

# DOCK LINE

Magnolia

MAGAZINE



June 2020

**CREIGHTON**  
REALTY PARTNERS

## The Real Truth About Real Estate After the Pandemic

How Creighton Realty Partners is Moving Forward and Bringing Certainty in an Uncertain Market

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**Lake Conroe Clean Rivers  
Sampling Program:  
Earning A 5-star (er, Frog) Rating**  
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This year our kick off to summer has a much different meaning than years past. Although we will still have beach days and cookouts there will also be social distancing, smaller gatherings and more staycations. Our new normal is anything but normal. It is true our vocabulary has changed with the continuation of phrases such as zoom meetings, social distancing and wearing masks, followed by the elimination of words like hugs, large gatherings and togetherness. Throughout all this change, some things remain the same. We are a community of resilience, compassion and generosity. It has become apparent now more than ever what a great community in which we live. We encourage everyone to take a look around, celebrate the little things and support your local businesses. They need your support now more than ever as we all struggle to navigate our way through this unique time in which we are living. If we all stick together we will be stronger than ever. Until next month...

Bentley & Ellie 

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### ON THE COVER



Tamarah Courtright Curtis of Creighton Realty Partners is a "Top Ten" real estate agent in the Houston region for nearly a decade, and with over \$33 million in sales last year alone, she knows the real estate market and what home buyers and sellers are looking for.

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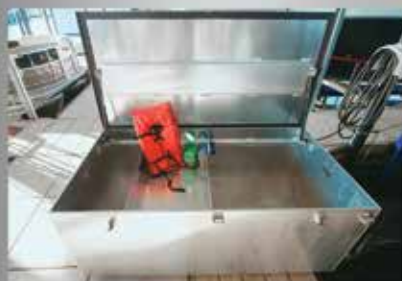


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# **The Real Truth About Real Estate After the Pandemic**

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN



# ***How Creighton Realty Partners is Moving Forward and Bringing Certainty in an Uncertain Market***

The COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the way we do life. For weeks, residents of Montgomery County were confined to their homes. Businesses were closed, wondering when they could open their doors again. The economy was headed into a recession. There were so many questions without answers. It seems we were and still are living in a world full of uncertainty, and almost no one is immune.

The real estate market is no exception. Many people who were planning on buying a home are expected to be nervous. While recessions typically don't have a huge effect on the housing market, pandemics are a unique exception. During past worldwide health scares, home sales have dropped during an outbreak, but housing prices have generally stayed the same with little change. Will that happen again? Will we be surprised by a rebounding market? Whatever lies ahead, home buyers and sellers are looking for clarity, and a voice of wisdom.

Tamarah Courtright Curtis of Creighton Realty Partners is facing the uncertainty head on. "We have had to make many changes as to how we conduct our business on every level," she says. "From homeowners not allowing showings due to fear of changes in the mortgage industry to how the actual closings are performed by the title company. However, we rolled with the punches and trudged forward, not knowing what each day would bring. I get multiple calls a day from clients asking me what is going on with the market and what my predictions are for the 2020 real estate market. Everyone wants to know how to proceed and if it's a good time to buy, sell or invest."

Having been through several recessions, including the housing market crash of 2008, Tamarah falls back on her experience and time-tested wisdom in real estate. As a "Top Ten" real estate agent in the Houston region for nearly a decade, and with over \$33 million in sales last year alone, she knows the real estate market and what home buyers and sellers are looking for.

Her perspective is timely as she looks back over the ups and downs in the market over the last decade: "I went through the subprime crisis over 10 years ago and that event had a much greater impact on the real estate market than we have seen of COVID-19. Subprime crashed most real estate markets and it was very difficult to get a loan."

*Continued on page 10 ➡*







*Texans back to work - Tamarah and Scott Gentry with S.Gentry Custom Homes, one of her trusted Contractors in her extensive vendor database that provides top notch service to her Clientele.*

Early on during the shutdown, people began to get nervous. Tamarah knows first hand what people were going through and is quick to point people toward the light at the end of the tunnel. "During the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown, people were panicking, not sure what to do," she says. "Should they proceed to purchase? Will they have a job? All thoughts and anxieties we all felt during a time when the future was unknown. However, the market did not stumble, and everyday I see it getting healthier and running strong. During the two months of quarantine the overall numbers of new sales contracts decreased around 50%. However, May 1st we saw a new confidence in the buyers and sellers and saw a significant rise in contracts, showings and newly listed homes."

You would think that all the economic uncertainty would cause people to hold off on buying or selling their home. At the very least, you might think that more people would be selling their homes (perhaps for less than they're worth), hoping to let go of debt and get

a bump in cash flow. However, the market is actually surprising everyone right now. As Tamarah explains, "The number of buyers are now outnumbering the number of listings available for purchase. If homeowners are on the fence about listing their homes for sale in 2020, I would advise to list."

Another surprising fact brings good news to sellers: "The prices have not dropped (unrealistic seller's prices have dropped to a more reasonable list price). Buyers are still relocating to our county and they need homes! All price ranges are selling and a lot of them are selling very quickly," says Tamarah.

While the world is full of uncertainty about the future, it seems not everyone is succumbing to the fear. The housing market in Montgomery County is a great example of how people are eager to move forward, brush off the dust from the quarantine, and look to the light in the darkness. Tamarah Courtright Curtis is one such light, helping people navigate the already tricky home buying and selling

process with confidence.

Lastly, Tamarah reminds us of the fighting Texan spirit, and our state's grit in tough times: "Have confidence in Texas! Texans are strong, tough and persevere through hurricanes, oil/gas industry ups and downs and now, Pandemics!"

That is perhaps the most rock solid truth we have to stand on: We will get through this. We will rise back up. We will move forward and find a way to not just survive, but thrive.

If you are looking to buy or sell a home, now might be a much better time than you think. Put your trust in a local real estate agent who's been through every market up and down and can lead you on the right path, pandemic or not.

Tamarah Courtright Curtis is a Broker, Realtor® ABR® serving the greater Montgomery County area. To get in touch with her about a home purchase or sale, or to learn more about her take on the pandemic and the real estate market, you can reach her at 936-844-SOLD, or go to [www.mocorealty.com](http://www.mocorealty.com). ♦



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Unbeatable charm & character describe this one-of-a-kind home that is perfectly situated on 2 private lots w/in close proximity to all Bentwater has to offer (54 holes of Golf, 2 pools, tennis, sports club, restaurants, marina + more)! This home commands attention from the first step inside! The great room boasts a cathedral ceiling w/exposed beam ceiling accents, a full wall of windows overlooking the outdoor entertainment area, a soaring floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace + rich hand scraped wood floors. The island kitchen is

equipped w/a Chef approved 6 burner cooktop, double ovens, eye-catching granite & antiqued copper apron front sink. Right off the kitchen you will find a convenient flex space and/or office that is located next to the walk-in pantry. The gameroom is located downstairs w/matching exposed beams, FP and wall of windows + dry bar. Two bedrooms w/two full baths are located downstairs; one being the Master w/double sinks/vanities, oversized walk-in shower + soak tub. **197 Edgemar Road, Bentwater in Montgomery. ML# 97723593. \$825,000**



12+ acres with a house + 50x30 metal building! The acreage offers automatic front gate, fencing + cross fencing, water to each pasture, large shade trees plus a ton of privacy, horse ready! The exterior of the house boasts a wrap around covered porch equipped with ceilings fans and a detached garage with game room/ additional bedroom/flex space above (heated/cooled) with brand new flooring. The interior welcomes with high ceilings in the living room w/wall of windows, fireplace and door leading to the back patio. An island kitchen with Silestone counters, warm wood cabinets, gas cooking + breakfast area with bay window. Office/study off living room + game room with double French doors. Master bedroom is on the first floor and offers a generous amount of space with a sitting area, double sinks, large soak tub + walk-in shower w/seamless glass surround. 3 bedrooms upstairs with 2 full bathrooms. Features include: Rinnai water heater, water softener w/filter, shop offers sewer/water/tv/network.

**12619 Maxwell Street, Timber Line Estates in Willis. ML# 65104389. \$580,000**



Welcome to Walden! This all brick one story home offers 4 bedrooms and a quiet back yard! Situated on almost a quarter acre lot within walking distance to the Sports Club, walking trails and boat launch (Lakeside pool, parks, marina, Golf Course are some of the amenities Walden offers)! The interior boasts a spacious living room w/a corner fireplace, wall of windows and tile floors. Large kitchen with granite counters, serving bar overlooking the living room, tons of cabinets, and dining area with a tray ceiling. Sizable Master

bedroom with Double sinks, walk-in shower, soak tub and generous walk-in closet. Split plan with 3 secondary bedrooms (bedroom #4 could easily be a study/office with French Doors). The backyard is large and private with a covered patio!

**11610 Walden Road, Walden in Montgomery. ML# 94424771. \$220,000**



A welcoming home tucked in the trees on a private 1 acre lot in Montgomery Trace w/in walking distance to one of the Lakes (nature trails/6 parks/playgrounds/nature reserves are included amenities)! The interior provides a spacious + comfortable living for the whole family. The focal point of the house is the kitchen w/spacious center island w/stylish Calacatta Quartz countertops, stacked stone backsplash, eye-catching glass tile inlay over the 5 burner cooktop, breakfast room, butler's pantry + dining room. The

two-story living room is equipped w/fireplace, built-ins + wood floors. The owner's retreat has double vanities, walk-in shower, soak tub + private door leading to patio. Office w/French doors + flex room (could be a 2nd study/media room/man cave or 5th bedroom). Upstairs, you will find a huge game room, hidden storage room, 3 LARGE bedrooms + 2 full bathrooms. Enjoy outdoor entertaining & nature watching on the oversized covered back patio! 12x10 storage building included! **8936 Stone Oak Drive, Montgomery Trace in Montgomery. ML# 95390097. \$426,000**



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**



Location is unmatched (minutes from schools, shopping, restaurants & The Woodlands), the neighborhood offers a sparkling pool, splash area, playground, sidewalks, great schools + the house is undeniably charming! In this 5 bedroom home, the floor plan could not be matched w/ 2 bedrooms/2 full bathrooms down & a very sizable gameroom upstairs w/3 bedrooms/2 full bathrooms up! The result is the perfect formula for a chic, modern-day floorplan! The interior

greeted w/warm wood floors that lead to the spacious living offering a cast stone fireplace + an entire wall of windows! The kitchen immediately pulls your attention with the island that comfortably seats 4 or more, granite counters, stylish wood cabinets that are classic yet modern, SS appliances, gas cooktop, butler's pantry, enormous walk-in pantry + formal dining room. Master bedroom boasts double sinks, oversized walk-in shower + soak tub and a closet that will not be disappointing! Exterior includes a front and back covered patio.

**1534 Judson Oak Drive, Holly Terrace at Jacobs Reserve in Conroe.**

**ML# 18417696. \$387,500**



Don't miss this RARE find! Situated on a park-like 1.38 acres with mature trees, manicured flower beds and a sparkling swimming pool! This 3 bedroom/2 full bathrooms + study house boasts newly installed wood-grain tile throughout, all new windows, fresh interior paint, updated ceiling fans in every room + much more! The interior greets w/ a spacious living room w/brick fireplace, wood ceiling beams and wall of windows that overlooks the pool area. Light &

bright kitchen w/stylish granite counters with a subway tile backsplash, bar seating, glass cooktop overlooking the dining room w/bay window. The Master bedroom offers great natural light, awesome storage/closet and an oversized shower with whirlpool tub. The secondary rooms are large and offer great closets. The exterior is equipped with a private water well, oversized garage, 2 storage sheds, an almost 20x30 covered slate patio by the pool, extensive pool decking + an estate style driveway for extra parking! High & dry! No flooding.

**23311 Brook Forest Road, Brook Forest in New Caney.**

**ML# 48956773. \$320,000**



This hard to find one-story home offers space + functionality & situated on a very private lot w/in the comfort of Stewarts Forest (recreation areas, playground, swimming pool, centrally located + more)! The interior greets with high ceilings and leads to an impressive island kitchen w/42" maple cabinetry, granite countertops, SS appliances, water filtration at the sink, sizable pantry & a large breakfast bar overlooking the very spacious living room. This home features 4

bedrooms in a split plan layout. The secluded Master bedroom offers two picture windows overlooking the private backyard, crown molding, double vanities/sinks, oversized walk-in shower w/seamless glass surround, corner soak tub + a great closet! The 3 secondary bedrooms are all very roomy and offer great closet space. The backyard welcomes with a cozy covered patio that overlooks the natural habitat of the untouched land behind the house. Don't miss out on this very well-kept and clean one story!

**963 Doire Drive, Stewarts Forest in Conroe**

**ML# 78389530. \$224,000**

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The Annual Volunteer Luncheon hosted by the Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County, Inc. (DRC-MC) looked a little different this year with volunteers, staff, and Judges joining together online to celebrate the year's achievements and thank their volunteers. This year's theme "Hat's Off to our Volunteers" allowed everyone to join wearing their fanciest or funniest hat providing much needed comical relief during this trying time.

The DRC-MC is a non-profit in Downtown Conroe that has been offering dispute resolution services and training to the community for over 30 years. In order to continue serving the community throughout this pandemic, the DRC-MC has been offering Online Mediation since the beginning of April, with more than 20 volunteers trained to handle Zoom and phone mediations.

DRC-MC volunteers work tirelessly throughout the year to help others resolve their conflicts peacefully and last year alone they donated over \$250,000 worth of mediation time to assist the community. In order to serve as a volunteer mediator at the DRC-MC, volunteer mediators spend extensive amounts of time receiving training in how to handle litigation related or pre-litigation General mediations (including contract disputes, estate issues, landlord tenant issues, and neighborhood disputes, etc.), Family mediations (including custody, child support, divorce, etc.), and Child Protective Services cases. But according to

Elaine Roberts, Executive Director of the DRC-MC, "volunteers went above and beyond what they usually do in order to ensure that volunteers, community members and attorneys could continue to safely mediate disputes during the pandemic. Twenty-four experienced mediators underwent intense training in order to learn how to conduct online and phone mediations via Zoom and so the DRC-MC was able to establish one of the first such non-profit online mediation programs in the state."

The DRC-MC always enjoys recognizing their volunteers at a Volunteer Appreciation event and did not want the current pandemic to stop them from recognizing their volunteers' hard work and achievements this past year. Thirty-three people joined on a Zoom call to recognize the volunteers, including staff, volunteers, and local Judges. Judges in attendance included Kristin Bays, Presiding Judge of the 284th District Court, Kathleen Hamilton, Presiding Judge of the 359th District Court, Patrice McDonald, Presiding Judge of County Court 3, Associate Judge Scharlene Valdez Overstreet of the 410th and 418th District Courts and Wayne Mack, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1. Each judge shared the positive ways mediation has impacted their courts.

Although, Jennifer Robin, Presiding Judge of the 410th District Court was unable to attend, she asked her to thank you letter be read to the volunteer mediators during the virtual celebration. Included in the letter was the following excerpt.

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, when social distancing was mandated, your innovative solutions for remote mediations allowed for continuity of the services you have historically provided this community. You stepped up to the plate when your community needed you the most, helping litigants resolve their disputes in an informal setting without court intervention, with the trickle-down effect of enabling Montgomery County courts to have more time to reach those cases that needed immediate emergency relief."

Amber Gong, Volunteer Coordinator for the DRC-MC presented the following awards to volunteer mediators for their services during the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year:

DRC-MC Longevity Awards: Ben DeVries-21 years of service, Charlsie Moore-20 years of service, and Gaye Henley-17 years of service

DRC-MC Achievement Awards During 2019: Lois Voth-241.5 mediation hours, Charlsie Moore-175.25 mediation hours, and Glenna Rodgers-158.25 hours

Diamond (mediated a minimum of 125 hours in one calendar year): Lois Voth, Tom Tuohy, Glenna Rodgers, Charlsie Moore, Norm Gautier, and John Herbig

Ruby (mediated a minimum of 100 hours in one calendar year): Glenda Livingston, Bruno Brunasso, and Dennis Wymore

Emerald (mediated a minimum of 75 hours in one calendar year): Carmen Troyo and Amy Lecocq

## HERO Board Awards:

Mediators of the Peace (Help with JP docket call 6 times in the fiscal year): Sara A., John Cinton, Tillie Eaker, Lena Gibson, Chris Renne, Gary Smith, Dave Teall, and Dennis Wymore

Life Saver (Same day, last minute scheduling): Francis Bourgeois, Ben DeVries, Norm Gautier, John Herbig, Charlsie Moore, Pattie Nolan, Ronnie Pace, Glenna Rodgers, and Tom Tuohy

Influencer Award (Interact regularly on our Social Media Pages): Sara A., Ben DeVries, Mike Fortner, Tammie Haynes, Amy Lecocq, Jack Lewis, Charlsie Moore, Diana Pino, Gene Roberts, Glenna Rodgers, Carmen Troyo, and Lois Voth

Community Engagement (Board Members who attend the Bookmark Art Contest Awards Ceremony and one other PR event): Glenna Rodgers and Lois Voth.

Disputes are currently being handled online via Zoom, during regular office hours, Monday through Friday. The Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County, Inc. (DRC-MC) was established in 1988 by Commissioners Court and the Montgomery County Bar Association and offers an affordable way to prevent disputes from escalating into serious civil or criminal matters.

Find out more about the Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County by visiting [www.resolution-center.org](http://www.resolution-center.org). Visit the DRC-MC Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/MontgomeryCountyDRC](http://www.Facebook.com/MontgomeryCountyDRC) Call (936) 760.6914, Ext. 2 from 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday – Friday.

For additional information contact: Savannah Martin, Marketing/Communications Coordinator for the Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County, Inc. (DRC-MC) at [savannah.martin@mctx.org](mailto:savannah.martin@mctx.org) or (936) 760-6914, Ext. 4. ♦



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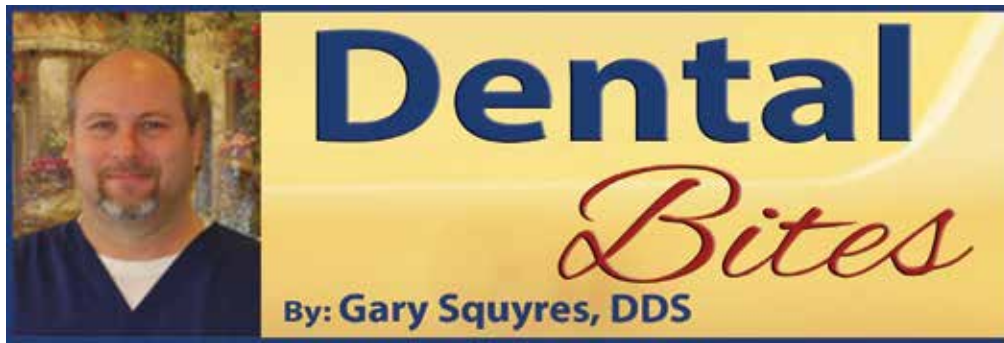
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## Summer Sports and Dental Injuries

Summer is the time for enjoying the great outdoors. However, some popular summer sports – such as baseball and basketball – can expose your teeth to danger. Here are several seasonal activities that could lead to dental injuries and ways to keep your smile safe:

### **Contact Sports (Soccer, Softball, Basketball, etc.)**

Soccer players are more likely than football players to sustain a dental-related injury. Soccer is a sport where a mouth guard and face masks are not mandatory, upping the odds for mouth and face injuries. The types of dental injuries that can occur without the use of a mouth guard are chipped or broken teeth, fractured crowns or bridgework, lip and cheek injuries, root damage to the teeth, fractured jaw, and concussions. While the mouth guard is no



guarantee against such injuries it can drastically reduce the risk.

### **Swimming and Diving**

Frequent swimmers may be at risk for developing yellowish-brown stains on their teeth. People who swim more than six hours a week are continually exposing their teeth to chemically treated water. Pool water contains chemical additives, which give the water a higher



PH than saliva. As a result, salivary proteins break down quickly and form deposits, known as "swimmers' calculus," appear most frequently on the front teeth. Swimmers' calculus can normally be removed by a professional dental cleaning.

Scuba diving, a sport enjoyed by people in the U.S., can lead to jaw joint pain, gum tissue problems or "tooth squeeze" – pain in the center of the tooth. All of these symptoms add up to what's called "diver's mouth syndrome"



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(also called barodontalgia), a condition caused by the air pressure change involved in scuba diving and by divers biting too hard on their scuba air regulators. Tooth squeeze is caused by the change in air pressure, particularly if a diver has a big cavity, a temporary filling, gum disease, periodontal abscess or incomplete root canal therapy. The best way to avoid these problems is to visit your dentist before scuba diving and make sure your dental health is tip-top. Ask your dentist's advice about fitting the mouthpiece of an air regulator.

The best way to avoid these problems is to visit your dentist before scuba diving and make sure your dental health is tip-top. Ask your dentist's advice about fitting the mouthpiece of an air regulator.

- **Stock mouth guard:** This can be bought "off the shelf" from a drug or sporting goods store. This type of mouth guard offers the least protection because the fit adjustment is limited. While better than nothing, a stock mouth guard is not considered acceptable as a facial protective device.

- **Mouth-formed protectors:** These mouth guards come as a shell-liner and "boil-and-bite" product from sporting goods stores. The shell is lined with acrylic or rubber. When placed in an athlete's mouth, the protector's lining material molds to the teeth and is allowed to set.

- **Custom-made mouth protectors:** The best choice is a customized mouth guard made



by your dentist. The custom mouth guard offers the best protection, fit and comfort level because it is made from a cast to fit your teeth.

Mouth guards are an important piece of athletic equipment for anyone participating in a sport that involves falls, body contact or

flying equipment. This includes football, basketball, baseball, soccer, hockey, skateboarding, gymnastics, mountain biking - any activity that might result in an injury to the mouth. When participating in summer sports, a mouth guard is your best ally. ♦

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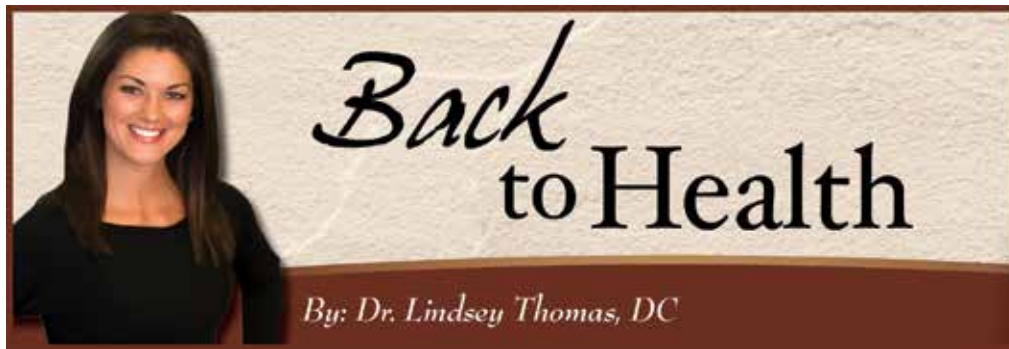
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## Movement = Development

There are so many important reasons why infants and children need to move. Early movement experiences are essential to the neural stimulation needed for your child's healthy brain development. An infant's brain is full of brain cells at birth and over time these cells form as many as 15,000 connections with other brain cells. It is during the first three years that most of these connections are made. Physical activity and play during early childhood has a crucial role in the sensory and physiological stimulation that creates more of these connections in the brain.

Infants are spending upwards of 60 waking hours every week in things - walkers, carriers, car seats, etc. Not only is this confining to your child, it doesn't allow them to have the ever important tummy or floor time. Placing your child in the upright position rather than on the floor tells the brain to start thinking walking rather than rolling over, creeping and crawling. Play-

ing on the floor, your child is able to throw and reach for objects and toys which he will repeat often. This is how your infant discovers rolling and finally starts to crawl.

All parents accept that crawling is a milestone but many do not realize why it is so important. Crawling not only means a new way of locomotion but it allows the infant to create connections between the two sides of the brain. When the baby coordinates his movements to move in one direction, he moves the right arm and the left leg and then the left arm and the right leg; this is called a cross crawl pattern. This pattern allows both sides of the brain to communicate and interchange information very fast. These are the same patterns that later in life will be used to perform more difficult tasks like walking, running, passing one object from one hand to the other, or even taking notes in class while listening to the teacher.

When crawling, the infant's body must remain in equilibrium or balance. This helps to strengthen the spine and properly develop the curves in the neck and lower back, setting the stage for proper spinal development and posture.

As the infant moves, he touches different surfaces and textures that will help to develop the senses on his palms and fingers. This will allow him in the future to grasp and hold objects like a pencil or crayon to draw, or play a musical instrument.

Another area where crawling is important is the visual aspect of the infant's development. Crawling helps the infant measure the world around him; the distance between his eyes and hands, at what distance an object is located, its volume and its size. This ability will be important in the future to clearly see things that are near or far. Knowing the distance and volume of objects will also help him with puzzles, brain teasers, solve problems, jump obstacles, understand spatial relationships and will also set the basis for reading and writing skills.

It's a parent's responsibility to stimulate their child's developing brain and nervous system with every motion and activity. In the busyness of your day to day life, it is easy to sit your child in front of the television to watch one of the many "educational" videos available today but it is important to remember that these videos do not stimulate the same neural pathways in the brain as active play activities. Play activities should include stimulation of all five senses (sight, touch, sound, smell and taste).

- Sight: Blowing bubbles, using both hands to draw shapes and letters, or tossing soft objects

- Touch: Different textures (smooth, rough, uneven), splashing water in the bathtub, building blocks or petting and feeding animals

- Sound: Dancing or moving to music, beating rhythm on instruments, musical chairs or singing sounds where words needed to be added ("B-I-N-G-O")

- Smells and Tastes: Introduce your child to different tastes and smells and look for the appropriate reaction or have your child name different smells

- Equilibrium and Balance: Spinning in circles, walking on uneven surfaces (sand, grass), crawling through small spaces, balancing on a teeter-totter, or tummy time

- Proprioceptive (sense stimuli): Pushing and pulling toys or wagon, playing catch with a ball, getting in or out of seatbelts, jackets, shoes and socks, stretching up to the sky, or pouring water or sand from one container to another

We are all hardwired to move and play. Start incorporating these active play activities into your child's daily routine and most importantly, have fun with your child. Good play routines can last a lifetime. Always remember your infant or child is never "just moving" or "just playing". Every action improves upon your child's development in some way!

For more information on this topic, as well as how chiropractic can benefit the development of your child please feel free to contact our office at (281) 789-7586. ♦

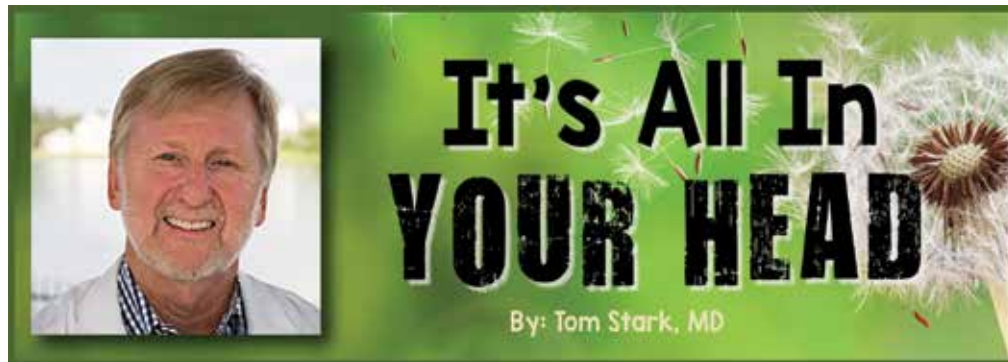
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## NEW TREATMENT FOR SEVERE SINUSITIS

Successfully treating diseases and infections of the sinuses is a challenging part of my professional life. Multiple medications, home remedies (like nasal washing) and surgical procedures are available and most provide relief. However, there is one type of chronic sinusitis that is difficult to obtain a long-standing cure. This is the type in which patients develop severe swollen tissue within the nasal passages and sinuses called polyps. Only 25-30% of patients with repeated or chronic sinus infections develop polyps. However, even after extensive surgical removal and a regiment of medical therapy the recurrence rate of polyps is approximately 40%. While polyps are not cancerous, their presence inside the nose and sinuses causes obstruction of airflow, severe drainage, facial pressure and often a severe loss of sense of smell.

Recently, there has been a breakthrough development in the treatment of this condition of the sinusitis with polyp formation. It involves administration of a "biologic" treatment as an injection therapy. The medication which is known as Dupixent (dupilumab) has been FDA approved for the treatment of asthma for approximately 5 years. Within the last year it has gained approval for the treatment of nasal polyps.

The class of biologic therapies have been available for over 20 years. Some are known for treatment of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or psoriasis with familiar names such as Humira or Enbrel. They act by blocking part of the immune system that is usually involved with autoimmune diseases. A severe side effect of these medications often is suppression of the immune system making patients susceptible to infections such as tuberculosis or fungal infections.

I am much more excited about Dupixent because it has no blockage of the healthy part of the immune system. Intensive research has shown that nasal polyps are the result of the overproduction of a specific type of inflammatory chemical known as Interleukin-4. When Interleukin-4 is produced along with another type, Interleukin-13 the resultant reaction

leads to severe swelling of the area involved. In the lungs the result is asthma, in the skin the result is eczema and in the nose the result is polyps. The new medication is actually an antibody to the Interleukin-4 protein that surrounds it and inactivates it before it can cause the disease process.

Because Dupixent does not significantly



impair the immune system there is no need to test for conditions such as tuberculosis or fungal infections.

The medication is available as an injection that is usually administered by the patient at home every 2 weeks. Don't worry, the needle is very tiny and there is almost no pain.

I currently have patients on this medication who have noticed great relief of their polyps. Many of them are very happy to recover their sense of smell within 2-3 injections. It is an exciting advancement and one more tool available for me to help patients with this serious problem. ♦

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# Lake Conroe Clean Rivers Sampling Program: Earning A 5-star (er, Frog) Rating

Lake Conroe was constructed in the late 1960s to the early 1970s in a joint venture between the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) and City of Houston with the sole purpose of providing a drinking water source to serve future demand in the greater Houston Metropolitan area.

As a partner in the project, SJRA takes great pride in operating and maintaining the Lake Conroe Dam and Reservoir. Included in the responsibilities is the charge of assessing the quality of the water in the reservoir. In cooperation with the Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC), SJRA administers the Clean Rivers Program (CRP) on Lake Conroe. The CRP is a water quality initiative overseen by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the purpose of monitoring the overall health of Texas Waterways.

Continuous monitoring of the quality of water in Lake Conroe is important not only because of its function as a regional drinking water source, but also due to its popularity as a recreational destination for boating, fishing, and a variety of other water sports and hobbies. The TCEQ requires water bodies to meet established water quality standards based on their "use." The official "uses" of Lake Conroe,



Water Sampling



as designated by TCEQ, are drinking water supply, recreation, and fish consumption. Therefore Lake Conroe is held to the most stringent water quality standards set forth by TCEQ.

There are currently ten monitoring sites in the Lake Conroe CRP Program (Figure 1). These sites are all located in the main body of the lake and were chosen to capture water quality parameters from all of the major contributing tributaries. At each designated site, SJRA samples for 11 different water quality parameters (See Table 1). Some specimens are collected, preserved, and delivered to an outside lab for detailed analysis.

Other samples are considered field parameters and are collected instantaneously with a water quality measuring device called a sonde (See Figure 3). The sonde is deployed over the side of a boat to different depths in the water column. At each defined depth, four water quality parameters are measured: pH, specific conductivity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. Data collected with the sonde can be downloaded to a personal computer and charted in order to detect changes in water quality throughout the water column for

# 2019 REGIONAL WATER QUALITY SUMMARY

The numbers represent the percent of total segment length that is impaired or of concern for each parameter. Cells without numbers (blanks) represent stream segments that are currently meeting state standards but may be improving or degrading for each parameter.

DO=Dissolved Oxygen    Bact=Bacteria    Chlor=Chlorophyll a    Nutr=Nutrients    PCB=PCB/Dioxins    Other=See Below

Basin	Watershed	Segment	DO	Bact	Chlor	Nutr	PCB	Other*	Frogs
Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal	Cedar Bayou Tidal	0901	100	100			100		●
	Cedar Bayou Above Tidal	0902	100						● ● ● ● ●
San Jacinto River	Buffalo Bayou Above Tidal	1014	10.2	78.3		64.8		2.3	● ● ● ● ●
	Buffalo Bayou Tidal	1013	37.4	86.8		49.4		32.7	● ● ● ● ●
	Caney Creek	1010	16.8	69.2					● ● ● ● ●
	Cypress Creek	1009	28.7	77.7	10.5	77.7		11.7	● ● ● ● ●
	East Fork San Jacinto River	1003		100					● ● ● ● ●
	Greens Bayou Above Tidal	1016	8.6	89.2		85.6			● ● ● ● ●
	Houston Ship Channel	1006	25.5	49.7	6.5	84.1	36.3	20.2	● ● ● ● ●
	Houston Ship Channel Buffalo Bayou Tidal	1007	19.6	70.3		83.2	28.6	1.9	● ● ● ● ●
	Houston Ship Channel/ San Jacinto River Tidal	1005				82.2	100		● ● ● ● ●
	Lake Conroe	1012	4.5						● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	Lake Creek	1015	70.8	12.1				30.7	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	Lake Houston	1002	20.9	7	2.9	43.9		8.1	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	Peach Creek	1011		100				15.4	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	San Jacinto River Tidal	1001					36.5		● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	Spring Creek	1008	34.8	72.6	1.2	53.3		13.7	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	West Fork San Jacinto River	1004		27.9		25.8		16.7	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
	White Oak Bayou Above Tidal	1017	11.7	87		83.2			● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Continued on page 20 ➡

Fig 2: HGAC 2019 Regional Water Quality Summary Frog Chart

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each month of the year. This information is useful to Texas Parks and Wildlife fisheries biologists as well as water treatment facility operators.

Another sampling device is known as a secchi disk and is used to measure the turbidity—or level of clarity-- of water (See Figure 4). The secchi disk is lowered into the water until it is no longer visible, at which point a depth measurement is taken and recorded. The greater the depth that the secchi disk remains visible, the less turbid the water. These extensive sampling procedures allow SJRA to establish a complete picture of the water quality in Lake Conroe.

Data gathered from each sampling site is then compared to TCEQ water quality standards and screening levels. If a parameter exceeds the standard or screening level for a continued period of time, the lake will be deemed impaired by TCEQ. To date, Lake Conroe has never been determined to be impaired and, in fact, remains one of the cleanest water bodies in the region. Each year HGAC issues a Basin Highlights/Summary Report, which ranks all water bodies in the region based on overall water quality. The rankings range from poor water quality, identified as a one frog rating, to excellent water quality, receiving a five frog rating (See Figure 2). SJRA is proud that Lake Conroe is considered

a 5-frog reservoir (See Figure 1).

Lake Conroe has excellent water quality and SJRA works diligently to protect this great resource for the public. It will take SJRA and the public working together to keep water quality at such a high level. If you have any questions about the water quality program on Lake Conroe, please contact Shane Simpson at [ssimpson@sjra.net](mailto:ssimpson@sjra.net).

#### Precautions Regarding COVID-19

##### (Lake Conroe open to families at this time)

Lake Conroe continues to stay open and can provide a welcome change to staying indoors. If visiting Lake Conroe, please continue to observe federal, state, and local COVID-19 guidelines including:

- Follow CDC recommendations on social distancing.
- Limit gatherings of people to a family unit.
- Follow recommended hygiene practices including frequent hand washing when visiting any common spaces such as marinas, gas stations, or boat launches.

“Our highest priority is for the health and well-being of Lake Conroe visitors and businesses,” said SJRA General Manager Jace Houston. “We want people to get outside with their families and enjoy the lake. We just need people to do it in a way that keeps them safe and healthy.”

“Precinct 1 advises everyone to enjoy Lake Conroe but make sure that you are following best practices and social distancing while on the water,” said Lt. Cade Montgomery County Precinct 1 Constable’s Office. “Make sure to keep your party to family units only, wash your hands, and for more information regarding COVID-19 visit [www.mctx.org](http://www.mctx.org).”

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](http://www.sjra.net), like SJRA on Facebook @SanJacintoRiverAuthority, follow us on Twitter @SJRA\_1937, or find us on Instagram @SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA. ♦

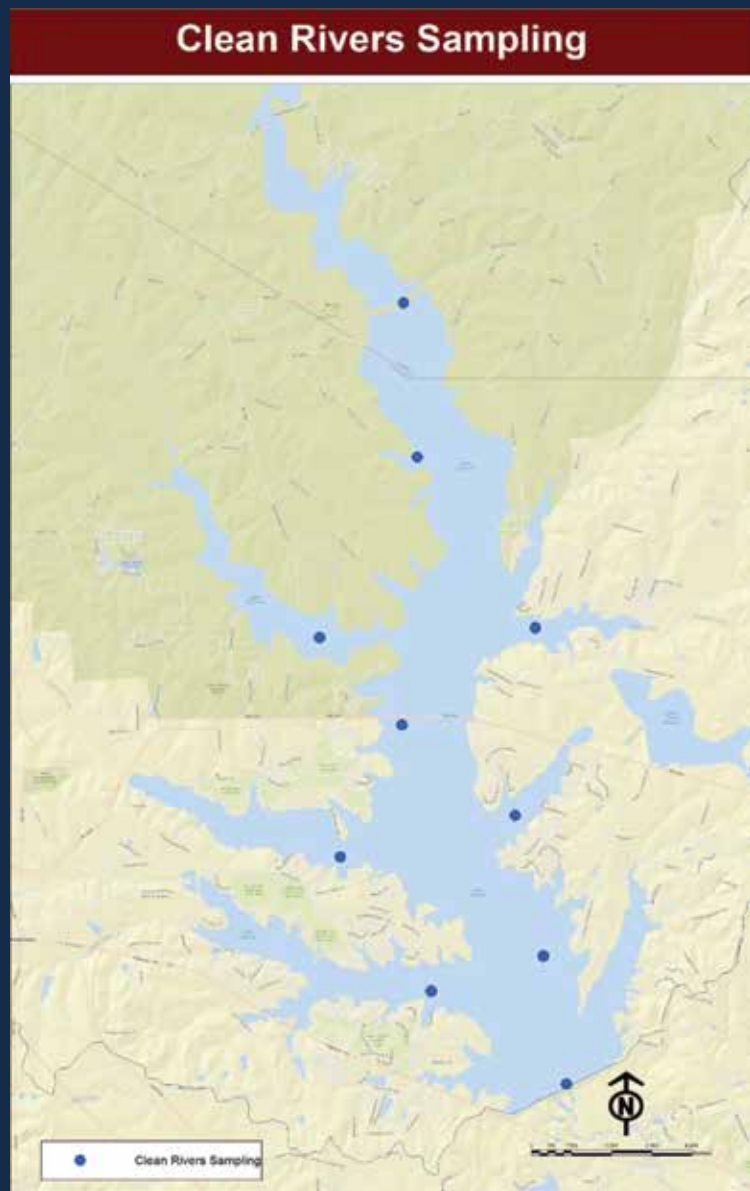


Fig 1. CRP Lake Conroe Sampling Locations

Parameters	TCEQ Screening Levels/ Standards Limits
Alkalinity	N/A
Chloride	>50 mg/L
E Coli	MPN/ 100mL
Ammonia	0.11 mg/L
Nitrate	>.37 mg/L
Secchi Depth	N/A
Sulfate	>50 mg/L
Total Phosphorus	>.20 mg/L
Total Suspended Solids	N/A
Chlorophyll	>26.7 ppb
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen	N/A
Dissolved Oxygen	<3.0 mg/L
Specific Conductivity	N/A
Temperature	> 32.22 °C
pH	N/A

Table 1: Parameters and TCEQ Screening Levels/ Standards Limits for CRP Lake Conroe



Fig. 3: MS5 Hydrolab Water Quality Sonde





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# Online with Dock Line

## Pandemic-Proof Your Business

### *Lessons Learned from COVID-19 about Marketing Your Business Online*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a lot of hard lessons for business owners. If your business was deemed non-essential, then no doubt you are facing a lot of uncertainty and may be struggling to keep your doors open (quite literally). However, we also learned that if your business has a strong online presence, then the blow was softened considerably as you could still sell your products and services online. All it took was a shift in attention and some creative marketing strategies and your business was rocking and rolling again. At the very least, you weren't stuck waiting as you struggled to pay for your staff and to keep the lights on.

So let's look at the specific ways businesses struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic because they weren't equipped to operate online.

#### **1. If your business is not online at all...get online now!**

Many businesses had to shut their doors to the public, bringing their interaction with customers - and sales as a result - to a grinding halt. People weren't spending their time shopping in stores, but it doesn't mean they weren't still shopping. With everybody stuck at home and spending more time browsing online, any shopping outside of essential businesses like grocery stores moved online. People weren't spending their time in brick and mortar stores, but in online stores.

If your business has a functional, value-driven website then there is opportunity for you to get people's attention and point them toward your products and services. If you don't have a website, or have an old, poorly designed website with little content, then you're going to lose out on tons of potential business. In fact, if your website is the only impression you give consumers and it is a bad impression, it could not

only prevent people from using your services, but it could hurt your business down the road by creating a negative association with your brand. The point is this: get online, build a strong presence, offer your services and products through your website, and create content that brings people to your site. And do it now.

#### **2. If your business is not active on social media...get active now!**

Facebook and Instagram are the best channels for small businesses, with Instagram by far being the best channel for organic engagement. Why Instagram? Well, consumers love visual content more than anything else. In fact, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Instagram posts got 20x more engagement on average compared to Facebook.

Now, this isn't to say that you shouldn't also be active on Facebook. Facebook is one of the very best places to advertise your business. Facebook ads can work wonders if you target them correctly and your offer is good.

However, if you aren't active on social media, then you are missing out on a huge opportunity to build your business. Nearly all of your ideal customers are on social media in some way. As a business, you need to be active on the channels your potential customers are on, and you need to provide valuable, helpful content to attract them. Try posting once a day if possible and make sure it has a visual aspect - photo or video based.

#### **3. If your business does not produce content specifically for online audiences...start it now!**

Video is, by far, the number one way people like to consume con-



tent online. The next best thing is also visual-based - posting photos. However, just as important as the visual aspect itself is the copy you use - the words associated with each post. Many businesses make the mistake of just selling all the time. That's the fastest way to lose people's attention and persuade them to stop following you. Instead post content that is valuable, helpful, inspirational, or charitable.

You may not be a professional copywriter, but you can still post content that people love just by being genuine. However, if you can hire a professional, by all means do it. People love a story, and they love when you make them the hero - not yourself. This means that you shouldn't just talk about yourself or your business unless it is done in a way that directly benefits the consumer. For instance, your story of building your business can be an inspiration for someone who needs hope. But as a general rule, make the consumer the focus. Nurture them along so they become fans of your brand, then when the time is right you can offer them something.

#### 4. If you don't have products or services you can sell online... create them now!

Speaking of your "offer", are you able to sell your products or services online? We learned during the pandemic just how detrimental it can be if your business is not deemed essential and you don't have something to sell online. If you can relate to that then it's time to think outside the box when it comes to traditional business. Plain and simple you need to do one of two things. First, if you do have products or ser-



vices that you can sell online, but don't have an online store on your website, then you need to create one now. If you think your products or services can't be sold online, then you need to get innovative and create them.

For instance, if you offer a service that requires face-to-face interaction with customers, then you can create a video chat alternative that can be done remotely. If you offer automotive services that require your customers to come to you, find a way to offer the same service by going to them - in a safe and secure way. The point is, whatever you offer can be transformed into an online offering. Yes, it may require some out-of-the-box thinking, but it might just transform your business.

If you find yourself fitting one or several of these categories above and your business needs to get online ASAP, then let us know. At Dock Line we specialize in getting businesses online. From social media services where we do everything for you like creating captivating content and managing your audience, to web design services that give you an online store for your offerings and valuable content to attract consumers. We also provide exceptional video services to create valuable content that your customers will love, and so much more. Let us know how we can help! Just reach out at [ozzy@thedockline.com](mailto:ozzy@thedockline.com). ♦

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## Easy Key Lime Pie



- 1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 6 oz. can frozen limeade

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 6 oz. graham cracker pie crust

Place the condensed milk, limeade, and heavy cream in the bowl of an electric mixer. With the whisk attachment, beat until fluffy, medium peaks form. The consistency will not change that much once the pie is refrigerated, so whip it until it is the consistency you want. Pour the filling into the pie crust.

Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight, until the pie is set. Serve with whipped cream.

- Small bunch coriander, leaves only
- 2 - 6 oz. fish fillets, skin on

Halve the avocado and use a teaspoon to scoop chunks of the flesh into a bowl. Gently mix all the other ingredients, except the fish, in with the avocado, set aside.

Heat a griddle pan until very hot. Season the fish with pepper, and salt if you want, then drizzle with a little olive oil. Griddle the fillets for 2-3 minutes on each side until charred and cooked through. Serve with the avocado salad. ♦

## Grilled Fish with Avocado Salsa

- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 ripe plum tomatoes, each chopped into 6
- 1 small red onion, finely sliced
- 3 tbsp. olive oil, plus some for drizzling
- Juice of half a lemon or 1 lime



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# Clear Direction for Your Retirement™

by Chris Wootton, ChFC®

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## From Surviving To Thriving In Difficult Times

On behalf of myself and the Wootton Financial team, I hope you are yours are staying safe and well. It has been an interesting year thus far to put it mildly and we continue to pray for our community, our country and our leaders as they navigate this pandemic event.

There is an old saying "may you live interesting times". We are certainly in a period of history that accomplishes that. There is tremendous fear and uncertainty on all fronts. The Corona Pandemic, the economic impact as a result and just what life will look like on the backside of it all from many different perspectives.

Bottom line, people and businesses are hurting and feeling as though they are simply surviving each day. Millions have lost their jobs with more to come. I know of many working for major corporations who have already been told that essentially it could get worse later this year before it gets better in that regard. Businesses, especially small businesses, are struggling to stay afloat or worse yet closing their doors altogether. People are both sick and dying from this virus and those that aren't worry about whether they'll end up as such. Depression is on the rise as well as things that associate with this debilitating condition. It's a lot to take in.

How are we to deal with such an onslaught of difficulty and uncertainty all at once? We certainly have both difficulty and uncertainty in life on a daily basis

but to have it all unfold at once can feel daunting to many. So, how do we go from surviving to thriving during times such as this?

I'm no pastor or therapist by any means so I don't have all the answers but I have learned a few things over my 47 years on this planet. I was told as a youngster that there are some aspects of life I can control and others I can't and not to fixate, fret and falter on the latter. I believe our faith plays a tremendous role in reducing anxiety and giving hope to many. I also believe our mental approach to such times and our actions through it play a role as well. This is certainly not an exhaustive analysis but they are proven principals.

This doesn't downplay or lessen the difficulty and struggle, it's real. However, how we prepare for and handle such events before, during and after determines whether we simply survive it or thrive in it to be better prepared for the future and this can look different for everyone.

With this said, I have a special treat for you our dear readers. At the end of this article I am providing a link to a video we've prepared with a dear friend of mine for over 25 years, Ruben Gonzalez. Ruben is a four-time Olympian in the luge in four different decades, a best-selling author and a world-wide public speaker. He knows a thing or two about adversity, mental toughness and pursuing your dreams and goals in the midst of uncertainty.

In addition to your faith, family and friends, I hope this video gives you some hope and encouragement during these times. That it helps you to thrive and not just survive. Feel free to share it with friends and follow our website and various social media channels for more helpful videos and info.

We are certainly here to answer any financial related questions or concerns you may have during this time. Whether it's a complimentary investment and financial planning consultation, what to do about a job loss or ideas on how you could seek to thrive financially during these times, we want to help you find Clear Direction for your Retirement®.

So, grab a beverage and enjoy the video. Blessings to you all.



Enjoy this  
video now!



<https://learn.woottonfinancial.com/ruben-gonzles-video-offer-landing-page>



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# SPRING & SUMMER; THE BIRDS ARE NESTING!

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

As we move from spring into summer, no doubt you will continue to see lots of busy backyard birds and hear them singing their beautiful courtship songs. Due to our warmer weather for an extended period of months, songbirds here may nest and raise several broods of young each

tail, and many are easily recognizable (as in “that’s a baby blue jay”). Baby birds “fledge” and leave the nest TO learn how to fly, not WHEN they know how to fly. This is natural behavior. They can be seen hopping around on the ground or flitting from low bush to low bush. This is completely



*Photos left and left center show nestling birds. Note they are not fully feathered. Birds in left center photo have “pin feathers”, which resemble toothpicks. The birds in right center and right photos are fledglings. Notice they are fully feathered and more recognizable as to what species they are (blue bird, blue jay, and mockingbird).*

year, starting in early spring and then continuing through summer and into early fall.

At our intake center, we commonly get calls from people who have rescued baby birds. There are times when a nest may fall, or a hatching or nestling baby bird may get blown or knocked out of its nest. Very young baby birds found on the ground do need help; these baby birds are either unfeathered, or have a little fuzz, or are just beginning to get feathers (pin feathers look a bit like toothpicks sticking out of a baby bird). These babies are helpless and cannot fly yet, or even walk or hop. If a nest can be located, the baby can be placed back into the nest. It is not true that if a baby bird is picked up or has “human scent” on it the parents will reject it (in fact, most songbirds have little or no sense of smell anyway). If a nest cannot be reached or located, many times it is possible to put up a substitute nest. Simply take a small basket, or small plastic container (like a Cool Whip or margarine container), poke a couple of drainage holes in the bottom, and line it with some grass and leaves. Then take the new nest and attach it to a tree (with bungee cord, string, or even nail it) close to where the baby was found. Put the baby or babies in the new nest and observe from a distance to see if the parent birds resume caring for the baby or babies. With most songbirds, both the male and female tend to the young, so even if something happens to one parent, the remaining parent should still be able to raise the chick(s). If parents do not return after a few hours, please call for assistance. Do not feed the baby birds anything; dehydrated or cold babies cannot digest any food, so attempting to feed them could do more harm than good. If it is late in the day, simply keep the babies warm and quiet overnight (parents do not feed their babies after dark in the wild anyway). A heating pad on LOW can be put half under the makeshift nest if needed. If babies are found late in the day, you can try re-nesting the following morning to see if reuniting is successful. Please call us if you have any concerns or questions about what to do.

Quite often when we get calls on baby birds, they are actually fledglings. These are baby birds that are fully feathered with a little stubby

normal. As they learn to fly, their parents are still tending to them and bringing them food. These birds do not need rescuing! This is the most dangerous time for baby birds, but they just need a day or two before they can fly quite well. Try to keep cats and dogs inside during the day if fledglings are seen, or if they are in danger from domestic pets perhaps try moving the fledgling(s) away from dangerous areas by placing them in a low bush or tree. It is simply not possible for wildlife centers or rehabilitators to take fledgling birds simply to protect them from domestic dogs or cats. Just imagine the numbers of animals involved in such a scenario...not to mention licensing guidelines limit rehabbers to “injured or orphaned animals”. It is not feasible to take fledglings simply to protect them from what “might” happen. Also, a word about cats...we love ALL animals, and many (most?) rehabbers also have lots of domestic pets. However, allowing unsupervised cats outside to predate on birds (as well as other small wildlife animals) has a huge impact on songbird mortality. It is much safer for cats as well as wildlife to keep cats inside. We see first hand every day the damage domestic cats inflict on many types of wildlife, but particularly on birds. If you do let your cats outside, then at least refrain from intentionally attracting birds to your yard (no birdfeeders, birdhouses, hummingbird feeders, etc.). Remember that bird houses will eventually mean fledgling baby birds, so unless you can keep your cat inside when babies are present, it would be kinder to not encourage them to nest where the cats are present.

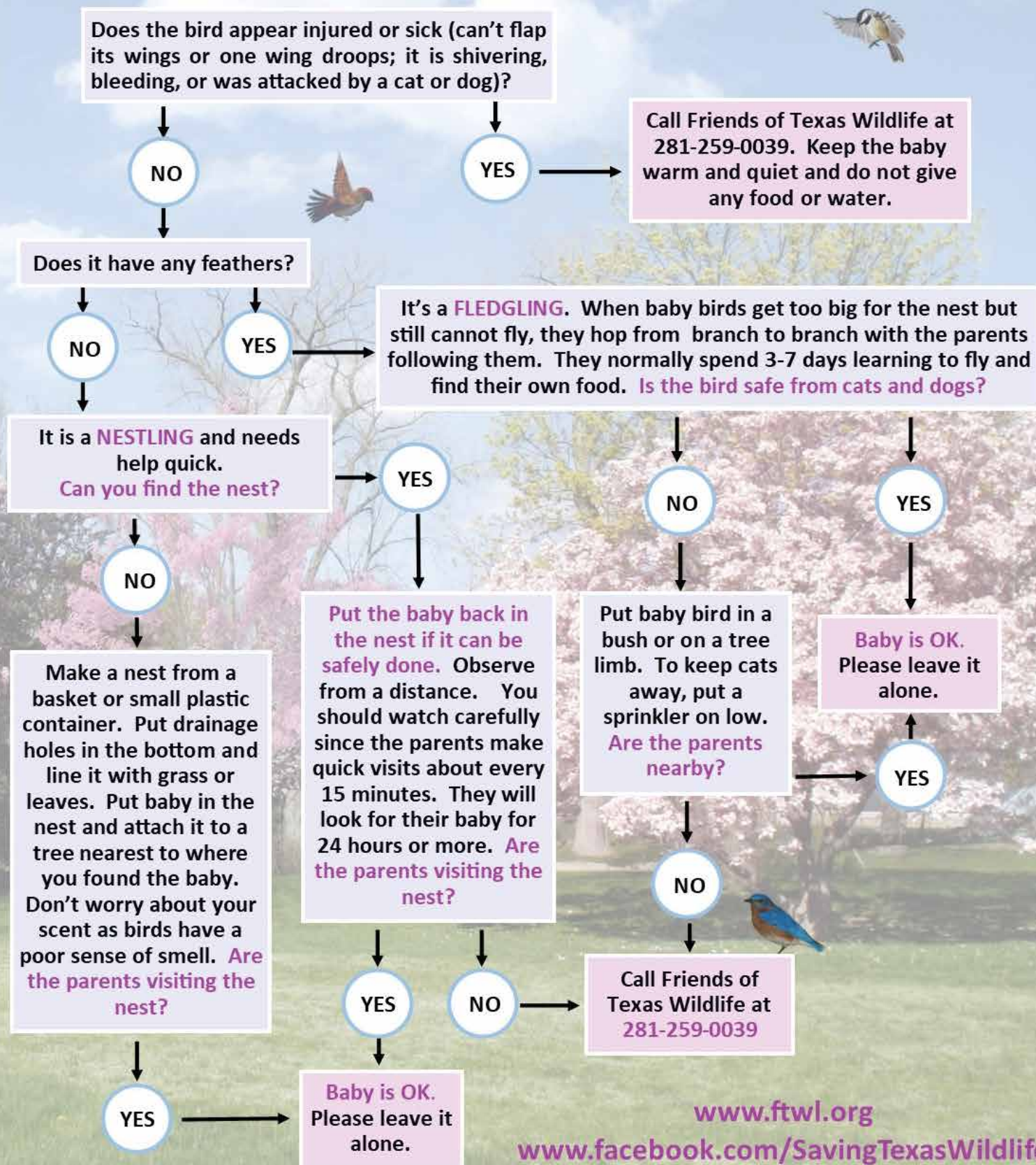
Most often simply understanding what normal behavior is for nestling birds is the best way to keep them safe and not unnecessarily separate them from their parents. We have more helpful information on our website at [www.ftwl.org](http://www.ftwl.org). To learn more about what we do and view pictures of many of the animals we assist, please visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SavingTexasWildlife](https://www.facebook.com/SavingTexasWildlife). We will continue to post on our website and Facebook page about our hours of operation and protocols during the Covid-19 concerns; at this time, unfortunately, our educational center remains closed. ♦





# I Found a Baby Bird

Every year, countless baby birds are “rescued” by well-meaning people who find fledgling babies out of the nest. Fledgling baby birds are old enough to be out of the nest, but they cannot yet fly. Assessing when a baby bird may need help (or not) is important to know. If you find a baby bird you are concerned about, please refer to this chart for guidance.



[www.ftwl.org](http://www.ftwl.org)

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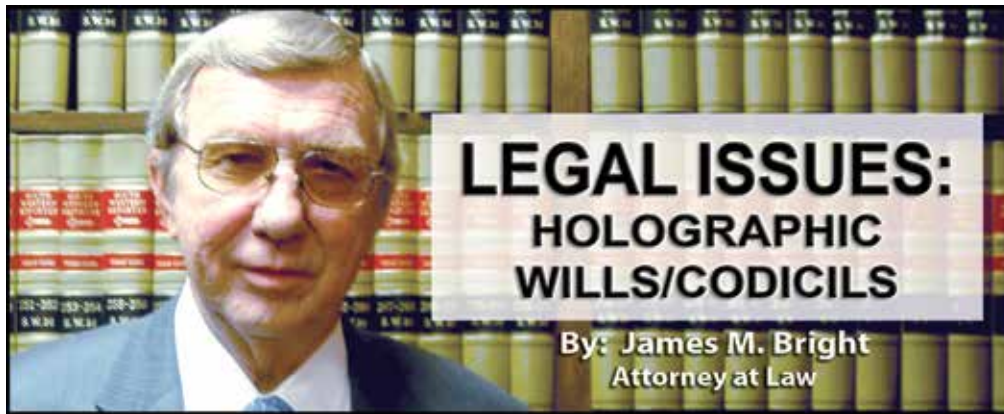
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*The following is provided for informational purposes only and is not, nor should it be construed as legal advice.*

Holographic wills/codicils are those last wills and testaments and/or codicils that are totally in the handwriting of and signed by the decedent.

Many people ask me if holographic wills are recognized in Texas as valid wills and if they can be probated in Texas courts. The answer is "Yes," holographic wills are common in this state, and they demand the same respect as an attorney-prepared will even though they may present special problems at time of probate. Holographic wills must meet the requirements of being a will and be specific enough to understand the intent of the testator.

The first requirement to probate any will, holographic or formal, is that the document offered

is "in fact" a will or codicil. The following essential elements are necessary to probate any will or codicil, but they become even more pronounced when the document offered is holographic.

**1. The Will or Codicil must identify the testator.** This element is usually met fairly easily, but on rare occasions is omitted. A good example is from my own practice where the testator had a formal will prepared by an attorney, but decided for some unknown reason to make some changes through a handwritten codicil. The formal will stated that he might wish to make a list of personal items that he wanted to pass to particular individuals, and that he would keep that list with his formal will as instruction for his executor. Often testators leave instructions to executors through documents that do not meet the formal requirements of a will for gifts of small and non-valuable assets and which the executor has the

option to follow or not to follow. If you wish for your codicil to be enforceable under the law, it must meet all four of the elements outlined in this article. Unfortunately, in the cited case, when the testator left the list, it not only contained numerous high value art items, but it was unsigned and showed no intent to make a gift. The list was nothing more than an inventory list of art items, and, therefore, was unenforceable.

**2. The Will or Codicil must be written with testamentary intent.** In order to be admitted to probate and for the testator's wishes to be enforceable, it must be clear that the person making the will or codicil intends to have the document treated as a testamentary directive. The most common and least ambiguous way to do this is to make a statement that "this is my last will and testament," but it is not uncommon in holographic wills for the testator to simply start listing how property is to pass without making it clear that such listing is an expression of testamentary intent. If the intent cannot be unambiguously determined by a simple reading of the document, then it probably will not be considered a will or codicil.

**3. The person writing the Will must have "testamentary capacity."** For this element, it does not matter if the will is holographic or formal. If the testator lacks testamentary capacity on the day that the will or codicil is signed, then the document is not an enforceable will/codicil. Standards for establishing testamentary capacity are well established by both statute and case law. The important thing to determine is that the testator had capacity on the exact date of the will.

**4. The Will or Codicil itself must adhere to requisite testamentary formalities.** For a holographic will or codicil to be upheld, it must be totally in the handwriting of the testator and signed by the testator. On occasions, this firm has found that sometimes a well meaning person will add additional language by typing, printing or handwriting. If a portion of the will/codicil is typewritten, printed or in the handwriting of a person who is not the testator, then courts will likely apply the "surplusage rule." If applied, this rule will allow probate of the offered will, but will disregard the language that is not in the testator's handwriting.

Although adherence to the above basic elements will qualify a holographic will for probate, they do not ensure that the enforcement of the will provisions can be followed without extreme difficulty and added expense. For example, on one holographic will handled by this firm, the testatrix met the burden on all the above-cited elements, but inadvertently created two more time-consuming problems as follow:

- Intended heirs were not clearly identified because the testator simply referred to seven named beneficiaries by their first names only. This did not make the will impossible to probate, but it did make it necessary to clarify the identity of each named person and to show the relationship with the decedent/testator. This required a separate legal action designed to identify the heirs who had been identified by first names only and to have a declaration by the court showing the identities. This procedure would not have been needed if the will had been properly drafted.

- The testator decided to make additions

# WILLS - PROBATE

## FLAT FEES

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to the will after the date of the original signing. Although the changes were still in her handwriting, they were made and dated approximately three months later and did not include a new signature. As a result, the part added later (i.e., the codicil) did not meet all of the requisites of a valid codicil and was ignored by the Court.

The testatrix was able to save a few dollars at the time of drafting by leaving a holographic will, but caused her family to spend three or four times more than would have been required to probate the will than if it had been professionally prepared.

The bottom line is this: It is usually less expensive to let a professional draft the needed documents. If you are the only living person in an aircraft that is doomed to crash unless safely landed, it is not only wise but also prudent to try to land the aircraft yourself. However, if there is a professional pilot on board who knows how to avoid the crash, you will probably be best served by turning over the controls to the professional. The same is true when it comes to drafting your will.

*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](http://www.houstontxprobate.com). ♦*





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Article and photos  
by Bronwyn Clear,  
Certified Texas  
Master Naturalist



## *fishing* HOLE NATURE



*When not singing in the trees, they can be spotted foraging through the grass for a meal.*

# The Northern Mockingbird Texas State Bird

*"Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."*

*– To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee.*



*You won't find them at your seed feeders because they eat insects in the warmer months and berries in winter.*



The Northern Mockingbird is a very popular and intelligent character. They hold a place in our culture, songs, books and movies. Mockers are found in great numbers nesting all over North America, and they are such delightful songbirds that they have been named the state bird for 5 different states, including Texas.

Medium in size, mockingbirds have striking white patches on their wings and tails that can be prominently seen while in flight. Otherwise, they have rather bland gray bodies with long legs and tails, small heads, skinny bodies, but very colorful personalities! During mating season, the male makes most of the nest. It has an outer geometric structure of large twigs and a center of softer material for the eggs and chicks. If a female likes his songs and nest work, she will lay a clutch of blue eggs with brown speckles. The chicks will hatch about two weeks afterward,

and in two more weeks the chicks will fledge.

Named for its ability to mimic, the mockingbird's medley is copied from many other birds such as bluebirds, cardinals, and even bald eagles. Sometimes from frogs and toads as well! The better he is at singing, the better he will be at attracting a lady. It is not unusual for one bird to have many songs in its current repertoire, and both females and males sing complex tunes. Although you may think there are 5 different birds singing in a nearby tree, the songs could all be coming from just one gleeful hopeful mockingbird. They sing anytime of the day, and amazingly, even at night!

Although they sing high up in the trees, they are ground foraging omnivores. Mockingbirds prefer bugs from the grass in summertime, and berries from low shrubs in the winter. A few summers ago one particular mocker fol-

lowed behind our lawnmower, gobbling grasshoppers that flipped up as the mower went by. Every week this mockingbird would swoop down and chase behind the mower! It was an easy meal for an intelligent opportunistic bird, and great entertainment for us bystanders.

To hear a mocker's birdsong, go to [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern\\_Mockingbird](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Mockingbird). Recorded birdsong is a service offered by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Or just walk outside to your back porch and listen. Sit back and enjoy the free concert given by your little winged virtuoso!

Learn more about the incredible nature in our area by joining a chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist organization. To find a chapter close to you, or to read about the state program, go online to [www.txmnr.org](http://www.txmnr.org). Volunteer and get involved! ♦



*A mockingbird nest has a geometric twig framework with a center nest made of soft Spanish Moss. Their eggs are light blue with brown speckles.*

*Mockingbirds are plain in looks, but beautiful in song!*







### 5-11-20 BACK IN THE BOAT BASS FISHING

Today I went out in the boat on Lake Conroe. It was a beautiful day to fish. The temperature was in the 70's and a nice breeze was



blowing. I could fish all day in this weather. I have not been fishing that much lately, so I decided today was the day I would try to locate some fish. The first few spots I went to when I started were not good. The blue herons were sitting around watching me to see if I was going to catch something. Not at that spot. Maybe I am just throwing the wrong bait. I knew the fish were around, I just had to find them and give them something appetizing to eat.

I came up to a brush pile then changed the bait I had been using and bam. Caught one.

It was about 3 pounds. I moved to another location and caught another small one. I went to a few more places trying to find them and nothing. It was time to go put some gas in the boat. Good thing I got there when I did because I didn't realize I was running on fumes. I headed back home to take a break.

Several hours later I decided I was going to go back out again. I was catching fish and it was a great day to be on the water. Not many boats were on the lake. Soon after I left I had a nice big bass on. I caught this one on a Carolina rig. It was approximately 6 or 7 pounds, not sure because I didn't have my scale. Fished till dark. Caught a few more but they were all smalls. The big one got me fired up.

### 5-12-20 Tuesday Night Tournament- Conroe Bass

Parker called me last week and asked if I



would fish with him and I told him no because I had not been on the lake and didn't know where the fish were. This time I said, "Yes" because I went out and found some pretty nice fish and felt confident to go ahead and invest my money and give it my best.

There were 37 teams fishing tonight. It was raining super hard when we got to the take-off, so we're delayed 45 minutes. Even



though we drew number 5, it didn't help us because it was a shotgun start since we were late taking off. We were one of the last boats to leave. Since we were delayed everyone had the same weigh in time, which was 9 p.m. There were 37 teams fishing in the Tuesday Night Tournament on Lake Conroe.

It rained on us for the first hour of the tournament. At least it slowed down because when we arrived it was coming down in heavy sheets and drifting across the water. Parker's dog, Chance was on board and he was getting wet as well. My mom told us he would be the good luck charm for tonight. We arrived at the first spot and Parker caught a little one. Then he hooked another fish and it hung him up and broke him off in a brush pile.

Our second spot we went offshore and I caught 1 on a Texas rig. Next spot I caught 3 on a Texas rig and a crank bait. Parker also caught 3.

We were going down the bank when Parker set the hook, the drag was loose, causing it to slip and the fish jumped twice. When he was pulling it in the net it jumped and threw the hook and the head was coming out of the net. I said, "Where do you think you are going?" and scooped it back in the net. Parker put him in the live well. We kept fishing and going down the bank. We caught some 2-3 pounders, culling along the way.

I was throwing a Texas rig and a fish thumped it hard and my eyes got big. I knew I had a "Big One". It jumped twice. I said, "Big One, Big One!" Parker netted it. I got it in the boat and we high fived. It was a 6 pounder. We culled another fish.

I was fishing and got hung up on the bank. While I was busy shaking it off and getting it unhung Parker was throwing a crank bait. He caught a 3 pounder and we culled our last fish. We felt we had a great day of fishing even though we were cut short 45 minutes by the delay.

We proudly pulled our fish out of the well and were excited to get in line to see what we had in our bag. We raced up the hill with Chance tagging along wagging his tail. I think he was proud of the fish we had in our bag. There were several anglers and captains







from Montgomery High School competing at this tournament. We got to the scales and we couldn't decide which one of our big fish was the largest so we weighed both of them. I caught one and so did Parker. My fish weighed 6-11. It was nice size but it was not the big fish for the night. There were two different guys that had 9 pounders. They put our 3 fish on the scale and the total weight was 15.55. That was a good bag, but there were still anglers in line so we had to wait to see the final out-



come. Then another team came up, they pulled a beast out of their bag. It weighed 9.4 pounds. We waited anxiously to see how much his total bag weight was. Luckily it was less than ours. I was scared when another guy pulled out 2 six pounders and was worried the third fish was going to be a 4 pounder. Thank goodness it was a 2 pounder. We talked to Mr. Clepper as we waited.

They announced all the winners and then they called out our names and we won first place. Parker and I caught fish on every spot. It was so much fun and I am glad I fished.  
**THROW IT OUT, POP IT IN, FISH ON! ♦**





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