

DOCK LINE

Lake Conroe

MAGAZINE

August 2020



See page 8

radiant
SKIN & HEALTH

**The Surprising Value of
Self-Confidence
in a World of Uncertainty**
How Radiant Skin and Health is Transforming
How People See Themselves



**SJRA Rehabilitation of
Bear Branch Gravity Main
Project Update**
See Page 46

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Just like June and July, August is shaping up to be like no other we have ever experienced. As we are continuing to learn what new normal behaviors are expected of us with changing variables on a daily basis it gets to be a bit confusing. Nobody seems to know what normal even looks like anymore. Here at Dock Line we will continue to be here to support our community, since now more than ever our community needs all of our support. As we continue to navigate the new waters of this ever changing summer, just know we will still have beach days and cookouts but there will also be social distancing, smaller gatherings and more staycations. Our new normal is definitely anything but normal. It is true our vocabulary has changed but throughout it all, the message remains the same. We are a community of resilience, compassion and generosity. It has become apparent now more than ever what a great community we live in. We encourage everyone to take a look around, celebrate the little things and support your local businesses, as they absolutely need your support as we all struggle to get through this unprecedented time. If we all stick together we will be stronger than ever. Until next month, stay safe and take care...



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DOCK LINE

Lake Conroe

MAGAZINE



table of CONTENTS

AUGUST 2020

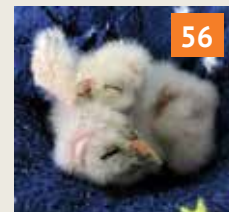


ON THE COVER



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- 8 The Surprising Value of Self-Confidence in a World of Uncertainty
How Radiant Skin and Health is Transforming How People See Themselves
- 12 A Crash Course in Insurance
- 14 Back to Health
- 16 Seeing the World Like Never Before...How Eye Trends is Changing Eye Care in Conroe, Texas
- 20 A Stress-Free Kitchen Renovation, On Time and Within Budget?
How Dream Kitchen & Bath is Transforming Spaces...and Perceptions
- 26 An UPDATE from STAGE RIGHT of Texas: The Only Constant in Life is Change
- 28 It's All In YOUR HEAD
- 30 Blue Water Navy Veterans & Survivors Awarded Big Benefits
- 31 Clear Direction for Your Retirement™
- 34 The Players Theatre Company: Hope Springs Eternal!
- 36 Life Line a Doctor's INSIGHT
- 38 From the Chairman's Desk
- 42 LEGAL ISSUES: LEGAL: WHO DO I PAY FIRST?
- 44 Online with Dock Line: Should You Build Your Own Website?
The Pros and Cons of a DIY Website
- 46 SJRA Rehabilitation of Bear Branch Gravity Main Project Update
- 48 Garden Thyme
- 50 Fishing Hole Nature: Flycatchers & the Texas Bird-of-Paradise
- 52 Rescues & Shelters are Overcrowded...How can you help?
- 54 Creatures from the Deep
- 56 Friends of Texas Wildlife: Is That a Baby Owl?
- 57 Catch 'Em, Clean 'Em & Eat 'Em
- 58 Fishing Adventures with Derek Pietsch
- 60 Lake Conroe Fishing Report
- 61 Fish News



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DOCK LINE MAGAZINE is published by:
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Subscriptions to DOCK LINE MAGAZINE cost \$25.00 per year. To subscribe, mail a check with your name and address to:
P.O. Box 1203
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Dock Line Magazine, Inc. welcomes reader correspondence. We reserve the right to edit or reject any material submitted. The publisher assumes no responsibility for the return of any unsolicited material.

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The Surprising Value of Self-Confidence in a World of Uncertainty

How Radiant Skin and Health is Transforming How People See Themselves

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN

The uncertainty in our world is increasing by the day. So many of the things we've put our confidence in are now becoming a source of worry, fear, or anxiety. Economic insecurity is looming, school systems are facing unprecedented challenges, social gatherings are difficult to navigate, and all the ways we've created our own "normal lives" seem to be crumbling. So much change in such a short time typically only causes more stress and anxiety about the future. The result of which tends to manifest in

our physical bodies.

But perhaps the shining light in all of this is the opportunity to change our perspective on where our sense of security comes from. We so often put our confidence in external things - things outside of our control. The saving grace in your life may actually be the confidence that is available to you from within. Now, before you go writing this off as some "woo-woo" mystical wisdom, you should know how powerful a little self-confidence can be to every part of your



world. Your reality is shaped heavily by how you see yourself. The less confidence you have in yourself, the more likely you'll look for an outside source to make up the difference.

Enter Radiant Skin and Health. The new med spa in Conroe is transforming people's ideas about what they thought was possible when it comes to their bodies. Stress can weigh us down and put such a strain on our physical bodies over time. Seasons like the one we're in now seem to only exacerbate the issue. Most people just accept it and live with the result, often adding extra weight to their bodies, finding new wrinkles in new places, feeling more fatigued than ever, and unaware that there is any hope to change it. Radiant Skin and Health is exactly the kind of solution that could reverse the physical symptoms of living in so much uncertainty.

Your Boost in Self-Confidence is Closer than You Think

Self-confidence is heavily predicated on how we see ourselves. Let's face it, we are our own worst critics. We look in the mirror and no-

tice all of our flaws before anything else. We see once firm, beautiful skin looking aged and wrinkled. We notice sagging skin in new places. We don't see the youthful reflection that used to bring us so much confidence in the past. Most of us just accept that our beauty is long gone and aging gracefully is just a pipe dream for celebrities.

However, that couldn't be further from the truth. Radiant Skin and Health, owned and operated by Dr. Jeremy Laningham, is giving people their youth back, and along with it the self-confidence that empowers them to take control of their lives again. Started in January 2019, Radiant Skin and Health has quickly become a bright light in Montgomery County for men and women of all ages and at all different stages of life.

"I opened the spa to help my patients



Continued on page 10



look great, and feel great," says Dr. Laningham. "I attended a conference in Dallas, when I saw the Inmode products and the results from the treatments. I knew I needed to bring that back to my practice. Our goal here at Radiant is to help our clients look and feel their best without breaking the bank."

Inmode is a leading innovator in medical solutions offering cutting edge medical devices for minimally-invasive & non-invasive procedures that provide amazing results for the patient

and the practice. Dr. Laningham immediately saw the need for the transformative treatments for his patients in and around Conroe.

How Can Radiant Skin and Health Transform How I See Myself?

Radiant Skin and Health now provides a wide array of options to help anyone, man or woman, to reclaim their youthful exuberance and revive their self-confidence. Here's a look at the core services you'll find at Radiant Skin

and Health:

- POWER T Hormone Pellet Therapy for treating low testosterone in men and giving them back their strength, energy, and virility.
- MORPHEUS8 Microneedling + RF Energy that improves skin complexion and texture for a more radiant and youthful appearance.
- EVOLVE TITE Skin Tightening that dramatically improves the look of sagging skin, recontouring your figure, with zero downtime.
- EVOLVE TRIM Body Reshaping, a quick and easy non-surgical, non-invasive alternative to liposuction. It's the new gold standard for body shaping and cellulite treatment.
- DIOLAZE XL Laser Hair Removal that lets you achieve the smooth and soft skin that you've always wanted without ever needing to shave again.
- LUMECCA Skin Renewal & Clarity, a light treatment to improve skin complexion, reduce skin irregularities and look years younger.
- FORMA Thermal Contraction that uses radio frequency treatments to improve the skin's overall appearance with smoother skin and a more radiant glow.

And Radiant Skin and Health offers even more services like spray tans and chemical peels.

Radiant Skin and Health also understands how important your overall health really is. As Dr. Laningham points out, "We are different from most med spas because we have an MD (me) here to do your consultation and assist with any of your needs, and we truly care about each and everyone patient of ours."

Perhaps the best aspect of Radiant Skin and Health is their desire to help anyone, regardless of your current situation.

"We really do have something for everyone," says Dr. Laningham. "Not looking to break the bank? Have a facial. Wanting to spoil yourself? Sign up for a mommy makeover package. We focus on your needs, and what it will take to make you happy."

If you're in need of a boost in self-confidence, want to revive your youthful vibrance, or just need to re-energize your life, Radiant Skin and Health may be just what you've been looking for. Come see how you can transform the way you look, and more importantly the way you see yourself.

To make these life-changing services available to everyone in the midst of social distancing and health protocols, Radiant Skin and Health is offering free virtual consultations to anyone. Simply call them at 936-209-3010 or fill out the form on their website at radiantskinandhealth.com. Radiant Skin and Health is located at 4015 Interstate 45 N Ste. 300, Conroe, TX 77304 and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. ♦

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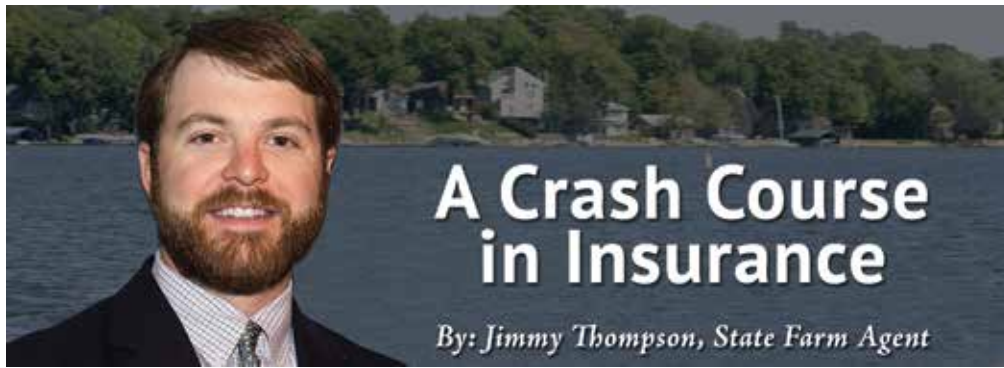
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Have you ever called a 1-800 number and pressed 0 until you were able to get to a real person? Or maybe you're like my father in law, and you yell at the automated recording until it malfunctions and patches you through? It's not an easy way to get business done, that's for sure! Insurance can be complicated enough at times, so it really doesn't help when your agent is a robot!

So think for a minute about the good old days.....when good honest PEOPLE (like real human beings) took care of your business. Remember what it was like when the people you played ball with, went to church with or saw at the grocery store and school events were the same people who took care of your family's insurance and financial service needs? Man, those were the good old days! Those were the days when your claim got handled by someone you know! Those were the days when you got what you

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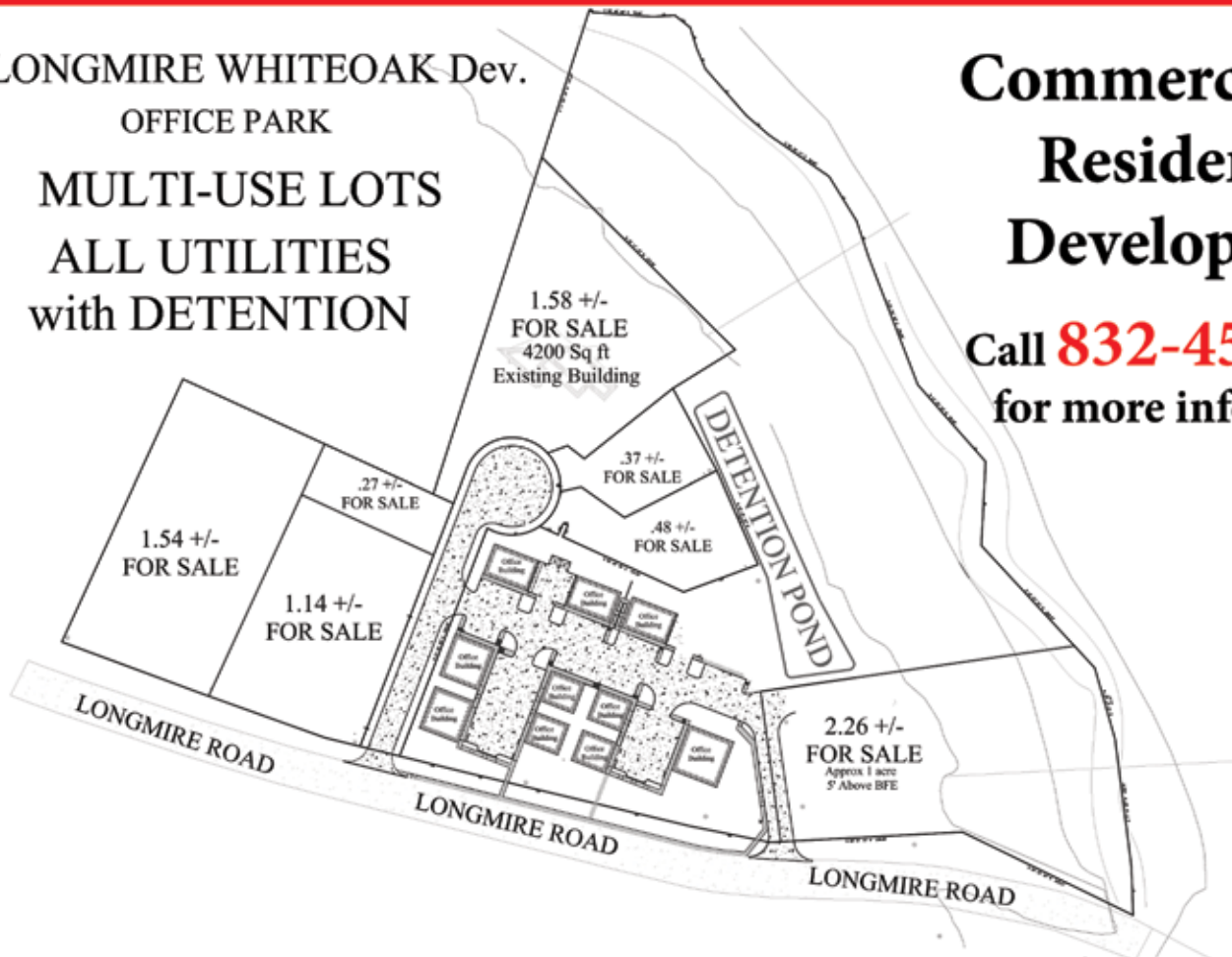
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Back to Health

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



Acute Lower Back Pain



Eight out of ten people experience lower back pain in their lifetime. Fortunately, the vast majority of acute (new) injuries resolve without complications in 2-4 week timeframe. With that said, low back pain is the #1 cause of disability and days lost from work in the United States today.

When an injury occurs, ice should be used to control pain and inflammation. Inflammation is the body's natural and necessary response to injury. Unfortunately, our body almost always over-responds with the inflammatory response which can lengthen the recovery process. By applying ice we reduce blood flow to the localized area and reduce the inflammatory phase of recovery. Ice should be applied for a maximum of twenty minutes every hour.

Following the ice application, muscles

should be lightly stretched using a 10 second hold technique. Mild muscle massage with trigger point massage may be used to reduce muscular spasm. It is typical for the body to respond to inflammation and pain by "splinting" itself by muscle contraction. A muscle spasm will cause further pain and inflammation, so it is important to break the muscle spasm so the body can progress through the inflammatory response. Trigger point massage is the process of pinpointing very tight and tender areas of the muscle and holding moderate fingertip pressure on the spot for 20-30 seconds. This evokes a relaxation response to the muscle. Continue the light massage searching and triggering those tight muscle fibers until the entire muscle is relaxed.

Keep in mind, studies have shown a quicker recovery for persons who continue to ambulate and perform light work duties through the healing process. Bedrest will lengthen your pain and suffering. Stay within your mild discomfort range to help the muscles relax and begin to advance in the recovery process.

Most importantly, we need to discuss those instances when we need more emergent care than ice, stretching and massage. Red Flags are signs and symptoms of conditions which warrant an immediate emergency room visit. The Red Flags of lower back pain are listed below:

Red Flags of Back Pain

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Dr. Todd Custer
Chiropractor/Athletic
Trainer

Dustin Cook, P.T.
Physical Therapist

**Increasing numbness to groin/anus region
Progressive weakness of the legs**

The Red Flags are signs of a condition known as cauda equina syndrome. Cauda equina syndrome is a condition in which the nerves in the lower lumbar spine are compressed causing progressively worsening condition resulting in permanent paralysis without immediate surgical decompression. This is very rare, but very permanent without emergent intervention. Present yourself immediately to the emergency room if any Red Flags begin to develop.

Another group of signs and symptoms that I will label as Yellow Flags require consultation with a doctor for further evaluation. The Yellow Flags of low back pain are listed below.

Yellow Flags

- trauma-fall, auto accident, etc.
- change in color of urine/feces
- pain worse at night-time and rest
- pain running down leg
- weakness/giving out of leg
- pulsating pain in back and belly
- severe pain, unmanageable with ice/stretch/massage
- unremitting pain lasting longer than 5 days

Yellow Flag symptoms may be signs of intervertebral disc injury, aortic aneurysm, kidney/gallstones, fracture, tumor or infection. These conditions require an attentive examination and testing so that appropriate intervention and proper care are provided.

If you tend to fall into a cycle of repeat injuries or are having a difficult time managing the pain or functioning through the pain, chiropractic or physical therapy can be considered to improve your functional abilities and manage your pain through the healing process. During therapy, core stabilization exercises and posture recognition strategies can be taught to prevent re-injury. In addition, hands-on massage, joint manipulation and mobilization can be used to reduce the muscle spasm and improve the motion at the joints of the spine.

In summary, the vast majority of low back injuries resolve over time with a reduction of activity (not bed rest!) and limiting pain by using ice/stretching/massage. If red or yellow flags are evident further evaluation is necessary. And if in doubt, better to be safe than sorry, get it checked out.

Todd R. Custer, D.C., A.T. – Dr. Custer is a doctor of chiropractic and former certified athletic trainer with experience rehabilitating injured athletes at the high school, collegiate, and professional levels (Philadelphia Eagles Football Club) since 1994.

Dr. Custer graduated from Texas Chiropractic College summa cum laude, and is currently treating patients at Better Care Chiropractic & Physical Therapy.

Questions/comments or requests for future topics can be forwarded to whybettercare@gmail.com. ♦



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Seeing the World Like Never Before... **How Eye Trends is Changing Eye Care in Conroe, Texas**



BY: MATTHEW CALHOUN



In 1985 Dr. Inns and Touns established their optometry practice and have made it their primary goal to bring patients the best vision and eye health, while using the latest technology. They work hard to get to know their patients and gain patients' trust and confidence. Their friendly staff is happy to help with scheduling appointments and insurance utilization. Same day appointments are also available.

Services Offered

Eye Trends provides routine eye care and same day glasses and contact lenses. They also provide care for a wide range of conditions, including

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- Co-management of cataract and LASIK surgeries

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Continued on page 18 ➞





images of the back of the eye. Optomap images can also provide a wide angle photograph of the retina for future comparisons.

Visual Field Testing

A visual field test measures your peripheral vision and can help with the diagnosis of conditions such as glaucoma or brain tumors.

Dry Eye Evaluation

Scans of the meibomian glands in the eyelid and tear quality evaluation can be diagnosing the underlying cause of dry eye symptoms. Once the cause is known, the best treatment recommendations can be made.

Dry Eye Treatment

Many treatments are available and can be initiated in office with care continued at home. One new technology available is treatment by Intense Pulsed Light (IPL). This non painful procedure stimulates the glands to produce better quality tears that do not evaporate as quickly. It has been used in various fields of medicine, such as dermatology, but has only recently been available for eye care. Symptoms improve after just a few hours.

For your summer, consider a new pair of sunglasses. UV in sunlight can lead to eye-strain and conditions such as cataracts, skin cancer, or benign growths on the whites of the eyes. They offer a wide variety of designer sunglasses including Maui Jim, Costa del Mar, Oakley, and Ray Ban. Make sure to get polarized lenses, which help reduce glare off surfaces such as wet roads, rivers, and the lake.

While out having fun this summer, stay up to date with your yearly checks ups with your optometrist. They can recommend treatments for eye strain, make lens recommendations based on your visual needs, check for eye diseases and much more. When you visit Eye Trends, you and your doctor can develop solutions with which you are comfortable.

Where to find Eye Trends

Eye Trends in Conroe can be found at 1329 West Davis Street. You can contact them by phone at 936-441-3937 or on their website at <https://www.eye-trends.com>. Eye Trends in The Woodlands is located at 402 Sawdust Road and can be reached at 281-363-2020. Feel free to schedule an appointment online or over the phone. Eye Trends looks forward to helping you feel and see better this year. ♦

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A Stress-Free Kitchen Renovation, On Time and Within Budget?

*How Dream Kitchen & Bath is Transforming Spaces...
and Perceptions*

BY: BRIAN SHERMAN



What's the most popular remodeling project for homeowners? What room is the most renovated room in American homes? The answer is not a surprise to anyone: the kitchen.

The kitchen is the room that people use the most. It's the place where so many family moments happen, where friends gather, where holiday memories are created. It's where the kids run through to grab a snack on a busy day, where you stand around the counter and enjoy a conversation, and where family meals are prepared with loved ones. It's usually the most memorable room in your home, and that might not necessarily be a good thing if your kitchen is old and out of style.

While it may be the most popular hang out spot, it's also the one room that gets outdated the quickest. Keeping up with the newest trends and upgrading your kitchen might sound exciting, but it also scares a lot of homeowners. There are a lot of assumptions about renovations, namely how stressful they can be. But the reality is, the stress factor comes down to choosing the right company.

Renovation? Get Ready to be Stressed...Right?

Dream Kitchen & Bath started for that very reason - to change the assumptions about home remodels by providing a service that will always exceed customers' expectations. And let's face it, expectations for the process of remodeling aren't usually very high. Time after time they have delivered results that surprise their customers, and they do it by breaking the mold of what a typical renovation should be. Here's a customer response that exemplifies the work of Dream Kitchen & Bath:

"Dream Kitchen & Bath surpassed our expectations - they have done an incredible job with our interior renovation. Our home needed a major facelift when we moved in, and Emad was personally involved in the planning of each project with recommendations based on his experience. His team handled all of our projects that included the kitchen, three baths, and the support



beam construction of the dining room for an open plan concept. Each crewmember on his team was very courteous, and made sure our concerns were promptly addressed and with attention to detail. All of our projects were within the cost estimates provided, and in a timely manner. The office staff and crews were both professional and courteous throughout this transformation. Our home looks wonderful, and we highly recommend Emad and his team for any home project."

– Angie's List Review

Dream Kitchen & Bath's General Manager Emad Takatka takes pride in their process. "We always exceed our customer's expectations. We always deliver what they were hoping for, which actually surprises most people. They can't be-

lieve that we delivered on time, with such high quality work and communication. We make the process as easy as possible and our customers are always delighted by our methods."

It's quite unusual for people to enjoy the process of a renovation. The finished product, sure, but the in-between is where the stress lurks. Dream Kitchen & Bath has found a way to transform not only people's kitchens, but also their perception on what a remodeling company can be.

Why Kitchen Remodels Don't Have to Be Stressful

Kitchen remodels specifically are so popular because renovations can be made without

Continued on page 22 ➞



you having to move out of the house, and it can add a ton of value to your home. While you can find a way to live around the construction, most renovations can be messy and make you want to stay away as much as possible. It's not uncommon to see piles of debris right outside the front door, and a messy dump of demolition aftermath sitting in front of the house. Dream Kitchen & Bath takes a different approach, removing all the debris daily and never placing it in front of the home.

They also finish remodel projects on time, a rare feat nowadays, and within budget - perhaps even more scarce. And we're not talking about cheap, simple designs and materials. Granite, marble, quartz, intricate designs, artistic molding, detail oriented craftsmanship - all designed, constructed and installed with excellence from conception to completion. Dream Kitchen & Bath follows a narrow road in the home renovation industry: they actually deliver on their promises.

Renovations also always seem to reveal hidden problems, and how they are handled can be the source of either anxiety or relief. "When it comes to problems and troubleshooting, with no questions asked I myself go and talk with the customer within an hour to make sure the communication is clear and that everything is under control. We move everything in our schedule around to meet the customer's needs and keep the project on track," says Emad.

A large part of their success is the vision behind the company, Emad's love for transfor-



mation. "My passion is simply to fix things, to make things better," he says. "My kids call me the fixer. I see something that is broken and I get excited about fixing it. When it comes to remodelling, I love to see the transformation of a space. I love finding the potential and making it a reality." Perhaps that's exactly why the company is called Dream Kitchen & Bath. Your dream for your kitchen contains all the potential Emad and his team need to transform your space. And do they ever deliver.

Current Events and Remodeling - How Has it Been Affected?

Many new homes now are built with an open concept, where the kitchen is the focal point. It makes perfect sense. The style is so



popular that homeowners are removing walls, opening up rooms, and rebuilding their kitchen to match the looks they so often see on HGTV. But with everything going on in the world, you may think remodelling a kitchen is the last thing on people's minds. Well, then you'd be surprised.

"To be honest, I'm surprised by this, but we haven't been affected at all," says an amazed Emad. "If anything, we've only had a few customers who requested to put a project on hold for a few weeks to be cautious, only to start back up once their fears were relieved of the severity of everything."

That should bring some hope to you if you've been considering a remodel but have had second thoughts due to current events. In fact, now may be the perfect time to transform your home to prepare for friends and family in the future.

Community Support Makes All the Difference

Dream Kitchen & Bath is not just a local favorite for transforming kitchens, but for bathrooms, living rooms, bedrooms - any space in a

home. Emad feels blessed to have the support of the local community. "We love our community because they are so supportive and love working with local businesses," he says. "While we strive to go above and beyond for each of our customers, we have been surprised that they do the same for us. They talk about us to everyone they know and about how we were on time, the quality of work, and the level of communication we provide. It's music to our ears. This has always been our goal, to reach this level of relationship with our customers."

If you are looking for a stress-free way to get your kitchen, bathroom, or full home renovation, Dream Kitchen & Bath is your new favorite home design and construction company. Not only will you get exceptional service and craftsmanship throughout your renovation, you will also get a beautiful design rendering for your dream room for free! You can learn more about Dream Kitchen & Bath by going online at www.dreamkitchenandbathtx.com, or by calling GM Emad Takatka at (832) 944-5528. ♦

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STAGE RIGHT

An **UPDATE** from **STAGE RIGHT** of Texas: The Only Constant in Life is Change

By: Carolyn Corsano Wong



Lisa Schofield in The Wild Women of Winedale. Change is hard.

STAGE RIGHT of Texas, resident theatre company at the historic Crichton Theatre, has announced that they are moving their production of *Peter Pan* to at least December of 2020 and are not going to be selling season tickets to their planned 2020-2021 Season. The board of directors has decided that theatre under gathering restrictions is not safe or financially practical so they are going to keep moving the productions until a time when gathering restrictions are not in effect.

Are you still doing *Peter Pan*?

Yes, we are producing *Peter Pan*. Out of an abundance of caution though, our board in

consultation with the show's production team decided that it would be best to delay the show once again. The new tentative dates for *Peter Pan* are Dec 4-20, 2020. Tickets will not be on sale until gathering restrictions are eliminated.

Why was *Peter Pan* delayed again?

Due to the surge in Covid-19 cases in June, restrictions of gatherings to no more than 10 persons are back in effect. We can't rehearse *Peter Pan* for presentation in September with only 10 people present at a time. Additionally, live performance venues are currently under capacity restrictions and social distancing measures are still in effect. With capacity restric-

tions in place, the 541 seat Crichton Theatre is reduced to a little over 150 seats. We lose money if we run a show with only that amount of folks in the audience especially an expensive show like *Peter Pan* that comes with the exorbitant cost to fly performers. Additionally, maintaining 6' distance is impossible on stage and backstage during a performance. We have chosen to do what we felt is in the best interest of our artists, patrons and our organization.

What happens to the next season line-up of shows: 2020-2021 Season of Screen to Stage?

STAGE RIGHT is not going to be selling a season package for 2020-2021. Since *Pe-*



The lovely Kathleen Baker in midtransformation as Cinderella



Lizzie Camp in Thoroughly Modern Millie

ter Pan is up in the air (sorry about the pun), it would not be wise to sell season packages since we don't know when the shows will actually take place. We will most likely start the same season of shows planned for 2020-2021

money due to the pandemic restrictions and have no source of income until we are able to present a show. If you'd instead like a credit to a show next season, we'd be happy to accommodate that as well. If you already purchased

season tickets to our 2020-2021 season, we will refund your money.

You lost me. I'm confused.

If you have questions, please call the Crighton box office and they can answer any questions you might have and get all your ticketing issues resolved.

Please keep up with the most current information regarding dates for shows on our website: www.stage-right.org or the Crighton Theatre website www.crightontheatre.org. Please keep safe, stay well and we look forward to seeing you back at the historic Crighton Theatre when this whole mess is over. On the plus side, when you do come back all of the renovations to the lobby may be finished! What a grand re-opening that will be! ♦



Our last bow on the Crighton stage

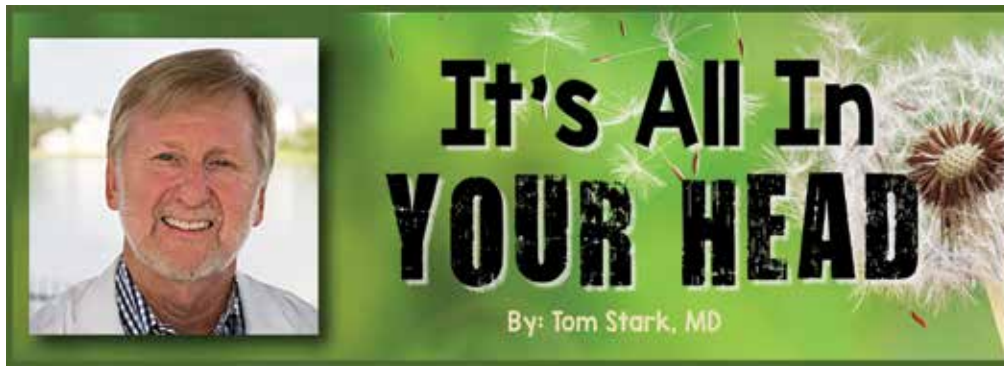
(*The Odd Couple*, *Nunsense*, *Elf*, *Funny Girl*, *Leaving Iowa*, and *Wizard of Oz*) for a 2021-2022 season. In the meantime, if it is safe to gather again we will come up with alternate small cast shows and hopefully a fundraising event to entertain folks.

I'm a season ticket holder and I already paid for some of these shows, how is that going to work??

Fear not. You will get what you paid for. Folks that had season tickets to our 2019-2020 season, you already paid for *Peter Pan* and *M*A*S*H*. When we are able to present those shows without social distancing requirements, you will see them in the seats you selected. If you would rather not wait and just want your money back, we'll do that. We hope though that you'll consider waiting until we can safely present these shows since we have already lost



The Horrible Herdmans became not so horrible in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever-The Musical



YOUR MEDICATIONS CAN MAKE YOUR NOSE AND THROAT FEEL BAD

In my role as a practicing ENT specialist, obviously I see patients with nose woes and throat inflammation including chronic throat clearing or cough. Often these conditions are the result of allergies or infections. I have previously written about treatments for these conditions using both over-the-counter and prescription medications.

This month I would like to talk about how medications that are prescribed for unrelated medical problems can result in symptoms such as nasal congestion and dryness of the nose and throat leading to thick postnasal drip. When I talk about this type of problem it is not considered to be a medication allergy but is

classified as a side effect.

The human body is tremendously complex and almost any chemical ingested into it can lead to an unexpected result. However many of the commonly prescribed medications have predictable side effects.

The first side effect that I encounter is nasal congestion or a stopped up nose sensation. I see this most commonly seen with medications to lower high blood

pressure. Many medications for hypertension work by causing the tiny muscles around blood vessels to relax. Unfortunately this action also leads to the blood vessels just under the surface of the nasal lining enlarging. This makes the nasal tissues get bigger which is what all of us experience as congestion. A DE-congestant, such as Sudafed, actually acts to constrict these blood vessels, making the tissue smaller and making breathing easier. Unfortunately Sudafed can raise your blood pressure, so long term use needs to be monitored.

Here is a list of other types of medications which have been noted to have side effects of nasal stuffiness and congestion: aspirin, ibuprofen, hormone replacements (including birth



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control), antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs and even ED meds like Viagra.

Dryness of the mouth and throat is also a common medication side effect. Blood pressure medications containing diuretics to remove fluid from the body can result in excessive dryness including thickening of the normal nasal secretions to create an irritating thick postnasal drainage. Drugs to control irritable bowel spasms, bladder spasms or frequent urination frequently lead to throat dryness and a feeling of frequent need to clear your throat. Other medications causing this problem include antihistamines, anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants, Parkinson's disease meds, nausea treatments and oral inhalers for asthma or COPD.

One other specific medication causing problems is blood pressure medicine in the class called ACE inhibitors. The most common one of these is known as Lisinopril. This drug frequently has a side effect of any persistent dry tickle cough. Once it is discontinued the cough usually goes away quickly.

Obviously not everyone will suffer these side effects. And I certainly do not recommend stopping prescription medications without having a conversation with your primary physician's office. But often looking outside the common causes such as allergy or infection provides better remedy of these persistent problems. ♦

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ML# 29003595. \$2,750,000



Rare, Rustic & Pure Country Living! Located on a quiet 1.5+ acres of land w/a 3 bed/2.5 bath+study main house, 1 bed/1 full bath guest quarters, 40x30 steel frame workshop w/concrete floors, air compressor, bathroom, office, 12 ft. overhead doors (2) & 14 ft. eaves, 40x15 lean-to shed, small pond + 2 entrances (1 is a circle driveway)! This home was built w/vision; from the landscape/ac-

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

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



Residential, Commercial or Both? Featuring almost 3.5 acres of land with a house + metal building within minutes from FM 3083, N Loop 336 E, I-45 + Hwy 105 and borders the unimproved area of E Semands Avenue; so many possibilities & options! The front 1.5 acres boast a 5 bedroom/3.5 bathroom/2 car garage home that was recently painted and well-kept plus a 40x30 metal building w/insulated ceiling, three - 12x12 ft. Roll

Up Doors, Piped for Compressed Air, 220v electrical in place, covered exterior parking/storage and a fully secured front entrance w/electric gates. The interior offers so much space! A large living room w/fireplace, an island kitchen w/great cabinet space, breakfast room + formal dining room. One bedroom downstairs (used as a home office) with a full bathroom. 4 bedroom upstairs with 2 full bathrooms.

901 Shady Lane, Woodland Estates in Conroe. ML# 10834808. \$485,000



Location & Privacy meet under a canopy of trees w/this 3.15 unrestricted acres. Situated outside the gates of Teaswood and w/in minutes of I-45, shopping/restaurants making it the perfect balance of the quiet life & modern conveniences. Fully fenced, large shade trees, natural vegetation, orange, grapefruit and lemon trees, barn/workshop w/office/studio + a private water well! The house boasts extensive outdoor living options w/a deep porch that wraps around two sides of the house + a 18x26 screened in patio w/a high ceiling & views of nature. The front door welcomes you into the living room w/a brick FP w/built in heatilator plus an additional den/gameroom downstairs for extra living space! The very spacious island kitchen is equipped w/a breakfast bar, solid wood cabinets, a brick accent wall w/arched niche for the cooktop + dining room. Two bedrooms are on the first floor including the HUGE Primary bedroom w/double sinks, soak tub + walk-in shower. Two bedrooms and full bathroom up.

5497 Teas Nursery in Conroe. ML# 57832890. \$474,900



Estate-style living with a sparkling private pool ready for the Summer! Located on a .34 acre lot with towering shade trees, eye-catching curb appeal, fenced backyard with private pool w/spa, tons of pool decking for sunbathing or entertainment + a second story walk-out deck overlooking the pool/backyard area! The interior greets with high ceilings and distinctive tile floors that flow into the spacious living room offering a wall of

windows that overlook the pool area, floor-to-ceiling brick fireplace + wood built-ins. The island kitchen boasts granite counters, solid wood cabinets, breakfast bar w/seating, breakfast area w/bay window + a dining room (currently being used as a study/office). The Primary bedroom is equipped w/shutters, pvc plank floors, bathroom w/double sinks, vanity area, walk-in shower + a HUGE closet! Upstairs provides 3 very spacious bedrooms with great closets (no carpet in the bedrooms!), Hollywood bath + a gameroom w/dry bar, half bathroom & a walk-out balcony!

3 Woods Estates Drive, Wedgewood in Conroe. ML# 6963926. \$334,700



Located in a gated Lake Conroe waterfront subdivision that offers a waterfront pool, boat launch, boardwalk plus great schools nearby! This 4 bedroom home offers light and bright curb appeal that welcomes you to the Lake area! The interior boasts a very spacious living area w/wood-like floors, plenty of windows that bring in natural lighting. The kitchen is open to the living room and is equipped with warm wood cabinets,

breakfast bar plus dining area. Large Primary bedroom with views of the Lake, oversized bathroom with walk-in shower. Three secondary rooms with great closet space.

10761 S Lake Mist Lane, Lake Breeze in Willis. ML# 32273476. \$229,700



This 3 bedroom/2 full bathroom home sits on a half acre fenced lot with a 30x30 metal workshop with a concrete floor + an uncovered 30x10 storage/parking. Located on a quiet road near Lake Conroe, MISD schools, shopping and major roads. The home boasts over 30 feet of covered front porch that overlooks the yard w/shade trees + additional outdoor entertainment space w/fire pit. The interior offers a spacious living room w/ceiling fan and plenty of windows allowing for great natural lighting. The kitchen is open to the living room and is equipped with solid cabinets, built-in microwave + dining area. Large Primary bedroom with private door to backyard area, tub + double showers! Updates include fresh paint (inside & out), new wood-like vinyl floors, new a/c and much more!

18142 Firepine Lane, Marvins Gardens in Montgomery. ML# 12094123. \$184,900



Located in a quiet subdivision in Willis that is minutes from major roads, restaurants, shopping, schools and golf courses! This 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom home offers an eye-catching exterior with a generous front porch that will welcome relaxation! The floor plan offers a spacious living room that flows into the dining room and overlooks the kitchen that will boast rich wood cabinets, granite countertops, breakfast bar that will be great for entertaining and a stunning backsplash. Master bedroom is located on the first floor for extra privacy

and offers an outstanding bathroom w/a great walk in closet! The two secondary bedrooms are located on the second floor with spacious closets and a shared bathroom with shower/tub combo. Low taxes! Frontier Lakes offers a unique country setting offering three lakes, multiple lakeside parks, and a horse pasture!

14858 Crockett, Lake Conroe Village in Montgomery. ML# 10687421. \$169,900

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Blue Water Navy Veterans & Survivors Awarded Big Benefits



By: **Kay L. Lee, Veterans Service Officer**

In 2019 the Court of Veterans Appeals ruled (*Procopio v Wilkie*) that Navy Veterans serving within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam (Blue Water) from June 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975 were presumptively exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange and now made eligible to receive compensation for disabilities which developed due to that exposure.

Claims made by these veterans, which were previously denied now qualified for reconsideration base on the new criteria. This also meant retroactively awarding the compensation claim to the date of the veteran's initial claim.

Since the start of the fiscal year in September 2019 through April 30, 2020, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Claims Department has assisted veterans in receiving over \$250 million in retroactive payments plus annual increases.

Of the \$250 million, \$107 million was in retroactive pay disbursed to 7,088 veterans throughout the state. That's an average of over \$15,000 per veteran. Additionally, \$145 million in annual increases was disbursed to 7,088 veterans throughout the state, an average of over \$20,000 per veteran.

Add to that in May, \$444,394 in retroactive accrued benefits was awarded to the widow of a Blue Water Navy Veteran. The award was the result of a great collaborative effort between Montgomery County Assistant Veteran Service Officer Karen Karr and TVC Houston Strike Force members Milton Austin and Van Stringer. Benefits were awarded back to 2005, with Special Monthly Compensation, for this substitution of claimant case.

"The case reflects outstanding work for a Texas veteran and his family to recognize his contribution to this country and the benefits he earned through his service," said TVC Claims Operations Manager Ryan Pavlu.

Claims activity for the state has been on the rise with interactions with veterans up 600% between March 23 and May 28, 2020.

We are very proud of Karen and her continued service to the veterans & survivors in our community.

It is the mission of the Montgomery County Veterans Service Office to assist our veterans and their families with their VA & State Benefits with compassion and competency.

For more information on VA & State Benefits, contact our office at 936-539-7842 or via email at vetsvc@mctx.org. ♦

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Social Security & Medicare Challenges

Social Security and Medicare are two of the most important programs to Americans in retirement and crucial for most in planning for income and medical during those years. How will Social Security and Medicare be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pardon the pun but the doctor is still out on the exact answer to this. Trustees however acknowledge that the estimates and analysis included in their reports do not reflect the potential effects.

Each year, the Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds release lengthy reports to Congress that assess the health of these important programs. The newest reports, released on April 22, 2020, discuss the current financial condition and ongoing financial challenges that both programs face, and project a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2021.

Social Security Trust Funds

The Social Security program consists of two parts, each with its own financial account (trust fund) that holds the Social Security payroll taxes that are collected to pay Social Security benefits. Retired workers, their families, and survivors of workers receive monthly benefits under the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) program; disabled workers and their families receive monthly benefits under the Disability Insurance (DI) program. The combined programs are referred to as OASDI. Other income (reimbursements from the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury and income tax revenue from benefit taxation) is also deposited in these accounts. Money that is not needed in the current year to pay benefits and administrative costs is invested (by law) in special Treasury bonds that are guaranteed by the U.S. government and earn interest. As a result, the Social Security Trust Funds have built up reserves that can be used to cover benefit obligations if payroll tax income is insufficient to pay full benefits.

Note that the Trustees provide certain projections based on the combined OASI and DI (OASDI) Trust Funds. However, these projections are hypothetical, because the trusts are separate, and generally one program's taxes and reserves cannot be used to fund the other program.

Highlights of Social Security Trustees Report

- Social Security's total cost is projected to be higher than its total income (including interest) in 2021 and all later years. The U.S. Treasury will need to withdraw from trust fund reserves to help pay benefits. Trustees project that the hypothetical combined trust fund reserves (OASDI) will

be depleted in 2035, the same as projected in last year's report, unless Congress acts.

- Once the hypothetical combined trust fund reserves are depleted in 2035, payroll tax revenue alone should still be sufficient to pay about 79% of scheduled benefits initially, with the percentage falling gradually to 73% by 2094.
- Based on the "intermediate" assumptions in this year's report, the projected cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to be announced in the fall of 2020, will be 2.3% (last year's report projected a COLA of 1.8% and the actual COLA was 1.6%). This COLA would apply to benefits starting in January 2021.

Medicare Trust Funds

There are two Medicare trust funds. The Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund helps pay for hospital care (Medicare Part A costs). The Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund comprises two separate accounts, one covering Medicare Part B (which helps pay for physician and outpatient costs) and one covering Medicare Part D (which helps cover the prescription drug benefit).

Highlights of Medicare Trustees Report

- Annual costs for the Medicare HI Trust Fund exceeded tax income each year from 2008 to 2015. There were small fund surpluses in 2016 and 2017. In 2018 and 2019, expenditures exceeded income, and deficits are expected for all later years.
- The HI Trust Fund is projected to be depleted in 2026, the same year as projected in last year's report. Once the HI Trust Fund is depleted, tax and premium income would still cover 90% of estimated program costs, declining to 78% by 2044 and then gradually increasing to 90% by 2094. The Trustees note that long-range projections of Medicare costs are highly uncertain because the health-care landscape is shifting and the effects are unknown.

Why are Social Security and Medicare Facing Financial Challenges?

Social Security and Medicare are funded primarily through the collection of payroll taxes. Because of demographic and economic factors, including higher retirement rates and lower birth rates, there will be fewer workers per beneficiary over the long term, worsening the strain on the trust funds.

What is Being Done to Address These Challenges?

Both reports continue to urge Congress to address the financial challenges facing these programs soon, implementing them gradually as to lessen the impact on the public. Combining some of the following solutions may also lessen the impact of any one solution.

- Raising the current Social Security payroll tax rate (currently 12.40%). According to this year's report, an immediate and permanent payroll tax increase of 3.14 percentage points to 15.54% would be necessary to address the long-range revenue.
- Raising or eliminating the ceiling on wages currently subject to Social Security payroll taxes (\$137,700 in 2020).
- Raising the full retirement age beyond the currently scheduled age of 67 (for anyone born in 1960 or later).
- Reducing future benefits. According to this year's report, to address the long-term revenue shortfall, scheduled benefits would have to be immediately and permanently reduced by about 19% for all current and future beneficiaries, or by about 23% if reductions were applied only to those who initially become eligible for benefits in 2020 or later.
- Changing the benefit formula.
- Calculating COLA for benefits differently.

You can view a combined summary of the 2020 Social Security and Medicare Trustees Reports and a full copy of the Social Security report at ssa.gov. You can find the full Medicare report at cms.gov.

Income planning around these areas is an important part of a well-rounded financial plan. Let us help you get Clear Direction for Your Retirement. Stay safe and God bless.



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Hope Springs Eternal!

By: Rebecca McDowell and Cindy Siple

Of all the things we can say about 2020, it has definitely been unprecedented.

One thing is for sure...We have missed you! In March, we had to close our incredible spring musical, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, before it completed its run, due to the countrywide mandated restrictions. In April, we decided to reschedule *A Chorus Line* from May to June/July, and to cancel our season finale, *Barefoot in the Park*, in order to be extra cautious, and to be considerate of our actors, volunteers, and patrons. After recasting a few of the roles, we chose to close *Chorus Line* as well. Protocols became stricter across the city, county, state, and country, and we wanted to assure everyone that The Players are serious about the well-being of all of our beloved supporters.

It is our greatest hope that the upcoming season, our 54th! will find you and us together again, sharing laughter, drama, songs, and dancing, at the Owen Theatre! We appreciate our patrons more than anything and are eager to fulfill our mission of producing and presenting quality live theatrical productions as an educational, cultural, non-profit project in our community.

Our plan is to open and run our 2020-2021 season as scheduled with the joyful and thoroughly entertaining *Sister Act, the Musical* premiering in September, followed by Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys*, then our Christmas extravaganza Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn* in December. *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* will help you laugh in the New Year, then *Footloose* and *Cabaret* will get your toes tapping through the spring, and we will wrap up the season with Larry Shue's clever comedy, *The Foreigner* in July.

Please be assured that we are dedicated to making your theatre experience both safe and enjoyable. We have recruited extra volunteers for rehearsals to make sure our actors, artistic and production team members, and technical crew are all staying well and healthy.

When we reopen in September, we will continue to provide the same quality diligent care of and for our patrons as we did at the end of this past season, following all recommendations for Fine Arts Performing Halls and Patrons, which can be accessed on the open.texas.gov website. As long as national safety protocols are in place, we will con-

tinue to provide distanced seating arrangements, monitors in the lobbies and restrooms to prevent crowding and to assist patrons in any way, hand sanitizing stations throughout the building, and mask requirements for anyone not seated, including ushers, patrons, and any front of house volunteers. We also will not seat in the front row to make sure the audience is appropriately distanced from the actors on stage. This keeps everyone safe!

We cannot wait to see your smiling faces (well, eyes) again! If you have any questions, please feel free to give us a call (936.539.4090) or send us an e-mail (owentheatre@gmail.com). For the most current updates, follow us on Facebook (The Players Theatre Company) and Instagram (PlayersTheatreCompany), and sign up for our newsletter at this address: <http://tiny.cc/ThePlayersNews>.

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The Players Theatre Company
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Life Line
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INSIGHT

By: Dr. Bonnie Cameron



Our summer fun will soon turn into a mad scramble to get backpacks, clothes and other supplies ready for the new school year. But one of the most important yet often overlooked necessities for families of school-aged children is healthy vision.

As children grow and change from year to year, so do their eyes and vision. School demands intense visual involvement, including reading, writing, computer and chalkboard/smartboard work. Even physical education and sports require strong vision.

If their eyes aren't up to the task, a child may feel tired, have trouble concentrating, and have problems in school.

Sometimes parents can tell if their child has a vision problem. For instance, their child may squint, hold reading material very close to their face, or complain about things appearing blurry. However, there are some less obvious signs of vision problems.

Here are some signs that could point to possible vision problems in children:

A short attention span. Giving up on tasks that require a lot of visual demand may indicate a focusing or alignment problem.

Avoiding reading and other close activities. Some children maybe subtle or obvious about their dislike of reading. These children may also protest or avoid drawing, coloring or other projects that require focusing up close.

Turning their head to one side. Your child may watch TV consistently with their head turned to one side. A child may turn their head to the side when looking at something in front of them. This may be a sign of a refractive error, including astigmatism. Turning their head helps the child see better.

Loss of place when reading. Children that re-read sentences or have to track

with their fingers may have poor eye alignment. Focus, tracking, depth perception, and other aspects of vision continue to develop throughout early and middle childhood. Convergence, the ability of both eyes to focus on an object simultaneously, becomes more fully developed by about age seven; this is one reason any problems a child has with focusing or eye alignment should be treated before that age.

Success in school is closely tied to eye health. That's why it is so important for kids to have regular vision exams with an Optometrist or another professional who is properly trained to assess vision in school-aged children. The earlier a vision problem is found and treated, the better off your child will be—in and out of school.


Remember your child may not know how to vocalize or even realize they have a vision problem. Look for the above subtle signs or simply schedule your school age child for a comprehensive eye examination. ♦




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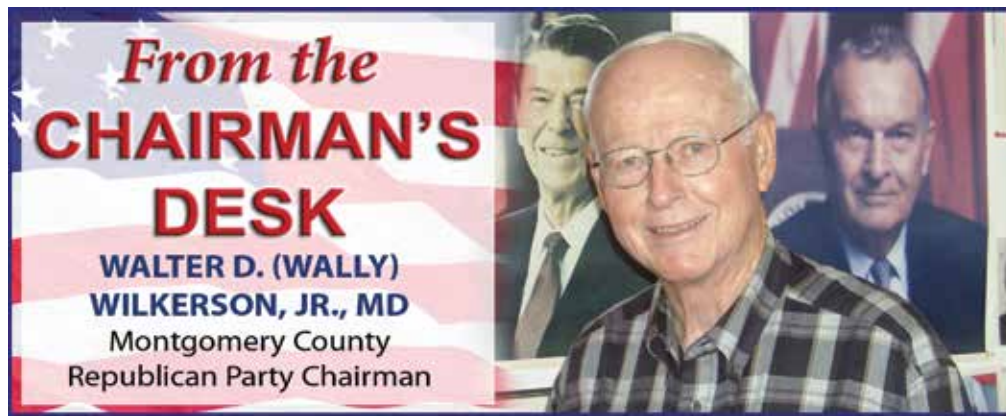
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Black History

Republicans salute Black History Month! There are many great African Americans, such as Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Booker T. Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, who have contributed to the success of America. They deserve all Americans respect and admiration. But I question whether African Americans are taught about all aspects of Black History, especially the facts about its relationship to the history of the Republican Party and their brute treatment by the Democratic Party.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 by mid-westerners opposed to slavery (abolitionists) and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 that allowed voters in these territories to choose whether or not to allow slavery. The vast majority of Democrats in Congress along with Democrat President Franklin Pierce supported the Act. Abraham Lincoln declared in 1855: "As a nation, we began by declaring that 'All men are created equal.' We now practically read it: 'All men are created equal, except Negroes'."

By the 1856 presidential election, almost every American opposed to slavery had joined the Republican Party and the Democrat Party became pro-slavery. Republicans nominated former U. S. Senator John Fremont, a southern-born abolitionist, as their candidate for president. The Democrats chose James Buchanan as their nominee. Buchanan won with the help of the "solid-south" while Fremont won most of the northern states.

In March of 1857, shortly after the election, the U. S. Supreme Court announced its infamous Dred Scott decision in which seven Democrat Justices ruled that black Americans could not be citizens anywhere in the country and had no standing to sue in Court for any matter. The two remaining Republican Justices dissented. The same year, Lincoln delivered a speech in which he described the differences between the two political parties. He said: "Republicans inculcate (indoctrinate), with whatever ability they have, that the Negro is a man; that his bondage is cruelly wrong, and that the field of his oppression ought not to be enlarged. The Democrats deny his manhood; deny, or dwarf to insignificance, the wrong of his bondage."

Thus the stage was set for the historic election of 1860. At the Republican Convention in Chicago, Lincoln won the presidential nom-

ination on the third ballot. In a four-way presidential election, Lincoln's 40% of the vote was enough to win the presidency. In Texas most residents were Democrats, but Lincoln gained the support of some prominent Texans, such as Governor Sam Houston. For his opposition to secession from the Union, Houston was chased from the office of Governor.

Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January of 1863. It proclaimed that all those enslaved in Confederate territory (10 states, including Texas) should be freed. The Proclamation applied to about 3.1 million of the 4 million slaves in the U.S. Booker T. Washington was an African American boy of nine years who lived in Virginia. He recalled a day in 1865 when he and his siblings joined their mother to hear a reading of the Proclamation. With tears in her eyes, she kissed each of the children, he recalled.

In 1864 after his re-election, Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, pressed the lame duck 38th Congress to pass the 13th Amendment to the Constitution which banned slavery in all of the U. S. and its territories. On December 6, 1865, enough states had ratified the Amendment make it a law. The Republican Congress introduced and passed the 14th Amendment and the 15th Amendment to the Constitution that granted citizenship and the right to vote for African Americans in the U.S. Not even 1 Democrat in the Congress voted for these amendments. The effects of the Civil War and the aftermath, called the Reconstruction, and the death of President Lincoln would be felt for more than a century in Texas. Lincoln's death prevented an orderly reconstruction of the Confederacy into a constitutional, free market society that he envisioned.

President Andrew Johnson, a former southern U. S. Senator loyal to the Union, succeeded Lincoln. Johnson had the Union army occupy the Confederate States. His policies ultimately allowed former Democrat leaders to return to power by ousting Republican leaders, many who were African Americans. The result was a failure to enforce most of the rights granted African American citizens by the Constitutional Amendments. Johnson also vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 passed by the Republican Congress. With Democrats back in control, every effort was taken, both from the legislative level

and the law enforcement level, to prevent African Americans from voting and enjoying the rights of citizenship.

The Democrats of the old Confederacy enacted Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws and poll taxes which legalized racial discrimination and the denial of the right to vote, hold office or serve on juries. The Ku Klux Klan became an active, organized and visible constituency of the Democratic Party and was allowed to operate at will. Not even one Democrat voted for the 1875 Ku Klux Klan bill written to punish Klan violence and lynching; or the 1875 Civil Rights bill banning segregation and racial discrimination. In fact, the 1893 Democrat-controlled Congress repealed the federal civil rights laws, including the Klan law and the voting rights protection laws. Republicans in Congress frequently led efforts to enact anti-lynching laws but those laws were consistently defeated by Democrats, with knowledge of "3,445 African Americans being lynched in the period from 1882 to 1964 [National Black Republican Association, www.NBRA.info]."

In Texas, blacks were barred from voting in Democratic Primary elections. Multiple suits in Texas Courts resulted in the same decision - the Texas Democratic Party was a white-only, private organization which had the right to exclude certain individuals from voting in their Primary election. Finally, a black attorney, Thurgood Marshall, who later would be appointed to serve on the U. S. Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson, filed a suit that reached the U. S. Supreme Court. In 1944, the Court ruled that excluding African Americans from voting in the Democratic Primary election was unconstitutional.

The effects of the Supreme Court decision were not actually felt in Texas until the election of 1948. As a Conroe physician, who had become involved with the Montgomery County Republican Party in 1962, I met Isaac Philpot, an expert carpenter and a highly respected black member of the Willis community. He probably was the first African American in Montgomery County to cast a vote in a Democratic Primary election. Knowing of my interest in politics, Isaac shared this experience with me. Initially, he was not allowed to vote in 1948, but after he challenged the Democrat poll workers with his knowledge of the Supreme Court decision, he finally cast his vote. He then calmly walked out of the polling location not knowing what to expect, but proud that he had cast his vote.

An equally compelling story took place in 2012. A vacancy in the U.S. Senate in the State of South Carolina occurred when Senator Jim DeMint resigned. The Republican Governor promptly appointed an African American Republican, Congressman Tim Scott, to fill the vacancy. The final paragraph of the Associated Press news story about the appointment read: "Outside the Statehouse where Scott spoke, a statue still stands of post-Reconstruction former governor and U.S. Senator Ben Tillman, who unapologetically advocated lynching any black who tried to vote."

The AP failed to note that Tillman was a Democrat who also was quoted in 1900 as

proclaiming: "We have done our level best to prevent blacks from voting...we have scratched our heads to find how we could eliminate the last one of them. We stuffed the ballot boxes. We shot them. We are not ashamed of it". In 1901, after President Theodore Roosevelt dined in the White House with Booker T. Washington, Senator Tillman said: "The action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that black man will necessitate our killing a thousand of them in the South before they learn their place again".

Black history correctly recognizes the sacrifices made by many brave African Americans in their crusade to achieve citizenship, the right to vote and equality but does it also recognize the efforts of the Republican Party in support of the same causes and the Democratic Party's determined opposition to them?

Texas Republicans have elected more minorities to statewide offices in the past 19 years than the Democrats have elected after controlling the state for over 100 years. In 2010, Texas became the only State to have 3 black Republicans serving in statewide offices - Michael Williams as Railroad Commissioner, Wallace B. Jefferson as Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court and Dale Wainwright as Associate Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Republican President George W. Bush became the first President to appoint a black as Secretary of State and he did it twice. And of the 5 blacks ever elected to serve in the U. S. Senate, 3 have been Republicans. ♦



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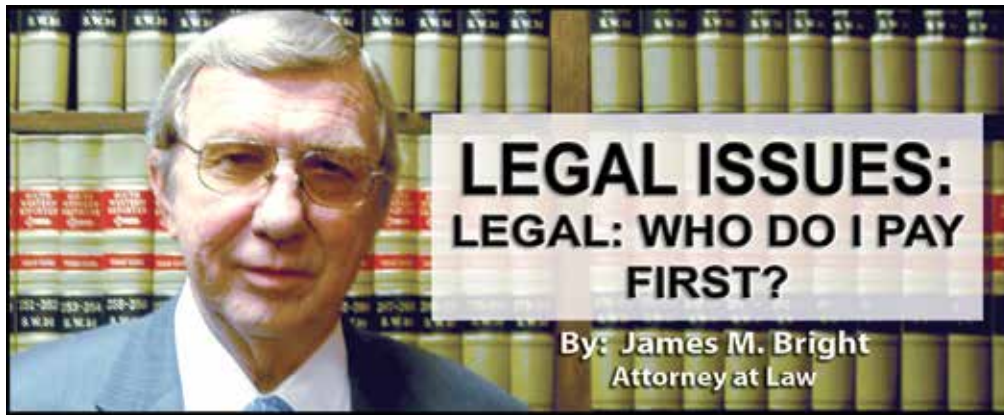
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The following is provided for informational purposes only and is not, nor should it be construed as legal advice. This particular article refers to payments by Executors for an estate and should not be deemed to be general advice.

In my practice I am often asked by people who are serving as executor of an estate, "If there are multiple debts due, and I do not have sufficient funds to pay them all, which debts should I pay first?"

There is great temptation to pay the creditor which makes the most noise, thereby proving the old adage, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease."

This practice of yielding to the most pressure is not, however, typically in the best interest of the estate or in the best interest of the executor. Based upon my personal experience

and the experience relayed by executors with whom I've worked, the "squeakiest wheel" is often the one that should receive the lowest priority (i.e., unsecured debts, such as those from credit cards).

First is proper to determine what amount, if any, should be set aside for maintenance of a surviving spouse or decedent's surviving minor children. Space in this column is not sufficient to explain the family allowance in detail, but it shall suffice to say that surviving spouses and minor children are due allowance, if particular conditions exist. (Estates Code §353.101 et seq.).

Other claims against the estate of the decedent shall be classified and have priority of payment as follows: (Estates Code §355.102).

Class I - Funeral expenses and expenses

of last sickness for a reasonable amount to be approved by the court, not to exceed a total of \$15,000, with any excess to be classified and paid as other unsecured claims. It should be noted that \$15,000 is not a very large sum to cover expenses of the last illness and funeral expenses. It should also be pointed out that this limit only applies to those estates where there are insufficient funds to pay all debts.

Class II - Expenses of administration and expenses incurred in the preservation, safe-keeping and management of the estate, including expenses awarded by the court for defending the Will, and unpaid expenses of administration awarded in a guardianship of the decedent. It should be further noted that even though attorney's fees may be paid as Class II expenses, they only gain this status of priority if they are incurred to protect the interest of all the beneficiaries. A person who files a contest to the Will in an effort to achieve a favorable outcome for himself is not entitled to Class II treatment of his claim.

Class III - Certain secured claims for money, including tax liens, so far as the same can be paid out of the proceeds of the property subject to the mortgage on the property or other lien, and when more than one mortgage lien or security interest shall exist upon the same property, they should be paid in order of their priority.

Class IV - Claims for the principal amount and accrued interest on delinquent child support and child support arrearages that have been confirmed and reduced to money judgment as determined by applicable sections of the Texas Family Code.

Class V - Claims for taxes, penalties, and interest under other select statutes.

Class VI - Claims for the cost of confinement established by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice under Section 501.017 of the Texas Government Code.

Class VII - Claims for repayment of medical assistance payments made by the state of Texas under applicable sections of the Human Resources Code to or for the benefit of the decedent. If the decedent was the beneficiary of Medicaid, and if such application for benefits was made after March 1, 2005, the state of Texas may file a claim for reimbursement for all Medicaid benefits received by the decedent as a Class VII claim.

Class VIII - All other claims. This is the lowest priority of claims and includes, but is not limited to, all unsecured claims such as credit card debt. Even though credit card companies may be the most aggressive in attempting to collect a debt from the estate of the decedent, they are actually in the lowest position of priority of payment.

If the estate that you are serving as the executor is one of those that is fortunate enough to have a much greater balance of assets than liabilities, then these priorities, while still im-

portant, have less of a long-term impact so long as the executor pays or settles all of the debt.

If, on the other hand, the estate that you are serving as the executor does not have sufficient assets to pay all claims against the estate in total, it is extremely important that you make a determination regarding which debts are to be paid and in what order. As always, you are encouraged to seek the services of a qualified attorney of your choice.

James Bright is 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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Should You Build Your Own Website?

The Pros and Cons of a DIY Website

In light of recent events in the world, you may be one of the many who have found themselves with a lot more time on your hands and stuck at home. You might also be one of the many unfortunate people who have lost their job, or if you have your own small business you've seen a drastic drop in growth. Wherever you are on the "affected by coronavirus" scale, it's likely you have been considering other options for income - mainly in the online space.

Perhaps you have an idea for a side business and need a website, or you already have a small business and you need to get your business online. Whatever your starting point, getting your own website is a crucial step in setting yourself up for success, and growing into something bigger, especially now. So, where do you start?

Well, for most beginners, the cheapest option seems to be the most attractive route. There are many DIY website builders that let you start for free. Wix, Weebly, Wordpress.com, and Go Daddy are just a few of the places that let you build a website for free. But is that the best way to go about getting your business online?

Let's look at that factor and the other major pros and cons of building your own website.

Pro: You can build your own website for free.

Free is appealing for obvious reasons. You can get a website without the financial investment. If you're just starting out, you might not have a lot of money to put into your website. You may be putting whatever start-up money into a different aspect of your business, and a free website gives you some wiggle room to do that.

Con: Free looks "cheap".

While "free" always sounds good, it also has a flip side that can mean "cheap". We've all seen the result of DIY free websites online. With the amount of time we all spend browsing websites nowadays, it's fairly easy to recognize when someone has gone the DIY route. The design is poor. The navigation is difficult. The messaging is confusing. The colors don't

flow right. Overall, it's just not appealing and we tend to leave the website just as soon as we visited.

Pro: DIY websites are easy to build.

Most free DIY website builders are super user friendly. You don't usually need to be tech-savvy to start building your own website. Also, many of the DIY website options offer "drag and drop" types of builders to make it even easier. You can choose pre-built blocks and sections and quickly put together a simple design on your own in just a couple of hours.

Con: DIY websites are limited to your own design skills and the DIY website builder's capabilities.

The downside to building your own website is that most people are not web designers, even though we tend to give ourselves the benefit of the doubt. We also tend to have a bias toward things we created, not being able to see flaws in our work. DIY websites are a perfect example of this. People often think the website they built looks amazing, when in reality it's not attractive to visitors or potential clients. Poor website design can be detrimental to your business as websites are often the first



impression people get of your business. Also, DIY website builders leave out a lot of design aspects employed by professional web designers in order to keep things as user friendly and affordable as possible.

Pro: DIY websites give you complete control.

Building your own website can be appealing because you have control over everything...or at least you feel like you do. You can build the site and complete it on your own schedule. You can make changes whenever you like. You can invest your own time in keeping it updated and secure.

Con: DIY websites lack security, get outdated quickly, and require time to maintain.

As any business owner will attest, time becomes more scarce and more valuable as your business grows. Finding time to devote to your website becomes more difficult, especially if you aren't very tech savvy. DIY websites already lack the level of security most professionally hosted websites provide. Keeping your website secure becomes more difficult over time. Not to mention, your DIY website will likely look outdated in just 6 months. Trends and technologies change quickly online. You'll need to stay up to date with what's "in" and what's working. Not only will you need to devote time to maintain your website, you'll also need to educate constantly on web design tactics.

If you're serious about your new venture, or want your current business to be taken seriously online, then avoid the DIY website option. You'll thank yourself later, and your customers will be grateful, too. Plain and simple, if your business is important enough to you, you'll invest in a professional website. Although you will spend more money up front, you'll see a return on your investment many times over.

If you need expert advice on getting a website that best represents the quality of your business, let us know! Dock Line is quickly becoming the local leader in web design services. Demand for professional web design in Montgomery County is growing exponentially. If you need a beautiful website for your business that helps it grow month after month and year after year, then let's talk. Contact us today at ozzy@dockline-magazine.com. ♦

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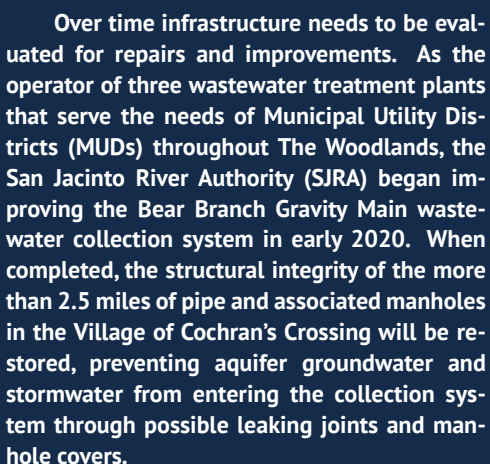
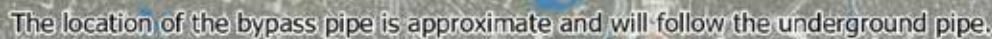
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- The process of CIPP involves inserting and running a felt lining made of fiberglass into a preexisting pipe that is the subject of repair and rehabilitation. Resin within the liner is then exposed to a curing element (hot water) to make it attach to the inner walls of the pipe. Once fully cured, the lining now acts as a new pipeline.

- Because there are several different diameters of pipe within the pipeline, this process will be required to be repeated several times.

Why are there pipes laying on the ground?

In order to rehabilitate the gravity main system, the selected construction method requires that the existing system (underground sewer line) be taken out of service, in sections. The temporary above ground pipes will be used to bypass sections of the existing system while they are rehabilitated using CIPP.

What are normal construction hours?

Temporary access roads have been installed along the project route to allow the

specialized CIPP equipment to access the pipes and manholes. Once the contractor starts the CIPP process, the crew will work 24/7 until that segment is complete. They will then move their equipment to the next segment to proceed with the next CIPP lining installation. There may be construction traffic on the access roadway during the night; however, if you see something suspicious, please report it to Montgomery County Sheriff's Department at 936-760-5800.

Will there be noise, dust, or odors from the construction activities?

As with any construction, there may be activities that cause noticeable noises, but the contractor is required to minimize impacts to the neighboring communities. The contractor will mitigate dust impacts using water trailers as needed. Potential odors may be present in the vicinity of the where the bypass pipes are discharging into manholes and when the contractor is cleaning the existing sewer pipe in advance of installing the CIPP. The lining process may have a smell similar to nail polish.

Will the area be restored and temporary roads and water crossings be removed?

The current scope of work requires SJRA's

contractor to restore any areas impacted by construction activities. Planning and coordination between SJRA and The Woodlands Township may require some revisions to restoration activities.

When will this project be completed?

The project is currently anticipated to be complete by spring of 2021.

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, find us on Instagram @sanjacintoriverauthoritySJRA, or connect with us on LinkedIn @San Jacinto River Authority. ♦

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Garden Thyme

By: Growers Outlet

More is Not Always Better

August usually brings us some very miserable weather. It can be extremely hot and dry or just plain hot and sultry. Either way it will be hot. At the time of writing this article, there is no way to know if we will get a tropical rain event or a hurricane by the time of publication. When it comes to plants, that can be a blessing or a curse in August depending on the amount of rain we get.

With or without the extra rain most of your plants including your lawn, will be under a lot of stress. When temperatures get above 95 degrees most plants will go into what we call the conservation mode or another way to put it is they become comatose. Plant activities slow down or stop at very high temperatures to conserve water.

During this conservation mode, you will notice a few things. Plants may droop and their leaves will lose the shine and vigor they once had earlier in the season leaving you with the impression they are dry. You won't see much if any new leaves forming or the growth rate will slow considerably. At the Growers Outlet, we find it extremely hard to water many plants properly once they get to this point. With a plant under stress, just like people, they become more susceptible to attacks from natural enemies and diseases. Too much water will only increase the stress factor and root rot becomes a common problem. The roots, already weakened, can be attacked easily. Too little water however can cause the roots to overheat and burn. Our experience and skill at the Growers Outlet helps us relieve these problems and keep our plants as healthy as we can during the Dog Days of summer.

Plant stress can be alleviated by using the proper soil amendments and watering practices earlier in the season. Proper nutrition will create a very dense and healthy root system that will enable the plant to utilize nutrients and water with the most efficiency. Watering when needed with less frequency and longer durations will make the roots go deeper. Deeper roots will dry out slower, thus requiring less frequent watering. Keep in mind that these practices cannot be started during this time of year because if your plants have a weak shallow root system, plant death can occur rapidly if water is withheld for too long. Monitor soil moisture either using a moisture meter or by feeling the soil, and water as needed. Keep in mind that your sprinkler system does not have a brain and knows nothing about your plants. It will only do what it is programmed to do.

On the bright side, it won't be long and the

evening temperatures will cool back down, the humidity will drop and we will once again start to think about beautifying our outside living environment. Once the mums start blooming, the Dog Days will be behind us and pansies and snapdragons will be next on our list of things to plant.

If you are a diehard gardener and you must work outside right now, remember, HEAT STROKE KILLS! Make sure when working outside in the heat that you recognize the early symptoms of heat exhaustion.

The most common signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Confusion
- Dark-colored urine (a sign of dehydration)
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Pale skin
- Profuse sweating
- Rapid heartbeat

If you, or anyone else, have symptoms of heat exhaustion, it's essential to immediately get out of the heat and rest, preferably in an air-conditioned room. If you cannot get inside, try to find the nearest cool and shady place. If you are by yourself, call someone to come and monitor your condition. If you have gotten too hot, heat exhaustion can rapidly progress to heat stroke and unconsciousness can occur.

Other recommended strategies include:

- Drink plenty of fluid (avoid caffeine and alcohol).
- Remove any tight or unnecessary clothing.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Apply other cooling measures such as fans or ice towels.

If such measures fail to provide relief within 30 minutes, contact a doctor because untreated heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke.

Things To Do In August

*Prune crape myrtle seed pods to encourage one last bloom cycle.

*Make sure that your trees are receiving at least one good soaking per week.

*Keep an eye on shallow rooted plants such as azaleas, from drying out. Don't assume your irrigation system is watering them properly.

*In late August it is OK to dead head or **lightly prune** flowering perennials and roses to encourage fall blooming.

*It is getting too late to add nitrogen to your lawn but products with liquid iron on yel-

lowed out grass will make a big difference in appearance. Also, products like **Microlife Humates Plus** is a great product for greening up your lawn without risk of burning and without using nitrogen.

*If you have had problems with brown patch in the fall, fungicides for brown patch will work much better when applied as a preventative once evening temperatures start reaching into the 60's.

*Be sure to water in the early mornings to help prevent any potential fungal disease.

*If you have areas of grass dying, check for chinch bugs and sod webworms. It is still possible to get infestations in August.

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 maintain the prettiest landscape on the block. ♦



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Eastern Kingbirds appear very formal, dressed in black "coats, tails & hats" with white "shirts".

Flycatchers & the Texas Bird-of-Paradise

Flycatchers migrate into our area to spend spring and summer. Scissor-tails, Eastern Phoebes, Eastern Kingbirds, and many others. They mate, nest and raise their young here, and then in late fall they gather together in large flocks



This Eastern Kingbird flycatcher is 70' up in a tree, snatching up high flying insects. Sometimes the flying insects are low to the ground and sometimes high in the sky. The birds go where the getting is good.

and head south to spend warm winters in Mexico or Central America.

Some flycatchers, such as the aptly named Eastern Phoebe, are "little brown jobs" with not much to characterize them other than their repeating call of "PHOEBE". Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, also known as the Texas Bird-of-Paradise, are all-time favorites with exotic long split tails, light grey bodies and peachy-orange wing and belly markings. Eastern Kingbirds appear very formal and pert in their tuxedo feathers of black and white.

As expected by their name, flycatchers are primarily insectivores which can execute tight spinning maneuvers to catch insects on the wing. You will see them almost anywhere, on telephone wires, up in high trees, on fence posts, or spots near the water to catch lake insect hatches. Farmers and ranchers appreciate them because they eat grasshoppers, flies and other insects that harm crops and animals.

You can tell if a bird is a flycatcher by looking at its beak shape. The types of bills that catch flying insects tend to be very flat and look like pancake spatulas! These flat beaks have more surface area than birds with pointed bills which makes them best for catching fast winged insects. This flat beak gives flycatchers an advantage.

To see photos of our Texas bird-of-paradise in flight, check out Google images and videos for "Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in flight". Or look on youtube.com. These sky dancers are breathtaking aerial artists, fluttering vertically up and down as much as 100 feet during mating season. It is worth the time to watch a scissor-tailed aerial show.

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.txmn.org. Volunteer and get involved! ♦

This 'little brown job' is an Eastern Phoebe flycatcher, and she is sitting defiantly on her nest. Can you make out her flat beak?



A Texas Bird of Paradise, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. About 14" long, it has a gray body, dark gray wings, peachy-orange belly and wing markings, and a split tail that is as long as its body.



Look straight into any flycatcher's face and you can see how very flat their bill is. Like a spatula! All the better to catch winged insects.

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Rescues & Shelters are Overcrowded...

How can you help?

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

Animal Shelter Volunteers of Texas (ASVT) has more than 200 animals in our foster program and it is a revolving door – we take them in – give medical care – spay and neuter and find them homes – take in more & repeat. Every animal has a story and how it came to us.

ASVT takes in unwanted, discarded, community animals to lighten the load on shelters and we place them in temporary ASVT foster homes until adopted. Unfortunately we can't take them all. Unwanted animals are at an all-time high and the local shelters are bursting at the seams and there is no sign of slowdown in sight.

We thank Dock Line Magazine for allowing us to share information on what is happening right under our noses here in our Community. This is not meant to sadden the public but to share awareness of the issues and the options for helping improve the situation.

Montgomery County Animal Shelter (MCAS), located on Hwy 242 houses more than 900 animals, plus has hundreds in foster care! Can you visualize what that must be like? They arrive unwanted, some starving, sick and neglected. Quite often you will see MCAS personnel going beyond their regular work hours and volunteering extra hours to help the animals in need.

ASVT, other rescues and MCAS are working together to re-home shelter animals and increase SPAY AND NEUTER in our community!

Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic that is plaguing us right now has made the animals in need coming in higher numbers. Shelters are limited on intake and hours of operation. ASVT and other rescues are having to pick up the higher influx of homeless stray animals in our community.

The past few months of this pandemic is bringing so many abandoned puppies and kit-

tens. We can take them in only if we have fosters so the dilemma continues.

There is FREE and LOW COST SPAY AND NEUTER AVAILABLE! There should be no excuse in the world to not have animals spayed and neutered when it is there for the taking! Please spread the word on spay and neuter!

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 6 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 180 fosters, many tears of joy, it has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life.

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 use the kennel freed at the shelter.

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.

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.

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

THE JOY OF FOSTERING A HOMELESS 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. We would love for you to foster volunteer, adopt or donate. Visit www.ASVTexas.org.

Animal Shelter Volunteers of Texas (ASVT) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. We are



dedicated to helping abandoned, abused and neglected animals. NO ONE IS PAID and we appreciate the Donations, Fosters and Volunteers to help us continue.





Our Annual Bulb Fundraiser is in full swing. It includes flower bulbs, such as daffodils, tulips, allium, crocus and other varieties. Plant these bulbs in fall to enjoy the blooms in springtime. Orders can be placed through September 15. Visit <https://threeriversfundraising.com/fund/asvt-fall2020>

HOW CAN YOU 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.

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





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IS THAT A BABY OWL?

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

We are fortunate in our part of Texas to have four different types of owls that can be found. Quite often at our intake center, we get calls about “baby great horned owls”. In our area, great horned owls are generally hatched early in the year, as early as January. While there are times we do get in baby great horned owls, many times what people actually find are the smallest owl in our area, the Eastern Screech Owl (which in everyone’s defense, do look a lot like miniature Great Horned Owls).

Eastern Screech Owls are short, stocky owls. Adults are only about 6 to 10 inches tall and weigh on average only ¼ to ½ of a pound. They have pointed ear tufts similar to those of the Great Horned Owl and are either mostly gray or mostly reddish-brown in color. The red (or rufous) coloration seems to be more common in southern states. The screech owls’ coloration is in no way connected to their gender, nor does the coloration change throughout their lifetime; gray owls remain gray and red owls remain red. In fact, both color morphs can occur within the same clutch of babies. Their eyes are pale yellow in color.

The Eastern Screech Owls are the most strictly nocturnal of all North American owls, so they are far more often heard than seen. They are known for their trilling or whinnying song. Screech Owls are common in most types of woods and prefer to be near water. Although they would rather nest in tree cavities, they can also be attracted to man-made nesting boxes, and pairs are monogamous. Eggs are laid in late March or early April, with 2 to 5 eggs being usual. The eggs hatch after 26 days. During nesting, the female stays in the nest except for brief dawn and dusk excursions. She and the nestlings are fed by the male. The owlets fledge

at about four weeks of age, but they gain flight and hunting skills slowly. The family will stay together for another 8 to 10 weeks as the owlets depend on their parents for food while they hone their own hunting skills. Both parents feed and tend to the youngsters at this stage.

During the day, screech owls prefer to remain hidden in tree cavities or old woodpecker holes. At dark, they emerge to hunt, with most prey being taken in the few hours just after nightfall. Eastern Screech Owls eat small birds, rodents, and surprisingly large numbers of earthworms, insects, crayfish, tadpoles, frogs, and lizards. They will also eat bats, scorpions, spiders, snails, and occasionally fish. Screech Owls are ambush hunters; they prefer to observe from a perch in a tree or bush and then dive down to pounce on prey. Because they often take prey on the ground and consume large numbers of insects, Screech Owls are particularly susceptible to poisoning from pesticides and fertilizers.

As with all owls, Eastern Screech Owls are perfectly designed hunters. Their skeletal structure is very light and strong, and many of the bones which would be separated in mammals are fused together in owls, making them strong to support their weight on the ground. In addition, some of their larger bones are hollow with bony internal bracing. This helps reduce overall weight. Owls are known as silent flyers, so you will never hear an owl flapping overhead. Their flight feathers are edged in fringe-like tips, which cuts down on air turbulence and effectively muffles the sound of flight. Many owl species have asymmetrical ears. Having ears located at different heights on their head makes them more able to pinpoint the location of sounds in multiple directions. While owls cannot, despite common myths, turn their heads all the way around, but they can rotate them up to 270 degrees in either direction. They have fourteen neck vertebrae (twice as



Top left: juveniles almost ready for release. Top right: red morph adult Eastern Screech Owl. Bottom left: gray morph showing their wonderful camouflage. Bottom right: adult gray morph Eastern Screech Owl.

many as humans) and they also have a special arrangement of the jugular veins to ensure that blood supply is not impeded as the neck is rotated. As nocturnal animals, owls have disproportionately large eyes. These large eyes help to improve their hunting efficiency, especially under low-light conditions. Their well-developed eyes are actually not eyeballs as such, but elongated tubes which are held in place by bony structures in the skull. For this reason, an owl cannot move its eyes at all to look side to side or up and down, but rather they need to pivot their head to look around.

If you happen to be out and about after dark, keep your eyes and ears peeled to see if you can observe these little nocturnal beauties. If you want to learn to recognize some of their calls, check out the following link: <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-screech-owl> and click on “songs and calls”.

With the ongoing concerns during the Covid outbreak, we continue to do our best to remain open while keeping everyone safe. We are extremely grateful to our wonderful volunteers for helping to assure that we can stay open. For the time being, we remain open, but our hours are limited, and we are accepting animal intakes only by appointment. If you need assistance, please call 281-259-0039, or email to our emergency email at ftwl.help@gmail.com. For the time being, our visitor’s center and educational programs remain closed.

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. ♦



Eastern Screech Owl babies are tiny little fluffballs about the size of a billiard ball. You can still see the “egg tooth” on these little ones (at the end of the beak, which helps them to peck out of their shell). They will fledge at four weeks of age, but are still dependent on their parents for another 8-10 weeks.

CATCH *Em* CLEAN *Em* & EAT *Em*

Blackened Salmon Soft Tacos



- 1 1/4 pounds skinless salmon fillet, cut into 4 pieces
- 2 tablespoons blackening spice mix or Cajun seasoning (no salt added)
- 1/2 small head romaine lettuce, thinly sliced (about 4 cups)

- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 8 small flour tortillas, warmed
- Low-fat sour cream, for serving

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Coat both sides of the salmon with the seasoning mix and cook, covered, until opaque throughout and blackened, 3 to 4 minutes per side.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, toss together the lettuce, cilantro, oil, lime juice, and 1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper.

Flake the salmon into pieces. If desired, spread sour cream on the tortillas, then fill with the salmon and top with the lettuce mixture.

Chocolate Lemon Ice Cream Pie

- 1 9" chocolate graham cracker piecrust
- 3/4 cup chocolate fudge ice cream topping, divided
- 1 (10-ounce) jar lemon curd
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 4 cups vanilla ice cream, softened



Spread half of the chocolate ice cream topping in the bottom of the piecrust and freeze.

In medium bowl, combine lemon curd, lemon zest, and ice cream; beat until blended. Spoon into piecrust on top of chocolate topping.

Drizzle with remaining chocolate ice cream topping; swirl the topping into the ice cream mixture with the tip of a knife. Freeze until firm. You can slice this right out of the freezer. ♦

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Fishing ADVENTURES

with Derek Pietsch



Today Parker and I went fishing at Lake Fork. We fished and fished and guess what? Zero Fish.

Since we did not catch anything yesterday, today will be a challenge to find where they are hiding. Parker's brother-in-law and girlfriend went with us today. She caught a 5 pounder. The challenge was on. I was determined we would catch some good fish today.

Parker and I were basically fishing in the same place making the same cast. He caught 2 spotted bass. I was fishing with a football jig. I caught a 5 pounder, and a 4 pounder. We kept on fishing in that honey hole. It was just fun catching since yesterday was a big 0. I caught 9 fish on the same spot.

Parker was having fun and did not want to leave. I needed to drive back but he kept insisting we stay a little longer. The gas tank in the boat was saying it was empty and he ignored it, thinking there was still gas in the tank. Surprise, the boat came to a screeching halt. We flagged down a guy on the lake and he went to get us some gas. He brought it back and we put it in the tank and it still did not



start. He took Parker back to get more gas and that boat would not crank. This man called his wife and she had a little car and we all jumped in. I was scrunched and my head touched the

roof. It was crazy, but thankful we were rescued. We all needed to get home and it was getting late. She took me, his brother-in-law and girlfriend to our cars. The man took Parker to the boat launch.

What an adventure. I did not make it home till 1 a.m. exhausted.

July 4, 2020 Happy 4th of July

What a great way to celebrate the 4th of July. Fishing at Galveston with my best friends Trey and Travis. The catch of the day was redfish and trout. There is a 5 trout limit and a limit of 3 redfish per person. We caught our limit of 3 redfish each and 6 trout. Used plastic swimbaits for bait. Having a great time with my friends and cooking up our catch.



July 5, 2020 Surfing on Lake Conroe



This evening I went out in the boat with my parents. It's really busy with boats on July 4th so I like to go out after everything calms down. The best time is early in the morning or late in the evening about an hour before sunset. The lake is quiet except for the birds and the sound of the waves as we move on the water. It is one of the most relaxing times of the day. I get my board out and enjoy the rest of the evening. My legs are burning, what a great workout. It's all worth it. At the end of day enjoying a great sunset. Doing What You Love. Loving What You Do. Enjoying the Great Outdoors.

July 8-9 2020 Fort Gibson Practice

Trey and I are getting ready for the tournament on Fort Gibson. It was originally scheduled in March, but got cancelled because of the Coronavirus. Today we went out where the lake meets Ft. Gibson up the river. It was a giant rock wall. Current was on one side of it. Overflow from the lake was above us flowing over

the rocks.

We used spinner baits and big worms. Got about 30 bites and caught a few fish. At the end of the day we shook them off. While we were idling, a big paddlefish jumped up about 3 feet in the air and scared Trey. Some of them we saw were about 5 feet long.

We went out today and practiced and caught about 13 pounds of fish. Going to continue to practice and try to locate the big fish.

Our trolling motor was giving us trouble and was not working correctly. We did not have time to fix it so I went to Walmart and purchased a paddle. Trey already had one in the boat and I bought another one. I don't know how that is going to work but we will try our best.

I called Lee Livesay, one of my buddies on the Bassmaster Elite Series and talked to him and told him that the trolling motor broke on Trey's boat. We both had paddles and we would use them. Lee knew that was not going to work so he called his one of his buddies, named Billy that lives in Oklahoma and told him we were in a bind. He asked him if we could borrow his boat and he said, "OK". That was such a generous offer but we did not feel that we knew him enough to take out his nice boat. Lee talked to us and said, "Go ahead and use it, you can't paddle and fish at the same time". We had never accepted something like this before. We did not even know this man and he was willing to help us. So, we both looked at each other and said, "Let's do this". We got in the truck and drove an hour away and picked up Billy's boat and talked with him and transferred our equipment into his boat. We just met one of the most generous guys. We were extremely grateful that he trusted us to use his boat. We drove back to the hotel and finally got to bed around midnight. Set our alarm to wake up at 4:30 a.m.

July 10, 2020 FLW Fort Gibson Tournament

It was a Friday morning with a slight breeze blowing. We were one of the last teams to take off. There were 82 teams in the tournament today. We were driving the bright green Skeeter and were about to set out on a great day of fishing.

We headed to the south end of the lake first. That is where we had the most bites during practice.

Our first stop was at a transition bank with a brush pile. This is when the rocks go from big to small with sand. This was one of the patterns we discovered. At 12 feet deep there was a school of fish. I caught the first keeper on the first cast. It was 2 ¼ pounder. Trey cast once and then on the second cast he landed a



6 pounder. He was going crazy, but he had to keep it down because there were other boats near us and we didn't want to make it obvious our spot was good. What a great way to start a tournament. For a solid hour it was non-stop action. Every cast we were getting bit or hooking fish. We were on a roll and this was fun! At this spot we caught 10 fish, 5 of which were keepers. It slowed down and we left and went to the next spot.

We went to a brush pile half way up the river. This is another spot we went to during practice and I shook off some fish the day before. We didn't catch a thing. It was getting cloudy and as we looked in the distance you could see it raining about 500 yards away.

Rain came and went. We went back to the first spot where we caught the big fish and got the most bites. We did this because the day before a storm rolled in just like today, they bit like crazy and we were hoping for a repeat. Well as you know things change and that did not happen. We saw some a high school boat fishing nearby so that hole was probably fished out.

We decided to go north running way up the river. It was a 30-minute run. Got to another transition bank with a brush pile fishing in 10-12 feet of water. The thermocline was at 12 feet. Trey and I were listening to Podcast Bass University on the way to the tournament about how the thermocline effects fishing. We realized why we were catching fish at a certain depth.

A thermocline develops when layers of water separate into several layers and the lowest level of water in the lake is full of rotted decaying matter, therefore depleting the oxygen. Since this bottom layer is depleted of oxygen baitfish like the gizzard and threadfin shad and other fish cannot survive below the thermocline. When you have reached the thermocline there is a sudden change in temperature. We were fishing right above the thermocline.

We were up north going up the bank fishing some of the lay downs. On my 3rd cast I hooked a 4 pounder. I culled one of my fish up. Right after I caught mine Trey was throwing the big worm on a small lay down and as soon as it hit the water, he picked up on it and it was dead weight. Had it on for two seconds and it pulled off. He didn't have a good hook set. After that we only had one more bite. We had ten bites on this same spot the day before.

We went to four to five more places and didn't catch a thing.

We ran all the back to the South end of the lake. We were low on gas. Running from one end of the lake to the other that we used fifty gallons of gas. We stopped at the gas station and put in five gallons, that would be enough to get us back to the weigh in.

Trey was throwing a jig and made a cast. He was dragging it across a brush pile and got hung up. He started popping it hard trying to release it and it came out. He drug it for two seconds and got popped. He had a fish on. Set the hook, it felt good. Fighting it, as he was reeling it in, he knew it was going to be a good cull. Landed it and culled one of the smaller ones. We only had one more small fish.

The lures we were using were the Mag-

num Trick Worm, Ol Monster and a Football jig. We ran out of spots so I started idling looking for new spots. We found another brush pile and on the first cast I set the hook and it pulled 3 strips of drag and the fish pulled straight into the brush pile and broke me off. That was our winning fish. It only needed to be a 4 pounder, but I know it was way bigger than that. It dominated me and I could not do a thing. It was so strong it broke me off.

We fished a few more places with no luck. Last place we went to we caught 4 keepers. That did not help, they were all too small. We fished as far as the lake goes from the south end all the way to the north end of the lake. We covered everything that looked good.

When we arrived at the weigh-in we pulled into a boat stall and parked the boat. We had a good bag on board but it sure would have been better if we had my fish that broke off or Trey's bigger fish that we lost to cull up the last small fish. Since we are social distancing for Covid-19 they only let one of us go up on stage with a mask to weigh the fish. Our bag weighed 17-5. They had me hold up our fish. It was exciting. I told them the big one was Trey's. We were excited! I told Trey and my mom I did not think it would hold. There was going to be someone else that had a few more pounds. There were still people in line and we were patiently waiting as they stepped up to weigh in fish. Then the Oklahoma's team came up and had a bag weighing 19-14 and took over first place. We were still happy to come in second,



but the most exciting thing was that we qualified to go to the FLW National Championship. The top 10 teams qualified. It will be held in 2021. It was a great tournament and we want to thank our new friend, Billy for being so generous and letting us borrow his boat. We sure could not have covered the water we did with a paddle instead of a trolling motor. This is what makes fishing so great. Meeting great people that are so generous and help others. It is all part of the journey, we will never forget this. Trey and I cannot thank Billy enough for letting us use his boat.

When the tournament was over, we took the boat back to Billy. He told us that 4 to 5 people called him and wanted to know why he let those Texas guys use his boat. He told them that we were friends with Lee so we must be good guys. You could spot this boat anywhere. It was fluorescent lime green and obviously this guy Billy knows everyone on the lake. **THROW IT OUT, POP IT IN, FISH ON!** ♦

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Lake Conroe FISHING REPORT



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

Black Bass: Bass fishing during late summer can be a little challenging. The pattern can change from shallow to deep in a matter of an hour or so. At daybreak I like to fish shallow running crank baits near any rock structures and around boat dock pilings. Once the sun gets up, I will fish worm rigs around submerged pond dams and roadbeds and also on the edges of a flat where it drops off to deeper depths.

Crappie: Crappie action may be a little slow at this time due to warm water temps, but if patient, minnows and jigs fished near bridge pilings and brush piles should be holding a few good slabs of crappie. Best depth is usually about 12' - 17' or so.

White Bass & Hybrid Striped Bass: At this time of year I like to troll small pet spoons behind deep diving crank baits near main lake humps and points in 15' - 25' depths. I will move from one location to another looking for these fish. If they are along the bottom I will bounce ¾ oz. slab spoons for some action.

Catfish: Catfish action is always good, especially during the early morning hours. Under the 1097 Bridge and along creek and river channels are prime fishing locations. Dip baits, night crawlers and shrimp are all good baits to catch cats. By baiting up these areas with range cubes and milo, you will increase the action. ♦

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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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