

Issue 23  
Fall 2023

# East Texan

**An American hero**

**Brunch with a side of history**





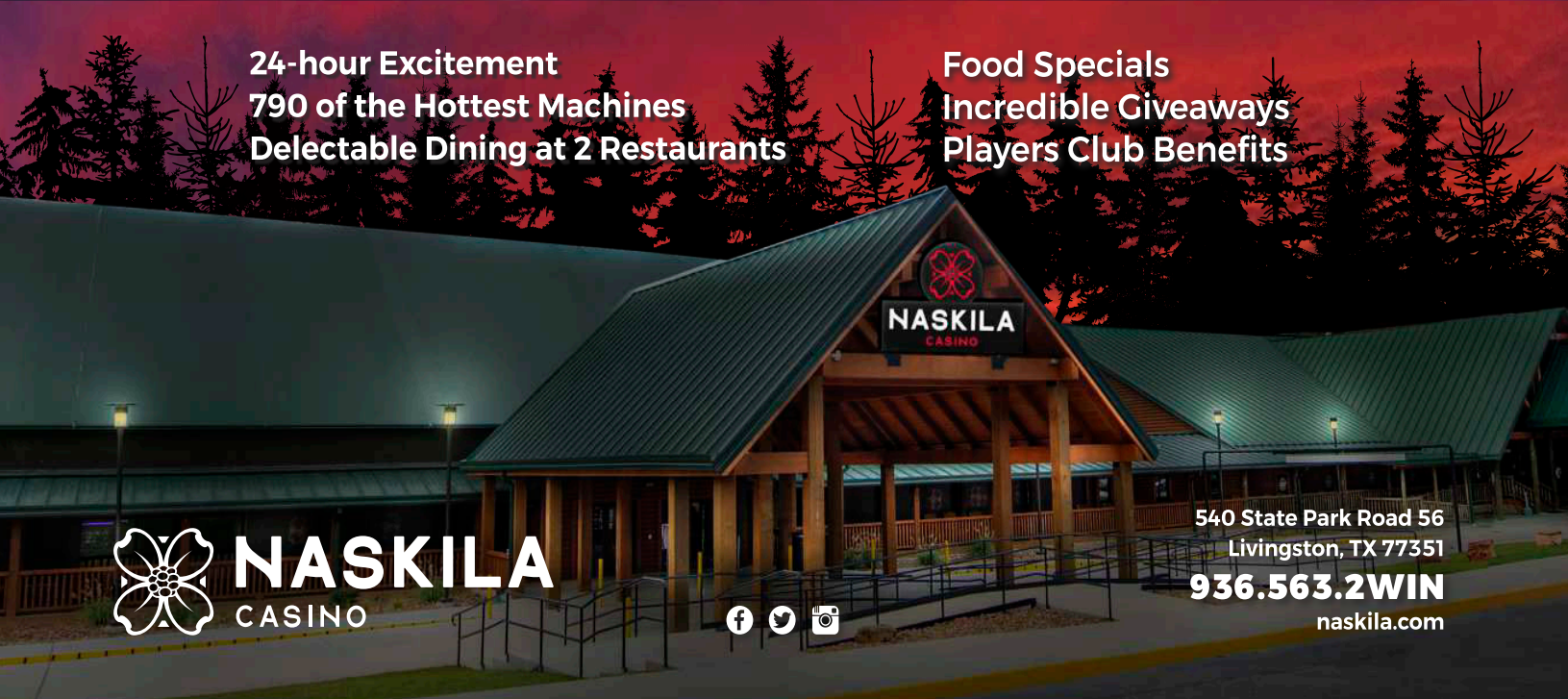
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## FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

*I am right there with my fellow East Texans in celebrating this long-awaited change of the seasons. We have all watched our beautiful green lawns become gasping, yellow crisps that may never recover. Our air conditioners have struggled and made sounds never heard before. Of course, we've lived through triple digits before, but this year seems unduly harsh, or maybe I am older and get cranky a little easier.*

*There have been a few spits of rain to start getting us back to the humid levels of comfort we are more accustomed to complaining about. Now we can ease into the nice harsh, cold winter that some are predicting will be wet and nasty. Yay!*

*Regardless of what the weather is at the moment, we would like to thank you for spending some time reading through the stories we have found for you. Whether it's hot and dry, humid and cool, or damp and cold, light-hearted stories, interesting locations to visit, histories, and delicious recipes from around our region always help to make us feel like there's something bigger and more important than a few months of misery: a sense of community, a shared culture, and belonging. We've weathered the summer storm, or lack thereof, together. Now, it's time to sit on the couch, enjoy some cooler days and nights, and read about the beautiful and unique tapestry that is our East Texas.*

~ Debbie Dickerson  
East Texan editor



## On The Cover



*Nothing says Fall like pumpkins, and this young man seems to have picked the perfect one during an annual pumpkin sale at Woodville Methodist Church in Tyler County.  
Photo by Jim Powers/Tyler County Booster*

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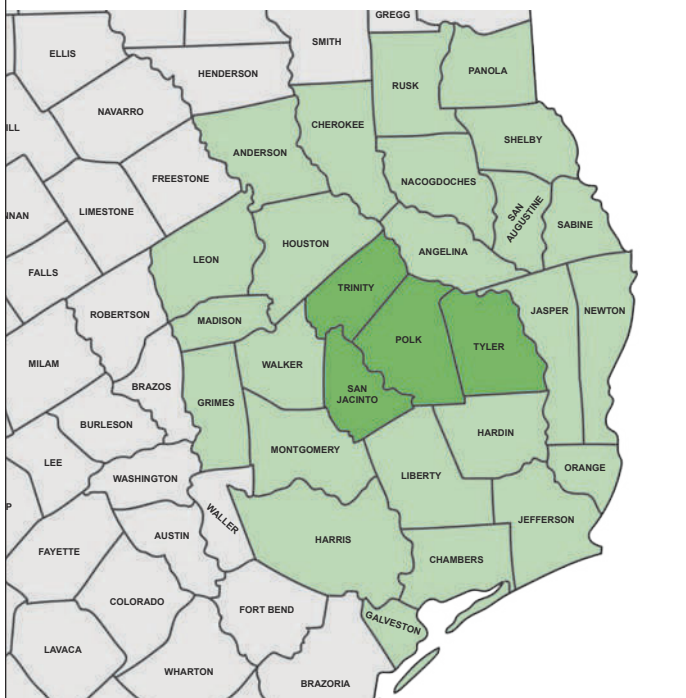


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## Brunch with a side of history

By Emily Banks Wooten

Since 1936, thousands of Sam Houston State University students and professors, Texas Department of Criminal Justice employees, Huntsville residents and those traveling through Walker County have frequented and enjoyed Cafe Texan, the oldest family owned and operated cafe in Texas.

Located in the historic art deco Eastham Building at 1120 Sam Houston Ave. on the courthouse square in downtown Huntsville, the cafe has seen its share of Huntsville history. However, those entering the cafe these days are in for a huge surprise. Cafe Texan is now home to a curated collection of antiquities and artifacts from all over the world, hence its name change to Cafe Texan History Museum & Library.

Sadly, John Strickland, the previous owner of 24 years, closed the cafe in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Huntsville native Vance Howard bought the building and oversaw his

vision come to life over the next three years. The entire building was gutted down to the studs and refurbished with new wiring, plumbing and fixtures. It underwent extensive reconstruction and opened its doors to the public in May of this year as a non-profit cafe and a museum, based on Howard's concept.

The building has basically been split down the middle with the beautiful, upscale cafe operating on the left side and the right side housing the museum. The cafe offers breakfast and lunch, with special dinners on occasion, featuring organically sourced ingredients, gluten-free options and a full bar. Historical photographs and prints adorn the walls, along with a rare 1936 geological map of Texas.

The museum is quite impressive with an unusual selection of artifacts that run the gamut, most of them quite unexpected to view in a small East Texas town. There is a Greek bronze



*(left) Cornelius Vanderbilt II acquired these pieces circa 1890s for his New York home. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten*



*(right) After closing during the pandemic, Cafe Texan, the oldest family owned and operated cafe in Texas, was purchased, completely gutted and renovated and is now called Cafe Texan History Museum & Library. It is located in the historic art deco Eastham Building at 1120 Sam Houston Ave. on the courthouse square in downtown Huntsville. Photo by Kevin Wooten*



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Corinthian helmet and a Japanese Kabuto helmet from the 16th and 17th centuries. There is an 1833 legal bond signed by Davy Crockett and ceramic pottery created and painted by Pablo Picasso. There is an American World War I son-in-service banner from 1918 and a limited-edition progressive era battle flag from 1912 with a printed portrait of Theodore Roosevelt, one of 575 copies signed by Henry Cabot Lodge. There is even a lock of hair and a pistol that belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte.

A beautiful hand-sewn double-appliqued cotton muslin 31-star American flag used in Abraham Lincoln's 1860 campaign hangs on one wall. Nearby are a pair of cowboy boots worn by President George H.W. Bush and a pair of cowboy boots and Western belt worn by retired broadcaster and Huntsville native Dave Ward.

There are also a number of handwritten letters from the founding fathers. One, dated March 2, 1779, is from George Washington planning the retaliatory Sullivan Expedition against Upstate New York Tories and their allies from the Iroquois Confederacy. Another, dated March 29, 1799, is from John Adams to Secretary at War James McHenry. One, written by James Garfield on May 16, 1865, when he was an Ohio congressman, mentions the death of President Lincoln. There is one from Benjamin Franklin to James Wright, one from Andrew Jackson to his wife and even one from James Monroe, addressing his Scottish ancestry, evidencing that the biographical dictionaries of the period were wrong. The stationery, and more specifically the penmanship, is all so fascinating to view.

We drove over one Sunday after church and enjoyed a lovely brunch. My husband selected the "Brunch Burger," which was a brisket beef blend topped with white cheddar and an egg cooked to order. It was served with breakfast potatoes. Our daughter selected the "Country Eggs Benedict" over buttermilk biscuits, grilled pork belly, poached eggs and a hollandaise with espelette pepper. It was served with the choice of breakfast potatoes, haystack potatoes or hashbrown casserole. I selected

*(left) The "Brunch Burger" is a brisket beef blend topped with white cheddar and an egg cooked to order. It is served with breakfast potatoes. Photo by Kevin Wooten*

*(above right) These Egyptian artifacts are (l-r) a gilded cartonnage mummy mask, canopic jars and a polychrome limestone stela. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten*

*(below left) A Greek bronze Illyrian helmet circa 500-420 B.C. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten*



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the “Eggs & Bacon Sampler,” which were jumbo eggs made to order, accompanied by a portion of jalapeno bacon, burnt end barbecue bacon and maple pepper bacon. It was served with breakfast potatoes and the choice of toast or a biscuit. If you are a bacon-lover like I am, then this is the dish for you. I had heard good things about the biscuits so that is what I chose and it did not disappoint. It was hands down the best biscuit I have ever eaten – very soft, tender and fluffy. I am already looking forward to my next visit to Cafe Texan History Museum & Library. ■

The cafe is open from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays. The museum is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays. Admission is free.

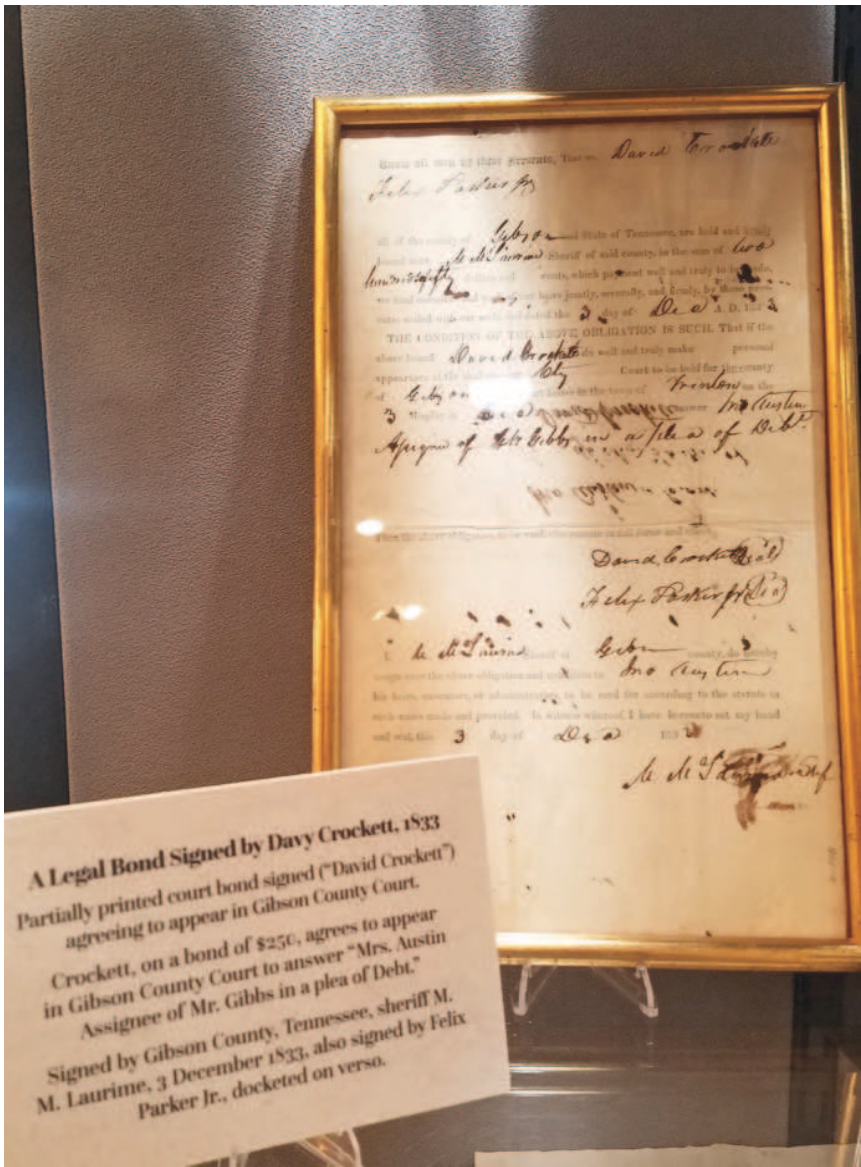


(left) The museum portion of the Cafe Texan History Museum & Library is quite impressive with an unusual selection of artifacts on display. Photo by Kevin Wooten

(above right) A hand-sewn double-appliqued cotton muslin 31-star American flag used in Abraham Lincoln's 1860 campaign hangs on one wall. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten

(below right) An 1833 legal bond signed by Davy Crockett, or “David Crockett” rather, agreeing to appear in Gibson County Court. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten

(below) The “Eggs & Bacon Sampler” consists of jumbo eggs made to order, accompanied by a portion of jalapeno bacon, burnt end barbecue bacon and maple pepper bacon. It is served with breakfast potatoes and the choice of toast or a biscuit. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten



**A Legal Bond Signed by Davy Crockett, 1833**  
 Partially printed court bond signed (“David Crockett”) agreeing to appear in Gibson County Court.  
 Crockett, on a bond of \$250, agrees to appear in Gibson County Court to answer “Mrs. Austin Assignee of Mr. Gibbs in a plea of Debt.”  
 Signed by Gibson County, Tennessee, sheriff M. M. Laurime, 3 December 1833, also signed by Felix Parker Jr., docketed on verso.





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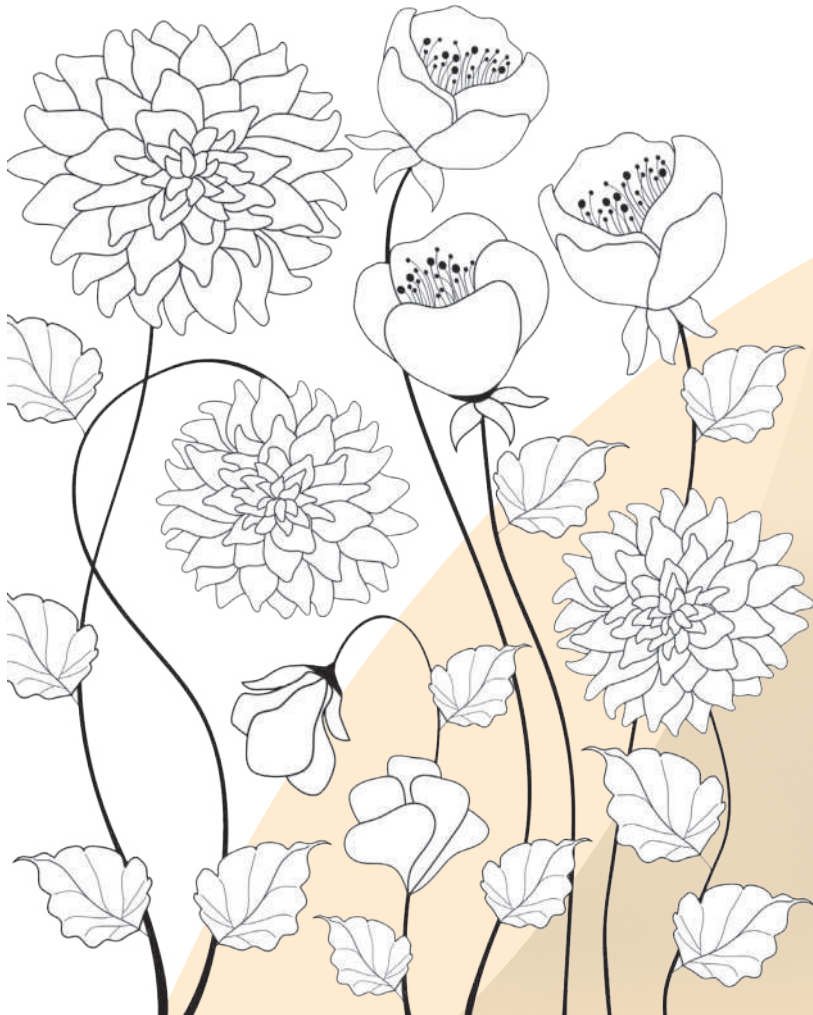
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# Those Blooming Potatoes





## By Janice R. Edwards

If you're paying attention, you learn something new every day. I know I have with my container garden. Last year I planted "new" potatoes in my "experimental" container and they grew like weeds. I learned something when I went down to water them one day. There it was – a bloom. At first, I thought it was a weed in the container. But I took a second look, and sure enough, the potato plant had put on a bloom.

I didn't know potatoes bloomed. I remember planting them in Mom's garden when I was a kid, but I don't ever remember seeing them bloom. I had to do some research – did I have a hybrid, or what?

Well, the first thing I learned was that the flowering just means the vines are mature enough to start forming tubers (what we eat). It's not a sign the tubers are ready to pull – you must wait until all the vines die and turn brown before the tubers are ready. Then I kept reading, and I found out some more interesting things.

Both tomatoes and potatoes are members of the Nightshades or Solanaceae. The Nightshades include quite a range of plants viewed as weeds, ornamentals, and fruits and vegetables like Belladonna, mandrake and tobacco. Edible Nightshades include peppers (*Capsicum* spp.), eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) and huckleberries (*Solanum melanocerasum*). Potatoes, like other members of the family contain alkaloids – a nitrogen-bearing organic compound. One of these alkaloids is solanine which is toxic to humans and many animals.

Potatoes produce their edible product, tubers, underground while tomatoes bear their edible fruit on the leafy part of the plant. Occasionally, the potato flower (which looks strikingly like a tomato flower except for color) will mature into a berry-like fruit. If you cut it open, I read, it will look like a small tomato inside. It is NOT edible. These berries on the potato plant are its true fruit, and if you let them mature, they will produce seeds. You can then grow potatoes from those seeds as well as the tubers. It takes a longer season to grow potatoes from seed than from sprouting tubers. Most of the time, the potato fruit just dries up and goes away. That's what

mine did. I understand that potatoes bloom if they get too much fertilizer, or the plants experience cold nighttime temperatures. Since mine started blooming after the cold fronts with that strong north wind, I'm assuming my plants bloomed because of cold nights.

If you do get berries on your potatoes, know that they are full of Solanine – a poisonous substance that can cause illness in humans. Also note, that even though your plant is growing the berries, the tubers themselves are not affected and are not poisonous. But the potato berry looks a lot like a cherry tomato – so especially if you have young children around, pick the fruit off and throw it away so small hands don't get them.

If you can save the seeds from the potato fruit and grow them next season, they won't produce the same kind of potato as the parent plant. I also learned I shouldn't plant potatoes in the same vessel with the same soil more than two years in a row.

Getting back to the potato tubers we are used to seeing and eating, their root system contains very little solanine. However, if your tuber is exposed to light, it begins to produce chlorophyll and solanine. The more light the tuber gets, the more chlorophyll it produces. Green skin or flesh on a potato or sprouts from the eyes signal rising levels of solanine which accompanies growth of a new plant. My Mom had always told me to cut the green portions off a potato and throw them away – that they were bad. I never knew to what extent before I investigated my blooming potatoes.

So, if you are tempted to eat any part of the potato that grows on top of the soil, or the potato berry – well, it would not be advisable. Solanine can cause upset stomachs, headaches, delirium, shock, paralysis and sometimes even more serious problems. Eating a potato with green flesh or skin – or that is sprouting – can also deal you some grief. Cut off the green flesh and skin and the rest of the tuber is still good to eat. Throw away or plant a tuber that is sprouting.

Wow – who knew I would learn so much about potatoes from wondering why it bloomed? ■





# HANGING SOME LIFE ON THE WALL

*Judith and Sam Haney put the “art” in the heart of Tyler County*



By Mollie LaSalle

“Sometimes, you’re a lonely little petunia in an onion patch,” mused Judith Haney, from her downtown Woodville nest in the town’s art district.

Judith and her husband Sam own and operate the venues comprising the downtown art district in Woodville, which are the Fine Arts Centre and Gallery and the Emporium for the Arts. The Haney’s are conveniently nestled between the two buildings, living upstairs. The space in between the Haney’s home and the Emporium stage was once home to the oldest building in Woodville, the old 19th century post office. The post office was deemed irreparably damaged after Hurricane Ike in 2008, and was torn down, paving the way for the Haney’s to convert it into a striking courtyard. The entire complex’s buildings are all pretty old; the art gallery dates to 1918, the Haney’s home is from 1905, and the Emporium stage is also from the early 1900s. Every building has a story to tell, and through the years, has been home to a Ford dealership, a gas station, a Western Auto store, a dress shop and a gym, among others.

Judith Haney was an educator for 42 years; she taught art in Houston before she and Sam decided to “come back home” to Tyler County in 1986, where she continued her career at Woodville ISD, at the middle school. Her long career as an educator brought her much joy; her students loved her. Upon retiring from her teaching career, she found herself at a standstill. “I couldn’t see myself sitting on the couch doing nothing, I needed something to do, I needed to feel productive.” To solve this immediate problem, Haney dove right back into the deep end; she was appointed the Municipal Court Judge by the city. She held this job for 15 years, and she also found herself handling those duties for the city of Ivanhoe; she became known around the county as “Judge Judy.”

Judith is obviously proud of hers and Sam’s creations. They have volunteered and run the Art Gallery and the Emporium as non-profit entities with the purpose of promoting a wide variety of artistic expression in Tyler County. She is known around Woodville as a creative thinker and a leading light for the arts in Tyler County, and Sam is right there by her side;



they have been married for almost 53 years. Judith just celebrated her 79th trip around the sun in May, and Sam notched number 84 on Valentine's Day. She has been forced to slow things down recently, after some medical issues told her to take it down a notch, but she seems to have regained some of the old steam she once had, and together with Sam, is passionate about her calling in her "retirement" years. Sam retired from a career in aviation where he worked in several phases. When they met, he was a commercial airline pilot. They married after only knowing each other a short time. They promised to love and support each other no matter where the journey led them. Judith calls Sam "the pilot of my life's adventure."

She was excited to elaborate on the history of the art district. "In the 60s and 70s, we had a lot of things going on at the Wood Fain Opera House – plays, movies, all of that, but when that closed, we really didn't have anywhere for people to exhibit their art or anything like that. The Woodville Inn used to let you hang art in the hall, and Fred Sullivan would let you put pieces in his store to sell. So, I'm an art teacher and here I was in Woodville, and the opera house closed after a devastating fire, and we all said, let's do something. 'We' were an author, painters, me, Sam, Fred Sullivan and a craftsman. We got together in late 2002 and thought we were just putting together a club and we ended up being a corporation. The Tyler County Art League was approved as a 501(c)3 non-profit in February 2003, just in time for the annual Festival of the Arts in March. We set up at Heritage Village with eight members and by the time the festival was over, we were up to 20, still thinking we were a club." The Fine Arts Centre and Gallery held their grand opening in October 2003 and membership was up to around 400. The Art League's mission statement is to promote public interest in the arts, support and encourage artists, and make the arts available and viable for the entire community.

"We wanted to do a play, because I was teaching theater and we had no place to rehearse or perform. The Lions Club very graciously let us use their facility for our first play, 'Steel Magnolias,' in 2004, and we had to rehearse at the Village," Judith said.

The next phase of their empire was born in 2008. "Sam and I had just bought this place and we were living upstairs and we were saying 'there's no place to have our plays.' We looked around and thought, 'Why not here?' so we started doing plays downstairs. Once we were able to buy the building on the corner and get it all gussied up, the first play we had there was 'Steel Magnolias.'"

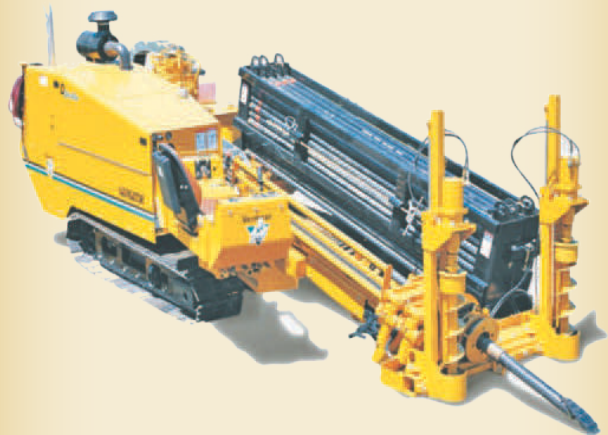
*(left) Mural on the side of the Emporium. Photo by Mollie LaSalle*

*(inset) Sam and Judith Haney. Photo courtesy of Judith Haney.*

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She went on to say, “we do wonderful, wonderful, wonderful music and plays; people know it’s quality and they keep coming back; we try to have six plays a year, and a concert once a month.” The mission statement of the Emporium is to promote and support the visual and performing arts for the cultural growth and enjoyment of its rural East Texas community. The Emporium for the Arts is also a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Judith summed up the direction the art district has taken since its inception 20 years ago, explaining, “Phase one was getting established and getting the building, (which at the

time was a gym). Phase two was building up membership and networking, and phase three is expanding classes, outreach into the local schools, and bringing more people downtown.” She told of plans to have the sidewalk in front of the complex painted yellow, so that “you can follow the yellow brick road” to the art district. She also added that she is “eagerly looking forward to their 20th anniversary celebration,” taking place October 13-14 at the gallery.

She is passionate about what she and Sam have accomplished and is equally proud of her newly opened Blue Feather Clay Studio and Sam’s glass blowing studio, or as Judith calls it, “the





*(above) "Blythe Spirit" presented at Emporium in 2017. Photo by Jim Powers.  
(right) Emporium Stage, Art Gallery and Blue Feather Clay Studio. Photos by Mollie LaSalle.*





Tin Can.” Sam has created some stunning pieces of stained glass and pottery, among other works, which are displayed throughout their home and in the art gallery.

The Haney’s are advocates for art education and they strive to continue presenting quality theater, visual art and music for everyone in Tyler County and beyond. Judith invites everyone to “come and see what we have to offer. We’re not scary, we are warm, wonderful people. You don’t even have to get all dressed up, you can come as you are.”

The Emporium for the Arts was honored as the business of the year in 2012 by the Tyler County Chamber of Commerce and Judith was singled out for the chamber’s prestigious Citizen of the Year award in 2007. She bemoaned the fact that when she was still working and going full blast, that she never had the time to tend to her babies. “I birthed these two (the gallery and the Emporium) and now that I have the time, Sam and I intend to move forward with phase three.” She really strives to get more people to the downtown area to see what they have been missing. Judith and Sam are dedicated to “Keeping the Arts in the Heart of Tyler County.” ■

The Fine Arts Centre and Gallery is located at 210 West Bluff in Woodville. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can call 409-200-4759 for an appointment to tour the gallery. The Emporium Stage is right next door, at 216 West Bluff, and is open when there are plays, concerts or special events scheduled. Go to their website at: [www.tylercountyartleague.org](http://www.tylercountyartleague.org) or on Facebook at Tyler County Art League to learn more. The Tyler County Art League and the Emporium for the Arts are 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.

*(left) Some of Sam’s glasswork and pottery, located in the gallery, and in their home. Photos by Mollie LaSalle.*





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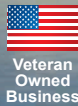


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# *Celebrating 175 Years of Methodism in Livingston*

## [ 1848–2023 ]

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By Gary Davis

In the year 2023, the Methodists of Livingston are celebrating 175 years of service in the community. Methodism in Texas originated from the frontier days of circuit riding, itinerant preachers, who traveled on horseback from one village to the next. This system of sending out these preachers to minister to the widely scattered settlers proved to be a very effective way of spreading Methodism across Texas.

The first protestant preacher to cross into Texas was undoubtedly William Stevenson (1768-1857). From Tennessee, the itinerant Stevenson entered the frontier of Texas at Jonesboro (often spelled Jonesborough) in the year 1817. This was the same village where Sam Houston crossed the Red River and entered Texas years later in 1832. Stevenson

also has the distinction of being the first protestant in East Texas as he traveled down Trammel's Trace and preached in Nacogdoches to a mixed assemblage of both Mexican and Anglo citizens. At this time the introduction of protestant beliefs was contrary to Mexican law.

An early written reference to Methodism in Polk County is contained in Homer S. Thrall's 1872 History of Methodism in Texas. It refers to the year 1843, when circuit rider, Reverend Frances A. Wilson (1790-1867), held protracted camp meetings throughout East Texas. Brother Frank, as he was called, spent a lifetime traveling on horseback, swimming across creeks and sleeping on the ground in the rain, all the while being under the threat of an Indian attack. He faithfully

*This photograph, taken around 1900 by Ben M. Lewis, is the first church building on Church Street. It was constructed in 1859 at a cost of \$1,964. It was referred to as "everybody's church" because the Methodists shared it with the Presbyterians and the Baptists. The child in the photo is Edgar "Volney" Doyle, Jr., son of E. V. Doyle who was a store clerk and founding member of the Baptist Church. Volney appears in many of Lewis's photos and was apparently just a curious child who followed the photographer around as he captured the images of town. Courtesy photo*





delivered the gospel to the socially isolated and spiritually starved people who traveled from miles around to hear him preach. One such meeting was held on Wolf Creek in Polk County (in 1870 this area was split from Polk and became San Jacinto County). By his estimates, he traveled a total of 150,000 miles, delivered 7,000 sermons and made over 4,000 conversions to Methodism. Wilson is listed on the Livingston Methodist Church Honor Roll of Pastors as having served from 1853-1855.

At the 1844 General Conference in New York City, a schism occurred within the Methodist Episcopal Church over the slavery issue. In a special-called conference held on May 1, 1845 in Louisville, Ky. a new and separate denomination called the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, or simply the MEC, S was formed. The Texas delegates voted to join this new denomination. It should be noted that black families had been included in Methodist congregations in Texas since 1822 and in 1846 the East Texas conference appointed Reverend Frank Wilson as "missionary to the people of color within the bounds of the Conference."

In 1845, the Republic of Texas was divided into two conferences, with the Trinity River as the boundary between the West Texas or simply the Texas Conference and the East Texas conference. Frank Wilson was the Presiding Elder (PE) of the San Augustine District. One of the circuit riding preachers in the East Texas conference was Reverend David McGowen Stovall.

Born in Tennessee in 1828, D.M. Stovall was ordained in the Methodist church at age 18. He recalled in a 1907 letter to the Houston Post that his family crossed the Sabine into Texas on February 1, 1836. Stovall was one of seven brothers that were circuit riding preachers that delivered the Methodist faith in Southeast Texas. In the July 6, 1911 Polk County Enterprise, Stovall advised that he traveled as an itinerant preacher in the East Texas conference for 36 years and that Livingston and Moscow were on his circuit.

Stovall answered the call to serve four years in the Civil War as a captain from Rusk County. He recalled that in 1858-59 he built the first house of worship in Livingston. He advised that prior to this, the neat little courthouse on the square was the preaching place. Stovall died on March 21, 1912, having served 65 years as a Methodist minister. He is buried in Diboll.

Methodism was alive and well in Texas and as reported in the 1850 U.S. census there were 328 churches in Texas. Of this number, 173 were Methodist and were valued at \$58,195. Second were the Baptists who owned 70 churches, valued at \$23,190. The Presbyterians had 47 that were valued at \$20,070. The Roman Catholics only had 13 churches whose valuation was placed at a whopping \$79,700.

Polk County was formed on March 30, 1846, as one of the first 23 counties after Texas was annexed into the U.S. The

original 45 blocks of the City of Livingston were situated on 100 acres of land that was originally donated by Moses L. and Ursula Choate on Aug. 8, 1946 for the purpose of becoming the county seat. It is widely accepted that Choate's offer came with the condition that the town be changed from Springfield to Livingston.

It is unclear as to why Choate wanted to change the name. Some say that his middle name was Livingston. Some say that it was to honor his hometown of Livingston, Tenn. The 1850 and 1860 census records reflect that he was indeed from Tennessee. Judge J.C. Feagin, when interviewed by the Houston Post on Sept. 22, 1922, advised that Livingston was named for Chancellor Robert Livingston, who administered the oath of office to George Washington. And esteemed Polk County historian, Emma Haynes, stated in her very comprehensive History of Polk County that Choate was from Livingston, Alabama.

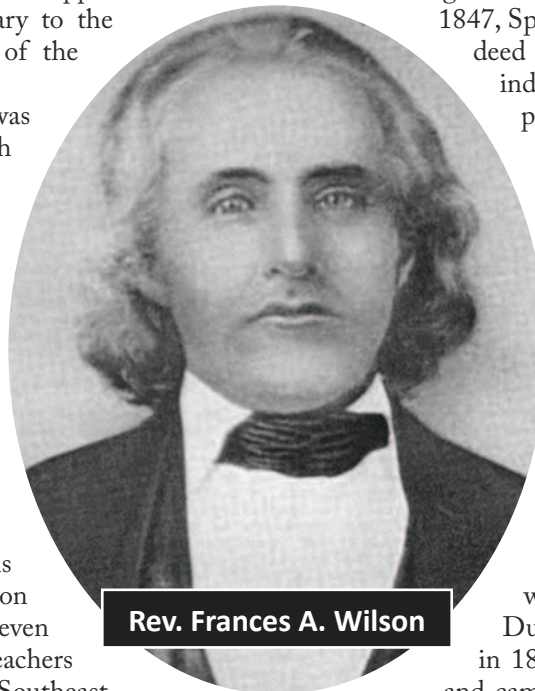
Regardless of how it got its name, by Feb. 25, 1847, Springfield was known as Livingston. In a deed of this date, the county appointed five individuals as trustees to erect buildings for public schools and divine services. The property that was set aside was block 40 plus three-quarters of an acre that sat just to the east of the block. James Andress surveyed the townsite of Livingston and named the streets on a plat that was filed on May 21, 1849. Church Street was likely selected because the county had set aside Block 40 for a church.

When a pastor was assigned a full-time position in a church, he was referred to as the Preacher in Charge, or PC. It is widely held that the first PC of the Livingston Methodist church was Samuel Blackwell Bell Dunnam.

Dunnam, who was born in South Carolina in 1803, later moved to Rapides Parish, La. and came to Polk County in the 1840s as part of the Louisiana Settlement. During the Civil War, Dunnam, who was in his 60s, answered the call of duty and served as a chaplain and medic. His daughter, Frances Eugenia, married prominent citizen and Livingston Methodist, Judge J.E. Hill Sr. Reverend Dunnam was 100 years old when he died on Dec. 10, 1903, and is buried in the Old City Cemetery.

In a deed dated Oct. 27, 1859, the county commissioners donated a lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The lot of ground was in the southeast portion of Block 40 and was 107 feet by 65 feet in size. Within the deed was a promise to erect an edifice for the purpose of religious worship.

From the district clerk records of Sept. 21, 1859, a contract for the first church building is found. The agreement between church trustees and the contractors states that the building will be used as a place of worship for the MEC, S. To be built at a cost of \$1964, the simple frame building was to be 32 feet by 48 feet with a 15-foot ceiling. There were to be eight windows, two doors and three rows of pews which corresponded with the doors, a nice pulpit and a suitable belfry.



Rev. Frances A. Wilson



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This first chapel, which was captured in several photographs by Ben M. Lewis around 1900, was shared with the Presbyterians and the Baptists for 30 years. Referred to as "everybody's church," the building doubled as a schoolhouse and the wife of PC J.A. Smith was one of the teachers.

In the year 1885, the Presbyterians built their own church on block 27 and the Baptists built their first building on block 41, adjacent to the cemetery, in the year 1887.

The church directory that was published in the Jan. 26, 1888 issue of the East Texas Pinery allowed that the Methodist church held services on the first and fourth Sabbaths of each month, mornings and evenings by the Reverend W.L. Pate and that Sunday School was held each Sabbath morning.

On June 12, 1890, the Methodist Episcopal Church acquired the east half of block 39 for the purpose of building a parsonage. It was located across Church Street, a single wide dirt road at the time, from the church building. The property was sold by the church on Sept. 24, 1959, but the building still stands in 2023 as the Lee Chiropractic Clinic at 312 E. Church Street.

According to the Dec. 20, 1906 Polk County Enterprise, the Reverend James W. Albritton was the new pastor of the Methodist church and he and his family were domiciled at the Methodist parsonage. The pastor sent word through the editor that he would be preaching the following Sunday morning and evening and that the members were expected to attend.

A church directory from November 1909 reveals that preaching at the church continued to occur only twice per month, now on the second and fourth Sundays. Sunday School was held every Sunday. The Women's Home Mission held meetings each Tuesday and the Women's Foreign Mission met on the second and fourth Mondays. The Epworth League, the young people's organization, met each Sunday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. Mrs. T.J. McKinnon was the Sunday School Superintendent.

On Jan. 2, 1908, the Huntsville Post-Item announced that W.T. McDonald, who had served the previous five years as the penitentiary chaplain, was appointed by the conference to his new home and church in Livingston.

By 1905, the Old City Cemetery had either been filled or spoken for and a new cemetery, Forest Hill, was established in 1906. In an Enterprise article dated Sept. 8, 1908, the Livingston Cemetery Association was formed by the ladies of town to raise funds for the upkeep of the two cemeteries. In this article a mention is made of a promise to tear down and remove the remainder of the old Methodist church within the next two weeks. From this, it is easy to draw the conclusion that the church had been removed from the cemetery lot.

No sooner than PC McDonald arrived, it was announced in the March 5, 1908 Enterprise that the Methodists were planning to build a new church building on the Fleming lot on Church Street (302 W. Church, current site of the Livingston Police Department). The estimated cost was to be \$4,000.



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*“One thing for certain about the incredible body of Methodists is that ‘down through the years’ they have dealt with both adversity and glory. There is no reason to believe that the next 175 years will be any different.”*

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The lot, 60 feet by 80 feet, had been purchased for \$500 from J.E. Hill Jr. on Sept. 19, 1905 by the trustees. The deed stated that the premise was to be used and maintained as a place of divine worship, for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The deed described the lot as being on the Church Street extension.

The ladies of the Methodist church were quite active in the early 1900s and had many socials for the benefit of their Women’s Home Mission ministry. In April 1907 the WHM ladies gave an ice cream social in the Dave Chandler building (416 N. Washington) but were mildly disappointed because the strawberries did not arrive on time. Despite this, a good time was had and \$24 was raised for a worthy cause. In January 1908, the WHM held a dinner and quilt sale upstairs over the

F.J. Manning store (516 N. Washington) and \$35 was raised for their effort.

In April 1908, an ice cream social was held at the home of A.C. Garvey for the benefit of the new church. Later that month, the ladies of the Methodist church gave a concert at the Opera House, a simple frame building located on the southwest corner of block 34 that operated from 1906 to 1913. The two-act comedy, “A Perplexing Situation,” was performed by local talent and berries, cake and ice cream were served to the appreciative audience. The handsome sum of \$57.50 was realized for the building fund.

On election day, Nov. 3, 1908, the Methodist ladies held a dinner at Keenan Peeble’s tin shop. This shop was located at 300 N. Washington, the present location of the office of Livingston Mayor, the Honorable Judy Cochran.

The May 28, 1908 issue of the Enterprise reported that a protracted meeting had begun at the Opera House and that the Reverend McDonald, along with the pastors from each local church, was helping with the twice a day service. After 15 days, 12 members were added to the various churches of the town, “but the greatest and best result of the meeting was the bringing together the people of the town in a spiritual union, in strengthening the membership of the churches, and in reviving the hope and cheering the faith of the Christian people of the town and community.”

The Sept. 1, 1908 Houston Post reported that local architect George F. Sawyer was preparing plans and specifications for the proposed new Methodist church to be erected in the next few months. The article read that the cost was estimated to be \$3,000 and the frame building was to be complete with a metal roof. However, some were urging the building to be of brick construction as it would be better and would only cost 25% more.

The Sept. 17, 1908 Enterprise reported that material was being placed on the ground for the new building. The Dec. 17 issue stated that the church was in the process of being constructed, and when completed, would be an elegant edifice.

On Jan. 21, 1909 it was announced in the local paper that the Reverend H.B. Smith had been appointed to the church and that on Feb. 11 he and his family would arrive.

On Feb. 16, 1909, the Women’s Home Mission Society elected officers for the coming year and the new pastor’s wife, Mrs. H.B. Smith, was elected president. The meetings, held each Tuesday, were filled with music and refreshments and free will offerings were always accepted for the benefit of their



*First Methodist Church's second church building on Church Street, 1909. Courtesy photo*



ministries. Often the ladies would collect their offerings via a mite box. Mite boxes, named for the story of the "widow's mite," were often used to encourage children and others to give offerings of their coins and small change.

The new church was completed in May 1909 and was a wood frame chapel painted white with beautiful rose-tinted lancet windows. The sanctuary was a large room with two balconies and the pews were situated at a 45-degree angle to the building. The interior was wainscoted in a dark oak finish with light beige wallpaper above. The ornate belfry had a bell that would ring up until 15 minutes before each service and there was a beautiful spire above.

The Enterprise article titled "Dawn of a New Era" announced that the church was complete at a cost of \$4,000 and that the handsome and commodious house of worship would be a credit to any city. "With all these improvements being made, one can readily see that Livingston is showing signs of prosperity" quipped the excited editor, W.L. West.

The Houston Post reported that the first service held on May 23, 1909 was the Baccalaureate Sermon delivered by Reverend H.B. Smith. The Enterprise reported there was a large congregation in the new building. The graduation ceremony for this and the previous year, 1908, the first two ever for Livingston High School, were held at the Opera House.

The 1910 high school graduation ceremony was held at the church as the new school was not completed until the fall of the year. It is likely that this is the only time that this ceremony was ever held in a Livingston church as the new brick school, complete with a cavernous auditorium, capable of seating 425, was opened on Oct. 26, 1910.

A religious census was taken in town as reported by the Enterprise of Nov. 18, 1909. Sixteen ladies, four from each church, made a canvas one afternoon with a view to find out how large a proportion of the townfolk were interested in the study of the Bible. One hundred sixty families were visited, embracing 689 individuals. Of these, 325 attended church, 301 attended Sunday school and 171 were church members. The Livingston Baptists had the largest group of attendees, followed by the Methodists, the Presbyterians and the First Baptists. There was hope expressed that the figures would stimulate all the schools to hunt out the people that were out of the church influences.

It was common for the different church bodies to join in union services for the good of the community. The businesses all closed for a morning Thanksgiving Service in November 1909 and the Reverend H.B. Smith delivered a message in a two-hour service held at the Brick Baptist church. The Livingston Baptists were often called this because they built the first brick church building in town in 1906.

The Union Tree at the courthouse was another way that the townspeople coordinated their efforts. In December 1909 the ladies from the four churches rallied together to place a tree and gifts in the courthouse for the merriment of the children. This tradition had been carried on for years and in a previous year had nearly resulted in a disaster. At the 1907 version there was some excitement when Santa Claus caught on fire. He was extinguished and the revelers went afterward to the rink (which later became the Opera House) for an evening of roller skating.

Another example of cooperation between the churches

occurred in November 1910. The four Sunday Schools, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Livingston Baptists and the First Baptists (the Baptist Church split in 1904) assembled at their respective houses and then marched in a Sunday School Parade to the Opera House. The Enterprise reported that it was a beautiful sight and would long be remembered by not only the children, but by all who participated.

On Dec. 14, 1911, the paper announced that Reverend Smith had been reassigned to San Augustine and the Reverend C.M. Kennedy was coming to Livingston.

As soon as Kennedy arrived, the Enterprise resumed publishing the church directory but oddly, only the ME Methodist Church, South, was featured. By this time, December 1911, the church was having services on a weekly basis. The Epworth League of young people gave a concert at the Opera House on April 27, 1912, with proceeds being used to pay for the new church piano.

The Livingston churches combined again in August 1912 for a 17-day protracted revival in the district courtroom of the courthouse. Dubbed "Everybody's Revival," there was an 8:30 a.m. service each day and all businesses in town closed so that everyone could attend. The Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians worked side by side in the salvation of souls. The first 10 days of the revival started out slow but toward the end, there were 51 conversions to the local churches. The Livingston Baptists received 41, the Presbyterians three and the Methodists five. In addition, there were many more who were already members who expressed a desire to come into the active work of their church.

The following year, in September 1913, the churches organized another two-week revival at the courthouse. This time there were 18 additions to the Methodists, nine to the Presbyterians and one to the Baptists.

On Nov. 9, 1913 the church was filled to capacity when Reverend Kennedy presented the church to the PE, Reverend J.W. Mills, for dedication. Reverend Mills was at his best and one of the most powerful gospel sermons ever preached in the city was delivered by him.

The Dec. 4, 1913 Enterprise reported that Kennedy had been reassigned and the new Livingston preacher would be Reverend J.F. Kidd from the Marshall District. As reported in the Dec. 11, 1913 Enterprise, "Kidd was a man of striking appearance and had an attractive personality. While he is comparatively young in his work, he is a hard student and is regarded by PE Mills as one of the coming preachers of this district."

By March 16, 1916 Rev J.O. Coppege had arrived from Centerville to assume the pulpit. Coppege had a short stay, however, as the Timpson Times of Nov. 30, 1916 reported that the Reverend B.C. Anderson was taking up his work in Livingston.

On Nov. 6, 1921, the Houston Post reported that the Methodist quarterly conference was held at the Livingston church and the Reverend J.E. Buttrill was asked to return for another year. The Reverend E.L. Ingram, PE of the Timpson District, complimented the locals by stating that the Livingston church had shown greater progress and better reports than any other church in the district.

On Sept. 15, 1921, it was announced in the Enterprise that six Sunday School rooms had been added to the church. They had



been needed for some time as the Sunday School had grown to such an extent that the building would not accommodate the classes in a satisfactory manner. The construction was done primarily by Reverend Butrill.

The 1922 conference sent to Livingston from the Nacogdoches District, Reverend J.C. Huddleston and in 1923, the Reverend W.J. Richards. Reverend Frank Platt arrived in 1924, and in 1925, I.T. Andrews was the PC for the next four years.

In another joint assembly of the four local churches in 1924, the Houston Post reported that the annual Sunday School picnic was held on Long Kane [sic] Creek. All businesses in town closed for the day and the schools declared a holiday. Free transportation to the picnic grounds was arranged and committees were formed to perfect the plans.

The Nov. 10, 1929, issue of the Enterprise reported that Reverend was being sent to Conroe and was by the Reverend J.T. Moore, who Jacksonville.

The Reverend C.E. Peeples, who Livingston in November 1933 was his selection to the presidency of Lon Morris College in June 1935. The June 20, 1935 Enterprise reported that Reverend Peeples and family would be leaving immediately for Jacksonville for him to assume his new charge.

In 1939 the ME Church, South merged with the Methodist Protestant Church to become the Methodist Church. The use of the term PE was eliminated, and district superintendent, or DS, began to be used.

On Jan. 25, 1939, C.L. Cochran deeded

to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at Livingston a tract that was located to the north and east of the church property. This gave the church a lot that was 214-feet deep by 96-feet wide and extended from Church Street to Polk Street.

For a revival in August of 1943, services were held twice daily. The Reverend Ray Loden from the First Methodist of Liberty conducted the services. The pastor of the church at this time was Nolan Vance.

In 1948 the wooden church building was razed and a new, brick building with seating for 300 was put up in its place. At the beginning of the project the PC was Ben Anderson and when completed in 1949 the pastor was L.R. Condrey.

On April 16, 1949, the same group of trustees executed a document to incorporate as "The Methodist Church of Livingston, Texas." On July 10, 1949 the opening service was held to much excitement from the congregation. Reverend Peebles returned from Lon Morris to deliver the message. The Houston Post ran a photo of the new \$60,000 brick Methodist church and announced its formal opening and a revival that was to be held daily during the following week. The church dedication ceremony was held on Dec. 9, 1951 during the pastorage of E.J. Berkelbach. The church membership in 1950 was 500 and the group voted to have air conditioning installed in the building.

In 1956, there was a major building program to add the detached Christian Education Building. The building was situated on the property that was acquired from C.L. Cochran in 1939. The formal opening was held on June 2, 1957. Complete with a modern kitchen, there was a representative from the United Gas Company on hand to demonstrate the appliances. The Reverend W.J. Williamson was the pastor at the time.

The Dec. 22, 1960 Enterprise announced that the new Methodist parsonage had been completed and that the Reverend Ben Behrens and family had moved in on Aug. 10. The architect firm of Moore & Coogler was secured to design the fashionable new home on Oakhurst Street that was built at a cost of \$30,000. The article stated that the old parsonage that had been used for 75 years was sold for the price of \$10,000.

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*First Methodist Church's third church building on Church Street, 1949. Courtesy photo*





*(left) The present First Methodist Church is the church's fourth building on Church Street. It is located at 2801 U.S. Hwy. 190 West in Livingston. Courtesy photo*

The 1960 parsonage was sold in the year 2000, but in its 40 years it served many Methodist pastors.

On June 13, 1965 a groundbreaking ceremony was held to start the construction of the new addition to the fellowship hall. This addition joined the hall and the sanctuary building and contained seven classrooms, an administrative office and a large basement which was used for the Methodist Youth Fellowship, or MYF. Once again, the architect firm of Moore & Coogler was called on for these major improvements.

In what has been the most comprehensive history of the church ever produced, the 1965 "Down Through the Years" publication was a mighty effort by a group of church elders. The booklet was used extensively in the writing of this document.

1968 was a big year for Methodism as a new denomination was born at the General Conference in Dallas. On April 23, 1968 the Methodist Church joined hands with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church.

On Aug. 6, 1992 Ernest and Winifred Reuter generously assisted in the transfer of 21 acres on Hwy. 190 West, for the purpose of constructing a new church building, the fourth to be built on Church Street. Under the leadership of Reverend T. Mac Hood, on Dec. 5, 1993, ground was broken on the property and the new 35,000-square foot, \$3 million-dollar "Miracle on Church Street" began to take shape.

On Oct. 16, 1994, the first service in the new building was held. In an emotional ceremony, the sanctuary light was

transported, via a horse drawn carriage, out on Church Street from the old chapel to the new location to signify the continuity of the institution, the oldest church in Livingston.

On Nov. 9, 1999, the church leaders made the decision to purchase a more modern parsonage. A two-year-old home located at 161 Mockingbird in Enchanted Forest was acquired and the pastors have made this their home since.

By 2011 the church had reached a point where, according to Pastor Don Willis's column, it was "busting at the seams." Built during the tenure of Pastor Mike Mayhugh, the new three-story Discipleship Building was adorned with the steeple from the old 1949 chapel. The consecration service for the new addition was held on Aug. 14, 2011. The new complex, complete with elevator, Hebrews Cafe coffee bar, classrooms and the Holy Ground worship center also housed the Great Beginnings Preschool program.

The year 2022 was a fractious one for Methodists as there was another schism within the church and the Livingston Methodists voted to leave the United Methodist Church and to affiliate with the newly formed Global Methodist Church. The arrival of the new pastor, Joel McMahan, certainly helped to spread a calmness throughout the congregation.

One thing for certain about the incredible body of Methodists is that "down through the years" they have dealt with both adversity and glory. There is no reason to believe that the next 175 years will be any different. ■





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# SAUSAGE-STUFFED SQUASH

By Barbara White

*The scalloped edges of the squash make this a pretty dish that is perfect for an autumn side or even an entree. You can easily tweak the ingredients to suit your family's tastes. Don't like mushrooms? Chopped peeled apples are a good substitute. Prefer a sage sausage to regular? Go for it! This makes 4 servings, but it can easily be doubled or tripled.*

## Ingredients:

2 small acorn squash

1 pound ground sausage

½ cup chopped mushrooms

(can substitute peeled chopped fresh apple for a sweeter dish)

¼ cup chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

1 egg, beaten

½ cup sour cream

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Salt and pepper

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Slice each squash in half, crossways. Scrape out and discard the seeds.
3. Season each squash half with a little salt and pepper.
4. Place the squash, cut side down, on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake in preheated oven for approximately 1 hour, or until softened.
5. Remove squash halves from oven, flip them over to allow to cool, and set aside. Leave the oven on.
6. While squash is baking, heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Cook and stir sausage until brown and crumbly. Drain and discard grease. Add celery, mushrooms (or chopped apples if using) and onion and cook 5-10 minutes, until softened. Remove skillet from heat.
7. Beat egg in medium bowl. Stir in sour cream and Parmesan cheese. Stir the cheese mixture into the sausage mixture. Fill the squash halves with the sausage filling.
8. Bake in the preheated oven until filling is heated through, about 20 minutes.



Photo by Amy Holzworth



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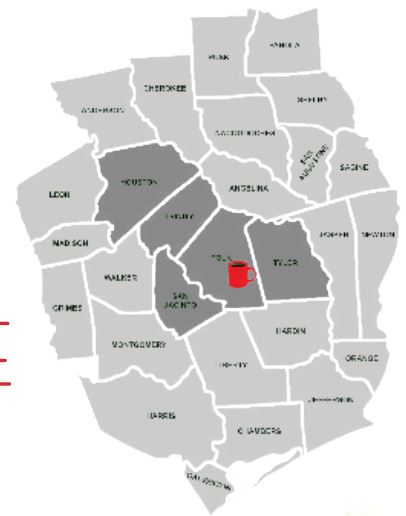


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# Time to smell the posies



By Jolene Renfro

Remember the nursery rhyme we sang as children? “Ring around the rosies, Pocket full of posies, Ashes, Ashes we all fall down.” We held hands, danced around in a circle, and collapsed onto the soft grass, giggling at the song’s conclusion.

As innocent as it seemed at the time, according to folklore, the poem referred to the Great Plague of the Middle Ages, which took the lives of nearly 100,000 souls. The “ring around the rosies” represented the circular rash surrounding the infected areas - a symptom of the plague. Small bouquets of flowers were called “posies,” and people carried them in an attempt to ward off the disease, mask the smell of death, or place on the graves of the deceased. The word “ashes” represented the “a-tishoo” sound of the sneeze the plague victims made. Or it could have a darker context, referring to the ashes of the cremated bodies of those who died. And “We all fall down” obviously meant the inevitable death that followed.

In reality, smelling the posies did no good because the bubonic plague was caused by bacteria passed on by flea bites, not by the foul-smelling air coming from the unsanitary conditions of the times, as people thought. However, Dr. Charles de Lorme, a 17th-century physician, believed he had the answer when he invented those creepy-looking plague masks you see in horror stories.

De Lorme described the mask as a “half-foot-long shaped beak, filled with perfume with only two holes, one on each side the nostrils, but that can suffice to breathe and carry along with the air one breathes, the impression of the herbs enclosed further along in the beak.” Aromatic herbs and flowers like mint leaves, rose petals, cloves, cinnamon, myrrh and honey were stuffed into the mask’s cavity. Pieces of cloth soaked in laudanum, frequently used as a cough medicine, and camphor, well known for masking smells with its pungent fragrance, were also packed into the beak-like space. De Lorme thought that the long shape of the mask would give the contaminated

air sufficient time to be diffused before it came into contact with the doctor’s nostrils. While not preventing contamination from the plague, it certainly helped curtail the foul stench of sickness and death. All this care was to keep the doctor safe while he came to your home, examined you, told you that you indeed suffered the plague, had two weeks to live, and therefore, would you please pay him today before he left your house.

After the plague, posies were still in vogue. In the 1800s, ladies often carried them in a form called a nosegay or what they nicknamed a “tussie-mussie.” Sanitation systems had not been invented yet, and horses were the main form of transportation. That means city streets still reeked - (feel free to use your imagination), so having something pleasant to smell kept the ladies from passing out when shopping. And in an era where Victorians spoke circumspectly, not verbalizing their true feelings, particular objects had symbolic meanings and were used to express what could not be spoken aloud in polite society. Bouquets of flowers were sent to convey secret messages between people, although I can’t imagine it was a secret since everyone knew what certain flowers in the bouquet meant.

Red roses, of course, meant true love; dahlias mixed in with the roses told that their love was eternal. Pink roses signified just a passing fancy. Bluebells communicated kindness. Peonies meant bashful. Even negative messages were sent through floral arrangements. Aloe spoke of bitterness. A pomegranate stood for conceit, and sunflowers were symbolic of false riches.

With cases of COVID on the rise and the onset of flu season ahead, you could make a nosegay of purple coneflower (strength /health), heather (protection), chrysanthemum (cheerfulness and rest), and yellow roses (friendship) and give it to a friend to let them know you are thinking of them and wishing them well.

Just don’t show up at their house in a scary bird mask. ■



# Just a Little Bit of Faith



**By Jan White**

“Truly, I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

For business owner Dena Shipley, this scripture found in Matthew 17:20 is not only her favorite verse, but her belief in its promise is so strong that she named her burgeoning business Mustard Seed Soap Co. and uses the outline of sunny mountains as her logo. Dena’s journey to creating and selling homemade soap products has, in her words, “been an act of faith.”

It began with a move to Crockett from Huntsville in 2017. The older Shipley children – Ciara, Taylor, Aaron, and Sarah were grown and living away from home. So, Ken, Dena, and their youngest daughter, Kayden, relocated to a smaller community where they purchased a piece of land outside of town. While providing a new start for the family, Kayden was still plagued with the severe eczema outbreaks she’d suffered from all her life. Multiple visits to doctors and hospitals had produced little results. Kayden had been prescribed all the oral steroids and topical creams available, “But as soon as they wore off, the flare-ups were even worse than before.” Echoing the sentiment of moms worldwide, Dena said, “I got tired of her being miserable, so I started to research and see what I could find that could help Kayden. Not to cure the eczema or get rid of it, but at least make her more comfortable.”

While researching the topic, Dena discovered the use of tallow, which is rendered beef fat, and its benefits for skin care. She was already familiar with tallow because she kept it in her pantry for cooking. But her investigation showed that

the product contains fatty acids and vitamins and resembles natural sebum, the oil produced by the glands in our own skin.

“One night,” Dena recalls, “Kayden had a severe outbreak on her face.” Desperate to try and relieve her daughter’s agony, Dena grabbed the tallow out of her pantry. “I just slathered it on her face, all around her mouth where the outbreak was the worst. And by the next morning, it was practically gone!”

At first, Dena thought it was just a ‘chance happening,’ but she continued to apply the tallow. As the days went on, it seemed like Kayden was able to avoid some of the worst eczema outbreaks, although she still had occasional flare-ups, especially during the winter. “It gets bad,” said Dena, “because the winter weather is so dry.”

A neighbor suggested that Dena try “Bag Balm,” a salve developed in 1899 currently sold to aid dry, cracked skin. “But it smelled like petroleum oil,” Dena said, “and it wasn’t really right for a child’s skin.” And while the straight tallow did a good job, “It smelled like beef,” Dena laughed. “Not many people want to just put straight beef fat on their face!” So, she started blending it with essential oils. Her first product was ‘silk,’ which is like body butter or balm. “Your skin loves tallow,” Dena stated. “It’s one of the best things you can use on your skin.” The tallow is quickly absorbed but doesn’t clog pores or leave skin feeling greasy.

Although the silk was helping Kayden’s skin problems, Dena was convinced there was another, more fundamental reason for the continued flare-ups. “We were Dove soap users,” she stated. “I would buy bulk quantities of Dove soap, which we used up pretty quickly.” While known as one of the mildest skin care

*Photos by Dena Shipley and Jan White.*









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products on the market, Dena felt like manufactured soap still contained ingredients that were irritating to Kayden's skin. It made sense that if the tallow silk helped contain the eczema outbreaks, tallow soap might provide even more relief. Creating her own soap would give Dena control over the process and ingredients. "When I started making soap, not only did Kayden improve, but my skin and Ken's skin improved too."


Initially, Dena made soap and silk just for her family, but eventually, she began giving away extras to friends as gifts. Soon, those friends asked if they could purchase more of her goods and suggested she try to sell them in local markets. "In 2020, Palestine's Farmer's Market had reopened, so I sold my stuff there." A boutique shop in Lufkin also sells some of her products. But the building located in historic downtown Crockett is her first brick-and-mortar store, and all of Dena's skin care products are created and packaged there.

"I made the stuff out of my house for years. It had taken over my garage, dining room, and kitchen." In the beginning, Dena even rendered her own tallow. "I started off getting beef fat from a rancher in Nacogdoches. The rendering process took a long time. I would do it in roaster pots and crock pots," she said. "You just let it sit there and melt. Then strain it at least a couple of times. Five pounds of beef fat will give you about two or three pounds of tallow." These days, production has increased to the point that the rancher can't supply the amount Dena needs. "I've had to outsource the tallow from other areas. But I'm really careful who I get it from," Dena said. "I vet the sources really well."


Soap-making is quite a serious endeavor for Dena; she worked on the shampoo soap bar for two years before releasing it to the public. "I always want to find the right blend. There are stringent, strict percentage levels of essential oils and fragrances that are allowed to be used because both can wreak havoc on someone if you aren't using them at a safe level, especially essential oils."

Dena uses the cold process method to make soap, which is ideal for sensitive skin because it's preservative-free and allows you to customize your bars with herbs, essential oils and colorants of your choice.


"We have fairly large containers," Dena said, "where we mix all the tallows and the oils, butter, clays for coloring, and any botanicals used like flower petals or ground chamomile. Then add the lye solution, blend it all up, and it's ready to be poured." The soap forms look like bread loaf pans but are much longer. After the mix is poured, the saponification process begins. Simply put, saponification is the process that turns



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(fat or oil) into soap by reaction with an alkali. "It heats up nice and hot, and the next morning, we pull it out of the forms." The cutting machine looks like an oversized bread slicer, chipping the loaf into individual soap bars.

Every product sold by Mustard Seed Soap Co. is handmade. Dena's skin care products include shampoo, conditioner, body soap, creams, sprays, body oils and lip balm. "And we started making candles this year," she said. "Although they aren't made from tallow. We use coconut and apricot. They burn nice and clean and last a really long time."

Mustard Seed Soap Co. opened its doors to business in March of this year. Dena says, "It has been a real blessing. Not a day goes by that I don't get to share an experience or say a prayer with someone who comes through that door. I treasure the sweet conversations I get to have with them."

Although Mustard Seed Soap Co. has only been a brick-and-mortar store for seven months, Dena is convinced it will succeed. "This store is not for me. I pray over all the products that they will bring comfort to others." Her voice choked with emotion as she continued, "When I look back on this - I didn't pursue it. God kept dropping things in my lap, so all I did was follow His lead."

And it started with just a little bit of faith. ■





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# The Magnificent Lithuanian Fish-Finding Dog

By Janice R. Edwards

“What a cute little dog, what kind of a little dog is that?” asked the woman fishing top water lures out of the antique Skeeter bass boat.

That’s not exactly what my husband, Roy; our Yorkie, George Mutt, and I were expecting to hear as we broke out of the Cypress trees and undergrowth swamp we had been paddling through on Caddo Lake during our annual Easter trip with the Houston Canoe Club. According to our map, we thought we’d be in a quiet clearing not far from camp.

On that Caddo Lake trip, we were reenergizing our souls and George Mutt was looking for an excuse - any excuse - to jump in the water on his own fishing expedition. George loved the water, and if I wasn’t paying close attention to him, he would be out of the boat and into the lake snapping up fish - reminiscent of “Jaws.” Roy and I were looking for our own place to fish - since we had not had as much luck as George in finding fish that day. Roy and I were on the hunt for a good

Bream hole so we could have our traditional fresh Bream and scrambled eggs for breakfast in the morning. George was busy running around on his “Mutt Butt Board” - his place in the canoe that Roy had fashioned out of plywood and outdoor carpet which fit between the thwarts of our red canoe.

If you live right, and you’re really lucky, you might be blessed with a dog like George at least once in your life. He had a human personality and never met a stranger. So when Roy and I greeted the couple fishing, George ran to the side of the canoe closest to them. He greeted them with his characteristic “smile” and tail wag. He knew an audience when he saw them - and George was always a ham.

Roy and I, in turn, greeted the couple in the Skeeter and asked them how fishing was. The man told us that they’d had a couple of bites, a Bream or two and a barely legal bass. Fishing was not good, but the couple was friendly and we struck up a conversation. George, of course, was not going to be left out,







and he barked and wagged his insistence to be noticed – hence the lady’s question, “What kind of a little dog is that?”

In our canoe club, there was another couple who owned an unusual dog who often went paddling with them. He was a beautiful soft gray dog with unknown parentage - but he looked like he should be some kind of breed of dog. His owners were asked what kind of dog he was so often on trips that they made up a breed for him – a Lithuanian Canoe Dog. So maybe that is why when we were asked what kind of dog George was that I glibly answered, “Oh, this dog is a Lithuanian Fish-Finding Dog”.

“A WHAT?” asked the surprised fisherman at the controls of the Skeeter.

All my life, I have thought that fishing took talent, and just the right timing. This situation was no exception. At that moment – as if it were planned - George ran up to the gunnels of the boat, smiled, and pointed with his paw to a location just in front of the bass boat. Guess we’d been married too long because Roy picked up my line of thought, and replied, “Yeah, a Lithuanian Fish-Finding Dog. See, if we pass by someone who’s fishing, and George likes them; he’ll point to where he sees the fish – like a pointer shows where the birds are. Look, he’s on point now.”

“R-i-g-h-t,” says the doubting fisherman noting George’s posture, “and where’s that dog pointing to now?”

Roy wasn’t about to give up on a good tale, so he quickly shot a line down George’s paw, and using his best fisherman’s instinct, searched for a likely place in that general direction where a fish could be hiding. He saw it and just as the lady

fisherman drew back her rod to cast, Roy instructed, “Tell your wife to cast to that Cypress stump on your left.”

She looked, shrugged her shoulders in disbelief and cast that top water lure directly over the Cypress stump in question. As the lure snaked out across the water between the boat and the stump, everything began to move in slow motion. The lure started its descent to the stump, and an eight-pound black bass exploded from the lake engulfing the lure which never had the chance to hit the water. George excitedly barked his approval as the lady reared back, screamed in delight and set the hook. Then the war was on. The lady reeled for all she was worth and that bass, who never saw what hooked him and never had the chance to go down, tail walked - gills flaring and water splashing - all the way back to the Skeeter boat. She landed the catch of the day.

Sometimes, the truth is stranger than fish tales. Those of us who witnessed the event sat there in stunned silence for a minute – after all, we were just telling tall tales. The man in the Skeeter bass boat went slack jawed and begged, “How much you want for the dog? I want to buy that dog!!” George, our loveable fish finding dog, made believers out of a couple of fishermen, and I’ll bet to this day that there is someone in Uncertain, Texas still looking for a Lithuanian Fish-Finding Dog.

Of course, George was not for sale – but that fisherman had a sudden keen interest in “that breed of dog” – and George, in particular. I imagine we could have gotten as much as we wanted for George that day – but, hey, you can’t sell your “trained” fish-finding dog. ■





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By Janice R. Edwards

'Tis a puzzlement what to do with those prolific plastic bags groceries and other items are bagged in when we shop. Cooking more at home, like I have been doing lately, though, leads to going to the grocery store for more ingredients and inevitably, lots of plastic bags.

So, what do we do with all those bags? I believe in reducing, reusing and recycling. I take my own bags to places like Aldi, but at other grocery stores and pet stores, I use their bags for convenience. I reuse those bags for bathroom trash can liners and cleanups for our pups' deposits. I don't know if there is still a store that accepts bags for recycling – I used to take lots of bags there. It's amazing how many plastic bags you accumulate.

I have discovered a project that uses a lot of those plastic bags and creates something useful made from them. I discovered p-l-a-r-n projects. What is plarn? Well, the "pl" comes from the plastic bags used to make it, and the "a-r-n" comes from the yarn it becomes – hence plarn. It's easy to make. If I can do it, anyone can. Save your plastic bags and when you have hundreds of them, just Google "making plarn." There are several demonstrations - some are illustrations, and some are videos. I found it easier to use a video on YouTube.

Once you have the hang of making the plarn, make up a ball of it, like you would yarn. When you start making plarn, be aware of the colors of bags you get: Walmart bags are soft grey with touches of blue, Kroger bags are tan with touches of blue, PetSmart bags are white with red touches, Dollar General bags are yellow with black touches, HEB has white bags with red print. They can all be used together, or colors can be separated out for a different look.

There are numerous plarn projects on the internet. Beginners often make sleeping mats for homeless people. I would have done this, but I don't know who gives them out to homeless people, so I looked for something else. First, I made an entry rug – but that didn't work because it slipped on the floor when it was wet. Then, I stumbled on this beach bag pattern. I made several of them and they all look different. The kind of plastic bags you use and the type ribbon you decorate with makes them all look different. The finished bags can be used when you need a big bag - diaper bags, beach bags, even tool bags. All you need is ribbon, a crochet hook and your plarn.

I'll share the beach bag project with you. If you crochet, this is easy, gives you something productive to do, recycles unwanted plastic bags and makes something you will be proud to use or give.



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## What you'll need

- Lots and lots of plastic bag plarn (around 200 bags)
- Crochet hook size H (I use J because I crochet so tight)
- About 17 yards of 7/8" ribbon
- Stitch markers or safety pins or paper clips
- Needle and thread same color of your ribbon to attach to bag

## The pattern:

### To begin, first construct the base:

Chain 36,

Rows 1-13: Single crochet into each of the 36 chain, chain 1 and turn;

Row 14: Single crochet into the next 35 single crochet, 3 single crochets in the next single crochet at the end of the row (i.e. 36 single crochet stitch) This makes the corner. Then single stitch in the stitches that make up the width of the bag (about 12 stitches), 3 single crochet in the last stitch that makes up the width (this makes the second corner). Now you are on the other side of the length of the base where you originally chained 36. Single crochet in each of the next 35 single crochet, 3 single crochet in the next single crochet at the end of the row (i.e. 36 sc stitch – this will make the third corner). Single crochet in the stitches that make up the width of the bag (about 12 stitches), 3 single crochet in the last stitch that makes the width and slip stitch to join the beginning row.

### Now construct the body of the bag:

Row 15: Chain 1, single crochet in the back loop only in each single crochet in the round. Slip stitch to join the round.

Row 16: Chain 1, single crochet in both loops in each single crochet in the round. Slip stitch to join round.

Rows 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37: Chain 3 (counts as 1 double crochet), double crochet in both loops in each single crochet in the round. Slip stitch to join.

Rows 18, 22, 26, 30, 34, 38: Chain 1, single crochet in both loops in each double crochet in the round. Slip stitch to join round.

Rows 19, 23, 27, 31, 33: Chain 4 (counts as 1 double crochet and chain 1), skip single crochet, \*double crochet in the next single crochet, chain 1, skip next single crochet, \*\*, repeat \* to \*\* 54 times, slip stitch to join round.

Rows 20, 24, 28, 32, 36: Chain 1, single crochet in each space in the round. Slip stitch to join round.

### Lastly, construct the shoulder straps for the bag:

#### Preparation for placement of straps:

Lay the bag flat. Measure 5" in on the right and left ends of the bag and mark with a stitch marker or safety pin. Do this on the other side of the bag as well. The 5" marker is the middle of each strap. This means you will have 4 stitch markers in all (2 on each side of the bag). Crochet the straps to the following pattern:

\*Row 1: Slip stitch into the single crochet that is 2.5" from the end of the bag and the stitch marker. Chain 1, single crochet in the next 7 single crochet. (You will have to take out your stitch marker when you do this, but you will no longer need it on this side of the bag.)

Row 2: chain 1. Single crochet in the next 3 single crochet, chain 1. Skip next single crochet, single crochet in the next 3 single crochet.

Odd numbered rows: Single crochet in the next single crochet and in the spaces.

Even numbered rows: chain 1, single crochet in the next 3 single crochets, chain 1, skip next single crochet, single crochet in next 3 single crochets. Repeat even and odd number rows until you have 77 rows (I think this is a bit long, shorten to 73 rows) total. Single crochet the strap to the other end of the bag on the same side of the bag making sure that the middle of the strap is at the place where the other stitch marker is. Remove the stitch marker if it is in the way. \*\* Repeat from \* to \*\* for the other side of the bag.

Add ribbon embellishment in the gaps you created in rows 19, 23, 27, 31 and 33, weave from the outside to the inside. Tack ribbon to bag and to complete the circle, I also use permanent fabric glue to secure the ribbon. ■







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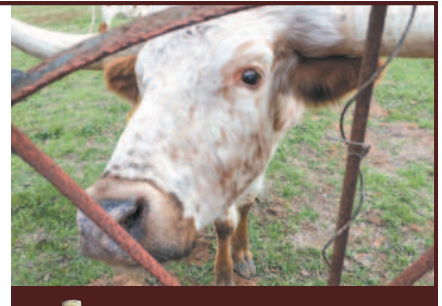
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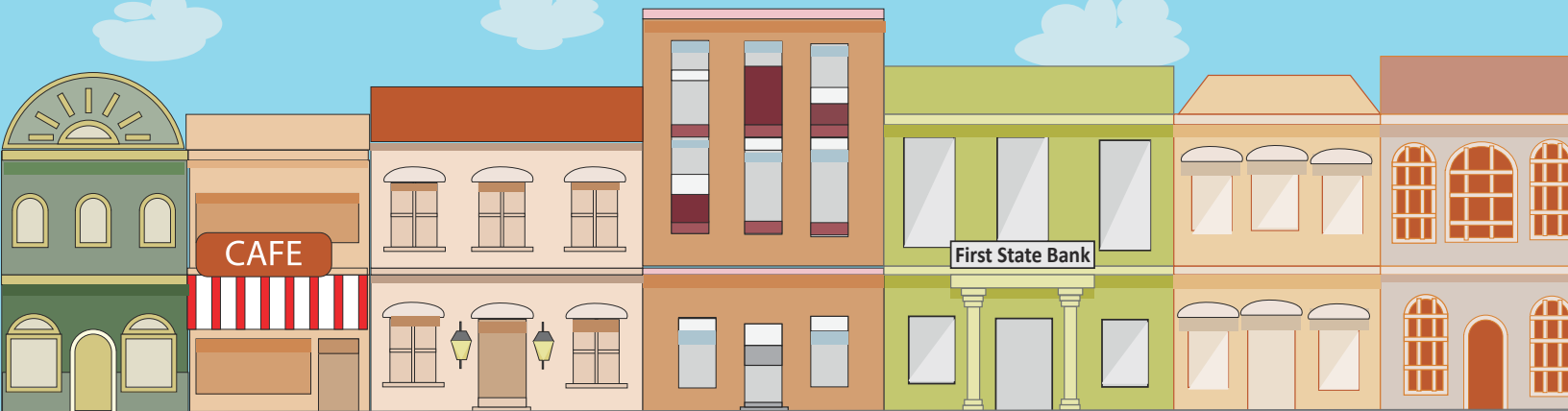


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# GARgantuan Catch

Angler tops IGFA all-tackle world record with 283-pounder from Sam Rayburn



*Kentucky angler Art Weston with the 283-pound alligator gar he caught and released at Sam Rayburn Reservoir on Sept. 2. Weston, who was fishing with guide Kirk Kirkland, fought the huge fish for nearly three hours using spinning tackle and six-pound test monofilament line tethered to a steel leader. If certified by the International Game Fish Association, the fish will be a new IGFA all-tackle record, six-pound line class record, a Texas all-tackle state record and water body record. (Photo courtesy of Kirk Kirkland)*

By Matt Williams, Outdoors Writer

One of the world's oldest and most hallowed freshwater fishing records has likely been crushed by a monster alligator gar caught and released recently at Sam Rayburn Reservoir by Art Weston of Union, Ky.

The news comes courtesy of Kirk Kirkland of Trinity. Kirkland is a veteran fishing guide who specializes in targeting the toothy titans using rod and reel. He calls his aluminum fishing boat the "Garship Enterprise."

Weston is a thrill-seeking big fish chaser with several International Game Fish Association line class world records already to his name.

On Sept. 2, Weston was fishing with Kirkland at the lake's upper reaches when he landed an alligator gar that weighed 283 pounds on Kirkland's certified scale. The fish was released immediately after it was weighed.

Measuring eight feet, four inches long with a 48-inch girth, Weston's fish is a pending IGFA all-tackle world record and Texas all-tackle state record. If certified, it will top the current world record and Texas record that has stood for nearly 72 years.

That mark — a 279-pounder — was set in December 1951 by the late Bill Valverde of Mission. It's been reported that Valverde reeled in the huge fish using a homemade pole fashioned from bamboo. His Montague reel was spooled with nylon line of an unknown breaking strength.

Weston is a light tackle expert who specializes in going after really big fish using tiny line. Amazingly, he landed the Sam Rayburn bruiser using a six-foot spinning rod and reel spooled with six-pound test Momoi Hi-Catch monofilament fishing line. He said the main line was tethered to a 175-pound test steel leader with an 8/0 J-hook. He used a chunk of carp for bait.

Matt Williams is a freelance outdoor writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by e-mail, [mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com](mailto:mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com). ■

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# AN AMERICAN HERO

By Brian Besch

Down FM 2798 and past Plum Pudding Road, between the towns of Segno and Votaw, is the community of Holly Grove. It's best to know where you're going to find your way, because there are thousands of trees hanging over and around the dirt paths that won't offer much help.

About to enter his 98th year on Earth, Durwood "Red" Allen has a front porch that provides a good view in Holly Grove. He hasn't always known where he was going in life. The armed services supplied a few surprises in his time during World War II. Some were good, like four years ago, when he was taken to San Diego for an all-expense-paid three-day tour. Others weren't as luxurious.

Allen was on the front lines in Germany during the war, but he first wanted to tell why.

"I was supposed to go to the Air Force when I was drafted. I wanted to be a mechanic and I was a pretty good mechanic anyway," he said. "I wanted to be a mechanic on an airplane. It was approved and they carried me out to Mineral Wells. I was going out to Alabama to the B-24 bombers and learn to be a mechanic on those bombers. That's what I wanted. All of my tests showed I was a good mechanic. They came out to the hut that we were in and this major said, 'Pack your things, you are headed to Alabama. You are going to be trained to be a radio operator on a B-24 bomber.' I didn't want that, but I didn't have the choice."

Allen then said while at Mineral Wells, a colonel announced to all their plans had been changed. There was an order that infantry was needed, and Allen would soon be sent to Camp Fannin, located northeast of Tyler.

Camp Fannin transformed more than 200,000 young American men into Army infantry replacements between May 1943 and December 1945. When they had finished training, these soldiers were assigned to serve in both theaters of war at places like Normandy, Malmedy, Remagen, Bougainville and many other sites of combat. Many would become casualties.

"It was one of the worst bases they had ever done," Allen said. "They weren't just strict with you; they were mean to us. We were mistreated. It is hard to think about. I was young, 18 years old, and I didn't weigh but about 135 pounds. When you are small like that, everybody picks on you. Some of those guys want to fight. I learned to fight, I had to when I started school. If you were the smallest there, all of the other kids think, 'Well, we will just whip you.' They got fooled, because my dad had taught me. I'm not going to tell you I'm the best fighter in the world, but I could hold my own."

No stranger to a rough time, he was born in 1925, and experienced the Great Depression as a youth. Sergeants and lieutenants at Camp Fannin did not have the ability to speak nicely, according to Allen. The men did learn use of military weapons, and the country boy from Texas said he already knew



how to shoot. He was raised on a ranch in Freestone County. The small town of Kirvin, west of Fairfield, is where he grew up.

Walter Winchell, a popular reporter at the time, said Camp Fannin would make a Marine base look like a Boy Scout camp.

"I had been working outside in January and East Texas got cold back in those days. It was the toughest camp the United States had. I broke my ankle, but the first time I was in (sick call), I had come down with double pneumonia. The platoon sergeant wouldn't let me go on sick leave. I was sick and coughing. Finally, on the third day, I just couldn't get out of bed. I was so weak, I couldn't raise up.

"I didn't hardly have the strength, but I put my pants on and my shirt on and it was wintertime. I had a high temperature, so that cool air out there felt good. I started walking and I didn't even have my uniform right. I met two guys, a major and a captain. There was a board, a 2-by-12 to walk across a stream of water. I got there first and walked across and that major started eating me out because I didn't have my uniform on. That captain stopped him and wanted to know where I was headed. I told him I was headed to sick call. I couldn't hardly talk. The captain asked me if I could make it, and I could see it a little ways up the hill. I was so weak, I didn't know, but I made it."

After reaching help, arrangements were made for Allen to receive a bed while he sat in the waiting room. Four days later, he woke up in a bed.

He was informed by a nurse that they had been fighting to keep him alive. He would spend six weeks in the bed with tubes in both arms and taking a new drug called penicillin.

Allen later broke his ankle during the last of his training. Jumping across a narrow stream of water, his foot hit a slick place and his ankle went across a rock.

Superiors yelled for him to get up, claiming that he wasn't hurt. After taking the boot off, his ankle had already swelled. Lying in a bed with his ankle hanging in the air, he was in the hospital for another six weeks.

Doctors documented that he would not be suitable for overseas duty. Therefore, he was assigned to train new recruits. His group would come from the Bronx. Allen said he was told they spoke English, but he questioned that.

He was teaching the group how to break down an M1 rifle.

"It was the perfect rifle if you learned how to use it. You could sight your adjustments for wind and elevation and that thing would shoot 500 yards. I had medals hanging down to here (marks around his stomach). I was the best shot out on the range that they had in Camp Fannin."

One of the new recruits would not touch the rifle and Allen could not urge him to try. A staff sergeant started yelling at Allen and soon a lieutenant jumped in to do the same.

"I did something I shouldn't have, but I had done lost my temper. Because some guy wouldn't do something, they blamed me. One thing led to another, and that lieutenant got on me. Me and that lieutenant got into an argument about it, and I told him, 'Why don't you come down here and see if you can get him to do something?' He said, 'That's not my job. My job is to see that you do yours.'

"My temper got away with me. I threw everything down and said, 'Y'all take care of this. I don't need this.' I walked

out. That was a mistake, yes. I walked out and went back to the barracks and laid down in the bed."

In 20 minutes, he was picked up and taken to a colonel's office. Following a 30-minute tongue-lashing, he was sent back to the barracks and ordered not to leave. The next morning, he was told that he would be shipped out.

After 10 days at home, the colonel had Allen transported to Germany, taking part in battle on the front lines.

"When I got over there, we were living in foxholes. It wasn't comfortable at all," he explained. "It was wintertime. The Germans were just as good of shots as we were. They were good soldiers and they had good weapons. I could be as close as (a few feet) with bullets shooting everywhere when we were raiding the Germans, and guys were getting hit and killed and wounded. A bullet never touched me. Now, explain that. Another guy or two had the same luck, but (the Germans) were shooting machine guns.

"We fought the Germans and we whipped them, but our unit was assigned up in the top of a mountain. This is in the wintertime, and it is 30 and 40 below zero. We had one overcoat, a pair of wool underdrawers, and two pair of socks. We were holding ground. There were two guys to a hole. We spent, I believe, 11 days doing that.

"We had the foxholes with logs and brush over them, so that when the artillery came in from the Germans, it had a cover over them that wouldn't hurt you. We were in there and the Germans started shelling us."

A hole next to his had soldiers who would not return home.

"One of their artillery shells went in that square door you could crawl into and went off in that bunker. It killed every guy in there. A part of them were up in the trees and everywhere. I saw that, because that was right next to the one that we were in. When that thing went off in there, that ground just shook."

When they were finally relieved, it took six hours to walk down the mountain after surviving on K-rations with very little rest.

Allen said he spent some nights sitting on his helmet to avoid standing water in the foxholes. He also had folded his overcoat to sit on it just as he did the helmet. After shaking it out and sticking it in the snow, the coat stood frozen.

He was taken to a hospital for five weeks after being frozen from the waist down.

"I saw boys lose their face, ears, nose, hand, feet, legs and I saw them die right there," he said of his time in the hospital. "If you don't get blood circulating in a certain length of time, blood poisoning starts. When that hits your heart, you are dead.

"That's the war. That is the reason I say let's not have any more war. It is nothing but misery. There are going to be some more wars, but I say let's not have them. Let's do something to stop them. Let those guys negotiate with each other."

Spending two and a half years overseas, one of them was during occupation. Allen was transferred out of the infantry and into special services. He was assigned to a kitchen as a cook.

"We had the Bob Hope Show over there for three weeks. Me and another boy would have to carry him up and put him to bed when he would get drunk. Our unit — we had a bar. Every month, any soldier that wanted a fifth of whiskey got it for free. It made a drunk out of half of them."



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*Durwood "Red" Allen and his family toured San Diego four years ago to visit military sites.*

Allen said he was never a drinker. He tried alcohol once, calling it the worst-tasting stuff he ever put in his mouth.

"Bob Hope would sit down at our bar; we had it down in the basement. We had a real bar down there — I mean first class. We were living in a fancy hotel, a top-rated hotel that Germany had and high-up officials used. Bob Hope would sit there, and the drunker he got, the more jokes he could tell. We had stools that you would sit on there, and then we had booths and we had tables. It was a pretty good-sized room. Not one time, but several times, Bob Hope would sit up there and get drunk and fall off of that stool."

Not only would Allen meet one of the kings of show business, but he also spent time with England's royalty.

"I met Queen Elizabeth when I was in England. I was taking rehab. A couple of evenings a week, they would let us go to town. They had these donut places you could go in and eat donuts. There were three of us boys. One of them was from Beaumont and I can't think of his name. We were sitting there and talking to one of the women that would give you donuts and soda water, and I saw that girl standing over there. I had seen a picture of her, but I had never seen her. I asked the woman, "That young lady over there, is that Princess Elizabeth?"

The woman introduced them, and the future Queen Elizabeth II spent a half hour with them.

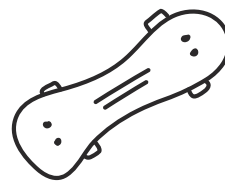
"She was more interested in Texas. She was working in the evenings. She was in the English military as a truck driver. She would work two nights a week. She delivered goods for the military."

In one of more than a dozen interactions, the then-princess told the men she would be visiting the Lone Star State following the war.

"She wanted to know where I lived in Texas, and I told her. I told her, 'If you come to Texas, I'll show you around.' She got elected queen and she did come to Texas. She told me she was going to look me up. I gave her my name and everything, and two or three areas she could follow to find me. She never did. She used to have a racehorse deal down in the valley, raising racehorses. I saw her one time here but didn't get a chance to talk to her. I waved at her and she waved back, and that's all there was to it."

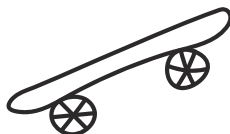
Allen has survived sickness, injury and evaded the bullets in war. It was a long way from the bomber mechanic dreams he had of the Air Force. There are still 167,000 living veterans from World War II, but there aren't too many with the memory for detail that Allen possesses. He has plenty of stories — more than can fit in a lengthy article. There are more narratives of Camp Fannin, the war, Bob Hope and Queen Elizabeth II — some perhaps too detailed for here. But if you're ever in Holly Grove, he has a front porch that is good for storytelling. ■





Life lesson learned

# Just roll with it



## Story by Barbara White

One Christmas, when Santa mistakenly thought I had developed a sense of balance and a little common sense, I received a pair of roller skates.

I was taught from an early age to be appreciative of anything I got, with the exception of things like measles and splinters, so I pretended to be thrilled. The fact is, I was disappointed. For the second year in a row, I might add.

I kept my mouth shut, strapped on those skates and proceeded to practice falling down. I soon figured out how to keep from going wheels up and by that afternoon I was playing carhop, skating up to my imaginary customers at the drive-in who were amazed by my ability to skate so beautifully while balancing a tray full of burgers and shakes.

I grew to love those skates, but no amount of imagination could turn them into the one gift that I had wanted the most: a bicycle.

Maybe next year, I thought. Or maybe for my birthday. Or maybe a random gift as a reward for being such an exceptional child. My dream stayed alive.

The roller skates weren't my first set of wheels.

I had a tricycle and a scooter, both hand-me-downs from my older sister. I loved them all; even my older sister, despite the fact she did not have the decency to have procured a bicycle that she could have passed down to me.

Then I got a pedal-powered tractor, which seemed like an odd choice for an aspiring young lady who did not live on a farm. It was bright orange with Allis Chalmers printed in black letters on the side. I did not know Allis Chalmers. My father explained that Allis Chalmers was a major manufacturer of agricultural equipment at the time. One of the best, he said wistfully.

You know how sometimes you buy someone a gift that you secretly wish you could keep for yourself? I think that may have been one of those times. I also think he may have wanted a son.

But the tractor had wheels – two large ones in the rear and two smaller ones on the front – and I liked wheels. I put them to good use.

So, by the age of 7, when I got the roller skates, I had been blessed with several sets of perfectly fine wheels, a collection of toys and dolls that would have made me the envy of many other kids and enough stuffed animals to fill my imaginary zoo. And yet I felt that something, something important, was missing.

I received many nice things the next Christmas. And the next. And the next. And the next. I still didn't get the one thing I wanted most in the world.

You are probably thinking that I was an ungrateful, selfish little twit. I wasn't selfish; I would have gladly given my Brussels sprouts to those starving children in Africa if I could have figured out how to get them there. I once trick-or-treated for UNICEF, although I admit I wasn't wild about the idea. OK, I guess I was an ungrateful little twit. I was an ungrateful little twit who wanted a bicycle.

In hindsight, the reason neither my sister nor I had a bicycle at an early age was because of where we lived, which was on a very steep, very winding, two-lane road in Oregon. A teenage boy with a souped-up Chevy lived near the top of the hill and loved to see how fast he could take those blind, hairpin curves.

If I had gotten a bicycle instead of my other wheels, all of which I was forbidden to use beyond our yard, my excitement, and likely me, would have probably been short-lived.

While I waited, and waited, I used all of the ingenuity and imagination I could muster to pretend I had a bicycle. My dad's big Samsonite suitcase that he kept in the corner of the bedroom – no, not because he stayed ready to make a quick getaway, but because he traveled a lot for work – became a bicycle. I would straddle that thing, leaning it to the left and back to the right as I traveled at such great speeds that I had to lean into each curve in the road.

I once tried to balance the tricycle on top of the scooter and pretend the contraption was a bicycle. I do not recommend this. My parents apparently didn't care if I got myself killed as long as I didn't do it in the road.

Finally, the Christmas before I turned 12, I came downstairs and there it was: a girl's bicycle, blue with a white seat and coaster brakes. It was exactly what I wanted.

I had probably logged a thousand miles on that thing by the next Christmas. It came with me when we moved to Houston, to a neighborhood that was much more conducive to bike riding and long before that part of town grew into one of those places where it takes three traffic light changes and a prayer to make a left turn.

That bicycle came with me to college, although it didn't make it to graduation. I returned from Christmas break my sophomore year to find a broken bike lock, but no bike.

I only hope it ended up with some little girl who wanted a bicycle as much as I did. Nah, that's not possible. ■



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# SHOP EAST TEXAS



*Old Town Tomball was a delightful surprise. Parking is good, the shops are close enough for a nice day of walking, and you can find a little bit of everything. Several of the merchants have been doing business here for many years, so the area is established with good quality food and products. There are several restaurants that range from barbecue to a tearoom. Refreshments include candy and ice cream or enjoy adult only options from the Honey Wine Tasting Room. Shops take up several blocks and include clothing, home décor, all the latest gift options for men, women and children, antique books and furniture. Starting this month, they are decked out for the Christmas season. This will be a wonderful day trip during the fall and holidays. Maybe I will see you there!*

*-Kelli Barnes, publisher (and designated shopper)*



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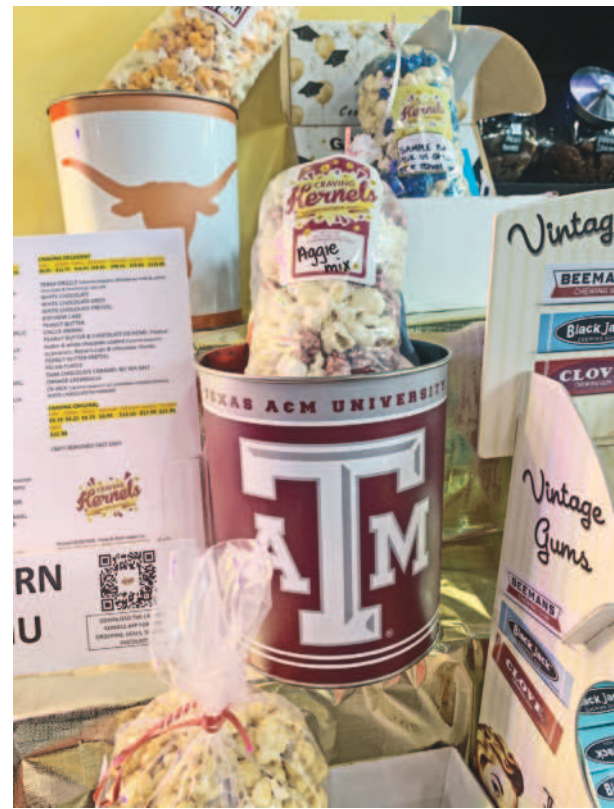
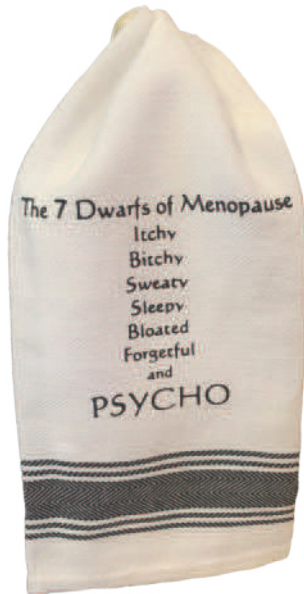
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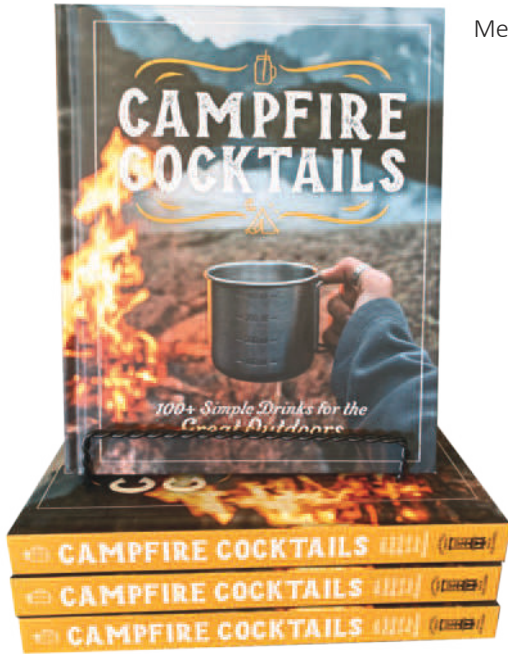


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# CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

### Lufkin

Sammy Kershaw, Collin Raye and Aaron Tippin at the Temple Theater  
*OCTOBER 1*

### Texas City

The Fab 5 in concert at Lagoon Fest  
*OCTOBER 1*

### Houston

Smashing Pumpkins at the Toyota Center  
*OCTOBER 3*

### Woodville

Tyler County Fair  
*OCTOBER 4-7*

### Houston

Depeche Mode at the Toyota Center  
*OCTOBER 4*

### Center

East Texas Poultry Festival  
*OCTOBER 5-7*

### Galveston

Ray Wylie Hubbard/Old Quarter Acoustic Café  
*OCTOBER 5-6*

### Houston

International Gem and Jewelry Show/  
NRG Center  
*OCTOBER 6-8*

### Nacogdoches

Country Willie Edwards/Fredonia  
Brewery  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Pineland

Pineland Day Parade and Festival  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Jasper

Fall Butterfly Festival/Sandy Creek Park  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Beaumont

2023 Fire Prevention and Fire Safety  
Festival/Fire Museum of Texas  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Orange

The Big Pumpkin Run 2023 5K/  
Downtown Riverwalk  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Hawkins

Hawkins Oil Festival 2023  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Galveston

Galveston Island Brewing Company 5K  
Beer Run  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Tyler

Corkscrew Half Marathon 10K and 5K  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Huntsville

49th Annual Fair on the Square  
*OCTOBER 7*

### Galveston

Jamie Lin Wilson/Old Quarter Acoustic  
Café  
*OCTOBER 9*

### Katy

Katy Rice Harvest Festival 2023  
*OCTOBER 13-15*

### Galveston

Chris Botti at the Grand 1894 Opera  
House  
*OCTOBER 14*

### Cleveland

Moe Bandy and Joe Stampley at the  
Texan Theater  
*OCTOBER 14*

### Houston

Wings over Houston Air Show/Ellington  
Field  
*OCTOBER 14-15*

### Huntsville

Huntsville Half Marathon, Quarter  
Marathon and 5K  
*OCTOBER 14*

### Seabrook

Country, Folk and Blues Festival/Clear  
Lake Park  
*OCTOBER 14*

### Huntsville

3 Redneck Tenors/Old Town Theater  
*OCTOBER 14*

### Woodville

Tyler County Art League 20th  
Anniversary Celebration  
*DECEMBER 13-14*

### The Woodlands

Chris Stapleton/CW Mitchell Pavilion  
*OCTOBER 13*

### Kirbyville

Southeast Texas Renaissance Faire  
*OCTOBER 14*



**Marshall**

Fire Ant Festival  
*OCTOBER 14*

**Kilgore**

Oktoberfest at Kilgore City Park  
*OCTOBER 14*

**Channelview**

San Jacinto Fall Fandango/San Jacinto Museum  
*OCTOBER 14*

**Houston**

Bayou City Art Festival/Downtown  
*OCTOBER 14-15*

**Livingston**

Trade Days at Pedigo Park  
*OCTOBER 14-15*

**The Woodlands**

Sting at the CW Mitchell Pavilion  
*OCTOBER 15*

**Beaumont**

5th Annual Beaumont Comic Con/Ford Park  
*OCTOBER 15*

**Lufkin**

Sounds of Silence Tribute/Polk County Commerce Center  
*OCTOBER 17*

**Woodville**

Tyler County Hospital Fall Festival  
*OCTOBER 19*

**Tyler**

Texas Rose Festival  
*OCTOBER 19-22*

**Woodville**

34th Annual Harvest Festival/Heritage Village  
*OCTOBER 20-21*

**Lindale**

Piney Woods Wine Festival  
*OCTOBER 20*

**Jefferson**

2023 Texas Bigfoot Conference  
*OCTOBER 20-22*

**Lufkin**

Draggin and Pullin in the Pines/Pine Valley Raceway  
*OCTOBER 20-22*

**Kountze**

Big Thicket Hogs and Strings 2023 Music Festival/  
Indian Springs Camp  
*OCTOBER 21*

**Beaumont**

Oktoberfest 2023/Pour 09 Bar and Rooftop  
*OCTOBER 21*

**Houston**

Peter Gabriel at the Toyota Center  
*OCTOBER 21*

**Coldspring**

38th Annual Car, Truck and Bike Show  
*OCTOBER 21*

**LaMarque**

Bayou Fest 2023  
*OCTOBER 21*

**Sugarland**

Kansas at the Smart Financial Center  
*OCTOBER 21*

**Pasadena**

Pasadena Gun and Knife Show/Pasadena Convention Center  
*OCTOBER 21-22*

**Houston**

Celebrating David Bowie/House of Blues  
*OCTOBER 24*

**Longview**

Harvest Festival and Livestock Show/Longview Fairgrounds  
*OCTOBER 24*

**Galveston**

Harvest Moon Regatta  
*OCTOBER 26*

**Clute**

Harvest Fun Fest  
*OCTOBER 26*

**Woodville**

Annual Rotary Gumbo/Woodville Fire House  
*OCTOBER 27*

**Colmesneil**

Community Wide Fall Festival/Community Center, 6-8 pm  
*OCTOBER 28*

**Lufkin**

2nd Annual Brookshire Brothers Trick or Trot 5k and Kids Fun Run/Downtown  
*OCTOBER 28*

**Colmesneil**

Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch/Victory Camp Colmesneil, 10 am-3 pm  
*OCTOBER 28*



# CALENDAR

## **Nacogdoches**

Tobaccodoches Cigar Festival 2023/  
Downtown  
*NOVEMBER 28-29*

## **Houston**

John Mayer at the Toyota Center  
*NOVEMBER 30*

# NOVEMBER

## **Houston**

2023 Houston Quilt Festival/G R Brown  
Convention Center  
*NOVEMBER 1-5*

## **Houston**

Vienna Boys Choir/Cullen Theater  
*NOVEMBER 1*

## **Houston**

Luis Miguel/Toyota Center  
*NOVEMBER 2*

## **Huntsville**

Gene Watson at the Old Town Theater  
*NOVEMBER 4*

## **Houston**

Collect-A-Con/G R Brown Convention  
Center  
*NOVEMBER 4*

## **Lufkin**

Tito Puente and his Latin Jazz Orchestra/  
Pines Theater  
*NOVEMBER 4*

## **Nacogdoches**

3rd Annual Day of the Dead Fun Run/  
Hospital Street  
*NOVEMBER 4*

## **Longview**

Southern Soul Blues Festival/Cobb  
Convention Center  
*NOVEMBER 4-5*

## **Humble**

2023 Humble Gun Show/Civic Center  
*NOVEMBER 4-5*

## **Houston**

Christopher Cross at the Heights Theater  
*NOVEMBER 5*

## **Montgomery**

Oilman Texas Triathlon/Margaritaville  
Lake Resort  
*NOVEMBER 5*

## **Kilgore**

Reel East Texas Film Festival 2023  
*NOVEMBER 9-12*

## **Tyler**

Vintage Market Days of East Texas Fall  
Event/The Oil Palace  
*NOVEMBER 10-12*

## **Conroe**

11-11 Music Fest 2023/Heritage Place  
*NOVEMBER 10-11*

## **Humble**

Houston Gem and Mineral Society  
Annual Show/Civic Center  
*NOVEMBER 10-12*

## **Galveston**

Polar Express Train Ride  
*NOVEMBER 10-DECEMBER 22*

## **Kilgore**

A Very Derrick Christmas in Downtown  
Kilgore  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Huntsville**

Johnny Lee/Old Town Theater  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Henderson**

34th Annual Heritage Syrup Festival  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Carthage**

175th Anniversary Celebration  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Woodville**

Holiday Tea and Purse Auction/Our Lady  
of the Pines Catholic Church Family  
Center  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Huntsville**

Huntsville Holiday Market  
*NOVEMBER 11-12*

## **Nacogdoches**

East Texas Half Marathon 5k and 10K  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Beaumont**

SETX Cattlebaron's Ball/Beaumont Civic  
Center  
*NOVEMBER 11*

## **Santa Fe**

Santa Fe Heritage Festival  
*NOVEMBER 12*



**Lufkin**

Jesus Christ Superstar/Temple Theater  
*NOVEMBER 13*

**Sugarland**

Peter Frampton at the Smart Financial Center  
*NOVEMBER 15*

**Katy**

A Katy Old Fashioned Christmas Festival  
*NOVEMBER 17*

**Palestine**

Polar Express Train Ride  
*NOVEMBER 17-DECEMBER 27*

**Crockett**

42nd Annual Christmas in Crockett  
*NOVEMBER 18*

**Lake Jackson**

Holidays Around the World/Lake Jackson Historical Museum  
*NOVEMBER 18*

**Tomball**

Bob Seger Tribute/Mainstreet Crossing  
*NOVEMBER 18*

**Houston**

Enrique Iglesias, Pitbull and Ricky Martin/Toyota Center  
*NOVEMBER 18*

**Livingston**

Trade Days at Pedigo Park  
*NOVEMBER 18-19*

**Palestine**

Whiskey and Wine Swirl/Downtown  
*NOVEMBER 18*

**Woodville**

Tyler County Art League Holiday Shoppe  
*NOVEMBER 21-DECEMBER 26*

**Jasper**

Pioneer Day at Martin Dies Jr. State Park  
*NOVEMBER 21*

**Sugarland**

Johnny Cash: The Official Concert Experience/Smart Financial Center  
*NOVEMBER 22*

**Marshall**

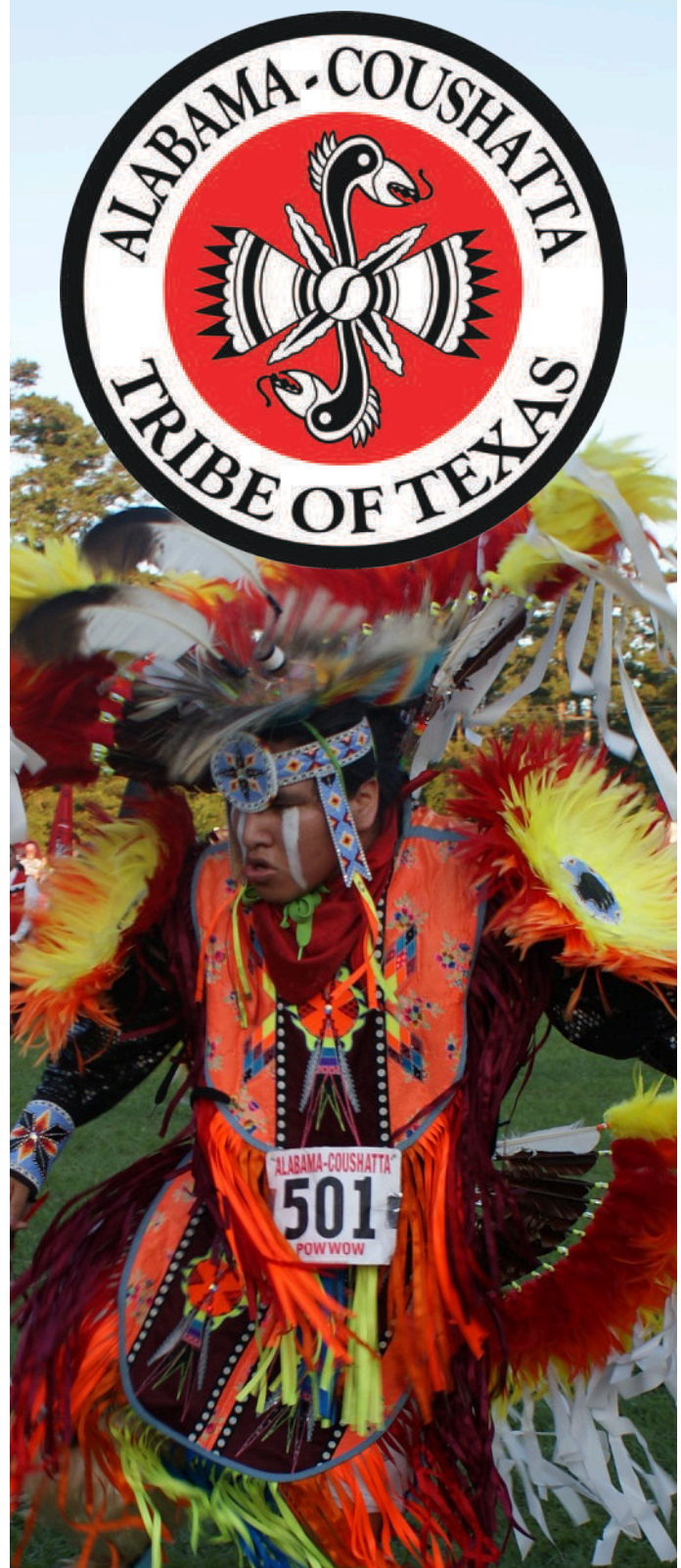
Wonderland of Lights  
*NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 31*

**Nacogdoches**

Nacogdoches Gun Show/County Expo Center  
*NOVEMBER 24-26*



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# CALENDAR

## **Tomball**

The Bellamy Brothers/Main Street Crossing  
*NOVEMBER 24-25*

## **Houston**

I Will Survive: Diva Legends/Jones Hall  
*NOVEMBER 25-26*

## **Galveston**

Slaid Cleves/Old Quarter Acoustic Café  
*NOVEMBER 26*

## **Waxahachie**

Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting/Downtown  
*NOVEMBER 28*

## **Galveston**

Jason Eady/Old Quarter Acoustic Café  
*NOVEMBER 29*

# DECEMBER

## **Galveston**

Dickens on the Strand  
*DECEMBER 1-3*

## **Woodville**

A Hometown Christmas/Downtown Courthouse Square  
*DECEMBER 1-2*

## **Baytown**

Christmas on Texas Avenue Festival  
*DECEMBER 2-3*

## **Nacogdoches**

27th Annual Jingle Bell Run/Pilar Street  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Colmesneil**

Birthday Party for Jesus/Victory Camp Colmesneil, 10-3  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Huntsville**

Huntsville Christmas Fair 2023  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Woodville**

Rotary Breakfast with Santa/St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Port Arthur**

Sea Rim Striders Jingle Bell 5K  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Houston**

2023 Tamale Festival/Navigation Boulevard  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Silsbee**

Christmas in the Big Thicket Festival/Silsbee Public Library  
*DECEMBER 2*

## **Orange**

Orange County Gun Show/Convention and Expo Center  
*DECEMBER 2-3*

## **Beaumont**

The Texas Tenors/Julie Rogers Theater  
*DECEMBER 3*

## **Tyler**

A Christmas Carol/Tyler Civic Center  
*DECEMBER 3*

## **The Woodlands**

Luke Combs at CW Mitchell Pavilion  
*DECEMBER 5*

## **Houston**

Jurassic Quest/NRG Center  
*DECEMBER 8-10*

## **Tyler**

White Christmas (Sing Along) at Liberty Hall  
*DECEMBER 8*

## **Livingston**

SETX Swing Band/Polk County Commerce Center  
*DECEMBER 9*

## **Marshall**

The Grand Old Christmas Show at Memorial City Performance Hall  
*DECEMBER 9*

## **Tyler**

Lone Star Winter Gun & Knife Show/WT Brookshire Conference Center  
*DECEMBER 9-10*

## **Montgomery**

Historic Montgomery Christmas Parade  
*DECEMBER 9*

## **Sugarland**

Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith/Smart Financial Center  
*DECEMBER 10*

## **Lufkin**

Reindeer Run 5K  
*DECEMBER 10*



# JANUARY 2024

## Lufkin

Drumline Live/Temple Theater

**DECEMBER 13**

## Lufkin

One Night in Memphis/Pines Theater

**DECEMBER 14**

## Houston

Anita Baker at the Toyota Center

**DECEMBER 15**

## Huntsville

Wilson Fairchild/Old Towne Theater

**DECEMBER 15**

## Marshall

Outdoor Christmas Market on Main Street

**DECEMBER 16**

## Sugarland

Warrant at the Smart Financial Center

**DECEMBER 16**

## Humble

Humble Gun Show/Civic Center

**DECEMBER 16-17**

## Tomball

Neil Diamond Tribute/Main Street Crossing

**DECEMBER 16**

## Houston

For King and Country/Toyota Center

**DECEMBER 17**

## Lufkin

Festival of Trees/Museum of East Texas

**DECEMBER 18**

## Sugarland

Sara Brightman/Smart Financial Center

**DECEMBER 20**

## Houston

Very Merry Pops/Houston Symphony at Jones Hall

**DECEMBER 20-22**

## Sugarland

Manheim Steamroller Christmas/Smart Financial Center

**DECEMBER 28**

## Houston

WWE Live Holiday Tour/Toyota Center

**DECEMBER 28**

## Galveston

Townes Van Zandt Wake/Old Quarter Acoustic Café

**JANUARY 1**

## Lufkin

Festival of Trees/Museum of East Texas

**JANUARY 1**

## Houston

Tina: The Tina Turner Musical/Hobby Center

**JANUARY 6**

## Lufkin

On Your Feet/Temple Theater

**JANUARY 10**

## Galveston

Yaga's Chili Quest and Beer Fest/The Strand

**JANUARY 12-13**

## Houston

Houston Marathon Health and Fitness Expo/G R Brown Center

**JANUARY 12-13**

## Houston

2024 Houston Marathon/Downtown

**JANUARY 14**

## Houston

Texas Home Show/G R Brown Convention Center

**JANUARY 20-21**

## Galveston

The Oak Ridge Boys/Grand 1894 Opera House

**JANUARY 21**

## Houston

Houston Auto Show/NRG Center

**JANUARY 23-27**

## Houston

PBR-Unleash the Beast/Toyota Center

**JANUARY 26-27**

## Sugarland

George Lopez at the Smart Financial Center

**JANUARY 27**

## Lufkin

The Greatest Love of All: A Tribute to Whitney Houston/Temple Theater

**JANUARY 28**

## Lufkin

East Texas Bridal Showcase/Pitser Garrison Civic Center

**JANUARY 28**



# Livingston POLK COUNTY

## Chamber of Commerce

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Saturday, October 21, 2023

8:00 - 9:00 am • Registration

9:00 - 11:00 am • Clean Up

11 am - 1 pm

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**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
TOURIST INFORMATION  
936-327-4929

[info@polkchamber.com](mailto:info@polkchamber.com)

[www.polkchamber.com](http://www.polkchamber.com)



# LIVINGSTON TRADE DAYS

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**2024 SPRING MARKETS**

**MARCH 16-17 & MAY 18-19**

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KENZI'S KLOSET  
LIQUIDATION STATION  
LIVINGSTON FEED & FARM SUPPLY  
LIVINGSTON TRADE DAYS  
MADONNA'S RESALE & FLEA MARKET  
MAINSTREET MERCHANDISE  
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PETALZ BY ANNIE  
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POTS, PANS & MORE  
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RUDY'S HONEY  
SEW FANCY  
SHERYL'S FLOWERS AND GIFTS  
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AARON'S TACO SHOP  
ALMA'S COURTHOUSE WHISTLESTOP CAFE  
BLUE DUCK KITCHEN & BAR  
THE BULL SHACK COFFEE & SMOOTHIES  
EL BURRITO MEXICAN RESTAURANT  
EL TAQUITO MEXICAN RESTAURANT  
FLORIDA'S KITCHEN  
HITCH-N-POST BAR-B-Q & MORE  
INDULGE KITCHEN & LOUNGE  
KATIE'S CAFE & BAKERY  
MYLI'S SWEET ICE  
SHRIMP BOAT MANNY'S

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AMERICAS BEST VALUE INN & SUITES  
HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS HOTEL SUITES  
LA QUINTA BY WYNDHAM  
MOTEL 6

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DOUBLE CREEK FARM  
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LIVINGSTON POLK COUNTY CHAMBER  
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