weighing 13 pounds or more.

In 2018, the program launched a new format with multiple weight classes and a year-round participation framework aimed at boosting angler interest while providing fisheries scientists with valuable information about big bass distribution across the state and which lakes are producing them most frequently.

"Lunker Legacy" is at the top-tier of the weight class categories. It is the only category where fish are retrieved and transported to the TFFC for spawning. Fish must weigh 13 pounds or more and be caught between Jan. 1 - March 31 to qualify.

The remaining ShareLunker categories are open for year-round entry:

- Lunker Class: For bass that measure at least 24 inches or weigh 8 to 9.99 pounds.
- Lunker Elite Class: For bass weighing 10 to 12.99 pounds.
- Lunker Legend: For bass weighing 13 or more pounds caught outside the Jan. 1 - March 31 spawning window.

Entering is simple. Legacy Lunkers require a phone call to ShareLunker headquarters (903-681-0550). Entry in the other three categories must be carried out online by creating a free account at texassharelunker.com using a Smartphone or home computer.

Electronic entries must be accompanied by at least two digital photos — one showing the fish on a measuring board and another showing it weighed on a digital scale. There is an easy-to-follow instructional video on the program website, texassharelunker.com.

Another neat twist to the revised format is it encourages participating anglers to become citizen scientists by getting them involved in the genetics research aspect of the program. Anglers can do this by plucking a few scales from the side of their fish before they release it.

The scales can be sent to the department's genetics lab in San Marcos for DNA testing. The testing results should provide biologists with a wealth of valuable genetic data over time that will be useful in evaluating wild populations of big bass in Texas reservoirs.

All confirmed ShareLunker participants receive a "Catch Kit" that includes an achievement decal and other goodies. Everyone who enters is eligible to win a \$5,000 shopping spree to Bass Pro Shops decided by a year-end drawing.

Anglers who donate Legacy Class are entered in an exclusive drawing for a shopping spree of equal value. This year's Legacy Class winner will be announced at the 2020 Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest scheduled for Nov. 5-8 at Lake Fork.

— Matt Williams



Anglers who loan the Legacy Lunkers to TPWD are given several options once the spawning effort is complete. Most choose to have the fish returned to the donor lake.

Cockrell elected to leave his 13.28 pounder at the TFFC until next spring in hopes that it might spawn before it is returned Alan Henry sometime in 2021. Maupin, meanwhile, donated his fish to the TFFC for display in aquariums and diving exhibits.

In addition to the 2020 offspring, TPWD hatchery crews released 14,203 advanced-growth fingerlings from last year's Legacy Lunker spawns into lake's Gilmer, Pflugerville, Kurth, Tyler, Murvaul and brood ponds that eventually will be inundated by Bois d'Arc Lake, a 16,600-acre North Texas Municipal Water District reservoir currently under construction in Fannin County.

Advanced-growth fingerlings are typically 6-8 inches long. The bigger fish are believed to have higher survival rates after stocking than offspring that are only a few months old. The downsides are pond space and the additional cost of raising the fish on live prey like koi carp and fathead minnows.

It costs about \$4 per fish to raise bass to 6 inches and 14 cents to raise one to 2 inches, according to Todd Engeling, director of hatcheries for TPWD's inland fisheries division.

A bright spot worth noting about this year's class of Legacy Lunkers revolves around Castle's whopper from Lake Nacogdoches.

The 15.34 pounder was the fifth Legacy class ShareLunker caught from Texas lakes since 2017 to be identified as an offspring from TPWD's selective breeding program launched in 1986. Others include 13.07 and 14.57 pounders caught from Marine Creek Reservoir near Fort Worth, a 13.06 pounder from Lake Naconiche

and a 13.79 pounder from a private TPWD research lake.

Genetics testing performed on the fish by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fisheries scientists identified the big bass as the offspring of a 14.50 pound Toyota ShareLunker caught at Tyler State Park Lake in March 2008.

The 12-year-old fish was stocked in Lake Nacogdoches as an "advanced growth" fingerling in 2008, according to TPWD fisheries biologist Todd Driscoll. Testing also indicated Castle's bass was an intergrade, meaning it did not have pure Florida genes.

Clearly, evidence continues to mount to support the premise on ShareLunker was founded when it launched more than three decades ago: Big bass can be selectively bred to produce more big bass.

TPWD inland fisheries director Craig Bonds agreed that the big Nacogdoches luncker was truly a special fish.

"It is yet another important piece of evidence supporting the value that the ShareLunker program adds to our efforts to increase the odds of current and future anglers experiencing a catch of a lifetime in Texas waters," Bonds said. "Improvements in our genetics analytics, anglers' continued willingness to partner with us by donating large bass for selective spawning, and the ongoing conversion of our Florida largemouth bass hatchery brood fish to include ShareLunker offspring will have a long-term positive impact on the quality of bass fishing in Texas. These observations, evidenced by growing numbers of documented angler catches of formerly-stocked ShareLunker offspring, continue to mount and validate our approach."

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com. ■

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SHOP EAST TEXAS

Online shopping is convenient, and in some cases necessary, but the East Texan magazine encourages shoppers to seek out local shopping opportunities this holiday season. It will be fun, you are guaranteed to find amazing items, and it will also help our local East Texas economy. Happy shopping!
 —Kelli Barnes, Publisher

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NRG Stadium
OCTOBER 5

Beaumont

Symphony of Southeast Texas, "The Piano Man
Meets The Rocket Man"
OCTOBER 5

Diboll

Angelina County Air Festival
OCTOBER 5

Lufkin

2019 Walk to End Alzheimer's/Ellen Trout Zoo
OCTOBER 5

Huntington

6th Annual Catfish Festival/Centennial Park
OCTOBER 5

Huntsville

45th Annual Fair on the Square
OCTOBER 5

Daingerfield

Daingerfield Days
OCTOBER 5-12

Mount Pleasant

Uncorked Food and Wine Festival
OCTOBER 5

Pearland

2nd Annual Fall Craft & Vendor Show
OCTOBER 5

Conroe

Bull Mania/Lone Star Convention & Expo Center
OCTOBER 5

Lufkin

9th Annual Lufkin's Bistro/Downtown-Main Street
OCTOBER 5

Nacogdoches

Fall Festival Plant Sale/SFA Gardens
OCTOBER 5

Jacksonville

Nicky Wheeler Memorial Bull Riding/Rodeo
Grounds
OCTOBER 5

Cleveland

Fall Festival/Stancil Expo Center
OCTOBER 5

Houston

Korean Festival Houston 2019/Discovery Green
OCTOBER 5

The Woodlands

Bbq Festival/Tom Green Park
OCTOBER 6

Houston

Mumford & Sons/ Toyota Center
OCTOBER 8

Nacogdoches

Pineywoods Fair
OCTOBER 9-13

Galveston

Harvest Moon Regatta
OCTOBER 10-13

Houston

41st Houston Italian Festival/University of
St. Thomas
OCTOBER 10-13

Gilmer

82nd Annual East Texas Yamboree
OCTOBER 11-12

Longview

903 Music Festival
OCTOBER 11-12

Canton
Autumn Stroll Festival
OCTOBER 11-12

Conroe
Cajun Catfish Festival
OCTOBER 11-13

Winnie
Larry's Old Time Trade Days
OCTOBER 11-13

Katy
Rice Harvest Festival
OCTOBER 11-13

Mineola
Mineola League of Arts Quilt Show
OCTOBER 11-12

Liberty
Trinity Valley Expo Fair and Rodeo
OCTOBER 11-19

Livingston
Trade Days at Pedigo Park
OCTOBER 12-13

Carthage
Potlatch Reunion
OCTOBER 12

Lufkin
Ray's Drive-In 60th Anniversary
Celebration Car & Bike Show
OCTOBER 12

Grapeland
Peanut Festival
OCTOBER 12

Marshall
Fire Ant Festival
OCTOBER 12

Onalaska
Childrenz Haven Chilifest 2019/Pontoons
Restaurant & Bar
OCTOBER 12

Tomball
Zomball in Tomball
OCTOBER 12

Canton
Canton Main Street Festival
OCTOBER 12

Port Arthur
Shore Fishing Classic
OCTOBER 12

Jasper
Champion Oaks Ranch 3rd Annual Boots &
BBQ Festival
OCTOBER 12

The Woodlands
Sam Houston Corvette Club Annual Car
Show
OCTOBER 12

Sugarland
Gulf Coast International Dragon Boat
Regatta
OCTOBER 12-13

Tyler
Corkscrew Half Marathon, 10k, 5k
OCTOBER 12-13

Houston
Bayou City Art Festival
OCTOBER 12-13

Lindale
Lindale Country Fest and Harvest Hustle
OCTOBER 12

Houston
8th Annual Lamborghini Festival/City
Center Houston
OCTOBER 13

Galveston
Greek Festival 2019
OCTOBER 13-14

Tyler
86th Annual Tyler Rose Festival
OCTOBER 13-19

Henderson
26th Annual PRCA Rodeo
OCTOBER 18-19

Brenham
Texas Arts & Music Festival
OCTOBER 18-20

Pasadena
Pasadena Strawberry Festival's Haunted
House
OCTOBER 18

Houston
17th Annual Ziegenbock Music Festival/
Sam Houston Race Park
OCTOBER 18

Longview
Ricky Skaggs/The Belcher Center
OCTOBER 18

Woodville
Harvest Festival/Heritage Village
OCTOBER 18-20

Kilgore
Kilgore College Homecoming/Kilgore vs
Blinn College
OCTOBER 19

Livingston
3rd Annual Polk County's Got Talent/Polk
County Commerce Center
OCTOBER 19

Madisonville
Texas Mushroom Festival
OCTOBER 19

Huntsville
Sam Houston State University
Homecoming/SHSU vs Nicholls State
OCTOBER 19

Tomball
Freight Train Food Truck Festival
OCTOBER 19

Lufkin
Heritage Festival/Pitser Garrison Civic
Convention Center
OCTOBER 19

Coldspring
35th Annual Wolf Creek Car, Truck and Bike
Show
OCTOBER 19-20

Houston
35th Annual Wings Over Houston Air Show
OCTOBER 19-20

Beaumont
25th Annual Girl's Haven Gumbo Festival/
Parkdale Mall
OCTOBER 19

Nacogdoches
4th Annual Sabine River Brass Band BBQ/
Liberty Hall
OCTOBER 19

Galveston
22nd Annual Artoberfest/Grand 1894
Opera House
OCTOBER 19-20

Mount Pleasant
Everything Texas Ranch Run
OCTOBER 19

Kemah
Scarecrow Festival
OCTOBER 19

CALFEN D A R

Houston
47th Annual BikeHouston Moonlight Ramble/Saint
Arnold Brewing Company
OCTOBER 19

Lufkin
ACHA Color Run/Walk/Ellen Trout Zoo
OCTOBER 19

Jasper
Fall Butterfly Festival
OCTOBER 19

Brookeland
Big Bass Splash/Lake Sam Rayburn
OCTOBER 19-20

Houston
Symphonic Spooktacular/Miller Outdoor Theater
OCTOBER 20

Huntsville
25th Anniversary of Sam Houston Statue
Celebration
OCTOBER 22

Kilgore
East Texas Oilmen's Chili Cook-Off
OCTOBER 24

Groves
Groves Pecan Festival
OCTOBER 24-27

Lumberton
Village Creek Festival
OCTOBER 24-26

Clute
Harvest Fun Fest/Clute Municipal Park
OCTOBER 24

Beaumont
Haunted Halloween Happy Hour/Chambers House
Museum
OCTOBER 24

Tomball
Tomball Bluegrass Festival
OCTOBER 26

Marshall
East Texas Baptist University Homecoming/ETBU vs
Howard Payne
OCTOBER 25-26

Palestine
Hot Pepper Festival
OCTOBER 25-26

Galveston
Island Oktoberfest
OCTOBER 25-26

Grapeland
Lone Star Blues and Heritage Festival
OCTOBER 25-27

Nacogdoches
Pine Knot, Millard's Crossing
OCTOBER 25

Conroe
Hot Rods of Texas Swap Meet/ Lone Star
Convention & Expo Center
OCTOBER 25

Galveston
38th Annual Island Oktoberfest
OCTOBER 25-26

Nacogdoches
Stephen F. Austin State University Homecoming/
SFA vs Mcneese
OCTOBER 26

Kingwood
Boofest Kingwood/Town Center Park
OCTOBER 26

Beaumont
Cops And Kids Halloween Carnival/Beaumont Civic
Center
OCTOBER 26

Houston
9th Annual Guitars n' Cars Auto Show/Sam
Houston Race Park
OCTOBER 26

Burkeville
1st Miss Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival Pageant
OCTOBER 26

Huntsville
Scare On The Square
OCTOBER 26

Baytown
Heritage Scaritage Festival
OCTOBER 26

Texas City
Model Train Festival
OCTOBER 26

Port Arthur
Mistletoe Market/Bob Bowers Civic Center
OCTOBER 26-27

Tyler
4th Annual Scottish Festival and Highland Games
OCTOBER 26-27

Magnolia
Fall Fest On The Stroll
OCTOBER 26

Lufkin
Farm Fest/Angelina Farmer's Market
OCTOBER 26

Golden
Sweet Potato Festival
OCTOBER 26

Onalaska
Trail for Treats
OCTOBER 26

Sulphur Springs
World Championship Hopkins City Stew
Contest
OCTOBER 26

Winnsboro
Classic Car Show and Antique Car Parade
OCTOBER 26

Livingston
River V Growers 1st Annual Fall Festival
OCTOBER 26

Palestine
Hot Pepper Festival
OCTOBER 26

Sugar Land
Sugar Land Beerfeast 2019/Sugar Land
Town Square
OCTOBER 26

The Woodlands
Zac Brown Band/Cynthia Woods Mitchell
Pavilion
OCTOBER 27

Lake Jackson
Halloween Spooktacular
OCTOBER 27

Beaumont
Spindletop Spookfest 2019/Spindletop-
Gladys City Boomtown
OCTOBER 29

Houston
International Quilt Festival/George R.
Brown Convention Center
OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 3

Greenville
Halloween on the Square
OCTOBER 31

Pearland
Trick or Treat Trail/Independence Park
OCTOBER 31

Lufkin
Main Street Halloween Trick or Treat
OCTOBER 31

Nacogdoches
Ghosts of Millard's Crossing
OCTOBER 31

Huntsville
"Rocky Horror Picture Show"/Old Town
Theater
OCTOBER 31

Livingston
Hallelujah Harvest Festival/1st Assembly of
God Church
OCTOBER 31

Rusk
Pumpkin Patch Express/Texas State Rail
Road
OCTOBER 5,12,19,26

Galveston
Lone Star Motorcycle Rally 2019
OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3

November

Plantersville
Texas Renaissance Festival
WEEKENDS THROUGH NOVEMBER

Lake Jackson
The Gatlin Brothers in Concert/The Clarion
NOVEMBER 1

Greenville
Bob Wills Big Ball in G Town
NOVEMBER 1

Greenville
6th Annual Bob Wills Fiddle Festival and
Contest
NOVEMBER 1-2

Houston
Rice University Homecoming & Reunion/
Rice vs Marshall
NOVEMBER 1-2

Huntsville
Shake Russell, Texas Troubador/Old Town
Theater
NOVEMBER 2

Coldspring
Cars, Coffee and Donuts/Courthouse
Square
NOVEMBER 2

Nacogdoches
Day of the Dead Festival/Downtown, Cole
Art Center
NOVEMBER 2

Winnsboro
Winnsboro Art and Wine Festival
NOVEMBER 8-9

Winnie
Larry's Old Time Trade Days
NOVEMBER 8-10

College Station
Santa's Wonderland
NOVEMBER 8-DECEMBER 30

Orange
St. Helen's Holiday Market/St. Helen
Catholic Church
NOVEMBER 9

Houston
Houston Grilled Cheese Festival/Midtown
Park
NOVEMBER 9

Gladewater
"Christmastyme in Gusherville"
NOVEMBER 9

Henderson
Heritage Syrup Festival
NOVEMBER 9

Gladewater
Heritage Open House
NOVEMBER 9

Spring
Spring Texas Music Fest
NOVEMBER 9

Tomball
Depot Day in Tomball
NOVEMBER 9

Houston
Legends of Hip Hop/NRG Park
NOVEMBER 9

Kilgore
East Texas Pipe Organ Festival
NOVEMBER 10-14

Houston
Houston Salutes American Heroes
Veteran's Day Celebration
NOVEMBER 11

CALENDAR

Sugarland
Sara Bareilles In Concert/Smart Financial Centre
NOVEMBER 11

Houston
The Black Keys Let's Rock Tour/Toyota Center
NOVEMBER 12

Tyler
"The Little Mermaid", UT Tyler Cowan Center
NOVEMBER 14

Canton
East Texas Fiber Festival
NOVEMBER 14

Kilgore
Reel East Texas Film Festival
NOVEMBER 14-17

Houston
Houston Cinema Arts Festival
NOVEMBER 14-18

Spring
Sammy Kershaw/Big Texas Spring
NOVEMBER 15

Galveston
Polar Express/Galveston Railroad Museum
NOVEMBER 15-DECEMBER 29

Huntsville
The Blackwood Quartet/Old Town Theater
NOVEMBER 15

Mount Pleasant
Deck The Halls Holiday Bazaar
NOVEMBER 15-16

Galveston
Moody Gardens Ice Land/Christmas Around the World
NOVEMBER 16-JANUARY 12

Kilgore
A Very Derrick Christmas
NOVEMBER 16

Pasadena
Home for the Holidays Market: Pasadena Trade Days
NOVEMBER 16

Friendswood
Friendswood Art in the Park Festival
NOVEMBER 16-17

Beaumont
Symphony of Southeast Texas, A Celebration of Mozart, Rossini and Sost
NOVEMBER 16

Livingston
Trade Days at Pedigo Park
NOVEMBER 16-17

Palestine
The Polar Express/Texas State Railroad
NOVEMBER 16-DECEMBER 28

Crockett
The Bellamy Brothers/Crockett Civic Center
NOVEMBER 16

Daingerfield
Holidays on the Square
NOVEMBER 16

Galveston
Moody Garden Festival of Lights
NOVEMBER 16-JANUARY 11

Livingston
Lights For Livingston, Christmas Lighting at City Hall
NOVEMBER 19

Lufkin
Marty Haggard Tribute to My Dad Tour/Pines Theater
"Georgia On My Mind", Temple Theater, Angelina College
NOVEMBER 21

Kilgore
Christmas Under the Stars
NOVEMBER 21-DECEMBER 22

Lake Jackson
Lake Jackson Festival of Lights/Lake Jackson Civic Center
NOVEMBER 21-24

Nacogdoches
2019 Holiday in the Pines/Fredonia Hotel
NOVEMBER 21-23

Palestine
Fall Foliage Scenic Tours
NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 8

Sugarland
Sugar Land Holiday Lights/Constellation Field
NOVEMBER 22-JANUARY 1

Palestine
Christmas In Palestine
NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 27

Galveston
Vienna Boys Choir/Grand 1894 Opera House
NOVEMBER 22

Lufkin
An Evening With Kathy Mattea/ Pines Theater
NOVEMBER 22

Nacogdoches
Pine Knot, Millard's Crossing
NOVEMBER 22

Longview
Vienna Boys Choir/The Belcher Center
NOVEMBER 23

Crockett
38th Annual Christmas in Crockett
NOVEMBER 23

Lufkin
25th Annual Festival of the Trees/Museum
of East Texas
NOVEMBER 25-JANUARY 6

Marshall
Wonderland of Lights
NOVEMBER 27-DECEMBER 31

Woodville
Home for the Holidays, Courthouse
Lighting, Visit With Santa
NOVEMBER 29-30

Houston
The Nutcracker, Houston Ballet
NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 29

Conroe
Conroe Kennel Club Holiday Classic/
Montgomery County Fair Grounds
NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1

Jasper
Christmas in the Park/Sandy Creek Park
NOVEMBER 30

Coldspring
Town Lighting at Coldspring Courthouse
NOVEMBER 30

December

Tyler
Martina McBride/UT Tyler Cowan Center
DECEMBER 3

Henderson
Downtown Christmas Parade
DECEMBER 5

Jacksonville
Christmas Parade
DECEMBER 5

Clute
Christmas in the Park
DECEMBER 5-7

Nacogdoches
Millard's Crossing Old Fashioned Christmas
DECEMBER 6

Hitchcock
Winterfest/Galveston County Fair & Rodeo
Grounds
DECEMBER 6-7

Greenville
Parade of Lights/Downtown
DECEMBER 6

Lufkin
"Christmas In The Pines", Christmas Parade
Friday
ADAC Reindeer Run Saturday Morning
Lighting Of Rudolph The Red Nosed
Pumping Unit Saturday Night at Lufkin Mall
DECEMBER 6-7

Magnolia
Christmas in Unity Park
DECEMBER 6-7

Winnie
Larry's Old Time Trade Days
DECEMBER 6-8

Sulphur Springs
Downtown Christmas, Lion's Club
Christmas Light Parade
DECEMBER 6

Sealy
Fantasy of Lights
DECEMBER 6-8

Galveston
46th Annual Dickens on the Strand
DECEMBER 6-8

Pearland
Hometown Christmas Parade
DECEMBER 7

Huntsville
Home for the Holidays Christmas Fair/
Downtown Square
DECEMBER 7

Katy
A Katy Old Fashioned Christmas Festival
DECEMBER 7

Henderson
Lighting of The Trees/Civic Center
DECEMBER 7

Tatum
Bois De Arc Christmas Celebration and
Parade
DECEMBER 7

Hempstead
Texas Trade Days Waller County
DECEMBER 7

Sugarland
Kansas Point of No Return Tour/Smart
Financial Center
DECEMBER 7

Mineola
Magically Mineola All Day & All Night
Events
DECEMBER 7

Gilmer
Yule Fest Parade, Breakfast With Santa
DECEMBER 7

Huntsville
Huntsville Christmas Fair
DECEMBER 7-9

Groveton
Courthouse Lighting, Christmas Parade
DECEMBER 7

Onalaska
Christmas in Our Town, Onalaska Vfd
DECEMBER 7

Grand Saline
Salt City Christmas/Tour of Homes
DECEMBER 7-8

Liberty City
31st Annual Liberty City Christmas Parade
DECEMBER 8

Houston
Andrea Bocelli/Toyota Center
DECEMBER 12

Crockett
Dallas String Quartet/Civic Center
DECEMBER 13

Houston
Hot Air Balloon Festival & Victory Cup Polo
Match/Downtown Aquarium
DECEMBER 13

Livingston
Christmas at Miss Effie's Cottage
DECEMBER 13

Lufkin
"Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer the
Musical"/Temple Theater AC
DECEMBER 13

Crockett
Dallas String Quartet/Civic Center
DECEMBER 13

CALENDAR

Tomball
German Christmas Market and
Festival
DECEMBER 13

Huntsville
Old Town Theater Presents "A
Christmas Carol"
DECEMBER 13-15

Greenville
Park Street Holiday Wagon Rides
DECEMBER 13-14/20-21

Coldspring
37th Annual Christmas on the
Square
DECEMBER 14

Livingston
20th Annual Jingle Bell Fun Run
and Hometown Christmas
DECEMBER 14

Tatum
Jingle Bell Bop and Shop
DECEMBER 14

Houston
Cher/Toyota Center
DECEMBER 15

Lufkin
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra/
Temple Theater AC
DECEMBER 17

Lufkin
"Miracle On 34th Street"(1947)/
Pines Theater
DECEMBER 20

Nacogdoches
Pine Knot Music Co-Op/Millard's
Crossing
DECEMBER 27

Sugarland
Moscow Ballet's Great Russian
Nutcracker/Smart Financial
Centre
DECEMBER 28

January 2021

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

Kingwood
Sawblade Texas Marathon &
Half-Marathon
JANUARY 1

Houston
Houston Boat Show 2021/NRG
Center
JANUARY 3-12

Houston
"The Color Purple"/Hobby
Center for the Performing Arts
JANUARY 4

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

Houston
Bridal Extravaganza 2021/George
R. Brown Center
JANUARY 10

Houston
Hops n Hot Sauce Festival/
Spindle Tap Brewery
JANUARY 11

Lufkin
East Texas Bridal Fair/Pitser
Garrison Civic Center
JANUARY 12

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

Livingston
Trade Days at Pedigo Park
JANUARY 17-19

Galveston
The Oak Ridge Boys/Grand 1894
Opera House
JANUARY 18

Houston
Chevron Houston Marathon
JANUARY 19

Houston
MLK Grande Parade/Midtown
JANUARY 20

Livingston
Multi-Cultural Festival
JANUARY 20

Houston
Houston Auto Show/NRG Center
JANUARY 22-26

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

Livingston
84th Annual Chamber of
Commerce Banquet
JANUARY 23

Nacogdoches
Pine Knot Music Co-Op/Millard's
Crossing
JANUARY 24

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

Houston
Branford Marsalis Quartet/
Wortham Theater Center
JANUARY 25

Houston
Wwe Royal Rumble 2021/Minute
Maid Park
JANUARY 26

Tyler
Rita Moreno/UT Tyler Cowan
Center
JANUARY 30

Events are subject to change or cancellation. To submit a calendar item email Mollie at events@easttexanmag.com



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-Gerald



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They found my cancer. I am a survivor."

-Roberto



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I only go to Dolores!"

-Teri

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-Susan



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