

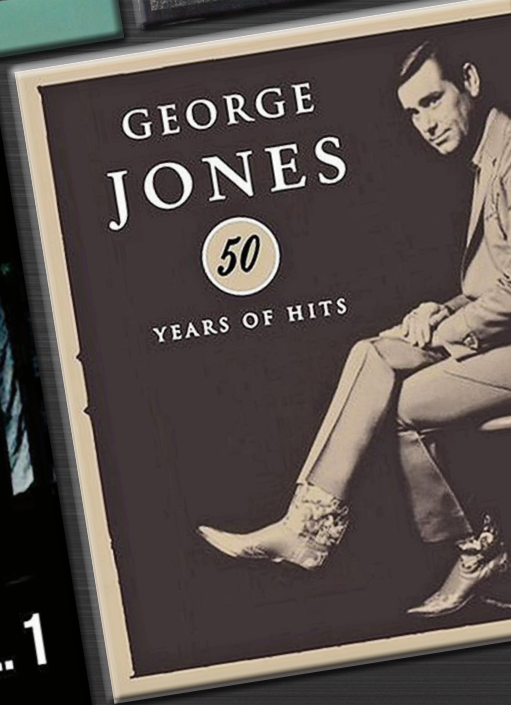
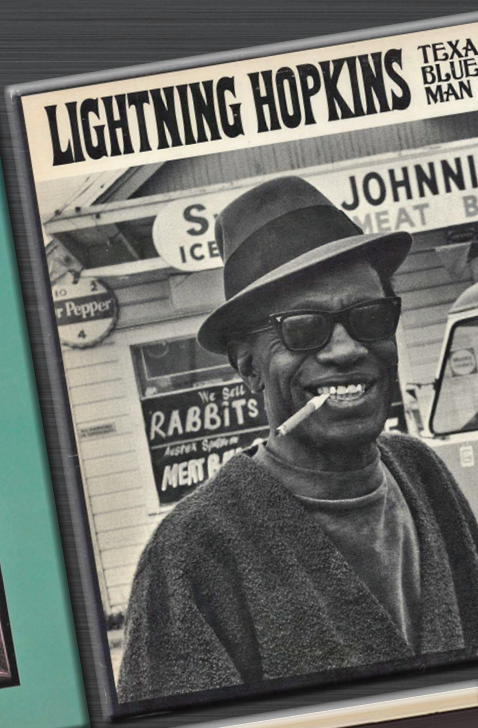
Issue 28  
Winter 2025

# T East Texan

**Feast from the East**  
*A selection of sounds*

**Kicking off the new year**  
like a slacker

**The Golden Age of Television**





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*A new year is here. We can take a deep breath, hit the reset button and start fresh if we choose.*

*I've never been one to make new year's resolutions, usually finding them left in the dust well before I've even thought about turning the calendar page to February. I do, however, try to evaluate areas of my life to see what's working, what isn't, how I got here and where I'm going. I'm a proponent of personal growth and practicing gratitude.*

*In this issue, Brian Besch provides his unique thoughts on new year's resolutions and those who make them.*

*A new year calls for a refresh so in that spirit I'm very excited to announce several new additions to the East Texan.*

*Beginning with this issue, Kelli Barnes will provide a regular feature of our work family's current favorite things. Check it out. You may discover something that will appeal to you too.*

*In "Shake & Sip," Beth Faircloth will introduce us to some new, and tried and true, cocktails to add to our repertoire.*

*Kevin Wooten will offer his insight, and perhaps some recommendations, on what he considers "The Golden Age of Television."*

*I truly hope you enjoy these new additions. And whether you choose to make your own new year's resolutions or forego the practice completely, I hope your new year is happy, healthy and filled with blessings.*

*Emily Banks Wooten  
Editor, East Texan*



## On The Cover



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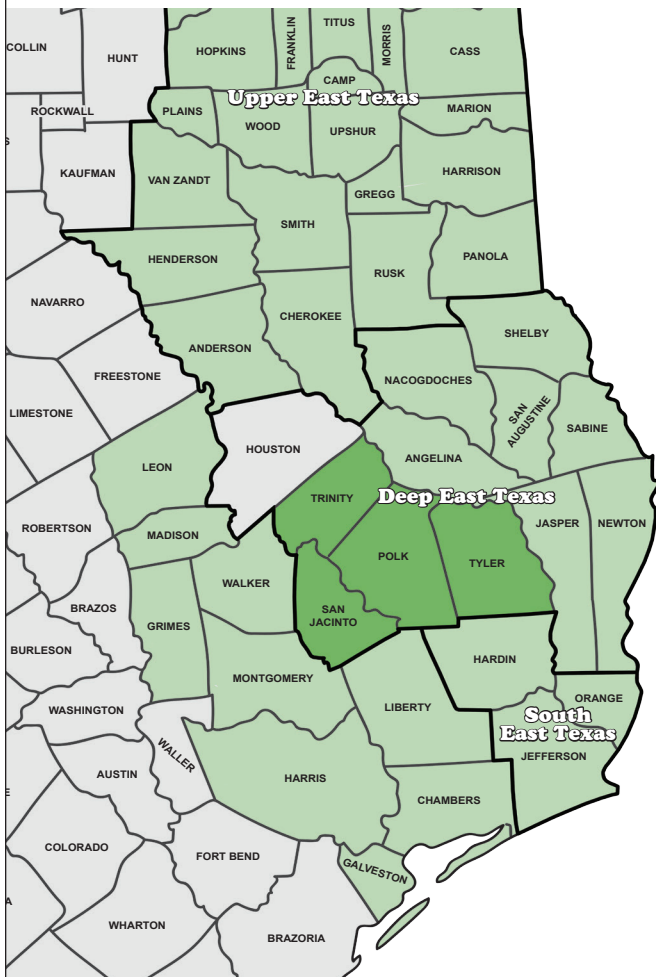
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## Features

**6** Kicking off the new year like a slacker

**14** Feast from the East  
*A selection of sounds*

**28** The Golden Age of Television

## Table of Contents

**10** Day Trip  
Colmesneil museum highlights bygone era

**20** Day Trip  
A little pit stop to break up your drive and wet your whistle

**26** Shake and Sip  
New cocktails to try

**32** Observational  
Drenched in moonlight

**36** Small Town Bites  
A great brunch spot that you'll return to time and again

**40** Recipe  
Chili cornbread casserole

**42** History  
The Father and Mother of Texas – The Connection

**48** Outdoors  
Hunting the mule foot hog

**52** Outdoors  
Deer camp meals in a snap

**55** Poetry  
Solitude

**56** Humor  
Welcome to the land of smooth talkers

**58** A few of our favorite things

**62** Calendar of Events



NEW  
YEAR  
GOALS

MAKE  
YOURSELF  
A PRIORITY

SELF  
CARE

REDUCE  
STRESS

DE  
CLUTTER

IMPROVE  
SELF

STAY  
SAFE

GET  
FIT

ASK FOR  
HELP

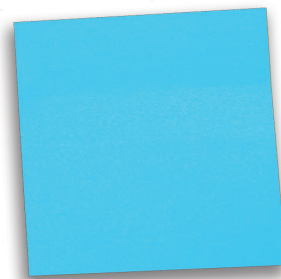
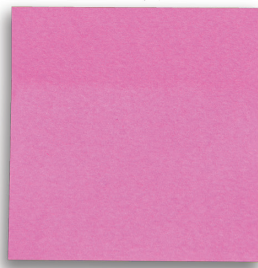
HEALTHY  
HABITS

DIVERSIFY  
INCOME

BE  
HAPPY



# Kicking off the new year *like a slacker*



**By Brian Besch**

Those looking for hope and inspiration, please turn the page.

This article isn't for you.

This isn't self-help, a way to reinvent yourself, or a project to make you feel better.

In fact, you could be doing so much less.

Setting resolutions for the new year is for all the annoying little overachievers in the world. The ones that have to talk about them — just obnoxious.

I'll start this by saying I am no health expert and taking my advice beyond entertainment is probably not in your best interest. If you needed that disclaimer, my suggestion is to wear a helmet at all times.

I am, however, an expert slacker. I will work incredibly hard to do very little.

Through research, I found that the second Friday of every year is known as *Quitter's Day* to mark when most surrender hope on resolutions. It's nice that someone has come up with a label for it. Calling everyone failures is likely considered mean.

The most common resolutions are health related. I am told aging is not for the weak.

Upon moving to Polk County a dozen years ago, one of the first articles the editor assigned highlighted unhealthy areas in Texas. My new home placed 253rd of the state's 254 counties.

Fighting back the joy of beating out one whole county, I read on. The description said nearly 1,000 of the area's people had died before age 75 in a three-year span and the obesity rate was over one-third of the population.

I can see it. My health began its decline once I drove over the Trinity River. My list includes gut health that leads to feeling lightheaded way too often, as well as gout, back and sciatic nerve pain. Hearing fades in and out, and the eyesight isn't improving. I've had the back issue for most of my life. The rest of that is on you, Polk County.

As a state, Texas ranks 20th in health, with Massachusetts on top, and sickly West Virginia bringing up the rear.

The country, when compared with the rest of Earth, isn't exactly on the medal stand. The United States sits at 66 of 197. The countries on those commercials where you can send money for food are the ones behind us.

The television says Robert Kennedy Jr. is going to make us all healthy again. His uncle wanted to send us to the moon. I suppose RFK Jr. is working to keep my stomach from resembling one.

Statistics show that only 8% of New Year's resolutions are kept until Dec. 31. The one I always think of is the gym.

While in school, we would regularly go to the



university's rec center. Parking on campus was always difficult, but in my first January there, it was impossible. While we circled parking lots, my friend saw me shaking my head and said, "It's just the resolutioners. They'll clear out in a few weeks."

I had never heard "resolutioners" before but knew what he meant. They were the ones walking around lost with crooked smiles and wide eyes. Sure enough, in a few weeks, they found something else to fill that time.

So, why talk about this? Why do them? Why waste our time? Why am I writing so many questions?

The most common resolutions include weight loss, spending time with family, drinking less alcohol, traveling more, getting organized, volunteering, saving money, stop smoking or drinking more water.

It might be best to pick one, because some of these seem to overlap. Drinking more water would probably help with weight loss, but spending time with family might get in the way of drinking less alcohol or quitting the smokes. You need some level of organization to travel more, but that saving money thing would be out the window.

If you are determined to make changes for the better, doing the absolute least may be the way to go. An article on the World Wide Web suggested instead of resolutions, coming up with a list of things you won't do. That seems more my speed.

If you want to get in shape and have never done anything physical in your life, the gym probably isn't your long-term future. Yet, something simple could be. I've got four-legged friends that look up at me when they've been inside too long. We walk.

If your goal is to save money, eliminate shopping apps or maybe don't walk into the store that you always leave with something.

If you really have a desire to volunteer, find a friend

or family member who already does. When the day comes that you are too busy, making all those other days easier to skip, the ball isn't completely dropped.

To drink more water, put out reminders or place bottles around the house and near the front door. Those walks to the refrigerator can be taxing.

If it is spending more time with relatives, start with the one you like the most, not the one that does that thing you can't stand.

The thing for me is not making it about perfection. Outside of work, I'm not big on time and schedules. If I don't remember this new thing I've eliminated every day or week, it's not a big deal. It seems if the purpose is working toward true slacking, maybe forgetting means you're getting there.

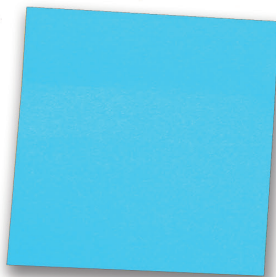
For that reason, I would also never start on Jan. 1. Maybe that's OCD, but if I've started after, that has eliminated the possibility of perfection for the year and it won't be an issue.

Maybe Quitter's Day is the perfect time to start. What a rush it would be to know you're still going after 80% of America fails. Take that, resolutioners.

Many of us probably want to be better versions of ourselves. Most people fail at resolutions because they find out it makes them miserable or gets in the way of what they really want to do.

If I really wanted to set a resolution, finding the cause of my health problems would be nice. There are instances where I burp for hours. While it would have been the hit of the lunch table in elementary school, it's probably not winning over the hearts and minds of many these days. I'm told a gastro doctor is needed, so that fun likely awaits.

Or maybe I find out that makes me miserable and gets in the way of what I'm really wanting to do. I'll probably lose interest around the second Friday of January. ■











## SMALL TOWN TEXAS

# Colmesneil museum highlights bygone era



By Mollie LaSalle

Colmesneil, Texas had its beginnings with the coming of the railroads in 1882. The town gets its name from W.T. Colmesneil, one of the first conductors of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad. The Trinity and Sabine railroad extended from Trinity to Colmesneil, forming a junction with the Texas and New Orleans railroad, which ran from Beaumont to Rockland. According to legend, Colmesneil built a house facing the tracks so that he could sit on the front porch and watch the trains go by. Colmesneil lived in the house for three years, sold it, moved on with the railroad, and passed away in Indiana in 1907.

In March 2003, local residents Billy Gregory and Jerrie Davis Smart purchased the run-down W.T. Colmesneil home. Their goal was to save and restore the house as a gift to the people of the town, and to the region, as well. They recognized the importance of the history of the area and saw the home as a key element in preserving the past for the future.

After Mr. Gregory's passing in 2016, the original depot and an old schoolhouse were moved to the old Sutton Mill site located south of the W.T. Colmesneil house. Gregory had purchased this site from Temple Inland in 2000 and intended this site for depot and railroad memorabilia.

The W.T. Colmesneil House is a must-see for local historians. You will see everything from a dining table and chairs from Franklin Roosevelt's train car to a portrait of Confederate Civil War General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The majority of the exhibits are from Mr. Gregory's collection. Railroad enthusiasts will not be disappointed, as there are countless lanterns, conductor hats and railroad insignia scattered about every corner.

One of the more interesting exhibits is a plantation-era dough-kneading trough, which according to a local resident, came from an Antebellum-era plantation, in which slaves kneaded dough for the plantation owners.

The upkeep of this magnificent treasure falls to its board of directors. Per the board, the W.T. Colmesneil House is like "stepping into the attic of one's great-grandparents. It is a treasure trove of bits and pieces, some relevant to interpreting the past, some not. The challenge is to provide context and interpretation to help visitors understand the period that began with the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s transforming the side-by-side villages of Colmesneil and Ogden, and isolated villages throughout this region, from small collections of subsistence farms with scattered mercantile centers to a few boom towns, of which Colmesneil was one."

*[left] The well that was used to draw water for W.T. Colmesneil's family, circa 1880s. Photo by Mollie LaSalle.*

*[above] The old train Colmesneil train depot. Photo courtesy of W.T. Colmesneil Museum.*





*The Board of Directors pose on the back porch during open house, December 2024. Photo by Mollie LaSalle.*



*A lantern from the railroad, circa 1880s.  
Photos by Mollie LaSalle.*



Serving on the seven-member board of directors are: Rhonda Bigby, president; Keelin Parker, secretary and treasurer; Vance Cowart; Brenda Garrard; Sloan Graham; Amanda Haralson and Sarah Reinmeyer. The board also oversees the train depot, the schoolhouse and an old corn crib on adjacent property near the museum.

Board President Rhonda Bigby shared one of her many remembrances. Bigby said, "I woke up at 4 thinking about the memories of the train stories my dad would tell me. As we would wait for the train to go by, I can still hear him saying "I learned to count watching the cars go by. We would take a long cane pole and tie peanuts on the end and wait for the train to go by, then hold it out to the man on the caboose to grab them."

She added, "One Christmas he told me that as he was giving the fella peanuts, that man tossed toys to my dad, his brother and four sisters. What a sight that had to be. Under the trestle going to Egypt, momma would have to 'gun it' when it had rained. We were sure we were going to get stuck. She would always say, "pray, girls," and my sister Glenda and I would get down on our knees and pray on the hump on the floor in the middle of the car. I don't even remember us ever getting stuck."

The board is currently in the process of having a plaque honoring Billy Gregory and Jerrie Smart placed in the museum, along with photos of them. Going into 2025, they hope to secure someone who will be available for tours on site. They also are in need of volunteers. The W.T. Colmesneil House and Museum is located at: 106 S. Pitzer, Colmesneil, Texas 75938. To schedule a tour of the facility, you can call 409-283-0342. Visit their website at [www.wtcolmesneilhouse.org](http://www.wtcolmesneilhouse.org). ■

*[left] A dough kneading trough from an antebellum plantation.*

*[right] The front porch of the W.T. Colmesneil house, where Mr. Colmesneil would sit and watch the trains go by.*

*Photos by Mollie LaSalle.*







# Feast from the East

*a selection of sounds*

By Chris Edwards

My buddy Shelfo is always reminding me that “music is a force,” and, yes, it most certainly is.

Leave it to the Good Lord to bless our mortal, earthbound existence with the tools to create and combine rhythm, melodies and storytelling, as well as the ability to appreciate those combined elements. Together, those factors transcend cultural boundaries and speak directly to the soul.

East Texas has been a fertile lot of soil for many great music-makers to plow and harvest bountiful yields throughout the years. From the roots of boogie-woogie emerging from Marshall in the 1870's to the soulful sounds of singer/songwriters as varied and eclectic as Clint Alford; Kim Cruse; Heather Little; Tommy Simpson and so, so, so many others in this day and age, there's a wellspring of musical magic to be discovered from within the region.

As I sit to cobble the ensuing list together, it's December, and a time when many custodians of public opinion are given to creating “best of” lists or compiling noteworthy news and events for the year and ranking them somehow. The purpose of this is not to provide a definitive best of/greatest hits of East Texas music, nor

are these records ranked in any ascending or descending order, but to showcase some artists and bands' work that you might want to check out.

As far as the criteria for what is listed here goes, all of these are full-length records. There are a metric ton of great East Texan acts working and recording now, and putting out singles, but for the sake of this endeavor, I wanted to stick with full-length albums that carry the listener through some sort of journey. Also, again, there's a ton of great music out there, but as far as genres go, what I've stuck with here is mostly representative of the singer/songwriter trope or blues/rock bands.

Another caveat: as the whole point goes, every band or artist listed below, or the resulting album, has to have some sort of East Texan tie-in. One more thing before we get started: every one of these artists/bands, with the exceptions of Lightnin' and Townes, are acts that I've seen live, and many of them multiple times. While the focus of this list is on the records described, do yourself a favor and go out and catch these acts live when you can.

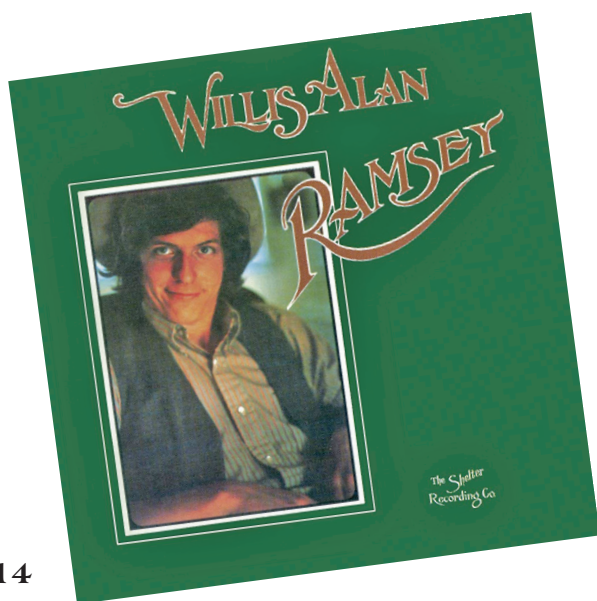
There's always going to be a need for live music, as long as people have the need to get out and have some fun. Although some East Texans would be loath to admit being seen in a honky-tonk to catch a band, there's always some musical magic being made, not just in bars and whatnot, but also in coffee shops, restaurants and all sorts of other gathering places, and chances are on any given night, that magic is taking place not too far from wherever you hang your hat.

A round-up of some great East Texan discs:

## — Lightnin' Hopkins —

Texas Blues Man (1967, Arhoolie) – There really is no method to how this list is presented. Not chronologically or grouped by different types of sounds, BUT it would seem criminal to not put Sam “Lightnin'” Hopkins in the pole position.

Lightnin', who was a product of Centerville, and spent a great deal of time around Crockett, was the walking definition of the word “mojo,” and although the number of songs out there that he recorded are legion, this 1967 collection really demonstrates what a mesmerizing presence Lightnin' Hopkins really was. With just





his voice and an electric guitar, Lightnin' compels the listener to "Watch My Fingers" on one cut, on which he shows his unique guitar prowess, which is unmistakable even to casual blues fans.

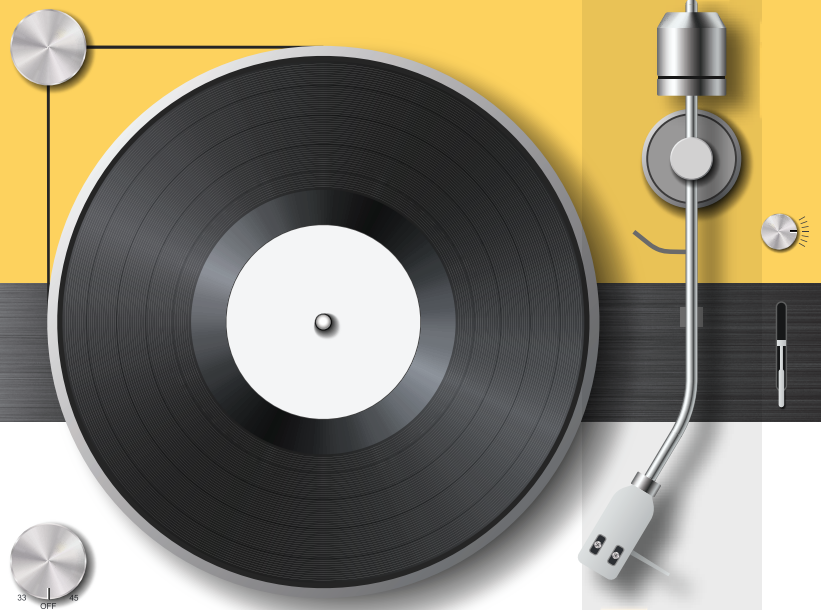
Songs like "Slavery," "Tom Moore Blues" and "Bud Russell Blues" could be covered by others, sure, but Lightnin' owns these songs. Nobody has ever come close to capturing the sort of mojo of Mr. Hopkins, and nobody will.

### — Willis Alan Ramsey —

Willis Alan Ramsey (1972, Shelter Recording Co.) – To date, the "green album" as some fans have referred to the self-titled masterpiece from the bard of Highland Park is the only album. For many years, when asked about the status of a follow-up, Ramsey would quip, "Well, what's wrong with the first one?" Reportedly, a second album is, at last, in the works, but this writer ain't holding his breath.

What's here is a sort of Rosetta Stone for Cosmic American Music, and though Ramsey is more thought of as a product of North Texas (by way of Alabama), part of this record was tracked in Tyler, and he used to play a lot of shows in Nacogdoches, way back when.

Songs like "Northeast Texas Women" and "Satin Sheets" seem embedded as a part of our DNA at this point, and to hear the original "Muskrat Candlelight," which the Captain and Tenille



covered as "Muskrat Love," with the ridiculous synthesizer sounds, is downright captivating. In Ramsey's hands, the song sounds like something that has been amid our consciousness all along as opposed to the exercise in cheese that "Captain" Daryl Dragon and Toni Tenille made of it.

Willis's record has been out of print for many blue moons, but he's on Spotify now, if you're into that sorta thing.

### — Townes Van Zandt —

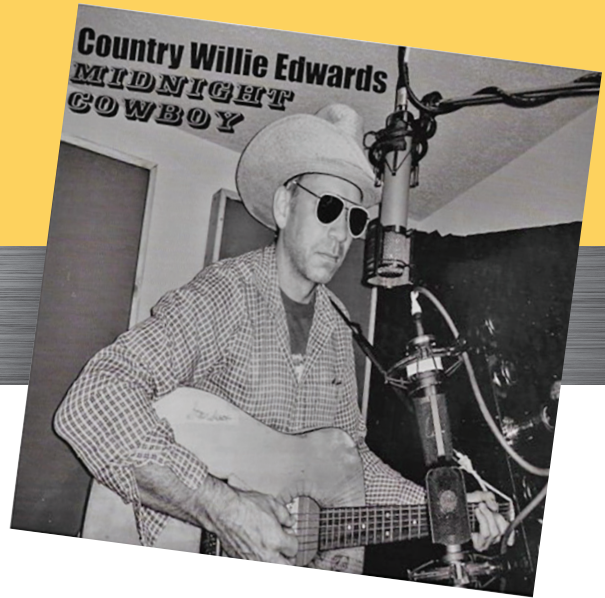
Live at the Old Quarter, Houston, Texas (1977, Tomato) – The man whom no less than Jack Ingram once proclaimed as the Christlike figure of Texas country music had his finest moments on record with a live double album recorded in downtown Houston at the original Old Quarter location.

The album, which strips everything down to the bare essentials of Townes' voice, his guitar and those incredible songs, of course, is one of the most incredible collections of great songs in the American canon.

Imagine this scenario if you will: an album of songs so amazing that it OPENS with "Pancho and Lefty." Yep, that's what you get here. Nothing but killer and absolutely zero filler. From Townes channeling Lightnin' Hopkins on "Brand New Companion" to hilarious talking blues numbers ("Fraternity Blues" and "Talkin' Thunderbird Blues"), the man was at the peak of his powers when these songs were delivered before a rapt audience in 1973. When the recordings from those live performances were released to the public in 1977, Townes's legend had grown substantially, but it would take friends like Emmylou Harris, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard to bring his godlike songwriting skills to mainstream audiences through covers of his songs.







— Gabe Wootton —

Old Quarter Live Sessions, Volume One (2020, Old Quarter Records) – Like the cornerstone record listed above this, any recorded document of Gabe Wootton needs to focus, simply, on the man delivering his songs. Wootton’s debut album, which was the first release on Old Quarter Records, was recorded before a live audience at the new Old Quarter, in Galveston.

There are traces of Van Zandt, Prine, Mississippi John Hurt and others in Wootton’s songs and performances, but at the end of the day, nobody is doing what Gabe Wootton is doing. A product of the East Texas Pines now calling the island home, it was more than appropriate that Wootton’s first dive into publicly available recorded product be a solo acoustic live album.

Catchy and poignant in his songwriting, Wootton’s performances are all strong of voice, and his guitar ranges from strummy barroom bard fare to delicate fingerpicking, and of course, with Gabe Wootton, there are enough hilarious between-song jokes and stories that make it worth the price of admission themselves. While the ethereal greatness of a song like “Ghosts” must be heard, so must the story about the weed eater with the handlebars. Trust me on this one.

— George Jones —

50 years of Hits (2004, Sugar Hill) – Is there any wonder, given the richness of stories and cultures that settled the region that one of our nation’s greatest musical treasures hailed from East Texas?

George Jones, the great “Possum,” himself, grew up in Saratoga, and for a while lived near Colmesneil, where he owned and operated Jones Country, of which many folks still have fond memories of great shows. This late-career retrospective covers a lot of ground, and songs like “Window Up Above” show what a great songwriter Jones was early in his career. His takes on classics like “Bartender’s Blues,” and of course, “He Stopped Loving Her Today” still sound as fresh and poignant now as they ever did.

I once knew a guy who hated George Jones’s music, and since that revelation, I don’t believe I’ve spoken to him.

— Willie Nelson —

Nacogdoches (2004, Pedernales Records) – Nacogdoches is not one of the better-known records in Willie’s discography, but the album, which was recorded at Dana Woods’s Encore Studio in the town for which it’s named, is a fine showcase of songs, East Texan talent on the production side and the late, great Paul Buskirk, a Nacogdoches resident who was a sort of mentor to Willie when he was a young, struggling songwriter.

Buskirk co-produced the record with Willie, and plays mandolin on the songs, which are a showcase of standards. Willie had already done one landmark collection of standards in the ‘70s (Stardust) but this one should be special to East Texans given the context.

You might have heard “How High the Moon” and “Columbus Stockade Blues” done many times before, by countless others, but there’s just always something special about the way Willie Nelson makes a song his own.

— Michael O’Neal —

Family Business (2014, self-released) – Already a cult hero among Texas country fanatics for his hardscrabble blue-collar ballad “7 12’s,” when he released Family Business, O’Neal is a pure poet.

His scratchy vocalizations and way of bending words to fit his meters and melodies is, in my mind, similar to the late, great bard of Athens, GA, Vic Chesnutt.

On Family Business, O’Neal writes about what he writes about better than anyone else: chronicles of his upbringing and poetic musings about family members and friends. As unique as O’Neal’s way of putting words together can be, there’s a universal conceit running through every one of the man’s songs. When you hear him sing about “Ms. Elsie,” who walks with a cane and is kinda shaped like a ball, and her gold Oldsmobile, you get it – we all had a caring “Ms. Elsie” in our neighborhoods, growing up, or somewhere in our childhoods.

O’Neal’s song “Brown Uniform,” about his mother’s struggles in working to raise he and his sister is one of the best-written lyrics you’re liable to hear, and when he sings about a tear brought to his eye while watching his sister walk down the aisle in “Jenny Lee,” you’ll find yourself affected in the same way.







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— Adam Carroll —

Far Away Blues (2005, Blue Corn Publishing) – The “New Dylan” sensation was a thing that music writers once upon a time switched out names and faces of every so often. Generational talents such as Bruce Springsteen; John Prine; Tom Waits and Ryan Adams, among others, wore that tag, at one point in their careers. In Texas, however, the comparison to Townes Van Zandt is what really makes for a sustainable career as a singer/songwriter.

Adam Carroll, hailing from the Tyler area, got the Townes comparison a lot more than most of the literate twentysomething songster crowd of his day, when he first emerged from the crowded field as a favorite of the Cheatham Street Warehouse scene in San Marcos. Carroll is still going strong, and playing great shows, along with his wife, as a duo, but early albums like Far Away Blues make it easy to see how his legend was minted.

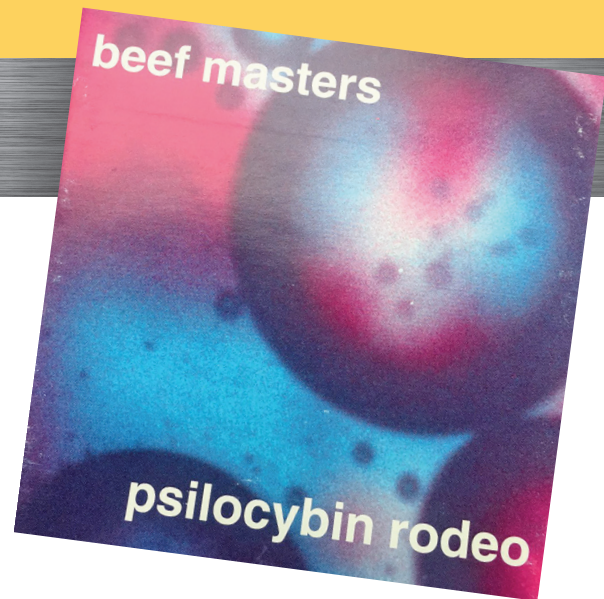
The uncluttered, uncomplicated arrangements (courtesy of producer and bona-fide Texas legend Lloyd Maines) create a feel of a good jam session on a backporch, or among a group of old-timers down at the fire station, or at the “AFL-CIO,” which is a song about just that sorta thing.

From rollicking (“Alright”) to beautiful (“Rice Birds,” “Love Song for my Family”), Carroll covers a lot of ground on this record. Several East Texan locales are namechecked throughout the lyrics on Far Away Blues, and although it’s hard to describe in so many words, this album just conveys that feel of the region.

— Toadies —

Rubberneck (1994, Interscope) – Although they are most associated with the Dallas-Fort Worth scene, particularly the early ‘90s cadre of bands labelled “The Fraternity of Noise,” the Toadies played so much in East Texas in their heyday that they might as well have been a regional act, plus their classic tune “Tyler” actually uses the titular locale for inspiration.

Frontman Todd Lewis, who now goes by the stately sounding



Vaden Todd Lewis, has a scream for the ages, kind of like a southern-fried Robert Plant or Chris Cornell. He and his band’s brand of mojo is something akin to a cross-pollination of ZZ Top, AC/DC and the Talking Heads, and on some songs, like “Happy Face” and “Quitter,” Lewis’s presence comes across like Michael Douglas’s “Falling Down” character. It doesn’t help matters that if you look at live footage and music videos from the band’s ‘90s heyday, he kinda looks like “Falling Down” guy, but that’s another matter for another time.

Trends will come and go in music, but generations from now, kids will still be headbanging and singing along to the band’s massive hit “Possum Kingdom.”

— Beef Masters —

Psilocybin Rodeo (1995, self-released) – Ah, the halcyon daze of the ‘90s when anything loud, heavy and/or “grungy” could get some sort of traction, and indie experience was the equivalent of a Harvard MBA in the eyes of major record labels.

Nacogdoches’ own Beef Masters checked all those boxes and self-released their second album Psilocybin Rodeo. Known for their loud, raucous live shows and their accompanying trippy light shows, which included film collages of all manner of oddities, at the core of everything the band did was good, melodic songs. Multi-layered epics like “Blur” co-exist alongside raging slabs of hardcore like “Slow” and sludge-metal numbers like “Bugeyed” and “75.”

Sadly, this album, like so many indie releases of its era, is lost to the sands of time, but although it’s out of print, copies can be found for those willing to search. I will also say this about this band: movie producers in the late ‘90s missed a golden opportunity to utilize the band’s power ballad “Blur” in some teen thriller movie typical of the day’s zeitgeist, no doubt in a scene where key characters are leaving a party only to be faced with some unspeakable horror(s). If ever there were a song tailor-made for such a scenario, that’s the one.



## — Country Willie Edwards —

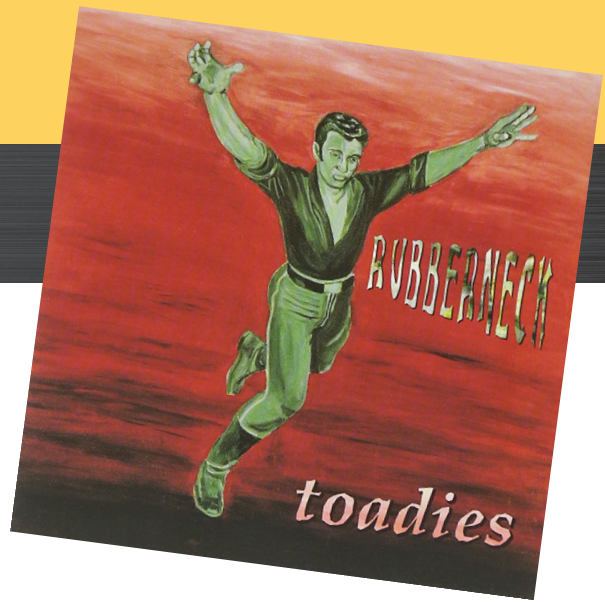
Midnight Cowboy (2021, self-released) – There is a timelessness to Country Willie Edwards (no relation to this writer, unless I'm trying to impress you) and his music. Really, the man and his music are inseparable.

One look at him, and one listen to his seemingly endless flowing fountain of songs, and you'll no doubt agree that the man was born to write and sing great songs. On his 2021 release *Midnight Cowboy*, Willie, along with longtime stalwart Thomas Oliver on drums/percussion, create an enormous sound with just the two of them, but with songs as good as "Angels of Antioch" and "When I've Finally Gone Crazy," it's not like they have to try too hard.

A product of the tiny farming community of Sardis, Willie really came into his own in the Nacogdoches music scene. Slowly, but surely, his gifts have been embraced by larger segments of the populace, including none other than Charley Crockett, who covered the title song off this record, and made it a highlight of his recent \$10 Cowboy record.

## — Kacey Musgraves —

*Same Trailer, Different Park* (2013, Mercury) – Golden's own hometown heroine Kacey Musgraves had been kicking around for quite a while before her major label debut in 2013, and it seems just like yesterday, to me anyways, that her "Merry Go 'Round" single stood starkly apart from just about everything else on pop country radio in its day.



Musgraves is a great vocalist and a singular songwriting talent, and although her music has gone in a more earthy, organic direction through the years, *Same Trailer, Different Park* is still a great song-to-song listen.

Catchy as though her songs might be, there's an elevated consciousness afoot in everything she writes. Songs like the aforementioned single, which holds a sardonic lens to the monotonous lifestyles that seem commonplace with young people in many rural East Texan towns and "Follow Your Arrow," which extols acceptance, curiosity and open-mindedness, both seemed so daring when they were release

## — Heather Little —

*By Now* (2024, self-released) – Lindale native Heather Little is known, if at all, as the girl who wrote some massive hits for Miranda Lambert, but anyone in East Texas who has seen her perform, usually solo acoustic, can attest to her spellbinding qualities as a performer and songwriter.

Little's *By Now* is about as much of a must-listen that I can think of released in 2024.

Harrowing songs like "Better by Now" and her own reading of "Gunpowder and Lead," which more or less made her aforementioned fellow Lindale native's career, are as great as anything you're going to hear anywhere in recent memory. "Five Deer County" might be the most perfect, cinematic ballad I've heard since Chris Knight's "Down the River."

It's also telling of the power of a young artist's work when a legend like Patty Griffin takes part in the proceedings, which she does on "Hands Like Mine." ■







## A LITTLE PIT STOP *to break up your drive and wet your whistle*

**By Emily Banks Wooten**

We were traveling on U.S. 290 not long ago when Hubby remarked, “We ought to stop at that distillery in Giddings.” Not aware that there was a distillery in Giddings, I immediately started Googling. He said he had seen it when we drove by it on a previous trip. Turns out he was referring to Kooper’s Whiskey in Ledbetter which is about nine miles east of Giddings. Not an actual distillery, it is a tasting room and blending house.

After years of making whiskey together as a hobby, husband and wife team Troy and Michelle Kooper left corporate life in Austin and moved to the country to pursue their dreams and started the Kooper Family Whiskey Company.

Kooper Family’s blending house was founded in 2014 with a love for crafting exceptional whiskeys through patient aging and careful blending. Eight years later, Kooper Family whiskeys are found across Texas, and their tasting room hosts thousands of visitors yearly. And it is 100% family-owned and operated.

Not familiar with the term “blending house,” I learned that a blending house uses various whiskey casks from multiple distilleries to create a new and unique product.

Those visiting the tasting room and blending house may enjoy premium whiskey flights with rye whiskey and bourbon or expertly crafted cocktails. Limited edition whiskeys are also sold exclusively in the tasting room.

We entered the unassuming building and once our eyes adjusted from the bright sunny afternoon outside to the

*Photos by Emily Banks Wooten.*





**KOOPER**  
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darkish, dimly lit interior, we were enchanted.

From the exposed wooden beams and hardwood floors to the galvanized metal-clad walls and stamped metal-fronted bar, it had a super chill vibe. There was a lot to take in visually. On one side of the large room lay two dozen casks. There were several sitting areas decked out in a mid-century modern style, in addition to some tables with chairs and benches where larger groups could sit.

In some ways, it was a little like stepping back in time. Beautiful large antique pieces were used to display the wares. Additionally, numerous antique tools, bits and bobs and unique artwork were implemented in the decor.

“In 2015 we sourced our first 175 gallons of unaged whiskey right off the still from Koval Distillery in Chicago. We barreled it up, aged it in the hot Texas climate, and later released it as Kooper Family 100% Rye Whiskey,” the Koopers said.

“Later we took that same distillate and blended it with another whiskey we began sourcing from Tennessee. We aged these two separately in different style barrels and married the result in a used bourbon barrel for a more balanced, complex whiskey. We released this as Kooper Family Rye, A Blend of



*Photos by Emily Banks Wooten.*







### Straight Rye Whiskies.

“That first purchase of unaged distillate and first successful attempt at whiskey blending started what has become a long journey of establishing the first traditional whiskey blending house in Texas. Distillates from Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, and Illinois are our primary substrate in a craft that takes dedication and extreme patience – one that has become a newly formed family tradition that we plan to pass down to future generations of Koopers.”

We each ordered an Old Fashioned, our cocktail of choice, and thoroughly enjoyed them. We considered purchasing a bottle to take home, but as it was a Sunday afternoon and state law prohibits the sale of alcohol on Sundays for off-premises consumption, we were out of luck. That just means that we’ll have to go back on another day.

The offerings include: Kooper Family Rye, a blend of

straight rye whiskeys; Sweetheart of the Rodeo, a blend of straight bourbon whiskeys; The Prodigal Son, a sour mash bourbon; Barrel Reserve Rye, a barrel strength rye blend; Single Barrel Bourbon; and Runaway Rye, a limited-edition straight rye whiskey. Branded T-shirts and caps are also available for purchase.

If you find yourself meandering in that neck of the woods and just want to relax and chill for a little bit, I highly recommend this unique place. ■

*Kooper’s Whiskey is located at 100 West U.S. 290 in Ledbetter. The hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays. For additional information, go to [kooperfamily.com](http://kooperfamily.com).*

*Photos by Emily Banks Wooten.*









From thespruceeats.com



## BLOODY MARIA

Prep: 3 mins  
Cook: 0 mins  
Total: 3 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

2 ounces tequila  
1 teaspoon horseradish  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard, optional  
3 dashes Tabasco sauce, or other hot sauce  
3 dashes Worcestershire sauce  
3 dashes celery salt  
3 dashes ground black pepper  
1 dash lime juice  
4 to 6 ounces tomato juice, to taste  
Lemon and/or lime wedge, for garnish  
Celery stalk, for garnish

### Steps to Make It

Build the ingredients in a highball glass: tequila, horseradish, Dijon mustard (if using), Tabasco sauce, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt, black pepper and lime juice, then stir well to combine.  
Add tomato juice.  
Mix well by rolling back and forth from one glass to another (or stir well). Fill the glass with ice, then stir again.  
Garnish with a lemon and/or lime wedge and celery stalk.  
Serve and enjoy.

## FIGGY SPARKLER



Prep: 3 mins  
Cook: 0 mins  
Total: 3 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

1 medium fresh or dried fig  
2 orange slices, cut in half  
9 fresh cranberries, divided  
1 1/2 ounces vodka  
4 ounces sparkling wine  
Orange twist, for garnish

### Steps to Make It

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the fig, orange slices, and 6 cranberries with the vodka.  
Add ice and shake well.  
Strain into a Champagne flute and top with sparkling wine.  
Garnish with 3 cranberries and an orange twist. Serve and enjoy.

## FROSTBITE

Prep: 3 mins  
Cook: 0 mins  
Total: 3 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

1 1/2 ounces tequila  
1 ounce blue curaçao liqueur  
1/2 ounce white crème de cacao liqueur  
1/2 ounce cream  
Luxardo Cherries, for garnish

### Steps to Make It

In a cocktail shaker, pour the tequila, blue curaçao, crème de cacao, and cream. Fill with ice.  
Shake well.  
Strain into an ice-filled old-fashioned glass.  
Garnish with a cherry. Serve and enjoy.





## SALTED CARAMEL MARTINI

Prep: 5 mins  
Cook: 0 mins  
Freezing:: 25 mins  
Total: 30 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

1 ounce caramel syrup, more for rim  
Kosher or sea salt, for rimming  
1 1/2 ounces vanilla vodka  
2 ounces Irish cream liqueur  
Soft caramel candy, for garnish

### Steps to Make It

Freeze the glasses for 10 minutes before rimming with caramel syrup. This will help prevent the syrup from running down the glass too quickly.

To rim the cocktail glass, begin by rolling the rim in a shallow dish of caramel syrup.

Roll the glass in a dish of kosher or sea salt, coating it lightly all the way around.

If you want to drizzle caramel inside the glass, hold it upright over the sink to catch any caramel drips. Lightly drizzle ounce caramel syrup webbing inside the glass. Immediately place the glass in the freezer so the caramel sets up while you mix the drink.

In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, pour 1 1/2 ounces vanilla vodka, 2 ounces Irish cream liqueur, and 1 ounce of caramel syrup. Shake well.

Remove the glass from the freezer and strain the drink into it.

Garnish with caramel candy. Serve and enjoy.



## SPICED CRANBERRY MARGARITA

Prep: 5 mins  
Cook: 10 mins  
Cooling Time: 15 mins  
Total: 30 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

For the Simple Syrup:

1 cup sugar  
1 cup water  
10 sticks cinnamon

For the Margarita:

2 ounces tequila  
1/2 ounce orange liqueur, such as Cointreau  
1/2 ounce lime juice  
1/2 ounce cranberry juice  
1/2 ounce cinnamon simple syrup  
Cinnamon stick, for garnish  
Orange slice, for garnish



### Steps to Make It

Prepare the Cinnamon Simple Syrup  
Place the sugar, water, and cinnamon sticks in a small saucepan.

Cover, bring to a boil over high heat, and cook until the sugar dissolves completely, about 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat and cool to room temperature, for about 15 minutes.

Make the Margarita  
Gather the ingredients.

Pour the tequila, orange liqueur, lime juice, cranberry juice, and 1/2 ounce of the cinnamon simple syrup into a cocktail shaker.

Add ice to the cocktail shaker until full. Seal the shaker and shake until it is cold to the touch.

Strain the cocktail into a rocks glass filled with ice and garnish with a cinnamon stick and orange slice, if desired. Enjoy.

## SNOWBALL

Prep: 3 mins  
Cook: 0 mins  
Total: 3 mins  
Serving: 1 serving  
Yield: 1 cocktail

### Ingredients

2 ounces brandy  
1/2 ounce simple syrup  
1 large egg white, optional  
2 to 3 ounces ginger ale, to taste

### Steps to Make It

In a cocktail shaker, pour the brandy, simple syrup, and egg white. Fill with ice.

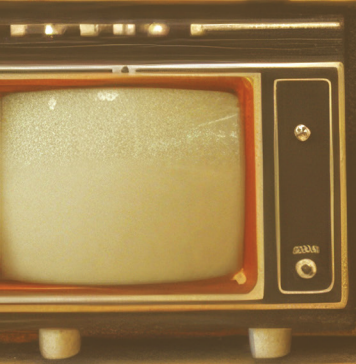
Shake vigorously to ensure the egg is properly mixed.

Strain into a collins glass filled with fresh ice.

Top with ginger ale. Serve and enjoy.









# The Golden Age of Television



By Kevin Wooten

Growing up, I heard my parents and other adults drop references to what they called “the golden age of television.” I never really understood, or even cared, what that meant or what they were referring to. Decades later, I still had no idea what this “age” was that they were talking about or what television shows were included. At my current age, I have likely forgotten more things than I will ever remember, but the phrase “golden age of television” stayed in my brain all those many years. So much so that I actually used the term a few years ago in reference to the current offering of shows on the television ... and other devices.

My wife, daughter and I have always enjoyed watching television. My wife and I usually watch television together. While we don’t always like the same shows, there are many that appeal to both of us. Our daughter, obviously, has her own interests. Most don’t align with her parents, but she still would share with us what she happened to be watching on her laptop, iPad, Kindle or phone. Rarely, but sometimes, we would all watch something together. The advent of streaming opened a floodgate of possible choices, and we continuously were on the lookout for the next good program.

At some point while scrolling through one streaming service or another, I began to realize that almost all of the shows that we had recently watched were, for the most part, very good. It was then that I uttered to my wife that we were living in “the golden age of television.” She laughed. Rightly so. It seemed ridiculous. As we continued to live our lives and watch more television, whenever we finished a series or streaming an original movie that we enjoyed, I would occasionally mention again that we were living in a golden age of television. It became a running joke for quite a while. Then, out of the blue, she began agreeing with me. She mentioned my opinion on the quality of television to friends and after a chuckle and some deeper consideration, some of them began to agree with my assessment of the entertainment industry.

The “original” golden age of television is commonly considered to be between 1947 and 1960. This period included early anthologies such as Kraft Television Theater and The Philco Television Playhouse. Also prevalent were telecasts of Shakespeare plays, opera and ballet. This period ended with the dominance of a new network model that included more

sitcoms and westerns.

The current golden age of television, in my opinion, first began with the rise of HBO and the organized crime drama *The Sopranos*. Highlighting the trials and tribulations of mob boss Tony Soprano, what made this show unique and important is that it played the long game with character development, exploring the main character’s struggle with balancing his job as a crime boss and being a family man, while also attending psychology therapy sessions. HBO, since it was not an “over-the-air” network, was able to push boundaries with regard to violence, language, and sexual content that would have been unacceptable on the traditional big three networks of ABC, CBS and NBC. Later great shows that followed *The Sopranos* model were *The West Wing*, *The Wire*, and *Deadwood*, all of which debuted before 2005.

As streaming options expanded and competition for viewers and subscribers became more heated, an increase in quality programming followed. Among these are considered some of the greatest television shows of modern times. They include the medical drama *Grey’s Anatomy*, small-town football in *Friday Night Lights*, advertising-centric *Mad Men*, drug-riddled *Breaking Bad*, zombie drama *The Walking Dead*, cultural touchstone *Game of Thrones*, *Vikings*, and my personal favorite, the strange and thoughtful world of *Bojack Horseman*.

More recent shows that I have enjoyed include *Succession*, *Better Call Saul*, *The Queen’s Gambit*, *3 Body Problem*, *Watchmen*, *What We Do in the Shadows*, *Slow Horses*, *Killing Eve*, *Hacks*, *Ted Lasso*, *The Morning Show*, *Lessons in Chemistry*, and *Fargo*. I highly recommend all of them, although not all may be age-appropriate for some of the younger members of the household.

Me and the family are currently in the process of watching *Cobra Kai*, *Outer Banks*, *Reacher*, *Severance*, and *The Diplomat*. There are many more on my “to-watch” list that I just haven’t had the time to start. To me, that is the defining characteristic of “the golden age of television”... so many good shows that I don’t have time to watch them all!

Of course, my taste in television may not be the same as yours, but if you put in some effort scrolling through your TV show options, I am quite sure that you, too, can find some thoughtful and entertaining fare to take your mind off real life for a while. ■





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*"What a little moonlight can do. Wait a while 'til a little moonbeam comes peepin' through." – Billie Holiday*

# Drenched in moonlight

By Janice R. Edwards

The full moon lit up the boat lane on Caddo Lake like a silver highway that Spring night. My husband Roy and I had been paddling and discovering the wonders of the lake on our annual Easter weekend paddling trip with the Houston Canoe Club. Caddo is the only natural lake in the state of Texas formed during the New Madrid earthquake and it is filled with a cypress forest. There are many natural wonders on that lake that call the adventurer like a siren's call – and we answered the call.

Roy had seen a beaver dam close to our campground and with the cool night air and the full moon shining down changing the lake boat lane into a golden road, the temptation to make a moonlight discovery trip became irresistible. So, Roy and I and a couple more boats put in the lake, excited to see beaver at work. Only one rule – the flashlights we all carried were for use only to ward off a power boat or in the case of emergency. We took the lead position (Roy in the stern and me in the bow) since he knew where the beaver lodge was being built.

Roy instructed us to paddle easy and quietly so we wouldn't disturb the beaver construction crew. I had no idea where we were going but I trusted Roy's instincts. After the first few strokes though, I became mesmerized by the boat lane we were paddling. The light of the full moon had changed a mundane boat lane into a shimmering golden pathway appearing to lead to the moon. It was going to be a great

paddle – even if we didn't see the beaver – and it was SOOO romantic! Roy had a knack for changing the wilderness into delicious romantic moments. As he paddled the silent Indian stroke, I contemplated the rest of the evening. The beauty of the wilderness and the love for this man filled me with a serenity most never experience. Just sharing this moment with Roy was worth the trip to get here.

I was so mesmerized by the moon's golden boat lane. I lost track of time and did not notice the approaching beaver dam off to our left. I didn't notice or hear something live approaching from that direction. Just then, as I absentmindedly dipped my paddle into the water to take a stroke, a loud slap hit the side of our canoe about where I was sitting. It was quickly followed by a loud slap of something slapping the water – hard. I was so scared I jumped straight up and come right back down in place as a sweep of crystal water from the startled beaver tail arced over my body. Did I scream? Nah. Ok, just a little. Scared the beaver worse than he scared me.

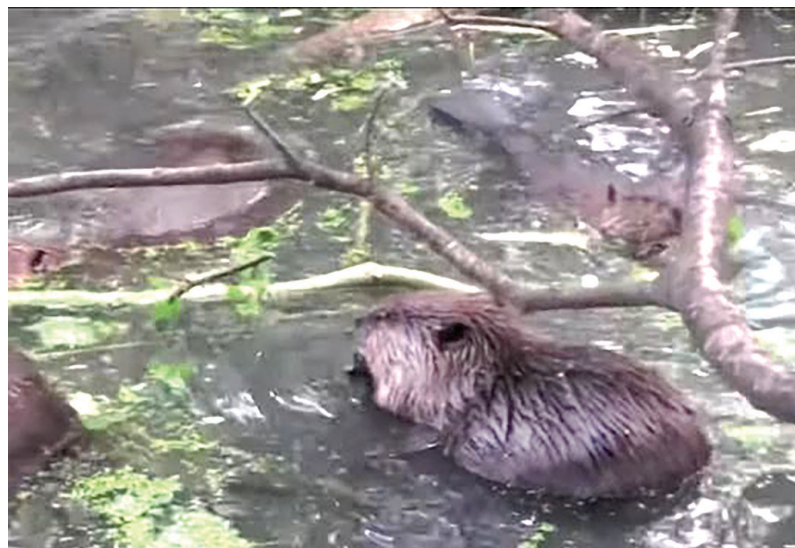
"Found the beaver, huh?" Roy affirmed, smiling like the Cheshire Cat.

"Guess so," I babbled. "I didn't see him, did you?" I was drenched to the bone from the beaver's line of defense.

"Yeah, but I didn't say anything because I thought you saw him, and I didn't want to scare him. You still up for getting closer to the den?"

"No," I flatly replied. "I'm freezing."

So much for romance. ■





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## A great brunch spot that you'll return to time and again

By Emily Banks Wooten

My first visit to The Sunflower Bakery & Cafe in Galveston was one to remember, albeit not necessarily for the food (although it was delightful).

It was April 2016 and a couple girlfriends had joined me to go see Chief Robert Irvine of Restaurant Impossible perform at The Grand 1894 Opera House in Galveston's Historic Downtown Cultural Arts District.

Little did we know that we'd wake up the next morning to a catastrophic flooding event in the Houston-Galveston area caused by a storm system that dumped more than a foot of rain on the area and would come to be known as the Tax Day flood of 2016.

Ready for a hot breakfast, the closest place that we could safely access that morning was The Sunflower Bakery & Cafe which proved fortuitous. The multi-roomed restaurant with its sunny, yellow-painted walls and array of brightly-colored paintings and photographs hanging throughout provided a welcome respite from the dreary weather outside. I enjoyed a heaping plate of migas accompanied by a cup of coffee and a mimosa

before we made our way back home.

Hubby and I were in Galveston not long ago for an overnight trip and I knew I wanted to partake in a leisurely brunch at The Sunflower before heading home. A line of people hanging out the door when we arrived was a bit daunting initially, so Hubby let me out to get us on the list while he looked for a parking place. Fortunately, the wait wasn't long and before we knew it, we were at a table enjoying coffee and Bloody Marys.

I selected the "Texas Crab Cakes & Eggs" which was two crab cakes topped with poached eggs and hollandaise sauce, accompanied by breakfast potatoes and toast. Hubby selected "Chicken & Biscuits" which was fried chicken strips, two eggs any style (he chose scrambled) with a biscuit and sausage gravy. We both thoroughly enjoyed our meals and couldn't finish them because there was so much food.

Family-owned and operated, the Sunflower Bakery & Cafe has been serving breakfast, brunch, lunch and its famous bakery treats since 1999, all created from scratch.

It began as a small bakery that served a few bakery items, cold sandwiches, and its famous tomato basil

*Texas Crab Cakes & Eggs. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten.*









*Patrons wait patiently for their table to be ready. Photo by Emily Banks Wooten.*



soup. A second location was later opened, with both continuing to grow. Eventually, both businesses were combined at the current location, with the crowds of customers nearly overwhelming them.

All was nearly lost in September 2008 when Hurricane Ike brought in seven feet of water that destroyed everything in the restaurant right down to the last spoon. Refusing to be bested, however, the restaurant was rebuilt in record time and reopened just three months later to record crowds and excellent reviews.

According to the Sunflower team, “The secret to our success is that we are chefs first. As a result, we focus on making fantastic food as well as creating a delightful experience for our customers. By focusing on creating a business we could be proud of instead of just making a profit, we build a loyal following that has far surpassed our wildest dreams.” ■

*The Sunflower Bakery & Cafe is located at 512 14th St. in Galveston. Closed on Tuesdays, it is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Mondays.*



*[top] A Bloody Mary is a nice brunch treat.  
Photo by Emily Banks Wooten.*

*[bottom] Chicken & Biscuits.  
Photo by Kevin Wooten.*



# CHILI CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

By Barbara White

*There is nothing better than chili and cornbread on a cool evening. This recipe combines the two into one simple casserole. Use any cornbread mix you like, or you can use your own favorite cornbread recipe.*

**Ingredients:**

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 15 oz can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15 oz can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 package (about 8.5 oz) cornbread or corn muffin mix
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 onion chopped
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- milk and egg (as per the preparation instructions for whatever cornbread mix you use)



**Directions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a large skillet, cook the ground beef, onion, and garlic over medium heat until the beef is thoroughly browned. Drain excess fat.
3. Stir in the chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Add the beans and tomatoes. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Transfer the chili to a 9x13 inch baking dish.
5. In a bowl, prepare the cornbread mix according to package instructions, using milk and egg. Stir in half the cheese.
6. Spoon the cornbread batter over the chili. Spread gently to cover.
7. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cornbread is golden and cooked through.
8. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the casserole and bake for an additional 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.
9. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with sour cream, cilantro, or hot sauce if desired.

Makes 6 servings



Photo by Amy Holzworth.



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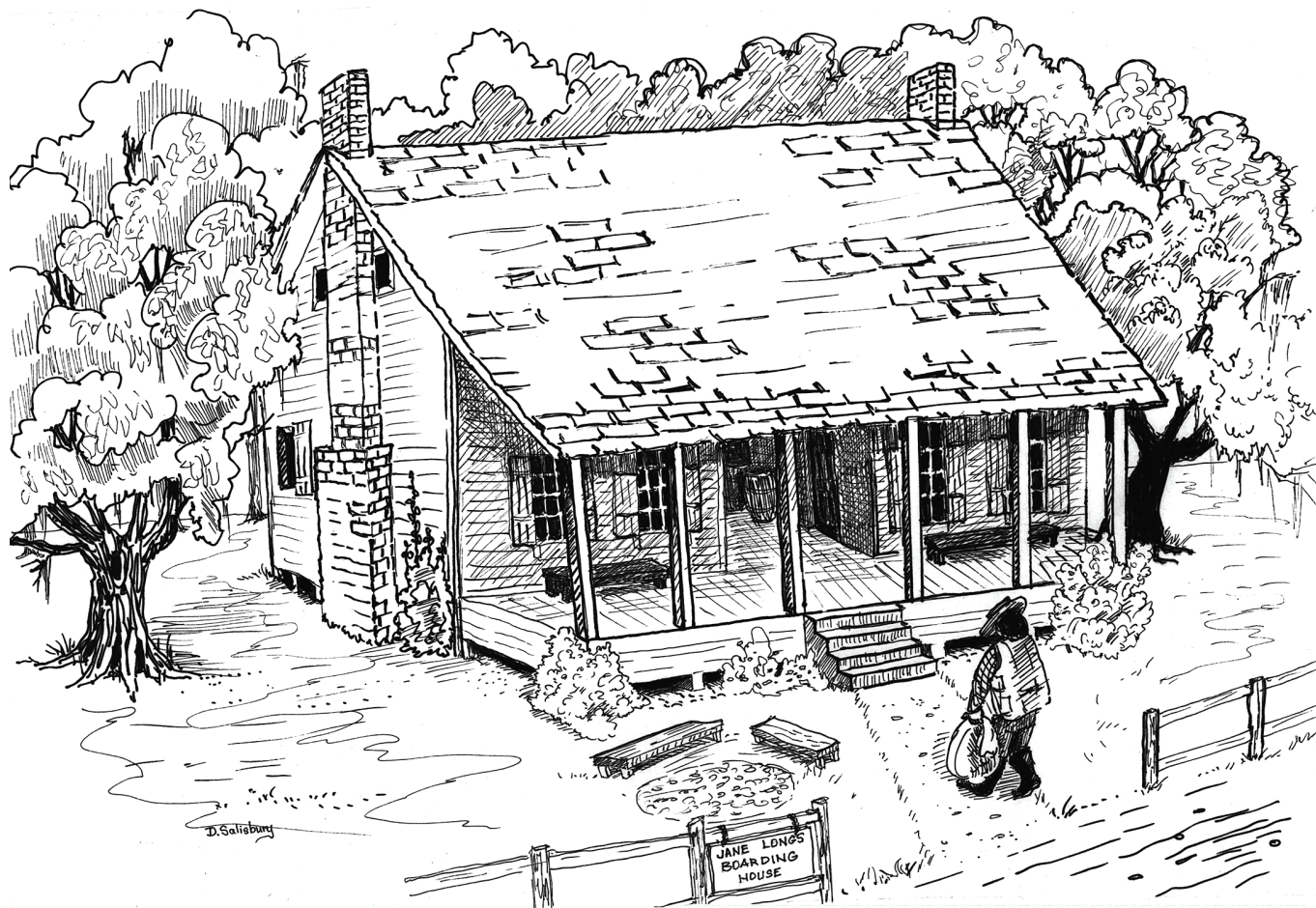
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# The Father and Mother of Texas

## *The Connection*



*Jane Long's Tavern by local artist Dorothy Salisbury, from the Brazoria County Historical Museum collection. Dorothy Salisbury created the drawing of Jane Long's Boarding House for a 1998 limited edition pewter Christmas ornament produced by the Brazoria County Historical Museum.*

### By Janice R. Edwards

Jane Long, known as “The Mother of Texas,” came to Texas with her husband, Dr. James Long, during Texas’ filibustering days. Before the Texas revolution, many entities saw Texas as a prize for the taking. Among them was Dr. Long, who left Jane Long at Port Bolivar in his failed attempt to take Texas from Spain/Mexico. This left Jane with young children and a need to make a living for herself. Eventually, she became an inn keeper in Brazoria, Texas.

Almost hidden today on an inconspicuous street in Brazoria is a state historical marker, “Site of Jane Long’s Tavern.” She came to Brazoria through East Texas as a young widow, one of the “Father of Texas” Stephen F. Austin’s “old three hundred.” So a question emerges. Did the “Mother of Texas” and the “Father of Texas” know each other, and if so, how intimate was their relationship?

What twist of fate brought together a young widow sought after by suitors and described by early colony visitor James Clopper as “a woman with an appealing figure, a pleasant smile, and masculine vigor,” with a man generally considered by his contemporaries as “less than handsome?” Was their connection romantic or platonic? A cursory investigation of their histories leads down an entrancing path. It seems Jane’s path closely followed Stephen’s.

In August 1821, Stephen F. Austin began negotiations with the provisional Mexican government to preserve the colonization enterprise under his father’s grant. He was authorized to explore between the San Antonio and Brazos Rivers to select a site for the proposed colonization. After this successful negotiation, Austin returned to New Orleans and published the terms of the colonization. The first colonists began to appear in Texas by land and sea by November/December 1821.





*Portrait of Stephen F. Austin by local artist Sherry Hall Fullen Shelton, from the Brazoria County Historical Museum collection. Sherry Hall Fullen Shelton painted the oil portrait of Stephen F. Austin for the Austin Colony exhibit at the Brazoria County Historical Museum in 1993.*

On September 19, 1821, Dr. James Long left Jane at his fort in Bolivar to gather additional volunteers to wrest Texas from Spain. Instead of returning in a month, he was captured, taken to Mexico City and killed under suspicious circumstances. When he did not return, the troops defending the fort dwindled with every ship that passed by. In November 1821 when the sloop, the Lively, carrying the first of Stephen F. Austin's settlers, stopped to ask Jane to go to the colony with them, she was alone except for her young daughter and slave, Kian. Jane refused the request, her first positive brush with Austin's colony, and gave birth to a child on December 21, 1821.

Early in 1822, Jane learned that her husband had been captured by the Spanish and then killed by Mexican revolutionaries and temporarily returned to the Natchez plantation owned by her sister and brother-in-law, the Calvits. When her youngest child died, she and the Calvits traveled to Texas as part of Austin's original 300.

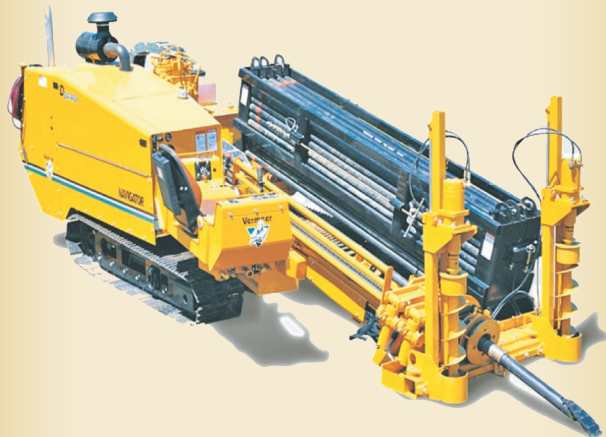
In January 1823, the provisional Mexican government granted each family approved by Austin 4,428 acres (a league) for grazing and 177 acres (a labor) for farming – a head right. In April, Austin induced the congress to introduce 300 families on his terms. Returning to the colonies in July 1824, he set up his headquarters in San Felipe De Austin on the banks of the Brazos.

By December 1825, Jane Long and the Calvits lived near San Felipe De Austin. During this time, the Austin/Long connection began. Austin "beat a path to Jane's door" and she and her sister made him a suit of buckskins. He even petitioned the Mexican government for a widow's pension for Jane, citing her husband's attempt to overthrow Spanish rule. (In 1824 Mexico gained its independence from Spain.)

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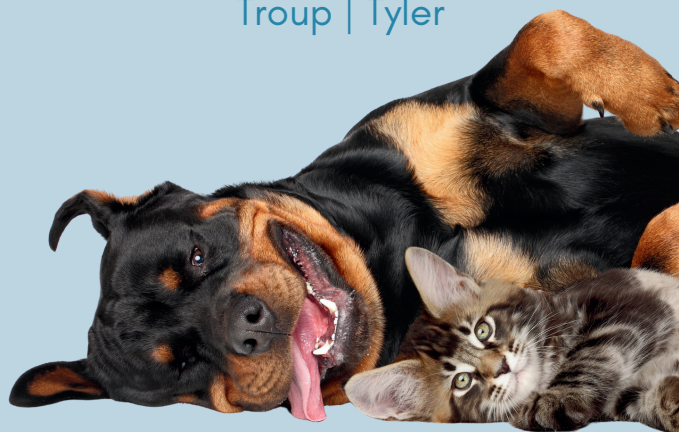
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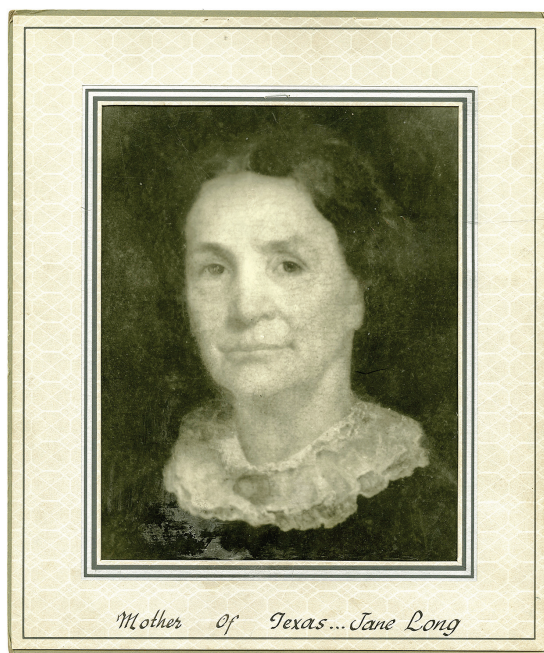
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Though the pension was denied, Austin granted her a head right of land – she was one of only 10 women of the original 300 who received that much. But to keep it, Jane Long and the Calvits had to improve it, so they moved onto the land and produced some crops, but it was not enough to make a living.

As discontent in the colonies spread, and Brazoria became the “unofficial port and settler center,” Jane convinced her daughter, Ann, and her new husband, Edward Winston, to move to Brazoria. Soon after landing in Brazoria (January 1831), Edward died from consumption. In March 1832 Jane first announced the tavern she and her daughter would run in *The Constitutional Advocate* and *Texas Public Adviser*. It quickly became the center of social life and revolution plotting. Jane operated her tavern in Brazoria from 1832-1837.


Jane held two historic balls, the Santa Ana (sic) Ball (July 21, 1832 – after the Battle of Velasco), and the Liberation Ball (September 1835 to celebrate Stephen F. Austin’s liberation from Mexican imprisonment) at her tavern. Austin attended both balls and both furthered the cause of the Texas Revolution. During the time of the first ball, Jane secreted arms for the Texans in a brick outbuilding and organized the women of Brazoria to make bullets for the Battle of Velasco. At the second ball, Stephen F. Austin made a speech which was taken as a call to arms.

Between the times Jane opened her tavern in 1832, until April of 1833 when Stephen F. Austin was appointed to secure Texas statehood from Mexico, the two Texas legends met and conferred often at the Brazoria tavern. While Austin was in Mexico seeking Texas statehood, and continuing until news came that he had been arrested (January 1834) and imprisoned in Mexico City under suspicion of trying to incite insurrection in Texas, Jane ran the tavern and plotted a revolution.



Jane Long. Courtesy of Texas State Library and Archives Commission





*Jane Long's Pie – I made Stephen F. Austin's favorite Pecan Pie per Jane Long's recipe book. Photo by Janice R. Edwards.*

But on March 27, 1834, she suddenly leased out the inn she had operated to M.W. Smith. When word reached the colonies that Austin was returning, she returned to business. On September 1, 1835, when Austin reached Brazoria, he went directly to her boarding house. He had been absent from Texas for 28 months. A few days after his return, on September 8, 1835, Jane gave a ball in his honor and most of the southern colonists attended.

When Sam Houston's army fell back prior to the battle of San Jacinto and hostilities in Brazoria were imminent, Jane secured her boarding house and relocated to Bolivar. After the victory at San Jacinto, she returned and reopened her tavern in Brazoria. It was the site of a "Victory Ball" on Oct. 29, 1836.<sup>1</sup> Austin was again a guest at the festivities. A short two months later, December 27, 1836, Austin died at the age of 43.

Austin's death changed things in Brazoria and once the spring rains of 1837 had stopped long enough for the roads to become passable, Jane Long moved to her land near San Felipe and opened a boarding house there. By the late 1840s she had established a plantation on her own land. She raised cattle and grew cotton which was more profitable to her than inn keeping. She never remarried.

The Mother and the Father of Texas knew each other well enough to confide in one another and to be concerned about each other. Some people contend that this relationship was platonic, and an equal number of sources claim Austin was Jane's ardent suitor. Was the nature of their relationship defined by personal attraction and affection, or did the Mother and Father of Texas merely rock the cradle of revolution? ■

<sup>1</sup>Jack C. Ramsey Jr., *Texas Sinners and Revolutionaries Jane Long and Her Fellow Conspirators*, 118.

## *The way to a man's heart is through his stomach ...*

*Legend has it this recipe is one Jane Long used when she ran her tavern at Brazoria. Did she serve it for Austin's homecoming ball?*

### STEPHEN F. AUSTIN'S FAVORITE PECAN PIE

Recipe courtesy of Nellie S. Patrick, author of *Jane Long of Texas 1798–1880*, published by Pelican Publishing Company.

#### Ingredients:

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup dark sorghum
- 3 tablespoons fresh cow's butter
- 3 fresh eggs
- 1 teaspoon essence of vanilla flavoring
- pinch of salt
- 1 cup fresh pecan halves
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 pie crust that is unbaked

#### Directions:

Stir the half cup of sugar and sorghum over a moderate fire until they boil. Stir in your butter. Meanwhile beat the eggs until the whites and yellows are blended. Pour the hot mixture over the eggs and stir. Add flavoring, salt and pecans. Now mix the flour and 1 tablespoon of sugar. Sprinkle this over the bottom of the unbaked pie crust. Pour the filling into the crust and cook in the oven which should be moderate. Cook about 45 minutes.



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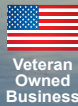


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# Hunting the mule foot hog

By Luke Clayton

As a boy my family fished a great deal in southeast Oklahoma where there has long been good number of Choctaw Mule foot hogs, decedents of the original stocking that came with the Choctaw people when they make their Trail of Tears journey all the way from Mississippi back in 1831. I remember asking my Daddy if those tracks we often encountered were made by a 'baby donkey'.

"No, son, these are hog tracks made by a special breed of hog the Choctaw people brought with them to this part of the country well over 100 years ago." He told me. I had long had a fascination with hogs, both wild and domestic. This was back in the late 1950's and I remember reading about hunting 'wild boar' in ads here is FFG. These hunts were for wild boar in the mountains of Tennessee and my lifelong goal was to travel to this 'distant land' and hunt them. As a youngster of about 9 years old, I had no idea that one day I would be hunting these unique porkers with tracks that resembled those of 'baby donkeys' on land owned by decedents of the Native Americans that originally brought them from Mississippi.

With solid hooves that aren't split like other hogs, the Choctaw hog is quite unique. The fact that the breed also has waddles hanging down below his jaw makes them even more unique. I've had a lifelong fascination with hogs, both wild and domestic. As a youngster, I remember picking pecans and making enough money to buy a couple of pigs from a neighbor. My goal was to sell them in the fall and earn some money to purchase my first horse, which I did. Back in the late fifties and sixties wild hogs weren't nearly as plentiful as today. Beginning in the late seventies their numbers greatly increased across much of Texas, thanks in part I believe to stocking by hunters that wanted wild porkers on the lands they hunted. I know because I was there and witnessed this on many occasions.

For the past several years, I have had the privilege of hunting on sections of the over 40,000 acres of beautiful mountain country owned by the Choctaw Nation in southeast Oklahoma, in what was once called "Indian Territory". I've hunted eastern turkey and deer on this remote land as a guest of the Choctaw Nation and Choctaw Lodge manager Dusty Vickrey several times in the past and when I expressed interest in hunting a Choctaw hog, Dusty







*Choctaw mule foot hogs are unique animals, challenging to hunt and provide great pork. They also have a very interesting history.*  
*Photo by Luke Clayton*

gave me the thumbs up. I think he knew I would be at least as fired up over the opportunity to finally take a Choctaw hog as the biggest whitetail buck on the property! I was targeting a 'management' buck and although some bruiser bucks came within range of my 6.5PRC CVA Cascade rifle topped with a Stealth Vision scope, the mature management type bucks eluded me. I did take a very heavy doe near the end of my hunt which allowed me time to go after a trophy (to me) porker.

Dusty explained that many of the hunters during the late winter hog hunts have taken the mule foot hogs but to date, I am the only hunter that has had a lifelong desire to harvest one of these unique animals. As the old saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"!

We set up a pop up blind on the edge of some very heavy cover where a big sounder of hogs bed up during the day. The plan was to bait an area a few yards out from the cover and attempt to wait until the smell of the Vineyard Max deer attractant drew them out of the brush. The smell of dried, crushed grape skins mixed with corn chops and rice brand has proven very effective on my past hunts and I felt confident these Choctaw hogs would also find the aroma irresistible. I settled into the blind a couple of hours before dark full of confidence the smell of grapes would pull the porkers out within range of my CVA 50 caliber Optima muzzleloader. Then, a streak of bad luck, the wind changed and my scent was being carried

directly to the bait pile and thicket beyond. With about 20 minutes of shooting light remaining, I knew if I was going to get my trophy Choctaw hog, I would have to take the hunt to the hogs. I could hear them back in the brush milling around and an occasional squeal when a larger hog would whack a pig with its snout.

Larry Weishuhn was with me with the intent of filming the hunt for an upcoming segment for our TV show "A Sportsmans Life". "Let's try to put a stalk on them", whispered my friend. We were soon easing back into the cover, me in the lead with the muzzleloader and he with the video camera rolling. Drake was off to the side listening as the hogs moved along and pointing the direction of their travel. By the sound the hogs were milling around about 50 yards back in the thick stuff and I slowly circled around downwind and picked my way through the brush. Thank goodness hogs are vocal critters, I stalked them by sound and it appeared they were working they way toward me.

I knew if they smelled me and spooked the whole sounder would vamoose and I paid close attention to the wind. I guessed their direction of travel and picked a small opening in the brush about 50 yards down the hillside. Good fortune was smiling on me; maybe it was the spirit of the Choctaw people that originally introduced their hogs to this country. I saw a couple of smaller hogs walk into the opening and then disappear into



the brush. About 15 hogs followed suit, mostly sows, pigs and smaller boars. I waited in hopes of a larger boar but my hopes were beginning to fade. Then I spotted a larger hog, jet black with waddles hanging down from his jaws. THIS was my trophy Choctaw boar, the one I had been hoping for. A KABOON sounded from the muzzleloader with the ensuing cloud of white smoke. For a few seconds I didn't know if my shot was good or not. Then through the scope, I made out the form of a very dead, very black hog in the brush; my trophy was anchored in his tracks. Choctaw hogs aren't big by feral hog standards. This one might have weighed 130 pounds but he had all the characteristics of the breed with long waddles and little mule foot shaped hooves. In the dental department, he showed the signs of a boar with a bit of age his cutters were about 1.5 inches long.

The Choctaws have a large number of these pure breed Choctaw hogs penned in a large hog proof fenced area in order to keep the blood line pure but hogs propagate quickly, sows can breed at six months old and often birth six to ten piglets. Each year the excess hogs are released into the wild to strength the bloodline of the feral hogs. Thus, not all wild hogs roaming this mountain country are of the true Choctaw bloodline but it's very common to encounter wild hogs displaying the characteristics of the Choctaw hogs.

I quit having trophies mounted several years ago, there is just so much room on the wall of my little cabin, but I will find room for a gun rack made from the legs of what I consider one of my trophies of a lifetime. Of course those 'mule' feet will be polished and prominently displayed!

My Choctaw hog was the fulfillment of a long time dream. As I stated, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." ■



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# DEER CAMP MEALS IN A SNAP

**By Luke Clayton**

I often become the designated camp cook when hunting with my friends. This is partly because I love camp cooking and partly because once one turns out a tasty meal or two for his friends at camp, he or she automatically becomes camp cook. So, these two easy to prepare camp recipes come with a warning; after you prepare them, be prepared to assume duties as camp cook, your compares will demand it of you!

Years ago, I made the mistake of waiting until after the evening hunt to prepare dinner. This was a huge mistake that delayed eating until at least 8 o'clock or later, if I harvested an animal and had to spend time recovering game, field dressing and transporting the deer or wild hog back to camp. I've perfected many dishes that can either be prepared during mid day or very quickly at camp after the evening hunt. The key to accomplishing these quick but tasty meals is to beginning with the preparation before I leave home.

Here are a couple of my favorites that can easily be prepared in 20 minutes at camp. Give them a try and I bet you will thank me after you spend an hour recovering and packing that next deer back to camp, you know the one you shot during the last minute of legal shooting light!

**CAMP FAJITAS** Who doesn't enjoy a meal of tasty well seasoned fajitas. I've made them from everything from javelina backstrap through the years. Just about any game meat lends itself well to fajitas so use what you've got. If it's your first hunt of the season and your freezer is empty, you can use domestic beef or pork but there's just something special about eating wild game at hunting camp!

I begin at home by thinly slicing the meat into small fajita size pieces and then dusting them liberally with my favorite fajita seasoning. I've tried them all through the years and prefer Bolner's Fiesta Brand which is not overly salty but has just the right blend of spices. In a gallon freezer bag, I combine the seasoned meat with chopped jalapeno, several crushed and diced garlic pods and the juice for two or three limes and allow to marinade in the frig a couple days before my trip to hunting camp. Before leaving home, I dice a few slices of fatty bacon and thinly slice red, yellow and green peppers. All this is contained in one large freezer bag and placed in the ice cooler. At camp, after my hog or deer is hanging on the meat pole or after spending an hour or two helping a buddy recover his, we're back at camp and everyone is looking to 'the cook' for dinner.

In my Lodge cast iron wok, I pour a little cooking oil and add the chopped bacon strips. Four minutes later the bacon is crispy and I add the marinated fajita meat and cook on high heat for

about 6 minutes. I like the veggies in fajitas to be cooked with the meat so I add the peppers and onion and continue cooking for about 5 more minutes, just until the 'crunch' is taken out of the peppers and they are soft but not cooked to pieces. I never, EVER microwave tortillas. They must be heated in a cast iron skillet or sometimes right over the flame until they are just a bit crunchy with spots of brown. This is a properly heated tortilla, just the way my Mexican friends taught me to prepare them. You can serve the stand alone fajitas or open a can or two of refried beans to top off the meal. I often make a skillet to Spanish rice at home to go with the meal but that's optional.

## STIR FRY VENISON

Another super tasty and quick camp meal is stir fry and the type meat you use is optional, game or domestic meat both work well but at hunting camp, I always try to use venison or wild pork but have substituted boned out quail and even duck breast. Begin at home before your hunt by thinly slicing the meat/fowl of choice. Place meat in a gallon freezer bag with a generous amount of Kikkoman Stir-Fry sauce and add a bit of soy sauce and allow to marinade at least 24 hours. I love garlic and add several cloves of diced garlic to the marinade or, when I have them, the green sprigs of garlic that I grow in my garden. These sprigs are available in some whole food stores but garlic is easy to grow and I usually pick my own. Before heading to camp, I either thinly slice pepper, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, snow peas, onion, mushrooms, etc. or better yet buy the pre packaged stir fry kits that have all the veggies sliced and ready to add to the stir fry. I love snow peas and often incorporate an entire bag of them in my stir fry.

At camp, after the hunt, I simply heat a bit of peanut or canola oil in my wok and cook the marinated meat for a couple minutes until done. I enjoy a thick sauce in my stir fry and usually add a bit of corn starch mixed in water for thickening. As the veggies cook, I pour in a bit more of the stir-fry sauce. Jasmine rice is a must with stir fry and I have another zip lock bag of rice that I prepared from home on hand. My guests serve themselves with a big helping of rice topped by the stir fry meat and veggies right out of the wok. Simple easy and FAST! Three ingredients necessary to a successful camp dinner! LC

Luke and Larry Weishuhn's book, "Campfire Talk" is available through [www.catfishradio.org](http://www.catfishradio.org) ■

*[right] The preparation for stir fry can be done at home which makes for a quick, tasty camp meal.*







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*Solitude*  
By Sandy Carroll

*Sunlight cast diamonds across the lake  
I saw a dragon fly in a bass's wake  
God said seek and you will find  
so, I left all my cares behind  
To gaze at the world in a quieter place  
enjoying our heavenly Father's grace  
Fall had cooled the morning air  
then I saw whitetails everywhere  
The shoreline showed signs of ancient man  
then I found an arrowhead in the sand  
Then pieces of pottery whaere a campfire had  
been I felt the Great Spirit suddenly descend  
To remind me that time is a fleeting thing  
enjoy what every day can bring*

*Along  
the  
Navasota*

by POET  
SANDY CARROLL

*Stories that make  
your heart smile*

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HOMETOWN HERO  
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and Amazon.



# Welcome to the land of smooth talkers

By Barbara White

A friend of mine, who was born and raised in East Texas, recently shared this story with me.

She had put her phone in her back pocket and inadvertently butt-dialed a friend of hers who lives in Chicago. She had been carrying on a normal conversation with her husband for several minutes before she pulled out her phone and realized what had happened.

"Hello?" she asked, not knowing who her backside had managed to call.

"I just LOVE listening to you talk," her friend said.

It is nice to know that there's at least one person in Chicago who appreciates a good Texas drawl.

Longtime Texas Monthly magazine writer David Courtney once described the varying degrees of Texas drawls as "mild, medium or Lufkin."

The fact that he picked an East Texas town as the home of the most spectacular of all drawls tells me he knows what he's talking about, but I don't think all the accolades should go to Lufkin. What about, say, Henderson? Or Kountze, Carthage, Jasper or Palestine? Or any of the other East Texas burgs where residents have perfected their accents effortlessly simply by having had the privilege of being born and raised in this part of the state?

Some of us, through no fault of our own, have had to acquire our Texas accents the old-fashioned way – by hobnobbing with a whole lot of East Texans. I got off to a slow start.

I arrived in Texas just in time to start high school, having been transplanted from Oregon into a state and city, Houston, that had all sorts of bragging rights at the time. The Astrodome, the

It was an exciting time, and I was ready to embrace my Texan-ness, beginning with learning to sound like I belonged here.

As the start of school neared, I was nervous to join what I just knew would be a bunch of kids who knew a whole lot more about being Texan than I did. I decided I would just try to keep my mouth shut and observe until I could get the hang of things and start getting Texanized.

Houston, we had a problem. We had moved into one of those neighborhoods that was then on the edge of the city's westward sprawl, where everyone was from somewhere else. In my high school of a couple of thousand kids, I met exactly one native Texan. One! Four years gone without a trace of an accent.

My situation improved when I headed off to college in Nacogdoches, to a school that attracts a lot of students from surrounding towns. Suddenly, I was conversing with a lot of East Texans. It was a happy time.

By Christmas break that first year, out-of-state relatives who called to wish my family happy holidays were chortling over my Texas accent. Their chuckles turned into guffaws when I mentioned that I was fixin' to go to the store. I threw in a couple of y'all's since they seemed to be getting such a kick out of it. My out-of-state kin hadn't heard anything yet; I was just getting started.

A few years later, I landed a job as a newspaper reporter in Livingston. As part of my job, I listened to a police scanner 24 hours a day. I recommend this learning method for newcomers who are tired of getting a suspicious side-eye and asked where they are from every time they open their mouths and want to get up to speed quickly.

A lot of real East Texans sign up to protect and serve the communities in which they grew up. That police scanner did a lot to boost my Texas credentials. It was there I picked up such terms as "Jeet-jet?" That, of course, means, "Did you eat yet?"

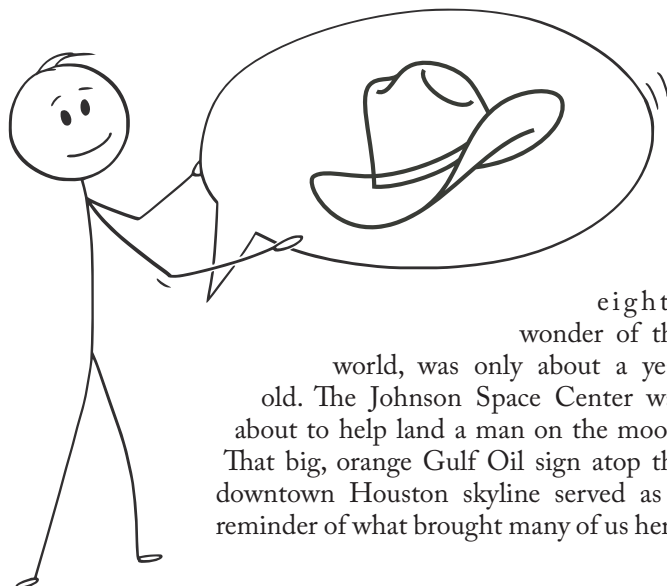
I also learned that some East Texans like to drop the middle vowel to turn a three-syllable word into a two-syllable word. Florida may become Flor'da, Italy sounds just fine as It'ly and Corrigan might as well be shortened to Corr'gan. Why waste syllables?

Today, I am proud to rank my East Texas accent in the mild to medium category on Mr. Courtney's scale.

I am also proud to say we are not a homogenous bunch. We don't all call a shopping cart a buggy and at least a few of us prefer our tea unsweetened.

It's all good.

If you are new to the area, we welcome you. Even if you talk funny. Stick around for a while and we'll have you drawlin' in no time. ■



eight  
wonder of the  
world, was only about a year  
old. The Johnson Space Center was  
about to help land a man on the moon.  
That big, orange Gulf Oil sign atop the  
downtown Houston skyline served as a  
reminder of what brought many of us here.





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These are a few of

# OUR FAVORITE THINGS

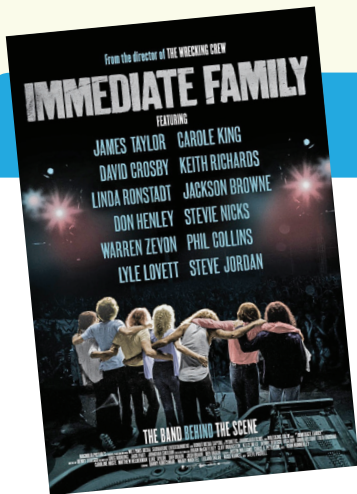
We are retiring our regional shopping sprees, to make room for a new feature. These pages will inspire you to find joy in your favorites, and maybe some of ours, too.



**Kelli Barnes**  
publisher, Polk County Publishing Company

## Crack Heels Stick

"I have been using this for just a few weeks and I have never had a product so easy to incorporate into my daily routine that actually works. My heels are so much better since I started using it."



**Emily Banks Wooten**  
editor, East Texan & Polk County Enterprise

## Immediate Family

"Hubby and I love a good music documentary, and we felt we'd hit the jackpot when we recently discovered "Immediate Family" on Hulu. The 2022 documentary that comes in at one hour and 42 minutes tells the story of four session musicians who were never really in the limelight yet found lasting success backing up the iconic singer-songwriters of the 70s and 80s and basically created the soundtrack of our lives."



**Amy Holzworth**  
graphic design editor

## Wool Felting

"Because nothing is more stress-relieving than stabbing something with a really sharp needle a couple thousand times."



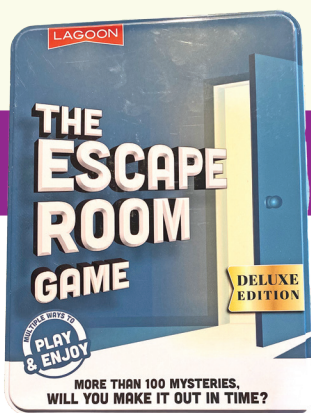




**Kevin Wooten**  
contributing writer, East Texan

### Amazon Jeans

"If you are a short guy, you know that finding clothes that fit is difficult. Stores that specialize in clothing for short men are often outrageously overpriced. Amazon.com has Amazon branded jeans and other types of pants that can be ordered to fit your waist and inseam size. The best part: Most all styles and sizes are less than \$40. That is less than half the price of online specialty stores."



**Trish Hardy**  
distribution team

### The Escape Room Game

"My family enjoys at home escape rooms or going and doing an escape room. I think what I like the most is that each person brings something different to the game. Our motto is 'together we're better'."



**Luke Clayton**  
outdoor writer

### Cattfish Radio with Luke Clayton and friends

"Available everywhere."



**Donna Hammer**  
advertising representative

### The Uzzle game

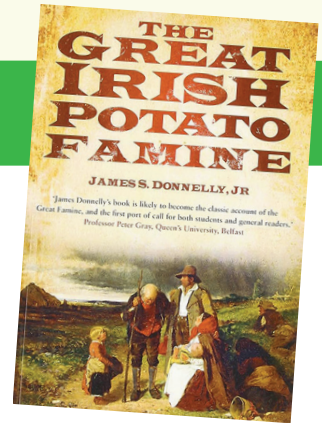




**Chris Edwards**  
editor, Tyler County Booster

### **The Great Irish Potato Famine** by James Donnelly, Jr.

"The text offers an incredibly well-researched account of one of the most major human catastrophes in modern historical record, and really explores the responsibility of the British crown for it to have happened, and the subsequent effects on Irish life."



**Cheryl Lloyd**  
print shop/page designer PCPC

### **Goat Milk Soap**

"Goat milk soap offers several benefits for the skin due to its natural and nourishing ingredients. Here are some key advantages:

- Moisturizing | Gentle and Mild | Rich in Nutrients
- Exfoliating | Soothing | Free of Harsh Chemicals
- Anti-Aging | Anti-Bacterial | Environmentally Friendly"



**Marlena Stubblefield**  
front desk/advertising, Trinity County News-Standard

### **Keepsake Pillows out of Special Clothing**

"I was recently going through a box of memories and found this pillow. After mom passed away my sister took some of Mom's shirts and vests and had them made into keepsake pillows. The one I have is made from a vest she wore only during Christmastime. It was her favorite. I packed it away because it made me sad. But now, it has a permanent place on my bed. It brings me happiness and good memories of my wonderful mother."







**Molly LaSalle**

front desk/reporter, Tyler County Booster



### Hey Dude Shoes

"I really don't have a favorite thing. I do, however, have a couple of things I guess I obsess over. One thing I have discovered is that my poor feet are unforgiving, and with age, were telling me to find some "sensible" shoes. I bought a pair of \$9 knockoffs of Hey Dudes at

Walmart months ago, wore them almost daily, and I soon discovered I needed new ones, so I ordered the real deal off of Amazon, they came four days later, and I will never look back."

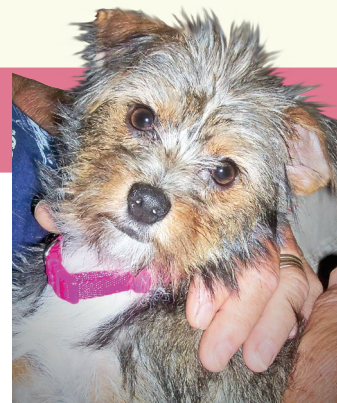


**Janice Edwards**

contributing writer, East Texan & Polk County Enterprise

### A New Friend

"During a time of loss, I reached out to the SPCA and found my new companion ... she wasn't what I thought I wanted ... but instinctively we knew we needed each other ... friends in need. Just being with this little dog makes me happy."



**Josh Boudreaux**

distribution team



### UE Megaboom

"The Ultimate Ears Megaboom is a portable Bluetooth speaker that can play for up to 20 hours on a full charge. It has a cylindrical design that spreads sound in all directions. The Megaboom can be paired with another Megaboom speaker for true stereo."



# CALENDAR

## JANUARY

### Galveston

Townes Van Zandt Tribute at the Old Quarter Acoustic Café  
*JANUARY 1*

### Tomball

Prince Tribute at Main Street Crossing  
*JANUARY 3*

### Houston

SETX Texas Pool & Spa Show/GR Brown Convention Center  
*JANUARY 4-8*

### Beaumont

SETX Whiskey Festival/Civic Center  
*JANUARY 4*

### Huntsville

Elvis Tribute at Old Towne Theater  
*JANUARY 4*

### Galveston

Battle of Galveston Walking Tours/ Downtown  
*JANUARY 4-5*

### Kirbyville

Country Music Show at the Palace Theater  
*JANUARY 11*

### Tomball

Wade Bowen at Main Street Crossing  
*JANUARY 14*

### Orange

Ain't Too Proud to Beg, the Life and Times of the Temptations/Lutcher Theater  
*JANUARY 14*

### Lufkin

Kim Cruse at the Pines Theater  
*JANUARY 16*

### Beaumont

Rodney Carrington/Julie Rogers Theater  
*JANUARY 17*

### Galveston

The Life and Times of the Temptations/ Grand 1894 Opera House  
*JANUARY 17-18*

### Humble

Hops N' Hot Sauce Festival  
*JANUARY 18*

### Tyler

Tyler Gun Show/The Oil Palace  
*JANUARY 18*

### Marshall

The Music of Sam Cooke/Memorial City Performance Hall  
*JANUARY 19*

### Houston

31st Annual MLK Parade/Downtown  
*JANUARY 20*

### Beaumont

Boots and Bows Gala 2025/Beaumont Civic Center  
*JANUARY 21*

### Tomball

Hayes Carll at Main Street Crossing  
*JANUARY 23*

### Spring

Loretta Lynn Tribute at Dosey Doe, the Big Barn  
*JANUARY 23*

### Houston

Rickie Lee Jones at the Heights Theater  
*JANUARY 24*

### Livingston

25th Annual Children's Pow Wow/A/C Multi-Purpose Center  
*JANUARY 25*

### Galveston

Galveston Island Country Music Fest/ Galveston Island Conv. Center  
*JANUARY 25*



**Huntsville**

Radney Foster at the Old Towne Theater

**JANUARY 25**

**Henderson**

Henderson Main Street Mardi Gras

**JANUARY 25**

**Tomball**

Woodstock Experience/Main Street Crossing

**JANUARY 25**

**Pasadena**

Junk Hippy Winter Show/Pasadena Convention Center

**JANUARY 25**

**Marshall**

Shenandoah at Memorial City Performance Hall

**JANUARY 26**

**Houston**

Houston Auto Show 2025/NRG Center

**JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 1**

**Tomball**

Bee Gees Tribute at Main Street Crossing

**JANUARY 30**

**Beaumont**

The Bellamy Brothers at the Jefferson Theater

**JANUARY 31**

**Houston**

Casey Donahew at the House of Blues

**JANUARY 31**

# FEBRUARY

**Galveston**

The Gatlin Brothers/Grand 1894 Opera House

**FEBRUARY 1**

**Tomball**

Collin Raye at Main Street Crossing

**FEBRUARY 1**

**Houston**

Monster Jam at NRG Park

**FEBRUARY 1-2**

**Nacogdoches**

Tex-Gras 2025/Fredonia Hotel

**FEBRUARY 1**

**Pasadena**

Repticon Houston/Pasadena Rodeo and Fairgrounds

**FEBRUARY 1-2**

**Houston**

Houston Auto and Boat Show/ NRG Park

**FEBRUARY 1-2**

**Galveston**

Lyle Lovett at the Grand 1894 Opera House

**FEBRUARY 4**

**Tomball**

Rolling Stones Tribute at Main Street Crossing

**FEBRUARY 5**

**Livingston**

Polk County Cares Crawfish Boil/Polk County Commerce Center

**FEBRUARY 8**

**Kirbyville**

Country Music Show at the Palace Theater

**FEBRUARY 8**

**Beaumont**

Harlem Globetrotters at Ford Arena

**FEBRUARY 8**

**Nacogdoches**

Aaron Watson at Banita Creek Hall

**FEBRUARY 8**

**Houston**

Brickfest Lego Fan Experience/ NRG Park

**FEBRUARY 8-9**

**Tomball**

Larry Gatlin at Main Street Crossing

**FEBRUARY 9**

**Tomball**

John Berry at Main Street Crossing

**FEBRUARY 13**

**Tomball**

Shake Russell at Main Street Crossing

**FEBRUARY 14**

**Longview**

2025 Home and Design Show/ Cobb Convention Center

**FEBRUARY 14-16**

**Houston**

Los Lonely Boys at the House of Blues

**FEBRUARY 15**

**Orange**

Twitty and Lynn at the Lutch Theater

**FEBRUARY 15**

**Houston**

Mary J. Blige at the Toyota Center

**FEBRUARY 18**



# CALFENPAR

## **Orange**

Chicago the Musical at the Lutch Theater  
*FEBRUARY 20*

## **Galveston**

Mardi Gras Galveston/The Strand  
*FEBRUARY 21-28*

## **Beaumont**

Monster Nation 2025/Ford Park  
*FEBRUARY 21-22*

## **Beaumont**

Fire Museum of Texas Chili Cook-off/  
Downtown  
*FEBRUARY 22*

## **Livingston**

Shake, Rattle & Roll presented by  
Livingston Community Concert Association  
at the Polk County Commerce Center  
*FEBRUARY 27*

## **Houston**

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo BBQ  
Cook-off 2025/NRG Stadium  
*FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1*

## **Beaumont**

Mardi Gras SETX/Crockett Street  
*FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 2*

## **Houston**

Rodeo Round-up and Go Texan Day/  
Hermann Square  
*FEBRUARY 28*

## **MARCH**

## **Crystal Beach**

Mardi Gras Parade 2025/Camp  
Margaritaville Resort  
*MARCH 1*

## **Lufkin**

Cash and Orbison Tribute at the Pines  
Theater  
*MARCH 1*

## **Houston**

Gary Clark Jr. at 713 Music Hall  
*MARCH 1*

## **Spring**

The Bellamy Brothers at Dosey Doe, the Big  
Barn  
*MARCH 1*

## **Galveston**

Itzhak Perlman at the 1894 Grand Opera  
House  
*MARCH 2*

## **Woodville**

Toast to Texas Independence/Heritage  
Village  
*MARCH 2*

## **Beaumont**

Taste of the Triangle 2025/Beaumont Civic  
Center  
*MARCH 4*

## **Houston**

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo/NRG  
Stadium  
*MARCH 4-23*

## **Kirbyville**

Country Music Show at the Palace Theater  
*MARCH 8*

## **Lufkin**

Peacherine Ragtime Society Orchestra at  
the Pines Theater  
*MARCH 9*

## **Nederland**

2025 Nederland Heritage Festival/Heritage  
Pavilion/Boston Avenue  
*MARCH 11-16*

## **Houston**

Rev. Horton Heat at White Oak Music Hall  
*MARCH 13*

## **Huntsville**

Riders in the Sky at Old Town Theater  
*MARCH 14-15*

## **Tomball**

Orleans live at Main Street Crossing  
*MARCH 15*

## **Beaumont**

Sleeping Beauty at Julie Rogers Theater  
*MARCH 16*



**Woodville**

Festival of the Arts/Heritage Village  
**MARCH 22-23**

**Lufkin**

Adonis Rose and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra at the Temple Theater  
**MARCH 22**

**Tomball**

The Malpass Brothers at Main Street Crossing  
**MARCH 23**

**Tomball**

Rick Trevino at Main Street Crossing  
**MARCH 27**

**Canton**

2025 East Texas Fiber Festival/ Canton Civic Center  
**MARCH 28**

**Woodville**

Lion's Club Rodeo/Tyler County Fairgrounds  
**MARCH 28-29**

**Woodville**

Western Weekend Trail Ride Parade  
**MARCH 29**

**Lufkin**

Bee Gees Gold at the Pines Theater  
**MARCH 29**

# APRIL

**Livingston**

Quilt Show/Polk County Commerce Center  
**APRIL 2-5**

**Canton**

First Monday Trade Days  
**APRIL 3-6**

**Orange**

The Cher Show, a Musical at the Lutcher Theater  
**APRIL 4**

**Tomball**

Selena Forever Tribute at Main Street Crossing  
**APRIL 4**

**Paris**

Paris Steak Wars 2025/Love Civic Center  
**APRIL 5**

**Port Arthur**

Cajun Heritage Fest 2025/Bob Bowers Civic Center  
**APRIL 5**

**Woodville**

82nd Annual Dogwood Festival Queens Parade  
**APRIL 5**

**Nacogdoches**

Spring Brew Fest 2025/ Nacogdoches Expo Center  
**APRIL 12**

**Lufkin**

Gino Vanelli at the Temple Theater  
**APRIL 12**

**Colmesneil**

Easter Walk with Jesus/Victory Camp Colmesneil  
**APRIL 12**

**Beaumont**

Sesame Street Live at Ford Arena  
**APRIL 12**

**Beaumont**

Neches River Festival 77th Coronation/Julie Rogers Theater  
**APRIL 12**

**Kirbyville**

Country Music Show at the Palace Theater  
**APRIL 12**

**Galveston**

2025 Elissa Sail Days/Galveston Historic Seaport  
**APRIL 12-25**

**Gladewater**

East Texas Gusher Days Festival  
**APRIL 18-19**

**Sugarland**

The Mavericks at Smart Financial Center  
**APRIL 19**

**Livingston**

SixtiesMania presented by Livingston Community Concert Association at the Polk County Commerce Center  
**APRIL 22**

**Orange**

Mauriceville Crawfish Festival 5K  
**APRIL 22**

**Nacogdoches**

Nacogdoches Multi-Cultural Festival 5K-1 Mile Run  
**APRIL 26**

**Corsicana**

Derrick Days Corsicana  
**APRIL 26**

**Nacogdoches**

3rd Annual Multi-Cultural Festival/Downtown  
**APRIL 27-28**

**Port Neches**

Port Neches River Fest 2025/ Riverfront Park  
**APRIL 30-MAY 4**

*Events are subject to change or cancellation.*

*To submit an event, email [events@easttexanmag.com](mailto:events@easttexanmag.com)*



# READY TO GROW YOUR SMALL BUSINESS?

Follow Bruce and Tonya Huber's lead. They contacted SFA's Small Business Resource Hub Director Larry Cain when they decided to launch Huber Gardens, an agritourism business six miles west of downtown Nacogdoches.

Part of the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship in SFA's Rusche College of Business, the Small Business Resource Hub offers these services **at no cost**:

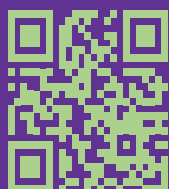
- ✓ Loan proposals
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Retailing
- ✓ Advertising
- ✓ Budgeting
- ✓ Business planning
- ✓ Personnel management

**"When he retired, Bruce was ready to pursue his passion for working the land and hospitality, so I contacted Larry Cain. Larry has taken the time to share business insight and encouragement with us and invite us to business-oriented seminars that gave us access to other helpful advice and resources."**

—Tonya Huber, Huber Gardens



The Small Business Resource Hub can help turn your passion into profit.



Scan the QR code for more information or contact SBRH Director Larry Cain at (936) 468-1469 or [larry.cain@sfasu.edu](mailto:larry.cain@sfasu.edu).



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I-45 AT EXIT 116 BOTH WAYS IN HUNTSVILLE!  
ACROSS FROM HOME DEPOT - HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL



## ALL-ELECTRIC 2025 ESCALADE IQ

Preproduction model shown. Actual production model will vary. Available late 2024.