

DOCK LINE

Magnolia

MAGAZINE



October 2020



DKB

Dream Kitchen & Bath

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

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

See page 8

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**Aquatic Plant Management on
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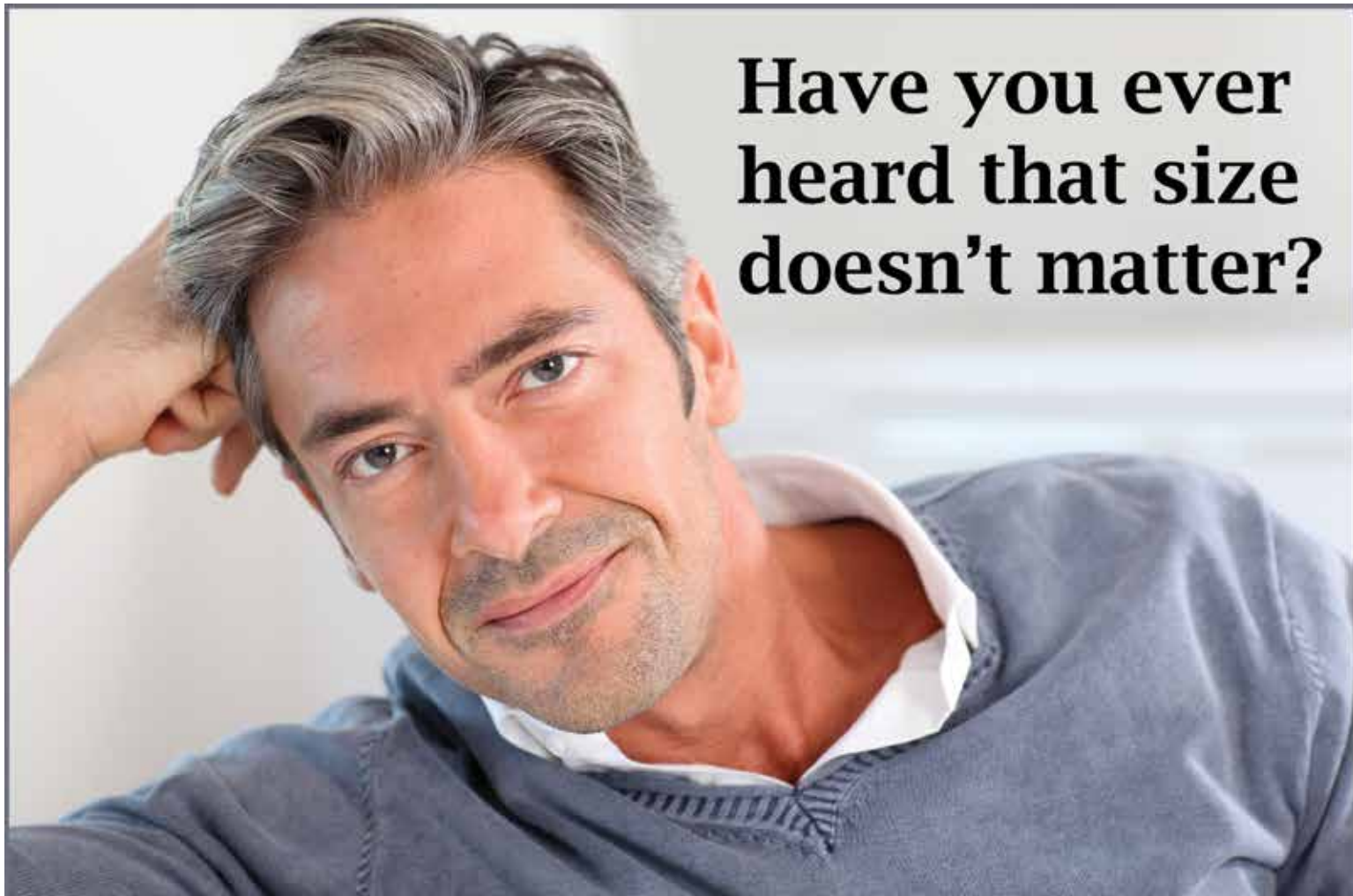
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As we enter into another season, sadly it is safe to say nothing much has changed from the summer. We are continuing on the road of uncharted territory as we move through another month of 2020, which means we are continuing to adapt to the new normalcy society has implemented upon us. Rules with changing variables on a daily basis get 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 us to stand together. We are a community of resilience, compassion and generosity. It has become apparent what a great community it is in which we live. As the holiday season inches closer upon us, we encourage everyone to take a look around, celebrate the little things and support your local businesses, they need your support now more than ever as we all struggle to get through this unprecedented time. If we all stick together, we will be stronger than ever.

Until next month...

Bentley & Ellie 

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ON THE COVER



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. 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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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 re-

modelling 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 believe 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 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.

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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 transformation. "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 remodeling, 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 remodeling 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. ♦

HALLOWEEN

Pet Safety Tips



NO SWEETS FOR YOUR SWEETIE

Keep your pets away from candy (especially chocolate); avoid placing bowls on the ground.



KEEP PUMPKIN AWAY FROM THE PUMPKIN

Decorative plants can be toxic candle-lit jack-o-lanterns are fire hazards if tipped over.



COSTUMES ARE OPTIONAL

Don't force on an unwanted costume. Most pets prefer birthday suits.



NO TRICK OR TREATER GREETERS

The front door is a high traffic area. Doorbells and knocks can upset even the friendliest pets.



MUST SHOW I.D.

Spooked pets can get lost. Microchip and tag them in case they get out.



PARTY POOPERS ARE OK

Some pets are happier in a quiet room away from the party.



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Here at My Family Vet Montgomery we hope you and your family including your furbabies have a happy and safe Halloween. Remember chocolate is toxic to dogs and sugary sweets just aren't good for them. Dogs "talk" by using body language to communicate with other dogs. When wearing costumes they cannot communicate as well. Make sure they have I.D. on during Halloween just in case they get out the door. Better yet keep your pets away from the door during trick or treating as all the activity can be upsetting to them. Jack-o-lanterns and decorations can be dangerous to pets so keep them away from pets. It's okay to put your pet in a quiet room away from all the action. Sometimes that is what is best for them.




TAXES and the 2020 Election

With the COVID-19 pandemic dominating the news cycle for most of the year, many may have moved the thought of the upcoming presidential election to the back burner for much of the year. However, election season is upon us and it's time to review the candidates.

With any administration, existing or new, the question of tax policy tends to loom on the minds of voters, regardless of whether they favor red or blue. So what are the tax positions and proposals of Trump vs Biden? Interestingly, public accounting firm Crowe has a nice summary of these two candidates' proposed policies for taxes on individuals. I've summarized this below and it is a neutral statement of the facts upon which you get to decide. Vote your conscience and may the best man win.

Individual Tax Rate

Current law is a top marginal tax rate of 37%. Rates are scheduled to increase to pre-Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) amounts after 2025. These are some of the lowest effective rates seen in decades.

Trump wants to enact a 10% middle-class tax cut, which could include lowering the 22% marginal tax rate to 15%. He also wants to extend the individual TCJA rates that are scheduled to expire after 2025.

Joe Biden proposes raising the top marginal tax rate to the pre-TCJA rate of 39.6% for income over \$400,000.

Deductions

Current law has the basic standard deduction for married couples filing jointly at \$24,800 (\$12,400 for single taxpayers or for married taxpayers filing separately, and \$18,650 for heads of household). After 2025, the basic standard deduction is scheduled to revert to pre-TCJA amounts.

The TCJA suspended the personal exemption and most individual deductions through 2025.

Trump is proposing extending the higher basic standard deduction and other deductions enacted by the TCJA that are scheduled to expire after 2025.

Joe Biden wants to limit total itemized deductions so the reduction in tax liability per dollar of deduction does not exceed 28%, which means taxpayers in tax brackets higher than 28% will face limited itemized deductions. He would also like to phase out the 20% pass-through deduction for income over \$400,000.

Capital Gains

Current law has the top tax rate for capital gains and qualified dividends at 20% in addition to a 3.8% net investment income tax.

Trump wants to index capital gains for inflation, reduce the capital gains tax rate and enact a capital gains tax holiday that eliminates capital gains taxes for a yet-to-be-identified period.

Joe Biden endorses removing the preference for capital gains and qualified dividends for income over \$1 million by taxing them at ordinary rates.

The net investment income tax remains.

Tax Credits

Current law says a child with an individual taxpayer identification number cannot be claimed for the Child Tax Credit but can be claimed for the \$500 other dependent credit. A taxpayer with an individual taxpayer identification number is eligible to claim the Child Tax Credit and the \$500 other dependent credit.

The maximum CTC is \$2,000. This amount is scheduled to revert to the pre-TCJA amount of \$1,000 after 2025.

The maximum child- and dependent-care credit is \$1,200.

Workers older than 65 who do not have a qualifying child are not eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

There is no tax credit for first-time homebuyers.

There's also no tax credit for renters.

Donald Trump will require a dependent to have a Social Security number to be eligible to be claimed for the \$500 other dependent credit and require a taxpayer to have a Social Security number to claim both the CTC and the \$500 other child dependent credit.

He also wants to extend the \$2,000 CTC enacted by the TCJA that is scheduled to expire after 2025.

Joe Biden wants to raise the CTC to \$8,000 for one child and \$16,000 for two or more children for taxpayers with income up to \$125,000 per year. The credit phases out for income between \$125,000 and \$400,000 per year.

Expand the EITC to workers older than 65 who do not have a qualifying child.

Enact a \$5,000 tax credit for family caregivers of people who have certain physical and cognitive needs.

Enact a refundable, advanceable tax credit of up to \$15,000 for first-time homebuyers.

Enact a renter's tax credit, designed to reduce rent and utilities to 30% of income for low-income individuals and families who make too much money to qualify for a Section 8 voucher.

Estate and Gift Tax

Current law for 2020 has the estate and gift tax exemption at \$11,580,000. This amount is scheduled to revert to the pre-TCJA indexed amount of approximately \$5.8 million after 2025.

Transfers of appreciated property at death get a stepped-up basis.

Donald Trump favors extending the higher estate and gift tax exemption enacted by the TCJA that is scheduled to expire after 2025.

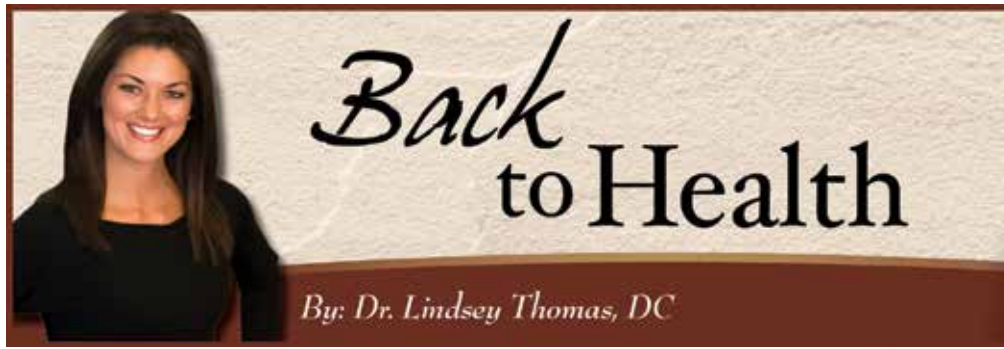
Joe Biden wants to eliminate stepped-up basis on transfers of appreciated property at death.

Regardless of who wins, you will want to be informed and prepared on the tax front and how it may affect your financial plan. What preparation are you doing now? We'd like to help and give you Clear Direction for Retirement®. Come see us, call us or visit us on the web. We always like making a new friend. Stay safe out there.



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Sniffling, Sneezing and Wheezing: Avoiding Those Fall Allergies

Fall is here and many of us are probably noticing that we are starting to snuffle and sneeze a little more often. We have pollen to thank for that. Ragweed pollination is in full swing during the fall months. When pollen gets into the noses of certain people, it triggers the runny nose, itchy eyes, and other allergy symptoms.

Air pollution can make allergy symptoms worse. One of the most common pollutants is ozone, which is created in the atmosphere by a combination of sunlight, nitrogen oxide, and hydrocarbons from burning fuel. Clouds of ozone are created around some cities as the sunlight becomes stronger.

Inside, molds love damp areas, including the basement and bathrooms. Their spores get into the air and can cause problems for allergy sufferers.

Dust mites, tiny insects, thrive in warm, humid temperatures and nest in beds, fabric, and carpets. Their residue can get into the air, triggering sneezes, wheezes, itchy skin and runny noses.

In a healthy person, when the immune system is stressed by being exposed to these environmental triggers, chemicals are released that produce inflammation. These chemicals are made by immune cells that migrate to the site where the body is compromised. By the end of the inflammatory process another group of immune cells begins to produce chemicals that have anti-inflammatory properties. These anti-inflammatory chemicals help in calming the area of inflammation. As a result, the symptoms of inflammation begin to resolve. The body, in the ideal situation, is genetically programmed to heal itself.

These symptoms become a chronic occurrence when your immune system is not functioning at 100%. Here are some tips to keep you healthy throughout the springtime months.

DIET

Clean up the diet by removing simple sugars. These sugars include glucose, sucrose, fructose and lactose and processed white flours. These sugars are in cereals, juices, cookies, cake, candy, soda, soft drinks, shakes, snack bars, milk, cheese, ice cream, bread, pasta, crackers and fast foods.

Sugar, like salt, is dehydrating to the body.

Dehydration increases histamine levels. Histamine is another pro-inflammatory chemical that can worsen symptoms. Water helps reduce histamine levels. Approximately, seventy percent of our body is made up of water. Make sure you drink water as your main beverage and stay well hydrated.

Remove unhealthy fats. These include partially hydrogenated oils, margarine, vegetable shortening and cooking oils such as corn, vegetable, safflower and sunflower oils. Use olive oil, organic butter, grape seed oil, coconut oil and cold pressed oils for cooking. You can also supplement your diet with good quality fish oil.

Eliminate the dyes, preservatives, food colorings, artificial sweeteners and additives found in most foods. Even pay attention to the color of your toothpaste and deodorant.

Of course, we all have those urges to eat ice cream, chips, candy, etc. That's why I recommend the 80/20 rule. 80% of the time stick with a diet that is filled with whole foods (i.e. vegetables, legumes, meat, chicken, fish, fruit) and the other 20% of the time satisfy your craving!

Chiropractic Care

Since chiropractic deals directly with allowing the nervous system to function at its highest ability, chiropractic care for an individual with allergies can be extremely beneficial. It is a safe, effective, and natural form of care.

It's most important to understand that chiropractic is not a treatment for allergies. Its purpose is to reduce stress on the body. Stress interferes with the proper functioning of the nervous system, can weaken the immune system, lower resistance and reduce the body's ability to heal effectively.

The chiropractic adjustment frees the nervous system from spinal stress allowing the immune system to function properly. This allows you to respond to internal and external environmental stresses more efficiently.

The adjustment is very gently and customized to each patient's needs. At Sandstone Chiropractic, we offer a variety of adjustment techniques to best fit the patient.

niques to best fit the patient.

Household Chemicals

We are all being overexposed to chemicals from the products we use in our household and daily lives. As the exposure becomes greater, allergic responses are also increasing.

Trading out your all-purpose cleaner for vinegar, lemon juice, baking soda and water is one way to eliminate the exposure.

Avoid petroleum-based products. This is very common in the lotion, shampoo, conditioner and body wash that we use.

Rather than using insect repellent that you buy in the store, use eucalyptus oil as a deterrent for those pesky bugs.

Switch your laundry detergent to chemical free. Several manufacturers create detergents that are free of phosphates and chlorine and are super concentrated, so a little goes a long way.

If you or anyone in your family starts sniffling, sneezing, itching or comes home with a bite, here are a few natural remedies to eliminate the symptoms.

Vitamin E oil applied to a bee sting can relieve pain and swelling.

A slice of onion rubbed on the site will relieve the itch and swelling of an insect bite. A paste of baking soda and water or mud and water will also calm the area.

Peppermint oil acts as a decongestant, and substances in peppermint contain anti-inflammatory and mild antibacterial constituents.

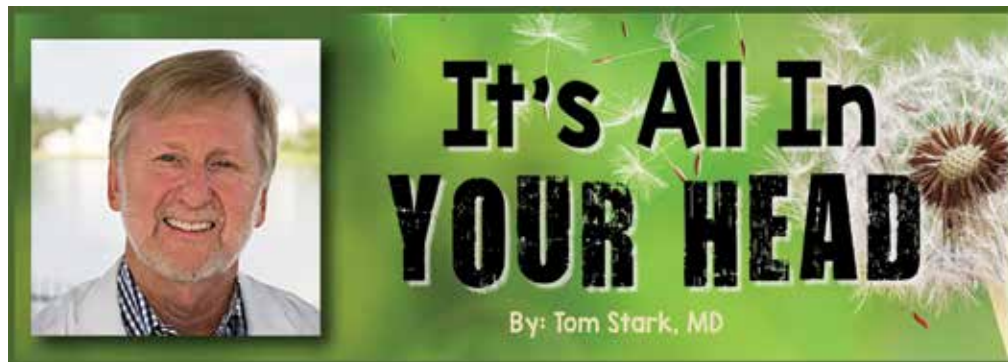
Flushing the nose with saline solution (salt water) can help soothe upper respiratory allergies by removing irritants that become lodged in the nose and cause inflammation.

Dust mites love a humid environment, which allows them to reproduce like crazy. Invest in a dehumidifier. A dehumidifier can also help prevent mold, another allergen, from growing. When cooking or showering, take advantage of the exhaust fan, another way to help keep humidity to a minimum.

If you find that you keep having the same allergic response or the response intensifies even after eliminating all inflammatory factors, further allergy testing may be necessary to identify the source.

Sandstone Chiropractic provides comprehensive allergy testing for all ages. Please contact our office for more information regarding these tests. ♦





Nosebleeds

Luckily, there are not many emergencies in my field of ear, nose and throat that require me to go to an emergency room in the middle of the night. However there is one situation that I get called to treat and that is severe uncontrolled nosebleeds.

Bleeding from the nose can be a minor irritation or can be severe enough to hospitalize a patient. I thought I would discuss the most common causes of bleeding from someone's nose as well as home treatment that often will prevent a trip to an emergency room.

The tissues of the nose have a very rich blood supply. Almost everyone has had minor injuries to their nasal tissues causing a little bit of bleeding that usually stops within a few minutes. Many children under the age of 8 have temporary nasal bleeding often associated with allergies. Usually these will stop on their own after a few minutes.

More severe or prolonged bleeding from the nose is rare in the general population but certainly occurs especially in people over the age of 50. Almost all bleeding is from the nasal septum, which is the wall between the 2 nasal passages in the middle. The nasal septum has a particularly excellent blood supply with blood coming from 3 different small arteries. The area that bleeds is usually in the front where it is a transition zone between the dry skin of the external nose and the moist mucosa coated membrane farther back.

Nosebleeds are usually associated with cooler dry air. Once we do get some winter here the humidity will drop, and of course we start turning on the heat in the house, which is usually very dry. This contributes to cracking of the membranes especially in the front of the septum with tiny blood vessels opening up if they are close to the surface.

Another very large factor contributing to nasal bleeding is the use of medications which we think of as "blood thinners". These include prescription drugs such as Coumadin, Eliquis or Plavix but also include of course the use of aspirin. Even so called low dose or baby aspirin of 81 mg a day is enough to contribute to nasal bleeding.

Controlling the nosebleed at home is usually not that difficult. If you or a family member




is prone to nosebleeds I strongly recommend that you have Afrin (oxymetazoline 0.05%) nasal spray in your home medicine cabinet. This medication acts quickly to constrict blood vessels and can often stop bleeding combined with a maneuver I will describe. If you are having bleeding from your nose that lasts more than 5 minutes, the first step is to blow your nose forcefully to remove all blood clots from the nasal passage. We think that blood clots are helpful, but in actuality they prolong bleeding in your nose. After blowing out as much blood as possible, spray the side that is bleeding with the Afrin, 3 or 4 sprays. Then wait 5 minutes and repeat the process of forceful blowing and for 3-4 sprays of Afrin. Then gently pinch the lower half of the nose together. Lean forward but do not lay back flat, as this will just make the blood go into your throat. Sometimes soaking a paper towel rolled up with Afrin and placing it in the bleeding side and pressing will also help. Pinching the upper half of the nose that is hard bone does not do any good at all.


Saline nasal sprays containing moisturizers such as xylitol, (Xlear spray) are very helpful in keeping the nasal passages moist to prevent bleeding so they can be used very, very frequently.

Hopefully this information will be helpful to you in the upcoming months of cooler dry air. Keep all your blood on the inside where it does the most good. ♦


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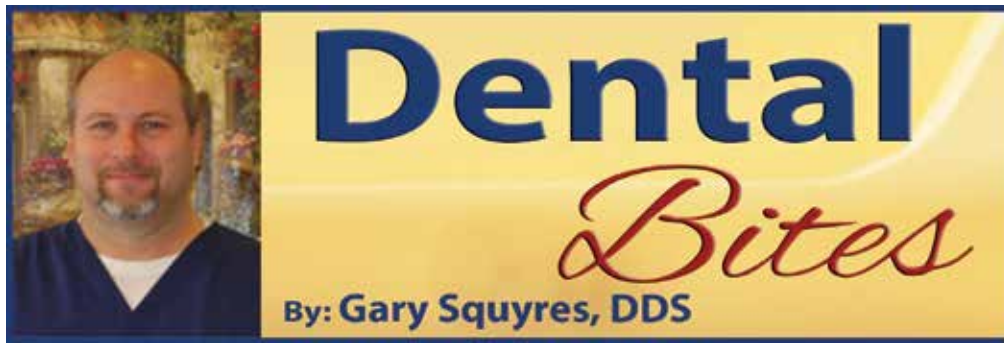
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4 Reasons to use Your Dental Insurance before the End of the Year

Did you know that you could actually save hundreds of dollars by using your dental benefits before the end of the year? While some dental insurance plans run on a fiscal year, most run on a calendar year. If your dental insurance plan is on a calendar year, these 4 reasons will show you why you should make a dental appointment now.

1. Yearly Maximum

The yearly maximum is the most money that the dental insurance plan will pay for your dental work within one full year. This amount varies by insurance company, but the average is around \$1,000-\$1,500 per year, per person. If this amount is not used, the insurance company



starts over when your annual plan expires and sets a new maximum for the upcoming year.

It does not require a lot of the dental work to reach your insurance maximum for the year. It is wise to get diagnosed work done this year in case something unforeseen happens next

year which causes you to exceed your insurance maximum. This will result in you having to pay that amount out of pocket.



2. Premiums

If you are paying your dental insurance premiums every month, you should be using your benefits. Even if you don't need any dental treatment, you should always have your regular dental cleanings to help prevent and detect any early signs of cavities, gum disease, oral cancer and any other dental problems.

If you have any dental care that you need to complete, you should make your appointment now to make sure that you take advantage of the dental coverage that you or your company has already paid for.

3. Dental Problems Can Worsen

By delaying dental treatment, you are risking more extensive and expensive treatment down the road. What may be a simple cavity now could turn into a root canal later. Call your dentist and schedule an appointment to use those benefits.



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4. Most Plans Don't Allow Roll Over of Unused Yearly Maximum

Most dental plans don't allow you to roll over your benefits that you don't use into the next year. Others, like some Delta Dental plans, will not allow you to use their rollover unless you have had at least one cleaning and oral exam in the plan year. So, either way now is a good time to schedule your next dental appointment. ♦



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How to Win at Social Media: The Exact 5 Strategies Used by the Top Brands and Influencers in the World

There are 3.8 billion social media users in the world today. If you own a business, you can bet that nearly all your current and potential customers are on at least one social media platform. By now, you've been told by everyone that your business needs to be on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, among others, and you likely have a page on one or more of those platforms.

However, you've probably seen how these sites have taken away much of the organic reach of businesses and brands, forcing them to invest in paid social media advertising to get in front of their potential customers. Many business owners think organic reach is just about dead.

Well, we're here to tell that it hasn't. In fact, if you follow the right strategies you can grow your organic reach and build up a special media presence that works every day to grow your business and bring in new leads. The biggest influencers and brands in the world are growing massive audiences organically by following some simple methods and best practices.

Without further ado, here are the five strategies that will guarantee organic social media growth that results in growing your business.

1. Post more than you think you should.

Many business owners have built a belief that social media can't do much for their business. At least, not organic social media. Sure, you can pour thousands of dollars a month into

Facebook and Instagram ads and you might see some results if you know what you're doing. However, organic results from social media are not easy to come by for businesses or brands.

That is, unless you post the right kind of content...and you post often - much more than you probably think. Influencers like Gary Vaynerchuck post up to seven times a day and big brands like Starbucks and Nike post once a day or once every two days. Most small businesses post much less than that. Maybe you can relate. The point is, if you aren't getting the engagement you want out of social media, you probably aren't posting enough.

2. Be consistent for 2 years (more like 5 years).

An even bigger challenge for businesses wanting to use social media as a growth strategy is consistency. Most businesses create a page for their business and post a lot early on, but begin to post less and less over time, sometimes stopping altogether. Trust is a powerful force in online marketing, and the best way to build trust is to show up consistently for a while. You need to create an expectation for your followers and meet that expectation every time.

Whenever you decide to post and however often you do it, keep doing it the same way. Do it for at least two years and you'll see your social media channels become a reliable marketing tool for your business. Do it for five years and you'll grow to become a trusted authority in your industry.

3. Document. Don't Create.

You may be wondering, "what am I supposed to post every day (or several times a day)?" Trying to come up with the most beautiful, attractive, viral-worthy post every time you post is exhausting. You don't have the time for that and you likely aren't a bottomless well of creative content. But you might be...

Gary Vaynerchuck, a successful online marketer and influencer that we mentioned above, gives this simple, yet powerful advice: Document. Don't create. Don't try to create something out of thin air every time you post. Just document your personal journey in your business. Post daily with a challenge you're facing or wisdom that is helping you. Share your successes and failures. Give advice. Help others.

A way to summarize this simply is to just be yourself. Be genuine and post every day about your journey. You could go live for a few minutes a day on Facebook or Instagram or just share a couple of sentences about your experiences. Yes, you'll feel a bit uncomfortable early on, but that will fade away as you get better and people start following you. People love connecting with authenticity.

4. Give, give, give, ask.

As a business owner, it can be tempting to talk about your products or services all the time and try to sell with your posts. This is a huge mistake and it's the fastest way to get people to ignore you on social media. Instead,

give away value when you post without asking for anything in return. Help out your audience. Post valuable content that will improve their lives. Post industry expertise that people would pay for elsewhere. Share what you know freely. Then, every now and then you can ask for something.

The best way to sell anything organically online is to provide value first, then ask for the sale later. When it comes to social media, you need to post value-based content at least three times for every post that asks for something - like an offer for your product or service.

5. Hire a social media manager.

If you're a business owner and you're reading all of this, you may be thinking that you simply don't have the time to invest in social media; at least not the kind that will actually grow successfully organically. Yes, you need to be on social media if you want to grow into the future. All of your customers are hanging out somewhere in these online channels. But, you don't have to do it yourself. One of the best investments you can make when it comes to marketing your business is to hire a social media manager.

A social media manager can post for you every day. They can create all the content for your social media pages and manage all the communication from your posts and messages. It's a great investment to make for the future of your business.

At Dock Line, we have an entire team of so-



cial media managers that help local businesses grow online. If you would like to find out how we could help your business grow through social media, let us know! Not only do we post beautiful content that your audience will love, but we study your market to post at the most optimal times, constantly test and tweak content so it gets maximum engagement, and nurture followers into leads and customers, all

while you focus on the parts of your business you do best.

If you're interested to learn more about Dock Line's Social Media Services for small businesses, send us an email today at ozzy@docklinemagazine.com. You'll be glad you did! ♦

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TPWD Angler Recognition Program: Making Memories for a Lifetime

By: Mike Gore, Fisheries Technician
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
College Station – Houston Inland Fisheries Management District

"Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." - Henry David Thoreau

As I am sitting in front of my computer today, I started reminiscing about the times my parents took us fishing. We enjoyed many long hours on the water, bass fishing at Sam Rayburn or trying to catch white bass at Lake Livingston. Spending time with my whole family outdoors are the childhood experiences I remember the most. Was it the hunting or fishing or was it the feeling of togetherness that I remembered with such fondness? I know it was the latter. It was the feeling of knowing that we had taken time out of our busy lives to be together; to share and make memories that would last a lifetime. Now, as a father and husband, I am aware of the fishing experiences that made my childhood filled with joy. I try to impart the same experiences to my family, especially my kids.

I caught my first Largemouth Bass on a black and white Heddon Lucky 13 Hula Popper on Sam Rayburn. A school of bass broke the surface chasing shad. I had never seen anything like it before. I sat in awe. Action was fast and furious for a few moments. The bass went down, but my dad turned to me and said that they would come back up at any moment, and to throw my lure as close as I could to the school. When the fish returned, I did just as I was told, hooking up with my first bass. It was only 12 inches long, but at 11 years old, it was big to me. The next few moments were even more important to me and are the vision I see every time I think about that moment in my life.

My dad removed the hook from the mouth of the fish. He was excited that I had just caught my first fish and desperately wanted me to get another before the school went deep again. He turned to me and said, "Hurry up and throw back out there..." His sentence stopped. On the word "throw" the fish, my first bass ever, slipped from his hands and returned to the water. I was devastated and upset. I did not get to admire my first bass. However, the hurt quickly faded and it has become one of my most cherished memories.

I could go on and write several stories about my experiences in the outdoors. My point in telling this story is to emphasize the quality time and memories that can be made on family trips.

Now COVID-19 is forcing people to find new things to do, and I have a suggestion that can create lasting memories for you as an individual or your family. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Angler Recognition Program recognizes anglers catches for waterbody and state records for every species of fish. Now this may sound like a hard goal to reach, but many waterbodies have never had a record application submitted! This means that many waterbody records are within easy reach. Before going out to your local lake or pond, go to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Angler Recognition page, <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/programs/fishrecords/rules/> to explore

how you can participate.

There are many different ways an individual can challenge themselves and make their fishing trip even more memorable by qualifying for the Angler Recognition Program: State or Waterbody Records by weight, Waterbody Records by tackle type (rod & reel, fly fishing, etc.), First Fish Awards, and Big Fish Awards. You can even practice catch and release with Catch and Release Records by length. Categories exist not only for public waterbodies, but private waters as well. Imagine adding a fish award to the memory of beloved family fishing trip. It would be priceless!

The Junior Angler Recognition Program started in 2003. It is similar to the Angler Recognition Program. You must be 16 years old or younger to participate. It was developed to encourage adults to take a kid fishing and motivate kids to ask someone to take them fishing. The Junior Angler Recognition Program provides an opportunity for a young angler to be recognized separately from adult anglers and be listed in the record book in a standalone division. Junior Angler Records are displayed on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website. Just because it's for young anglers, doesn't mean the categories are any lighter. Kids can qualify for

Junior State Records, Junior Waterbody Records, Big Fish Awards, First fish Awards, Outstanding Angler, and others.



Angler Recognition Application

Angler Recognition Certificates

Since the Junior Angler Recognition Program is not so well known, many of the categories have not been filled yet for many waterbodies. Parents can help a child get as many records as they can or catch the biggest fish out of any waterbody of their choice. It is a great way to spend quality time with a child. Any species of fish qualifies, whether it is as small as a Golden Shiner or as big as a Small-mouth Buffalo. To qualify, a fish must weigh at least 2 oz., otherwise many of the rules for the normal Angler Recognition Program apply to the Junior Angler Recognition Program. Junior Anglers receive a certificate in the mail of the achievement and will be able to see their name on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website if they qualify for a record. Both of my kids have waterbody records at a local pond in College Station, Texas. My son, 7 years old at the time, even qualified for a Junior State Record with a Red-bellied Pacu he caught on a worm. His sister caught her record fish at 3 years of age. Let me tell you, there is nothing that will make a parent prouder than to see their child grinning from ear to ear knowing that they had just accomplished something on their own. The days could not go fast enough with the anticipation of getting those certificates in the mail.

Here's some guidelines before you head out to your favorite fishing spot to pursue a potential record catch:

- 1) Look at the records for that waterbody you are going to visit. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/programs/fishrecords/record-search.phtml>

- 2) Print an application and participation brochure for the rules. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/programs/fishrecords/scales.phtml>

- 3) Take a camera or phone that takes good pictures to capture photo evidence of your fish.

- 4) Take a measuring device (ruler, tape measure, etc.) to get a length and girth of the fish. Girth measurement is the circumference around the biggest part of the fish's belly.

- 5) If you have a record fish by weight, you'll need to find a place that has a certified scale to weigh your fish. You'll need the date it was certified, and by whom for the application. The most common place to find a certi-



Certification process of a potential waterbody record by TPWD staff at a local fishing event

*Junior Waterbody
Record Redear
sunfish*



*Junior Waterbody
Record & Junior
State Record Pacu
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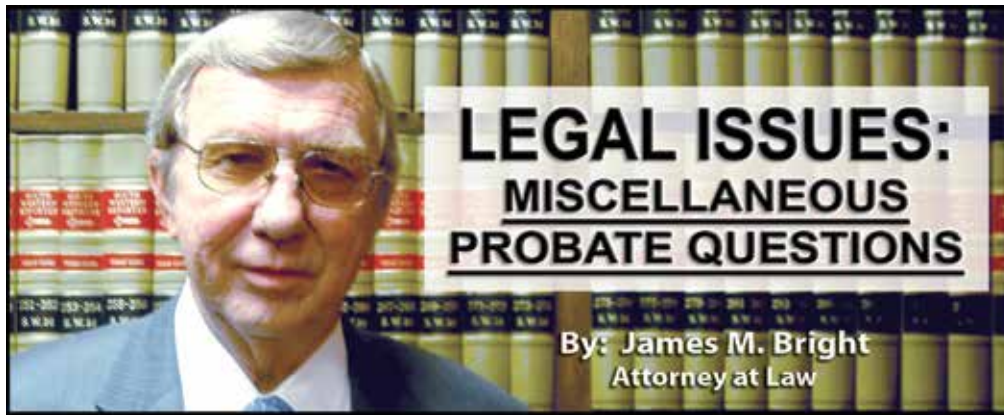


fied scale is a local meat market. Certified scales listed with Texas Parks and Wildlife can be found at: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/programs/fishrecords/scales.phtml>

- 6) Fill out the application for your catch according to the procedures in the brochure. If you have any questions call the fisheries biologist for your area, and they will be glad to guide you through any questions you may have to complete the application.

Take the time and take a child out to create some great memories!

For information on the Angler Recognition Program go to <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/programs/fishrecords/>. For additional questions, contact our office by phone at (979) 272-1430, or by email at mike.gore@tpwd.texas.gov or alice.best@tpwd.texas.gov. Also, visit us on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/TPWInlandFisheriesCollegeStationHouston>. ♦



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

The following is a list of common questions that are encountered in my law practice regarding estates and probate of Wills. The answers may vary depending upon circumstances of that particular client, but are offered as a guideline for situations which are not extraordinary.

What is the difference in legal title and equitable title and how do the differences relate to probate of estates? As applied to real property issues, equitable title gives the right to possess or use the real property, while legal title shows the person or persons on the deed. A common way that these dramatically different rights appear in probate is when one person (such as a surviving spouse) receives a life estate and remaindermen (children of the

decendent or others) receive legal title. The result of this situation is that remaindermen hold legal title to real property that the surviving spouse has a right to occupy or possess. Technically, the remaindermen (children or other) can sell legal title, although the property would be encumbered by a life estate. In practice, the remaindermen are not likely to find a buyer who is willing to accept those conditions. As regards probate—these issues can be resolved by even a simple Will.

What are revocable life estate deeds (sometimes called “Lady Bird Deeds”)? This is a deed where a person grants a life estate in property to himself and grants legal title to his children or others. This instrument differs from a life estate in the fact that the grantor retains for himself the right to sell or encumber the property during his lifetime. The so-called

“Lady Bird Deed” is often used in anticipation of application for Medicaid benefits. It attempts to transfer the property to descendants without making it subject to Medicaid reimbursement after the death of the grantor. These deeds, if done, must be with a full understanding that there may be title company objections. It should also be noted that if this vehicle is initiated as a shield to Medicaid Recovery, the Internal Revenue Service has a “look-back” period of 60 months.

It is also important to note that laws may change so that the so-called “Lady Bird Deed” may not be effective for its intended purpose.

Does a probate of a Will automatically transfer title to real property? The answer to this question depends upon the type of probate proceeding done. If the Will was probated as a Muniment of Title, then the answer is yes. Transfer of title to real property in Texas is essentially complete upon the filing of a certified copy of the Will together with a certified copy of the Court’s Order in the Real Property Records of the county where the real property is located.

If there were debts to be paid or other cause that an administration be opened, then transfer of title to real property is **NOT** automatic. Transfer of title to real property in this instance would be accomplished by signing and filing an executor or administrator’s deed. An executor or administrator’s deed is a deed wherein the grantor is also the executor or administrator that has been authorized by the



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Court to represent the estate of the decedent. The executor's deed transfers title of the real property to the beneficiaries under the Will.

An example might be, husband dies; surviving wife is the executor and the beneficiary. In this case, wife, in her capacity as executor, signs a deed transferring husband's ownership interest in real property to herself in her individual capacity.

This is an often overlooked duty of the executor. Being authorized by the court to act for the estate does not automatically transfer title to real property; it only gives the executor the authority to act.

The questions answered above cannot begin to answer all of the questions as they relate to your particular loved one's estate. You are encouraged to have an experienced attorney of your choosing answer questions as they relate to you or your loved ones as well as to prepare documents which express your wishes at the time of your death.

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

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Aquatic Plant Management on Lake Conroe It Takes a Village



A cage with White Water Lilly.

For more than 40 years, aquatic vegetation has been a matter of concern on Lake Conroe. The San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) and Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) are close and collaborative partners in the on-going effort to manage aquatic vegetation in the lake. Though spearheaded by SJRA and TPWD, the

program has grown because of the ongoing contributions of many area stakeholders representing multiple interests. The Seven Coves Bass Club and Lake Conroe Association in particular have been staunch supporters of aquatic plant management and have had a major influence on the program's growth.

The idea of "management" within the context of aquatic plants, includes both native as well as exotic (i.e. non-native/invasive) species. The overall objective is to maximize the amount of native plants while limiting exotic species to an acceptable level. As eloquently described by TPWD Fisheries Biologist, Alice Best, in last month's issue of Dock Line, these exotic plants can be very aggressive, often out-compete native plants for existence, cause a multitude of undesirable consequences and upset the delicate balance of the natural ecology. One of the most significant and impactful effects of exotic plants is that they can form such large, dense mats that they can severely limit recreational opportunities on the lake. In fact, certain plants can become so entangled in boat propellers that they can render vessels virtually inoperable. Though well intended, certain methods used to control exotic species often also reduce the amount of native vegetation.



Bull Rush from the Native Plant Nursery.

Shortly after the reservoir filled in 1973, the exotic plant, water hyacinth, was first identified. Over the years, other exotic species have found their way into Lake Conroe including giant salvinia, crested floating heart, and hydrilla. Historically, the two most troublesome in terms of the labor and expense to control are hydrilla and giant salvinia. Once established, eradication is simply not a realistic objective. Therefore, a sustained main-



White Water Lilly from the Native Plant Nursery.

tenance program is essential. Both SJRA and TPWD have active exotic-plant treatment programs and each dedicates an extensive amount of time and resources, including experienced, licensed applicators to help fight the battle. A truly successful management program must be equally as committed to native plant restoration as it is to exotic species control. Therefore, SJRA and TPWD are both fully committed to this vitally important aspect of the overall aquatic plant management program. As previously acknowledged as being a major stakeholder and partner in the quest to maintain native plant species, several years ago, the Seven Coves Bass Club constructed an aquatic plant nursery on the SJRA Lake Conroe campus. The Nursery, which consists of eight individual waterproofed wooden troughs, is used to grow a variety of native plant species. Plants grown in the nursery are propagated from clippings of "mother plants" that have been well established in the reservoir from previous planting efforts. Those grown in the nursery in any given year can be transferred back into the reservoir the following year in a continuous, self-sustaining cycle. Each year an estimated 600 plants are transferred from the nursery back into Lake Conroe. Transplanting excursions often include the assistance of volunteers passionate about preserving the overall health of the lake's ecology.

In 2020, SJRA decided to try something new and create a living nursery test and demonstration site at the west end of the Lake Conroe Dam. For this, project staff chose to plant Bull Rush, Water Willow, Pickerelweed, and White Water Lilly. The test site will give SJRA a chance to monitor



Pickerelweed from the Native Plant Nursery.



Water Willow thriving on the shoreline in Caney Creek.



Vallisneria being harvested in the field for propagation in the Native Plant Nursery.

the growth patterns of each species thus providing insights on survival and proliferation rates once plants have been re-introduced into the natural shoreline of the lake. This living nursery will also serve as erosion control, provide suitable fish habitat, create educational opportunities, and act as a secondary nursery for future clippings and propagation. From the beginning, the plan has been to establish native plant colonies on the north end of the lake that, once established, would reproduce through mechanisms such as seeds and fragmentation, allowing plants to migrate to and populate other areas of the shoreline.

A stakeholder meeting was held on September 10th to allow for an open forum to discuss the current status of aquatic plants in Lake Conroe, the effectiveness of control and restoration efforts, and to outline a unified path forward.

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



Living Nursery Site at the Lake Conroe Dam (Shane + Jace).



Living Nursery Site at the Lake Conroe Dam

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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1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground pepper
Chopped fresh parsley

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the tortellini and cook as the label directs. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water, then drain the pasta.

Meanwhile, heat the butter in a skillet over

medium-high heat. Add the shallot and cook, about 2 minutes. Add the pumpkin and nutmeg and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Stir in the cream and bring to a low boil. Reduce the heat to medium low; simmer, stirring, until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the cheese and cook until thick.

Add the tortellini to the skillet and toss with the sauce, adding some of the reserved cooking water. Serve with more cheese and parsley.



Caramel Apple Bars

1/2-cup cold butter
1 (17.5-ounce) pouch oatmeal cookie mix
1 egg
1 cup peeled and chopped apple
3/4-cup caramel topping
1/4-cup all-purpose flour

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-x-13-inch pan with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, cut butter into cookie mix. Stir in egg until mixture is crumbly. Reserve 1-1/2 cups of cookie mixture. Press remaining cookie mixture in bottom of prepared pan. Bake for 15 minutes.

Sprinkle apple over the cookie crust. In a small bowl, mix caramel topping and flour and drizzle over apples. Then crumble the reserved cookie mix over caramel layer and bake 20 to 25 minutes. ♦



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Rolling Oaks - 555 +/- acres located between FM 1488 and Honea Egypt (less than 15 miles to I-45). Prime development land or investment opportunity (Water/sewer available).
0 Corolla Road in Magnolia. ML# 43255781. \$12,783,101



Pool Time! The backyard is equipped with a private pool + spa, two levels of covered and uncovered entertainment space and a ground level lawn for kids, dogs and/or garden! The home offers a double car driveway, a 2 car garage + a 2 full car or truck attached brick carport, an extended front covered porch ready for relaxation and all located on a quiet cul-de-sac street.

The interior greets w/a two story foyer, warm wood floors lead to the spacious living room w/wall of windows overlooking the pool area & a gas fireplace. Open kitchen w/island with bar seating space, gas cooktop, granite counters, breakfast area + formal dining room. The Primary bedroom is on the 1st floor and offers double sinks, vanity area, walk-in shower, soak tub, 2 walk-in closets (one has a top notch custom closet system!). Gameroom, study area, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms are located upstairs. Conveniently located in Graystone Hills, minutes to I-45, elementary school is in the neighborhood, walking trails, parks, pool.

2408 Bramlet Drive, Graystone Hills in Conroe
ML# 64958412. \$364,500



This home brings modern farmhouse chic to sought-after Graystone Hills (parks, trails, pool w/slides, elementary school)! Crisp colors + earthy floors makes for the perfect balance of clean, modern spaces w/comfortable touches of rustic charm! The interior is white & light-filled, setting off the sumptuous wood floors that lead to the island kitchen w/double ovens,

Bosch 5 burner cooktop w/pot filler, granite peninsula, apron front farmhouse sink, all overlooking the spacious & airy living area w/a drool-worthy shiplap wall accented by the fireplace. The primary bedroom is a reTREAT for sure w/a bathroom fit for the pages of a magazine! Double sinks, vanity area, free standing tub, HUGE walk-in shower + an amazing closet! The 3 secondary bedrooms are located in a separate wing w/a Jack/Jill style bathroom setup. A bonus room off the living would be an excellent media room or playroom. Exterior-welcoming covered front patio, extended back patio great for entertaining! Upgrades galore!

2417 W Bramlet Drive, Graystone Hills in Conroe
ML# 19114416. \$359,000



Excellent opportunity to own a 1.565 acre unrestricted tract on FM 1774. Great traffic exposure, located in an established commercial area. Curb cut in place on FM 1774 and opportunity for additional access at the back of the property. Survey available. Can divide. Owner will build to suit. **0 FM 1774 in Magnolia. ML# 71917730. \$289,900**



Fresh, clean and situated in sought after Lakes at Northpointe (parks, tennis courts, pool, rec center + great schools)! This well-kept home welcomes w/a covered front porch overlooking a finely manicured lawn on a quiet cul-de-sac street. The interior greets w/high ceilings, appealing archways, open floor plan w/a very spacious living room w/wall of windows, tile flooring and all flows nicely into the chic kitchen w/stylish countertops, crisp white cabinets, coffee bar w/picture window, breakfast bars open to the dining area & living room. Off of the living area you'll find a room perfect for a game room/sitting area/formal dining room or a study! The Primary bedroom is tucked in the back of the home for added privacy & features double vanities, double sinks, soak tub, walk-in shower + a HUGE closet! Two secondary bedrooms w/great closet space. Private fenced backyard w/patio and extra side yard space. Fresh paint throughout, upgraded fixtures, remodeled kitchen + more! **13614 Cypress Heath Court, Lakes of Northpointe in Cypress ML# 96088108. \$276,800**



Picture this, a white farmhouse situated on approx. one acre in New Waverly, two-side wrap porch w/room to relax. This 1920 farmhouse is replete w/charm & character, brought back to life & transformed into the perfect blend of original vintage detail + modern living. The interior immediately WOWs from the wood multi pane window in the entry to the hand hewn wood trim around the living room entrance. The fully updated kitchen features the original shiplap wall accents, quartz countertops, SS appliances, subway tile backsplash, breakfast bar + dining area. The Primary bedroom is a newly-constructed addition, however, it has the original wood floors, wall of windows, spa-like bath w/double sinks, quartz counters, walk-in shower + HUGE walk-in closet. One of the secondary rooms features the original Queen Anne Sash windows! Updates include windows, new plumbing and electrical, paint, all new bathrooms, flooring, newer HVAC system and so much more! Private water well and no restrictions.

24 Novark in New Waverly. ML# 73793538. \$273,000



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Dominating Performance

Article by: Mark Hooker
Photos courtesy of: Debbie Pietsch

To say that the MISD Fishing Team had a Dominating Performance on Lake Conroe would be an understatement. The combined squad from both Montgomery High School and Lake Creek High School, had 5 teams in the Top 10, out of 139 individual teams from 23 Houston Area High Schools.

Leading the way for MISD was last year's Angler's of the Year for MISD, Fallon Clepper

fish, allowed the team to increase their limit by almost 4 pounds, sealing both their 2nd place finish, as well as helping the MISD Fishing Team to a resounding First Place finish. Being that their official time to stop fishing in the Texas High School Bass Association Tournament was 3:00, that's an impressive lesson for all of us, compete hard until the end.

Rounding out the top three weights and

Brandon Warren, placing 8th with 8.34 pounds, and Jack Haag and Connor Callihan coming in 9th with 7.54 pounds. This is only the third time in the history of the MISD Fishing Team, that the Squad had 5 teams in the Top 10.

Overall, the fishing was extremely tough on the 139 Teams, as over 50 percent of the field did not catch a keeper Bass, which on Lake Conroe is 16 inches. Anytime it takes less than



& Wyatt Ford. This "Dynamic Duo" captured 2nd Place with a 5 Bass Limit of 16.13 pounds. Their "Local Legend" Captain Julian Clepper reported, "the kids caught them fishing slow in 3 to 12 feet of water using numerous soft plastic techniques. The bite was very tough, as we only caught 6 keepers on this day." Clepper went on to say that "the kids fished hard all day, and Fallon caught their biggest fish that culled out a smaller fish at 2.47." That cull of a smaller

places for MISD, which is how the overall Team Champion is decided, were Jack Middlebrook and Kaden Harmann coming in 5th with a total weight of 11.37. They were followed closely by Rylan Mitchell and Tyler Gerner landing in the 6th spot with 10.90 pounds. This combined total of 38.40 pounds easily outdistanced the 2nd Place school by 6 pounds.

As mentioned above, we had two other teams in the Top 10 in Andrew Wilson and

10 pounds to be in the Top Ten, you know it was tough conditions!

Overall, the MISD Fishing Team had 40 Teams competing for scholarships and prizes. The next stop on the THSBA Houston Division Trail is Lake Somerville on October 10th. It will be there, that the MISD Fishing Team will look to expand their lead, and accomplish one of the three Team goals for the season, another Conference Title. ♦



Fishing ADVENTURES

with Derek Pietsch



FISHING THE SALTWATER IN GALVESTON

The beginning of fall the is the best time to catch the Bull Reds in Galveston. It's still a little early but we can't wait to hear our reels scream. The Bull Reds swim from the bays to the Gulf to spawn. Redfish are members of the Drum family. When they are pulled out of the water they make a unique drumming sound. They are also called Red Drums. Redfish range in color from silver to a copper red and then fade to white on the bottom.



They also have a large ringed spot on the upper part of the body at the start of the tail.

Trey, Austin and I went out on the weekend of September 12 to 8 Mile Beach. We threw out the cast net to catch some mullet with no luck at all. I decided to go to the local bait shop to pick up some mullet since we were not having any luck catching and it was the same story there. There were no mullets. Redfish like to eat shrimp, crab and mullets so I decided to try something different and bought some crabs to use for bait.

Currently the limit is 3 Redfish between 20" to 28". You can also purchase a bonus Red Drum tag allowing you to keep one Redfish more than 28 inches. We always release the Red Drums back into the ocean. We just love catching them!

We got back to the beach and walked out to the second sandbar, normally we go out to the third but the tide was too high. We started fishing at 10 p.m. that is when the Bull Reds are biting. We fished for hours and got lots of bites from catfish. Finally, I got a Bull Red on and set the hook and handed over my reel to Austin. I wanted him to see what it was like to catch a Bull Red. He reeled and reeled fighting the fish for 15 minutes and then he landed the giant 36-inch Bull Red. Then we released him back into the ocean. We fished till 2 a.m. and that was the only fish caught for the night.

THROW IT OUT, POP IT IN, FISH ON! ♦

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WHAT EVERY WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR WANTS YOU TO KNOW

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

As a wildlife rehabilitator, one quickly learns that educating the public is a large part of the services we provide. When people bring animals to our intake center, they are often curious about what we do and how they can help animals. There are also many misconceptions about wildlife rehabilitation in general. This month's article will try to address these topics.

First, here is a little background information about wildlife rehabilitators in general:

- In almost all cases, wildlife rehabilitators are completely unpaid and unfunded. Many of us work at "real" jobs to earn a living (unrelated to rehab "work"). We pay for most, if not all, of the expenses of caring for the animals we take in out of our own pockets. Donations at the time an animal is dropped off with a rehabber are very much needed and appreciated. Anything helps!

- Rehabbers will generally ask the public to bring animals to them. Please be understanding of this request. Most rehabbers have many animals in their care at any given time which require frequent feedings and attention. Time spent running around in the car picking up animals is time taken away from the animals already in care.

- Rehabbers do not have unlimited resources and/or space for animals. Some can only take certain species. Most will get to the point that they are completely overwhelmed and cannot take in any more animals at times. If a rehabber refers you to other resources, it is not because they do not care about the animal. It is actually because they want the best care for that animal; that may mean it needs to go to somebody else who has more time and space to properly care for that animal.

- In Texas, as in almost any other state, wildlife rehabilitators are required to have state and/or federal permits (issued by Texas Parks & Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife), and they are also required to work within the rules and regulations set forth by those organizations. We all are required to obey those rules, at the peril of having our permits taken away if we do not follow them.

- All training and continuing education rehabbers have is obtained on our own time, at our own expense. That is also a requirement for obtaining and retaining ones permit, although once again we receive no funding or assistance to help pay for it.

- Wildlife rehabilitators have a lot of expertise and knowledge, but we are not licensed veterinarians. There are limits as to what a rehabber can realistically do, both from a medical standpoint as well as the fact that we are dealing with wild animals. Treatment that might be possible to do for a pet is not necessarily possible for wildlife, especially in the cases of adult animals (such as deer, coyotes, bobcats, foxes, and raccoons). Sadly, sometimes helping a wild animal is not possible. While many of us are fortunate to have veterinarians who will assist us, we generally pay for these services out of pocket. Thankfully, some veterinarians will offer rehabbers discounted services.

- Please bear in mind that rehabbers are often overwhelmed, overworked, and sleep deprived. We are on call 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Animal emergencies do not take vacations, and most of us do not either. Please be understanding if we seem harried and exhausted. We generally are.

Generally, people who are seeking help for an animal they have found have a love for wildlife as well. We often get asked how people can help, or how they can get involved. We understand that not many people



*Some baby birds require feeding as frequently as every twenty minutes.
From top left: baby wrens; top right: baby barred owls; bottom left: baby mockingbirds; bottom right: baby great horned owl.*

can make the commitment to be a hands-on rehabber, but there are many other ways you can be a friend to wildlife, as well as to wildlife rehabilitators. Here are just a few:

- Consider volunteering with a rehabber or at a rehab center. This can include helping hands-on with animals in care, answering phones, help with animal transport, help with fundraising (VITALLY IMPORTANT!), or help with administrative tasks.

- Are you handy? Offer help with building of cages, nest boxes, etc. This kind of assistance can be invaluable to both new rehabbers just getting started as well as to rehab centers in need of more caging on site. Scout projects are always welcome too!

- Do you own rural property? We are always looking for release spots for rehabilitated wildlife animals. As our county continues to be developed, finding safe release locations is becoming more of a challenge.

- Help us out if you can by donating. Direct donations can be made at www.ftwl.org. You can also support our organization through AmazonSmile and Kroger Community Rewards (details also found on our website). Many corporations offer matching donations for direct donations, payroll deductions and/or volunteer hours.

- If you have a cat or cats, please consider keeping them inside. Free-roaming cats kill or injure millions of wildlife animals every year. We get many, many songbirds, squirrels, rabbits, opossums, and even young

owls and hawks that have been attacked by cats. Many of these animals have non-survivable injuries.

- Please do not use rodenticides (rat or mouse poison). Even with bait stations, these poisons often affect non-target animals such as owls, hawks, raccoons, squirrels, and foxes. Wildlife and even domestic dogs and cats can be inadvertently poisoned, either by direct ingestion or by ingesting a rat or mouse that has eaten the bait.

- Be mindful of other toxins, such as pesticides, fertilizers, etc. Many animals ingest insects, or drink from run off, and they then ingest the toxins as well. Songbirds and screech owls are particularly at risk from pesticides.

- If you do find an animal that appears injured or orphaned, PLEASE call or email a rehab facility as soon as possible! In many cases, especially with baby animals and birds, it may be possible to reunite with their parents. Time is of the essence in these cases. We have helpful flowcharts on our website (www.ftwl.org) and Facebook page that are species specific and give reuniting information. Reuniting baby animals with their natural parents can help to keep rehabbers from getting overwhelmed too quickly.

- Please do not “rehab via the internet”. There is so much misinformation out there. Many animals we get require critical care when



Many of the animals that rehabbers care for need frequent care and feeding. Top left: baby raccoon being bottle fed; top center: adult opossum; top right: fawn being bottle fed; bottom: three baby gray squirrels.



Injured animals often require around-the-clock care. Top left: bald eagle with lead poisoning; top right: baby squirrel with a broken leg; bottom left: baby rabbit with a broken leg; bottom right: armadillo with dog-bite injuries.

they first come in due to improper feeding and care. Please remember that a Google search does not qualify one to be a rehabber. Animals that are dehydrated, ill, emaciated, and/or hypothermic cannot digest food or formula, so feeding them can in fact kill them. Improper feeding can cause severe gastric upset as well as a host of other issues. For any animal found, warmth is the most important thing. Hydration should only be done with warmed Pedialyte (or other electrolyte-type of drink) given with a small syringe or eye dropper.

- The fastest way to get in touch with us is by emailing our help line at ftwl.help@gmail.com. This help line is monitored frequently, even when our center is not open. For rehabbers listed by county, help can also be found by checking <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/rehab/list>, or by searching ahnow.org (put in your location, and then click on “wildlife emergency”).

- Please do not set traps to relocate wildlife animals. This often results in orphaned babies being left behind. If you have nuisance wildlife issues, please reach out to a local rehabber for advice, or call an expert company such as 911 Wildlife or Skeedaddle Humane Wildlife Removal. These companies will not harm any animals, and they will assure no babies are left behind.

- If you can help us out with volunteering, cage building, or being a release spot, please email ftwl.center@gmail.com.

These are simple things everyone can do to help wildlife animals as well as your local wildlife rehabilitator. 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. Details can be found at www.ftwl.org, and then click on “How to Help”. We also have a great deal of helpful information on our website about other species of animals and how to assess if they need help or not. If you need assistance with an animal in need, please email us at ftwl.help@gmail.com. For the time being, due to ongoing Covid concerns, our educational center remains closed. ♦

Article and photos
by Bronwyn Clear,
Certified Texas
Master Naturalist



Heron bring bigger catches to shore and stab them to death. This makes fish easier to swallow, but Herons have been known to choke to death on a large catch!



Great Blue Heron – The Really Big Bird!

One of the most splendid and fierce birds around our local waterways is the Great Blue Heron. Their size and coloring give them their name. Great Blues can grow to an enormous height of 4-1/2 feet tall with a wingspan up to 6-1/2 feet, but a weight of only 4 to 7 lbs. Their coloring is black, white, and grey with hints of blue. During springtime they have a shaggy look with long plumes down their shoulders, fronts, and behind their heads. In flight the Great Blue is recognized by long trailing legs,



Look at those gams!! Drying and cooling off.



The Great Blue Heron. 4-1/2 feet tall with a wingspan of 6-1/2 feet, but a weight of only 4 to 7 lbs!

a tucked S-shaped aerodynamic neck, and slow graceful beating wings. And if a Great Blue is surprised, it flies off making a ferocious growling honk!

In East Texas the Heron rookeries are usually high in tall pine trees, but never far from the water. Their nests are made of loose sticks and twigs, and are about 3 feet in diameter. Females lay around 3 to 6 light blue eggs in a clutch, and generally produce only one spring-

time clutch each year. Both parents take turns incubating the eggs and feeding the young, requiring almost 2 months of hard work before the nestlings can fly.

The Great Blue Heron is a true carnivore and can hunt prey day or night due to special photoreceptors in its eyes. Fresh fish are their preference, but they have been known to eat rodents, crabs, and even baby alligators! These birds are found near most bodies of fresh or



Great Blues constantly need to repair their loosely made stick nests.

salt water, and occasionally in roadside ditches. Great Blues have even been known to raid backyard goldfish ponds! They are long-legged waders and can stand like statues, waiting patiently to snatch small fish hiding around their tall legs. Or from the side banks a Great Blue will swoop down, grab a much larger fish, carry it to land, and stab it to death with its dagger beak. Once the fish stops wiggling there is less chance of choking on it, but a bird occasionally does die by choking on too large a fish! Therefore, these birds always eat fish headfirst to

prevent having them get stuck in their throats. Make no mistake, these birds are relentless stone-cold predators!

Learn more about the incredible nature in our area by joining a chapter of the Texas Mas-

ter 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! ♦



During breeding season in springtime, their long plumes create a shaggy look.



Hérons are long-legged waders that slowly stalk smaller prey in shallow water.

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