



DOCK LINE

Lake Conroe

MAGAZINE

APRIL 2020

Hello Beautiful Boutique

**Become the Beauty You
Want to See in the World**

See page 8



**GIS at the San Jacinto River
Authority**
See Page 30

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110 Cadence Court, Woodforest in Montgomery + 173 ACRES

ML# 40999210. \$3,150,000



Situated in a prime location on FM 1097, less than 3 miles from I-45, 10+ acres with a barndominium shell with electrical, hvac, plumbing already in place! Plus, a 30x25 shop with a full bathroom.

13630 E. FM 1097 Road in Willis
ML# 5419352. \$425,000



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. \$365,000



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. \$145,000



Welcome home! This 3 bedroom/2 bathroom home is perfectly situated on a very rare lot! Sitting with only one neighbor on the Right side, one of the well-kept and manicured community relaxation areas to the Left and private walking trail to the back! As soon as you drive up to the house you will notice the bright and blooming landscaping and large shade trees. The front

courtyard greets w/a sitting area and allows for front privacy. The interior offers high ceilings in the living room w/great natural lighting, tile floors, fireplace and French doors lead to the back patio. The updated kitchen is equipped with granite counters, tile backsplash w/glass tile banding, flush mounted cooktop, breakfast area + formal dining w/a wet bar. The Master bedroom is very spacious w/high ceilings, double sinks, granite counters, stylish shower/tub + great closet space. Two secondary bedrooms w/a full bathroom in between. Fenced backyard. Neighborhood boasts walking trails, tennis courts, pool & playgrounds!

11203 Canyon Trail Drive, Cutten Green in Houston

ML# 69929638. \$217,900



Fresh and Clean! This 3 bedroom, 2 full bathroom home is ready for move-in with fresh paint and flooring throughout! Located on a private corner lot with a double-wide driveway with covered parking (20x21), fresh/eye-catching landscaping, 12x8 storage shed, over 375 square feet of covered/uncovered back porch w/fan + a covered front porch! Great entertainment

space! Spacious living room with vinyl plank flooring with great natural lighting. Kitchen is open to the living area and boasts custom cabinets w/pull out storage drawers, breakfast bar, SS appliances + stylish backsplash. Large Master bedroom with walk-in closet, double sinks, shower/garden tub combo. Split plan for two secondary rooms on the opposite wing w/full bathroom offering walk-in shower. Tons of EXTRAS in this house! Roof is 5 years young! Community offers a great location to Highway/shopping/schools and a park! Washer and dryer stay and also 2 build-ings in the backyard stay!

9541 Cedar Ridge Court, Pin Oak in Willis

ML# 41418320. \$115,000



Water view 1/1 second floor unit in sought after Lakeview Terrace in April Sound! Located in Building E with views of the pool, grounds and lake from your spacious covered back patio plus your assigned parking spot is practically at your front door! The interior boasts fresh paint, hand-scraped wood floors in living, floor-to-ceiling slate tile fireplace, kitchen w/granite counters, SS

appliances + stack-able washer and dryer! Master bedroom offers tons of space, a walk-in closet + additional closet. Full bathroom w/great updates plus a built in Bluetooth light/speaker! All of this is located in April Sound w/a 24 hr. manned gate entrance, clubhouse w/restaurant/bar, Golf Course, pro shop, pools, parks, fitness/workout center, tennis and so much more!

201 Lakeview Terrace Unit #E, Lakeview Terrace in Conroe

ML# 37053631. \$104,700

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Spring has finally sprung once again! Although we have been consumed with experiencing the devastation of the Corona Virus, house isolation and consumed with worry about what the future has to hold for us this year. We would like everyone to remember it's still a great time to live in Texas. Longer days, great weather and blooming flowers means a longer dog walk and one super happy dog.

We would just like to say thank you to all the great people who read and follow Dock Line Magazine. We have met so many wonderful people and made some great friends throughout the community. Now that the weather is getting sunny once again, we encourage you to look for the brighter days to come. Remember now more than ever how important it is to shop local and support our great community for we are all in this together. The April edition is filled with some great articles, new businesses and interesting facts to help you explore your community and keep you informed. We hope you enjoy it and thanks for reading Dock Line Magazine.



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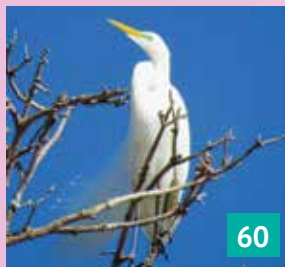


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ON THE COVER



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Verle "Ozzy" Osborne
PUBLISHER

Linda Sharver
EDITOR

Coconut/GT2
MANAGING EDITORS

Kelly L. O'Quinn
ART DIRECTOR

Susan Osborne
OFFICE MANAGER

David Donahoo, Colton Rucker
SEO SPECIALISTS

Walt Thompson
DIRECTOR OF SALES

Angela Glezman
 Stephanie Davis
 Jessie Smith
SALES

Brian Sherman
WRITERS

Jessie Smith Photography
PHOTOGRAPHER

CONTRIBUTORS:

James M. Bright • Tom Stark, M.D.

Butch Terpe • Ruby Cross

Lisa Wolling • Mark Hooker

Walter D. Wilkerson, Jr., M.D.

Dr. Todd R. Custer, D.C.

George Harrison

Chris Wootton, ChFC • Kay L. Lee

Dr. Bonnie Cameron

Bronwyn Clear

Carolyn Corsano Wong

Michael Pittman Images

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 Dock Line Magazine, Inc.
 P.O. Box 1203, Willis, TX 77378
 Telephone: 936-890-7234
 E-mail: ozzy@docklinemagazine.com

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 Willis, TX 77378

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Become the Beauty You Want to See in the World

*How Hello Beautiful Boutique helps women
feel beautiful, inside and out*



BY: BRIAN SHERMAN

"Ok, let's talk. But first let me say hello to everyone." Judy Burks is the epitome of "boutique". Having just arrived to meet with me, I assumed she needed to check in with her employees. Judy then proceeded to greet everyone in the little shop on West Davis Street. That small act could just about sum up who Judy is and the heart behind her thriving store, Hello Beautiful Boutique. I would say it made quite a first impression, but my interaction with Judy wasn't actually my first impression.

Walking through the front doors of Hello Beautiful Boutique is a bit like passing through a portal into another world. Beautiful chandeliers hang throughout the store and the smell of warm vanilla floats in the soft-lit atmosphere. Fashionable clothes and interesting items are spread throughout the store with an invitation to spark curiosity and perhaps joy. Although small and full, nothing about the store feels crowded.

Robin, the store manager, is setting up a display of llama slippers toward the front and immediately greeted me with a smile. It didn't take long for Robin to light up as she began to tell me the history of the store. Even though she has only been with Judy for 12 years, starting back when it was still called Silks & Twigs, she reflected on the original story, which began 38 years ago. Robin's love for Hello Beautiful Boutique and for Judy Burks was evident from the start. "It never feels like work when it's something you love to do." She says.

"Ribbon!" Judy calls out to Robin as we walk back out into the main store "Bring me one of the Save the Girl bags to show Brian." The nickname made me smile, emphasizing that Judy's love for practical fashion and jewelry is only eclipsed by her love for people. To be honest, it didn't take more than a few minutes to realize that Judy and her staff are much more like family than anything else. Sitting in her office in the back of the shop, she joyfully discusses the college degrees that her employees are working toward and the passions they are pursuing. She knows that not all of them will be with her forever and she's perfectly happy to pour into their lives while they're with her and empower them to follow their dreams. Judy is much more a mentor than a boss. Everyone in the shop feels it. "I've always believed that a store is only as successful as the people you surround yourself with and I have the best staff in the world".

It's not just the people who work and shop in the store that Hello Beautiful nurtures. Judy has a passion for giving back. "The big, big thing that we are so blessed to be a part of is Faith Fighting Cancer," Judy passionately brings up. It's an organization that they've partnered with for the past few years and again this year by

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donating 20% of their total sales on September 12, 2020. Judy adds what makes it so special to her: "They are run entirely by volunteers and the money stays in Montgomery County." Hello Beautiful also supports charities for animals, veterans, and several others in and around Montgomery County.

One part classy chic and another part hospitality, Hello Beautiful Boutique offers a unique and desirable collection of fashionable, yet affordable apparel, unique gifts, jewelry and accessories. Although it may sound like I'm describing a typical boutique gift shop, that description would fall far short of accurately depicting this place. Everything is intentional, as if the regulars who shop in the store had their say in what goes in it. Such is another reflection of Judy Burks, the store's long-time owner, and her intimate knowledge of the designers and makers of every piece of clothing and every accessory in her store.

I asked Judy what made her want to greet everyone in her store before doing any other business. "Enthusiasm with our customers is what we offer them. Our employees and customers leave their problems at the door. When they walk in our store, it's sunshine and roses. Nobody likes negativity, especially now." Judy talks through a smile.

Hello Beautiful Boutique is centered around stylish clothing, jewelry and accessories, but the overarching vision of the store is centered around beautifying the lives of the people that come through the door. For instance, at one point, Judy explains that they are not a bookstore, but that she found two special books that she had to offer. One is for someone graduating, which she plans to give to her grandson next year, and the other is about the tooth fairy. Such is the case throughout



the store. Yes it has many of the same types of items that you'd find in most boutique stores, but it's also full of heartfelt exceptions hidden throughout the shop, inviting you to discover them as though part of a chic scavenger hunt.

Jewelry by Kendra Scott, bags by Makeup Junkie Bags, clothing by Clara Sun Woo - Judy and Robin, who go to 5 different trade shows a year to discover new designers and trends, know what their customers really want. They make a point to stay on the forefront of innovation and design. While style and name brands are desired attributes, Hello Beautiful Boutique makes a point to also stay practical. Fashionable doesn't have to be expensive. Judy emphasizes that they offer something at every price point. Perhaps even more important is the focus on local artisans and American-made products.

I asked Judy, "What is your vision when it comes to treating customers? What do you

want them to know?" She smiles, "When they walk out the door, they say 'I am definitely coming back. And they do...and they bring a friend.' She continues, "We know that there are so many places that they can go shop, and that we are honored that they would choose our store to come shop."

Of course, Judy talks about all the success over the years not from an "I" point of view, but always from a "we" perspective. Her store and all her success she attributes not to her own efforts, but made possible by the steadfast love and support of her husband of 57 years, Kenneth.

Come experience what a boutique is meant to be (and ask to see one of the new "Sash" bags...wow) at Hello Beautiful Boutique at 3915 W. Davis, Suite 230 in Conroe, TX. Check them out online at www.hellobeautifulboutique.com or call "Ribbon" (Robin) at Hello Beautiful at (936) 756-3700. ♦

Back to Health

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



SCIATICA



What is it?

Sciatica is a condition in which the individual has a sharp burning pain located to the buttock that may or may not radiate into the upper leg (never below the knee). It is a common ailment that affects approximately 50% of the adult population at some point in their lifetime. It can be a real pain in the posterior.

What is the cause?

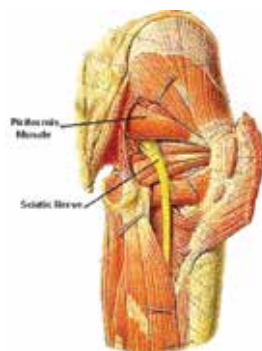
The sciatic nerve is the large nerve that is formed by the nerve roots of the lumbar spine converging into the sciatic nerve that exits the pelvis in the upper buttock region. It is the largest nerve in the body and controls all the muscles and skin sensation below the knee. "Sciatica" is the term we use when the nerve is inflamed. There are numerous causes to sci-

atica, but the most common is a herniated disc that is irritating the nerve roots in the spine. Those same nerve roots will converge into the sciatic nerve and will burn and ache to let us know about the inflammation.

Another cause to sciatica can be as simple as a wallet in the back pocket that irritates the nerve. Also, excessive sitting (especially with your legs extended in front of you) can put a stretch on the nerve and result in an inflamed sciatic nerve.

In addition, a condition known as Piriformis Syndrome can cause sciatica.

The piriformis muscle is located deep to our buttock muscle (gluteus maximus) and is part of our external rotator muscle group of the hip. The relevance of the piriformis is that the sciatic nerve exits the pelvis beneath the piriformis muscle and if the muscle is spasmed, it can pinch/inflame the sciatic nerve. Interestingly, about 10% of the population is actually born with the sciatic nerve not exiting below the piriformis, but actually running through the muscle which greatly increases the likelihood of sciatica.



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What is the best treatment for sciatica?

Surgery and injections are not indicated to treat sciatica. Conservative treatment has shown the best results for treating sciatica. Stretching the buttock (gluteus maximus and piriformis muscles) and lightly exercising those same muscles is a must. Deep tissue massage to those muscles and fascia can also be effective, but be sure to not put pressure on the sciatic nerve, as it may amplify the pain. Chiropractic manipulation will reduce nerve root irritation. Ice or heat application for a time-frame of 15-minute applications may alleviate some pain.

Lastly, avoiding irritation of the sciatic nerve, by removing a wallet from the pocket, limiting sitting times and avoiding hamstring stretching will help you find relief from the dreaded sciatica.

Dr. Custer is the owner/operator of Better Care Chiropractic and Physical Therapy. He combines chiropractic manipulation with active rehabilitative techniques to restore pain-free living. If you have questions/comments/suggestions, please feel free to contact Dr. Custer at whybetter-care@gmail.com. ♦

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Lifting the Community, One Boat at a Time

What Lake Conroe Boat Lifts can teach us about doing business, the right way.

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN



When you've been in any business for over a decade, then you're doing something right. Lake Conroe Boat Lifts was started by Glen Martin 12 years ago. Already a successful businessman in the home construction industry, Glen launched his boat lift company with the desire to meet a common need for any thriving lake community: building durable, high-quality boat lifts and bulkheads. As more and more lakefront communities fill the shoreline of Lake Conroe, Lake Conroe Boat Lifts provides not just a service to these homeowners, but a greater service to the whole community.

With any booming economic area there comes an influx of business opportunities. Savvy businessmen swoop in quickly to take advantage of the growing market. As much as

it improves the overall region from an economic standpoint, it also brings with it an influx of fast-money schemes and fly-by-night "businesses" that pop-up or show up just to make a quick buck. While the money can be good, the quality of work tends to take a hit, and the consequences follow, although they might not show up for a few years.

Boat lifts and bulkheads are a great example. The quality of materials and the level of craftsmanship needed to make a great boat lift play a huge role in the longevity and appearance of it. To put it plainly, a boat lift is not something you want to be cheap about. As Glen points out, "You are making a large investment. Make sure you use quality materials that will last. The cheapest bid is not always the best."

There is no shortage of boat lift companies in the Lake Conroe area. Typically, as markets get more competitive, the natural course for businesses is to try to compete on price. With all the competition, Glen Martin and Lake Conroe Boat Lifts have thrived without having to sacrifice on quality. "People come to us because they are referred by others and have seen our work," says Glen. Any experienced business owner will tell you that is the most effective form or marketing by a long shot. When your customers are your sales force and your work speaks for itself, then you're doing something right.

If you dig into the details, you'll quickly

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learn that Lake Conroe Boat Lifts doesn't follow the typical "minimum requirement" approach to building and repairs. While there are certain standards that must be followed when building something like a boat lift or a bulkhead, there is also a focus on craftsmanship and durability that Lake Conroe Boat Lifts uses as their own sort of minimum requirement. For instance, as Mr. Martin highlights, "We use larger gage cables than most boat lift builders, and marine grade lumber." "Better quality materials" are the standard in this business, and the work speaks

for itself.

Perhaps the most compelling thing about Lake Conroe Boat Lifts is not just the attention to detail and quality of materials. It actually has more to do with customer care. "We are different," Glen states. "We offer faster response times, when a lot of companies shedule you four to six months out. We also work directly with the owners to strive for the safest and best construction plans. And we keep in constant communication with the owners." A construction project like a boat lift is a big deal.

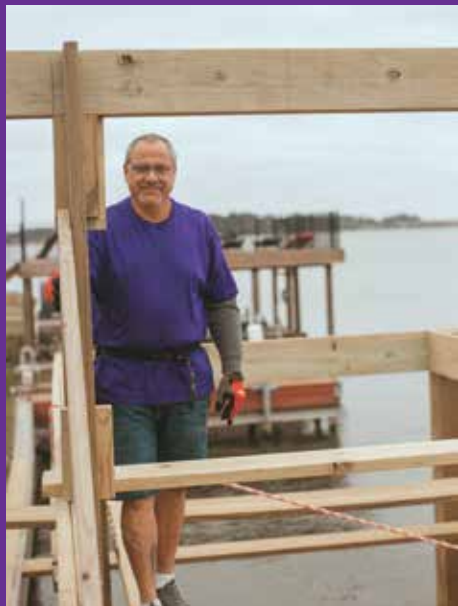


It's going to be a part of someone's home for a long time. It needs to look good, but also be functional and durable. Most of all, the homeowner has to love it. It needs to add value to their lives. This is why it is so important to work so closely with the homeowners. It's a lesson any business should pay attention to.

Lake Conroe Boat Lifts makes a point to keep the customer happy throughout the entire process, not just when revealing a final product. "We keep in regular contact with the owners. We send pictures as work is in progress, provide an easy to understand contract, and offer a warranty, all while still providing competitive pricing." And it's not just new builds that Lake Conroe Boat Lifts is known for. They are also a trusted resource for repairs and replacements. After all, anything that is constantly exposed to water, especially bulkheads and boat lifts, will need maintenance.

So, you may be wondering, what's the real secret? Why does Lake Conroe Boat Lifts really stand out so much? We've talked a lot about the business practices and quality standards they follow. But perhaps the greatest reason for their ongoing success in the Lake Conroe community is something that can't quite be put on paper. Simply put, they care. Everyone in the business lives on the lake. It's not just their market, it's their community. If you want to build a successful business in any industry, then use people who live in the community - people who care about the place they live and work and build relationships.

As Glen will tell you himself, it's not just about getting someone's business. "We want to build relationships with our clients." After all, when the job is done and daily life resumes, you want to be met with a smile when you run into a customer in the grocery store, in church, at a restaurant and anywhere else in the community.



When asked to give one piece of advice to others, Glen Martin shares a deep and simple bit of wisdom that his employees understand better than anyone: "Stand behind your work and treat your customer's project as if it were your own home."

For more information about Lake Conroe Boat Lifts or to get a quote on a new build or repair, call (936) 444-6952, or visit www.montgomerycountyhds.com. ♦

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Free "Law Line" Service

When: April 6, 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.

Montgomery County Welcoming Neighbor Club

May Luncheon

When: April 16, 2020

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

Where: King's Kitchen

Montgomery County Welcoming Neighbor Club (social club 501c7) monthly luncheon will be held at the King's Kitchen on April 16, 2020. Social hour begins at 10:00 followed by a short business meeting and lunch. Afterwards, there will be a teacup exchange. Call Rebecca at 936-671-9629 for information concerning this meeting and to make reservations.

Conroe Craft Beer and Crawfish Festival

When: April 25, 2020

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Where: Pacific Yard House, 101 Metcalf St., Conroe, TX 77301

Admission: Price Varies

Join us for our annual all-you-can-eat crawfish festival on Saturday, April 25, 2020 at Pacific

Yard House in downtown Conroe. Axe throwing, craft beer tasting, food truck vendors, kids activities, live music and of course crawfish until 8:00 p.m. Contact us to sign up for the crawfish cooking contest! ♦



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Getting the Most Out of Custom Home Building: *Design*

By: George Harrison

While going through the home design process it's easy to get caught up in the layout of the house and disregard aspects of the build site. You will want to design your house to be appropriate for the situation at hand. The idea is to make the house look like it was meant to be there. Imagine a narrow house on a wide lot or acreage tract.

The contour of the land must be considered to plan for accessibility. Consider placing the garage where there is less slope on the driveway or allow distance to reduce driveway slope. The shape of the house can affect the costs of site preparation particularly on lots with elevation challenges. If a house is running with the slope of the land it will usually require more fill material.

Minimize disturbances, Maximize Privacy. Placement of the house on the lot and location of the rooms can create privacy where you want it. Outdoor lighting, position of the sun, traffic and noise producing situations can be minimized by design. Make provisions for outdoor spaces in appropriate locations. Place your spaces to get a view, allow for easy access outdoor areas, and provide privacy where you want it most.

Take into consideration what it will be like living in the house once it is complete. Start with a base floor plan, incorporate the amenities that are most important to you and then add all the details. A good design builder can offer ideas and solutions while keeping a check on your budget. ♦



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A Different Niche!:

From Dream to Boutique



**The New Home Décor Boutique in Montgomery
that's Set to Become an Instant Local Favorite**

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN

It's amazing how many business success stories can be attributed to a simple pivot. While in the day-to-day life of a business, sometimes it's a side business or hobby that carries the most passion. A Different Niche! is a perfect example of this phenomenon. Ken and Faye Milstead owned and managed Milstead Glass in Magnolia for over 30 years. In 2012, Milstead Glass expanded to include Milstead Home Décor, Faye's passion project. For the last eight years, her home décor boutique has grown in popularity.

When Ken and Faye decided to sell Milstead Glass in 2019, Faye had no intentions of slowing down. Instead, it was time for her dream to take on a life of its own. Her previous 1,500 square foot boutique in Milstead Glass has blossomed into a beautiful, new 4,000 square foot showroom located at 2114 McCaleb Rd. Faye's passion for home décor has continued to intensify and now she has the right location, product lines and time to allow her passion to flourish. The home décor boutique is a reflection of Faye. "I didn't want to retire. That's just not for me. I was ready to start living my dream full-time," she says. Faye admits she loves the experience that she and Ken gained with Milstead Glass, but doesn't miss the business. "I do miss my employees," she exclaims. "My employees and my customers have always been my priority."

When asked why she decided to open her own home décor store, Faye speaks of creating a shopping experience centered around the customer. "A Different Niche! encourages customers to come in, take the time to browse, touch and feel the products. Smell the wonderful candles and lotions in the store. You can purchase almost anything on Amazon from your computer or phone. My plan is to make A Different Niche! a destination for great shopping and in coming months, small events," she explained. "Most of all, it's about shopping locally and supporting your community."

Like many beloved brands, there is an almost serendipitous way this store came to be, including how it got its name. Faye reminisces, "When I

Continued on page 24 ➞





first opened, a man walked in and was just looking around. I didn't have a name for the store yet. He looked around and said, 'You know, this is a different niche.' And it just clicked."

Why that name clicked is no secret to Faye. "When you go to the market, you have to select unique products that people like and just don't see anywhere else." Customers aren't looking for something ordinary for their homes. They want something with character - something that looks good, but also tells a story," shared Faye.

Unique is the focus at A Different Niche!. Large furniture stores offer a standard selection of the most common brand items. Faye's approach is to offer products that accentuate people's style and take on a personal meaning to them. Part rustic, part chic, part contemporary - Faye's sense of style comes from years of learning what her customers love most. Her new store continues to offer the brand names her clientele has come to love from her original location, while adding more new product lines to discover. You'll find brands like Tyler Candle Company®, Orleans Home Fragrances®, Noodle & Boo®, Bella Tunno®, Bearington Baby Collection®, Park Hill®, Forty West®, Uttermost®, nora fleming®, among many others. The shop also carries a large selection of Texas-based brands including wines you will love!

Her customers regularly tell her they love the name, the openness of the store, and the selection of merchandise. It's not just another store, after all. A Different Niche! has a welcome atmosphere that invites you to hang out and look around. Walking through the doors is a bit like accepting an invitation to a home décor scavenger hunt. Customers can enjoy a glass of wine from local wineries like Messina Hof®, Bernhardt®, and Los Pines Ranch® and discover new brands around every corner.

If the success of Milstead Glass is any indicator of Faye's new venture, then it's safe to say A Different Niche! will be a resounding success. After all, Faye is bringing the same level of dedication and passion to her new store. As she fondly expresses, "This is why I'm where I am today. It's because of glass." She



attributes her 30+ years of continued success to one factor: "Our main goal has always been customer service. Make them feel like they're appreciated when they walk through the door." Her method speaks to a timeless simplicity that is all but lost in business nowadays: "You stand up!. You greet customers! You smile! You're there for your customers. You take care of them. Customer service is number one. At A Different Niche!, you'll feel more like family than just another shopper," Faye strongly emphasizes.

When asked what advice she would leave with her customers, her wisdom is simple, yet profound. "Be kind. Be honest. Show respect."

It's safe to say that A Different Niche! is set to become a new, local-favorite, destination in Montgomery County. Come check out the boutique and see for yourself.

A Different Niche! opened its doors in March 2020, and is now open Tuesday to Friday from 10:00AM to 6:00PM, Saturdays from 10:00AM to 3:00PM, and is closed on Sundays and Mondays. Come shop and enjoy a glass of wine at the store located at 2114 McCaleb Road, BLDG. A, Ste. 100, Montgomery, TX. You can also give them a call at 936-286-8073 and find them online at www.adifferentniche.com. ♦



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from

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nora fleming® · Uttermost®
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STAGE RIGHT

OF TEXAS

Presents Hilarious Comedy

M*A*S*H

April 10-26

By: Carolyn Corsano Wong Photos: Michael Pittman Images



*The cast of M*A*S*H hope you will join them at the 4077th*

STAGE RIGHT of Texas, resident theatre company at the historic Crighton Theatre presents the hilarious comedy *M*A*S*H* April 10-26. The play is adapted by Tim Kelly from the book by Richard Hooker and will be directed by Meredith Ann Gaines. Presentation is made possible by arrangement with Dramatic Publishing.

*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 named Ho Jon 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



Frank Burns and the dead cat; how did that get there?



General Hammond having a discussion with Colonel Blake

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 at the 4077th 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. If you loved the book and subsequent TV series, you'll love the play.

Director Meredith Ann Gaines has assembled a wonderful cast and crew to bring this entertaining play to the Crighton stage.

M*A*S*H Company:

General Hammond - Todd Brady
Private Boone - Matthew Wehring
Lt. Colonel Henry Blake - Steve Murphree
Captain Bridget McCarthy - Rhea Young
Lt. Janice Fury - Rachel Sakal
Sergeant Devine - Shaun Bennett
Lt. Louise Kimble - Jill Villalobos
Major Frank Burns - Ed Dolphin
Father Mulcahy - Frank Purcel
Captain Walt Waldowski - John Kaiser
Captain John (Trapper) McIntyre - Baron Dan Jackson
Captain John (Ugly) Black - Daniel Fonville
Corporal Radar Reilly - Ara Hollyday
Captain Benjamin (Hawkeye) Pierce - John Barton
Captain August (Duke) Forrest - John Thompson
Ho-Jon - Nicholas McKee
Private Lopez - Sean Sears

Continued on page 28 ➡

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A diagram showing a cross-section of a bulkhead wall. A worker in a blue suit is using a machine to inject yellow resin into the soil behind the wall. The resin fills cracks and voids, creating a watertight barrier. The diagram is divided into two circular insets showing the resin filling cracks and voids.

STAGE *RIGHT*

Performances at the historic Crighton Theatre in Conroe, TX

M * A * S * H

MOBILE ARMY SURGICAL HOSPITAL

A photograph of a green military ambulance with a white star and a red cross on its side, parked next to a large green tent with a white cross on its side. The scene is set outdoors with trees in the background.

Adapted by Tim Kelly
From the book by Richard Hooker
Directed by Meredith Ann Gaines

APRIL 10-26, 2020

Fridays & Saturdays 8pm, Sundays 2 pm

Saturday matinee 4/25 at 2 pm

Tickets \$17-26 Group discounts available

TICKETS: 936-441-SHOW (7469)

ONLINE: WWW.STAGE-RIGHT.ORG

Funded in part by The City of Conroe CVB visitconroe.com

By arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Company

Lt. Nancy Phillips - Tracie deRoulac
 Major Margaret Houlihan - Leona Hoegsberg
 Congresswoman Goldfarb - Jennifer Prior
 Dean Mercy Lodge - Jennifer Prior
 Miss Randazzle - Katie Kowalik
 Mitzi - Monique Lott
 Fritz - Monaé Lott
 Agnes - Katie Kowalik
 Captain Oliver (Spearhucker) Jones - Chris Daniel
 Lt. Connie Liebowitz - Rachel Sakal
 Major Ruth Haskell - Donna Warner
 Korean Woman #1 - Donna Warner
 Korean Woman #2 - Angelie Aggarwal

Director - Meredith Ann Gaines
 Stage Manager - Angelie Aggarwal
 Lighting Designer - Ashley Anthony
 Sound Designer - Travis Gaines
 Set Designer - Meredith Ann Gaines
 Scenic Artist - Kara Kowalik
 Costume Designer - Kara Kowalik
 Producers - Steve & Carolyn Wong



Dentist Walt Waldowski undergoing a bit of shock treatment to shake his blues away



How about a tug of war to make you forget about the war?

rights, costumes, props, etc. Of course in the event of a cancellation we can apply the cost of your ticket to another show or issue a refund if that is what you prefer, I'm only asking that perhaps you might consider it a donation to help us offset the costs this virus has caused STAGE RIGHT and the Crighton Theatre. We'll get past this as we have weathered many a storm before. Crises like this give me hope because although sometimes we see the absolute worst in some people, the majority just want to help their neighbor and do so with such a giving heart it is sometimes overwhelming. Thank you all for your continued support.

– Carolyn Wong ♦

SPOTLIGHT NON-PROFIT

As with every STAGE RIGHT show, a need in the community is highlighted and then a 'spotlight' is thrown on an organization helping with that need. The Spotlight Non-Profit for *M*A*S*H* is the Montgomery County Veterans Memorial Commission. Montgomery County Veterans Memorial Commission is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring our heroes, remembering our history, educating the public and bringing awareness to the needs of our veterans in our community, state and country. Stop by their information table during the run of the show and see how you can support the beautiful new Veterans Memorial Park and their efforts to support area veterans.

Performances of *M*A*S*H* will be April 10-

26; Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 2 pm and an added Saturday matinee on April 25 at 2 pm. All performances are at the historic Crighton Theatre located at 234 N Main St., in downtown Conroe, Texas. Tickets can be purchased online at www.stage-right.org or by calling the Crighton box office 936-441-7469.

P.S. – As I write this article here in the middle of March, the theatre is currently shut down due to an order by the county to cancel events over 250 person for 30 days. The 30 days will hopefully be enough to nip this bug in the bud (as Barney Fife would say). If we are required to cancel performances of *M*A*S*H* we hope that you would let us keep any moneys made from prior ticket sales as we have already spent money on advertising, scripts, performance



Hawkeye and the gang



Major Houlihan having a discussion with the nurses



Duke, Hawkeye and Radar with the Bonwit Sisters



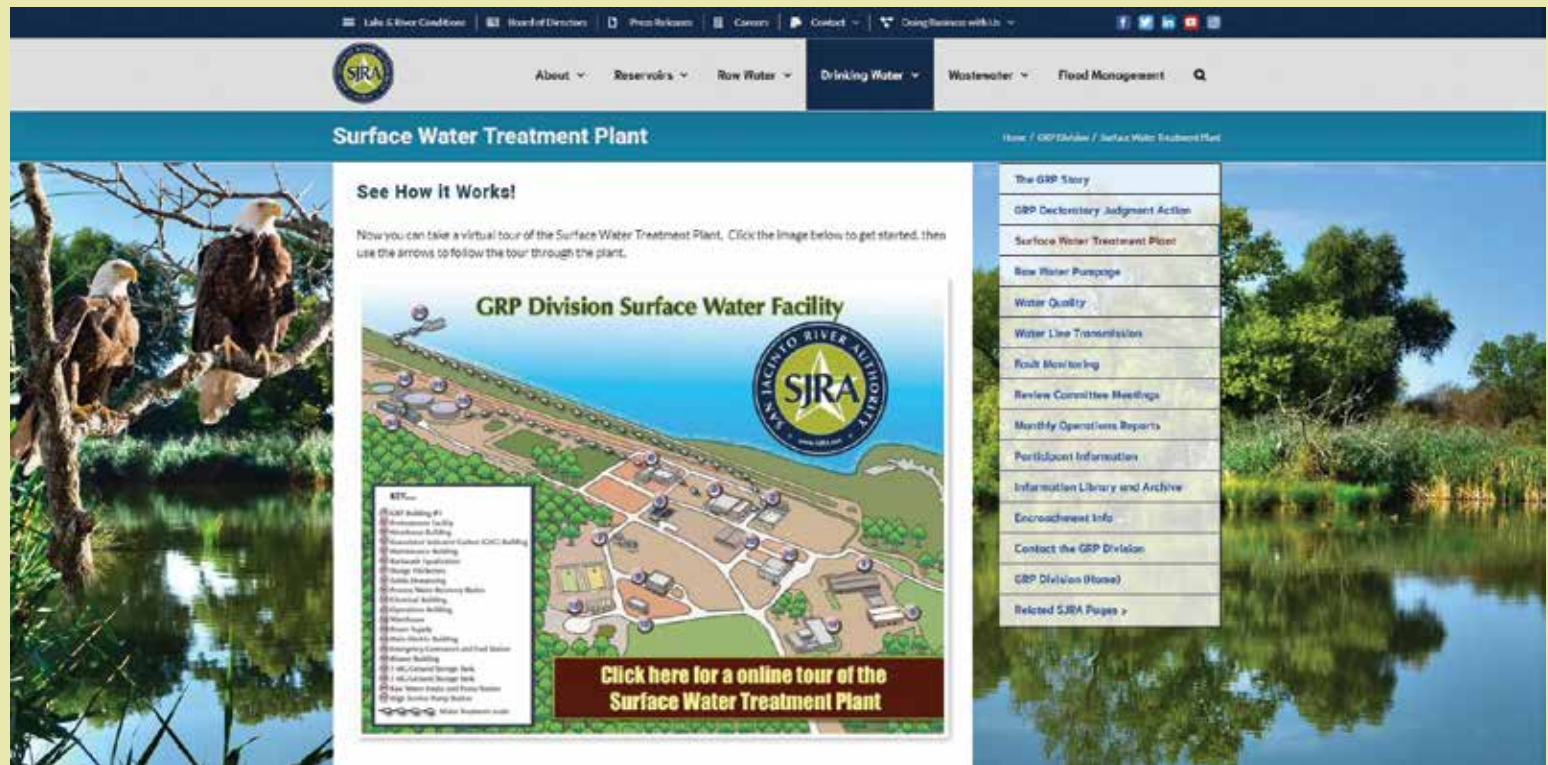
GIS at the San Jacinto River Authority

Just about everyone is familiar with mapping apps on mobile phones. In fact, most of us probably use one on a weekly, if not daily, basis. These mobile applications are a type of Geographic Information System (GIS). The roads, imagery, restaurants, gas stations, and other information available are all different GIS datasets. These datasets make it possible to zoom in to The Woodlands, search for 'restaurants,' and then populate various restaurant locations on the map. The data also enables the user to see the establishment's name, address, reviews, and other useful information. Most people don't realize they have been using GIS for years.

GIS is a technology field that has been around since 1968. GIS utilizes the location, or geography, of objects/features and the informa-

SJRA Woodlands Division operates and maintains three regional wastewater treatment plants, a wastewater conveyance system, five water plants, 38 water wells, six elevated storage tanks (ESTs), eight ground storage tanks, and hundreds of miles of wastewater collection and potable water distribution lines. GIS allows a technician or water operator to locate specific assets for routine maintenance or potential repair. Technicians can look at the valve dataset to find where a particular valve is located and confirm the size prior to a repair allowing staff to be proactive by loading the proper equipment on the truck before leaving the shop, saving time and money.

SJRA also utilizes GIS in preventing future erosion and extensive damage. The Lake Conroe Division uses GIS for internal data collection,



tion associated with those objects/features for mapping and analysis. So how is GIS being used by an organization like the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA)?

Geographic tells us the where – location of a water line, dock, or siphon.

Information tells us the details – diameter of a water line, owner of the dock, or name of the siphon.

Systems are the computers, software, data, and people needed to build the data, run the analysis, create the map, and support the users.

SJRA has four GIS professionals on staff who are responsible for building and maintaining data for our Operational Divisions. The datasets and the information associated with them are used in various ways. By using GIS, SJRA can map locations of various assets. For example, the

dropping points such as animal damage or erosion issues onto a map which allows technicians to accurately map and plan repairs and note trouble spots while out in the field. In SJRA's Highlands Division, GIS is used for assessing the Highlands canal system for levee improvements, vegetation clearing, and new access gates. The collected data is instrumental in mapping future projects and planning budget expenditures.

Most internal and external presentations, studies, reports, as well as the SJRA 10-Year Project Plan use GIS to help visualize projects. GIS is also useful for public education campaigns to show SJRA's work sites within a community and convey complicated topics or messages in a more creative and easy to understand way than words alone.

Two ways SJRA is using GIS for public education is through the Know Your Watershed campaign and operational Story Maps. Know

Continued on page 32

SJRA Board of Directors Recommends Renewing Flood Mitigation Strategy

San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) Board of Directors last month approved a recommendation to the City of Houston (COH) to continue a temporary flood mitigation program at Lake Conroe. The board's vote proposed extending the initiative through December 2022 and serves as a recommendation to the City of Houston who owns the majority of the water rights in Lake Conroe.

At the special board meeting, over 100 constituents voiced their opinions on the initiative to reduce water level in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis to create extra capacity to catch rainfall and storm water runoff. During the meeting SJRA Director of Water Resources and Flood Management, Chuck Gilman, gave a presentation to the board that included 20 years of rainfall and lake level data for consideration.

The SJRA Board of Directors approved the following recommendation to the COH regarding the operation of Lake Conroe:

- Spring strategy: Beginning April 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' mean sea level to 200' msl). Recapture of lake level beginning June 1.

- Fall strategy: Beginning August 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' msl to 200' msl). After September 1, increase capacity an additional six inches (from 200' msl to 199.5' msl). If a named storm is predicted to impact our region, the COH may initiate an additional release of six inches (to 199' msl) by notifying SJRA in writing of their call for release. Recapture beginning October 1.

- All releases come from the COH's 2/3 share of permitted water supply in Lake Conroe at the city's request. SJRA staff to coordinate with COH staff on the details and timing of any releases.

- If the lake level of Lake Conroe has already dropped to the target elevation due to natural evaporation, no releases should be made.

The strategy of temporarily creating capacity in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis began in 2018 to provide flood mitigation benefits for regional downstream constituents in both Montgomery County and Harris County by catching rainfall and runoff in Lake Conroe.

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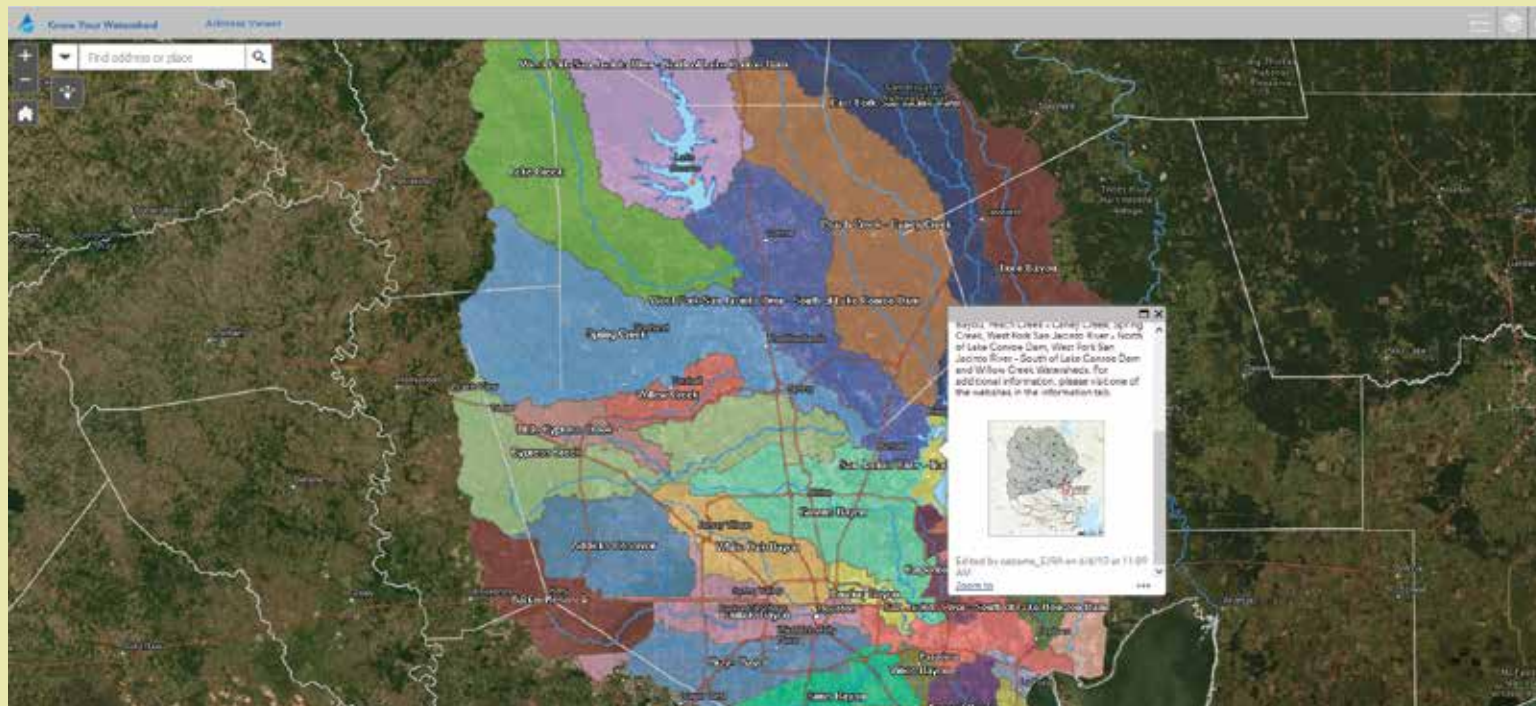
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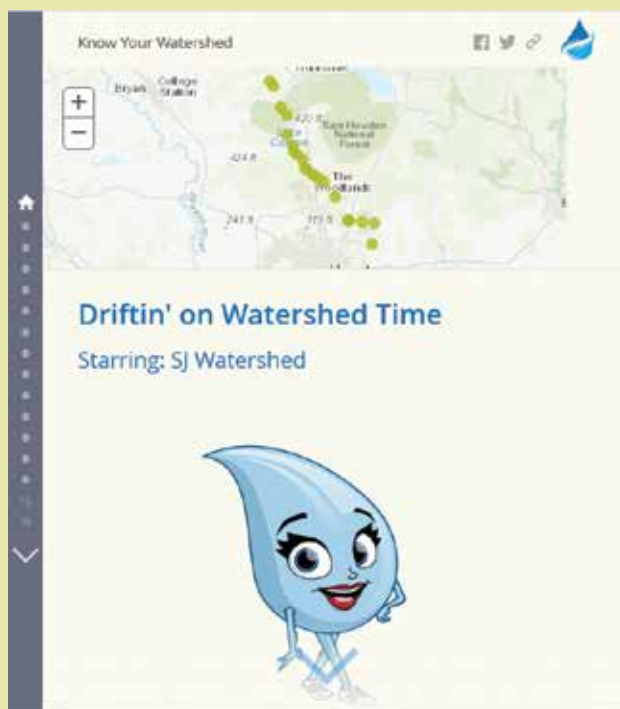
www.ghfamilymed.com



Your Watershed (www.KnowYourWatershed.com) is an interactive web-site designed to educate San Jacinto River Basin residents by engaging them in 1) identifying their watershed 2) recognizing flow patterns 3) observing how water naturally drains throughout the basin, and 4) learning important water-related facts in a creative and entertaining way. Viewers can access information by clicking on an “Address Viewer” link and searching for their location, or take a virtual tour with perky

public viewer to track mowing and maintenance schedules on line this summer.

Created in 1937 by a special act of the Texas Legislature, the San Jacinto River Authority's (SJRA) mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. From managing Lake Conroe to providing water and wastewater services in The Woodlands to operating a water treatment plant designed to reduce reliance on



water drop SJ Watershed and her friends by clicking on the “Story Map” which features fact sheets, animation, and videos.

On SJRA's website www.sjra.net viewers can take a virtual tour of the GRP water treatment plant or type in their address to see if they are conserving our aquifers by receiving treated surface water from Lake Conroe. SJRA has both water and wastewater virtual tours of their Woodlands facilities coming this spring. SJRA Highlands will have a

underground aquifer water supply, SJRA has grown from a small agency that primarily helped farmers construct stock tanks for water and soil conservation to a community partner with five distinct operating divisions throughout the San Jacinto River basin. SJRA's operational divisions—Lake Conroe, Woodlands, Highlands, Groundwater Reduction Plan, and Flood Management—serve the community through municipal and industrial water supply, wastewater treatment, water quality man-

agement, and flood mitigation strategies.

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 watershed, excluding Harris

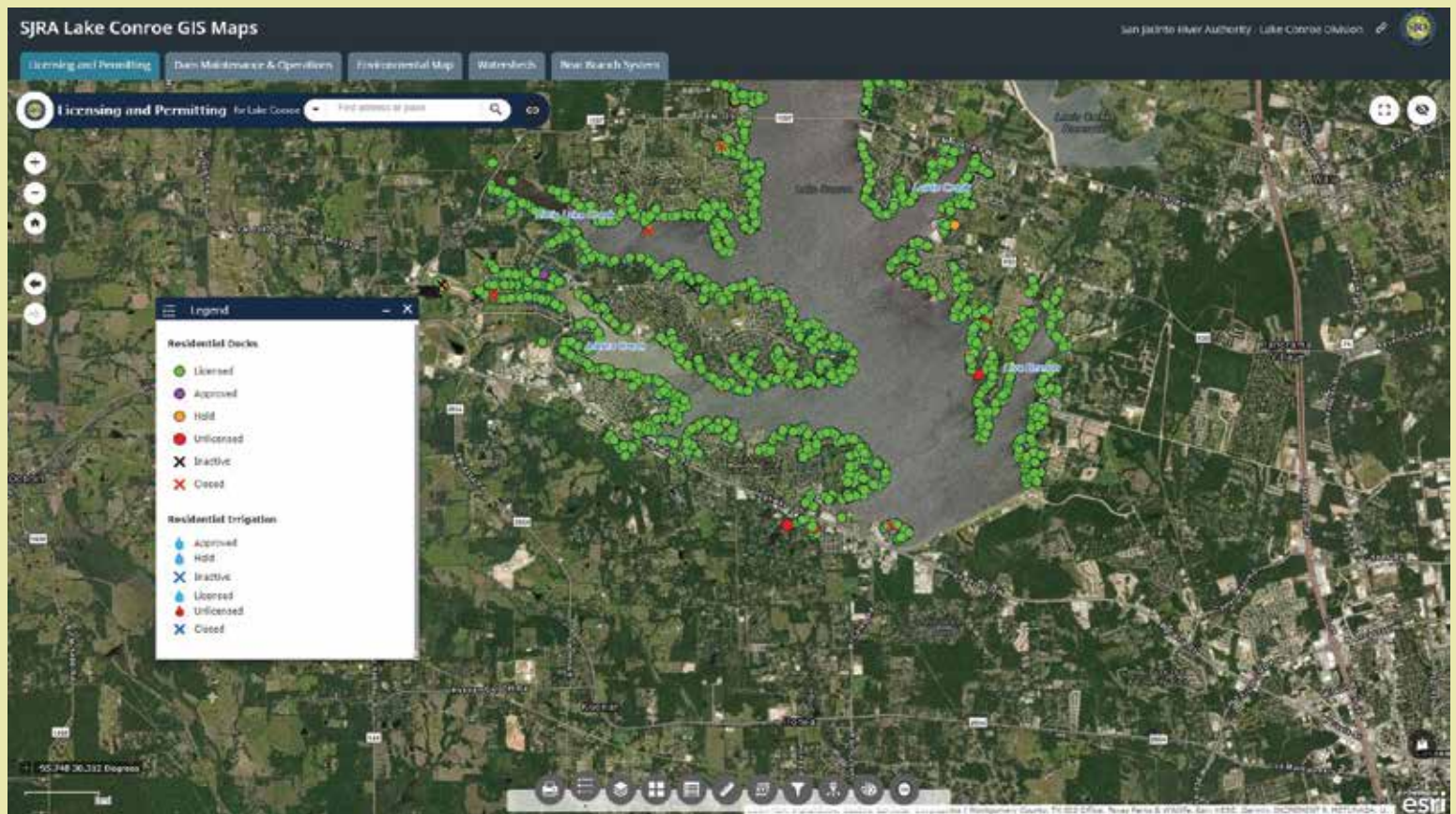
County. For additional information on SJRA visit our website at www.sjra.net, like SJRA on Facebook @SanJacintoRiverAuthority, follow us on Twitter @SJRA_1937, or find us on Instagram @SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA. ♦



The graphic features a blue water droplet logo at the top center with the text "KNOW YOUR WATERSHED" below it. A paragraph of text explains the campaign's purpose: "It is no surprise that the Greater Houston region ranks in the top ten on the National Weather Service's list of U.S. cities that have the most erratic weather conditions. Simply put, Texas weather is unpredictable. In the midst of such uncertainty and instability it is essential to Know Your Watershed. If you are able to identify that piece of information, you will be equipped with knowledge that could prepare you for the next severe weather event. The Know Your Watershed Campaign is designed to help you identify the watershed, recognize where the flow is coming from, and provide you with important water related facts. Tap into the flow of information by clicking on the Address Viewer link below and searching for your location or take a virtual tour with SJ and her friends by clicking on the Story Map."

Below the text are two interactive buttons:

- Address Viewer:** "Click here to enter an address". It features a map icon and a location pin. Below the button, it says: "Address Viewer is an address look up tool that provides the watershed the location is in, a static map that illustrates where flow is coming from, and general information."
- Story Map:** "Click here to take a ride down the San Jacinto River". It features a cartoon character and a map icon. Below the button, it says: "The Know Your Watershed Story Map is a virtual tour down the San Jacinto River to Lake Houston."





All Eyes on Thyroid Eye Disease

Nearly 20 million people are affected by Thyroid Disease in the US. Women are 5 times more likely to develop this condition than men. Thyroid Eye Disease can occur on its own or in conjunction with Hyperthyroidism or Grave's Disease. Not all people with a thyroid disorder will develop Thyroid Eye Disease. Having a known thyroid condition or family history increases your risk of developing Thyroid Eye Disease. This is a rare and vision threatening autoimmune condition that causes the muscles and the fatty tissues behind the eye to become inflamed and enlarged, leading to bulging of the eyes and facial disfigurement. In addition to the bulging eyes, or proptosis, patients can experience double vision and light sensitivity. These changes can ultimately lead to blindness.

Persons who are currently diagnosed with

Thyroid Eye Disease or persons who are concerned they may have this condition should monitor for certain ocular changes. Changes typically occur during the active or inflammatory stage of the disease. This stage can last between 6 months and 2 years. Look for:

Eyelid retraction. Where one or both of the upper eyelids sits in a higher position than it had in the past. Your eyes may look bigger in current pictures of yourself versus those of a few years past. It may also be more difficult to fully close your eyes.

Swollen puffy eyelids. This symptom can easily be confused with allergies. Remember allergies will have accompanying sinus involvement and itching. Allergies are also seasonal.

Bulging eyes. This symptom may occur in one or both eyes. Changes will be noted over

time. Referencing past photos maybe helpful.

Dry, gritty eyes.

Chronic redness.

Excessively watery eyes.

Pain or pressure behind or around your eyes.

Light sensitivity.

Blurred and double vision.

Autoantibodies working behind the eye cause long-term damage to orbital structures. After the inflammatory or active stage is over you enter the stable or non-active stage. In the past, any changes to ocular structures that occurred during the active stage were nearly permanent. A few surgical options exist to correct for bulging of the eyes and double vision. These surgical options are not without their own risks.

A new option now exists. A new drug, Teprotumumab, has recently been approved by the FDA to treat Thyroid Eye Disease. A recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine has shown the drug to not only halt the active inflammatory stage but also to reverse its damaging effects. In the double blind study 86% of the patients treated experienced improvement in symptoms, appearance and quality of life. Improvements were seen in as few as 2 treatments. Treatments are available now. Those affected by Thyroid Eye Disease should discuss options with their Endocrinologist.

Dr. Cameron is owner and operator of Cameron Optical in Montgomery, Texas. See our ad in this issue for further details. Get routine eye exams to ensure you maintain healthy vision. ♦

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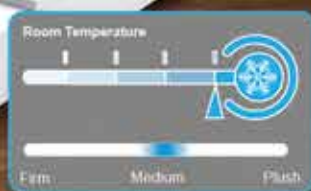
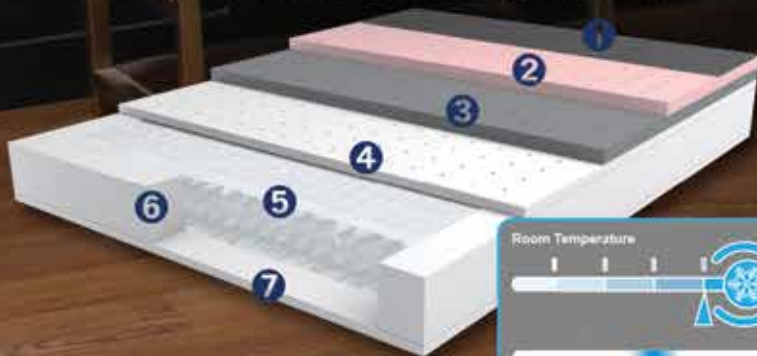
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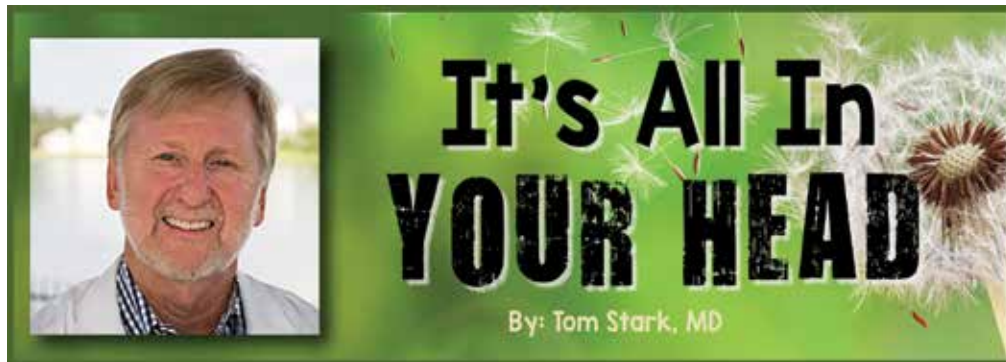
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Beethoven

With all the serious and depressing news about Coronavirus, this month for something different I would like to talk about how severe hearing loss affected possibly the greatest classical composer of all time.

Ludwig von Beethoven was born in 1770 in Germany making this year the 250th anniversary of his birth. He became a giant in the classical music world during his lifetime. However, he was tormented for most of his productive life with profound hearing loss and excruciating abdominal pain. The earliest indication of his hearing loss was first reported when he was 26 years old and progressed to complete deafness by 1816 at the age of 46.



The "medical" treatments for both his hearing loss and abdominal pains included ice cold baths which of course were not effective and of course tormented the poor man! He endured bloodletting, and the use of leeches for the deafness. To compensate for the loss, Beethoven's piano in his studio was triple strung to amplify the loudness. He wore special wardrobes that were designed to enhance sound enough for him to hear and to compose.

It was reported that when the 9th Symphony premiered, that there was a colleague in the orchestra pit keeping the tempo so that Beethoven could visually follow and present it to the orchestra and chorus. At the completion of the performance he was unaware of the thunderous applause until someone turned him around to face the audience. A study of his notes reveals that his hearing loss complaints are strikingly similar to what our patients describe as the symptoms of their hearing loss, including tinnitus, and inability to understand speech in both quiet and in a background of noise.

There have been many theories about the cause of Beethoven's hearing loss. His ears were studied after his death and it was reported that there were only wisps of the hearing nerve visible arising from his inner ear. Some have speculated that Beethoven suffered from a disease process that primarily affects the bones of the middle ear, or some type of autoimmune disease that had destroyed his hearing. Miraculously, a clump of his hair, cut at the time of his death, was found by a collector of Beethoven manuscripts. An analysis of his hair determined that Beethoven had been exposed to unbelievably high toxic levels of lead, leading to a disease known as plumbism. He was presumably poisoned by high levels of lead in the wine that he drank and from his earthenware that he ate from. The high lead levels could account for his deafness and horrific abdominal complaints.

The investigations into the cause of his hearing loss emphasize that even today there is value in a medical assessment of hearing loss whether it is ringing in the ears (tinnitus) or hearing loss. We often uncover treatable causes of hearing loss, or provide amplification solutions to improve the ability to communicate in our hearing world.

So, take the time to go and listen to the works of this giant of classical music as we celebrate his 250th birthday and do not forget to have your own hearing checked and be medically examined for possible treatable causes of your hearing loss. We promise NO ICE WATER BATHS! ♦

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MISD Fishing Team

Four Down One to Go

BY: MARK HOOKER

The MISD Fishing Team entered the Fourth segment of the Texas High School Bass Association Houston Division Competition, with a mere One-point lead over their closest competitors for the Conference lead. The team responded well to the pressure packed situation, and came away with a resounding victory at Toledo Bend on February 15th. The win added Two more points to the Team's lead in the Houston Division, going into the final Conference Tournament of the 2019-20 Season.

While winning the Tournament over 22 other Houston Area High Schools, the Team also did something they have never done in Six years of Competition, by having 5 teams in the Top 10 for a tournament. Leading the



way for the Team was the Tandem of Jake and Zach Hird. The Hird Brothers brought in 5 fish for a limit weighing 14.15 pounds to capture 2nd Place overall for Individual Teams out 132 competing from 23 Houston Area High Schools. They were followed by James Hooten and Steele Bokemeyer, with 5 of their

own that weighed 13.22 pounds, landing them in 6th place. Will Collora and Brayden Miller also had a 5 fish limit that tipped the scales at 12.29 pounds, earning this pair a 7th place finish.

Helping with the record setting day of having 5 teams in the Top 10, Dallas Copeland



and Evan Franks brought 5 fish to the scales for a total weight of 12.14 pounds, securing an 8th place finish. Jack Haag and Conner Callihan completed this awesome day, with a 9th place finish with 11.99 pounds.

After tabulating the top 3 teams for MISD, which is how the overall Team champion is decided, MISD won handily with over 39 pounds. Adding to the excitement was Taylor Peel, who brought in the Big Bass of the Tournament, with a 7.27-pound fish. By finishing in First Place, the Squad has a little breathing room going into the last Conference Event on Lake Livingston on March the 7th.

Immediately following the last Conference event, the Individual Teams that have acquired enough points to Qualify for Regionals, will represent MISD at the Regional Tournament. This year, the Regional Championship will be held on Lake Conroe on April the 11th. It will be here that the MISD Fishing Team will look to win their Third Regional Championship in Six Years. It is also where Individual Teams will vie for a coveted State Championship Berth, where the Team will look to win their second State Championship. ♦

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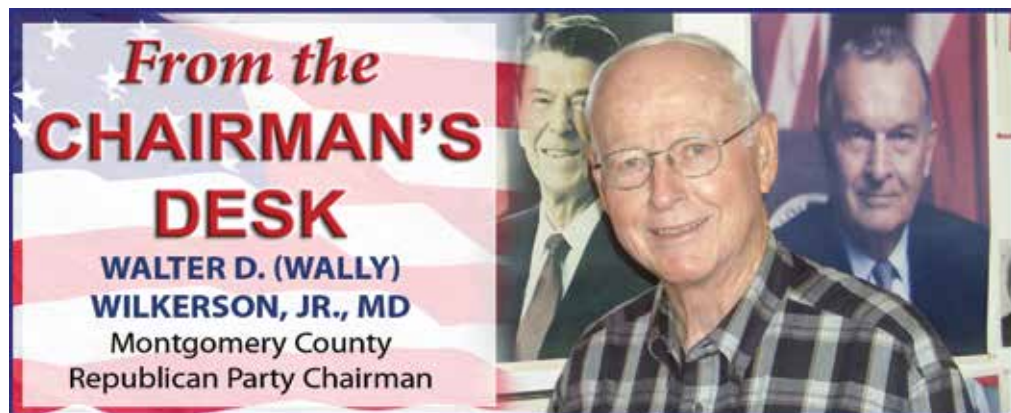
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Lincoln and the Bible

"In wartime, a president who once seemed indifferent to religion evolved into a theologian of liberty". So wrote Meir Soloveichik, director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, in a Wall Street Journal article entitled "What the Bible Taught Lincoln About America". Soloveichik noted: "When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, he was certainly not thought of as a man given to religious fervor." But with the death toll mounting over the years of the Civil War, Lincoln evolved into a "theologian of the American idea".

For instance, Lincoln began the Gettysburg Address with the words "fourscore and seven years ago". Lincoln knew his audience was deep-

ly familiar with the King James Bible and would recognize the language of Psalms- "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years". In 1861, Lincoln received a gift from a Bavarian immigrant that had an enormous effect on him. The gift was a framed painting of an American flag on whose stripes were inscribed Hebrew verses from the book of Joshua. Soon thereafter, Lincoln departed Springfield for Washington, D.C. for his inauguration. Before the train pulled out of the station, Lincoln declared: "I now leave not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon (George) Washington. Without the assistance of

the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail".

Along the way in Trenton, NJ, he spoke of reading about (George) Washington and his battle for that city. He concluded that Washington intended "to serve as a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people." Soloveichik wrote: "By referring to Americans as 'almost chosen people', Lincoln drew a comparison between his country and biblical Israel..." Lincoln traveled on to Philadelphia where he visited Independence Hall, home of the Declaration of Independence, and delivered a biblical reference- "All my political warfare has been in favor of the teachings coming forth from that sacred hall... May my right hand forget its cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I ever prove false to those teachings." This was a reference to Psalm 137 and the doctrine "all men are created equal".

Lincoln's "biblical reflections" reached "full flowering" in March 1865 with his Second Inaugural Address which many critics describe as the most "remarkable piece of oratory in American history". It concluded with the Psalmist's declaration that "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether". Just a week later, Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes when Christians were observing Good Friday. Jews attended Passover the following day. "Mary Lincoln would later report, that just before he died, the president had reflected that 'there was no city on earth he so much desired to see as Jerusalem'. Soloveichik concluded: "But Lincoln's description of America as an 'almost chosen people' remains important, not just as a key to his thought but as a warning for Americans today. A chosen people is eternal, but America is an exceptional nation only if it remains ever loyal to the covenant of its founding, the ideals for which Washington and Lincoln died." ♦

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What is the Veterans Service Office?

I thought it might be necessary to inform our veteran community on what exactly the Montgomery County Veterans Service Office is and what some of the services are that we assist with.

We are a county funded office for Montgomery County Veterans and their dependents and survivors. Our office was developed just after WWII with the mission to assist our veterans and their survivors with the VA claims process and to answer eligibility questions.

Services Provided:

- We counsel our veterans and/or their dependents and survivors as to VA & State benefits they may be entitled to receive.
- We complete all the necessary forms to obtain the maximum benefits allowable.
- We assist with obtaining any documentation needed. (DD-214, Military discharges, marriage licenses, etc.).
- We help the claimant correspond to any letters sent by VA.

Benefits we assist with:

- Service Connected Disabilities • Non-Service Connected Pension • Survivors Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Survivors Pension • Appeals • Educational Benefits • Medical Eligibility • Life Insurance Programs • Burial Benefits
- VetCenter Support • State of Texas Benefits • And many more.....

Credentials:

Collectively the staff of Montgomery County Veterans Service has over 64 years of experience in VA & State benefits with more than 1500+ hours of training.

We hold accreditation through multiple organizations, Texas Veterans Commission, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Our Mission Statement

"The mission of Montgomery County Veterans Service is to provide the most beneficial service to the veterans and their dependents of this county in a compassionate manner with the desire to obtain the most advantageous benefits available to them, through continual education of VA regulations and application procedures affecting the veteran population."

For more information on how we can assist you, please contact us at Montgomery County Veterans Service 936-539-7842 or via email at vetsvc@mctx.org and follow us on FaceBook @ Montgomery County Veterans Service. ♦



By: Kay L. Lee, Veterans Service Officer

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INVESTMENT RISK

How Are You Managing It?



Few terms are used in the investment world as much as “risk”. I think if you’ve followed the markets for the last few years this would go without saying given the extreme and in some cases historical market fluctuations. Most advisors and financial media talk about investment risk in terms of price volatility of a given security. However, there are many different types of risk in the financial world. For instance, inflation risk, interest rate risk, reinvestment rate risk, default risk, liquidity risk, well, I think you get the picture.

On a practical level, we can say that risk is the chance that your investment will provide lower returns than expected or even a loss of your entire investment. This also creates concern about the chance of not meeting your investment and income goals. It should be understood if you’ve been investing long that investment in the stock and bond markets carries some degree of these risks. There’s no guarantees, just degrees of risk and reward depending on where you decide to put your money. In general, the more risk you’re willing to take on (whatever type and however defined), the higher your potential returns, as well as potential losses.

How Do You Define Risk

It is true that when we speak of risk from an investment perspective it can involve many different underlying types of risk as we’ve just mentioned. However, most folks we meet with think of risk in a simpler way. When you boil it all down, they only care about the value swing of their account balance and the risk of loss! So ask yourself, how do you define risk? I’m willing to bet you’re in the camp I just described and rightfully so. More importantly, ask yourself, what strategy am I employing right now to manage my risk of loss? This is the question that few ask and even fewer truly understand.

Understanding Your Risk Tolerance

The concept of risk tolerance is twofold. First, is that of your desire to assume risk and your comfort level with doing so. That is to say, knowing your own feelings about taking chances. Second, concerns the fact of what you NEED to make a financial plan work for your situation. That is, your financial ability to cope with the possibility of loss depending on your age and overall financial needs and goals. We believe the best approach for identifying both is to approach it mathematically, not emotionally.

Dynamic vs Static Risk Management

Once your tolerance is evaluated, you have a choice as to how to manage your investment risk. Depending on your investment firm and advisor and their approach, you can manage risk either dynamically or statically. Most don’t even realize this fact because they’ve only known or heard one way of doing this and that is statically. I’ll attempt to summarize these next without getting off into the weeds too far. It’s important for me to emphasize here that no one approach is 100% successful all the time. What you need to determine is which methodology works best for your financial needs and risk tolerance given the implications of each approach.

Static Risk Management

Most folks are familiar with this approach but possibly by different terminology. You may have heard it described as a buy and hold investment strategy. The concept is that you buy a static percentage of stocks, bonds or other investments (like a 60/40 portfolio – sometimes called the “balanced portfolio”) that are diversified across various asset classes (or even sub-classes and sectors) and you hold them long-term come what may, it doesn’t typically change. In times of heavy market losses, time is always the friend

of the static approach. I know you’ve heard it. “Just hold on, the market will always come back”. Will it? History would say yes, but whatever happened to “past performance is not a guarantee of future results?” The bigger question in this methodology is that it speaks very little to the timing of major market corrections and your retirement date and need for distributions (sequence of returns risk).

Dynamic Risk Management

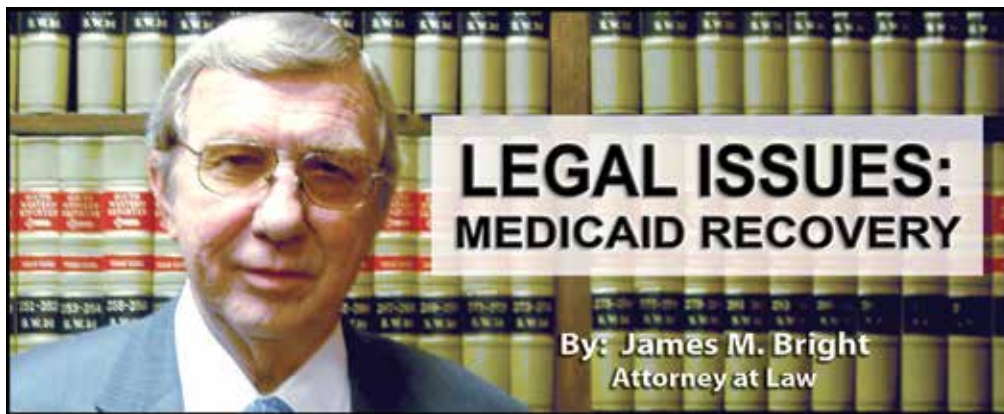
Generally speaking, dynamic risk management (which we employ here at our firm) works from the premise that not every stock or bond, class or sector is appropriate to hold all the time. Additionally, increasing or decreasing risk exposure to the market altogether may need to be adjusted at times. That is to say, there may be times where it’s better to be in cash rather than riding out a precipitous drop in the market. This is anathema to a static risk approach. Obviously, we are not talking about market timing, that’s a fool’s errand. However, if one is willing to apply quantitative, fact-based assessments in short, intermediate and long-term time frames, one can spot trends and opportunities. Market conditions can be sought that allow for more or less risk depending on what’s happening NOW versus what one “thinks” may happen over time into the future.

There is a lot of fear and uncertainty in the markets today. John Templeton’s maxim that “bull markets are born on pessimism, grown on skepticism, mature on optimism and die on euphoria” is, I believe, on full display. Seeking to avoid disaster in your investments is no accident, know your risks. Let us know how we can help you find Clear Direction for Your Retirement®.



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

This firm is often faced with questions during probate proceedings regarding how the Medicaid Estate Recovery Program affects the disposition of property belonging to an estate. Although this program affects only a small number of probate clients, it can be troublesome. If benefits have been paid to the decedent, and the probate estate is the owner of the family home and the children have an expectation of inheritance from the sale of the home, there is a great possibility of conflict.

When qualifying for Medicaid, the person applying must show financial necessity for care. When computing this financial need, the State of Texas ignores the value of the homestead property. The assumption is that the Medic-

aid applicant may return to their home after the need for Medicaid services is no longer required. This is the case, no matter how long the recipient receives services in the nursing home, care facility or by other means.

The Medicaid Estate Recovery Program, normally referred to as "MERP" is a federal program which Texas and all other states are mandated to implement. It is a program for recovery of expenditures made by the State of Texas for long-term care health/nursing home benefits which have previously been paid by the state. The funds so collected will be put back in the system to pay for future Medicaid benefits for other persons seeking long-term care services.

One of the first questions that must be answered before we can determine how MERP affects distribution of probate assets includes:

Was the recipient of Medicaid services 55

years of age or older when the long-term nursing care or other services were performed, or did the recipient apply for long-term care services on or after March 1, 2005?

If the Medicaid recipient applied for services prior to March 1, 2005, and subsequently received benefits, they are "grandfathered" into the system, and the estate will never be liable for reimbursement of benefits received.

If, on the other hand, the Medicaid recipient applied for or received services on or after March 1, 2005, his/her estate may be liable for services provided.

Common Medicaid questions that come up when probating a Will include:

• **What is included in an estate that can be reached by MERP?**

The answer to that question will include all real and personal property that is subject to probate. The most effective way of answering this question is to define which assets, if any, do not pass through the probate estate. A non-exclusive list of these assets can be insurance proceeds, retirement accounts, pension plans, deposit accounts that carry a payable on death (POD) designation or right of survivorship plan designation.

• **What are the exceptions, if any, from MERP claims?**

According to Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), if any of the following conditions exist, the MERP claim will not be filed:

- There is a surviving spouse;
- There is a surviving child or children under 21 years of age;
- There is a surviving child or children of any age who is blind or has a permanent or total disability under Social Security requirements;
- There is an unmarried adult child residing continuously in the Medicaid recipient's homestead for at least one year before the time of the Medicaid recipient's death.

Further, according to published information from DADS, they will only file a claim if it is cost effective.

Claims that have been considered to be not cost effective include those instances wherein:

- The value of the recoverable estate is \$10,000 or less; (*See the above non-exclusive list of assets that have historically been safe from recovery.*)
- The recoverable amount of Medicaid costs is \$3,000 or less; or
- The cost of the sale of the property would be equal to or greater than the value of the property.

Another common question is how far does the Internal Revenue Service "look back" for transfer of property?

The period of time for an IRS "look back" is normally sixty (60) months. If the Medicaid recipient's plan is to avoid MERP claim requirements, it should be done well in advance of need.

It is also worthy of note that when the State of Texas holds a lien on real property of a decedent that is responsible for Medicaid debt, it does so only to the extent of the debt. This may result in the State being reimbursed and the heirs still receiving their inheritance.

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Example: If the Medicaid debt is \$30,000 and the old homestead is worth \$120,000, the State will be reimbursed and the heirs will still inherit \$90,000.00.

The information made available in this article is also available through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Publications from those offices are directly or indirectly the source of most of the information contained in this article.

As always, if you have questions relating to any area of probate law, you should seek advice from an attorney of your choice that has demonstrated expertise in probate matters.

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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Stuck at Home and Thinking of Starting an Online Business?

What to Know Before You Start an Internet-Based Business

As the whole world comes to a standstill in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, I predict that we will see an influx of online businesses started in the next few months. People are spending more time at home with time off of work and have been instructed to not leave as much as possible. It's the perfect mix of ingredients for pursuing personal creative expression. The "right time" that most people wait for to follow their passions has fallen in their laps.

So, with this new time on your hands, you can finally start that thing that you've been putting off for years. If you've ever wanted to start your own business, you can do it right now from the comfort of your own home with just a laptop and an internet connection.

Before you dive head first into the world of online business, there are a few things you need to know. Thousands of people venture into the online space every year to start a virtual business, but the sad truth is most of those businesses fail quickly, if they really ever get started at all. You really can succeed online, but you need to take the proper steps to get there. Most of all, you need to understand why most online businesses fail and how you can follow the steps of those who are crushing it.

Let's dive in! Here are the keys to success you must follow before you start your online business.

1. Demand

Do people actually want what you have to offer? Some people jump into starting an online business and may have everything in place



to make it work, but nobody buys. Sadly, this happens quite often. Before you decide to start an online business, you need to first determine if the idea is solid - if you are meeting a real need for someone.

A great resource for testing your business idea before you go all in is Pat Flynn's book, *Will It Fly*. Pat is one of the most successful online entrepreneurs in the world and his book walks you through the necessary steps to make sure your idea will actually be successful. You could also just ask. Put out a poll on your personal social media pages and get some real

feedback. Ask friends and family for honest opinions. Search online to see if there are other businesses already doing it well. Most of all remember, if someone else is already succeeding at your idea, it doesn't mean you shouldn't pursue it. It just means it already works!

2. User Experience

So, you have a solid idea. Now you need to make sure that people can get it easily. This means you need to have a solid platform online. A good online "platform" is centered around a user-friendly website that is attractively de-

signed, easy to navigate and helpful to the visitor. When someone comes to your website to buy your product or service, they need to know what to do and where to go. As simple as this sounds, most business websites don't work well at all. They confuse people with unclear messaging and they are difficult to navigate.

Make your website easy to use, and free of clutter. Don't talk about yourself unless it will directly help the customer. Instead, talk about your customer and how you help them. Give them as few steps as possible to buy your product.

3. Consistency

The most successful online businesses provide value consistently, day after day, week after week, and month after month. Most people start an online business with lots of momentum in the beginning, but fizzle out quickly and their website becomes a ghost town. However you decide to provide value, whether it's through blogging, email, video, or social media interaction, you need to create a schedule and stick to it for a while. How long is a while? About 2 years.

4. Authenticity

The internet is chock full of personalities, influencers, and experts. Many of them are genuine and their main goal is truly to help others. However, there are far too many people online who put up a front. They show you what they want you to see. They create personas, fabricate an identity of massive success, and smooth talk their way into your wallet. If you are going to start an online business and start inviting people to get to know you, just be real. Be yourself. Be genuine. As you grow in popularity any false persona you create will become harder and harder to hide behind. Be real from the beginning.

5. Generosity

Starting an online business requires a lot of work up front, but if done correctly, it can run on autopilot to a degree. However, instead of letting it run in the background as just a tool to make money, be willing to invest your time into it. What I mean by this is to show up online where your customers are, like your social media pages and on your email list, and be available to them. The best way you can be generous, especially in the beginning, is with your time. Talk to your audience. Show them you care. Give away your advice and knowledge.

One of the best methods for building an audience online is to offer something for free in exchange for someone's information, like an email address. Give away something genuinely valuable and people will listen to you, buy from you, and tell their friends about you.

6. Marketing

One of the most common ways online businesses fail is a lack of marketing. Believe it or not, just building a great website and offering your amazing product or service doesn't mean people will actually visit your site or buy your offering. They need to know you exist and that you have something they need to make their lives better. That means you need to show

where they hang out and get their attention... without spamming them. How do you do that? By providing real value. This is why we always recommend a business to have a blog. It's a time-tested method of providing real value to your audience and letting them know you're the expert. The great thing about a blog is that, if written and published correctly, it does a ton of marketing for you with SEO. Search engine optimization helps Google find your content and recommend you to searchers. People searching for what you offer will visit your site if Google recommends you. That's why the best marketing is always through the channel of providing great value to people. You can do the same thing with video on YouTube. YouTube

is actually the second largest search engine in the world, behind Google.

Of course, you can also run ads on social media sites or use pay-per-click advertising, but my recommendation is to utilize the organic, value-based methods most often.

Are you thinking of starting an online business? Do you already have an idea, but need to build an online presence around it? Let us know. At Dock Line, we have tons of resources for starting an online business, whether you want to build it all yourself or have a web design agency help you. If you'd like more information or to get access to our "Starting an Online Business" resources, send me an email at brian@thedockline.com. I hope to hear from you soon! ♦



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Tangy Honey Glazed Ham

1 (10 pound) fully cooked, bone-in ham
1-¼ cups packed dark brown sugar
½ cup pineapple juice
½ cup honey
¼ large orange, juiced and zested
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon ground cloves

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Place ham in a roasting pan.

In a small saucepan, combine brown sugar, pineapple juice, honey, orange juice, orange zest, Dijon mustard, and ground cloves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes. Set aside.

Bake ham in preheated oven uncovered for 2 hours. Remove ham from oven, and brush with glaze. Bake for an additional 30 to 45 minutes, brushing ham with glaze every 10 minutes.

Carrot Cake

4 eggs
2 cups white sugar
3 (4 ounce) jars carrot baby food
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-½ cups vegetable oil
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
1 (8 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup raisins
1 can cream cheese frosting

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9x13 inch pan.

In a medium bowl, stir together the eggs, sugar, carrots, vanilla and oil. Combine the flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt, stir into the carrot mixture. Fold in the pineapple, nuts and raisins. Pour into the prepared pan.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes in the preheated oven, until cake springs back when lightly touched. When cool, frost with cream cheese frosting. ♦

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Garden Thyme

By: Growers Outlet

Growing Your Own Food

There is nothing tastier than homegrown fruits, veggies and herbs. Most people think that they are unable to grow their own food but it is easier than you think. In times like these, growing your own food can be very beneficial. At the time I submitted this article we are still open but anticipate having to close soon because of the virus.

Plant By The Moon

Planting by the moon is an idea as old as agriculture, based both in folklore and superstition, but there are scientific ideas to back it up. The Earth is in a large gravitational field, influenced by both the sun and moon. The tides are highest at the time of the new and the full moon, when sun and moon are lined up with earth. Just as the moon pulls the tides in the oceans, it also pulls upon the subtle bodies of water, causing moisture to rise in the earth, which encourages growth. The highest amount of moisture is in the soil at this time, and tests have proven that seeds will absorb the most water at the time of the full moon. If you are interested in this here is a link I found: <https://www.gardeningbythemoon.com/>

Don't Plant Too Late

Tomatoes are the biggest seller of all the vegetable plants we sell. The days to maturity on average are 75 to 90 days, so tomatoes



planted the first week of March will reach maturity from the middle of May to the first of June. Tomatoes planted later will be maturing when the high temperatures start reaching the mid to upper 90's. These very high temps can start playing havoc with your tomatoes. Because of the virus, it has been very challenging to get a garden planted. So plant when you can and hope for the best.

Herbs For The Chef In You

If your favorite seasoning is something other than salt and pepper you probably use fresh herbs when cooking your meals. With the high cost of "fresh" herbs in the grocery stores this should be enough motivation to start growing your own. There is nothing easier



to grow than most herbs. Several of our herbs grow well from year to year without much care while a few like basil and cilantro are seasonal. One easy growing perennial favorite that comes to mind is rosemary. Rosemary is also a great plant for dry areas and is a great deer repellent plant.

Site Selection

Most herbs are sun lovers requiring at least 6 hours of full sun per day. As with other food crops it is best to grow your herbs in a well-draining organically enriched soil. Many people will actually interplant their herbs with their flowers. For people with deer problems this can be beneficial because deer don't like pungent smelling plants, like rosemary. If garden space is not suitable, pots are another great alternative. Most herbs will grow very well in pots on your porch, patio or balcony as long as the right amount of sun is available.

Plant By Seed or Transplants

Herbs can be purchased either by seed or in 4" or larger pots. Because of their ease of growing there is not much advantage to buying bigger starts unless you want to get a jump start.



Herbs For Nature Lovers

Many of the herbs are food or nectar plants for many species of butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. The herbs that are food for caterpillars can be decimated sometimes, like the way the swallowtail butterfly larvae do to the

bronze fennel. Don't worry if they chew them down, nature has a way of catching up after the caterpillars are finished feeding.

Best Selection Of Herbs In The Spring

The Growers Outlet carries more varieties of herb transplants and seeds than anyone in the area, from March until about June, so don't wait too long to get what you need.

A Garden To-Do List for the month of April for our area will include the following:

*This is our standard To-Do-List for April but considering the circumstances, I am sure you will have to make some adjustments.

*After your azaleas and camellias are finished blooming, fertilize them with the organic Microlife Azalea Food or Nitro Phos Azalea Camellia Food.



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

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

*Get all of your seasonal color planted soon so they can get a good root system before it gets too hot.

*Any of your roses that are prone to black spot should be treated on a bi-weekly 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 good quality mulch like Landscapers Pride Black Velvet mulch or pine bark mulch.

*You should be finishing up planting your veggies and herbs before the end of April.

*For weeds that are growing use Bonide Weed Beater for Southern Lawns in April.

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

*If you have dead spots in your lawn and you don't want to plant new sod, top dress those areas with our Leaf Mold Compost. It worked miracles for fixing bad areas of grass.

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.grower-soutletinwillis.com. We have the products and knowledge to help you have the prettiest yard on the block.

HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL PASS AND WE WILL ALL BE BETTER BECAUSE OF IT. HUG YOUR LOVED ONES AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS. THANKS FOR SUPPORTING US. WE WILL SEE YOU AT THE END OF THIS. ♦

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MISD Fishing Team A Return to Winning Ways

BY: MARK HOOKER

Finishing Second in Conference for the First Time in the Fishing Team's History last year, did not sit well with many on the Team. From 2014-2018, the MHS Angler's Club had known nothing but First Place in their Conference.

Their First Conference Title coming in the Houston High School Fishing Conference in 2014-15, beating 14 Houston Area High Schools. Then, winning 3 Consecutive Texas High School Bass Association Conference Titles from 2015-2018 was next, capturing these Championships over as many as 46 Local High Schools. There were also 2 Regional Titles, as well as being crowned the THSBA State Team

Champions in 2017 along the way.

Enter the 2018-19 season, which was the catalyst for making the 2019-20 squad hungry to return to Montgomery's familiar spot. Last year's team was the first to be combined, with students from both Montgomery High, as well as Lake Creek High Schools, hence the name change to MISD Fishing Team. The numbers of Team Members had swelled to 94 students, and anticipation was high to continue the Winning Ways established in the prior years.

However, the newly united Team had an old nemesis in Huffman Hargrave. The Falcons had been nipping at the heels of the MHS Anglers Club's for several years. In the 2018-19

Conference season, Hargrave was finally able to catch Montgomery, earning them the Conference Championship, and putting Montgomery in the unfamiliar spot of 2nd.

The 2018-19 squad responded well to this setback, by outdistancing Hargrave at the Regional Championship that year, and qualifying a record number of teams to the State Championship, in which they placed a very respectable 4th. The 2018-19 Team also had a strong base in which to build upon for the 2019-20 season, with the return of the Teams' Anglers of the Year from last year Dallin Turner & Carson Rennell, plus the addition of some strong Incoming Freshmen in Fallon Clepper & Wyatt Ford.

Speaking of record setting, that is exactly what transpired at Lake Livingston for the MISD Fishing Team. By winning the Lake Livingston Event, there was no doubt





that Montgomery was back. The win clinched a 5th Conference Title in 6 years of Competition for Montgomery, more than any other Team in THSBA History. It was also the way the team responded to the challenge that Lake Livingston can bring, that impressed this writer so much. There were 7 individual Teams from MISD that were in the Top 10 for the tournament. It was an unbelievable display of dominance, on a Lake that had given the teams of prior years' a little trouble. The Tournament Director Ryan Emmert said later that "I don't think that's ever been done before. Having that many Individual Teams from one school or Team, in the Top 10 of any tournament in the THSBA."

Leading the way in this historic win for MISD were Zach & Jake Hird in 3rd, Beau Massey & Wyatt Lanier 4th, Tyler Funderburg & Hayden Bither 5th, Logan Beverung & Jack Shafer 6th, Jack Haag & Conner Callihan 7th, Fallon Clepper & Wyatt Ford 8th, and Taylor Peel & Tanner Poole coming in 9th. To take 7 spots out of 132 total Individual Teams, from 23 Area High Schools, is simply unheard of.

Along these same lines, the MISD Fishing Team also set another precedence; in that the "Squad" had 5 Individual Teams qualify for the coveted Anglers of the Year Tournament. This is a tournament where only the Top 10 Individual Teams from all 9 conferences, will have the opportunity to compete at the end of the season after the State Championship. Those qualifying from MISD were as follows: Fallon Clepper & Wyatt Ford, Taylor Peel & Tanner Poole, Ethan Price & Brendan Oleyar, Carson Rennell & Dallen Turner, plus Clayton Holcomb & Kade Beall.

The MISD Fishing Team has now earned the right to send 26 Individual Teams to the Regional Championship, which will be held at

Lake Conroe on April the 11th. The Team invites everyone in the community to come out and support this awesome group of young men and women. They have represented the town of Montgomery, as well as the School District, in a very positive manner. The weigh in will



be held at the MISD Stadium, with weigh in activities usually running from 3 to 5 p.m. It will be here that Teams from all over the region will be competing for the right to go to the State Championship, which will be held at Lake Belton on May the 8th-10th. ♦

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The Joy of Fostering Homeless Pets

When I was alone... You were there!

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

Animal Shelter Volunteers of Texas is a foster based rescue organization. We depend on foster parents to help us improve the quality of lives for animals in our community. ASVT has been active in rescuing homeless and abandoned pets since 2010.

I personally became involved with fostering for ASVT about 5 years ago. I was asked if I would like to foster an injured Chihuahua named Soldier that was having his leg amputated. My first thought was how can I ever love a dog and then let him go. Everyone assured me I could do it, so I went with it. Well, I was right. When it came time for his first meet and greet I was in tears. Soldier was my first "foster fail". But, I did try again and it didn't become easier to let them go, but I realized I was saving a life and making sure my fosters were placed in a safe and loving home. After more than 250 fosters, many tears of joy, it has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life.

***When I was alone...You were there!
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This is Rue's story. A tiny senior Chihuahua that came to the shelter after her owner passed

She was overlooked from all my foster Chihuahuas for 18 months. She learned to love and lost her need to be nippy. Then one day a lovely lady in Vermont saw her picture. After several weeks of communicating with her I made the decision for her to be adopted and make the journey to Vermont. This foster mom didn't sleep for three nights during this journey. Rue arrived safely and is living the life she deserves with so much love!

I'm Alive...Sofie's Story

My name is Sofie Bear. I'm alive because I



had a foster home. I'm alive because they made a small sacrifice, a small adjustment to their routine and welcomed me into their home. I'm alive because they loved me!

Sofie living the wonderful life she deserves.

All fosters shown here are waiting to be adopted. Please consider adopting a rescue pet.

WHAT IS A PET FOSTER HOME?

Being a pet foster parent, you provide a temporary home for a pet on the way to adoption. The number of pets that ASVT can save depends on the number of fosters who open their homes and hearts to foster them.

WHY DO ANIMALS NEED FOSTER CARE?

Fostering saves two animals lives when shelters are full. The one you foster and the one

that can now take the empty kennel left by your foster. Many times homeless pets are found on the streets having been dumped by uncaring humans or simply lost and don't find their way back home. ASVT can take these pets into our rescue only if we have a foster home for them.

Whatever the reason, these pets need extra love and care before they can be adopted. Providing foster care can be a lifesaving gift for a homeless pet.

TRANSPORTS!

ASVT does transports to northern states that have a need for adoptable dogs. These pets need to be in a foster home for at least two weeks prior to the transport. Temporary fosters are needed for this time before the transport leaves. These puppies were rescued by ASVT and are on their way to Iowa. All are being temporarily fostered.

On The Fence About Fostering? I would rather cry watching a foster pet leave my home to live a full life of happiness and joy in a loving home...than cry because no one stepped up and the animal died alone and frightened



and sad in a shelter, FOSTERING SAVES LIVES, PLEASE TRY IT!

HOW IS IT DONE?

Fosters find their forever homes by ASVT networking on numerous pet finder websites, on our website, Facebook page and adoption events. This gives people looking to adopt a



away. She was scared and very nippy. When the call came in from the shelter ASVT said "Yes"! I picked her up and tried to ease her sadness.

Rue's Freedom Ride from the shelter.

rescue pet a wide venue to look for their dream pet.

If you would like to help the homeless pets of our community and become an ASVT foster, just visit our website and submit a foster application at www.ASVTexas.org

HOW TO SAY GOODBYE.

It's not easy to say goodbye. Giving up a pet you have fostered can be emotional. We all shed our tears of joy. Seeing your foster take their second freedom ride with their new family will help you remember that he or she has found a wonderful new home.

Foster parents are the unsung heroes of rescue. They offer compassion, love and temporary shelter for pets on their way to a loving permanent home.

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



You can visit our website to sign up to volunteer and/or foster and donate using our DONATE button. Donations help us 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.

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The Elegant & Fashionable Great White Egret

From the late 1800's to early 1900's Great White Egrets were so fashionable that they were hunted almost to extinction! Back then women's high fashion used all those long gorgeous white feathers for hats, capes, accessories and other clothing. But conservationists rallied and laws were passed to protect these lovely birds. Now they are common in all wetland habitats including streams, lakes, sea shores, ponds, marshes and even occasionally your roadside ditch! Any wetland area with fish, lizards, insects or frogs is a great place to look for these beauties.

Great White Egrets are hard to miss but easy to misidentify because their cousins, snowy egrets and cattle egrets, also have large populations in the area. Look for the great white's distinctive long black legs, big black claw feet, a yellow-orange beak, and of course all that beautiful white plumage! They stand over 3' tall with a 5-1/2' wingspan. During breeding season they have lime green coloring around their eyes, and spectacular mating plumage cascading down their backs.

These tall birds slowly wade in shallow waters to hunt, patiently waiting for their meals

to swim or hop by. Fish and frogs see the long dark legs as a safe, protected place to swim because the Egret's legs look like reeds and twigs. You can also see the big birds standing on a

The glorious breeding plumes were once highly sought for women's fashion.

Egrets and Great Blue Herons often nest together in rookeries. There is safety in numbers for all their eggs and chicks.



bulkhead or a shore bank, staring down into the water, watching intently for their next meal. A great white egret will carry a big fish to shore, stab it through repeatedly with its sharp beak, and eat it head first after the wiggling stops. Never forget that these birds are true carnivores.

In April and May you will spot our nesting great whites up creeks, high atop secluded pines away from human activity. They make good-sized stick nests that look as if they would rattle apart during a storm! Not surprisingly, the parents are constantly bringing in twigs, sticks and other nesting material to reinforce their rickety nests. And the egrets are not alone in their chick nurseries. There are often Great Blue Herons nesting alongside in the same rookery! There is safety in numbers for all their eggs and chicks because predators include black vultures, eagles, raccoons and



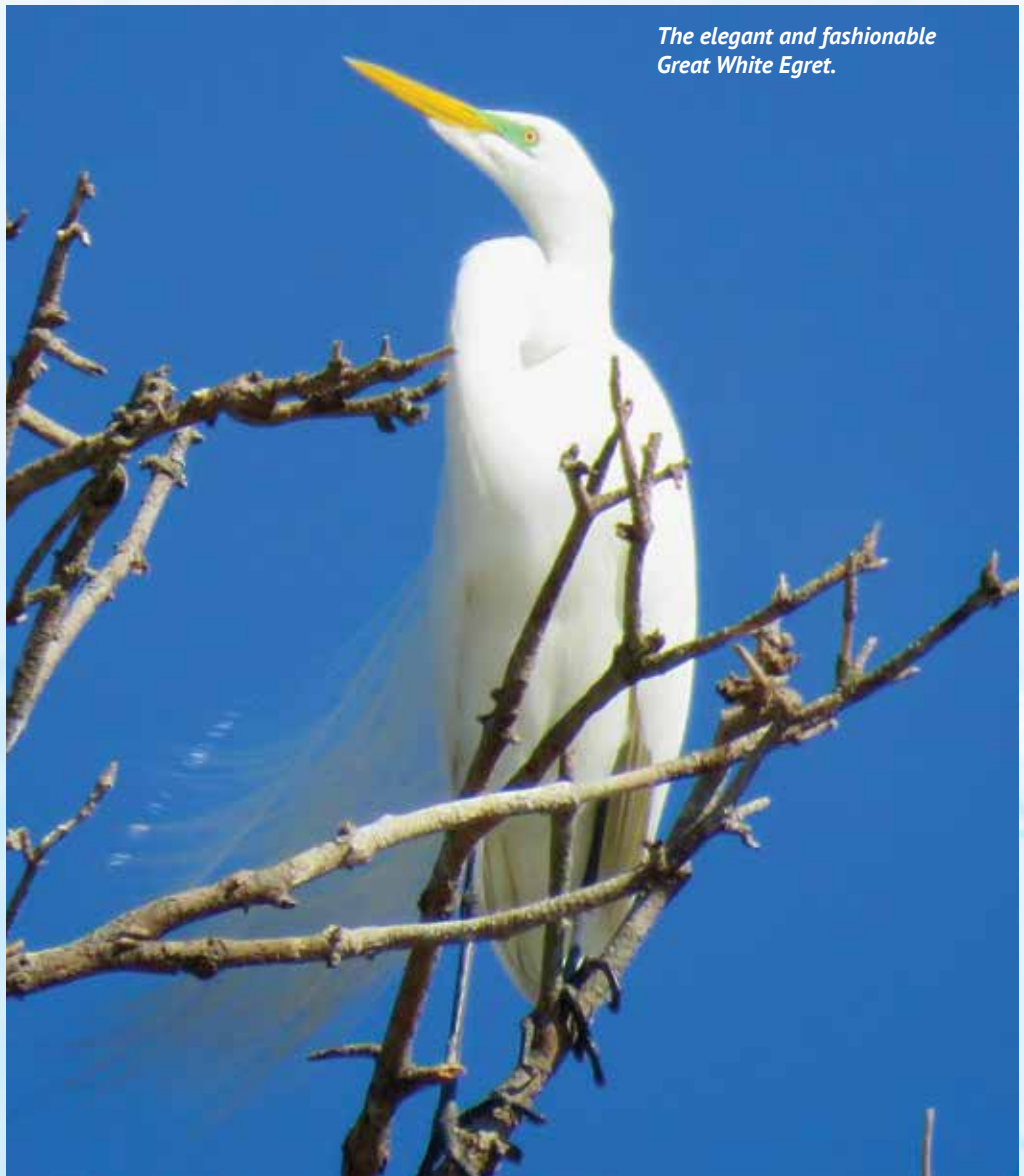
Great whites are defined by their long black legs, black claw feet and orange beaks.



These nests are near water in tall secluded pine trees. And they need constant repair with additional sticks and twigs.

snakes. After about 4 weeks of incubating eggs, and 3 more weeks of feeding the hatchlings, the chicks are ready to leave the nest and start out on their own adventures.

Learn more about the incredible nature in your area by joining a local chapter of the



The elegant and fashionable Great White Egret.

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 black vulture predator sits below the birds' nests, waiting quietly for a clumsy chick to fall, or an easy egg to snatch.

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CRITTERS IN YOUR ATTIC OR CHIMNEY?

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

At Friends of Texas Wildlife, we often get calls from homeowners who have nuisance wildlife issues. While many of us enjoy coexisting with our furry and feathered friends, we can generally agree that we really don't want to share our houses with them. We would like to offer some simple, humane, and inexpensive ways you can encourage wildlife to move along and that your home is not a good place for them to stay.

If you have animals in an unwanted place (usually an attic, chimney, or under a deck, shed, or trailer), here are some things to remember. Because we live in an area where weather is usually mild, and animals do not hibernate, typically wildlife animals generally only want "in" when they are looking for safe denning places to have their babies. With the spread of suburbia and more clearing of wild areas, there are less natural denning places left for wildlife, so they try to adapt and find the next best thing. The most common animals people have problems with are raccoons, bats, and squirrels (in attics or chimneys) or skunks and opossums (under decks, sheds, or trailers). A little prevention can limit having problems in the first place. Keep tree limbs trimmed away from roofs and eaves so access by wildlife is limited. Make sure your chimneys are capped with screening, which will prevent all wildlife from gaining access (some birds may also try to nest in chimneys). If you feed your pets outdoors, please remember to pick up all food and water bowls before dark; skunks, opossums, and raccoons are all nocturnal and love a free meal when they can get one. Feeding wildlife encourages them to congregate in areas too close to people and domestic pets, and it can also increase the number of animals in a particular area, which can lead to overpopulation and the spread of disease. If you feed birds and squirrels, try to keep the feeders away from housing structures to discourage climbing on your home. Keep your home and outbuildings in good repair, making sure to fix any holes or rotten wood in roofs, eaves, or siding. A small hole can easily be enlarged by animals seeking an entrance point.

Raccoons and squirrels are the most common animals to be a nuisance in chimneys or attics due to their great climbing abilities. The animals typically take up residence in very early



Because of their ability to climb and their tenacity, raccoons are one of the more common animals found in people's attics. They usually have their litters in mid-spring or occasionally early fall. Raccoons generally have two to six kits. Families often stay together through their first winter.

spring or early fall, just before they give birth. The reason they select a particular space is because they could gain access and they perceive that particular attic or chimney to be a safe place to keep their babies. It is the mission of the homeowner to convince them otherwise. If it is not possible to leave the animals alone until they naturally vacate in a few weeks, you should make them believe your home is no longer a safe, quiet spot to raise their babies. First you will need to locate where the animal(s) are getting in. Tape some newspaper over the access hole as this will allow you to monitor

the animal's coming and going. Here are three effective means to convince unwanted attic or chimney occupants that your home is NOT a safe place for them to den:

PREDATOR SMELL. Place a stinky dog blanket (the smellier the better) near or as close to the area of animal activity in your attic or chimney. Brush your dog and place the dog hair around access points (or get some dog hair from a friend or neighbor). Purchase fox or coyote urine at a sporting goods store or online,

Continued on page 66 ➞



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Baby skunks (left) are typically born late spring or early summer. Mother skunks prefer dens such as rotten logs or fallen trees, but in the absence of those they will look for den sites under decks, sheds, or other buildings. Baby squirrels (right) are born early spring or fall. Mother squirrels prefer to nest in trees or tree cavities, but occasionally they will get into house eaves or attics.

saturate some tennis balls with it, and toss them around in the attic (for chimneys, you can try some soaked cotton balls. In a pinch ammonia may also work as it mimics a strong urine smell.

MAKE A LOT OF NOISE. Periodically, over a 3-day period, go into the attic or near the chimney base and make a lot of noise. Blow whistles, honk air horns, and clang pots and pans. You can also attach a box or cans to a cord, toss it into the attic, and drag it across the rafters. Make the noise during the natural sleep period of the animal (raccoons sleep during the day; squirrels at night). Put a portable radio in the attic or at the base of the chimney and tune it to talk radio. Play it loud during the natural sleep cycle of the animals. The sounds of human voices will reinforce that your home is not a safe place for them to stay.

LIGHTS. Keep bright lights on in the attic 24 hours a day for the 3-day period. Flashing strobe lights can also be quite effective. For chimneys you can try a drop light.

All of these methods can be adapted to scare animals out from under decks, sheds, or trailers also. Utilizing all three of these methods usually assure you of a critter-free space in about 3 days. Remember, if a mother animal has already had her babies, she will need a little time to find another denning location and then relocate her babies. Mothers will move their babies (one by one) to a new location. Raccoons or skunks will typically move their babies during the night and squirrels during the day. Also remember that the mother animal almost always has multiple denning spots already scoped out; given the time and opportunity she will move her babies to another location if she senses danger. Opossums, as marsupials, have a "built-in nursery" as baby opossums grow up in their mother's pouch. Once mama opossum leaves, the babies leave with her. Skunks may need a little more time to leave, especially if the babies are not yet old enough to follow their mother. Give the animal ample opportunity to move out. Do not block entrances/exits and make sure to keep your dog(s) inside as much as possible. Keep checking the newspaper you have taped over access holes; once the paper remains undisturbed

for several days and you no longer notice noises coming from your attic, chimney, etc., you can safely seal up all access points. Take care to repair all access points. Block entryways with thick boards or wire and trim back tree branches to prevent any further access. This method of removal has been used hundreds of times over the years in our area and has proven extremely successful. Encouraging wildlife to move out on its own is a win-win situation; mom gets to raise her own babies, you save lots of money since you didn't need to pay anyone to remove the animals, and baby animals were not unnecessarily orphaned. NOTE: This technique does NOT work for mice/rats or bats. This technique should also not be used for owls or chimney swifts since mother birds cannot move their babies. Many species of bats are protected, so they can only be dealt with after breeding season is over. Typically, a one-way "door" is installed at the access point to the attic or eave; the bats can fly out but not get back in. Almost all songbirds and birds of prey are federally protected, so their active nests, eggs, or young cannot be interfered with. If you notice a bird building a nest in a spot that is a nuisance to you or your home, the nest can be removed ONLY if eggs or young are not yet present.

Many people's first impulse is to set live traps and remove the animals themselves, or to call a pest control company. Trapping is a very ineffective way to deal with wildlife issues. You may be able to trap the mother, but it is almost always impossible to trap the babies, so trapping often leads to needlessly orphaning baby animals. A mother animal, trapped and separated from her babies, often injures herself quite severely while struggling to free herself from the trap (imagine her being trapped and listening to her crying babies nearby). Studies show that trapped wildlife animals transported and released into new areas have extremely low survival rates. Another reason trapping will not solve the problem is because wildlife from the surrounding areas will soon replace any animals removed. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, and squirrels are everywhere in our area; trapping merely creates turnover in the population. We discourage trapping unless an animal is stuck somewhere and does

not have the ability to get out.

If you have tried all of the above, or if you have a situation you feel you cannot deal with on your own, please call us at 281-259-0039 so we can refer you to some help. We encourage people to please NOT use regular pest control agencies as many are not licensed or trained to deal with wildlife. Many of these companies euthanize animals they remove, and most are not trained in how to locate babies, thereby often leaving orphaned baby wildlife behind for the homeowner to still deal with. We will be happy to refer you to the appropriate companies who can safely and humanely help you deal with nuisance wildlife and to also assure that no orphaned babies are left behind. Please remember that we need to try to share our space, as best as we can, and to try to coexist with our wild friends. They benefit us by keeping the natural balance in order; remove one species, and you are likely to create unbalance up and down the food chain.

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/SavingTexasWildlife. 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, April 11. 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. Summer Camp registration will open April 1. For more information about any of these activities, or to register for summer camp, 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.ftlw.org, and then click on "How to Help". ♦

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Lake Conroe FISHING REPORT



BY: BUTCH TERPE
AT STOW-A-WAY MARINA
& R/V PARK

Black Bass: April is the time of year where a good number of bass will still be in their spawn. Plastic worms and lizards are good bait choices fished in the back of coves in 1' – 5' depths. Spinner baits and shallow running crank baits are other good bass catching baits as well. Boat docks, stumps and any rock structure are the types of cover that bass can be found.

Crappie: Most of the crappie will have moved out to deeper water and can be caught around key areas such as bridge pilings, timber and brush piles in 12' – 20' depths. Jigs and minnows are your best baits during this time.

White Bass & Hybrid Striped Bass: In the last couple of years a good number of white bass have showed up on the lake. White bass and hybrids both can be found on main lake humps and points and can be caught by trolling pet spoons or by bouncing slab spoons in these areas. I like to move from one location to another until a good number of these fish are located.

Catfish: During the early morning hours I like to fish shallow along bulkheads and breakwater areas in 3' – 5' depths. The reason these fish are in these areas is because they are feeding on shad that are bunched up in their spawn mode. I use minnows or shad under a bobber as I move along these areas. Once the shallow bite slows down I will move back to deeper areas along creek and river locations. ♦

~~~~~  
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Ed (right) & Herman (left) with a cooler full of Crappie and Catfish



James & Seth with a whopping 50 Catfish & 31 White Bass



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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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