

DOCK LINE

Lake Conroe

MAGAZINE

March 2020



Quality **SLEEP SHOPS** of 
Furniture Expo

**The Value of Good Sleep
And the Surprising Cost
of Not Getting Enough**

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**SJRA Highlands Division:
Serving Raw Water Needs
Since the 1940s**
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**Excerpt from:
WHITE BASS FISHING IN
CENTRAL TEXAS**
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She has treated and managed patients with complicated medical conditions ranging from hemophilia, congenital heart conditions, and childhood cancer, to unique syndromes and special needs. She is an expert in dental prevention, craniofacial growth and development, oral trauma, and has extensive training in treating cleft lip and palate in babies and young children.



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Lake Conroe

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MARCH 2020



March has officially begun and with it brings a variety of community events, rodeo traditions, green holiday happenings and warmer weather. We are also up and running following the kick off of all our new products and services here at Dock Line Magazine. If you can imagine it, we can promote it. We would like to say a big thank you to all our friends, family, and business and community support we continue to receive as this new chapter unfolds. We hope you have an amazing March.

Until next month,



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ON THE COVER



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THE VALUE OF GOOD SLEEP AND THE SURPRISING COST OF NOT GETTING ENOUGH

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN



Travis is BACK, Travis is BACK come see him!

Our most valuable asset as humans is time. We spend it every day, and once it's gone, we can't get it back. Time is an investment. We can spend it recklessly and waste it, or we can use it wisely and get a "return on our investment." Time may be gone forever once it passes, but it doesn't mean we can't add more time to our lives. In fact, you could add years to your life just by getting enough restful sleep each night. The opposite is also true. You could lose years off your life, and lower the quality of the years you do have, by not getting enough sleep.

The sad truth is that most Americans don't sleep well. Some of it can be attributed to our busy lifestyles and our smartphones. However, the biggest reason we don't sleep well could actually be our mattresses. Yes, your mattress could be the culprit to your never-ending fatigue.

What Happens When I Don't Sleep Enough?

Aside from a lower life expectancy, losing sleep is proven to have many other negative side effects. Here's what happens when you don't sleep well:

You are more likely to be overweight. In a 2004 study, people who slept less than six hours per night were 30 percent more likely to gain weight and become obese than those sleeping six to nine hours per night.

You will become more forgetful. During deep sleep your brain clears out plaque-forming proteins (the same ones that contribute to Alzheimer's and Dementia). When you get deep sleep, which occurs when you get more than 5 hours a night, your brain resets properly and helps you think more clearly during the day.

You will look older, faster. Poor sleep can contribute to poor skin. When you don't sleep enough, your body produces less human growth hormone. This causes more fine lines and wrinkles over time, especially under your eyes.

You are more likely to get sick. Missing sleep over time wears down your immune system, making it more difficult for your body to fight off viruses and diseases. It also slows down your recovery rate from sickness.

The bottom line is this: poor sleep results in poor quality of life. Sleeping well adds years to your life and gives more life to the years you have left.

How a Mattress Affects the Quality of Your Sleep

So, you need to sleep better. Giving yourself an extra hour each night by going to bed earlier is a great start, but if you're like the millions of Americans who don't sleep well anyway, then you need to do the next best thing. You need a new mattress.

However, before you follow one of the countless ads for beds floating around out there, you need to understand a critical truth: not every mattress is right for you. Contrary to what many of those ads imply, you don't need the newest, most expensive bed out there. A mattress might be high-priced be-

Continued on page 10 ➞



Montgomery County's
Mattressman..
Cory Walter



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cause the materials are expensive, but it's likely overpriced because the cost to advertise it is so high. Large mattress companies spend millions of dollars on marketing, and you as the consumer are often left paying the difference.

No, you don't need to get the highest-tech mattress or the most expensive one. What you do need is the right bed for you.

To find the right mattress, you need to ask yourself the right questions:

- Do you sleep on your back or your side?
- Do you sleep alone or with a partner?
- How much do you weigh?
- Do you suffer from back, neck, or shoulder pain?
- Do you have allergies?
- Do you have a medical condition that affects your sleep?
- What do you like/dislike about the bed you have now?

Asking the right questions will help an experienced mattress provider find you the perfect mattress for you. It is likely that you'll need to test out several mattresses before you find the right one.

Not All Mattress Sellers are Created Equal

The sad truth is, not all mattress stores have your best interest at heart. Often, the salespeople at large brand mattress stores are trained to sell mattresses, not consult you on the quality of your sleep. They are trained to move products, not educate their customers. Sleep is such an important factor in the quality of your life. It can be costly to leave it up to a quota-driven sales person.

Cory Walter, the owner of Quality Sleep Shops of Texas, takes a different approach. "We don't pressure anyone. We educate them. I want them to get the best mattress at the best price, even if it's not with us." Quality Sleep Shops of Texas has built a reputation locally for its rare honesty and attentive care for the lives of their customers. Cory often has to re-educate his customers on the truth about mattresses, even discourage them from buying a new mattress just because they were sold a wrong idea about their current one. For instance, it is a common belief that you should replace your mattress every 5-8 years. However, some mattresses easily last 10 years or



*5 Star Service done right...
John Pinchback, Shane Thornhill and Travis Hodges*

longer. That narrative was created by big brands to sell more beds.

Sometimes the most important aspect of your mattress is what's not taught. In fact, one of the most important features of a mattress that almost nobody is ever told about is coil count. Coil count affects the level of support a mattress provides and the longevity of a mattress. Coil counts can range from 225 to over 1100. Beds with higher coil counts will provide better support and last longer than those with lower coil counts. Lower coil-count beds will often feel softer in a store, but wear out much faster. This seems like a crucial factor when it comes to buying a bed. However, in any given big-brand mattress store, beds with all different coil counts are placed next to each other and this important detail is almost never mentioned by sales people. Another industry secret is that one company makes all the coils for every mattress on the market. So, you are really paying for the other materials and for the name on the mattress.

The Local Difference

Quality Sleep Shops of Texas is big on educating its customers so they get the best bed for their unique situation, and at the best price. The best bed for you might not cost \$2,000, but only \$500. Quality Sleep Shops of Texas might be the only mattress provider that will encourage you to get the \$500 mattress. Why? Because getting the right bed is bigger than making a sale. To Cory Walter, you are his neighbor, his friend, his family.

"It's not about the money. It's about my reputation. I live here. I run into my customers all the time." He adds, "I just try to find my customers the best value for their hard earned money. I'm here every day, and I'm here for you. My customers know that." Trust is a non-negotiable factor to Cory. It's a big part of the reason he never runs fake sales, a common practice in the mattress industry. He only offers the best price, always, and encourages his customers to shop around. Almost every time, they end up back in this store.

It's not just his customers that Cory is passionate about. Most people would never know that Quality Sleep Shops of Texas provides mattresses to over 100 fire stations in and around Montgomery County. It's bigger than growing a business. It's about growing a community.

Bad sleep is costly. Good sleep is priceless. Invest in the quality of your sleep and invest in your local community while you're at it.

Quality Sleep Shops of Texas is located at 14543 Hwy 105, West in Conroe, Texas. They are open Monday - Saturday: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, and closed on Sundays. Learn more about Quality Sleep Shops of Texas and view their mattress options online at www.qualitysleepshops.com. ♦

Back to Health

By: Dr. Todd R. Custer D.C., Athletic Trainer



Thoracic Kyphosis

What is it?

Kyphosis is the normal curvature of the thoracic spine. However, if it becomes exaggerated (hunch-back-like), it is not only a visible distraction, but it can be a sign of an underlying condition such as scoliosis. Excessive kyphosis is usually attributed to poor posture but can also be related to an autoimmune condition or even a sign of a compression fracture. The curves of the spine are vital to our spine health because they give the muscles



a mechanical advantage to absorb the forces to the spine. Too much curve in the spine, however, can overload the muscles and predispose a person to a muscular strain/spasm.

How can chiropractic treatment help?

Chiropractic manipulation will improve joint motion, reduce deep muscle tension and



overall pain due to kyphosis. Adjusting alone will only reduce the symptoms for rapid improvement of the condition; you must combine the manipulation with proper stretching and strengthening to reduce symptoms associated to the excessive kyphosis.



How can you improve excessive kyphosis?

To compensate for our everyday bias toward slumping in a chair, frequent stretching of the chest and shoulders with the Doorway Stretch and lying on a ½ foam roll are two of the best stretches to gain postural correction. Strengthening of the back extensors can be achieved with a Bird Dog exercise or back extension exercises. Through awareness of using proper posture, stretching and strengthening, long-term improvement of the kyphosis can be achieved.

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Dr. Todd Custer
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COMMON SYMPTOMS OF KYPHOSIS

- Visible hump on back
- Spine stiffness
- Rounded shoulder
- Fatigue
- Mild back pain
- Tight hamstrings (muscles in the back of the thigh)

SERIOUS SYMPTOMS

- Numbness, weakness, or tingling in the legs
- Loss of sensation
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties.



Dr. Custer is the owner/operator of Better Care Chiropractic® Physical Therapy with locations in Willis and Montgomery. Dr. Custer graduated from Texas Chiropractic College in 2005 with highest honors, Summa Cum Laude. He combines his 15 plus years of experience in injury rehabilitation (as an athletic trainer) with his chiropractic education to promote a fast and efficient recovery process. If you have questions or would like to request an article topic please send correspondence to: whybetter-care@gmail.com. ♦

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Dock Line Magazine - Lake Conroe Edition March 2020 13

Blinded by the Light of Your Windows... and the High Cost of Custom Blinds? How Bloomin' Blinds Gets It Right.

By: Matthew Calhoun



"It's the people who make a business good or bad."

This is the mantra often repeated by father and son partners Dave and Dallas Schultz. When Dave Schultz and his son Dallas brought the Bloomin' Blinds franchise to the Spring and Huntsville area in 2018 he brought something that he thought was missing: a personal connection with customers. Dave and his son Dallas found that they could be better than the competition by offering honest prices for their services. "The common practice in the industry is to 'mark up to mark down' with a discount," Dave says, "and to nickel and dime customers with little charges like installation charges and removal and disposal of old blinds."

Most companies will inflate the price of blinds, and act as if you are getting up to a 40% discount. Bloomin' Blinds prides itself on a set price at a lower cost and will cut out any surprise charges or hidden fees. The price will include all of the new product, the installation, the removal and disposal of the old window coverings, and all the supplies needed to complete the job. And that's the rare difference offered by Bloomin' Blinds: one honest low price upfront – no games and surcharges. The Bloomin' Blinds is a national brand that allows the highest quality of products to be combined with the lowest cost of honest service.

It's a Family Operation

After years of experience running his own company until 1998, which he sold and then retired, Dave found that he could start a business with the customer care of a small-time business, but with a national reach. "We have the benefit of receiving volume pricing through a national enterprise" he says, "but we are also family operated with the financial resources to make it through any economy." Every sale is an experience that feels more like working with a family friend. As Dave puts it "We are veteran and family-owned and operated. We run our business with military precision and respect and treat our customers as if they were family. Over thirty-five years as a business owner has taught us that what goes around comes around. If you always do the right thing and have a positive attitude – you will succeed." When you make the call and have them come to your home, they will treat it with respect and care.

Doing the right thing is the foundation of their company's core values. To Dave

Continued on page 16 ➞

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and Dallas, the goal is not just to improve the community by having a successful business, but by leaving a legacy.

Looking to save money and invest in your home? Bloomin' Blinds has you covered on all fronts

Looking to spruce up your home for a low price? Dealing with hot spots or your furniture fading? Want to protect any small children or pets from an accident as well? Bloomin' Blinds loves transforming spaces with their expertise in window coverings. Shades and blinds come in different types and sizes, and in most cases, windows need to be custom fitted. Bloomin' Blinds has options for every type of need and gives you an investment that solves many problems.

1. Enhance Beauty & Show Off Your Style: Windows are a central focal point of a room because of how much area of a room they occupy. Plantation Shutters and Roman Shades give a room a very Southern or Luxurious look. You can spruce up any room in your home while staying on a budget. Other styles are offered as well.

2. Save Energy: Blinds and Cellular/Honeycomb shades offer varying levels of insulation and lower the level of heat coming in during the summer or escaping in the winter. Your A/C bill won't skyrocket every

summer just trying to beat the heat.

3. Protect Your Furniture and Flooring: Sun fading happens fast and is both costly and irreversible. You can automate your shades to lower during the harshest time of day, then raise after that time has passed, but lower again in the evening for privacy. You can then have them rise again in the morning and repeat the cycle.

4. Improve Privacy in Your Home: There are many options such as various percentages of light-filtering, and operation settings you can have on your home such as "Top Down/Bottom Up" – which allows the sun to come in the top and privacy at the bottom. This is an underrated value if you live in a cul-de-sac.

5. Add Convenience at the Tip of Your Fingers: Bloomin' Blinds can set up a motorized operation for single windows, groups of windows and multiple groups of windows in the home. These groups can be operated by a set schedule, remotely off-site (with access to the Internet), by remote control, a smartphone, or even a smart assistant like Alexa.

6. Repair Your Current Blinds: Bloomin' Blinds also does in-home repairs of blinds, shades and shutters, a service that no other national window coverings seller offers. One older window covering in a room

may only need repair, and it may not be necessary to replace the whole room.

Advice for Customers

Although you can buy your blinds from a home improvement store, Dave stresses that you shouldn't. "Don't buy blinds and shades at home improvement stores. Sure, you save money with cheaper blinds and by you doing the installation – but this is one thing that should be left to professionals. We often come behind failed self-installs and find terrible fits and improper installation." He adds, "Our blinds and shades are precision measured for both height and length. We don't select a one-size-fits-all and lop off the ends." This custom fit and cut are often needed as windows are not always squared correctly. Sometimes areas around the window can be warped and off balance. A custom fit saves you from wasting money and time.

The old adage "Quality doesn't cost -- it pays" really is the truth when it comes to your home. That's why each blind is custom-fitted to perfectly match your unique style for each room.

As Bloomin' Blinds customer Paula White mentions, the process is simple and effective. "The service was great. The order and install of my Roman shades and



my roller shades for my new home could not have gone more smoothly. So pleased with the variety to choose from and colors as well. Thank you Dallas for a wonderful experience."

As a veteran, Dave understands the toll that military duty puts on families. They offer a 5% discount on blinds and services to any veterans who use their products. To get a quote for your windows, contact them at (936) 236-6800. You can find them online at <https://www.bloominblinds.com/>. Don't settle for less. Bloomin' Blinds can give you quality service and national products today! ♦



Free "Law Line" Service

When: March 2, 2020

Time: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Have a legal question? A free call-in public Law Line for residents of Montgomery County who have general legal questions is offered on the first Monday of every month at 281-645-6344 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. by volunteer attorneys from The Woodlands Bar Association. (If the first Monday is a Federal holiday, then the Law Line will be offered on the second Monday of that month.) Topics include bankruptcy, family law, criminal law, consumer protection, and more. The volunteer attorneys do not provide specific counseling yet offer general information and inform people about their rights and options and what legal resources may be available for callers to follow through with their concern. Callers' identities, as well as the identities of the volunteer lawyers, will remain anonymous. This free public service is a project of The Woodlands Bar Association in conjunction with the United Way of Greater Houston, Montgomery County Center. The Woodlands Bar Association is comprised of private practice attorneys from both

large and small law firms, judges and corporate attorneys and seeks to promote high legal standards, education and community service in the area. The Law Line offers a local community service opportunity for members to share their unique legal skills to provide service to others. www.WoodlandsBarAssociation.com.

North Shore Republican Women's Meeting

When: March 4, 2020

Time: 10:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Where: Bentwater Yacht Club, 800 Bentwater Dr., Montgomery, TX 77356

The March 4, 2020 General Membership Meeting of North Shore Republican Women will feature: CEO Randy Johnson and Chief of EMS James Campbell of the Montgomery County Hospital District. Sign-in begins at 10:45, Meeting at 11:00, Lunch at 11:30, then the Program runs from Noon until 1:00. Lunch is optional, but reservations must be made by Noon Saturday, February 29, 2020 by clicking on the register link at www.NSRepublicanWomen.org. You can also register by calling the Country Club at 936-597-6219.

Montgomery County Welcoming Neighbor Club May Luncheon

When: March 19, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Where: Panorama Golf Club, 73 Greenbriar Dr., Conroe, TX

Montgomery County Welcoming Neighbor Club

(social club 501c7) monthly luncheon will be held at the Panorama Golf Club on March 19, 2020. Social hour begins at 10:00 followed by a short business meeting and lunch. Afterwards, the program will be Bingo. Call Rebecca at 936-671-9629 for information concerning this meeting and to make reservations.

Montgomery County Fair

When: March 27 through April 5, 2020

Time: Fri 4am 12 Midnight, Sat 4am 12 Midnight, Sun 4am 12 Midnight, Mon 4am 12 Midnight, Tues 4am 12 Midnight, Wed 4am 12 Midnight, Thu 4am 12 Midnight, Fri 4am 12 Midnight, Sat 4am 12 Midnight, Sun 4am 12 Midnight

Where: Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 9333 Airport Rd., Conroe, TX 77305

Admission: \$10.00

Montgomery County Fair features livestock show, poultry, breeding beef, rodeo, agriculture products, fine arts, needle crafts, horticulture show, metal crafts, sculptures, glass crafts, scrapbooking and much more! For more information visit www.mcfa.org. ♦

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Getting the Most Out of Custom Home Building:

Avoid Mistakes - Make Informed Decisions

By: George Harrison

Building a Custom Home can be one of the most exciting experiences a person can enjoy. The possibilities are endless and your dream is born. Finding a desirable piece of land seems like the first logical step. All available land options are reviewed, discussed and you make a choice. You gather ideas, photos and other items you feel are helpful to design your home. You find someone to get all of this information bundled up into a set of construction drawings. You attend a few meetings, work on revisions and a couple of thousand dollars later you finally have the road map to your new custom home. The plans are sent out to builders for pricing. After weeks or more of anticipation your vision of your new custom home is shattered by the shock of builder prices. Now you are stuck with a lot, you've invested countless hours and thousands of dollars with no results. This can be very discouraging.

Hiring a Design/Builder can help you avoid common mistakes through an informed decision-making process.

What is a Design/Builder?

An experienced Home Designer offers options and ideas. A Knowledgeable Builder provides answers and solutions. A Design/Builder is a person or company that has both qualifications that can be tasked to provide an end result which includes a set of criteria and a budget. This encourages creativity, superior service and a quicker desired result.

These are a few advantages to hiring a Design/Builder:

- Lot evaluation services can be provided before the lot purchase.
- Requires less initial investment to determine feasibility of the project.
- Receive advice about construction costs before and during the design process.
- More options, money saving ideas are offered which equates to better, more efficient designs.
- More information can be provided about ownership costs, energy efficiency and water conservation.

Go with a Design/Build company for more accurate information, better decision making, less stress, faster results and you will get more for your money.

Why Rembrandt is the best at Design/Build:

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Breaking the Mold

How Wiggins Furniture Became Conroe's Favorite Furniture Store



By: Brian Sherman



Walking into Wiggins Furniture, the view appears much like most large furniture stores. There are beautiful living room sets, dining room tables and bedroom sets throughout the store – every kind of style you could want in your Texas home. But thirty seconds into the expansive showroom any semblance of a typical furniture shopping experience disappears. You're greeted by a friendly welcome and a smile, and encouraged to take a look around and dream a little.

After all, furniture shopping, in general, captures the epitome of the "I'm just looking" approach by customers. Buying furniture is about visualizing and feeling. Most people wanting new furniture don't know exactly what they want until they see it, sit on it, feel it, and imagine what it looks like in a specific room in their home. They don't want to follow a sales person around. They want to feel at ease to look around and try things out.

Kim Wiggin's history in the furniture industry made her understand this better than anyone. In fact, 20 years ago Kim and James opened their furniture shop for that very reason. People aren't just customers. Their homes are their sanctuaries. The furniture reflects their family and lifestyle. So, it needs to last and be comfortable. It needs to be a soft place to land after a long day, a place to sit and be a family together, and a it's central part of what makes a house a home.

There are big name furniture stores that offer great selections of furniture, Kim says, but quality is often sacrificed for the sake

of volume and profit margins, and personal service is often lost in the process. Kim and James opened their store to be able to offer well-made, high-quality furniture that families could afford, enjoy, and have in their homes for years to come. They have built many great customer relationships over the last 20 years and look forward to the next generations to come.

More than a Couch

When asked what her favorite piece of furniture is in her own home, Kim Wiggins, without missing a beat, says one thing: "my sofa". She elaborates, "When you walk into a room, you want that wow piece...but you want it to be comfortable. My sofa, it's old.

I've had it for a long time, but I love it."

When asked why, she reminisces about growing up in a home with a single mom, along with her brother and sister. "Life was not always easy," she says. "My mother worked hard and money was often tight." Kim and her brother started working at 15 to help pay bills. When Kim later received her first big bonus at work, she bought her mom a new living room set. That experience left a lasting impression on both Kim and her mom. Many memories were made on that sofa, in that living room, in mom's house. Kim's mother has since passed, but

Continued on page 24 ➞





the memories live on.

The furniture in our homes tells a story. They hold memories of love, laughter, growing up, good days and bad days. Wiggins Furniture seems to be built on that kind of foundation. The customers feel it in the ex-

perience at Wiggins. Perhaps it's the real reason that generations of families choose to buy their furniture from Wiggins, and only Wiggins.

Most stores have grown too big for the owner to hang out and help. Kimberly and

James Wiggins, however, are an exception to the rule. As the store has grown over the years, they are always there. In fact, they carry an intimate knowledge of the furniture they choose to sell. Walk in and point to any piece in the store and they will tell you who makes it, how it's made and what it's made of. Matt Johnson has worked in sales at Wiggins Furniture with Kim and James for 14 years now and too knows every piece of furniture and its history. Working at Wiggins is a family atmosphere, not only for the customers, but for the employees also.



The Three Rules of Business *Wiggins Edition*

So, what's the real difference? Why has Wiggins flourished in Conroe for 20 years? Well, according to Kim, they have three rules they live by that all of their success can be attributed to:

1. *Treat people the way you want to be treated.*

This is why Wiggins doesn't hound customers with sales people. They want people to love what they get, not just in the moment at the store, but when they get home and in the days, weeks, and months that follow. "I want them to be proud of what they



purchase, not feel like they got pushed into something" says Kim. So, they put themselves in their customers' shoes, listen to their needs and make sure they will be happy with the choices made.

2. Don't sell anything that you wouldn't buy (and love) yourself.

"I won't buy anything and put it in my store that I wouldn't put in my own home," says Kim. "If the quality isn't good enough for my home, I'm not going to sell it to someone else." A good follow-up rule to treating others the way you want to be treated is this one. Treat others' homes the way you would your own. A great way to make your customers feel like family is to treat them like they already are.

3. Help the customer make the best decision for themselves.

Good business is more about educating customers than just making a sale. Kimberly mentions a scenario in which a customer is asking why two recliners are priced so differently. "I'll flip it over and explain how one is constructed vs. the other one's construction. This one is about a five-year recliner and this one is about a 10-15 year recliner." Educating the customer on the quality and makeup is so important. Even more import-

ant, however, is helping the customer understand how often the furniture will be used in their own home and by whom.

At Wiggins, no piece of furniture in the store is there for the sake of just making a profit. It's there to create memories in someone's life, to be a welcome place to land at the end of a long day, and to turn some-

one's house into a home they are proud to come home to.

Wiggins Furniture is open Monday - Friday 10:00AM - 6:30PM and on Saturdays, 10:00AM - 5:00PM. They are located at 5459 W Davis St in Conroe. Learn more about them online and view some of their furniture selection at www.wigginsfurniture.net. ♦





It's All In YOUR HEAD

By: Tom Stark, MD

I sincerely enjoy writing these monthly articles about different areas of my specialty of Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat). I try to educate and inform especially regarding any new therapies.

On a personal note, I am frequently asked why I chose this specialty. In medical school, I knew that I wanted to be in a surgical field. I enjoy being able to "fix things with my hands", rather than prescribing medications. In 1977, during my third year of med school I spent month training in ENT. Not only did I find the field fascinating but also all of the physicians who were in the area really seemed to be enjoying themselves.

My formal specialty training, or residency, was done at Bethesda Navy Hospital just outside of Washington, DC from 1979 through 1983. Since that time obviously I have seen multiple advances.

For example when I trained, all nasal and sinus surgical procedures involved the surgeon wearing a headlight to see inside the nasal pas-

sages. Instruments were very similar to dental tools for removing diseased tissue from the bony walls of the nose and sinuses. Visualization was extremely difficult and because of the location of the sinuses near the eye and brain could often be very dangerous. Since the late 1980's, nearly all sinus surgery has been done using small pencil thin fiber-optic scopes attached to a video camera. Following that came powered shaving-like instruments to remove diseased tissue such as polyps in a much safer manner. Then in the last 12 or so years sinus balloon treatments became available.

I feel that my early training, done under precise "old school" professors using techniques we might consider now to be ancient or primitive, gave me a very strong foundation and confidence. The new endoscopic techniques that I now use are far superior and safer. My nature is definitely an eagerness to try new things in the field of surgery and medicine. One advantage of being in my field

for nearly 40 years is that I have learned that just because something is new does not necessarily mean it is better. And also some "new" developments are just variations of old techniques.

My favorite uncle was also Tom Stark, MD. He practiced general medicine and surgery in Beeville, Texas. I try to incorporate his small town doc values in my practice using both very new and some "older, seasoned" techniques together. ♦



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The SECURE Act

What You Need to Know



If you are not part of our e-newsletter or a client of our firm then you haven't had the opportunity to read my thoughts about this important piece of legislation till now. We always like to make a new friend so I would encourage to go to our website at www.woottonfinancial.com, take a look at the articles and educational resources and sign up for our e-newsletter so you don't miss these important topics in the future.

In the past 2 years, two primary pieces of Congressional legislation have been passed. The first was the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act", the largest tax overhaul of the tax code in 30 years. The second, more recently passed (and effective January 1st, 2020) was the "Setting Every Community Up For Retirement Enhancement" Act or as is now known, the "SECURE" Act. This Act again is one the largest changes to affect retirement planning and retirement plans (IRA, 401k, etc.) in decades and there are some important things you need to know. This article focuses primarily on the individual investor or plan participant but there are important considerations for corporate plan sponsors as well which are not covered here. However, call us and we can go over those with you as we can help corporate or individual plan sponsors with their fiduciary obligations as well.

Although we don't have space here to cover everything in the Act, I've tried to narrow it down to some of the items that will have the most effect on individual retirement account investors. It is important that you visit with a fiduciary advisor and review your financial plan to see how this may affect you, your spouse and most importantly the beneficiaries of your retirement accounts as they are the most affected. If you've not done financial planning with a professional in the past, now's a good time to start.

New Rules

- 1. Elimination of the "stretch" IRA/Retirement account provision** – For people passing away in and after 2020, their non-spousal beneficiaries have now lost the ability to "stretch" forced taxable required minimum distributions over their lifetime. They will now be forced to liquidate the beneficiary IRA or other inherited retirement accounts within 10 years. This does not affect the spouse as a beneficiary and there are some other narrow exclusions to the new rule such as certain minors (till the age of majority) and the disabled (as IRS defined) but check with your advisor for more specifics as to whether any of those exclusions apply to your situation. For most, even if the spouse is the beneficiary of your retirement account, when your spouse is gone, they're non-spousal beneficiaries will be subject to the new rule. Sooner or later it will affect every retirement account, so plan now to the extent you can. Also if you have a trust involved with your IRA at death, you'll want to review this arrangement as well since certain "see-through" trust arrangements could be affected.
- 2. Contributions to traditional IRA's post 70.5** – The new law now allows contributions after 70.5 to your IRA as long as you have earned income.
- 3. Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) age increase** – If you turned 70.5 and were due to take an RMD in 2019, sorry, you will have to continue taking those taxable distributions as originally scheduled. However, if you weren't 70.5 in 2019 then you now get to defer RMD's till age 72. Congratulations! The round age will also help clear up the confusion many have as to exactly when the first RMD must be withdrawn and which life expectancy factor age to use.

- 4. Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) unaffected** – This is important to the charitably minded folks out there who are already 70.5 or will be in 2020 and beyond. If you're already 70.5 the QCD rules don't change. The law kept the QCD rules intact allowing them to start at 70.5 and satisfy RMD requirements but not count towards income. For those who can defer RMD's to 72, this is giving you a 1-2 year tax planning or giving opportunity window where IRA distributions may be counted as a charitable contribution but not as an RMD.
- 5. 10% early withdrawal change** – For those seeking a distribution before 59.5 from a retirement account for a Qualified Birth or Adoption distribution, the typical 10% penalty you would incur doesn't apply up to \$5000 as long as you follow the timing rules for the withdrawal. Get with an advisor for more details on this change.

Non-Retirement Account SECURE Act Tax Benefits

- 1. Mortgage Insurance premium deduction** – Retroactive to 2018 and through 2020.
- 2. Medical expense deduction** – The AGI threshold has been kept at 7.5% of AGI for 2019 and 2020.
- 3. Qualified Disaster Distributions from retirement accounts** – If meeting the qualifications in the Act, distributions up to \$100,000 would be exempt from the 10% early withdrawal penalty, be treated as distributed evenly over 3 years if desired, be exempt from mandatory withholding requirements and may be repaid within 3 years of the distribution.

To be sure, this Act will require some adjustment and repositioning of many financial plans. Give us a call or come see us for an initial, no obligation review so we can help give you... Clear Direction for Retirement.



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STAGE RIGHT OF TEXAS

Abundant Entertainment on the Horizon!

By: Carolyn Corsano Wong

STAGE RIGHT of Texas, resident theatre company at the historic Crichton Theatre has 2 more shows left in their current season and has recently announced their upcoming 2020-2021 season. Left in the 2019-2020 Season of Possibilities are *M*A*S*H* in April and *Peter Pan* in July.



M*A*S*H
Adapted by Tim Kelly
From the book by
Richard Hooker
Directed by Meredith
Anne Gaines
Performance Dates:
April 10 – 26, 2020

*M*A*S*H* stands for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, and joining it are two unpredictable madcaps, Hawkeye and Duke. They can't be dealt with casually, however, because they are also two of the best chest surgeons in South Korea. They decide to wage a campaign to get a young Korean to the United States and entered in a good school. Along the way, Hawkeye has an encounter with a woman psychiatrist who believes he's been trying to lobster-trap mermaids in a rice paddy! There's a jolly visit with the daffy Bonwit sisters, the worst tap-dancing act the U.S.O. ever sent overseas. A sergeant is selling dumb GIs fishing rights in the Bay of Phum. Radar O'Reilly, a soldier with incredible hearing, anticipates things before they happen. The proprietor of a painless dental clinic is cured of dark moods by the recreation of an old monster movie—and a monster! It's all here, including a little romance mixed in with dramatic moments and a genuine love of life. Oh, yes—the Korean boy does get his education in the United States.



Peter Pan
Lyrics by Carolyn
Leigh
Music by Morris
"Moose" Charlap

Additional Lyrics by Betty Comden Adolph Green

Additional Music by Jule Styne

Based on the play by Sir J. M. Barrie

Directed by Sara Preisler

Performances: July 10-26, 2020

Auditions: Apr 19-20, 2020 (tentative)

Based on J.M. Barrie's classic tale and featuring an unforgettable score by Morris "Moose" Charlap and Jule Styne with lyrics by Carolyn Leigh and Betty Comden and Adolph Green, *Peter Pan* is one of the most beloved and frequently performed family favorites of all time. This high-flying Tony Award-winning musical has been performed around the world and delighted audiences for 60 years.

Peter and his mischievous fairy sidekick, Tinkerbell, visit the nursery of the Darling children late one night and, with a sprinkle of pixie dust, begin a magical journey across the stars that none of them will ever forget. In the adventure of a lifetime, the travelers come face to face with a ticking crocodile, a fierce Indian tribe, a band of bungling pirates and, of course, the villainous Captain Hook. Featuring the iconic songs, "I'm Flying," "I've Gotta Crow," "I Won't Grow Up" and "Never Never Land," and a rousing book full of magic, warmth and adventure, *Peter Pan* is the perfect show for the child in all of us... who dreamed of soaring high and never growing up.

And announcing our 2020-2021 Season of Screen to Stage...



Sept 11 – 27,
2020

The Odd Couple
by Neil Simon

The story of two divorced men — neurotic neat-freak Felix Ungar and fun-loving slob Oscar Madison — who decide to live together. Can two divorced men live together without driving each other crazy?



Oct 23- Nov 8,
2020

Nunsense by
Dan Goggin

The Little Sisters of Hoboken discover that their cook, Sister Julia, Child

of God, has accidentally poisoned 52 of the sisters, and they are in dire need of funds for the burials. The 5 remaining sisters decide that the best way to raise the money is to put on a variety show with riotous results.



Dec 4 – 20, 2020
Elf-The Musical

Based on the motion picture of the same name, with a score by Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin.

The book is adapted

by Bob Martin and Thomas Meehan from the 2003 film.

Buddy, a young orphan, mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. The would-be elf is raised, unaware that he is actually a human, until his enormous size and poor toy-making abilities cause him to face the truth. With Santa's permission, Buddy embarks on a journey to New York City to find his birth father, discover his true identity, and help New York remember the true meaning of Christmas.



Feb 12-28,
2021

Funny Girl
Book by
Isobel Lennart,
music by Jule
Styne, and lyrics

by Bob Merrill.

A musical theatre classic which celebrates the exuberant and elegant flavor of Broadway in the 1910s and 20s and the comic genius of Fanny Brice. Featuring such beloved songs as "People", "Don't Rain on My Parade", and "Sadie, Sadie."



Apr 9-25, 2021
Leaving Iowa

A Comedy
about Family Vacations by Tim Clue
and Spike Manton
Hilarious and
poignant. A show

suitable for ages 10 to 110, "Leaving Iowa" is a postcard to anyone who has ever found themselves driving alone on a road, revisiting fond memories of their youth. A celebration of the dreaded and beloved 'family vacation.'



Jul 9-25, 2021
The Wizard of
Oz
(RSC version
1987) by L.
Frank Baum
adapted by John
Kane from the
motion picture
screenplay for
the Royal Shake-

speare Company. With music and lyrics
from the MGM motion picture score by
Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg, Back-
ground music by Herbert Stothart

Dorothy lives on a farm in Kansas until
a cyclone arrives, and picks her, her house,
and her dog Toto up and deposits them in
the land of Oz. There with the aid of the
Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion
she travels to Oz so the Wizard may send
her home again, because there's no place
like home.



Single tickets to our remaining shows
this season can be purchased online at
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our upcoming season can be purchased
by calling the Crichton Theatre box office
at 936-441-7469. All 6 shows are only
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in our fantastic line-up. In addition to your
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purchased. That way you can invite a friend
to join you to see one show during the sea-
son for free. Your seats will be reserved
for the next season, your name will be in
every playbill and you can always change
the date of attendance for free! We hope
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Season at the historic Crichton Theatre! ♦



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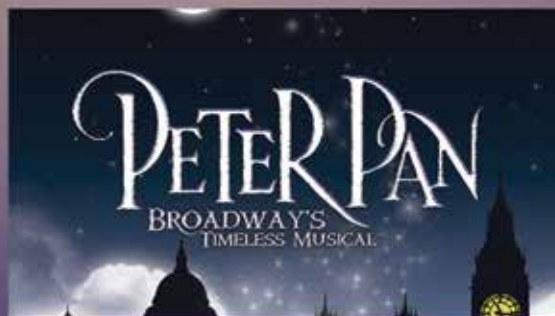
2019-2020

A Season of

Possibilities



April 10 - 26, 2020



July 10-26, 2020

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SJRA Highlands Division: Serving Raw Water Needs Since the 1940s



Siphon No. 28 (two 72-inch pipe) off of Jones Road in Baytown was demolished and replaced in 2018 as part of the South Canal Improvements project, which included levee improvements as well.

The San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) is best known for managing Lake Conroe and providing water supply and wastewater treatment services to all 11 Municipal Utility Districts in The Woodlands. But, on the eastside of Harris County the lesser-known SJRA Highlands Division delivers millions of gallons of raw water to petrochemical partners daily contributing to the economic strength of the region.

The SJRA Highlands Division delivers water from Lake Houston and the Trinity River through an extensive 27-mile system of canals and a 1,400-acre staging reservoir to customers such as ExxonMobil, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, and a number of other industrial, municipal, and agricultural customers pursuant to long-term water supply contracts.

SJRA's Highlands Division delivers 60-80 million gallons of water per day (MGD)---that's more water each day than all other SJRA operating divisions combined.

The Division's infrastructure was originally built in the early 1940's by the Federal Works Agency to supply water to the war industry in the Ship Channel area of Houston. Consisting of a pumping station on the lower reach of the river and canals on both sides of the river, SJRA delivered water to

Humble Oil and Refining's Baytown refinery (ExxonMobil Corporation today) as well as to other important industries to support the efforts of World War II.

After the war, SJRA purchased the portion of the canal on the east side of the San Jacinto River and the City of Houston purchased the canal on the west side. SJRA began its first steps in the water business with the canal system and a reservoir in Highlands, Texas. Shortly after acquiring the canal system, contracts were signed with Humble Oil to provide 20 MGD to their Baytown refinery, and soon SJRA began to also provide irrigation water for up to 5,000 acres of rice, soybeans, and grass farms in the northeastern part of Harris County.

Today, the SJRA Highlands Division maintains and operates a pump station on Lake Houston, a canal system running from Lake Houston to a 1400-acre reservoir in the Highlands area, and additional canals running from the reservoir east and south to two large industrial customers. A number of municipal customers also purchase raw water from the canal including Crosby, Newport, and Barrett Station. With over 27 miles of canal to maintain, 40-plus road crossings, several large pump stations, and industrial customers that require uninterrupted water supply, the Highlands facility operates 24/7, 365 days a year.

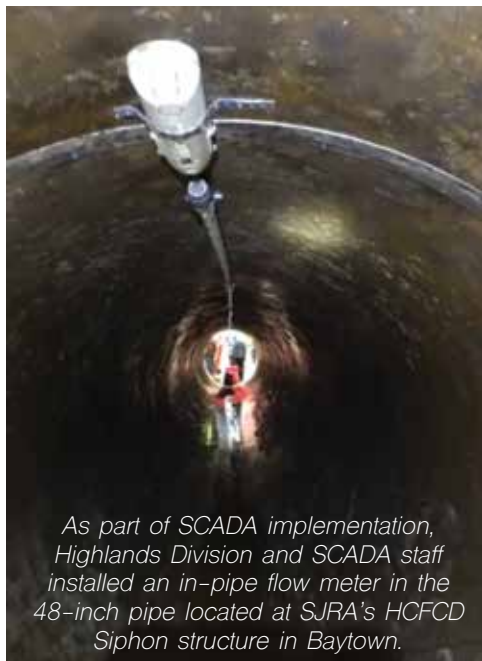
The modern-day SJRA Highlands Di-



Division staff, Bryan Kilgore and Jay Jones assist in the effort to improve access and security through the placement of pipe gates and fencing at the Wallisville Road Siphon structure.

vision strives to address aging infrastructure and other operational needs through extensive planning efforts, constantly evaluating operations and infrastructure to plan for and meet the level of reliable service and hydraulic capacity needed by today's customers and stakeholders.

To assist with this effort, the Division's 10-Year Project Plan is evaluated and updated annually. This effort begins with a comprehensive technical and geographic field investigation of the entire Highlands



system including approximately 27-miles of canals, 54-miles of levees, the Lake Houston Pump Station, East Canal Pump Station, and approximately 55 other crossings, culverts, bridges, and siphon structures. A Structural Risk Analysis is then completed to assist the Division staff with (re)prioritizing projects. The findings from the Comprehensive Field Investigation and the Structural Risk Analysis are utilized by the Division in determining in-house projects versus contracted projects, along with the budgeting and funding required. Planning for projects in advance allows staff to take all the immediate and long-term needs into consideration and to begin making the necessary decisions to provide for the Division's operational needs in the future.

In 2010, a rigorous planning effort began to address aging infrastructure. The most critical projects included levee rehabilitation, siphon replacement/removal, transfer pump station construction as well as intake and pumping bay desilting, pump and discharge pipe repair. Recent projects include demolitions and replacements of siphons near Baker Road in Baytown, Jones Road, and Wallisville Road.

Always in mind when improving access and ensuring reliable infrastructure and hydraulic capacity, is raw water reservation for future use. Staff has to plan well in advance to reserve future contracted water rights to provide for increases in customers' demand. This planning provides for adequate water supplies and conveyance capacity in the System. Ongoing collaboration and planning with all current and potential System customers is required. Additionally, system improvements require coordination

Continued on page 32 ➞

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Wallisville Road Siphon structure (two 48-inch pipe) is the most recent siphon project completed on the East Canal. The new structure provides for redundancy and improved reliability. Coordination and cost sharing occurred between SJRA and Harris County on this structure.

and collaboration on projects and possible cost sharing with partners such as the Texas Department of Transportation, Harris County, and Harris County Flood Control District. System improvements are planned over the next decade to continue to address the remaining 1940's infrastructure as well as future hydraulic capacity demands.

In 2017, to further improve the efficiency of the Division's operations, the SJRA Highlands Division implemented a new control system comprised of computers, networked data communications, and graphical interfaces. The new supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system not only improves system operations, but allows for collaboration and data sharing with various customers. Through SCADA automation, SJRA operational staff can now electronically monitor and proactively respond to the fluctuating water demands of the Division's customers. The implementation of SCADA instrumentation has resulted in timely and more efficient operations within the Division by reducing the need for staff to be in the field manually making adjustments and/or responding to water level changes.

Through significant planning efforts and improvements, SJRA's Highlands Division has continued a history of reliable service that is integral to our region's success. Providing for increased customer demands, co-

ordinating with stakeholders, and improving aging infrastructure through technological advances provides for efficient operations and regional economic growth. The Division will continue to address aging infrastructure, access and security improvements, and improve hydraulic capacity throughout the System.

To learn more about the detailed 10-



Actuators installed on gate control structures located adjacent to industrial customers provide for improved and remote operations.

Year Project Plan for the Highlands Division and ongoing improvements to the System visit www.sjra.net/highlands/.

One of the major river authorities in Texas, SJRA's mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. Covering all or part of seven counties, the organization's jurisdiction includes the entire San Jacinto River water-



Paul Hardin, SCADA Technician works diligently at the East Canal Pump Station to install and setup VFD's for improved and remote operations of the pumps and motors.



The Siphon No. 7 (off of FM 2100) Bypass project was completed at the end of 2019.

Coordination occurred with the Texas Department of Transportation to provide for the removal of the current siphon structure and provide bypassing of raw water during the expansion of the FM 2100 roadway.

shed, excluding Harris County. For additional information on SJRA visit our website at www.sjra.net, like SJRA on Facebook @SanJacintoRiverAuthority, follow us on Twitter @SJRA_1937, or find us on Instagram @SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA. ♦

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Excerpt from:

WHITE BASS FISHING IN CENTRAL TEXAS

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

Written by Michael Tennant, Steve Magnelia, Craig Bonds, and John Tibbs
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries Management

The white bass, commonly referred to as “sand bass” or “sandies”, is an abundant and popular sportfish in Texas reservoirs. This is due to its willingness to bite artificial lures, schooling behavior, and outstanding quality as table fare. White bass provide anglers with exciting action throughout the year, but most notably during their annual spring spawning migration up river and stream tributaries. From January through April, large schools of white bass concentrate in the far upper ends or riverine sections of reservoirs making them more susceptible to anglers. The complete white bass angler understands the biology, migrational behavior, preferred habitat, appropriate fishing techniques and local “hot spots” for this popular species.

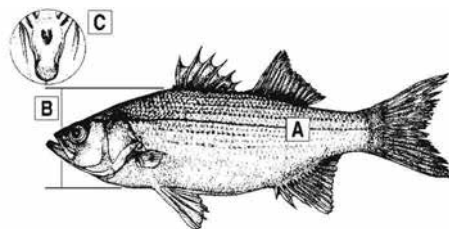
IDENTIFICATION

The white bass is a silvery, spiny-rayed fish with several incomplete lines or stripes, which run horizontally on each side of the body. The head is fairly small and pointed, and the dorsal (back) fin is conspicuously double, separated into spiny and soft-rayed portions. The white bass can be easily confused with striped bass and hybrid striped bass (a cross between white and striped bass), which are other members of the temperate bass family. However, striped bass and hybrid striped bass grow much larger than white bass. Anglers must be adept at differentiating between them as they often coexist in the same reservoir. White bass can be distinguished from the others by the tooth patch on the tongue (one is present on white bass

whereas there are two on striped bass and hybrid striped bass). Striped bass and hybrid striped bass also have several distinct “stripes” that extend to the tail, while the white bass has only one stripe extending to the tail. Study the pictures below, including the detail of the tooth patches.

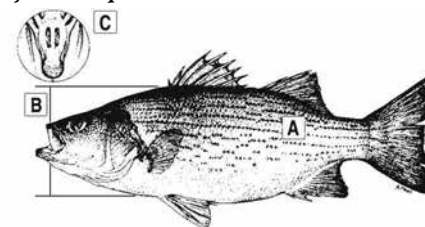
WHITE BASS STRIPED and HYBRID STRIPED BASS

White Bass



- A: Stripes faint, only one extends to tail.
- B: Body deep, more than 1/3 length.
- C: Has one tooth patch near the midline towards the back of the tongue.

Hybrid Striped Bass



Also known as Palmetto or Sunshine bass.

A: Stripes distinct, usually broken, several extend to tail.

B: Body deep, more than 1/3 length.

C: Has two tooth patches near the midline towards the back of the tongue. Tooth patches may be distinct or close together.

Note: For hybrids, all characteristics should be considered in combination, as characteristics in individual fish may vary.

LIFE HISTORY and BIOLOGY

White bass are migratory open-water fish. Most of their life is spent in the open-water portions of reservoirs chasing schools of small gizzard and threadfin shad. In late winter (December-January) schools of white bass migrate to the upper portion of reservoirs awaiting environmental cues signaling the start of the spawning migration up major tributaries. In February and March, they begin their spawning migration seeking clean gravel and rock substrate with good flow to spawn. Riffles and shoals are common spawning locations. How far white bass migrate is extremely variable, but it is not uncommon to find spawning white bass 25-50 miles above the reservoir. This may be related to river and stream flow, which varies among years. Fisheries biologists are unsure if adult white bass return to the same spawning spot each year, or if it is a random occurrence. After spawning, adult fish migrate back into the main body of the reservoir. The whole spawning migration is usually complete by sometime in May. Interestingly, “tributary”

spawning may not be inherent in all white bass. Some white bass may spend their entire lives in the main portion of reservoirs, spawning on wind-blown, rocky shoals instead of in major tributaries.

Of the three temperate basses found in Central Texas (white bass, striped bass and hybrid striped bass) only white bass successfully reproduce in significant numbers, although the other two species may also migrate up tributaries in the spring. Central Texas striped bass and hybrid



Close-up of White Bass caught from the Sabine River

striped bass populations are completely supported from stockings by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) fish hatcheries. White bass are not nest builders. Spawning takes place in mid-water. The female rises toward the surface enticing males to follow. Fertilized eggs drift to the bottom and adhere to gravel or rock. Eggs usually hatch within 2 to 3 days. The newly hatched fry migrate downstream in schools seeking food and protection. On many Central Texas reservoirs white bass grow rapidly, normally attaining a size of 9 to 10 inches in their first year of life and 12 inches by the end of the second. This is faster than the statewide average. The life expectancy of white bass is short and few reach 5 years old. Although no studies have specifically looked at sexual maturity of white bass in Central Texas, fisheries biologists think that males become sexually mature at age one (8-9 inches) and females at age two (12-13 inches). This would be similar to fast growing populations in Tennessee and Arkansas. No studies in the Southern United States found significant numbers of female white bass less than 10 inches that were reproductively mature. A white bass weighs approximately 0.5 pounds at 10 inches and 0.9 pounds at 12 inches.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT and FISHING REGULATIONS

White bass in Texas are currently managed with a statewide 10-inch minimum length and 25-fish daily bag limit. An experimental 12-inch minimum length limit was implemented on several Central Texas reservoirs between 1995 and 2003. The purpose of the experimental regulation was to test whether additional protection would delay harvest of immature female white bass and increase population abundance and average size of white bass. Evaluation of the 12-inch minimum length limit indicated this regulation failed to improve white bass populations in Central Texas Reservoirs. In addition to fast growth, a high level of angler harvest was required for this regulation to work. These requirements were based on computer generated models utilizing fisheries

data collected on these populations. Angler creel data collected by TPWD, suggest that harvest rates for white bass were likely below the threshold level needed for the greater length restriction to be effective. Other research conducted by TPWD, and supported by recent scientific literature, indicates white bass reproductive success is highly correlated with springtime reservoir inflows. In other words, higher than average spring inflows to reservoirs correspond with higher than average white bass spawning production and vice versa. Environmental conditions can play a large role in determining white bass densities.

TPWD will continue to monitor white bass populations and angler harvest rates to determine what length limit is best suited for these fisheries. If fishing pressure significantly increases in the future and harvest levels reach a critical point, TPWD will consider alternative regulations. Currently, alternative regulations are not warranted.

SEASONAL FISHING PATTERNS

Spring (March-May): White bass will be in the rivers or major creek tributaries. A variety of artificial lures will work, but this is a good time for small jig fishing. Small, medium-running crank baits also work well. Trolling the river or creek channel with small crank baits is a good technique. Fishing early in the spring can be inconsistent, but if the bite is on you can have the day of a lifetime. Many old timers say, "when the redbuds (or dogwoods) are blooming the white bass are running". This old saying usually holds true. April and May can be the most consistent months as many white bass have finished spawning and are hungry as they migrate back to the reservoir. Spring is also a good time to try night fishing using lights. Floating or submersible crappie lights, which attract baitfish, work well for this. Flats at the mouths of major creeks, main-lake flats, and floating breakwaters near lighted marinas are consistent producers of white bass at this time.

Summer (May-September): May to early June is characterized by good schooling action for white bass. The mouths of major creeks and main-lake points are good areas to try. Look for birds chasing baitfish. The whites and stripers won't be far behind. Topwater lures, lipless crank baits, and small twister tail jigs cast into schools are good bets. Anglers might also try night fishing as described for spring, although this pattern often weakens as the water warms throughout May. As the water heats up, anglers should concentrate on main lake structure near deep water, or look for schooling fish at dawn or on cloudy days. In the heat of summer good marine electronics for finding the fish in deep water are vital to consistent success.

Fall (September-November): Early-fall fishing is much like summer. Keep looking for the schools with your electronics. As the water cools, white bass will begin feeding at the surface in earnest. Cloudy days with a little wind are the best. Concentrate on creek mouths and major points. October and November can be good for surface schooling. Look for stripers mixed in with whites.

Winter (November-February): The water is coldest this time of year. Two patterns are noteworthy. One is to locate schools in deep water on major structural elements such as river channel

ledges, humps, and tips of points. Vertically jigging spoons and tail spinners in these areas will produce some of the most consistent action of the year, if you can locate the fish. In January and February structure in the upper end of reservoirs near major tributaries is a good choice. A secondary pattern is night fishing around lighted boat docks and marinas in the main lake. Fishing from lighted dock to lighted dock casting a small twister tail jig into the light will produce consistent action, if you can stand the cold. Don't be surprised if you catch some nice stripers as well. January and February are two good months to try this pattern.

PLACES TO GO

Some of the best white bass fishing in the spring can be done from the bank and while wading in the upper reaches of tributaries. County road maps available from the Texas Department of

Transportation, or "The Roads of Texas", Shearer Publishing, Fredericksburg, TX, (800-458-3808) are invaluable for locating some of the access points described. Always get permission from the landowner if you cross private land to enter a river or stream. Topographical reservoir maps are often available from controlling authorities or at retail fishing stores. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department maintains an internet web site which contains information on many fishing-related topics, including reservoir access, regulations, and fishing news, among many others. Check it out at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.

For the full publication, visit: https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_br_t3200_0022e.pdf.

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For more information on length and bag limits, check out the TPWD Outdoor Annual or download the app! <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/>

Information on where to fish in Texas public waters, including the Community Fishing Lakes, is available at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/wheretofish/>. If you have any questions, please contact us at 979-272-1430 or by email at niki.ragan@tpwd.texas.gov or alice.best@tpwd.texas.gov.

Follow TPWD's College Station-Houston Inland Fisheries office on Facebook and Instagram: www.facebook.com/TPWInlandFisheriesCollegeStationHouston <https://www.instagram.com/fisherieshouston/> ♦



Larry Hodge (retired TPWD) holding a Hybrid Striped Bass.

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The Players set to open rock-n-roll musical Little Shop of Horrors on March 6th

By: Adam Isbell

The Players Theatre Company is pleased to bring the dark-comedy, sci-fi musical, *Little Shop of Horrors* to the Owen Theatre stage this month. Opening March 6th and running through the 22nd, this production is sure to thrill audiences. The music, composed by Alan Menken, is in the style of 1960s rock and roll, doo-wop and early Motown, and includes several well-known tunes such as the title song, "Skid Row (Downtown)", "Somewhere That's Green", and "Suddenly, Seymour". With a book by Howard Ashman, the musical is based on the low-budget 1960 black comedy film *The Little Shop of Horrors* by Roger Corman. This film has a cult following of its own as well as the 1986 movie musical starring Rick Moranis, Steve Martin and Ellen Green, the latter taking the success of the off-Broadway musical and turning it into a feature film, directed by Frank Oz. The Players' production is directed by Adam Isbell. Adam is deter-

mined to wow a variety of audiences with his directorial debut. His attention to every single detail makes this a dazzling spectacle for theatre-goers and an experience they won't soon forget.

The story follows a hapless flower shop worker, Seymour Krelborn, who comes across a strange and unidentifiable plant. Over time, this foul-mouthed, R&B-singing carnivore, which Seymour names Audrey 2 (after his co-worker and the object of his affections), promises unending fame and fortune to the down-and-out Krelborn, as long as he keeps feeding it BLOOD. The manipulative plant preys on Seymour's love for Audrey one and his desperate need for approval from his uptight, self-serving boss, Mr. Mushnik, to get Seymour to do whatever he wants. With Audrey's abusive and sadistic dentist boyfriend, Orin Scrivello, D.D.S., audiences will have a hard time deciding who the real villain is. Rounding out the principles

is a trio of street urchins – Crystal, Ronnette and Chiffon, who also act as the Greek chorus. They help carry the story along and appear with catchy songs and glitzy costumes throughout the shows' entirety.

Leading the cast as Seymour is Jacob Massoletti. This is Jacob's first show since playing demented dentist, Orin, in his high school production ten years ago. With a fresh perspective as the starring role this time around, Jacob really brings Seymour to life with his nervous foibles and unending dorkiness. He came in and set the bar high for his castmates and that's where the bar stayed. His love interest, Audrey is played by Courtney Berry. Audiences may recognize Courtney from shows at both the Owen and Crighton Theatres. Previously playing Elizabeth in Stage Right's highly successful *Young Frankenstein* and Doralee in The Players' production of *9 to 5*, Courtney is excited to showcase even more of her talent



as the lovable and vulnerable heroine of this story. She will earn numerous merits for her unique interpretation of this iconic character. It will be a refreshing take for cult followers and a standout performance for first time Little Shoppers. Voicing the show's antagonist is Trevor Hall. Trevor will be voicing Audrey 2's lines off stage while a puppeteer is doing all the mouth-moving on stage. Trevor was last seen as Gaston in The Players' *Beauty & the Beast*. Even though you may not see him, you will be highly entertained by his boisterous voice and collection of foul-humored jokes. He's also extended his talents beyond the stage and took all headshots and publicity photos for this production. Gavin McKinnon is playing gruff-exteriored Mr. Mushnik. Gavin made his stage debut in Stage Right's *Into the Woods* as the Baker a little over a year ago. He brings a sense of likability to Mushnik while still maintaining that old curmudgeon demeanor. Allan McFarlane has taken The Players' stage by storm these past couple of years. With roles in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Seussical the Musical*, and *Happy Days*, he's showing a whole new side of himself as

Continued on page 40 ➡

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abusive narcissist, Orin Scrivello. The street urchins (often referred to as The Dreamgirls by the director) are made up of Angelie de los Santos, Shananda Poulos, and Meredith Fisk. Angelie was last seen at the Owen in *Godspell*. Aside from that, she has a slew

of credits at both theatres for years past and is an entertaining attraction at the Texas Renaissance Festival. Angelie really steps it up in this role and wows as Crystal. Shananda recently got her feet wet in Stage Right's version of *Cinderella* this past October after a seven-year hiatus from the stage. She was a show-stopper in that and is sure to bring that same energy and entertainment value into the role of Ronnette. After years of various credits at both theatres, Meredith Fisk is getting her chance to shine as Chiffon. With a voice so astonishing and an attitude to match, she is somebody to definitely watch out for! Making up the ensemble (each with a worthy featured part) are Kathleen Baker, Briana Steptoe, Lindsay Elgin, Kyle Clevenger and Dallas Hiett. Kathleen was last seen as the title role at the Crichton in *Cinderella*. Briana did her first show with the Owen over a year ago with the eye-catching, fun-filled *Seussical the Musical*. Lindsay and Kyle have both been in shows at the Owen before while this is Dallas's first time to be in a theatre show; however, he has done shows or sung in choirs at his church. Each ensemble member brings a unique flair to Little Shop and along with fun characterizations, their enchanting voices captivate in the big musical numbers.

The puppeteers, Michael and Jamie Glass, are deserving of a paragraph of their

own. Not only are they puppeteering, they are responsible for the puppets' existence. They've been working the whole of last year on perfecting all four stages of the Audrey 2 puppets. These puppets alone will be worth the ticket. As if that's not enough, they are also in charge of the elaborate and exciting set. Their credits go beyond both theatres whether it be behind the scenes or on the stage. Keep an eye out for them because they may pop up here and there throughout the production as well.

It is necessary to give special mention to the artistic team, each bringing so much to this show and each with numerous accolades in this theatre community. Award winning actress, Layne Roberts took on the role of Music Director and ensures a clear, rich and beautiful sound. Sarah Wilkins acts as Stage Manager. You will be shocked to know this is her first time in this role because of how effortlessly everything is run. Jodie Schrier will have audiences wanting to join in on these fun and familiar dances that elevate this already stellar show. Rebecca McDowell acts as the Assistant Director and voice of reason, with Amber Babcock posing as Vocal Coach and mentor.

Little Shop of Horrors runs March 6-22, 2020, Fridays and Saturdays at 8PM, Sundays at 2PM. There is also an additional show on Thursday, March 19th at 8PM. ♦



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Dry Eye is a Problem for Millions

Over 40 million Americans suffer with chronic dry eye. Symptoms include burning, redness, irritation, excess mucus, gritty feeling, blurred vision and tearing. Sufferers often attribute symptoms to allergies and then self-medicate accordingly or ignore the issues. Failure to recognize dry eye early on can make management more complicated. It is important to report any symptoms to your eye care professional for proper diagnosis.

Your tears act as a barrier to the environment



and the friction created by eye movements. Three important layers make up your tears. There is an oily layer, a watery layer, and a mucus layer. A disruption in any layer will cause the symptoms of dry eye. The proper treatment depends on which layer is defective.

Multiple contributing factors affect the quality of your tears. Visually demanding tasks like computer use, driving, reading and gaming slow your blink rate. Performing these tasks without the proper

spectacle correction decreases the blink rate even further. History of contact lens wear, refractive surgery, or cataract surgery are contributing factors. Medical conditions like Crohn's Disease, Hypothyroidism, and Rosacea alter tear function. Medications including diuretics, allergy, sleeping aids, antidepressants, glaucoma, and caffeine can cause disruptions in your tear layers. Ignoring symptoms for a long time can cause permanent alterations in the tear layers, increasing the severity of dry eye.

Don't cry, there are lots of wonderful advancements for the management of dry eye. Supplements help balance out your tear layers where they are lacking. These include artificial tears and oral supplements, conserving your own tears. These include lacrimal plugs and specialty contacts designed to hold moisture and tears in your eyes. Tear production can be increased by neurostimulation and prescription eye drops. Diagnosing and treating the underlying condition is a major factor in controlling the severity of dry eye. Properly treating your thyroid disorder, correcting loose saggy eyelids, unblocking the oil glands located in your eyelids are some examples. Proper treatment and management of dry eye all starts with a visit to your eye care professional. Tell your doctor any and all symptoms you are having. Learn what type of dry eye you have. Early detection and management can save you a lifetime of dry eye misery.

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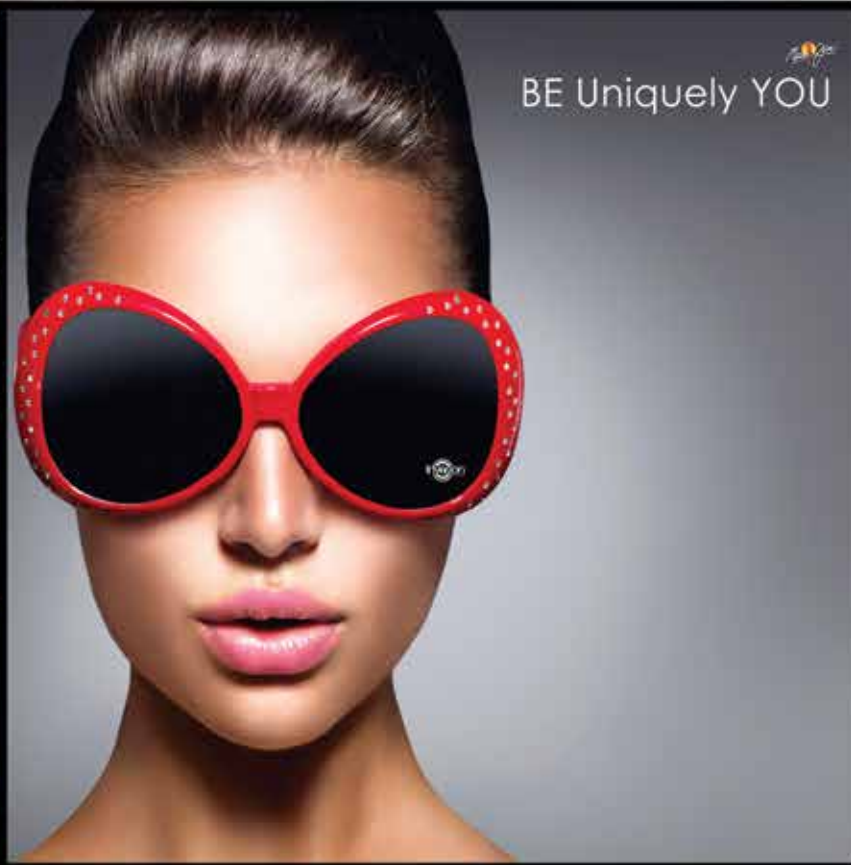




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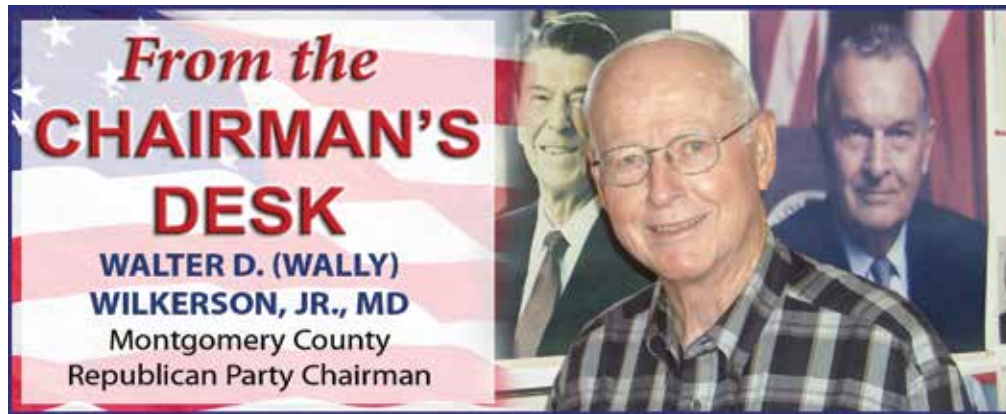
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“Bombshell”

“Bombshell” has become a much quoted word associated with the impeachment news for the past three years. Any new revelation was considered a “bombshell”, certain to convict President Donald Trump and remove him from office. Ben Zimmer’s column, Word on the Street, in the February 1, 2020 Wall Street Journal shed some light on the origin of this word.

The word combines “bomb” which originated in the late 1500s from the French ‘bombe’, “ultimately from Latin ‘bombus’ meaning a booming sound—

with ‘shell’, an old English word for a hard covering that came into military use for hollow objects filled with explosives.” On January 27, 1706, John Moody, a British officer serving in the Canadian colony of Newfoundland, “sent a letter reporting on the defense of the fort of St. John’s, which was under siege by French forces during the Queen Anne’s War. Moody wrote: “I was forced to fix planks and throw up earth to cover them; and also to make long wooden troughs for carrying bombshells and granadoes (grenades) to secure the ditch”. By the early 19th century,

“bombshell” had become common for describing “shocking revelations” in the media.

In 1817, the New York Evening Post described a letter making “damaging claims” about members of the Democratic Republican Party in Pennsylvania. The letter “exploded among them like a bombshell”, Zimmer wrote. Soon enough, “bombshell” could stand on its own as a metaphor, especially in politics”, he concluded. The impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in 1867 led to an increased use of the term. During WW I, a popular vaudeville entertainer, Eve Tanguay, was billed as a “bombshell of joy”. Actress Jean Harlow brought the term more “notoriety” in 1933 when she starred in romantic movie comedy titled “Blonde Bombshell”. Harlow is still remembered as the original “blonde bombshell”.

The “Bolton Bombshell” was the shorthand favored by news outlets in the reports on allegations in Bolton’s book regarding the impeachment of President Trump. ♦

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1934 w/local history that was relocated to this spot, 24x27 metal workshop, 2 private well + right-of-way into River Plantation! Main home has been loved by ONE family EVER! The circle drive leads to a well-kept home boasting a spacious living room w/FP + game room equipped w/a ceiling fan from the Texas/Pacific Railroad Station in Dallas! The kitchen is light/bright w/solid wood cabinets, solid surface countertop + large dining room w/bay window. Master bedroom + 2 additional beds down. 4th bedroom w/bath is the only room up. 2nd Home is 3/2/2 w/great updates!

10085 Stidham Road in Conroe. ML# 59996989. \$730,000



Rare, Rustic & Pure Country Living! Located on a quiet 1.5+ acres of land w/a 3 bed/2.5 bath+study main house, 1 bed/1 full bath guest quarters, 40x30 steel frame workshop w/concrete floors, air compressor, bathroom, office, 12ft overhead doors (2) & 14ft eaves, 40x15 lean-to shed, small pond + 2 entrances (1 is a circle driveway)! This home was built w/vision; from the landscape/accent lights to the hand scraped cedar beams to the hand selected pecan cabinets. The exterior boasts a 3 sided wrap around porch w/wood ceiling planks, fenced interior yard, finished garage (w/2nd floor quarters) + water well. The interior greets w/a scored concrete floor that offers a distinct look that leads to a GREAT room w/cathedral ceilings, wall of windows & a striking stone FP. The island kitchen overlooks Heart of the house w/granite counters, pecan cabinets + walk-in pantry. Private Master bedroom is equipped w/double closets, double vanities, soak tub + walk-thru shower w/multiple shower heads.

lected pecan cabinets. The exterior boasts a 3 sided wrap around porch w/wood ceiling planks, fenced interior yard, finished garage (w/2nd floor quarters) + water well. The interior greets w/a scored concrete floor that offers a distinct look that leads to a GREAT room w/cathedral ceilings, wall of windows & a striking stone FP. The island kitchen overlooks Heart of the house w/granite counters, pecan cabinets + walk-in pantry. Private Master bedroom is equipped w/double closets, double vanities, soak tub + walk-thru shower w/multiple shower heads.

12168 Clint Parker Road in Willis. ML# 90114299. \$539,000



One-of-a-kind is the only way to describe this 4 acre lot with your own private healthy pond in sought after Teaswood! Located in a cul-de-sac on a quiet, tree-lined street a few blocks from the League Line gate entrance. This tract is comprised of two lots. Tons of hardwoods, softwoods and a pristine pond! Teaswood offers executive estate living with tree lined streets, rolling terrain, nature trails, gated access and custom homes throughout. Survey

attached. No flooding/high and dry.

10453 River Ridge Lane, Teaswood in Conroe. ML# 14383090. \$369,000



Former C-Store near Downtown Conroe on a .29 acre corner lot. Interior offers storage rooms, cooler, bathrooms, etc. Being sold in as-is condition. Currently vacant.

**1216 N Roberson Street in Conroe
ML# 18525514, \$199,000**



Perfect location in Cottage Grove! This modern 3-story, three bedroom, three and one-half bath, two car garage (easily fits a Tahoe sized SUV) townhome has gorgeous views, a side yard and easy access to a park for pets, kids and guest parking. Boasting oak hardwood floors, high ceilings throughout, stainless steel appliances, a balcony, and scenic rooftop terrace. Updates include paint, insulation, and a new roof (2018). The large master bedroom

has high ceilings and two walk-in closets. Luxurious master bath w/ granite countertops, his & hers vanity, separate tub & tiled shower. The street has quick access to I-10 and 610 and is close to Downtown, Memorial Park, fantastic restaurants, retail & entertainment. The railroad has deemed this section as a quiet zone, void of loud noise and fast engines. NO HOA FEES!! This lot has never flooded.

5706 Cornish Street #D, Cottage Grove in Houston. ML# 71057192. \$354,000



This home has warmth and charm inside and out! As you enter the front door the wood ceiling of the living and foyer coupled with its stone fireplace will immediately WOW and set this house apart from the others. The high ceiling of the living room adds volume and space to the area while the windows allow for tons of natural light. Open to the living room, the kitchen is spacious and comes equipped w/solid wood cabinets, SS appliances, granite counters and VERY clean! The Master bedroom boasts a recessed ceiling, double sinks, granite counters, walk-in shower, soak tub plus large walk-in closet. The three secondary bedrooms are located on the opposite wing of the house. All rooms are large and offer great closet space. NO CARPET! The exterior offers a large deck adding the pleasure of an outdoor living space. Fenced backyard. Water softener. New A/C.

12010 Mustang Avenue, Texas National in Willis. ML# 72546068. \$264,900



Panorama on the Golf Course! This 4 bedroom home is situated perfectly on the fairway of a rolling par 4. The exterior boasts a HUGE back patio/deck overlooking the course and backyard. The interior immediately WOWs with the high cathedral ceilings of the living room w/a floor-to-ceiling fireplace and views of the course. Clean/Fresh kitchen w/granite counters, double ovens, modern cooktop, great storage, breakfast room + formal dining room. The

Master bedroom is located on the first floor and offers tons of space w/a bay window, striking tile in the bathroom w/double sinks, granite counters, oversized tub/shower and separate water closet. Three very spacious secondary rooms are located upstairs w/ new carpet, a full bathroom w/double vanities, granite counters + a privacy door for tub/shower. The community of Panorama offers The Village Golf Course, NO HOA DUES, restaurant/bar, pro shop, pool, parks and great schools! Sitting on 2.5 lots (0.47 acres)!

111 Rolling Hills Drive, Panorama-Hiwon in Conroe. ML# 12033767. \$255,000



TWO Lake Conroe Waterfront lots in Wildwood Shores. Live the resort life with all the many amenities Wildwood Shores has to offer. Enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking trails, boat docks, 2 pools, tennis and basketball courts, playground for the kids and picnic areas. Wildwood Shores is located on the North end of Lake Conroe next to the Sam Houston National Forest that is 163,000+ acres of hiking

trails, horseback riding, and feeding the fish. This IS the hidden GEM of Lake Conroe.

0 Harbor Point, Wildwood Shores in Huntsville. ML# 30655729. \$150,000

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Texas Veteran Land Board Home Loan Program

Eligible Texas Veterans and Military Members have an opportunity to purchase a home with a competitive, low-interest loan featuring little or no down payment. Veterans, Military Members and their spouses may receive up to \$510,400 on a fixed-rate loan for 15, 20, 25 or 30 year terms. Veterans with a VA service-connected disability rating of 30% or greater qualify for a discounted interest rate.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify, homes must meet the following requirements:

- The home must be the Veteran or Military Member's primary residence in Texas.
- The home must be a single family attached or detached home, townhome or condominium.
- Duplexes or other multi-family units must have been constructed at least five years prior to the closing date of the loan.
- New homes must have either ENERGY STAR certification or HERS Index score of 75 or less.
- The home must remain the Veteran or Military Member's primary residence for at least three years, and the Veteran or Military Member borrower must occupy the home within 60 days after loan closing.

The VLB does not offer to refinance. If you have an existing loan on your home, the VLB cannot provide refinancing to lower your interest rate, nor can the VLB Veterans Housing Assistance Program be used for a down payment on a home.

The VLB Veterans Housing Assistance Program provides Veterans and Military Members with loans, where VLB is in first lien position of the primary residence. It's possible for a Veteran or Military Member to have one active loan in each program — land, home, and home improvement — at the same time.

Once a Veteran, or his or her successor, has successfully paid off a VLB home loan s/he may obtain another VLB home loan. The same applies to the VLB Land Loan Program. All VLB programs are self-funded, using no public taxpayer funding. VLB programs are financed with bonds, which are serviced by loan payments from Veteran and Military Member participants.

VETERAN ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for VLB programs, Veterans, Military Members and their spouses must be:

- At least 18 years of age.
- A bona fide and legal resident of Texas on the date of application and meet one of the following service criteria:
- An active duty Military Member.
- A member of the Texas National Guard.
- A reserve component Military Member having completed 20 qualifying years for retirement.
- A Veteran having served at least 90 active duty days unless discharged sooner due to a service-connected disability and not discharged dishonorably.
- A surviving spouse of a Veteran listed as missing in action or whose death was service-connected.

For more information visit the Texas Veterans Land Board Loans website at www.vlb.texas.gov. You can also get information on other VLB programs. For more information on VA and State benefits, contact Montgomery County Veterans Service at 936-539-7842 or email at vetsvc@mctx.org and like us on Facebook (Montgomery County Veterans Service). ♦



By: Kay L. Lee, Veterans Service Officer



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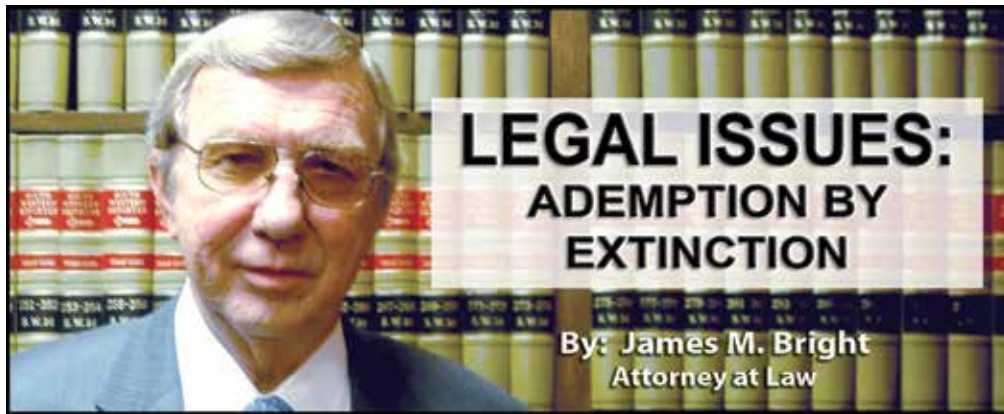
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The following is provided for informational purposes only and is not, nor should it be construed as legal advice.

The question is sometimes asked, "What happens when my will specifies a particular asset to go to a particular beneficiary, and that asset was sold or destroyed prior to my death?" The answer is typically "ademption by extinction."

"Ademption describes the extinction of a specific bequest or devise because of the disappearance of or disposition of the subject matter given from the estate of the testator in his lifetime. Unless the testatrix specifically provides otherwise in the will, the sale or removal of a specific bequest from the estate adeems the devise or bequest. A will speaks at the time of the testatrix's death, and only the estate the testatrix then possessed passes under the terms of the will. When a specific devise of realty is adeemed because the testatrix sold it before her death, absent

a contrary intent expressed in the will, the beneficiaries of the realty under the will are not entitled to the sale proceeds; instead, the proceeds pass under the residuary clause." San Antonio Area Found. V. Lang, 35 S.W.3d 636, 641-42 (Tex.2000).

An example of this type of specific bequest might be, "I bequeath my fully restored 1958 Corvette to Joe Doe."

If you continue to own the 1958 Corvette (don't we all wish) at the time of your death, then Joe Doe inherits it outright and your executor can pass title.

On the other hand, if you decided after the will was signed to sell your Corvette, the asset would no longer exist at the time of your death, and the gift would fail because of ademption by extinction. Joe would not receive the Corvette or the proceeds from the sale.

The same principle of ademption applies to

real property. If your will declares that you devise your interest in "Blackacre" to Sally Sue, and if you sell "Blackacre" prior to your death, then your gift to Sally Sue is ignored, and she will receive nothing unless she is included in another part of your Will or the residuary clause.

"The doctrine of ademption applies only to specific bequests and devises." In re Estate of Brown, 922 S.W.2d 605-607 (Tex. App. – Texarkana 1996, no writ).

EQUITABLE CONVERSION:

A twist to the above examples might yield a different result when a contract for sale of "Blackacre" is pending at the time of the testator's death. "When a specific devise is subject to a contract for sale executed by the testator before his death, the doctrine of equitable conversion applies." Mattlage v. Mattlage, 243 S.W.3d 763,768 – Tex. App. – Waco, pet. denied).

Assume the same facts recited in our above example of Sally Sue and "Blackacre" but with the sale not fully consummated at the time of testator's death. In this case, there exists the possibility of an equitable conversion. The devise of real property to Sally Sue may be considered a conversion to personal property rather than real property. If this occurs, Sally Sue would receive the proceeds of the sale instead of nothing as in ademption by extinction.

Courts have held that the question of whether or not to consider the gift as an equitable conversion will likely turn on whether or not the potential buyer could successfully sue to specifically enforce the agreement between the buyer and the testator.

SOLUTIONS:

It is very common for clients of this firm to request a provision in their will leaving a particular automobile to a grandchild and propose something like, "I bequeath my 2008 Toyota to my grandchild, Tad."

This type of bequest will likely fail through ademption by extraction, because when you die it is probable that you have traded that 2008 Toyota for a newer model something.

A better approach to this bequest suggested by your attorney might be, "I bequeath the automobile that I may own at the time of my death to my grandchild, Tad." If you own an automobile at the time of your death, it will be inherited by Tad without ademption.

The type of unintended results that are demonstrated by this article can easily be avoided by careful estate planning done by the attorney of your choice. Remember that your attorney is a "paid pessimist" being constantly on the lookout for what might or could go wrong.

James Bright has been admitted to practice before the Federal Courts for the Southern District of Texas and Eastern District of Texas as well as all of the Justice Courts, Probate Courts, County Courts at Law, District Courts, Courts of Appeal and Supreme Court for the State of Texas. He maintains an office in Houston and by appointment another at 208 McCown Street in the heart of historic Montgomery. Contact may be made by telephone (936) 449-4455 or (281) 586-8277. For more information about wills or probate in Texas, please see- www.houstontxprobate.com. ♦



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Upcoming Public Events

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(These events are subject to change)

| DATE | EVENT/OCCUPANT | CONTACT INFO | FACILITY | GENERAL INFORMATION |
|-------------------|--|--|-------------------|--|
| MARCH 2020 | | | | |
| 2/29 - 3/1/2020 | Home & Garden Show Texwood Shows | montgomerycounty homeandgarden.com | Convention Center | Sat: 9 am - 6 pm Sun: 10 am - 5:30 pm |
| 3/1/2020 | Angels Rodeo TX AgriLife Extension Service | 936/539-7823 | Expo | 2 pm - 4:30 pm |
| 3/3/2020 | Box 44 - Primary Election | 936/539-7843 | Convention Center | 7 am - 7 pm |
| 3/4/2020 | Floodaware Class Emergency Management | 936/523-3906 | Convention Center | 6 pm - 8:30 pm |
| 3/6-7/2020 | Henderson's Stars & Stripes Championship Henderson's ATA Martial Arts | hendersonata.com | Convention Center | Fri: 7 pm - 9 pm Sat: 7:30 am - 5 pm |
| 3/14-15/2020 | High Caliber Gun & Knife Show | texasgunshows.com | Convention Center | Sat: 9 am - 5 pm Sun: 10 am - 4 pm |
| 3/16/2020 | Owning Your Own Piece of Texas: Agricultural Laws Texas Landowners Need to Know TX AgriLife Extension Service | agriliferegister .tamu.edu/landowners | Convention Center | 9 am - 3 pm |
| 3/20-21/2020 | Lone Star Jeep Invasion | info@lonestarjeepinvasion.com | Convention Center | Fri: 12 pm - 6 pm Sat: 10 am - 5 pm |
| 3/25/2020 | Barrel Race MCFA | www.mcfa.org | Expo | 2:00 pm |
| 3/26-27/2020 | Appraisal Review Board Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts | carmen.chavez@cpa.texas.gov | Convention Center | 8 am - 5 pm |
| 3/28/2020 | Woods & Water Kids Banquet | woodsandwaterkids.org/events | Convention Center | 6:30 pm - 10:30 pm |
| 3/29/2020 | OSC Mini Nationals Old School Cheer Company | oldschoolcheer.com | Convention Center | 12 pm - 3:30 pm |
| 3/27-4/5/2020 | Montgomery County Fair and Rodeo | www.mcfa.org | Fairgrounds | See website |
| 3/31/2020 | Clash of the Counties MCFA | www.mcfa.org | Expo | 7:00 pm |
| 3/31/2020 | Senior Citizen Day Montgomery County Fair | www.mcfa.org | Convention Center | 9 am - 3 pm |
| APRIL 2020 | | | | |
| 4/3-4/2020 | Martial Arts Cox ATA Martial Arts, LLC | www.coxata.com | Convention Center | Fri: 7 - 9 pm Sat: 7:30 am - 5 pm |
| 4/7/2020 | Memorial of Christ's Death Central Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses | 936/777-9945 | Convention Center | 7:30 pm - 8:45 pm |
| 4/7/2020 | Memorial de la Muerte de Jesucristo Crystal Creek Spanish Jehovah Witness | 936/499-1234 | Convention Center | 7:30 pm - 8:45 pm |
| 4/15/2020 | Last Day of Unleavened Bread Church of God, A Worldwide Association | jdbucg@gmail.com | Convention Center | 10:30 am - 4:30 pm |
| 4/18/2020 | Montgomery County Funky Junque Market | facebook.com/ MontgomeryCounty HolidayExtravaganza | Convention Center | 10 am - 5 pm |
| 4/18-19/2020 | Fandango Tejas Southwest Paso Fino Horse Association | www.swpfha.org | Expo | Sat: 9 am - 7 pm Sun: 9 am - 4 pm |
| 4/19/2020 | All-Star Athletics Spring Championship Cheer Brands Inc | www.funcheer.com | Convention Center | 11 am - 3 pm |
| 4/24-26/2020 | Texas Mineral & Fossil Show RMGM Promotions | www.rmgm.com/promotions | Convention Center | Fri & Sat: 10 am - 6 pm Sun: 10 am - 5 pm |
| 4/25/2020 | American Cancer Society Relay for Life | 936/520-0718 800/227-2345 | Expo | 3 pm - 10 pm |
| 4/28/2020 | PTO Today's 2020 Parent Group Expo | ptotoday.com/events (Open to K-8th Grade PTO/PTA Leaders) | Convention Center | 9 am - 2 pm |
| 4/30/2020 | Lake Conroe Region Outlook Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce | lakeconroeregionoutlook.com | Convention Center | 8 am - 12 noon |

Online with Dock Line

6 Things Your Website Should Include

If you want your website to convert more visitors to customers, it must have these features..

If you own a business, your website should be working for you to consistently bring in new leads everyday. Most websites come with a hefty price tag and may look pretty, but they don't do much to grow a business. Very few people see the website, much less know what to do when they do see it. Worst of all, the message is unclear.

Can you relate? Are you consistently getting new customers through your website?

At Dock Line, we've built hundreds of websites for small businesses to help them grow their business online. No matter what industry you're in, there are six things that we've suggested most often when designing a highly profitable business website.

Incorporate these six components in your website and you'll get more visitors, more sales, and more fans of your business. You'll stop losing to your competition.

1. Your business website should include a 3-second headline.

When someone visits your website they should understand what you do in 3 seconds or less. People make instant subconscious decisions about you and your brand when they visit your website. If you confuse, you lose. Your website headline needs to clearly tell the reader what you do and how it helps them.

To help you clarify your main headline (the company's tagline), use this formula to get started.

_____ to help you _____ your _____.

= (Main service you provide) to help you (Result of your service) your (Thing your service benefits).

Example: Landscaping services to help you manage your lawn.
Here are a couple of guidelines to follow when developing your main tagline.

Don't:

- Don't use insider lingo.
- Don't be too vague.
- Don't be long winded.

Do:

- Use language anybody will understand.
- Be specific.
- Be concise.

2. Your business website should include a clear call-to-action.

If possible, give visitors only one call to action on each page of your website. If your main objective is to get them on the phone, make that the only option. You may also offer a lead generator as a call-to-action. Make sure it points people to your main call-to-action. Make your call-to-action specific and straight to the point.

What is it you want the website visitor to do? Do you want them to book a call with you? Do you want them to buy your product? Be up front and direct. Also, make the call-to-action obvious – put it just under the header of your website, and in the top right of the main menu.

- Bad CTA's: "Learn More" "Get Started"
- Good CTA's: "Call Now" "Buy Now"

3. Your business website should include a "Success Header Image".

The header background at the top of your home page is prime real estate. It is where your 3-second headline goes and it is the first thing people see when they visit your website. Your header image gives people their first impression of your business, so it needs to imply success.

Use an image that shows the success of your product. It doesn't have to be an actual photo of your product or even a real customer of yours. You can use a stock image if you want, as long as it conveys a message of success, as if someone used your product or service and achieved their desired goal because of it. Images with people work best, especially if they are happy and smiling.

4. Your business website should include search engine optimization.

What's the use of having an amazing website if no one sees it? Search Engine Optimization (SEO) works to get your website higher in the rankings on search engines like Google.

Nearly everyone begins a search for a product or service online. With SEO you can use Google to your advantage and get more visitors to your website by showing up on the first page of search results.

How to start implementing SEO:

- Use strategic keywords in your writing based on what people type into Google to find the services you offer.
- Optimize your website so that it loads quickly and looks good

on any device (See "Mobile Optimization" below).

- Put engaging content like video on your website.
- Invest in good technical SEO (Back-end website optimization).

SEO stats you need to know:

- 93% of online experiences begin with a search engine.
- 81% of people perform some type of online research before making a large purchase.
- Google currently holds over 80% of total search engine market share.
- 75% of people never scroll past the first page of search engines.
- Leads from search engines have a 14.6% close rate, while out-bound leads (ex. cold-calling, direct mail, etc.) have a 1.7% close rate.

5. Your business website should include responsive design.

52.2 percent of all website traffic worldwide is generated through mobile phones.

Simply put, more people are searching online using their mobile devices compared to desktop computers and the gap is widening each year. This means your website needs to be optimized to look good on any device, especially mobile phones.

If you have a website, pull it up on your phone now and see how it looks. You can also open your website on a desktop and click and drag the web browser to make it thinner. You can see how the appearance changes to match the screen size...or not.

If your website doesn't adjust to various screen sizes it becomes difficult to navigate and read. You can make it more mobile responsive by doing the following:

- Rebuild using a responsive website design template.
- Eliminate the use of popups.
- Make buttons and links large.
- Optimize for fast page load.

It's worth investing in an experienced web designer who can optimize your site to be mobile responsive.

6. Your business website should include sales oriented copywriting.

Not only should your website look good, it also needs to compel people to buy your product or service. As Donald Miller, CEO of Storybrand, says,

"Pretty websites don't sell things. Words sell things."

When we talk about sales-oriented copywriting, we simply mean this: Don't talk about yourself. Talk about your customer.

As hard as it might be to hear, people don't care about how long you've been in business, what your mission statement is, or the whole backstory about how you started your business. What they do care about is how you can help them and if you understand their pain.

It's also important to remember that you only have a few seconds to grab someone's attention and persuade them to keep reading or not. Good sales copy will keep the reader's attention and carry them through your desired process toward a sale.

Answer these questions in your copywriting:

- Who is your ideal buyer?
- What problem do they face?
- What kind of life are they aspiring to that the problem is hindering?
- How can you solve their problem?
- What bad thing will happen if they don't solve their problem?
- What will their life be like when you solve their problem?
- What simple plan can people follow to solve their problem?
- How can they get started right now solving their problem?

So, how does your website fare in relation to these essential components? Can you see areas where you can improve right away by implementing some of these? Maybe, you have a website that is outdated, or just doesn't do anything to grow your business. Or worse, maybe you don't have a website at all. If you'd like some help getting a website that you are proud of and one that works every day to grow your business, we can help.

Dock Line now offers professional web design, along with digital marketing services like SEO and social media marketing. If you need a new website for your business, let us help you out. Give us a call today, or just send an email to info@docklinemagazine.com. ♦



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Four Way Chili

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 pound mild pork sausage
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes
- 2 (15 ounce) cans pinto beans, drained
- 2 (1.25 ounce) packages chili seasoning mix
- 1 (8 ounce) package angel hair pasta
- 1 (4 ounce) packet saltine crackers
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Crumble the ground beef and pork sausage into a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir until browned. Drain, and set aside.

Coat a large pot with cooking spray, and add the green, red and yellow bell peppers, and onion. Cook over medium heat until tender, stirring occasionally. Add the beef and sausage to the peppers. Puree the stewed tomatoes using a blender or food processor, and stir them into the pot along with the chili seasoning. Mix in the pinto beans, and heat to a simmer.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the angel hair pasta, and cook until tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain.

When serving the chili, place the items on your plate in the following order: Start with pasta, then crush some saltine crackers, then some shredded cheese, and then chili.

Team Four Tuna

- 2 tablespoons minced red onion
- 2 pepperoncini peppers, minced
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 2 imitation crab legs, chopped
- 2 (5 ounce) cans tuna, drained

In a mixing bowl, stir together red onion, peppers, mayonnaise, vinegar, imitation crab, and tuna. Chill if desired.

Serve on your favorite bread. ♦

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Garden Thyme

By: Growers Outlet

It's All About the Soil

The Growers Outlet prides itself in having the best quality locally grown plants and great service in the Lake Conroe area. For the past 20 years, our customers have come to depend on us for solutions to their landscape and lawn problems. We routinely get a dozen questions per day from customers on the appropriate care of their lawn and landscape investment. We have noticed over the years that most of the questions have been the same and the solutions are the same as well. It is common to have a frustrated customer come to us that is sick and tired of spending their hard-earned money on plants and fertilizers only to wind up with an unhealthy lawn and landscape.

All the problems had the same common denominator, POOR SOIL. In most cases, homeowners address their poor soil problems by spending endless amounts of money on insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers only to have their problems go un-corrected. Our industry has seen a pretty dramatic transition from the traditional use of synthetic chemicals for fertilization, pest and disease control to organic solutions. We are doing a 360 and are getting back to our roots when it comes to solutions for our lawn and landscape problems.

Our ancestors used what little they had to make their plants grow before our country discovered quick fix chemical solutions. The synthetic fertilizer and pesticide industry all started after World War II when unused munitions factories were transformed into fertilizer and pesticide factories. This new industry gave us easy to apply, cheap, clean smelling fertilizers and highly effective pesticides. After the War, our country's new prosperity fueled rapid growth of new housing which included sculpted lawns and landscaping. Due to the pride of keeping up a nice home or peer pressure, the lawn and plant care industry grew. Corporate America discovered that money could be made making products that will make lawns and landscape plants appealing to the eye. At the same time, it appears they created a dependency on their products.

Over the years, of seeing people battle lawn and landscape plant problems while using the old approach, we have figured out the best solution to solve most of these issues. Without getting into the science, it is a simple fact that the old approach, using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides will not give you a healthy lawn and landscape, just a temporary fix that will not resist damage caused by heat stress, insects and diseases, very well.

Most of our landscape problems stem back to when your house was built. To accommodate your building slab, most builders had to grade away any healthy soil that was there and replace it

with a sandy clay soil with high compaction properties. THIS SOIL WILL NOT SUPPORT GOOD PLANT GROWTH in its current state.

Applying synthetic fertilizers will green up your lawn. However, where the rubber meets the road is when we hit July and lawn and plant stress start showing up. This can always be explained. If it is caused by insects we can spray to kill them. Most diseases, but not all, can be remedied by chemicals. These solutions have only proven to be a temporary fix.

The ROOT cause is poor soil structure. Short of stripping up all your grass and plants, replacing the soil with good soil or waiting a thousand years, the other solution is to amend the soil you have. These amendments should include things that will add to and stimulate the beneficial microbes in your soil. These little critters in the right numbers will speed up that thousand-year process dramatically, by 995 years or less. Usually in as little as 2 or 3 years you can get your soil to support healthy turfgrass by using our Organic Soil Nutrition Program.

This program is not proprietary. Many of the products can be substituted but we think the ones we have put together are the best to achieve your goal of a healthy lawn and landscape that will give you more time to enjoy it and more money in your pocket with the savings from your reduced water bill.

Come by the Growers Outlet and we will show you our proven program for a better looking and more trouble-free lawn and landscape.

**A Garden To Do List for the month of March
for our area will include the following:**

*Feed azaleas and camellias, once they are finished blooming with the organic Microlife Azalea Food or Nitro Phos Azalea Camellia Food.

*Once your azaleas finished blooming prune back not more than one third.

*If you haven't already done so, fertilize your roses with Microlife organic Ultimate Plant Food, Nelson's Color Star or Nitro Phos Rose Food.

*Any of your roses that are prone to black spot should be treated on a bi-monthly basis with a product like Bonide Infuse. Don't wait until the black spot occurs before treating!

*If you haven't already done so, now would be the time to re-mulch your trees and shrubs with a good quality mulch like Landscapers Pride Black Velvet mulch or pine bark mulch.

*March is a good time to buy and plant your vegetable garden plants. Don't wait too late into April.

*If you have pecan trees and didn't feed them in February you can still feed them in March. Be

sure to use a product like Nitro Phos Pecan and Citrus Food that contains zinc.

*You can control caterpillars that defoliate trees by treating all new leaves with BT.

*It is still not too late to use a product like Nitro Phos Barricade, a pre-emergent herbicide to treat your lawn to prevent weed seed that has not germinated yet.

*For weeds that are growing use Bonide Weed Beater Ultra.

*If you haven't already done so you should fertilize your lawn with MicroLife 6-2-4 General Purpose Fertilizer, Nitro Phos Imperial Lawn Fertilizer or Nitro Phos Sweet Green before the end of March.

*Rake and top dress any bare spots in your lawn with leaf mold compost.

*Cut back and pinch all your perennials and fertilize them.

*During periods of cloudy damp weather be sure and spray your shrubs, especially roses, to prevent fungal diseases like black spot.

*This is a great month to spray for Virginia Buttonweed.

*Use a systemic insecticide on your crape myrtles to prevent aphids.

For great gardening products and information, come by the Growers Outlet and visit with any member of our team to get the help you need or go to our website at WWW.growersoutletinwilis.com. We have the products and knowledge to help you have the prettiest yard on the block. ♦



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Fishing ADVENTURES

with Derek Pietsch



January 2020 Pre-Fishing Toledo Bend

Trey and I arrived at Toledo Bend on Sunday to start pre-fishing. It was really windy and we just caught a few. We practiced again on Monday I caught a few and Trey did not catch any. Grant is fishing with Hayes this year. He fished on The Woodlands High School team. Grant caught a nice 4 ½ pounder while he was practicing, but his partner Hayes did not catch any either. It is really tough and the weather is not cooperating either. It's Wednesday and we have been trying hard to find fish but it's tough, I mean really tough. Today Trey and I started fishing at 9 a.m. because it was raining very hard. We wanted to wait till it slowed down a bit. I caught 1 keeper. Trey and I took turns fishing. It was so cold we warmed our hands with hand warmers and put them in our pockets when the other one was fishing. It was in the 30's and miserable with a constant rain. We fished for 3 hours and decided to go in. It was still raining at 12 and everything was soaked. Our gloves were wet. This was no fun at all. No fish. Wet and Cold. All we could think about was a warm place. Grant also told us he was freezing and his hands were numb.

1-23-20 BASSMASTER COLLEGE SERIES – Toledo Bend

Today is the day I have been waiting for and I just don't know what to think. I came into this saying we could win and qualify, but with the bad practice days and all the terrible weather it doesn't seem attainable. The line to get to the ramp was so long. It took about an hour just to get to the ramp. Colleges are here from all over the United States to compete. There are 250 teams fishing today. That is the limit. The top 25 teams will qualify for the



National Championship in the summer. It is still sprinkling rain, but should stop soon. Wow we are finally getting a break. Hopefully we can concentrate on fishing instead of freezing and accomplish our goal to catch 5 BIG keepers.

You can definitely tell there are 250 boats in



this tournament. The lines are at least an hour long just to get to the boat ramp to launch. Several lanes are closed due to the drought.

We found a group of fish on the main lake next to the standing timber and brush piles. There were a lot of fish on the graph. Some in the brush and some scattered in the area. I was up front looking at the graph and dropped down to the fish with a drop shot. I caught 1 keeper and lost one. It broke the line in the timber. Trey caught 3 at the first spot.

We left there and went to Housing, a creek

arm. We fished shallow for 1 ½ to 2 hours with no luck. I caught 1 tiny fish, that was it.

I decided to go back to the first sport to get





one more keeper, with no luck again. Making a long run to the last spot to see if we could catch something big. The ones we had were all small. Trey had one fish on, only for a second, then it pulled off the hook. I caught a little spotted bass which was the last keeper.

Grant and Hayes fished shallow the first day. They caught 3 keepers weighing in at 8.8 lbs. Trey and I had 5 fish also weighing 8.8 lbs. What are the chances of that? My brother and I are tied on the first day. Yes, I said, "Tied with a sack of little fish".



1-24-20 Day 2 Toledo Bend

The rain has finally stopped, but it is still extremely cold. There was ice on the boat this morning. It is going to be sunny, but still cold.

We started the day fishing the main lake points. We fished 2-3 with no luck close to the launch. We went back down south to try a few new places. Found a few fish that looked like a school and I caught 1 fish. We decided to go back to the place we fished the day before where we caught all our fish and we caught 2-3 small keepers. Knowing it was going to take a big sack to catch up, we decided to fish new water hoping to catch some big fish.

We headed over to Indian Mounds. We saw Grant in a distance and idled up to him to chat. He had 1 keeper at that time. We found a group of fish and Trey caught 1 spotted bass. It was a hard day of fishing for us. We just couldn't get any good

bites. There was a lot of spotted bass between 1 ¼ - 2 pounders. Just not enough to make the cut. Grant and Hayes fished deep using drop shot and caught 4 keepers.

Trey and I are planning on fishing the FLW College series the rest of the school year. Our next tournament is in March at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. **THROW IT OUT, POP IT IN, FISH ON!** ♦



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Transport Saves Lives... ASVT Road Trip

By: Ruby Cross, Animal Shelter
Volunteers of Texas, 501c3 (ASVT)

What is a rescue transport? Why are transports important? Who does these transports? Are they free?

These are just some of the questions that the public asks when we say "Transport saves lives." ASVT provides humane road trips for homeless, abandoned dogs primarily to our rescue partner in Sioux City, Iowa. We help bring them to their "second chance" for a loving forever family.

What is a rescue transport?

"The transportation of animals is the intentional movement of animals by transport."

Wikipedia has a simple way of describing rescue transport. ASVT likes to say it transports rescue animals to a better life.

Why are transports important?

Believe it or not... many other states actually have a shortage of puppies and adult dogs. Consequently, the last five years have seen an increase in the transports of shelter and rescue animals from areas of over population, to areas of greater demand.



Who does these transports?

ASVT does scheduled transports once a month. Many rescue groups also do transports and there are also organizations that provide transport services for rescues and animal shelters.

Our transports are driven by a professional

animal transport driver. Sometimes, when we have a group of puppies that need to go quickly, one of our volunteers will load their personal SUV and make the drive to their destination.

Are they free?

Transporting animals is a very expensive operation. There are costs for health certificates, the fee for the transport driver, and boarding for shelter dogs if a foster is not available. All shelter dogs that are approved to go on transport must be out of the shelter for at least two weeks, so they have to be boarded. ASVT has to reserve at least 10 crates on the transport van to make the trip. The average cost for each dog is \$200.

The transport process is handled by three ASVT Transport Coordinators. It is a time consuming process and we are fortunate to have this Task Team of three that handle it all.

- ASVT has partnerships with shelters, foster based rescues and breed specific rescues that have high adoption needs.

- These shelters/rescues have room for pets from Texas because of better spay/neuter and registration laws.

- ASVT has been sponsoring pets for transport for five years. We have visited the receiving shelters and have great relationships with the management and staff of the shelters/rescues.

- The pets are driven to the shelter/rescue by an animal transport overnight and arrive the next day.

- The pets ASVT have sent are usually adopted within 10 days. Some puppies have been adopted off the van!

- ASVT spends \$200/per dog for the transport. This covers the cost of the animal transport, boarding for 14 days if a foster home can't be found, a required interstate health certificate exam and any necessary vaccines to bring the pet up-to-date.



What is the impact of animal rescue transports? How many dogs are transported each year? In 2018 ASVT transported 160 dogs and 272 dogs in 2019 were transported. The number of animals in high kill shelters and abandoned animals ASVT rescues before they get to the shelter are staggering. Statistics show that an estimated 6M to 8M dogs and cats enter animal shelters each year and even more astonishing is that 3M to 4M are euthanized (from Humane Society of the United States).

SAVING PUPPY LIVES

ASVT "puppy only" transport departed to Iowa in February. It was driven by two ASVT volunteers in a personal van. The transport included 15 puppies. They arrived on Thursday and by Friday they were all adopted.



These are just four of the lucky puppies that made the journey to Iowa to find their forever homes.



During the month of January 2020, ASVT took in over 50 puppies into our program. February transport gave many of these puppies a real chance for a good life.

ASVT is a 501c3 nonprofit rescue and we depend totally on community donations to make these transports possible. All ASVT staff are volunteers and do not collect a salary. 100% of all donations go toward saving the animals.

See some of our puppies available for adoption. Just submit an Adoption Application at www.ASVTexas.net.



What's in it for you?

If you have been around anyone in marketing or sales, you have probably heard the saying, "Sell the Sizzle NOT the Steak". The "ASVT Sizzle" is the wonderful homes these puppies will find because of your generosity.

All sponsorships will receive a certificate and picture of the dog you sponsored. If you are a business, it is something you can proudly display in your office and on your website.

You can save a dog with a Transport Sponsorship. Just visit our website and make a donation using the DONATE button. Make a note that the donation is for a transport dog. You can sponsor with the entire \$200 or a partial sponsorship. Or you may sponsor the entire transport! All sponsorships are tax deductible and you will receive a letter for your donation.

Please consider helping these dogs on their journey to a forever, loving home.

HOW CAN YOU HELP US HELP THEM? ADOPT, SPONSOR, VOLUNTEER, FOSTER, DONATE!

Other ways we help our community animals is by educating youth, pay for medical expenses, food, supplies and transporting animals to areas with high adoption needs.

ASVT also sponsors a Spay/Neuter Program for community animals whose owners cannot afford to have their pets altered. This helps decrease the rise of community puppies and kittens that will end up in the shelters. ASVT requires spays and neuters for all animals in our program

The accomplishments of ASVT would not be possible without partners like Ransoms Steakhouse, Wiesner Automotive, Empire Electric, Dock Line Magazine and so many more. ♦





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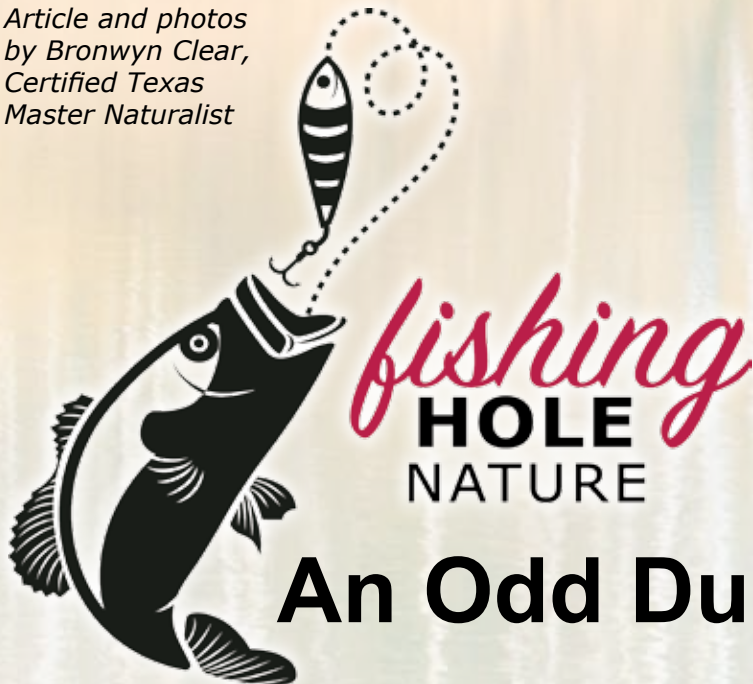
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When alarmed, muscovies hiss and raise their head crests.

An Odd Duck – The Muscovy

What's not to love about ducks! They quack, they waddle, and oh those feet! From the domesticated "Donald" varieties to the wild varieties, they make people smile.

Have you heard someone shout "DUCK!" when a ball sails past your head? Have you ever



A watchful family. The green tinted feathers are remnant colors from a native population.

wondered about that command? It comes from way back in the past because of the duck-raptor predator-prey relationship. When a swimming duck realizes an eagle is about to drop out of the sky to make him a meal, a smart duck's maneuver is to plunge entirely under the water. The eagle keeps dive-bombing, and the duck keeps "duck-ing". Sooner or later the duck wins, or the eagle does, but don't count the duck out!

There are so many duck phrases - "Sitting duck", "Water off a duck's back", "Like a duck to water", "Lame duck", "Duck soup", "Ducks in a row", "Dead duck", "Ugly Duckling", "Duck, Duck, Goose!". And don't forget about Daffy and Donald. Yes, ducks are endearing, and ingrained in our American culture, history, food supply, and language.

Floating near the banks is the ever-present iridescent green headed Mallard, or the ornately detailed Wood Duck. But these days some odd ducks have also been paddling along our lakes and ponds, and they are Muscovy Ducks. A male drake can be as big as a goose at 15 pounds, and they have red facial ornamentations called caruncles, somewhat like those on a turkey! Muscovies also have a feather crest on their heads that they raise and lower at will. They are considered to be

one of the more intelligent ducks, and they don't scare easily. If you get near one, he might just stand his ground and hiss at you!

Muscovies originated in regions south of the border, and have been expanding to areas inside the States. They are dabbling ducks and eat plants, small fish, bugs, and frogs. Unlike other ducks they don't quack so much as trill or giggle, but like many ducks they hiss when something threatens their territory. Although they spend their days on the water, the Muscovy roosts on land in the safety of tree cavities or shrubs, or they use their webbed claws to dig out shallow nest holes in the ground. Domesticated Muscovies are raised by farmers and duck lovers for meat and eggs, poultry show contests, and for pets. Some are bred for their spectacular colors - pied white and black, pastel, blue, lavender, red and speckled! This makes for a very striking bird indeed. People who raise them really love their personalities and antics. They might jump into the air to eat bugs, or chase and catch mice on the farm! To other communities they are



These large ducks have bright red ornamental facial wattles, also called caruncles.



With a weight up to 15 pounds the Muscovy drake is as big as a goose.

major pests and allowed to be destroyed. Florida's feral populations have grown to enormous numbers, passing disease to other ducks, breeding with native ducks, taking over neighborhood ponds and leaving huge fecal messes for landowners.

The regulations regarding these migrating ducks are somewhat confusing, possibly because they are both loved and hated. A few years ago they were added to the US protected species list when indigenous populations were found in a few Texas counties along the Rio Grande. However, due to the explosion of feral populations in unexpected areas, the US Fish and Wildlife Service calls them a problematic invasive species. What is clear is that these ducks are flourishing, and we are seeing more and more of them on our waterways.

Learn more about the nature in your area by joining a chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist organization. To find a chapter close to you, or to read about the state program, go online to www.txmn.org. Volunteer and get involved! ♦



A pied black & white Muscovy.



Muscovies come in many colors – including dappled grays and pastels



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Songbird and Raptor Nesting; Does That Baby Bird Need Help?

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

Spring is once again in the air, and baby animals and baby birds will soon be all around us. Understanding natural behavior is important as it can save wildlife lives. Sometimes well-meaning individuals think they are helping or saving baby animals from harm when, in fact, they are taking healthy babies away from their wild parents. Understanding the natural behavior about how baby birds grow and leave the nest can help to prevent them from being needlessly kidnapped.

Some of the large birds of prey in our area, such as eagles and great horned owls, begin nesting as early as December/January, so chicks may hatch out by January/February. The largest raptors nest earlier and then the smaller raptors nest later into the spring and early summer. Songbirds begin choosing nesting sites as early as February and may begin laying eggs in March. This means there are several times throughout the year when baby birds will be hatched and raised, with baby birds leaving their nests sporadically throughout the warmer months.

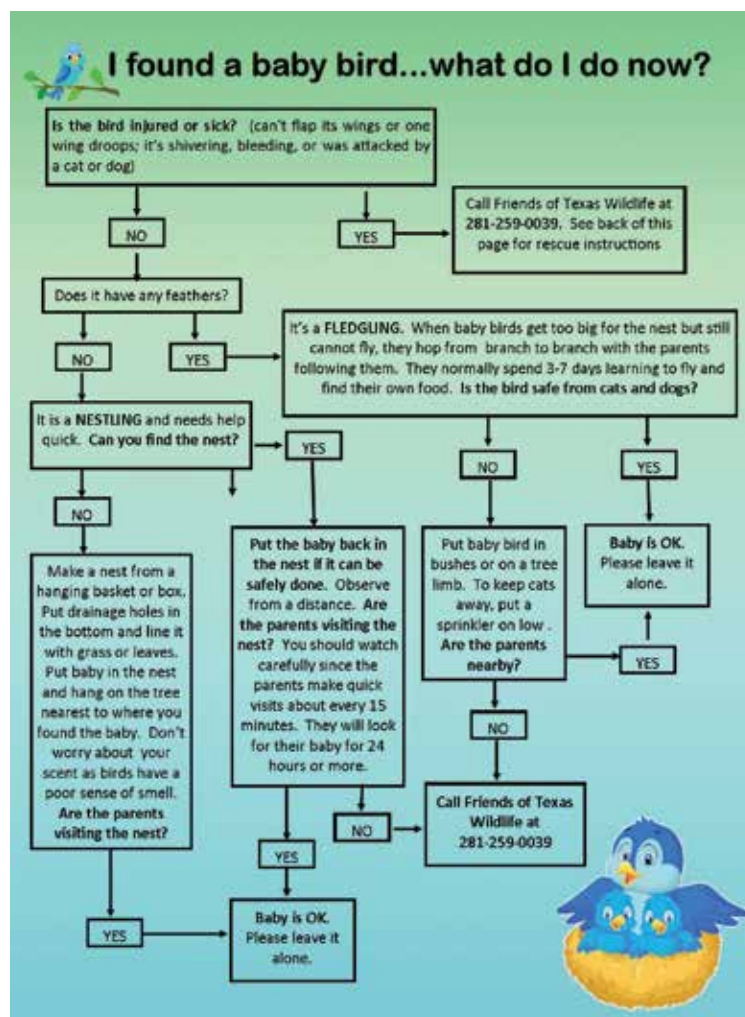
Raptors (hawks and owls) are typically born anywhere from January through May. Generally, the larger the bird the earlier in the year they are born. By May, many of the early arrivals are beginning to leave their nests. Similar to songbirds, when raptors first leave the nest, they cannot fly well yet. They are called "branchers" at this age and sometimes they wind up on the ground inadvertently. If they have feathers as opposed to down and they are in a safe location, they should be left alone. Their parents will still attend to them while they learn to fly. If you are not certain whether a baby owl or hawk may need help, please call us for assistance. Sometimes even younger birds that have fallen from nests can be "re-nested" in a large basket so their parents can continue to care for them.

Songbirds are busy nesting in spring and summer, and some birds will even raise two or three broods each season. Hatchling birds have no feathers. Nestling birds have fuzzy down feathers and/or are just beginning to have pin feathers emerge (it looks like they have toothpicks sticking out of them). If either a hatchling or nestling has fallen from a nest, it does need help. If you can place it back in the nest, that is the best thing to do (it is an old wives' tale that touching the baby will cause the parents to reject it). If the nest has been destroyed or cannot be located, take a small basket or bowl (like a margarine container), punch some holes in the bottom, and line it with pine needles, leaves, or straw. Tack the nest on the tree closest to where you found the baby and watch for at least a couple of hours to see if the parents come back to feed. Fledgling baby birds are fully feathered and have about one inch of tail feathers. They leave the nest TO learn how to fly, not WHEN they can fly. It is normal for them to hop from branch to branch or even wind up on the ground. The parents will still tend to them while they learn to fly. If they are in danger from domestic pets or not in a safe spot, it is ok to pick them up and place them in a nearby bush or low tree. This is the most dangerous time for baby birds, but they just need a day or two before they can fly quite well. If possible, keep cats indoors if you notice fledgling birds in your area.

Friends of Texas Wildlife will be having an Open House on Saturday, March 21 from 11 am to 3 pm. At this open house, we will have many interesting educational displays. All our educational animals will be there for you to visit with (opossum; box turtles; snake; owls; and hawks). Educational displays will also be presented by: The Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center; Texas Master Naturalists; Texas Wildlife Association; Caleb Paul (snake wrangler/reptile rescue and removal); Montgomery County Sheriff's Office; Lake Houston Nature Center; Texas A & M Forest Service. For the first time ever, we will

be offering "behind the scenes" tours of our flight enclosures and intake center. This is the only time this year our entire facility will be open to the public. \$5 per person, kids 3 and under free. More details available at www.ftwl.org.

To learn more about what we do and view pictures of many of the animals we assist, please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SavingTexas-Wildlife. Our educational visitor's center is open the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., located at 29816 Dobbin Hufsmith Road, Magnolia, Texas, so the next open house date will be Saturday, March 14. Come on out and visit us, learn a little more about local wildlife, do some fun activities and a craft, and meet some of our non-releasable wildlife educational animals. We also host birthday parties, camps, and educational presentations. For more information about events, birthday parties, spring break camps, summer camps, or educational presentations for scouts, schools, or other groups, please visit our website or email ftwl.education@gmail.com. There are many other ways you can help support our efforts, too (such as Kroger Community Rewards, Amazon Smile, etc.). Details can be found at www.ftwl.org, and then click on "How to Help". ♦





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Lake Conroe FISHING REPORT



BY: BUTCH TERPE

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Black Bass: This is the time of the year that a bass fisherman has a chance to catch the largest bass of his or her life. Most of these fish are in the back of creeks and shallow coves making ready for the spawn. Spinner baits, plastic worms and shallow running crank baits fished near cover such as stumps, boat docks or any rocks in these areas are all good bait choices.

Crappie: Crappie will be moving to the shallow protected areas as well and can be caught by fishing minnows beneath a bobber fished along the banks with some cover such as brush, stumps or boat dock pilings. Depths can vary between 2' - 12' depending on water temperatures and clarity. Try moving from one area to another.

White Bass & Hybrid Striped Bass: At this time of year these fish can be found on submerged humps and points anywhere from 15' - 25' depths. I usually start out by trolling pet spoons behind deep diving crank baits to catch and locate these fish. If I locate these fish near the bottom, I like to use 3/4 oz. slab spoons and bounce them along the edge of these humps or points for some good action.

Catfish: Catfishing is always going to be active at this time and can be caught under the 1097 Bridge or along the river and creek channels. Just by baiting up the area with milo or range cubes, you will attract a good number of these fish in the area where you are fishing. Chicken liver, shrimp and dip baits are all good bait choices for catfish. ♦

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