

## TEXAS HIGHWAYS--CLEAR LAKE--"WHEN..."--MALLORY

Clear Lake lies halfway between Houston and Galveston. Well-known as home to the Johnson Space Center and Space Center Houston, the area also boasts of being the recreational boating capital of Texas. Take Interstate 45 to NASA Road One, then go approximately five miles east to Clear Lake.

Summer means splash-down of a non-NASA kind at marinas and recreation centers around Clear Lake. Charter a trip on a sailboat or deep sea fishing boat. Go it on your own with watercraft rentals of many types (sailboats, powerboats, jetskis, canoes, or windsurf boards). Several locations offer lessons.

A number of summer events spotlight Clear Lake's nautical spirit.

Summer sailing regattas include the following races: June 2, Fiesta Del Sol Regatta, a three-to-five-day race from Galveston's jetties to Pensacola, Florida; June 24-25, the Houston Yacht Club's Annual Regatta in Galveston Bay; bay races sponsored by the Galveston Bay Cruising Association (GBCA) on July 8 (Charge Cup), July 15 (Single-Handed Race), July 22 (Mixed Doubles Race); July 23 (Junior Skippers Regatta), August 12-13 (Canvas Cup), and August 19-20 (Lady Skippers Regatta); and August 26-27, the Houston Yacht Club's All-Women Crew Series. For details contact the GBCA, 1500 Marina Bay Drive, #3380, Clear Lake Shores 77565; 713/334-2521.

From almost any spot on Clear Lake, view the 20-minute Fireworks Spectacular launched from a barge beginning at 9:15 p.m. on July 4. From July 8 to July 29, the annual Lunar Rendezvous Festival (713/486-5134) features such activities as the Clear Lake Symphony concert (July 15), Loral Space Run (July 15), lighted boat parade (July 22), and Coronation Ball (July 29).

August 4-6, the annual Blessing of the Fleet (sponsored by the Kemah Elk's Club, 713/334-2322) celebrates the fishing industry. Held at the Kemah boat ramp under the

Texas 146 bridge, the event features a boat parade, fleet blessing, carnival, food, music and street dance.

On September 28, 29, and 30, and October 1, boat lovers check out the latest in power and sailing vessels at the Houston International In-the-Water Boat Show at Watergate Yachting Center. Every weekend of the show, several local groups offer free boat rides to the public. Also at Watergate October 7-8, the Houston Rowing Club (713/334-3101) and other groups host the annual Wooden Boat Festival. See hand-crafted dinghies and rowboats, tour two 34-foot rowing pilot gigs, and watch demonstrations of team rowing.

For general information on boat charters/rentals, events and other water activities, contact the Clear Lake-NASA Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1201 NASA Road One, Houston 77058-3390, phone 713/488-7676 or fax 713/488-8981.

Get a feel for Clear Lake's maritime mentality with a visit to more than a dozen full-service marinas, many of which offer slips for transient boats.

The oldest marina, Seabrook Shipyard (1900 Shipyard Drive, Seabrook 77586-3469; phone 713/474-2586), is located under the Texas 146 bridge on the Seabrook side of Clear Creek Channel. Its restaurant, open to the public, overlooks Clear Lake.

Watergate Yachting Center, the lake's largest marina, is located at 1500 Marina Bay Drive (Farm Road 2094), Clear Lake Shores, 77565-2245. Call 713/334-1511 or fax 713/538-2016. Next to Watergate, Waterford Harbor (800 Mariner's Drive, Kemah 77565-2250; 713/334-4400) offers first-class dining open to the public (restaurant, 713/334-2584).

South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center (2500 South Shore Boulevard, League City 77573; 800/442-5005, fax 713-334-1157) features three restaurants and a high-rise hotel with lake views, as well as a large marina. The Nassau Bay Hilton and Marina is located at 3000 NASA Road One, Houston 77058-4322. Call 713/333-9300 or fax 713/333-3750.

Find some of Clear Lake's most popular eateries along Restaurant Row on the Kemah side of Clear Creek Channel. Contact the Kemah Economic Development Corporation (602 Bradford, Kemah 77565; 713/334-1611) for a listing of restaurants and shops. For a brochure on places to shop and dine in neighboring Seabrook, write Kidd Properties, Fourth & Hardesty Streets, Seabrook 77586; phone 713/474-3869. The second weekend of each month, visit Seabrook's open-air Back Bay Market, featuring antiques, art, and clothing.

For a general list of marinas, restaurants, and shops, contact the Clear Lake/NASA Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (see address above).

Dip into the seaworthy atmosphere at bed and breakfasts in Seabrook and Kemah. The Pelican House Bed & Breakfast Inn (1302 First Street, Seabrook 77586; phone 713/474-5295) sits under live oaks with a view of the bay and features four bedrooms with rates from \$55 to \$65 per night.

The Crew's Quarters B&B at 114 Waterfront Drive on the Seabrook side of Clear Creek Channel features three guest rooms overlooking the bay and the boat parade. Prices are \$40-\$65 per night. Make reservations through the sister B&B, the Captain's Quarters, in Kemah (713/334-4141). The elegant Captain's Quarters (701 Bay Avenue, Kemah 77565) sits on a bluff overlooking Galveston Bay and features five guest rooms styled with nautical motifs. Rates are \$55 to \$120 per night.

For an ecological treat, visit Armand Bayou Nature Center. From NASA Road One, turn north on either Kirby Road or Texas 146 to Red Bluff Road. Turn left on Bay Area Boulevard to the entrance at 8500 Bay Area Boulevard. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Open Wednesday and Thursday 9 to 5, Friday 9 to dusk, Saturday 8 to 5, and Sunday noon to dusk. Admission is free for members and children 4 and under; children 5 to 17 are \$1; adults \$2.50; and seniors \$1. Special events weekends feature guided tours with advanced notice. For details write: Box 58828, Houston 77258 or call 713/474-2551.

Learn more about Galveston Bay ecology, or help with wetland restoration, by contacting the Galveston Bay Foundation at 17324-A Highway 3, Webster 77598, phone 713/332-3381.

For local history, visit the Bay Area Museum (Box 58686, Webster 77598-8686; 713/326-5950), located at Clear Lake Park, 5001 NASA Road One. Closed Monday, hours are Tuesday through Friday 12 to 5, Saturday 10-4, and Sunday 1-5. Admission is free.

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