

SPECIAL REPORT

The Coast TEXAS

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POST-HARVEY
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& MORE



JUNE 2018

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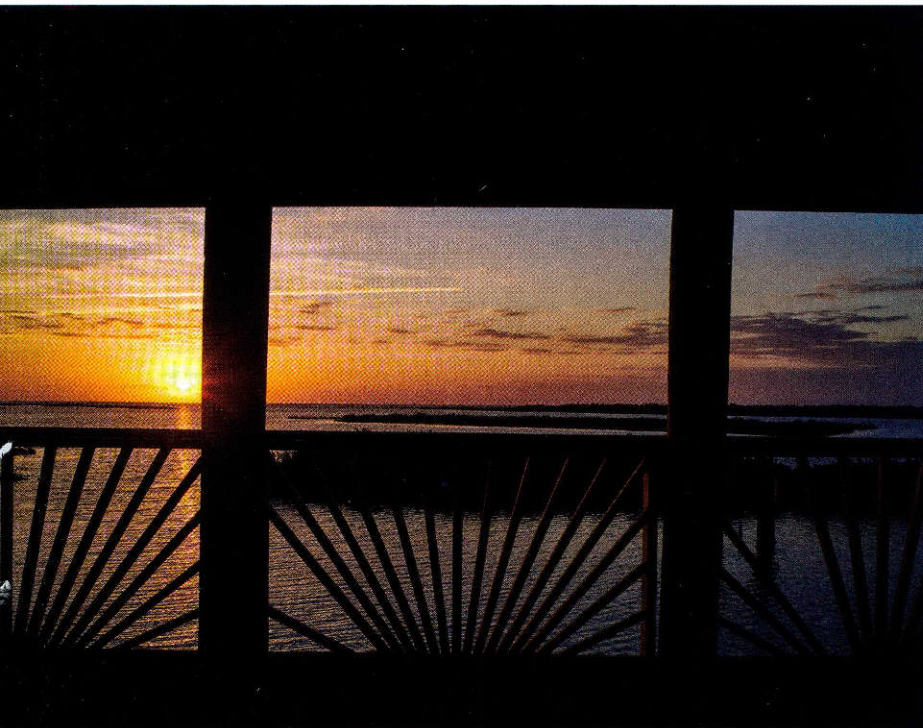


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A Hopeful Horizon

OUR ANNUAL COASTAL Issue is different than the one we had in mind when we began planning it last summer. The impact of Hurricane Harvey on coastal communities was so severe it left many people uncertain about the coming tourism season. In many of these small towns, tourism is the primary industry and vital to their recovery. We quickly realized one way we could help: spreading the word that beloved destinations like Port Aransas and Rockport-Fulton are ready for visitors.

I had the opportunity to spend a few days in Rockport last month, and though definitely frayed at the seams, the charming fishing town's appeal seems to have been augmented by its recent struggle. Rockport locals have a saying: "You're only a visitor once." It's a tongue-in-cheek reference to how many first-time visitors return next as residents or vacation-home owners.

Sunrise over Cove Harbor, just south of Rockport, in Paradise Key.

But it also speaks to the feeling you get, even on your first visit, that you're among friends. We often have an idealized image of small towns that doesn't quite live up to reality, but Rockport makes you want to believe.

It's the kind of place where the owner of the B&B you're staying at also sits on the local education foundation board and heads the burgeoning cultural arts district; where someone you met at dinner the night before—who has been living in a trailer for the past eight months waiting for an insurance adjustment on her destroyed home—enthusiastically offers to drive you and your kids around town on her golf cart if you come out for a family vacation because "the kids will just love it;" where most every person who walks into the locally owned restaurant you're eating lunch at is greeted by name and asked how the repairs on her home are going or what the latest news is on his wife's new business venture.

Whether this kind of close-knit community always existed in Rockport or was amplified by the shared experience of tragedy, it makes for a travel experience that delivers on a deeper level than mere entertainment and relaxation. In turn, we've put together a special report that tells the story of the coast's comeback from Harvey, one we hope inspires you to contribute to the recovery in your own way—on the beach, in the surf, or tableside with an ocean view. Every little bit helps.

Emily R Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE, *Executive Editor*



Coastal
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Texas Gulf shrimp is a Lone Star treasure. It's wildly popular with consumers and professional chefs alike. And who can blame them? With miles of clean, sustainable coastline framing the Gulf of Mexico, there is no reason to buy, serve or eat shrimp from anywhere else. Texas Gulf shrimp is naturally delicious and better by a nautical mile. For information about wild-caught shrimp, visit gotexan.org.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



JUNE



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Back to the Beach

Nine months after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, sunning, fishing, and dining are all on the summer agenda in beloved vacation destination Port Aransas.

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Rockport Rising

One of the communities hit hardest by Harvey shows its heart as businesses from restaurants to birding tours reopen and reinvent.

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An Immovable Feast

Houston's red-hot dining scene slowed to a snail's pace after Harvey—but thanks to diligent restaurateurs, foodies are finding their plates full again.

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How Houston's art scene bounced back from Harvey after the storm collided with its season openings.

Story by HEATHER BRAND

Photographs by ERIC W. POHL



Russell and Bernice Jackson of Island Car Wash in Rockport



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JUNE



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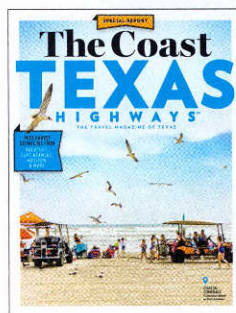
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COVER

Cinnamon Shore in Port Aransas
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Barton Springs Pool

#TRUETXSUMMER CONTEST

Inspired by our "93 Days of Summer" feature? Share photos of your summertime adventures by posting them to our Facebook page to win True Texas swag. See the full checklist and contest rules online.



JUNETEENTH EVENTS

Find out how cities around the state are celebrating Juneteenth. The June 19 holiday, which commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas, is honored with parades and festivals.



#THROWBACKTHURSDAY

Every Thursday, we reach into the annals of Texas history to bring you vintage snaps of the Lone Star State. Search hashtag #ThrowbackThursday on our social media pages to check them out.

TEXAS HIGHWAYS™

Published monthly by the Travel Information Division

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Subscriptions are \$24.95 annually
(\$39.95 foreign).

Current and back issues available at
512-486-5858.

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GOT
SOMETHING
TO SAY?

93 days of summer? That's cute. We all know summer lasts 1,789 days here.

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OUR
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MONTH

Do you feel as lucky as I do that here in Texas, we have such a gorgeous natural landscape of wildflowers that welcomes us to spring each year?

**TEXAS FIRST
LADY CECILIA
ABBOTT**

The original owners [of Gilhooley's Restaurant and Oyster Bar] had the motto "We don't fry so you don't die."

**KAREN BLEYL
HECK,
SMITHVILLE**

Socially responsible folks like my dad taught me from a young age to never throw trash out the window. Someone has to keep things clean, and that job is yours.

**ROBERT
GARCIA,
HARLINGEN**



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Greener Pastures

The April article "Welcome to Mattie's" reminded me of the friendship my parents had with Mary and Chester Koock, the originators of Green Pastures. Chester helped my dad start a small frozen meat business while Mary Koock got her restaurant off the ground. Green Pastures was growing, and Chester chose to stay there and help Mary, so my dad closed the meat business and concentrated on his other businesses. The two families were always in touch with each other, and when my sister got married her reception was held at Green Pastures where they served milk punch, something we preteens couldn't have. Years later, after my wife and I celebrated our first anniversary, a book arrived in our mailbox from Mary. It was a copy of her book, *The Texas Cookbook*, with a dedication inside. It is still a treasure in my arsenal of Texas cookbooks. The Koocks are gone, as are my parents and my wife, but the memories are still alive thanks to your article.

David M. Smith, Weatherford

Get Cracking

I am quick to argue with San Saba being called the "Pecan Capital of the World" [May]. Pecans are a leading industry here in Seguin, and you will

find a replica of the "biggest pecan in the world" at the Guadalupe County Courthouse. We have a Pecan Festival and a Pecan Queen and her court. My dad owned the Wagon Wheel Ranch with 80 acres in pecan trees. One year around 1950, he harvested 80,000 pounds of pecans. Seguin depends on its pecan industry.

Ann Williamson Beicker, Seguin

Seven River Day

Your "Nine River Day" story [May 2017] made it easy to trace your steps. Our adventure turned out to be seven rivers. We explored the most beautiful of Hill Country waterways as children might have, as these were places we had never been. We fell in love with the serenity of the beautiful Medina River, dabbled our toes in the "Guad," went for a chilly

morning swim on the San Marcos River, and enjoyed the waterfall on the Blanco River at the state park. Our final stop found us sneaking a smile at the falls on the Pedernales River. Had we been more economical with our time, we would have made all nine rivers, but heck, we had such a grand adventure my wife wants to return (as long as there is shopping involved) to complete the trip this year.

**Charles and Raye Boulit,
Burleson**

TH: The summer solstice's long hours of daylight inspired Senior Editor Matt Joyce's quest to swim in nine Hill Country rivers in one day. Find his story at texashighways.com and get ready to make the most of the upcoming solstice on June 21.

READER'S
FAVORITE

Nac Fan

After reading the Nacogdoches article in the March issue, my husband and I made a reservation at the Fredonia Hotel, gassed up the car, and drove down to Nacogdoches eager to see the azaleas in bloom during the Azalea Trail. We were a little too early to see the azaleas in all of their glory, but we so enjoyed visiting Nacogdoches and learning about its interesting history. One of our favorites was a tour of the Sterne-Hoya House; the docent there was very knowledgeable and gave us a wonderful tour. We ate at some wonderful places—Mahlemore's and Clear Springs for dinner and Dolly's Diner for breakfast. It was a great springtime road trip.

KERRY AND SHARON ROACH, Wichita Falls

For tourism information, call the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, 888-564-7351; visitnacogdoches.org.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX, 78714-1009. Email: letters@texashighways.com.



SCENIC ROUTE

Relics of the Storm

*28° 02' 34.26" N
97° 01' 36.79" W*

ALONG THE TEXAS

coast, telltale signs of past storms endure in the occasional skeletal remains of piers jutting into the Gulf and bays. Until they are rebuilt, these structures on Key Allegro along Aransas Bay recall the impact of Hurricane Harvey, presenting a hauntingly beautiful scene in the wake of last August's storm. Key Allegro—a resort community with residences, second homes, and rentals—is located on an approximately 200-acre island near the northernmost end of Broadway Street between Rockport and Fulton. For more information, visit rockport-fulton.org.



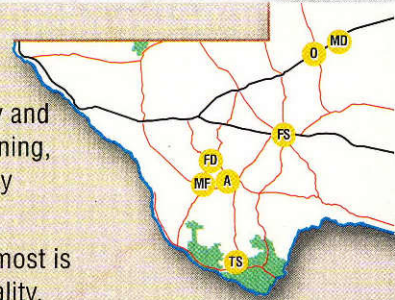


WEST TEXAS ROAD TRIP



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MD

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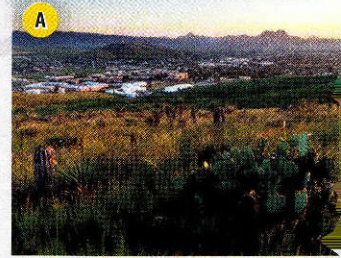
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June 22-July 29 - Theatre of the Big Bend @ Kokernot Outdoor Theatre (weekends)
June 29-July 4 - Fourth of July Celebration



A



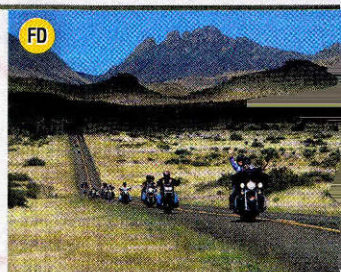
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FD



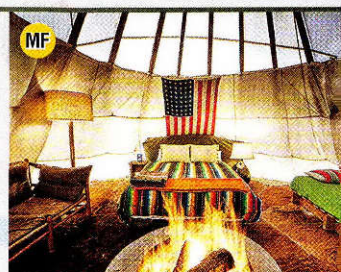
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June 6-10 - Agave Festival Marfa
July 26-29 - Viva Big Bend music festival



MF

DRIVE

TEXAS WILD + TEXAS FAMILY + SOUVENIR

North on South Padre

From high-rises to sand dunes, a venture
up State Park Road 100

story by **W. F. Strong**

The flowers of beach morning glory blossom on the sand dunes of South Padre Island.



I GET MY FIRST CLEAR VIEW OF SOUTH Padre Island from the summit of the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway. At 85 feet above Laguna Madre, the bridge reveals the island stretching majestically on a north-south line, like a thin ribbon of sand floating in a cobalt sea.

To the south I can see the jetties and the ship channel cutting through to Brownsville and Boca Chica Beach. Tracking north, South Padre's sweep of beachfront hotels and high-rise condos give way to white dunes that eventually disappear in the island haze.

That's where I'm heading today as I descend from the bridge onto South Padre Island to explore State Park Road 100, known in town as Ocean Boulevard. The island's main artery, 100 starts on the west side of the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway and runs about 13 miles to its end among the dunes. The route may have the most varied real estate of any short road in Texas: Ritzzy homes and condos occupy the south end in the heart of town; at the north end, coyotes, ghost crabs,

To the east, dozens of anglers cast into the gulf. To the west, kite boarders surf the bay, their "power kites" billowing brilliantly against the blue waters.

and pelicans inhabit a remote moonscape of dunes.

Before venturing north, I pull into Blackbeards' Restaurant, which opened as a burger shack in 1978 and has since expanded four times into a sprawling restaurant. Though Blackbeards' is now known mostly for seafood, I opt for the half-pound hamburger with guacamole and onion rings. *USA Today* once ranked Blackbeards' burgers among the 10 best in America. Trust me, that ranking is well deserved.

After lunch, I head north another mile and a half to Sea Turtle Inc., an open-air rescue facility dedicated to rehabilitating injured sea turtles and educating the public about these endangered creatures. Ila Loetscher, aka The Turtle Lady, launched the nonprofit in 1977 in her backyard before moving it to a bigger space in 1999. For years she received contributions in the mail addressed simply to "The Turtle Lady—SPI, TX."

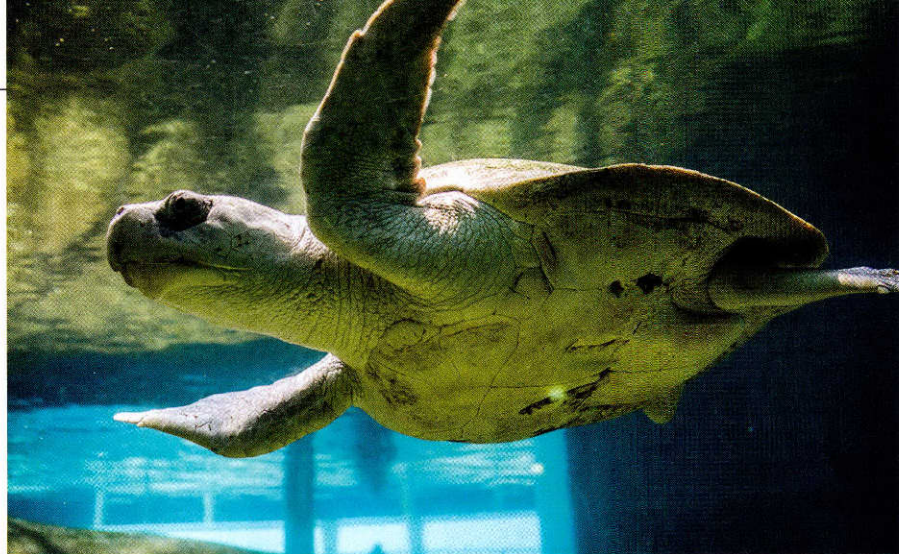
Here the organization rescues all types of sea turtles, says employee Sanjuana Zavala, "about 400 a year beached for various reasons," such as

Above: Two stables lead horseback rides on the island. Right: A Kemp's ridley like those at Sea Turtle Inc.

shark-bite injuries to their fins. Most of the rescues are Kemp's ridley turtles, an endangered species that lays thousands of eggs annually on Padre Island. When possible, staff members nurse the turtles back to health and release them into the ocean. But some insist on returning: One turtle was released three times well out to sea and yet three times found its way back. Visitors can take self-guided tours of the 25,000- and 40,000-gallon sea turtle tanks and observe daily "Turtle Talks" in the 300-seat amphitheater.

Continuing north past the South Padre Island Convention Centre, Park Road 100 skirts Andy Bowie Park, a recreational beach, then passes through a master-planned housing development called The Shores. As development thins, the road reaches The Stables, which leads guided horse tours and lessons, and hosts polo events.

Today, though, I'm bound for the end



of State Park Road 100 and head ever northward into a shallow canyon of dunes. Glittering white in the bright sun, the dunes tower as high as 40 feet above me. Kids love to climb and roll down these dunes, over and over, until they look like they've been heavily sprinkled with flour.

I park the car and climb to the top of a dune for a view. With strong gusts sweeping over the hills, I lean into the wind and stuff my cap in

my back pocket. To the east, dozens of anglers cast into the waves of the gulf. To the west, three kite boarders surf Laguna Madre, their red and yellow "power kites" billowing brilliantly against the blue waters. Kite boarders and kite surfers say South Padre Island is one of the best places in the country to find consistently strong winds.

I slide down a sand chute from the top of the dune and head north again. As I

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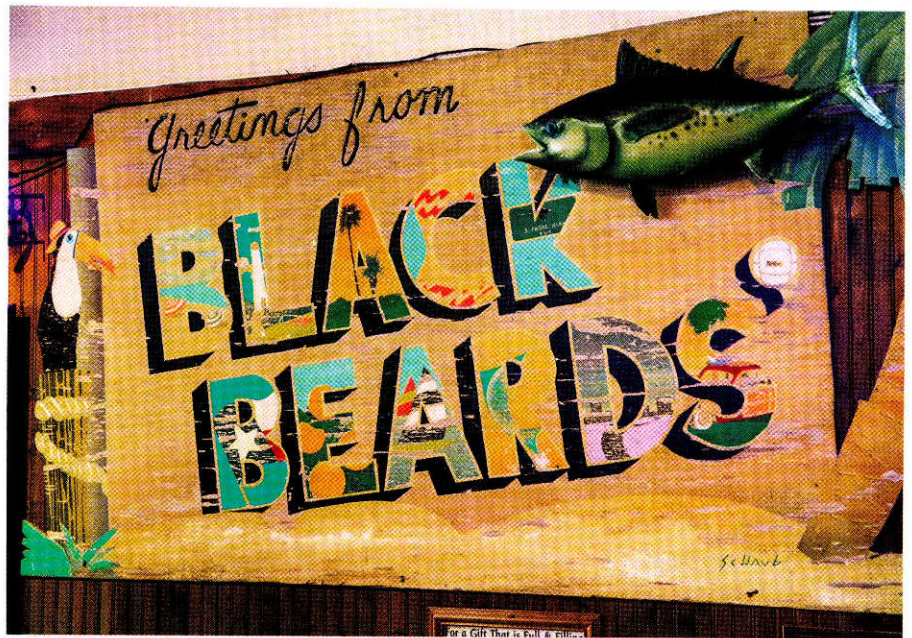


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take it slow on the four remaining miles of Park Road 100, I watch front-end loaders toil in their Sisyphean struggle against the sand and wind. I can't help but think of my own variation of Robert Frost's *Mending Wall* poem: "Something in sand that doesn't love a road."

A Texas Department of Transportation crew clears sand from Park Road 100 every day, says Bill Taitague, a maintenance technician. After Hurricane Gilbert 30 years ago, "it took us more than four months to clear the road," he says. "The sand was 4 and 5 feet deep for 4 or 5 miles."

Gene Paull, a retired geoscience professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, adds, "If it weren't for the railroad vines and other types of dune vegetation, the dunes would just migrate across the island and disappear into the bay."

Venturing north for the final two miles of Park Road 100, I can see the ocean intermittently between the enormous dunes. The surf is up. Boiling white foam crashes onto the sandy beach, and sea mist rises into the clear air. I pass the South Padre Island Adventure Park, a generator-powered business with zip-line towers and horseback riding on the beach.

Reaching the end of Park Road 100, I park and look north at the

tracks continuing through the sand. (The beach continues another 20 miles to the Port Mansfield Channel; four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended.) It's hard to believe in this sandy world that Padre José Nicolás Ballí, the island's namesake, and other ranchers grazed large herds of cattle here in the early 1800s.

About 100 years after that, in 1926, World War I veteran and railroad developer Col. Sam Robertson rallied local businessmen to join him in the construction of an "Ocean Side Highway" all the way up Padre Island. "We can have 150 miles of the most beautiful highway in the world," he urged the Rio Grande Valley Commercial Club.

While Robertson's idea proved to be impractical at the time—and likely still is—he was definitely on to something. The 13 miles of State Park Road 100 make up one of the most memorable drives in Texas. **L**



State Park Road 100 spans about 13 miles from the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway to its terminus on South Padre Island. For tourism information, visit the South Padre Island Visitors Center, 610 Padre Blvd. Call 800-767-2373; sopadre.com.



Liquid Learning

Kids can engage with water conservation at Laredo Water Museum

story by **Daniel Blue Tyx**

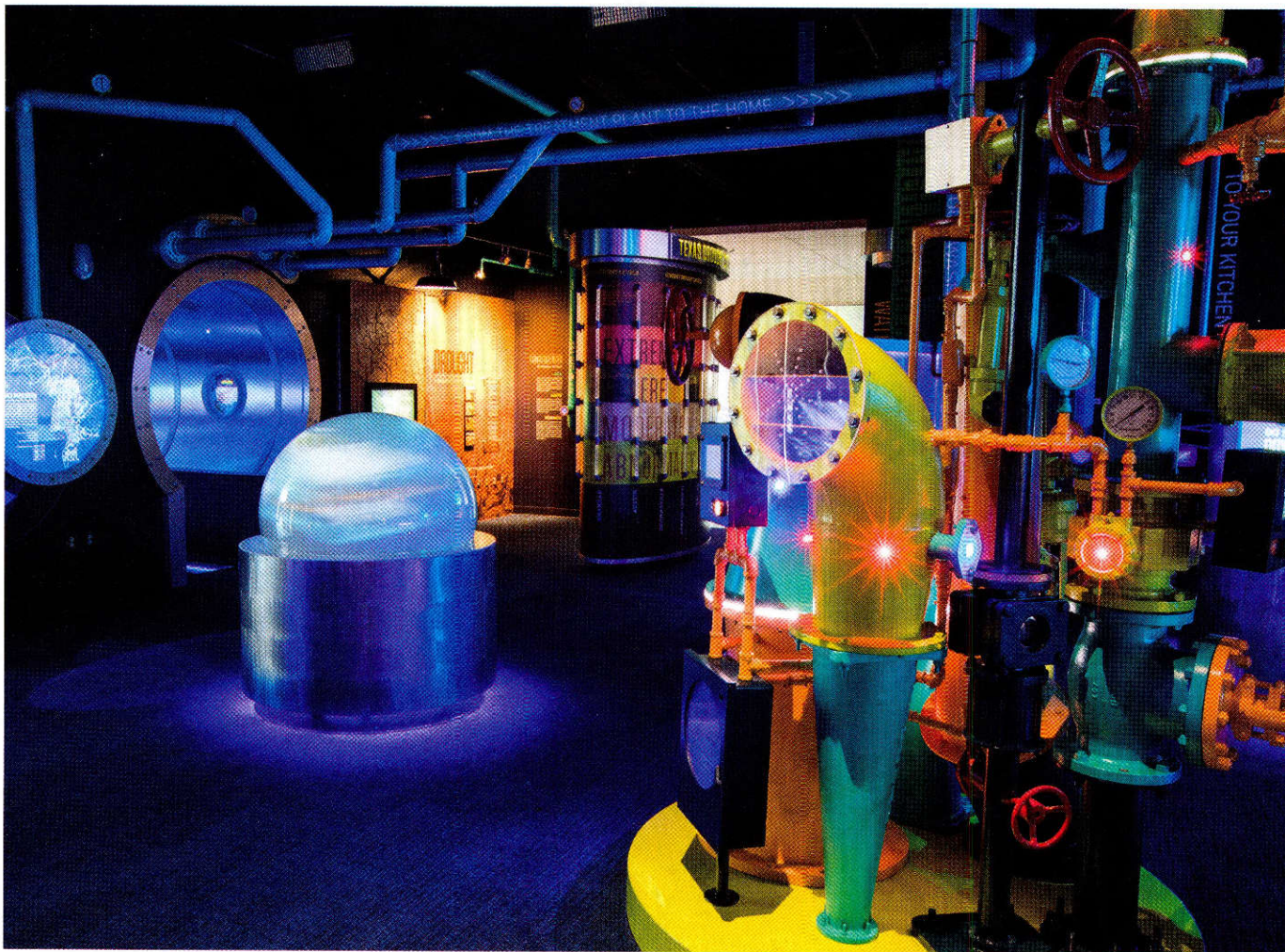
“WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE?” MY 5-YEAR-OLD daughter, Ana, asked when she emerged from her bedroom dressed in blue stretch pants and a sparkly violet T-shirt. I shrugged my shoulders, and she crinkled her brow in disapproval at her father’s lack of with-it-ness. “I’m a water droplet!” she proclaimed. “Now let’s go to the water museum.”

Together with her 8-year-old brother, Byrdie, we were getting ready to check out the new Laredo Water Museum, which opened last summer. While I prepared breakfast, Ana assembled a backpack filled with notebooks, pens, and a camera. Besides being an enthusiastic traveler, Ana was on a mission: The topic of her class science fair project was the water cycle.

Clever installations in the form of a shower, a washing machine, and a purple-glowing toilet offer information about water usage at home.

As we turned onto Jefferson Street, the striking façade of rectangles in seemingly every shade of blue announced the museum’s presence from blocks away. This narrow road runs from Laredo’s historic downtown to the banks of the Rio Grande, where the museum sits next door to the 64-year-old Jefferson Water Treatment Plant. After the statewide drought from 2010-13 hit Laredo especially hard, the city received a federal grant to modernize the treatment

A colorful wall in the Laredo Water Museum displays interesting facts about water usage.



This page: One of the many kid-friendly exhibits inside the Laredo Water Museum. Opposite page: The museum sits on the banks of the Rio Grande, which provides water for Laredo.

plant and support water conservation education. That led city officials and the water plant superintendent, in conjunction with a Houston-based design firm, to collaborate on a unique museum that features permanent exhibits on the delicate ecology of the Rio Grande watershed as well as more than 30 hands-on exhibits designed to appeal to kids.

After stepping inside, we were greeted by María Romo, a project specialist and our guide for the day. Formerly a water conservation inspector charged with handing out warnings and citations for violations of city ordinances, Romo told us she found her work as a museum educator a more effective and enjoyable way to encourage water-wise habits.

The three of us quickly agreed as we followed her along a squiggly blue line in the shape of the Rio Grande on the floor. Our first stop was a brilliant panel that mapped out the river's path as it snaked from the snow-capped headwaters in the Rockies

The striking façade of rectangles in seemingly every shade of blue announced the museum's presence from blocks away.

to the Gulf of Mexico. On another panel, a few steps farther upstream, we found a beautiful timeline of the river's history. Illustrated with artifacts like a collection of 800-year-old Pueblo arrowheads, the timeline spans the formation of the Rio

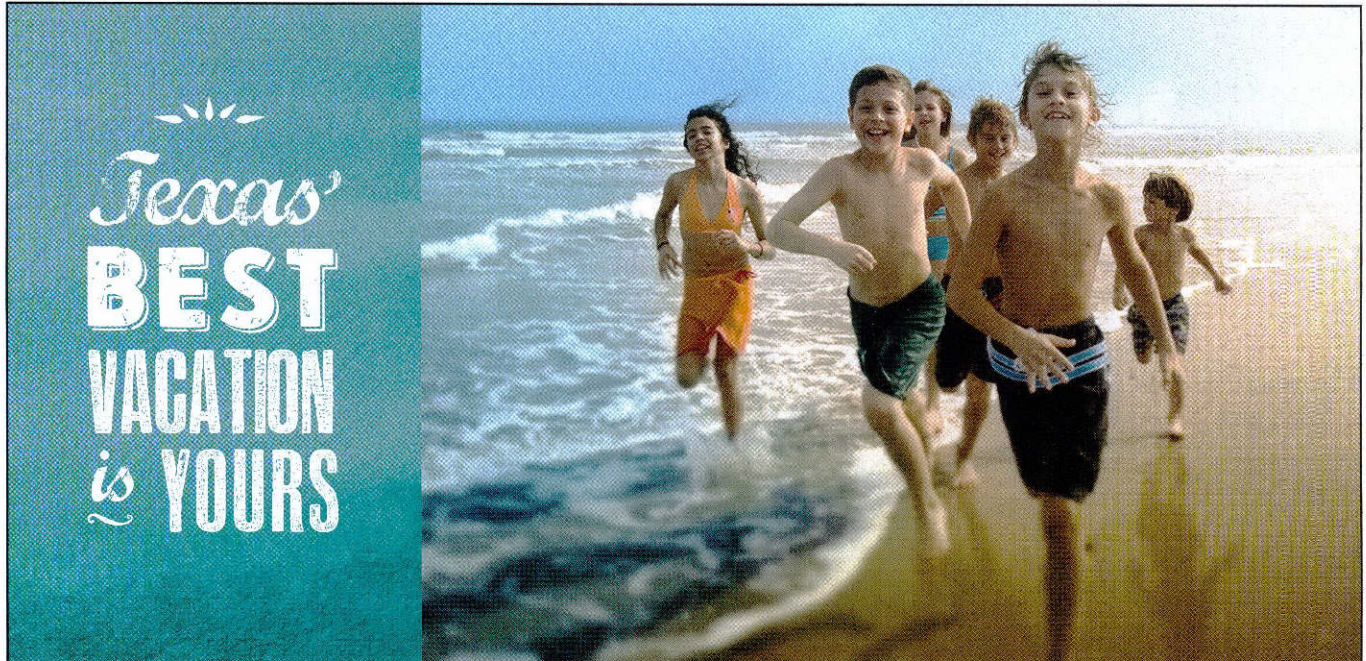
Grande Gorge 29 million years ago to the construction of hydroelectric dams and passage of environmental protection laws in the 20th century.

I could have soaked in the plethora of information for longer, but the kids had already spotted the neon lights beckoning them to the interactive exhibits in the main hall. To get there we took a most unusual route: straight through the inside of a huge, 60-inch-diameter water pipe. "This is actually the size of our largest-diameter pipe in the city of Laredo," said Romo, as she showed us a sequence of lighted circular screens inside the pipe with videos dramatizing each stage of the water purification process taking place right next door.

Emerging from the other end of

the pipe, Romo invited us to explore the exhibits at our own pace. For the kids, at least, that meant fast. With Ana trailing close behind, Byrdie sprinted to an attention-grabbing exhibit with 90 gallon-size milk jugs mounted in rows on the wall. Using a touch screen, they worked together to complete a survey about our family's water usage. As they entered how many times a day we washed the dishes or flushed the toilet, we all looked up in anticipation to see how many milk jugs would light up, showing the gallons of water required for each activity.

Another popular exhibit focuses on the scarcity of clean water in the developing world. Byrdie and Ana learned that people in many places must pump and carry water to their homes. Then, they raced to see who could pump 5 gallons the fastest into

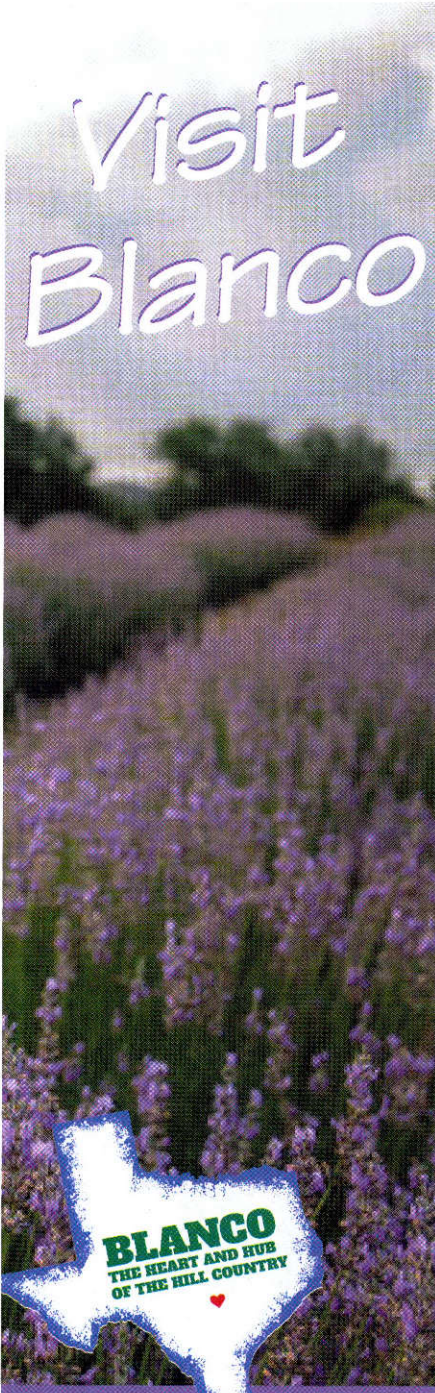


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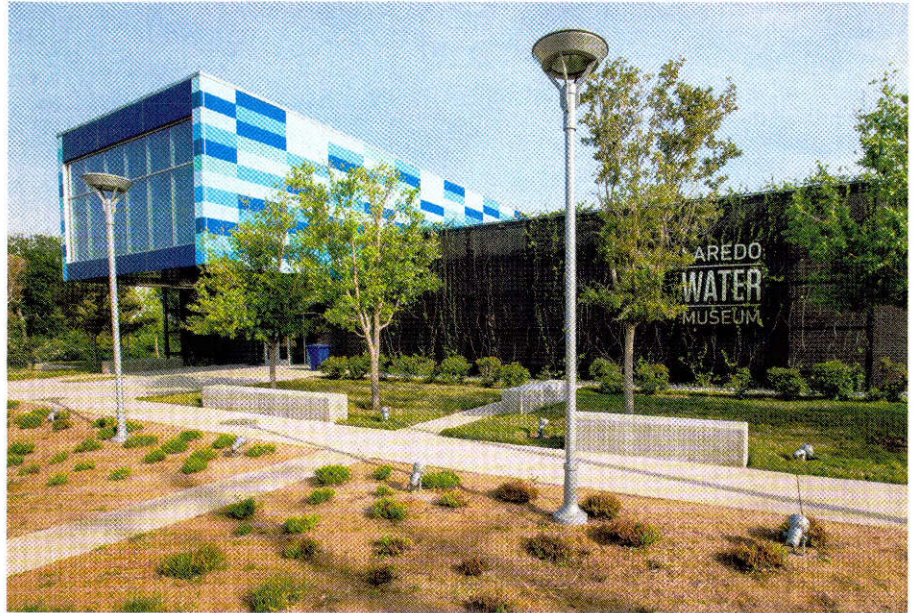
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a bucket overhead. “This is a lot of work,” Ana gasped 2 gallons in, gaining a new appreciation for something she had always taken for granted: water from the tap.

Many of the other exhibits focus on practical steps we could take as a family to reduce our water footprint. Clever installations in the form of a shower, a washing machine, and a purple-glowing toilet offer information about water usage at home. Another section explores the environmental impacts of pollution and waste. Byrdie and Ana were especially intrigued by a large circular floor space where images of plastic marine debris were projected. Grossed out and amazed at the same time, they took off running in circles, as though traversing a floating island of trash.

As the museum was getting ready to close, I herded my reluctant-to-leave children out of the exhibit hall. Before it was time to go, though, Romo had a surprise. She presented each of us with a blue reusable water bottle. Then, she led us to the water fountain next to the restrooms, which has doors that sport educational diagrams showing how much of our bodies are made up of water.

“This is one of my favorite parts of the whole museum,” Romo said. She demonstrated that the water fountain has a special water-bottle nozzle with an electronic display that records how many disposable water bottles had been saved through its use—“980!” Byrdie cried, as he filled his bottle; “981!” Ana echoed.

We thanked Romo and headed to the car for the trip home, which I already knew would be filled with a litany of water-saving tips from my two children. “See, it’s a good thing I dressed like a water droplet,” Ana said as we started back down Jefferson Street.

“Why’s that?” I inquired.

Reflecting on our museum journey from the Rockies all the way through a life-size water pipe and into the kitchens and bathrooms of Laredo, she didn’t hesitate with her response. “Now I can tell my class that I didn’t just learn about the water cycle. I actually got to be part of it.”



THE LAREDO WATER MUSEUM

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The museum occasionally closes for large group tours. Call 956-795-2620 ext. 3085; cityoflaredo.com/utilities/laredo-water-museum.html



An Enduring Star

Galveston's Star Drug Store celebrates the past

story by **Heather Brand**

CUSTOMERS ONCE CAME to the Star Drug Store for their medicinal needs, but today they come for a different kind of pick-me-up: meals and merchandise. For more than a century, the Star has been a fixture in Galveston's historic downtown. A glowing neon-lit Coca-Cola sign shines like a beacon above its sidewalk awning on 23rd Street, a few blocks south of the Strand, the island's main commercial artery. This vintage porcelain sign, which dates from the late 1940s, is said to be one of the last of its kind.

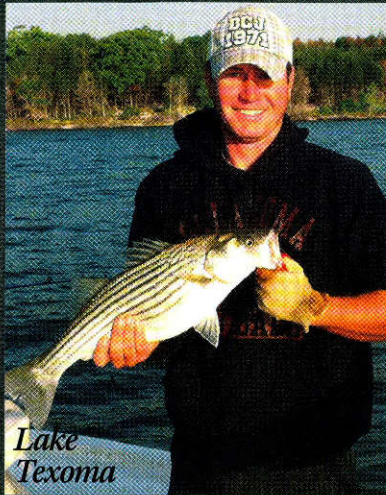
Set in an 1886 building, the store's interior also harks back to olden days. A local druggist named Charles J. Michaelis bought the building in 1906 and added the soda-fountain counter in 1917. The original glass-fronted cabinetry lining the walls once displayed elixirs, tonics, and tinctures; now it showcases bags, hats, and baubles to tempt impulse shoppers.

One of the best-selling items is the \$20 T-shirt emblazoned with the store logo, derived from its iconic Coca-Cola sign. Various vintage-style tin signs promoting Coke and other classic products decorate the mezzanine (and are also for sale for \$12.95). However, the Star is especially known for its year-round stock of Mardi Gras masks, which range from \$5 for the simplest design to \$45 for a rhinestone-bedazzled mask festooned with feathers worthy of artistic display or the fanciest masquerade balls.

Mardi Gras masks may seem like an unusual find at a pharmacy-turned-restaurant emporium, but owner Natili Monsrud says their popularity is a natural fit with the island's history. By the time the Star had opened its soda fountain, Galvestonians had already been feting Fat Tuesday with costume balls and parades for more than 30 years. World War II disrupted the custom in 1941,

The Star Drug Store traces its origins to 1906. The neon Coca-Cola sign dates to the 1940s.

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but the community revived the tradition in 1985 and Mardi Gras has been going strong in Galveston ever since. One of the main parade routes starts just a few blocks from the Star's location and travels along the Strand. "We host the third-largest Mardi Gras in the country," Monsrud boasts. "We get people from all over." Even out of season, visitors come to the Star in search of a mask. "It's a souvenir to remind them of their experience here on the island."

Pharmacies began adding soda-fountain counters around the turn of the 20th century in response to the popularity of "medicinal" carbonated beverages.

Invariably, Star Drug Store shoppers stick around for the food. Hungry patrons perch on barstools at the horseshoe-shaped marble counter, where they can get a good view of the cooks tending burgers sizzling on the grill and whipping up creamy milkshakes. Pharmacies began adding soda-fountain counters around the turn of the 20th century in response to the popularity of carbonated beverages. Originally considered "medicinal," druggists sometimes laced these drinks with cocaine and opiates until the government began regulating those substances in 1914. Yet the bubbly, syrup-flavored beverages continued to be popular—and they remain so. The Star still offers



The Star tempts customers with breakfast and lunch favorites like omelets, patty melts, and Reubens. The store's most popular souvenirs are Mardi Gras masks in styles both simple and extravagant.

an array of fizzy flavors, including lime, cherry, vanilla, strawberry, chocolate, and grape, which can be mixed with ice cream to make an ice cream soda. It also features classic treats such as ice cream sundaes, banana splits, and frothy egg creams (chocolate milk with a spritz of soda).

The Star dishes up heartier fare as well. For breakfast, choose among omelets, stacks of golden pancakes, and French toast dusted with powdered sugar, plus sides of bacon, sausage, or grits, and wash it all down with a cup of chicory coffee with evaporated milk. The menu also faithfully recreates traditional lunchtime favorites: Swiss cheese-smothered patty melts, pimento-cheese sandwiches, and Reubens with sauerkraut and Russian dressing on homemade Latvian rye baked by Monsrud's father.

Monsrud wanted to develop a menu that was "tried and true." "You can't go wrong with a burger and a shake," she says. Yet she has devised some inventive twists, adding a zing of horseradish to the tuna salad and pineapple chunks to the curried



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is at 510 23rd St. in Galveston. The kitchen and soda fountain open daily 8:30-3. Call 409-766-7719; galvestonstardrug.com.

chicken salad. She concocted a new dessert, too: the Shipwreck Float, a scoop of vanilla ice cream buoyed by a blend of Coke, Dr Pepper, root beer, and cherry syrup.

Monsrud's parents, Marty and Genece Tilts, purchased the Star building in 2001. By that time, the store had sat dark for about a decade, and a fire in 1998 had gutted the upper story of the building, causing extensive smoke and water damage to the first floor as well. Over the course of five years, they brought the property back to life, preserving its historical details. They also installed a new railing on the store's mezzanine balcony, where pharmacy patients once rested on cots while recovering from treatment, to allow visitors a bird's-eye view of the activity below. "We've kept it authentic," Monsrud insists. "Everyone who comes in says it's just like they remembered. They feel like they are stepping back in time, and they come in to soak up a little bit of history." (The family made some improvements as well, transforming the second-floor space into two loft apartments, which are now available as vacation rentals.)

Some passersby are drawn into the Star by its storefront display, a collection of the store's own historical artifacts. The assortment of old apothecary items includes vials and pillboxes left over from when the building still served as a pharmacy. These antiques are not for sale, but Monsrud does have packets of over-the-counter medicines available for ailing customers as a nod to the store's former purpose—and so she can still call the Star "the oldest drug-store in the state." **L**

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PLATES

TRAVEL + EAT + DRINK

Crustacean Craving

Southeast Texas stops for truly delicious barbecued crab

story by June Naylor

Covered in a mixture of garlic, black pepper, and cayenne, **barbecued crab** is a regional speciality you won't soon forget.



BARBECUED CRAB, A COASTAL DELICACY born in a tiny corner of Southeast Texas, is tender, juicy, and laced with spice. This misnamed meal isn't barbecue, though, which I realized some years ago when my friend Carolyn invited me home from college to visit her family in Beaumont, promising we'd eat something not found anywhere else.

On a mild spring evening, her parents piled us into the car for a 45-minute trip from their Beaumont home down to Sabine Pass, where we pulled up to a local shack called Sartin's and stood around for about an hour before a table opened up. I breathed in the salty air, looked at the fish swimming beneath the aged dock beside the small café, and marveled that people would hang out and chat about nothing for what seemed to be

The scent of that powerful blend of cayenne and garlic cooked into these bright-red crustaceans was heady and irresistible.

forever, while waiting to eat something that sounded nonsensical.

After finally being seated at a long table, we waited some more. Eventually, a waitress arrived carrying two giant trays piled with searing-hot crabs—Gulf blue crabs, pulled that day from nearby waters—bearing an enticing and foreign aroma. The blackened-everything craze from Louisiana had yet to blanket Texas, and the scent of that powerful blend of cayenne and garlic cooked into these bright-red crustaceans was heady and irresistible. Nobody could explain why these shellfish were called “barbecued,” because they were neither smoked nor grilled—and there wasn't a trace of barbecue sauce anywhere to be found. The one similarity is that eating barbecued crab is messy as all get-out, perhaps more so than a slab of ribs, because the heavily seasoned crustaceans are served right out of a molten-hot deep-fryer. Carolyn and her parents showed me how to crack the crabs to pull out the meat once they were cool enough to handle. It was a process; I remember being a little envious of their prowess.

In the years since, that particular Sartin's closed, but I'd heard that other locations survived in the Beaumont area. I kept promising myself I'd return to see if these crabs lived up to my memory; motivation kicked in when I heard there was but one Sartin's still in business, and the specialty was becoming scarce. After talking my husband into a barbecued crab mission, we set out for the Golden Triangle.

We stopped in the remaining Sartin's, which operated in Nederland for 21 years. (In May, well after my trip, Sartin's relocated to a mall in Port Arthur.) The visit took me on a delicious, messy journey back in time with every bite. We were mesmerized by cook Elaine Tran's preparation of the barbecued crabs. She'd already done the hardest part, which involves

This page: Crabs fresh from the deep fryer. Opposite page: Aside from barbecued crab, **Floyds in Beaumont** is known for its crab bisque.

stunning the live blue crabs in icy water before pulling off the carapace and apron. She then covered the crabs in seasonings and, grabbing them with tongs, lowered them into searing-hot oil to fry about a minute. Sartin's models its seasoning recipe after one developed by Granger's Restaurant, the Sabine Pass seafood joint that invented barbecued crabs in the late 1940s and burned down a decade later. Granger's original black pepper, garlic, and cayenne recipe is said to have vanished, but you can still buy Bolner's Fiesta brand BBQ Crab Seasoning if you want to master this dish at home.

As we continued on our barbecued crab adventure, we finally became better at the technique of eating the shellfish, which requires a bit of practice to get right: With one hand, you grip the body and, with the other, pinch the place where a big front leg attaches

(using napkins—those babies are hot and slippery!), and break them apart to reveal lush, thick shreds of white crab meat. My favorite addition to the ritual came in drizzling each bite with a squeeze of fresh lemon wedge.

Our weekend continued with more barbecued crab discoveries, and each came with its own round of gustatory joy. At The Schooner, a large seafood house alongside a busy Nederland highway, the barbecued crabs shared space on a large oval platter in a jumble with big, butterflied and fried shrimp, scallops, and stuffed deviled crabs. Owner Constantine Megas spoke with humble pride about the recipes that have become traditions since his family took over the then-3-year-old



restaurant in 1950. Its barbecued crabs bear a less spicy and slightly sweeter seasoning combination made just for The Schooner by a Beaumont food company called TexJoy. The Schooner also cooks exceptional gumbo, a nuanced dark bowl of roux packed with meaty shrimp, crab, and crawfish.

FAMILY TIME

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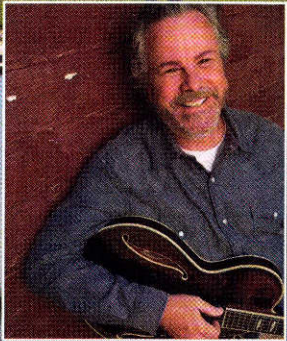
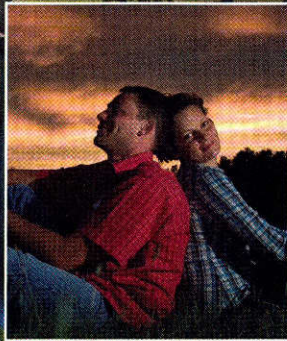


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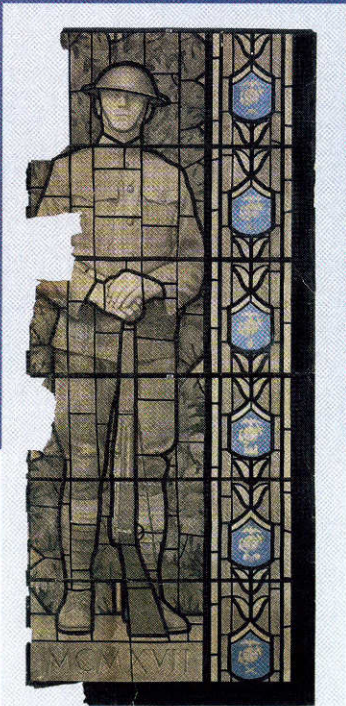
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At loud and crowded Floyds Cajun Seafood in Beaumont, we started with a bowl of the much-touted crab bisque, which general manager Paul Knobloch insisted we try. Good thing we split this lush, creamy indulgence, or else we wouldn't have had room for the main event. Steam wafted from the giant platters set before us as the crabs—piled at least three deep, with more than a dozen to a platter—had come seconds earlier from the fryer. Floyds' version was as spicy as Sartin's, with most of the seasoning clustered around the center of the crabs and less on the legs. Knobloch claimed his proprietary recipe, made in house, is a 75-year-old secret dating back to another long-gone South Louisiana shack connected to the Landry's seafood restaurant family. We listened and nodded, tearing apart the crustaceans, squeezing lemon on each piece then taking another bite of the warm, addictive garlic toast served on the side. We washed it down with cold Abita Amber, that refreshing lager for piquant Cajun foods.

Finally hitting overload, we pointed the car toward home, agreeing not to wait years before returning for another barbecued crab weekend. We've since heard from our Southeast Texas pals about other great crab destinations. The only thing we can't agree on is where to stop for our first crab fix. 🍷



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Floyds Cajun Seafood and Texas Steakhouse, 2290 I-10 South, Beaumont, **409-842-0686: floydsbeaumont.com**. Floyds serves barbecued crab from about July through September, when blue crabs are in season.

The Schooner, 1507 S. Hwy 69, Nederland, **409-722-2323; theschoonerrestaurant.com**.

Sartin's Seafood, 3100 Hwy 365, Port Arthur, **409-721-9420; sartins.com**.

A Light in the Storm

Camaraderie and comfort food at Rockport's seafood standout GLOW

story by Michael Corcoran



WHEN EVACUEES KAREY AND DAVID SWARTWOUT returned to Rockport in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, they assumed their old boathouse-turned-restaurant would be part of the devastation they'd been watching on TV. Driving down Broadway for the first time post-Harvey was “very disorienting,” Karey said, “because so many landmarks and buildings were just gone.” She took a deep breath when the car reached

“It was important for us to reopen as quickly as possible.”

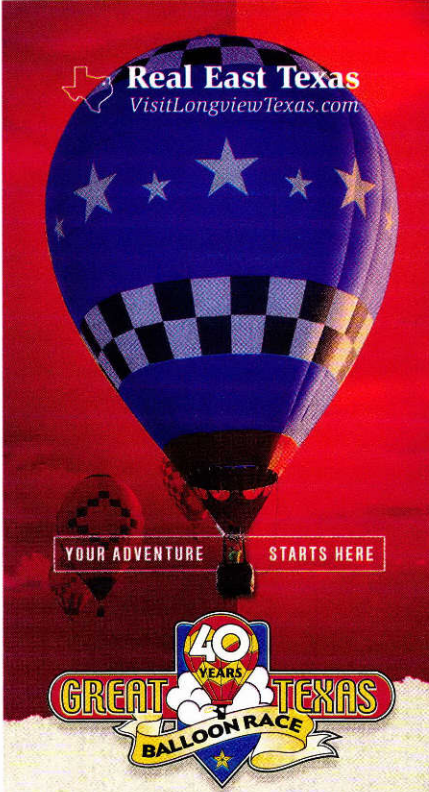
the 1800 block and then exhaled in relief when, at the end of the long driveway, she saw a magnificent GLOW: Their little seafood restaurant was still standing. The costly wall reinforcement materials required to pass code before opening in 2011 turned out to be well worth the red tape. The restaurant was back in business as soon as power was restored a couple of weeks later.

“It was important for us that we reopen as quickly as possible for the community,” said Karey, GLOW’s owner-chef and a 10-year Rockport resident. “We had incredible survivor’s guilt, but we were fortunate enough to have a choice—either move on or keep going. So we chose to just keep ‘swimming, swimming, swimming,’ as my sons say.”

By the start of 2018, about one-third of the businesses in Rockport had reopened, and GLOW had become more than a place for creative shrimp and steak dishes and refreshing intoxicants like the Big Tree, a blend of vodka, cucumber, lime, and mint. The charming white wooden box with the high ceiling brought a sense of comfort to residents, who shared their stories and felt like everything was going to come together again like the shrimp, crab, and oysters in GLOW’s famous Rockport chowder.

“This has always been a gathering spot, a place to make memories,” Karey said of the 32-seat eatery, designed to be intimate but also social, like a European bistro. The tables are so close, conversations spill over and friendships develop. If you’d like a little room and a nice view of Little Bay, there are six well-spaced picnic tables outside, in addition to patio seating.

Karey Swartwout—with husband, David, and daughter, Olivia—wants GLOW’s diners to feel “welcome and cared for.”



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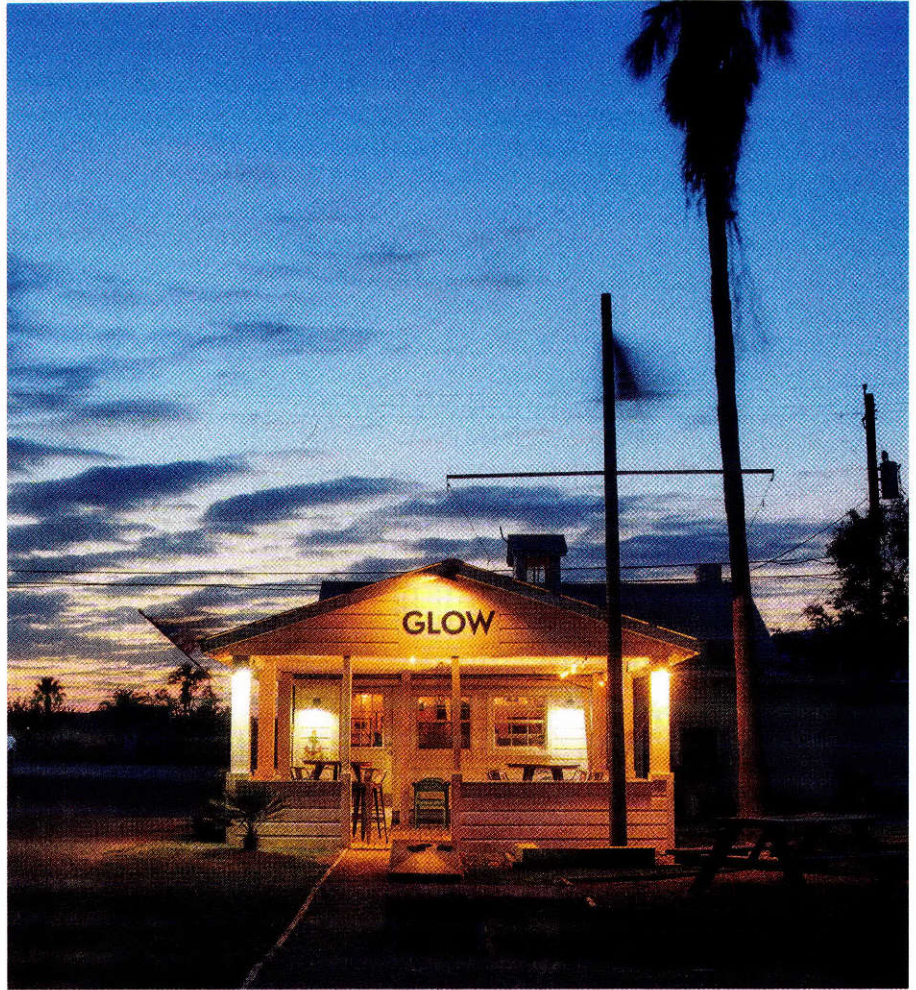
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GLOW withstood Hurricane Harvey and quickly reopened after the storm; popular menu items like **Mom's Shrimp** bring comfort to Rockport residents.

"Our [sales] numbers are about the same as they were last year at this time," said Karey, who named her restaurant after the glimmering luminescence of the sun and the moon on Little Bay. Although the word "glow" today conjures smartphones in the dark, the Rockport restaurant harks back to the days when talk was entertainment. Usually, the only time cell phones come out is to take "shelfies" of such dishes as Mom's Shrimp in a sauce of white wine and mushrooms over creamy mashed potatoes.

There was a period of uncertainty immediately after the hurricane, so to get some cash flow GLOW started

selling the sea salt it had been harvesting from Aransas Bay. "We wanted to keep the payroll going," said Karey, who was able to keep her staff during the downtime. A three-day process, from cistern to oven to bottle, yields a finished product that goes for \$13 an ounce. A portion of the proceeds funds the nonprofit Glow Rockport Foundation, which has committed \$2,000 to Rockport-Fulton High School's Class of '18 for college scholarships. (Husband David is a career and college guidance counselor at the high school.)

Karey became interested in harvesting salts during her eight years in Europe, where the practice is commonplace. Although she once served a cheeseburger to Jack Lemmon while working as a waitress at Sardi's in New York City out of



college, her true entrée in food service came when she opened a catering business in the United Kingdom in 2001. Karey moved to London when a job in e-commerce transferred her from Austin. “Tex-Mex, barbecue, and New Orleans cuisine were just dreadful in London at the time,” she

To increase cash flow after the storm, the restaurant began to harvest and market sea salt from Aransas Bay.

said. Sensing an opportunity, Karey launched Butter & Co.—Butterworth is her maiden name—which got really busy, really fast, making authentic North American dishes such as gumbo, chicken posole, and muf-falettas. Karey went full time from software to cookware.

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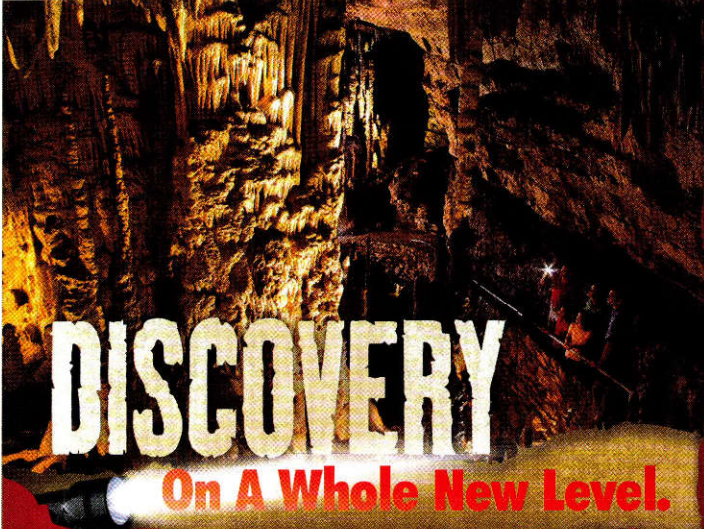
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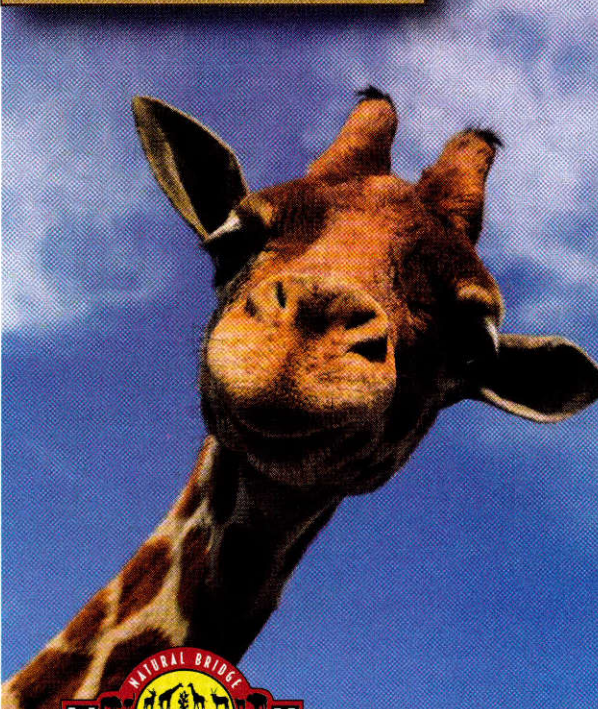
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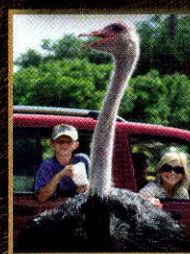
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Pregnant with twins, Karey moved to Rockport in 2008 with her then-husband, whose parents lived there. "It was supposed to be temporary," she said, "but I just fell in love with the town." She found her building, which was formerly a sailboat repair shop—hence the high ceiling—right next door to Rockport Cemetery in late 2010.

Framed antique maps are a big part of GLOW's décor, especially in the quaint bathrooms. "They're from all the places David and I have lived," Karey explained. The plot of Manhattan in the bar area represents Karey's time studying acting in the Big Apple after graduating from Texas State University in 1994.

The map of Panama in the men's room alludes to David's previous job as assistant principal of an international school in the Central American country. It was there that he received an email in January 2014 from his short-time, junior high flame Karey, whom he hadn't seen in 29 years. "I never really forgot him," she said. The pair planned a rendezvous in Houston, and three years later they were married and the parents of a daughter, Olivia, who joined their five boys from previous marriages.

Add a restaurant, and it's a lot of work, though Karey said it's the satisfying kind: "The world is becoming increasingly automated, less personal. It's important to us at GLOW that we connect with our customers, from our made-from-scratch kitchen to our napkins folded into the shape of a sailboat. We all have a basic human desire to feel welcome and cared for."

Karey wants you to walk out of her restaurant with your senses radiating. Organic happiness manifests as a warm glow. **L**



GLOW

is at 1815 Broadway St. in Rockport.
Call **361-727-2644**;
glowtexas.com.



What a Wonderful World

A Houston brewery became an unlikely hero during Harvey

story by **Kimya Kavehkar**

ON A MERCIFULLY COOL FRIDAY EVENING IN the acre-size backyard of Houston's 8th Wonder Brewery, the post-workweek crowd streams in, ready to cut loose. And just as you'd expect of the fourth-largest city in America, the vibe is delightfully diverse—a 20-something couple canoodles in a seating area made from a retrofitted shipping container; a group of coworkers roll up their sleeves, setting newly freed elbows on a picnic table; and a trio of pals stare up at a television watching the tense last moments of a basketball game. Different races, ethnicities, and age groups have come together, cradling amber and coffee-colored pints of beer, carrying on the centuries-old tradition of breweries, pubs, and taverns as centers of their communities.

But the 5-year-old brewery, located in East Downtown, doesn't just facilitate the community, it participates in it.

That word-of-mouth chain reaction resulted in five 16-hour days of extricating strangers. The brewery staff navigating the crisis-stricken streets of Houston.

While people mingle and play cornhole in the yard, a dark green military cargo truck adorned with the 8th Wonder logo sits unassumingly near the fence line. During Hurricane Harvey, a friend who knew about the brewery's large truck, a six-wheel-drive M35, called co-founder Alex Vassilakidis and asked if Vassilakidis could take it to rescue some family members who'd been stranded in south Houston. Once he and others evacuated one house, next-door neighbors called out for help, and that word-of-mouth chain reaction resulted in five 16-hour days of extricating strangers, the brewery staff navigating the crisis-stricken streets of Houston to rescue nearly two dozen residents who'd been stranded in their homes.

"Our city was hurting, and people were struggling," recalls co-founder Ryan Soroka, who was in Dallas at the time of the hurricane with his wife and young child. "We had a vehicle that can get through waters, and so they went out."

The brewery had bought the truck a year before, thinking it would be a fun prop for patrons' selfies and for use in marketing and promotion. Soroka never imagined it would be a lifeline. "If it even saved one family's life or got them out of a dangerous situation, it was worth every penny," he says of the truck that eventually became too water-logged and broke down. While the brewery staff does have plans to fix it, the vehicle currently takes on a symbolic role as a memorial.

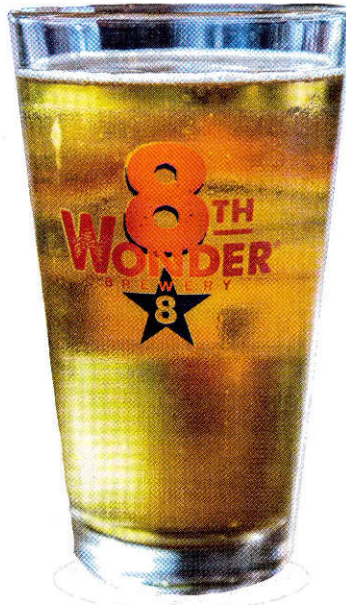
With its unwavering dedication to the city, it's no wonder 8th Wonder has become a local favorite. Patrons line up at the counter to pay \$15 for a 16-ounce souvenir glass and three tokens that can be exchanged for three beers. You can also get a plastic cup and three tokens for \$12, or a plastic cup and one token for \$5. The brews, which total 12 to 15 on tap at any given time, have cheeky names that wink to life in Houston: Weisstheimer, a German hefeweizen that won gold at the

The main taproom of 8th Wonder Brewery is almost always bustling with thirsty Houstonians.



8TH WONDER BREWERY

is at 2202 Dallas St. in Houston. Call **713-229-0868**; 8thwonder.com. The taproom is open Mon-Sat, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sun 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Brewery tours are held Mon-Fri at 7 p.m.



For \$15, you can purchase a **souvenir pint glass** and three tokens worth of beer.

features well-known standbys, including a Cuban sandwich, burger, and pimento grilled cheese. Eatsie Boys, which formerly had a brick-and-mortar location, was Soroka's first business venture before he downsized it to focus on the brewery, a risk that paid off—8th Wonder is the 14th-largest craft brewery (production-wise) in the state.

8th Wonder's name is a reference to the Astrodome, which due to its unprecedented size at the time of its opening in 1965, was hailed as the "eighth wonder of the world." The Astrodome sits 5 miles from the brewery's industrial 'hood. The Toyota Center, home of the Rockets; Minute Maid Park, home of the Astros; and BBVA Compass Stadium, home of the Dynamo, are all within walking distance. The brewery nods to its proximity to three major stadiums in its sports-themed taproom. Memorabilia ranges from 20 original Astrodome seats to a signed square of hardwood from the Rockets'

The brews, which total 12-15 on tap at any given time, have cheeky names that wink to life in Houston.

championship in 1994. A customer also gifted a set of patron saint candles adorned with the faces of Astros players. During Game 7 of last year's World Series, eager fans packed the brewery hoping for a shift in Houston's sports luck and a cosmic response to the sorrow of Harvey. They set up the candles in a corner and lit them. People prayed over them. And it worked. It also made 8th Wonder Brewery a triple threat—local hang-out, scrappy crisis response team, and shrine. And the beers are pretty darn good, too. **L**

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Discover a bigger world at your Texas State Aquarium. Embark on an adventure through land and sea with playful dolphins and otters, beautiful coral reef fish, and many other exotic species in our newest experience, Caribbean Journey.

Corpus Christi

TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM

texasstateaquarium.org

prestigious U.S. Beer Championship in 2017 is a play on Westheimer Road, a well-known east-west artery. Cougar Paw, a mild and malty red ale, is an ode to the University of Houston mascot—a portion of its sales benefits scholarships for the Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, where Soroka earned his master's degree and hatched plans for the brewery. Brew GK, an apple kolsch, is a collaboration with rapper Bun B, a member of legendary Houston rap group UGK. 8th Wonder's beers are purposefully lower in alcohol content and are highly drinkable, meant for sipping in notoriously hot and humid Houston. "In a city where it's summer nine months a year, it's hot," Soroka says, "and I don't want to be chewing through 8, 10, 12-percent alcohol-by-volume beers." Even Rocket Fuel, a typically hefty porter blended with milk sugar and Vietnamese coffee from local Greenway Coffee Company, feels lighter.

Any selection pairs well with fare from the gold-plated food truck Eatsie Boys out back. The *elote* fries adds a Mexican street snack kick to waffle fries, which are slathered with buttered corn, garlic aioli, hot sauce, cotija, and green onion, and come with lime wedges for squeezing. The menu also

reDiscover FAMILY FLOATS

As they say, the family that floats together has fun together! Kayak your way around the Coastal Bend on your next trip to Corpus Christi. Glide through black mangroves and seagrass flats, into sloughs and back lakes near the historic 1857 Lydia Ann Lighthouse. Meander through one of the Mustang Island State Park paddling trails for outstanding sight casting and bird watching. The world is indeed your oyster here in the Coastal Bend, and the time has come for exploring! On land, plan some time at the USS Lexington and the Texas State Aquarium's new Caribbean Journey expansion.

Rediscover Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend,
and rediscover family fun.

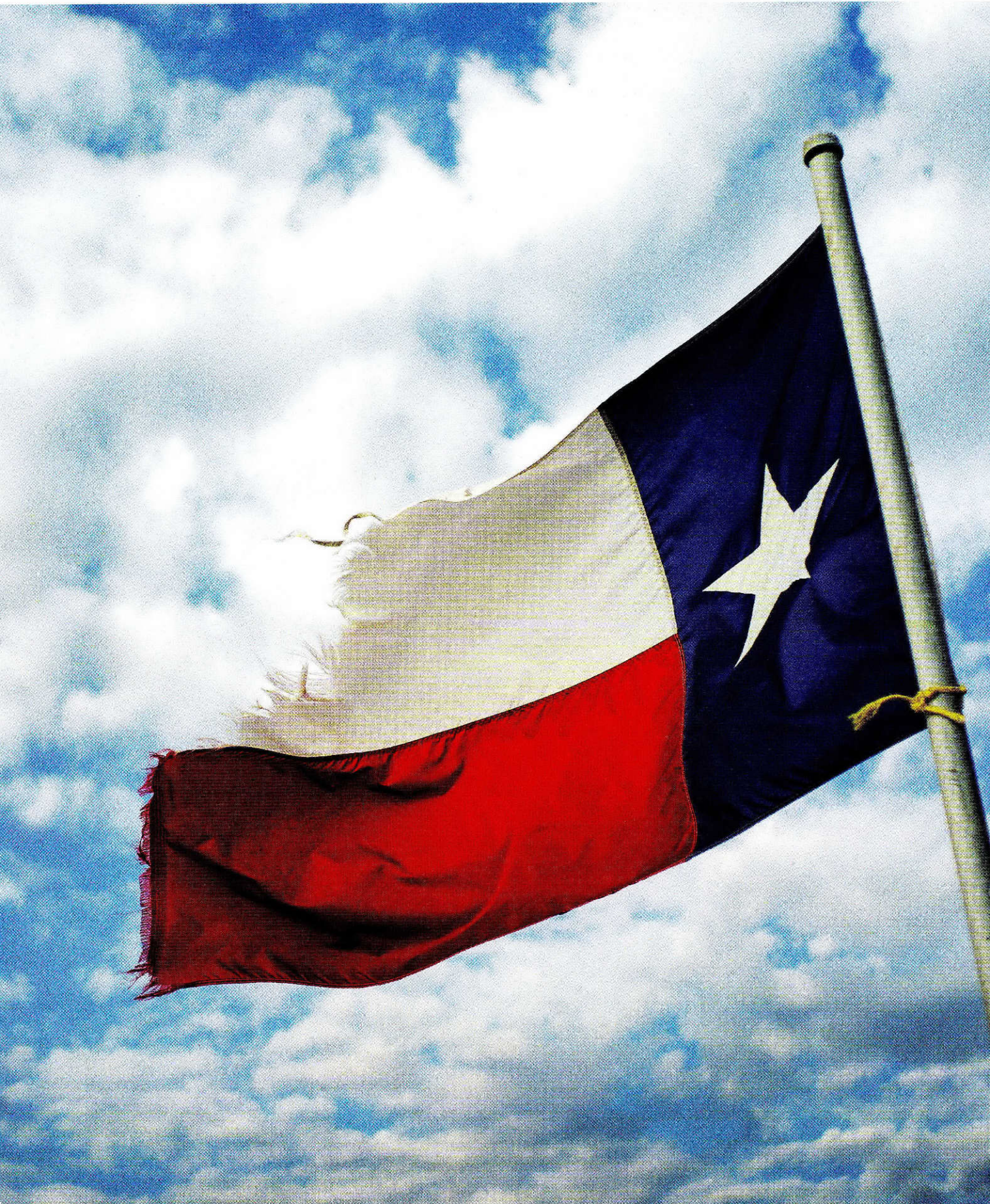
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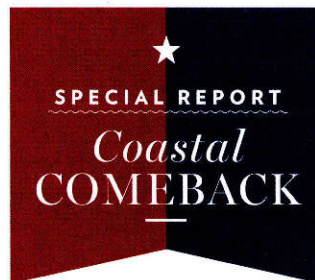
*The Ilfrey family exploring
the flats with local guide
Ryan Ford at Rockport Kayak.*



**COASTAL
BEND
UNITED**
REBUILD. RESTORE. RECOVER.

Coastal Bend United is a non-profit coalition of ten Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce created to support small businesses affected by Hurricane Harvey in the Coastal Bend. The best way that you, as a Texan, can help your neighbors is to rediscover the coast. Come visit. Eat in our restaurants. Shop in our stores. Swim on our beaches. Stay for a while. We appreciate your support. CoastalBendUnited.org





Texans are resilient.

We've been tested time and again, from despotism to depressions, oil busts to dust bowls—and now by Hurricane Harvey. But as in past trials, Texans have found a way to turn obstacles into opportunity and seize the chance for renewal. Consider Lee Roy Hoskins, owner of Port Aransas' venerable Tarpon Inn, who labored for months to rebuild after the hurricane. "We had a lot of things we needed to work on anyway," Hoskins says with a smile.

The story of Hurricane Harvey is well known. Cameras were rolling as the storm blasted the coast and then dumped flooding rains for nearly two weeks, turning city streets into murky rivers. When the sun finally came out, we took hope as the media highlighted heroic stories of survival, community, and fundraising efforts led by celebrities like J.J. Watt and George Strait.

After those distressing days last summer, the news cycle moved on to the next breaking disaster, and life returned to normal for those of us spared the wrath of one of the most damaging storms on record. But for the places affected by Harvey—including many of Texas' favorite travel destinations—very little has remained the same for the past nine months.

As a magazine dedicated to chronicling the best of Texas travel and culture, *Texas Highways* has been keeping watch. Starting in the weeks after the hurricane, we deployed writers to follow the stories of Harvey recovery in Port Aransas, Rockport-Fulton, and Houston. We found Texans' characteristic grit on full display and stories of reinvention and growth.

It would be hasty to suggest it's business as usual on the Texas Gulf Coast, but plenty of old favorites and interesting developments justify a return visit. And these places are eager to welcome you back. In Rockport, check out the new home of the famed Rockport Center for the Arts in its burgeoning downtown. In midtown Houston, try the smoked brisket pho at Saigon House, where new partners gutted a damaged building and reopened as one of the city's most innovative Vietnamese restaurants. And in Port Aransas, charter a fishing tour or take it easy and head to The Phoenix for surf and turf. "We had no choice but to rebuild," co-owner Vanessa Brundrett says. "After all, our name is The Phoenix."

BACK TO THE BEACH





*RESOURCEFUL
& RESILIENT,
PORT ARANSAS
IS READY FOR
SUMMER VISITORS*

*STORY BY JOHN LUMPKIN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
KENNY BRAUN*

A

Anticipation grows as you roll down the window and drive onto the Port Aransas ferry to cross the narrow channel to Mustang Island. Salty air invades the senses, and sunrays glint on the shifting waters where dolphins play. As you disembark into the heart of this historic fishing town, brown pelicans skim the water for dinner or perch on weathered piers. Fishing boats rock gently in the harbor, rigged for their work in nearby bays or the open ocean.

For generations, Port Aransas visitors have found comfort in the sights and sounds of this favorite island escape—an occasional getaway for some and an annual pilgrimage for others. And so, as Hurricane Harvey pummeled the Texas coast last August, legions of anxious fans and admirers followed the news from afar. With photo-album memories of fishing expeditions and visions of heaping plates of fried shrimp and oysters, they wondered: What had become of their treasured Port A?

Nine months later, Port Aransas visitors will discover an island on its way to recovery. Thanks to inventive and hard-working locals, most of Port Aransas' traditional attractions are poised to accommodate this summer's wave of tourists.

"The list of what you can do is longer than the list of what you can't do," said Mary Henkel Judson, editor and co-publisher of the weekly *Port Aransas South Jetty*. But she confided, "Harvey is still with us," including what she called "Harvey mush-brain," the despondency caused by months of life amid hurricane wreckage and debris. Thankfully, cleanup workers have removed most of "Mount Trashmore," a debris pile on State Highway 361 that at one point reached a height of four stories.

Among familiar venues open to customers are fishing charters like Deep Sea Headquarters and Woody's Sports Center, the historic Tarpon Inn, Farley Boat Works, the Port Aransas Nature Preserve, favorite open-air restaurants, and of course Shorty's, the storied bar that reopened

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within days after Harvey made landfall in its backyard. Perhaps most importantly, Mustang Island's 17 miles of open beach were spared from significant hurricane damage.

Port Aransas officials and merchants were understandably wary about this year's spring break, but the beaches—"our biggest asset," as Chamber of Commerce CEO Jeff Hentz put it—attracted crowds of visitors. "Our numbers were solid and better than expected, even despite poor and cooler weather," Hentz said. "This bodes well for a promising summer, when we hope to have 60 percent of our lodging inventory open."

The trauma of Hurricane Harvey won't be lost on summer visitors, evidenced by vacant lots where entire buildings once stood and structures still under repair. But after a flounder po' boy and a few hours of idle time on the beach, it's easy to remember Port A's appeal. The beaches survived the worst of the storm because Mustang Island's front line of dunes, protected by vegetation and



largely untouched by development, turned back the surge from the Gulf. Ironically, much of the flooding that damaged homes and businesses came from the bay side, as Harvey's circular rotation pushed water from Corpus Christi Bay over the flat shoreline and into neighborhoods across the island.

"We greatly admire the strength and the perseverance of the population," said Austin resident Gary Pickle, whose extended family's Port Aransas vacations began decades ago. The Pickles skipped their fall sojourn last year, but this year is different. "We definitely hope to pick up where we left off, hopefully finding our old haunts intact, and if not, finding new ones," said Pickle, who with wife, Jan, oversees a gathering of three generations. Indeed, houses they have rented in Sand Point just behind the dunes needed only minor repairs, and their favorite sandals-and-shorts restaurants like Beach & Station Street Grill are open.

When Harvey struck, sand dunes helped protect the beaches of Port Aransas such as this one at Cinnamon Shore.

ON THE WATER

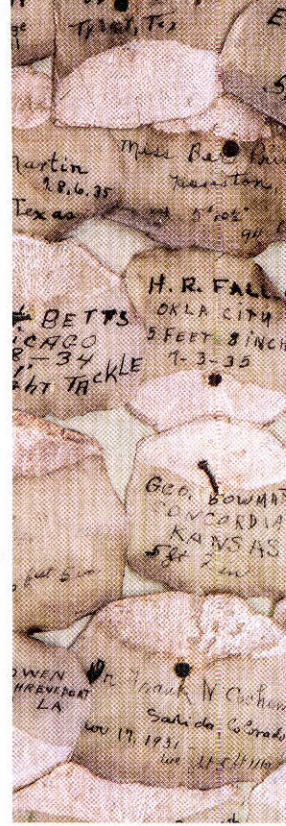
Fishing is intrinsic to Port Aransas. What would you expect from a town that was once named Tarpon because the fish were so bountiful that even President Franklin D. Roosevelt was drawn to these waters? Overfishing reduced the tarpon population years ago, but this year's anglers will find ample opportunities to cast for flounder, kingfish, shark, mangrove snapper, ling, and Spanish mackerel.

"Our goal was always to reopen," said Beth Owens, co-owner of Deep Sea Headquarters, a fishing charter acquired by her husband, Kelly Owens, in 1996. The Owens' operations survived Harvey because they moved their boats to South Padre Island and Corpus Christi the day before the storm struck. Though Harvey shuttered Deep Sea's dockside building and knocked out its phones, loyal clients promised via Facebook to keep their fishing reservations if Deep Sea could reopen. Within three weeks, the company started operating from an open-air headquarters under a palapa.

The Owens also own Red Dragon Pirate Cruises, a 70-foot ship that launches daily for themed outings, including a fireworks cruise planned for July 4. Since its return to service in December, the Red Dragon has welcomed families aboard for entertaining duels and fusillades in the spirit of 17th-century naval battles. On a recent outing, parents, grandparents, and children ranging from toddlers to teenagers bounded aboard after a tutorial by dreadlocked Quartermaster Ezekiel, who shouted in baritone, "Ahoj, scallwags!" The cruises include photos with the captain, sword fights, and cannon firings.

Woody's Sports Center, a Port Aransas mainstay for half a century, is also back in business after significant damage to its retail store, headquarters, and docks. Owner Glenn Martin's complex is ready for customers with its outdoor Back Porch Bar and lessee Patty Wilson's window-service Harbour Lights Grill, which will cook your catch. As Martin explained with a grin, "They can buy my fuel, live bait, and ice and go fishing. After that, they can pay me to clean the fish while they have a cocktail."

Though the city's three long fishing piers suffered "catastrophic" damage and will be closed for the foreseeable future, City Manager David Parsons noted shoreline anglers can use the reinforced banks of Roberts Point Park next to the ferry landing or the rocky South Jetty.



Clockwise from above: cooling off at Shorty's Place; trophy scales at The Tarpon Inn; rebuilding continues at the Leona Turnbull Birding Center; a Red Dragon pirate.

**WEB
EXTRA**

Read more Port Aransas recovery stories and find a list of upcoming Port Aransas festivals at texashighways.com.



“
**OUR
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 ALWAYS
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 REOPEN.**”

HANG YOUR HAT

While many attractions are open, Port Aransas' lodging inventory has not fully rebounded since the storm. Standbys like Cline's Landing, the condominium tower near downtown Port Aransas, will take two years to renovate, and others vulnerable to Harvey's Category 4 winds are in a limbo of insurance adjustments, homeowners' associations, and infrastructure repair.

Townhomes, lodges, and single-family vacation cottages fared better than high-rises, especially those built to current hurricane-resistant codes, including the popular Cinnamon Shore beach community. They form the basis for rental pools this summer, along with economy and mid-tier low-rise hotels.


Among visitors' choices will be The Tarpon Inn, which has endured a series of calamities since its opening in 1886, including a 1900 fire and several hurricanes. During Harvey, an 8-foot surge of water nearly flooded the inn's bottom floor, but the building remained intact thanks to its telephone pole pier-and-beam construction. The storm spared the inn's famous lobby walls, which are decorated with the scales of trophy tarpons caught over the decades. Each scale is marked with dates and names, including one signed by President Roosevelt in 1937.

As workers made repairs this spring, The Tarpon Inn's signature red wooden rockers already occupied their customary stations on the verandas. Vintage furnishings, like four-poster beds and claw-foot tubs, survived. "We had a lot of things we needed to work on anyway," said Lee Roy Hoskins, the inn's owner—a bittersweet refrain familiar among Port Aransas storm veterans.

FAVORITE HAUNTS

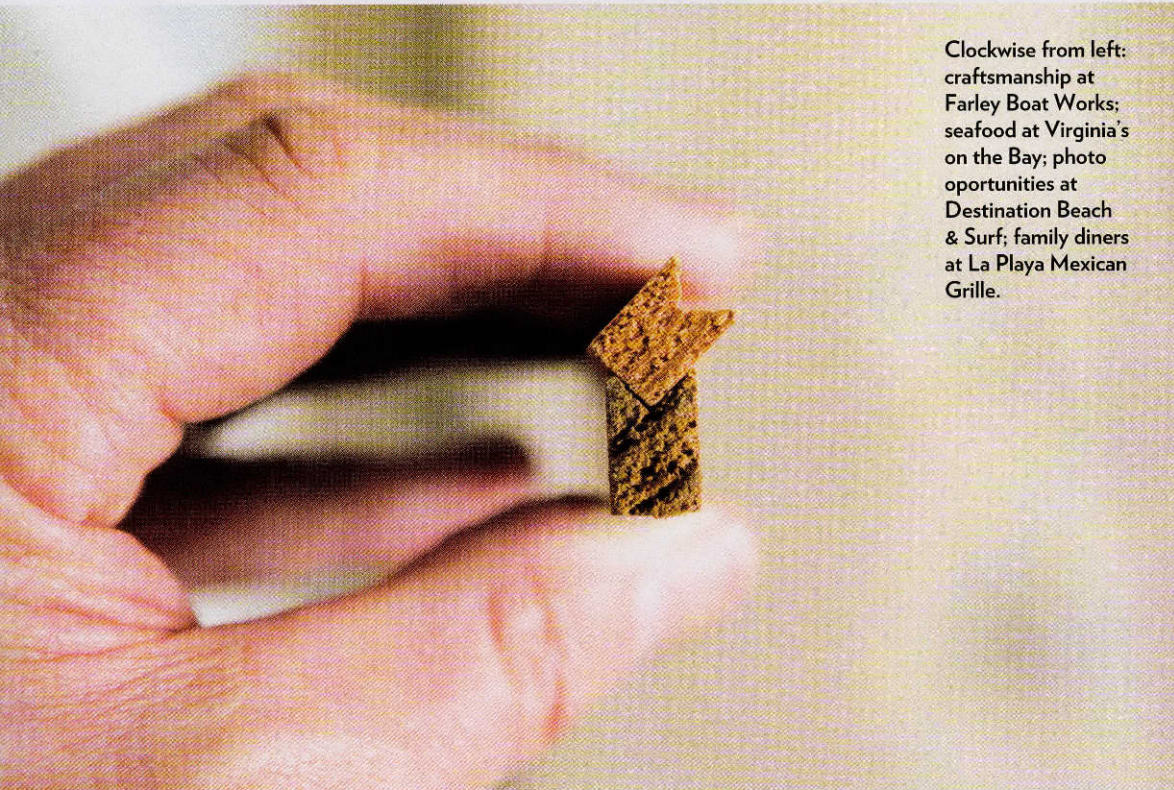
A stone's throw from The Tarpon Inn, Shorty's—the town's oldest bar—served customers their first post-Harvey beverages a week after the storm's blast. Contractor Chris Jordan helped replace the roof and remove knee-deep debris; then he played bass guitar in a band for an impromptu reopening party made possible by a hot-wired portable generator.

"Everybody was in muddy boots and everybody was happy to see one another," his



Hurricane Harvey destroyed Port Aransas' three wooden fishing piers, but the popular South Jetty is still accessible to anglers.





Clockwise from left: craftsmanship at Farley Boat Works; seafood at Virginia's on the Bay; photo opportunities at Destination Beach & Surf; family diners at La Playa Mexican Grille.





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girlfriend, Andrea Shaw, recalled. “The rest of the town was dark.”

In the months following the hurricane, Jordan and Shaw were among a handful of local businesspeople who moved into a seven-bedroom vacation rental because Harvey rendered their homes uninhabitable. The occupants of their so-called “Commune”—including Greg Villana, owner of La Playa Mexican Grille; Linda Halioua, owner of Venetian Hot Plate; and Tiana Worsham and Vanessa Brundrett, owners of The Phoenix—sweated out their comebacks by day and prepared group dinners for one another in the evening. “If you were hanging out here, you were not going to go hungry,” Jordan said.

By spring, the Commune’s residents had all found new dwellings, and one by one they reopened their restaurants, starting with La Playa in December. Harvey inflicted substantial damage on Venetian Hot Plate’s building, including a caved-in roof and interior destruction. Frustrated by delays with insurance and other problems, Halioua challenged herself: “I’ll show you. I’m going to do it even if it kills me.” Fortunately, it didn’t, and the restaurant retains Chef Mark Pulich’s menu of Northern Italian cuisine with coastal influences.

Six months after Harvey, The Phoenix moved to a new location and welcomed a festive crowd for mussels in Champagne and creole mustard broth, U-10 scallops, and red snapper topped with encrusted avocado. “We had no choice but to rebuild,” said Brundrett, a fifth-generation Port Aransas resident. “After all, our name is The Phoenix.”

NATURAL RESILIENCE

For evidence of rebirth, a pair of endangered whooping cranes arrived in January in Charlie’s Pasture, the centerpiece of the Port Aransas Nature Preserve. The city closed the Port Street access to the 1,217 acres of tidal flats and marshy grasslands in Harvey’s aftermath to rebuild boardwalks and repair roads, though visitors can still access a 1-mile trail at Community Park. The young feathered couple may have settled in Port Aransas because their traditional protected winter habitat at the nearby Aransas National Wildlife Refuge has gotten crowded as the flock grows.

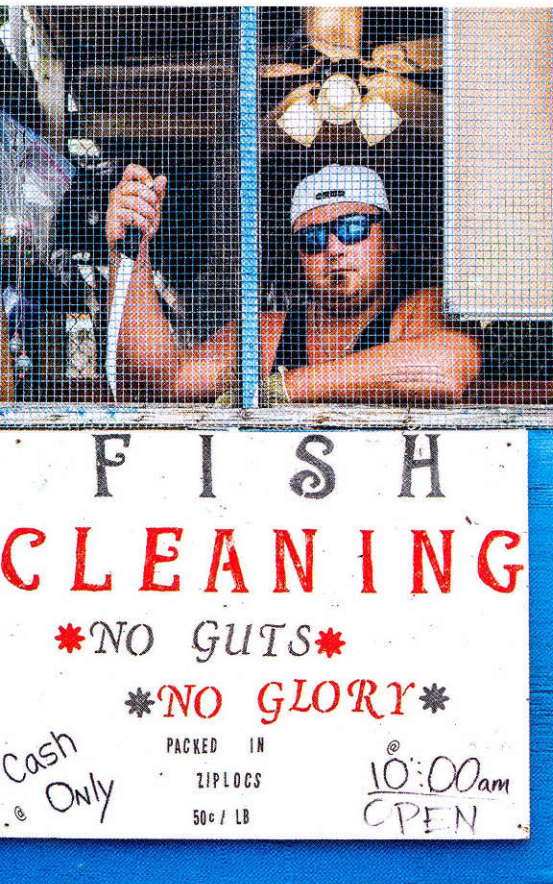
Clockwise from top left:
Cinnamon Shore boardwalk;
Woody's Sports Center;
the Port A restaurateurs of
the makeshift "Commune;"
Harbour Lights Grill at
Woody's; the new home of The
Phoenix Restaurant and Bar.



FOR PORT ARANSAS TOURISM INFORMATION,

call the Port Aransas/Mustang Island Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau at 361-749-5919; portaransas.org. The Visitor Center, 403 W. Cotter Ave., opens Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The chamber updates its website frequently as businesses affected by the hurricane reopen. The *Port Aransas South Jetty* newspaper also produces a quarterly visitor guide with the latest news on local tourism attractions, visitorsguide.portasouthjetty.com.





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The preserve’s Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center has reopened part of its boardwalk, though its elevated observation tower is inaccessible. From the walkway, a 7-foot alligator was clearly visible on a recent visit, sunning among the reeds during a warm afternoon.

Less fortunate was the inundated campus of The University of Texas Marine Science Institute, which is currently under reconstruction. One silver lining is that its onsite nonprofit, Amos Rehabilitation Keep (ARK), required minor repairs. By January, ARK was moving sea turtles and birds that it rescued before the storm back into the shelter. The institute has plans for limited public tours of its outdoor trails, including the ARK, in late fall.

VISITORS WELCOME

In post-Harvey Port Aransas, familiar landmarks serve as barometers of recovery. IGA, the island’s bustling full-service grocery, is back to business as usual. On Alister Street, the massive open-jawed shark sculpture, a popular photo opportunity, escaped the storm’s wrath, though Destination Beach & Surf—the spacious shop that it promotes—was forced to rebuild, opening during spring break.

Port Aransas Police Chief Scott Burroughs, who is running his office out of a portable building, was among the initial wave of law enforcement officials to return after Harvey’s landfall. He encountered a daunting scene, but he said, “I knew it was going to be OK from the get-go—from day one—because of the nature of the people who live here.”

Burroughs, who writes a weekly column for the *South Jetty*, makes a summer 2018 prediction: “This is a town of 3,500 people, but there are millions of people in the state of Texas and around the country that consider Port Aransas their place. I think they are chomping at the bit to come back.”

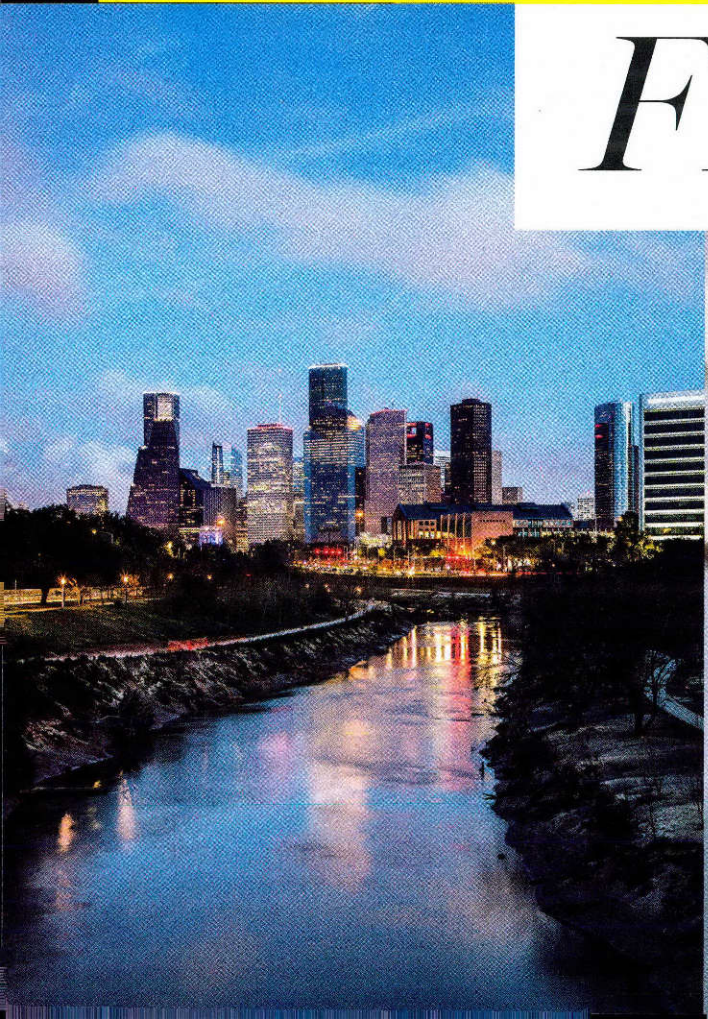
Richardson-based writer John Lumpkin joined a family reunion at Port Aransas weeks before Harvey struck and returned twice for extended visits to chronicle its recovery. Kenny Braun’s new book of landscape photography, As Far As You Can See, chronicles the best of his decades of exploring the Texas outdoors.

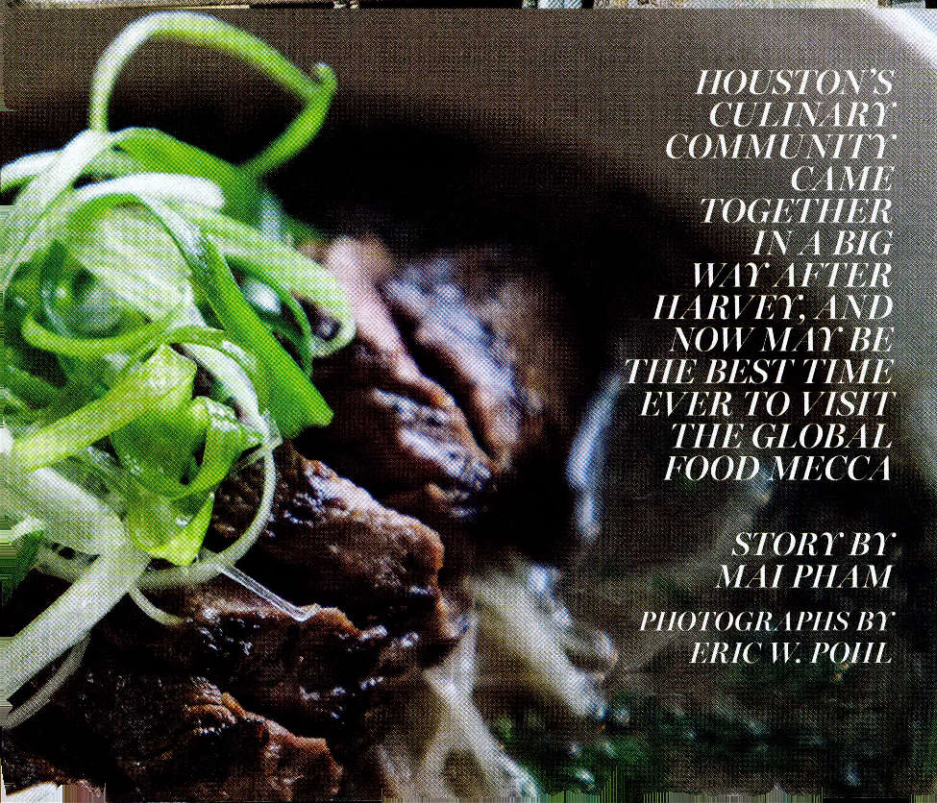


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THE GLOBAL
FOOD MECCA*

*STORY BY
MAI PHAM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ERIC W. POHL*

Ask Houstonians what they love about their city, and they're bound to bring up its first-rate dining scene. Houston's culinary offerings have been strong for a while but never more so than in recent years, with high-profile restaurants capturing attention on a national stage and the number of eateries in the Houston metro area swelling to a record of more than 12,000 featuring cuisines from about 75 countries.

However, the Houston foodie scene's proudest achievement may lie in the heart and grit of its close-knit chef community. In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, restaurateurs banded together, feeding thousands displaced by the floods.

Like so many individuals affected by Harvey, the city's restaurants struggled in the aftermath of one of the most costly natural disasters in U.S. history. This is the story of how four Houston-area restaurants weathered the storm.

EYE OF THE STORM

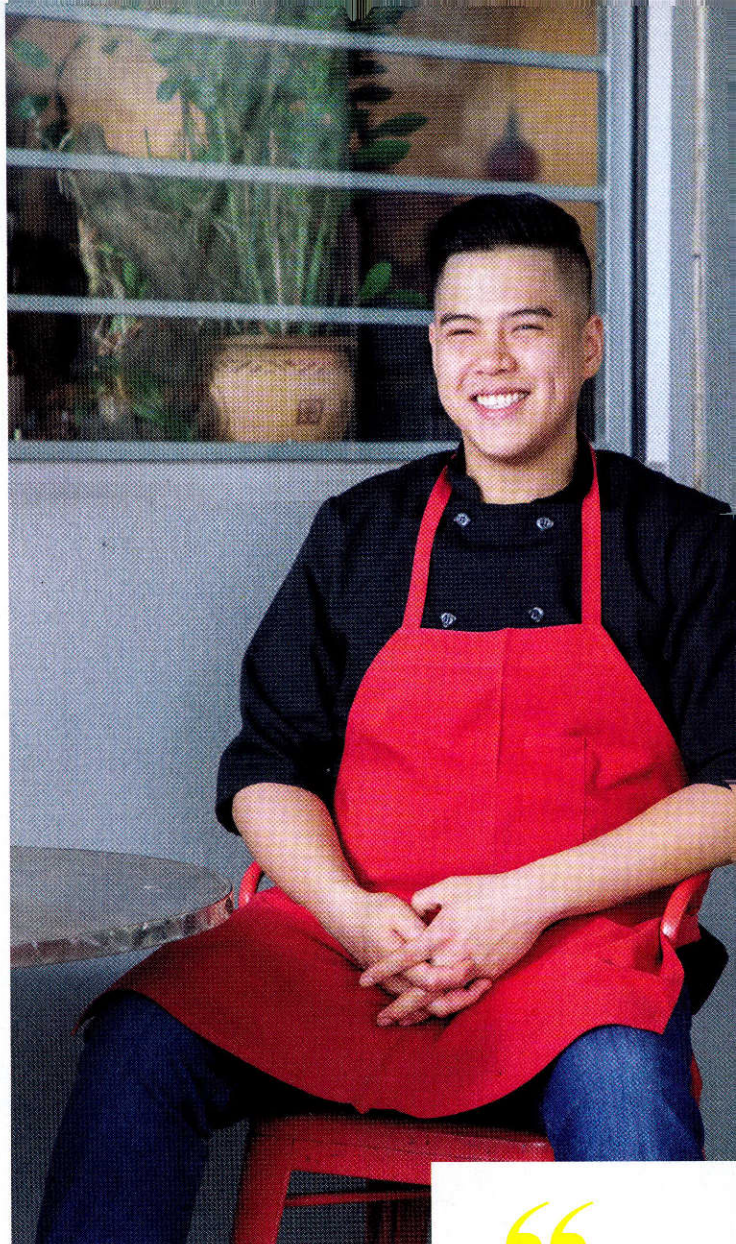
RAFFA'S WATERFRONT GRILL, KINGWOOD: One of two Kingwood restaurants owned by Tony Raffa, the steak and seafood spot celebrated its 10-year anniversary a month before Harvey. A destination restaurant with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the San Jacinto River, it's been considered one of Kingwood's best for years. It had also, until Harvey, seemed impervious to natural disasters. In 2008, Hurricane Ike had blown through without causing damage. So had the 2015 Memorial Day flood and the subsequent "Tax Day" flood of 2016. Raffa's did not sit on a floodplain. The normal water level lies 24 feet below the building; there had never been a need for flood insurance. But then again, Houston had never seen a hurricane like Harvey.

Raffa's was open the Friday evening Harvey was supposed to hit but closed on Saturday and Sunday due to severe flooding. By Monday, when the water had reached waist level on the streets, Tony, his wife, and some friends braved the waters in an effort to salvage whatever could be saved. Among other things, he put 40 cases of wine on tabletops. He thought the restaurant might get 12 inches of water, but the reality was much starker. Video footage from across the street showed water inundating the entire King's Harbor development at 6 p.m. that Monday, rising to about 5 feet. Everything stayed submerged for about 72 hours before the water began to recede, and he and his wife returned to a gut-wrenching sight.

Chairs were piled up, booths were overturned, and whole refrigerators were flipped over. Everything but the building's frame was destroyed. Over the course of the next several days, as many as 200 volunteers—from friends to members of Tony's church and volunteers from local businesses—showed up to help. The landlord had a restoration company on the ground within 24 hours. It took about a week just to remove the Sheetrock and debris.

SAIGON HOUSE, MIDTOWN: The trendy Vietnamese eatery debuted in the heart of Midtown in fall 2015. Owner Duc Dinh, who also owns Wrap & Roll in Pearland, hoped to attract theatergoers as well as nearby residents and Midtown professionals. But two years into the project, restaurant manager Lan Nguyen, Dinh's mom, was running ragged. The 12-hour workdays were taking a toll. She knew she couldn't keep it up and began looking for help.

When Hurricane Harvey hit, the floodwaters rose to approximately one foot inside the restaurant. Lan, whose home in Braeswood Place had taken on four-and-a-half feet of water, had enough things to worry about without the stress of what to do with the restaurant. By the time she got back into Saigon House three weeks later, the floodwaters had receded. With no flood insurance and little in the way of cash reserves, she

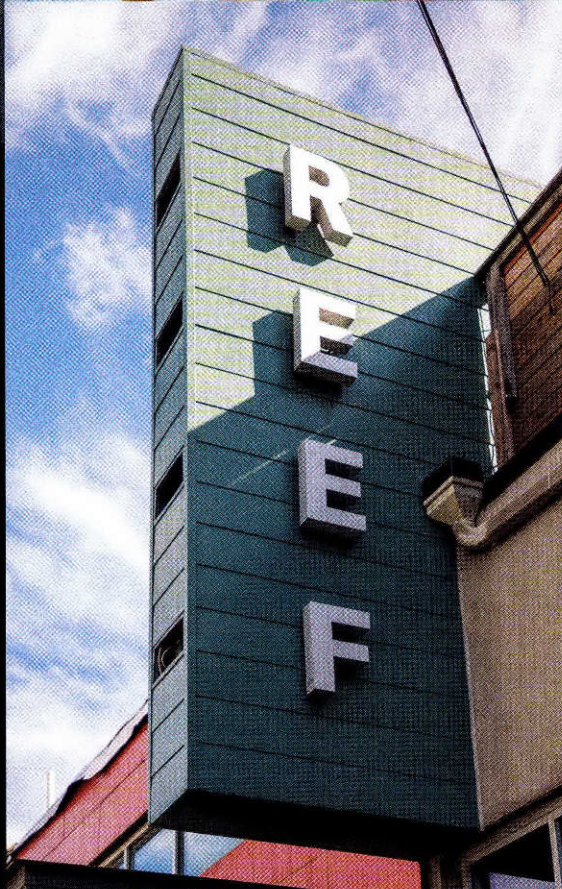


cleaned up, aired the place out as best she could, and reopened for business.

On Nov. 1, Tony Nguyen, one of the founding partners in the gourmet food truck Wokker TX Ranger, joined family friends Dinh and Lan as chef-partner of Saigon House. A few weeks after he started, the restaurant had to be completely gutted to remove mold climbing up the walls after the flood.

BRASSERIE 1895, FRIENDSWOOD: In late 2015, Kris Jakob—then a culinary instructor at French cooking school Culinary Institute LeNôtre and the man behind the Houston school's successful on-site restaurant, Kris Bistro—left his eight-year, tenured post to open his own restaurant. The first chef-driven restaurant to open in the

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Opening spread, clockwise from top left: a cocktail from Brasserie 1895; Raffa's Waterfront Grill owner Tony Raffa at his gutted restaurant; filet mignon pho at Saigon House; downtown Houston skyline over Buffalo Bayou. This page, from left: Tony Nguyen, chef-partner of Saigon House; diners at Saigon House; the exterior of REEF; smoked salmon at Brasserie 1895.



southeast Houston suburb of Friendswood, Brasserie 1895 was immediately embraced by the community as a scratch kitchen serving innovative global cuisine, with monthly rotating dishes ranging from nachos topped with cochinita pibil to curried wagyu beef tartare, and chicken-fried steak with foie gras cream gravy.

It was business as usual at Brasserie 1895 on Aug. 25. Jakob, who lives five minutes from his restaurant, drove home after closing. By the time he arrived, the water level had already risen up his driveway. "I could literally swim," he says. "I was swimming with my dog on the street. It was sometime between midnight and 1 a.m., but everybody was out on the streets and playing in the water."

The next morning, all the streets in Jakob's neighborhood were blocked, and the water kept rising. "It felt apocalyptic," he says. It was three days before he could drive to his restaurant, and even then, he had to take a roundabout route through the neighboring town of Alvin to get there.

In the days leading to his return, his partner, Sky Lyn Gibbons, had turned Brasserie 1895—which sits on a hill and was spared the widespread flooding in the area—into a makeshift shelter. Air mattresses covered the dining room floor, along with trash bags filled with personal belongings. The patio outside the restaurant served as a pet kennel. The temporary residents had made the kitchen their own, using the restaurant's on-hand resources to cook for themselves. It was a disaster but a harmonious one. People had shelter. They had food—and each other.

When the water receded, the restaurant cleared as people returned home and began to tear out all the wet Sheetrock and address the physical damage left in Harvey's wake. The hurricane had absolutely devastated Friendswood. Around 3,000 homes—nearly a quarter of the homes in town—had been flooded. More than 100 properties, many in a 100-year floodplain along Clear Creek, were substantially damaged.



REEF, MIDTOWN: One of Houston's first bona fide "celebrity chefs," the 6-foot-5 Bryan Caswell gained national attention when he famously competed on season three of Food Network's *The Next Iron Chef*. The busy restaurateur oversees REEF, Little Bigs, Third Bar, El Real Tex-Mex, Bryan Caswell Catering, and El Real in Terminal B at Houston Bush Intercontinental Airport. Caswell and his wife, Jennifer Caswell, co-owner and chief operating officer of his restaurant group, closed all of the restaurants in potentially affected areas on Aug. 24 and kept tabs on them as Harvey ravaged not just Houston but areas like Seadrift and Rockport, where they had close ties.

REEF, Caswell's flagship restaurant in Midtown Houston, sustained significant damage from water that broke through the ceiling. An estimated 4 inches of water sat in the restaurant for five days.

When the rains stopped, the Caswells went to the George R. Brown Convention Center—which functioned as a temporary housing shelter—to donate supplies. Jennifer, whose brother is a firefighter, wanted to help. The water damage at REEF had spared the kitchen, so, after conferring with the downtown division of the Houston Police Department, the Caswells offered to

provide hot meals to the police force. The Caswells also signed on to prepare meals for flood victims temporarily housed at the convention center.

Operations at the restaurant ramped up thanks to social media. Within three days, Caswell, his crew of 25, and an army of more than 100 volunteers were cooking for 15,000 people from Rockport to Port Arthur, from victims stranded in makeshift shelters to Houston police and other first responders. Donations poured in from purveyors like Brothers Produce, D'Artagnan, and Matin Preferred Foods.

José Andrés, whose nonprofit World Central Kitchen had helped with disaster relief in countries such as Haiti, was one of the first of several celebrity chefs on the ground, arriving while Houston was still flooded, and people were scrambling.

Other celebrity chefs who joined the Caswells in their relief effort included Ming Tsai, who flew in from Boston, bringing 20,000 pounds of donated chicken from Perdue Farms. James Beard award-winning chef John Currence from Oxford, Mississippi, and chef Kelly English from Memphis, Tennessee, borrowed a trailer, filled it with food and supplies, and made the drive to Houston.

HOPE FLOATS

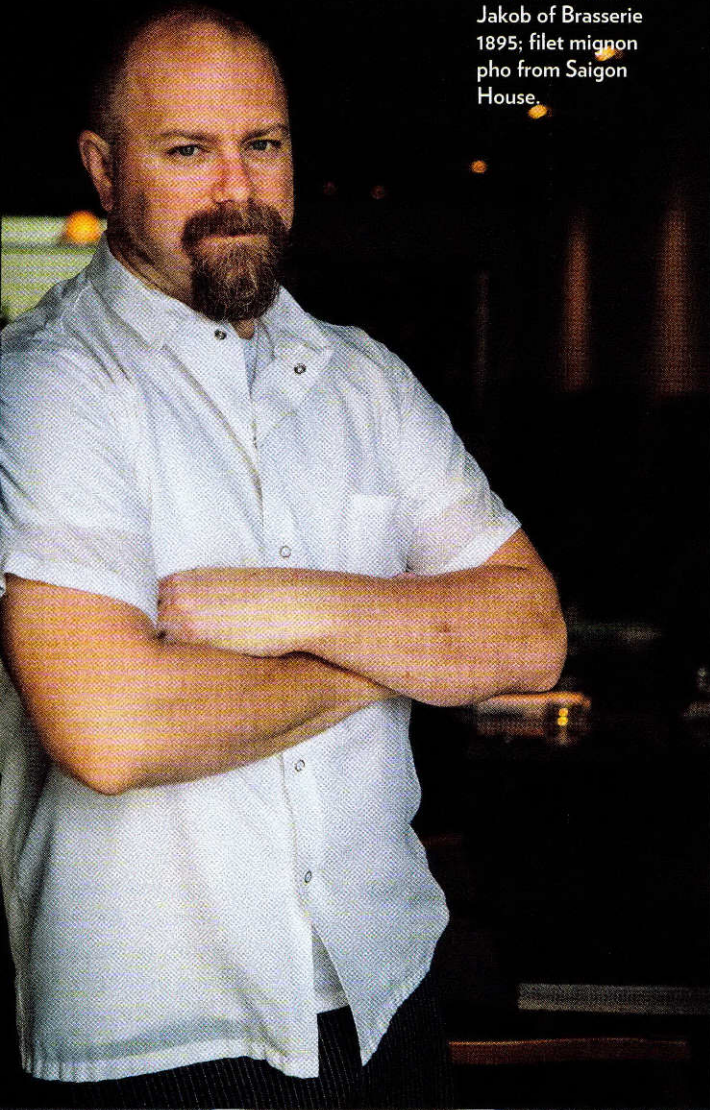
SAIGON HOUSE: On Thanksgiving week, Tony Nguyen shut down the 3,300-foot restaurant and began the laborious task of mold remediation. With no assistance coming from FEMA or their insurance company, he and his mom, with a few helpers, rolled up their sleeves and got to work. His mom's experience buying and flipping houses proved invaluable. They tore out the molded Sheetrock, applying bleach and anti-mold solution, then closed everything back up—in just nine days.

Saigon House reopened for business the Monday after Thanksgiving. Tony, a self-taught cook, revamped the menu. His first order of business was rolling out a specialty pho menu.

Tony's pho—made by simmering beef marrow bones, chicken bones, and oxtails for 24 hours—is a thing of beauty. An elevated version of the bowls found around Houston, Nguyen sought to differentiate his product not on price (his bowls range from \$9-\$12) but on quality. His pho filet mignon,

“
**THERE'S
MORE
POSITIVE
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Clockwise from top left: the interior of Brasserie 1985; Kris Jakob of Brasserie 1895; filet mignon pho from Saigon House.



which features a sliced, 6-ounce slab of seared tenderloin steak, is the first of its kind in Houston. Another first is his smoked brisket pho, a sort of barbecue-meets-Vietnamese-noodle-soup combo wherein applewood-smoked, melt-in-your-mouth barbecue brisket is served atop steaming-hot bowls of anise and cardamom-scented rice noodle soup.

Tony has also capitalized on Houston's obsession with Viet-Cajun crawfish, and through social media and word of mouth, Saigon House has become a Midtown go-to for tasty mudbugs in distinctive flavors like Saigon Heat, with garlic butter and citrus onion, and Thai Surprise, which is reminiscent of Thai sweet and sour tom yum soup.

RAFFA'S WATERFRONT GRILL: The restaurant was a total loss, somewhere in the order of half a million dollars in damages. In the days after the flood, it was unclear whether Raffa's could ever reopen. Tony knew he would need help and to somehow find funding to even consider reopening. But luck—buoyed by the goodwill of friends and strangers—was on his side. An online fundraiser started by his cousin in Massachusetts raised close to \$45,000. Insperty, a Kingwood-based company that organized the Lake Houston Area Relief Fund to help restore local businesses, granted Raffa's \$10,000. Spearheaded by Harriet and Matt Kee, two of Raffa's former employees, a fundraising dinner called RaffaStrong raised \$95,000. Tony was also approved for a U.S. Small Business Administration disaster relief loan for \$200,000 within four months of Harvey.

The restaurant's landlord also had flood and business interruption insurance, which helped to abate rent during the months Raffa's has been out of business. The flood insurance would restore the building, but it wasn't until seven months later—on March 10—that the final coverage determination came through.

BRASSERIE 1895: Though he could have resumed business after the restaurant was no longer needed as a makeshift shelter, Jakob wouldn't countenance it. The Friendswood community remained in a state of emergency. Military-grade amphibious tanks, brought in for the rescue effort, rolled down the streets. Volunteers and relief agencies had descended on the community en masse. Large piles of debris accumulated on lawns everywhere he looked. In lieu of reopening, Jakob spent the first weeks after Harvey cooking comfort food like chicken and dumplings, big vats of jambalaya, and huge pots of Mexican pozole—everything from scratch—so Friendswood flood victims and volunteers could come in after an exhausting day's worth of hard labor and enjoy a hot meal for free. Brasserie 1895 became a safe haven the community could count on.

Even after the restaurant resumed operations, it was evident the community still had a massive need for family meals. So Jakob added an affordable "Harvey Relief" section to the menu so displaced families had a place to count on for hot, wholesome family meals. As people got back on their feet, the



HOUSTON'S CULINARY CACHET

Houston has more than **75 categories of cuisine**, **600 vegan-friendly restaurants**, and **150 farm-to-table restaurants**, as of 2017.

The number of Houston-based restaurant and chef semifinalists for the **James Beard Foundation awards** has been rising each year since 2015: That year, it received five nominees. In 2016, eight. In 2017, nine and in 2018, 12.

Houston chefs won James Beard's **Best Chef Southwest** competition the last three out of four years*, taking home the region's top prize in 2014 (Chris Shepherd), 2016 (Justin Yu), and 2017 (Hugo Ortega).

Houstonians dine out almost more than any other city—6.9 times per week, compared with the national average of 4.9, according to Zagat.

Houston has more than **700 food trucks** and is ranked among the top 10 food truck cities in the U.S., according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

*2018 honorees were announced May 7, after press time.



dine-in menu morphed into a take-home family meal service of large-format dishes. To keep labor costs low and offer these meals at a decent price—\$10 per portion for dishes like beef stroganoff or house-made lasagna bolognese—Jakob made the meals himself.

REEF: Well before Harvey made landfall, the Caswells—through the establishment of their nonprofit Southern Salt Foundation—held charity dinners to support their mission of Gulf Coast conservation. The foundation was therefore able to accept direct monetary donations for Harvey relief. By mid-spring, the foundation had collected close to \$70,000, a portion of which will be disbursed to Harvey flood victims throughout the Gulf Coast.

Three weeks after Harvey, the Caswells also partnered with the Ford Motor Co. to deliver food and supplies—complete with cheerleaders in a tailgate-style setup—to first responders and communities in need.

REINVENTION

BRASSERIE 1895: Since introducing a \$10 take-home family meal service, the restaurant's daily demand for the meals ranges from 100-200 portions. Customers who had purchased the meals out of need now do so for convenience. Weekly menus are posted through social media and sell out within hours.

"Harvey actually turned out to be a good thing for our business," Jakob says. "The family meals became a positive revenue stream for us and a positive service for the

community. Without it, we would have never ventured into this sector of prepared meals."

Jakob has had to change his business to keep up with demand. As of March, he made a decision to forgo lunch and dinner service on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, focusing instead on family meal production. Brasserie 1895 now opens for regular dinner service Thursday through Saturday only. Starting the week after Easter, Jakob began offering a Sunday barbecue pop-up service, with plans to open a barbecue joint in the near future.

"There's more positive that came from the flood than negative, in my opinion," Jakob says. "Yes, people had damage to their property, but the amazing amount of people that flooded Friendswood to help do the demolition and construction—it was just incredible. To this day, I still have people that come to buy meals from us who donate to other people who don't have kitchens."

Jakob continues, "The community is trying to help people get back on their feet. No one is complaining. No one is in the dumps. Friendswood, as

a community, is stronger than ever before, and it's thanks to Harvey."

RAFFA'S WATERFRONT GRILL: After months of not knowing what would happen, Tony Raffa says he finally sees a light at the end of the tunnel.

"They just started putting Sheetrock up in my space," he says. "I'm actually feeling pretty damn good. Where my position was on Sept. 1 compared to now is extremely different. So I'm feeling very optimistic about the future."

The construction effort to repair the existing structure is underway. If all goes well, a new and improved Raffa's Waterfront Grill will debut in late August, one year after the flood.

"My wife and I have been spending hours in the design center looking over granite and tile. That part—trying to make Raffa's Waterfront Grill more than it was before—taking a bad situation and turning it positive by updating some of our finishes in the restaurant—is exciting, too."

Tony is also immensely thankful. "A lot of people that I did not expect to show up and offer assistance did. People came to spend eight hours a day cleaning out the space. My hometown really had a big punch in the eye, but it is finally coming back to be its old self again."

REEF: After months of waiting for insurance payments, REEF held a pop-up wine dinner with Matthiasson Wines on March 5 as a lead-up to its eventual reopening, slated for May as of press time. The new REEF, once reopened, will feature a chef's table capable of serving 12 to 16 guests per evening. Through fundraising dinners and other events spearheaded by the Caswells, the Southern Salt Foundation will continue its mission to promote a holistic approach to Gulf Coast conservation.

SAIGON HOUSE: Thanks to Tony Nguyen's leadership both on the culinary and operational front, Saigon House has

gained a reputation not only for its high-quality pho and Vietnamese food but as one of the best Viet-Cajun crawfish spots in town. The clientele, which had previously come mainly from nearby businesses and residences, now drive from all parts of the city to sample Saigon House's cuisine.

"I'm very overwhelmed from the Houston community," Tony says. "I know that the city is still struggling, but people still come to support us, and I'm really grateful."

Tony is working on systemization of operations so he can let go of day-to-day tasks and possibly develop Saigon House into a franchise model. He is also hoping to engage the local community through art. As part of the rebuild and redesign, he is commissioning local artists to paint four murals above the booths in the main dining room.

"It was very difficult at the beginning," Tony reflects. "But I think now that the labor-intensive stuff is out of the way, we can just focus on the food." 🐘

Houston-based freelance writer Mai Pham specializes in food, wine, and travel. Follow her on Instagram @femme_foodie. Photographer and native Houstonian Eric W. Pohl relished the chance to revisit his hometown to help tell the story of Houston's comeback from Harvey.



Clockwise from top left: charcuterie and cheeseboard at Brasserie 1895; Bryan and Jennifer Caswell of REEF; a bartender makes a flaming drink at Brasserie 1895.

SAIGON HOUSE

3101 MAIN ST,
HOUSTON
713-529-1100;
SAIGONHOUSE
FOOD.COM

BRASSERIE 1895

607 S.
FRIENDSWOOD
DRIVE, STE. 11,
FRIENDSWOOD
832-385-2278;
BRASSERIE1895.
COM

RAFFA'S WATERFRONT GRILL

1660 W. LAKE
HOUSTON PARKWAY,
STE. 103, KINGWOOD
281-360-1436;
RAFFAS.NET

REEF

2600 TRAVIS ST.,
HOUSTON
REEFHOUSTON
.COM

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

STORY BY
HEATHER BRAND

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ERIC W. POHL

Harvey struck when Houston's world-class arts scene was gearing up for a new season, devastating venues and upending plans. But creativity and courage go hand in hand: "This city came together in a way I've never seen," says Eileen J. Morris, artistic director of the Ensemble Theatre.



NICKY
DAVIS
2017

HOUSTON
STRONG

HOUSTON STRONG MURAL
by artist Nicky Davis



THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY

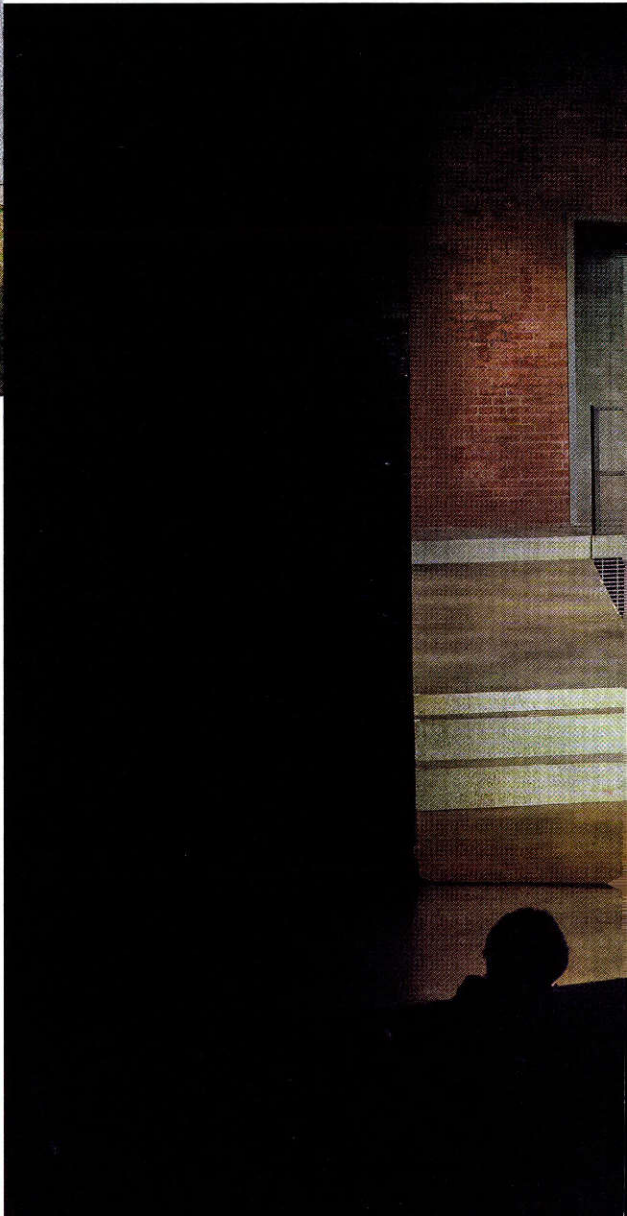
Displaced by flood damage for seven weeks, the orchestra relocated to Rice University's Stude Concert Hall, where it performed six concerts for free to the public. More than two dozen of the symphony's musicians, some with damaged homes of their own, also brought their instruments to perform at area shelters.

HOUSTON SYMPHONY AT JONES

HALL is at 615 Louisiana St., Houston. Call 713-224-7575; houstonsymphony.org. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (June 15-17) and *Classical Mystery Tour: A Tribute to the Beatles* (July 6)

JENNIE ASH

The executive director of Art League Houston was scrambling as rain streamed through the ceilings and pooled on the gallery floor: The annual *Texas Artist of the Year* exhibition, honoring contemporary artist Trenton Doyle Hancock, was a week away. To Ash's relief, she found a new home for the show at Rice University's Moody Center for the Arts. "It's times like these that bring out the best in people," she says.





THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

A quick-acting maintenance worker and his mop were enough to minimize damage from water seeping into a seating area and dressing rooms. With a professional cleaning, the theater made its season debut with a complimentary performance of *Sassy Mamas*, just one week behind schedule.

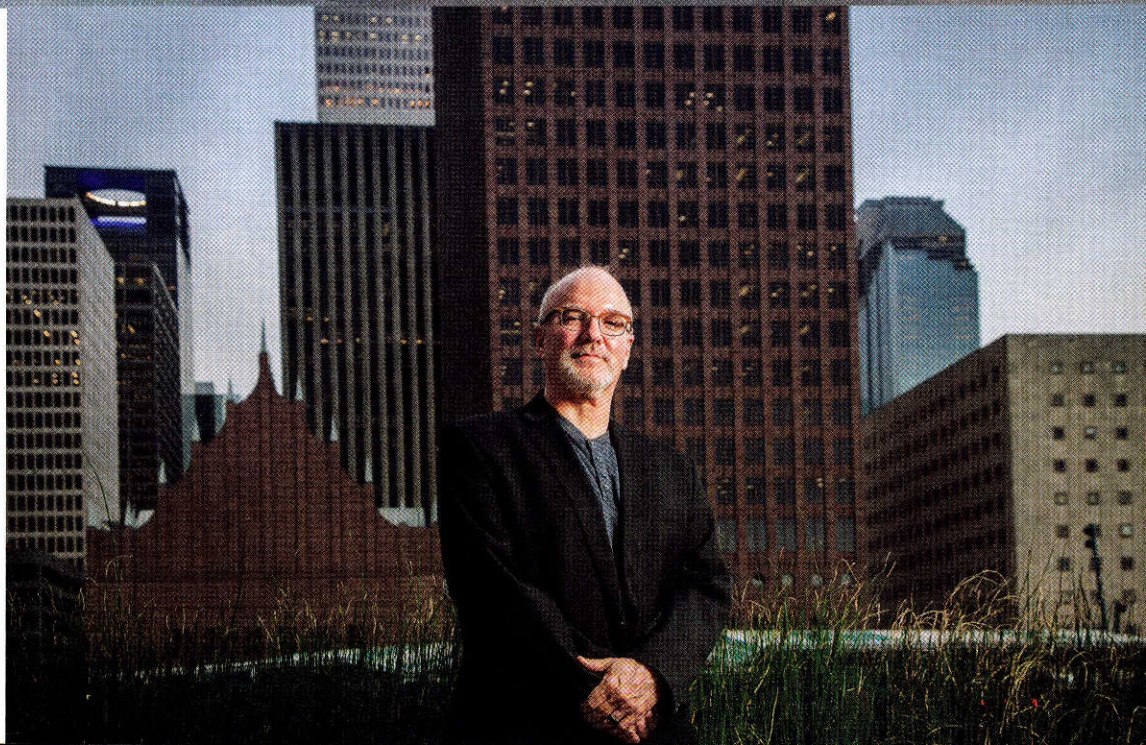
THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE is at 3535 Main St. in Houston. Call 713-520-0055; ensemblehouston.com. *Sistas the Musical* (June 28-July 29)

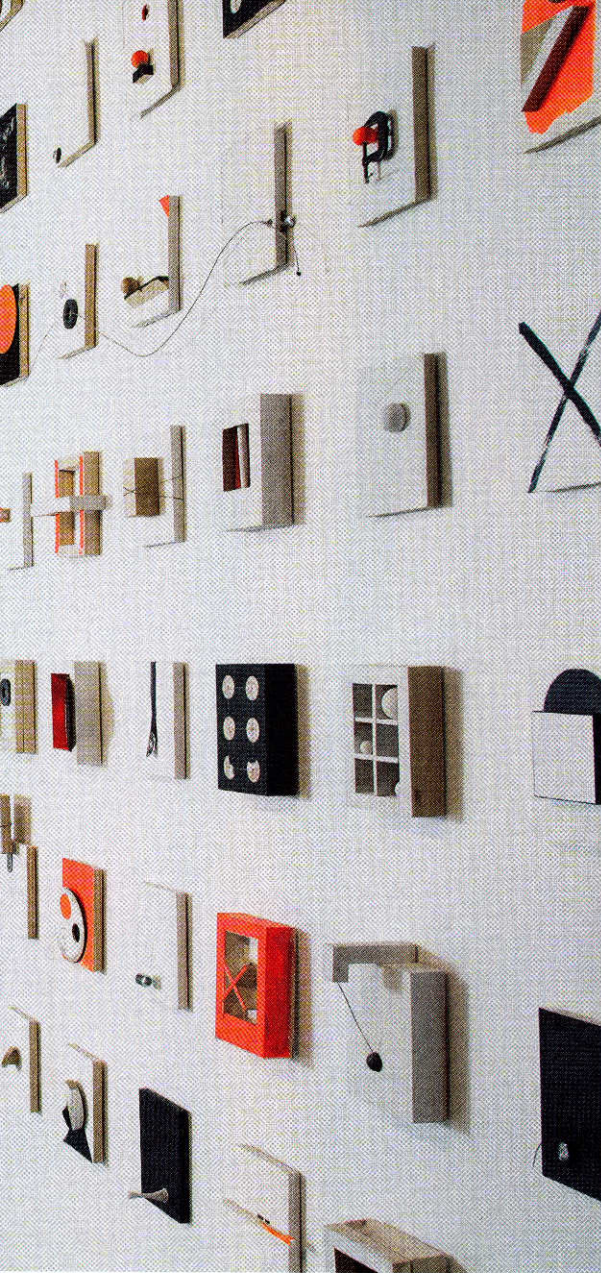


ART LEAGUE HOUSTON

Less than three months after Hurricane Harvey, the Art League held its first exhibition under a newly repaired roof. One of Houston's oldest nonprofit art organizations, it is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year and continues to serve as an incubator and showcase for the city's artists.

ART LEAGUE HOUSTON is at 1953 Montrose Blvd. in Houston. Call 713-523-9530; artleaguehouston.org. *COMPLEX 3* by Austin artist Seth Orion Schwaiger and works by Delita Martin and Luisa Duarte (June 8–July 21).





EILEEN J. MORRIS


“People wanted us to keep going,” says the artistic director of the Ensemble Theatre, whose company actors gave variety-show performances and an impromptu staging of *Brer Rabbit* for storm survivors who’d found shelter at the George R. Brown Convention Center. “It was an opportunity for art to have an impact and change lives,” Morris says.

JAMES BLACK

“Watching the entire city come to a standstill was heartbreaking,” says the interim artistic director of the Alley Theatre, which sustained \$22.8 million in damage. Staff members still found time to entertain children displaced by the storm: “They knew they had to jump in and help. It’s the empathy of artists—it’s the core of who we all are—to help and serve others.”

THE ALLEY THEATRE is at 615 Texas Ave. in Houston. Call 713-220-5700; alleytheatre.org. *The Cake* (June 1–July 1) and *Holmes and Watson* (June 22–July 22)



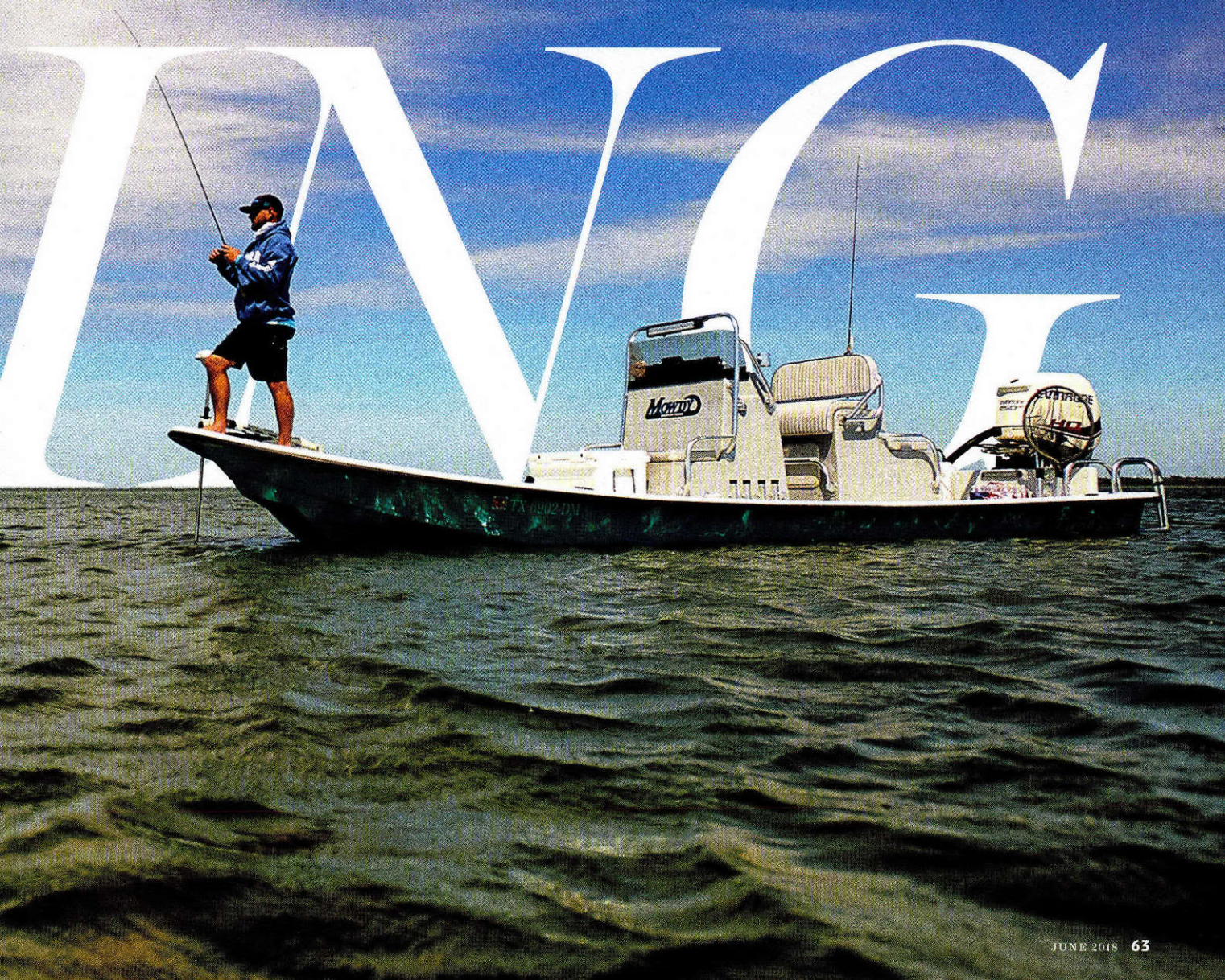


ROCKPORT
BLS

*UNBOWED BY DISASTER,
A CHERISHED BAYSIDE
COMMUNITY REBUILDS*

STORY BY JUNE NAYLOR

*PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DAVE SHAFER*



Opening spread: Fishing guide Alan Voigt; this page: ruin and renewal in Rockport; opposite: Marsha Hendrix, Fulton Mansion site manager.

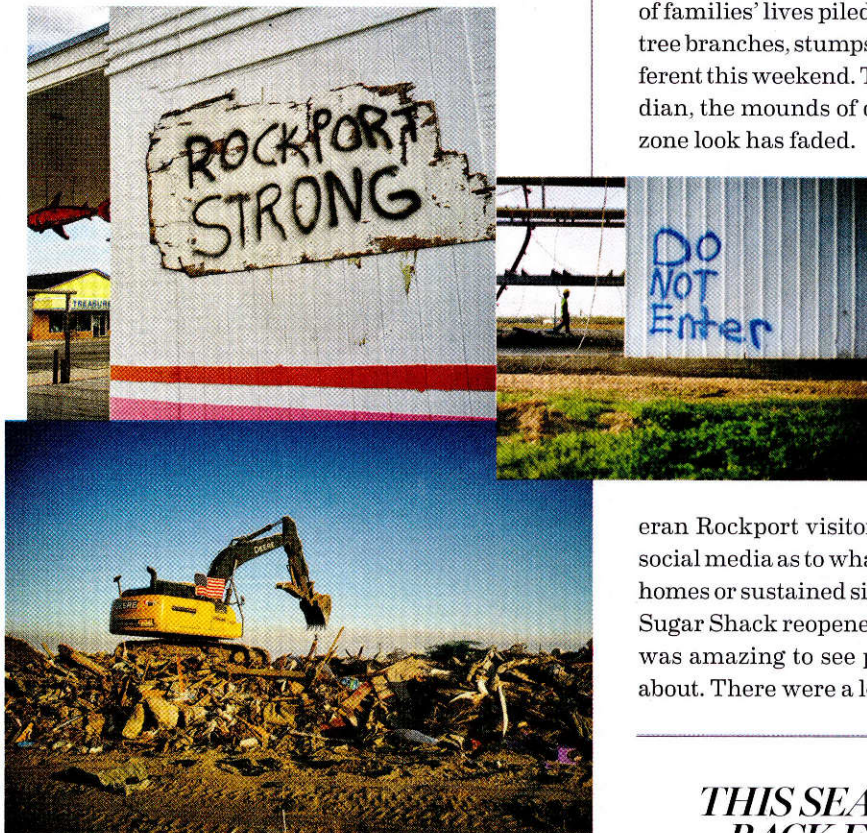
Checking into The Inn at Fulton Harbor near Rockport, a cheerful blond woman has brought a basket of cookies to share with the other guests. She turns to me and my husband, who are in line behind her, and offers some to us. Cut in the shape of Texas, each cookie is iced in bright blue and artfully emblazoned with white letters that spell “Rockport Strong.”

Wherever my husband and I go during a recent long weekend, the same slogan on T-shirts and signs and water bottles reassures that yes, this seaside town—battered by Hurricane Harvey a little more than six months prior to our visit—is not just back from the near-dead; it is alive and kicking. Certainly, much work lies ahead, but progress is steady and, most assuredly, strong.

Many residents were still shell-shocked when we previously visited Rockport in late September, a month after the storm. They were also grateful to the power company for bringing out-of-state teams to restore electricity quickly, and we heard time and again how H-E-B fed thousands of meals from mobile kitchens to displaced and hungry folks. Mostly as we drove around this peaceful place I’ve adored since childhood, we were stunned at the mountains of home ruins and vestiges of families’ lives piled on the roadsides, often mixed with thousands of tree branches, stumps, tangled fences, and light poles. It’s markedly different this weekend. Though much refuse remains on the highway median, the mounds of detritus are shrinking, and the widespread war-zone look has faded.

Sue Anne Brewer, the cookie-bearing guest at the Fulton inn, tells me her family visits Rockport-Fulton from their home in Bishop, just south of Corpus Christi, as often as eight times per year. Like me, she became a regular as a kid, back when Texans began building resort homes in the Rockport seaside development Key Allegro. Her passion for Rockport has only strengthened since the hurricane, Brewer says; she’s returned numerous times and, like hundreds of veteran Rockport visitors, has helped friends rebuild and sent word via social media as to what others can contribute to residents who lost their homes or sustained significant damage to them. “I was here the day the Sugar Shack reopened,” Brewer says, referencing a popular saloon. “It was amazing to see people reunited with friends they were worried about. There were a lot of tears.”

***THIS SEASIDE TOWN IS NOT JUST
BACK FROM THE NEAR-DEAD;
IT’S ALIVE AND KICKING.
MUCH WORK LIES AHEAD,
BUT PROGRESS IS STEADY AND,
MOST ASSUREDLY, STRONG.***







RIDING OUT THE STORM

Craig Griffin built The Inn at Fulton Harbor in 2002 after a career in marine biology and geophysics. He'd already purchased Charlotte Plummer's Restaurant, which sits right on the harbor, in the late 1990s. When Harvey bore down, Griffin made the decision with a couple of friends to ride out the storm in an upstairs room at the inn, knowing he'd built a solid place that would survive. "Let me be clear," he says, remembering the harrowing night six months before. "I do not recommend staying for a hurricane when evacuation has been ordered." The inn stood firm, but water damage shuttered operations for more than three months while contractors restored the 44 guest rooms and a cottage with new insulation, Sheetrock, flooring, cabinetry, and furniture. The result? Beautiful quarters with fine, white bedding and, at the foot of our bed, an impressive oak bench made from 60- to 100-year-old fallen trees that Griffin couldn't bear to see trashed.

Nearby in Rockport, hotelier Jatin Bhakta experienced his 15 minutes of fame during Harvey when storm chasers captured a large hotel wall crashing down at his year-old Fairfield Inn. When we met Bhakta last fall, he was just reopening his La Quinta after storm cleanup. He

aims to reopen the Fairfield Inn in October, but work on his Fulton Hampton Inn will last until next year. Meanwhile, his La Quinta—which has poolside cabanas and suites with kitchenettes—is doing a brisk business.

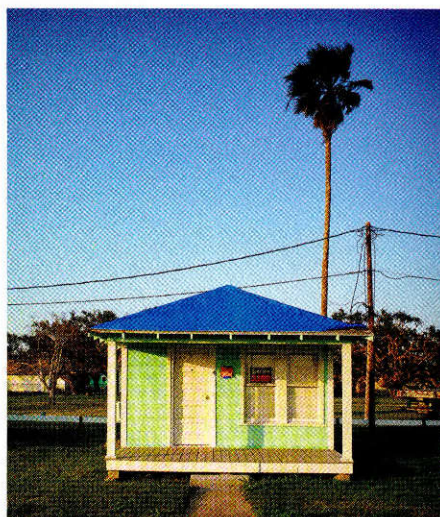
Within walking distance to historic downtown Rockport, Angel Rose Bed and Breakfast suffered only minor damage and reopened within two weeks after Harvey. The 1881 Victorian home has a storied history as a port in the storm; during the Corpus Christi hurricane of 1919, up to 200 townsfolk sought refuge in the home's second story.

Popular rental properties in the Key Allegro area, near downtown on a little island in Aransas Bay, remain mostly in limbo; many were taken to the ground and await rebuilding, a process hindered by insurance issues and availability of construction workers. "I'm told most of these homes and condos won't be ready again until 2019," says property manager Cindy Grieves, noting that of some 200 rentals, only about 50 survived.

THE BIRDS ARE BACK

Tommy Moore, owner and captain of the Skimmer, the primary birding and nature tour boat sailing from Fulton Harbor, is one of the friends who endured the storm with Griffin at the Fulton inn. He's still restoring his house and says business is down about 40 percent, even as birds have continued to flock to the region: "The whooping cranes don't know there was a storm," Moore says.

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, the birding site most often visited by the Skimmer, survived the storm, though some natural habitats were blown away, and several structures were damaged or destroyed.



"The whooping cranes don't know there was a storm," says Tommy Moore (left), owner and captain of the Skimmer, a birding tour boat that sails from Fulton Harbor.

On a Saturday birding trip, we see dozens of the exquisite, rare whooping cranes, which return to Canada by mid-spring. Our fellow birders, making up an enthusiastic bunch with fine camera equipment, are here from Manitoba and Boston, Utah and Nebraska, New Jersey and Miami, and even Sweden. In three hours, we spot several dozen species of duck, crane, heron, osprey, egret, ibis, spoonbill, loon, and kingfisher. Back in town, we also visit one of the Aransas Pathways birding trails with a boardwalk over a wetlands pond and spy still more happy feathered friends on a site that escaped damage. Fishing guides say they're pulling in plenty of great fish; they just need the visitors to come back.

Around the Rockport area, the surviving live oaks are fully green again, and wildflowers carpet roadsides, brightening scenery even where there's a damaged home or business whose future seems sadly uncertain. Over on Goose Island, the magnificent centuries-old live oak known as the "Big Tree"—one of the oldest and largest trees in Texas—remains in fine form, though some of its younger, smaller relatives didn't survive.

COASTAL CULTURE

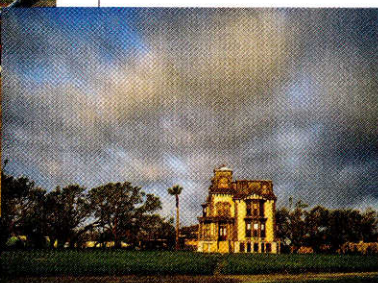
The stately Fulton Mansion, an 1877 wonder built by a structural engineer to withstand the most ferocious storms, has endured its share of hurricanes. The three-story state historic site experienced significant water damage coming from the roof down. Architects arrived almost immediately to begin a likely 18-month, \$1 million restoration process. "I couldn't stomach it being closed," says site

manager Marsha Hendrix, who describes the brutal week spent bringing all the soggy furnishings, antiques, and artifacts out of the house. "Our community needs its attractions open, so we are asking people to come see it as we work."

Nearby in the Rockport harbor, the Texas Maritime Museum has replaced its ruined roof and cleaned the flooded interiors. No artifacts were destroyed. "We took the opportunity to expand and update exhibits, change the flow and make the whole place look like new," says Curator Phil Barnes, who reopened the museum in April.

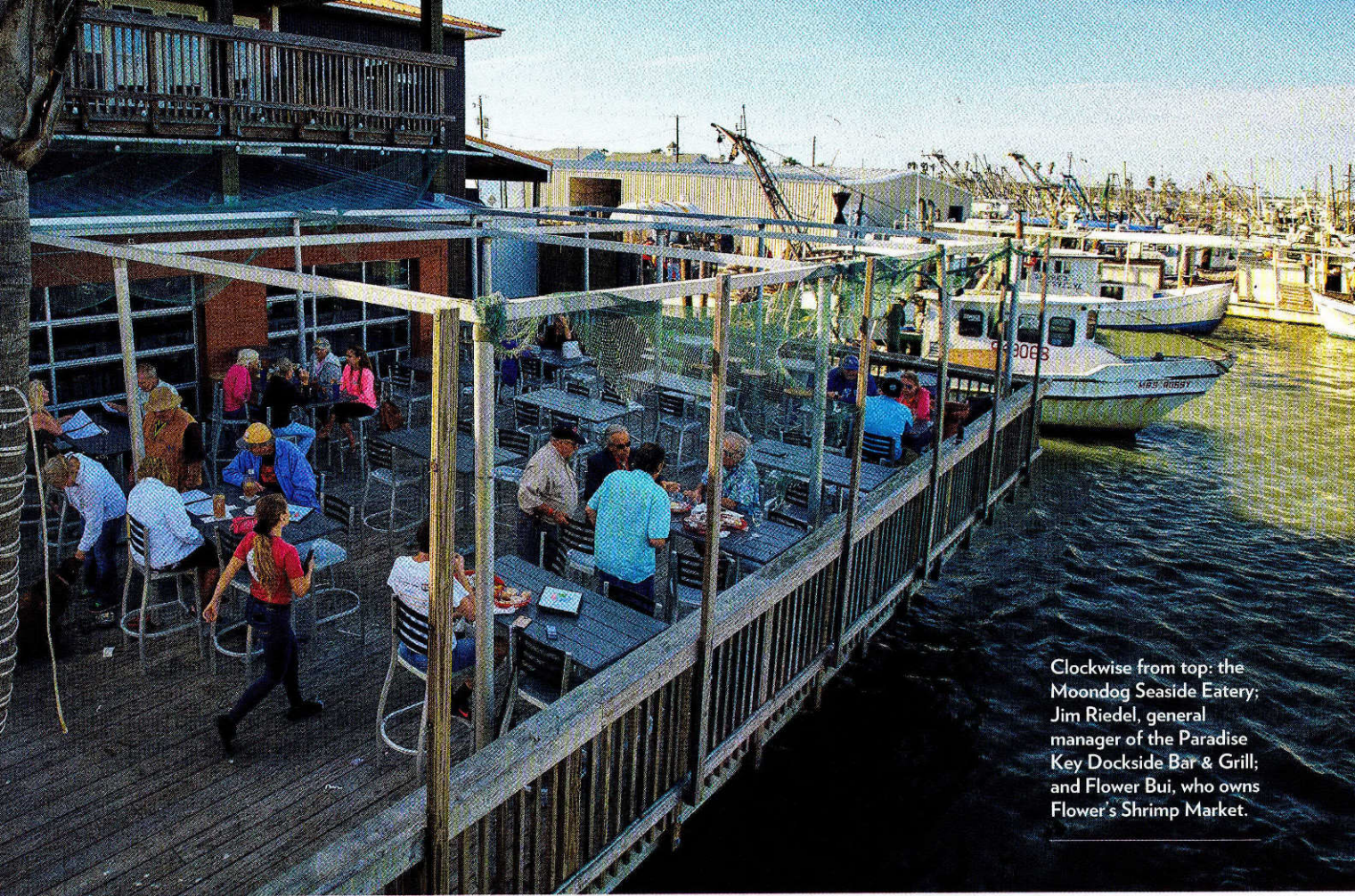
Just a block away, the 130-year-old building that houses the Rockport Center for the Arts was far less fortunate. Horrific damage to the roof and walls forced the gallery to move to new digs in a stucco building a half-mile away, in what's becoming a revived downtown Rockport. Curator Elena Rodriguez says the art center's

**"WHENEVER A
NEW PLACE OPENS, WE ALL
CELEBRATE. ALL I CAN SEE
ARE IMPROVEMENTS."**

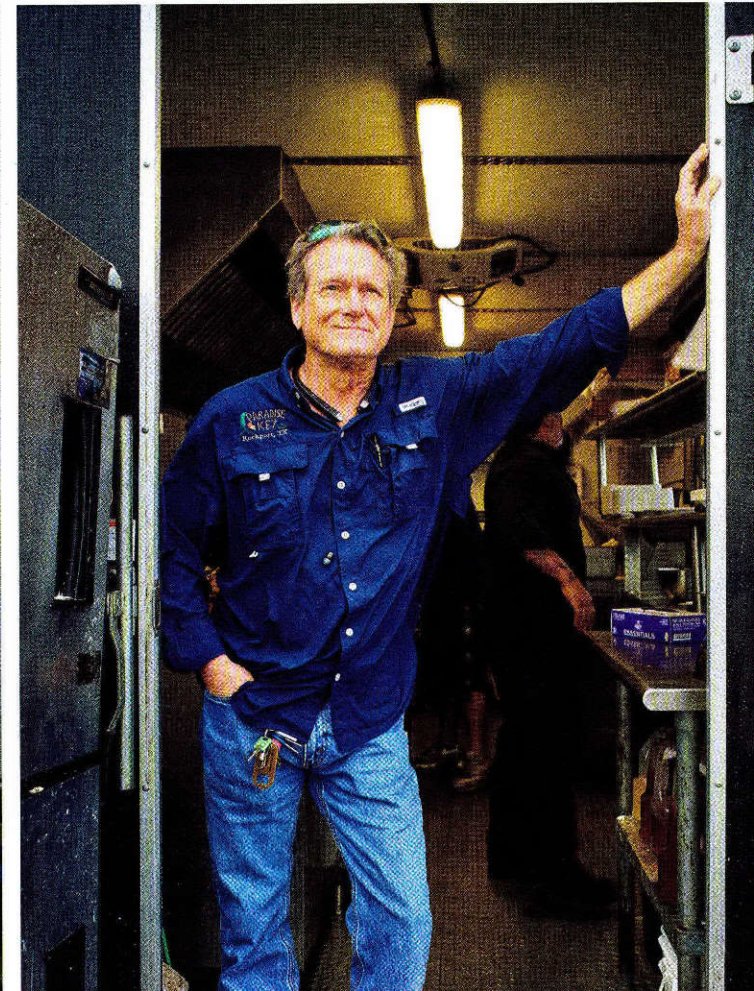
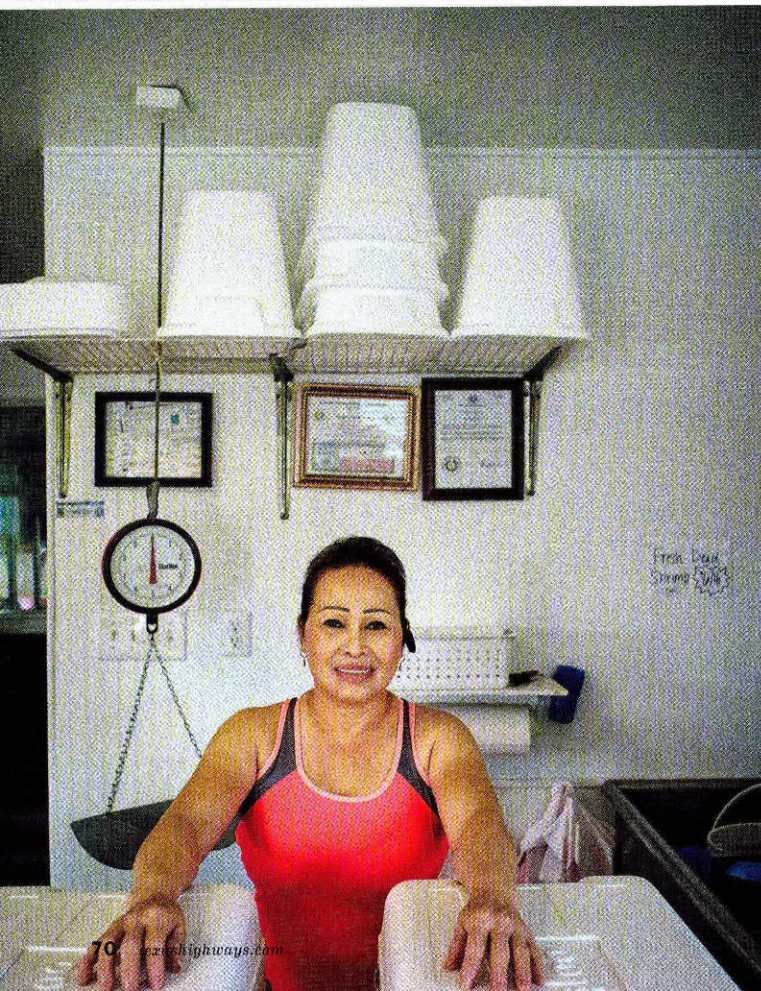


Clockwise from top: Texas Maritime Museum; the Fulton Mansion; and the Rockport Center for the Arts, where Elena Rodriguez (right) is the curator.





Clockwise from top: the Moondog Seaside Eatery; Jim Riedel, general manager of the Paradise Key Dockside Bar & Grill; and Flower Bui, who owns Flower's Shrimp Market.



sculpture garden is due to move to the center's new home, and a full schedule of exhibitions is already underway. Art center traffic grows, as do businesses downtown, such as the new Rock Bottom Park and Pub a few doors away. "Whenever a place reopens or a new place arrives, we all celebrate," Rodriguez says. "All I can see are improvements."

BAIT AND BOUTIQUES

Family-run Flower's Shrimp Market, the busiest bait shop and fish market in Rockport, was out of commission for about five weeks after the storm while owner Flower Bui replaced her commercial building's roof and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. Her cleanup was significant, having lost a large quantity of frozen fish. Operating her shrimping boat 80 miles up the coast in Palacios, she's now selling more shrimp to her local clientele, and she's the bait queen for most anglers and fishing charter operations. "Anyone who's serious about fishing goes to Flower," says her patron Wes Williams, a part-time resident. "She also sells the best fish within a hundred miles for people cooking at home."

As for serious shopping aficionados, both the local and visiting variety, head to the Bay Window. Owner Julia Dutton reopened her store near the downtown waterfront about four weeks after the hurricane, putting her employees back to work as soon as she replaced her damaged air-conditioning units and exterior. When we met last September, she was relieved that while sales were down, the Bay Window was still enjoying a little foot traffic. "People find a little bit of normal by just getting out of the house and coming into the store," she said. Revisiting this trip, I can't get in and out without buying bracelets and a gauzy summer top. Living here would be dangerous for me; I see why Bay Window remains a go-to boutique.

SEASIDE DINING

A devastated kitchen wouldn't keep Jim Riedel from reopening his sizable Paradise Key Dockside Bar & Grill as quickly as possible. In late September, Riedel brought a food truck to the huge parking lot adjacent to his restaurant and set up picnic tables where diners could eat. Not wanting to lose his employees, he launched an abbreviated menu and kept the cocktails flowing. "We're not only not leaving, we're doubling down," Riedel promised last fall, talking about plans to enlarge the entire operation. Guests ate burgers and the like, with a view of quiet waters—nobody dared move their boats through the Intracoastal Waterway beside the restaurant with so many sunken

**"OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS
ITS ATTRACTIONS OPEN, SO WE
ARE ASKING PEOPLE TO COME
SEE IT AS WE WORK."**

ON THE REBOUND

For visitor information and updates on reopening businesses, contact the **Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce**, 319 Broadway St. Call 361-729-6445 or 800-242-0071; rockport-fulton.org

boats hidden just beneath the surface—and of the smashed-up, five-story boat stack next door, where George Strait and hundreds of other owners had stored their watercraft. Returning this trip for dinner, we find Riedel seating customers and servers hustling orders out of the spanking-new kitchen to at least 90 guests in the rebuilt dining rooms. The blackened snapper, caught nearby, is exceptional; the fried shrimp gets two thumbs up. Riedel says he's happy to be serving such a supportive crowd but, like all restaurants, needs more employees to keep up with booming business.

John Raley, owner of Moondog Seaside Eatery in Fulton, also determined to keep his employees at work, reopened in November. His place sustained up to \$250,000 in damage, and several pieces of kitchen equipment had to be replaced. "It's a miracle the building was pretty much unscathed, though we heard reports it had been leveled," says Raley, who evacuated to Luling during the storm. "I'm a big believer in prayer."

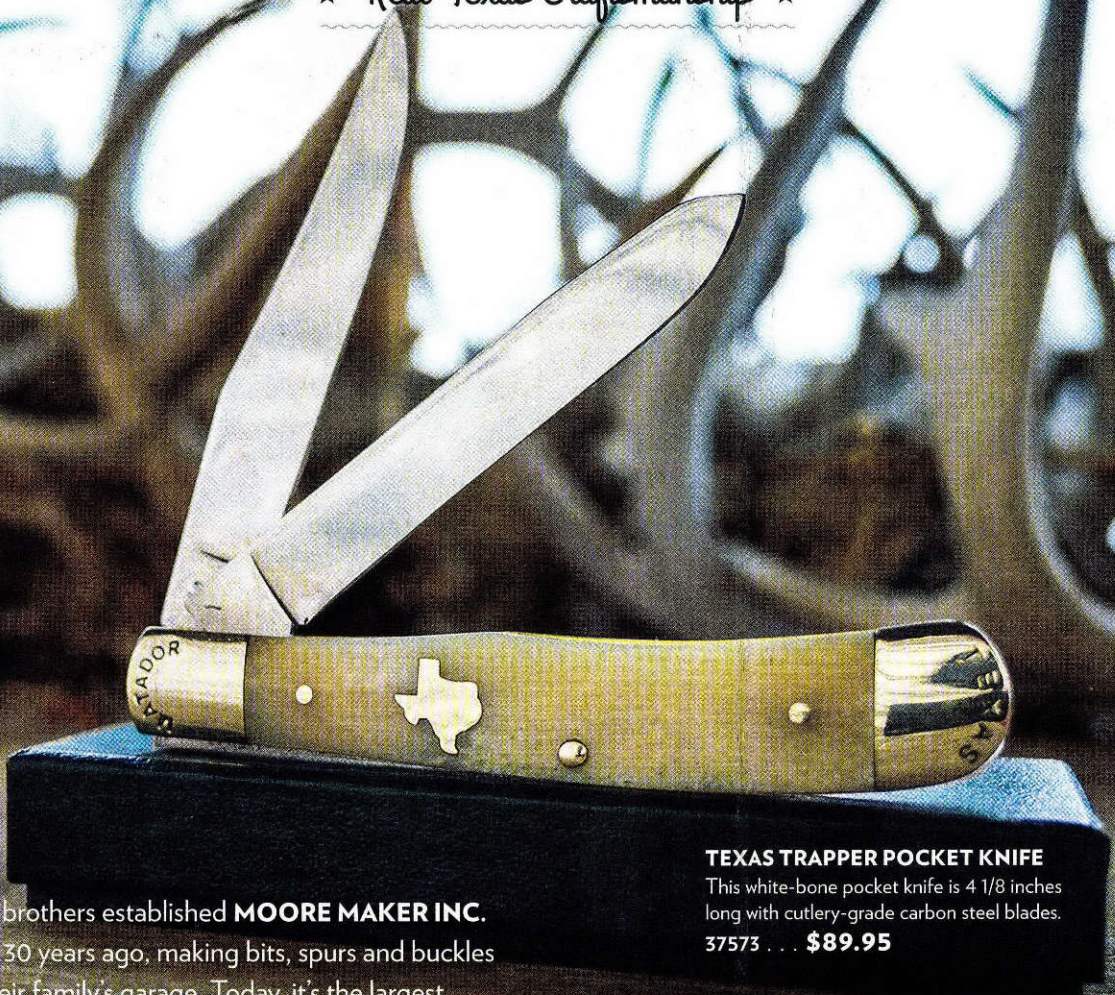
Enjoying a platter of fresh oysters and a bowl of gumbo one sunny afternoon on this spring trip, we breathe in the sea air and toast the fishing boats bringing their day's catch to the pier next door. Just a few steps from our room, we revel in a dinner on the upstairs deck at Charlotte Plummer's, which Griffin reopened two weeks after the storm. The cool starter of lump crab and avocado with Crab Louie dressing and a plate of spicy grilled shrimp goes down easily with wine by the glass. The reflection of a full moon shimmers on the water beside us, setting the mood for a quiet dinner date far removed from the fury of the storm. **L**

A lifelong Rockport devotee, Fort Worth-based writer June Naylor is heartened to see the community on the mend. Photographer Dave Shafer of Richardson was awed by the magnitude of the hurricane's aftermath.



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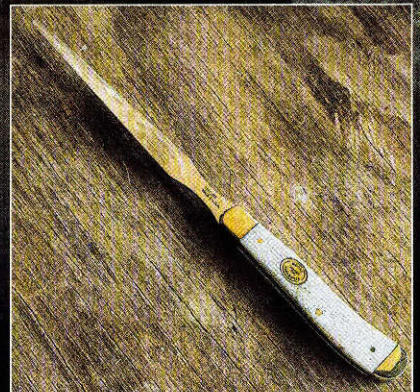
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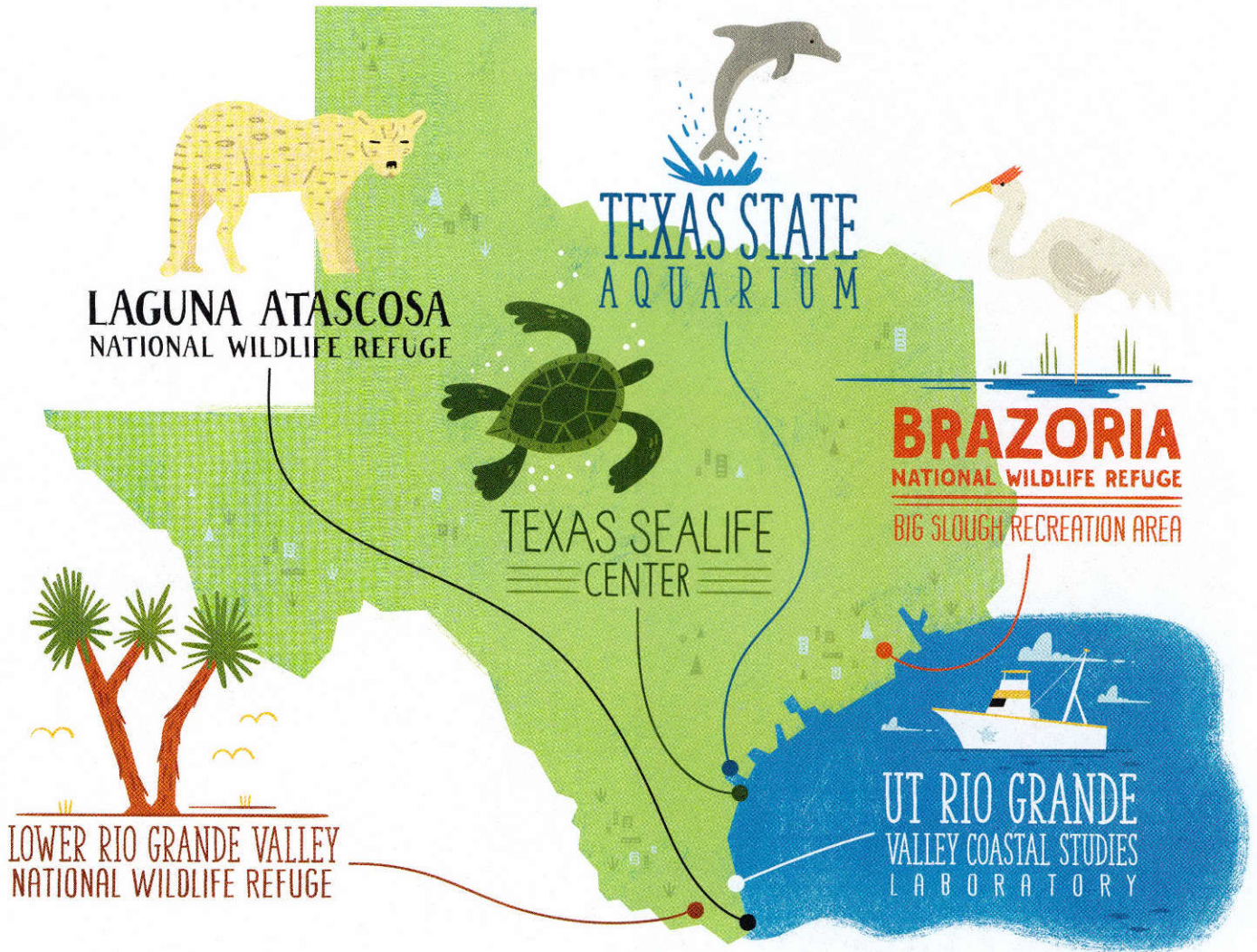
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➤ DESTINATION: TEXAS GULF COAST ◀

Science by the Sea

Coastal aquariums, labs, and preserves enrich your day at the beach

story by **Melissa Gaskill**

THE TEXAS GULF COAST, WHERE THE North American continent descends into the Gulf of Mexico's salty waters, harbors a steamy mix of marshes, bays, beaches, and ocean. Over the years, scientific institutions and conservation groups gravitated to this rich environment to establish laboratories, preserves, rescues, and aquariums dedicated to studying and protecting its diversity of life. We know most travelers escape to the coast to while away time on the beach, but we also know that such experiences take on

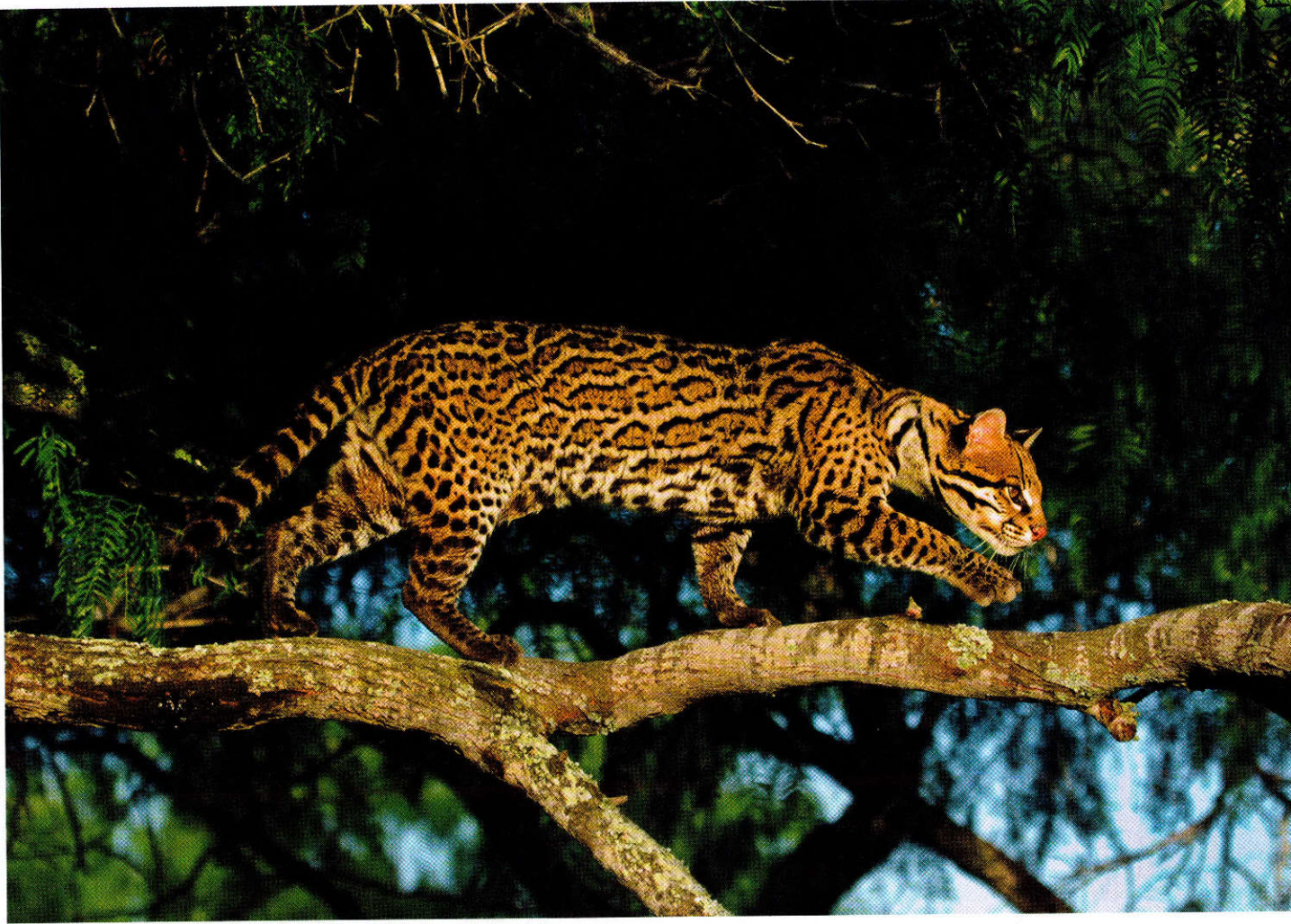


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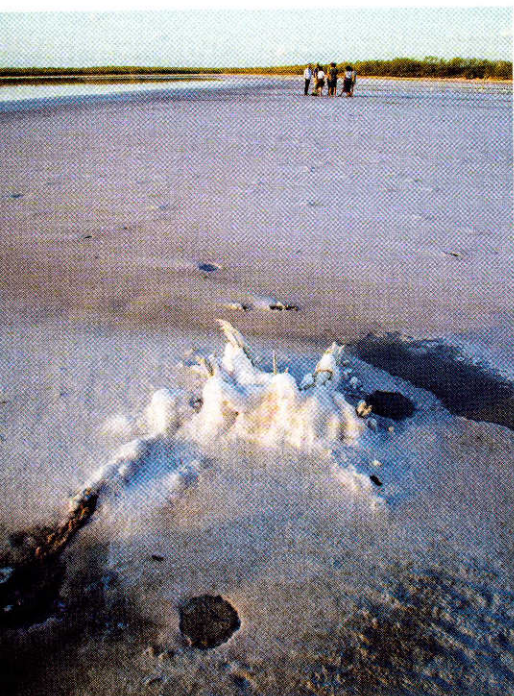
greater meaning with a little educational insight. Here we've put together a science-by-the-sea road trip—a syllabus for discovering the most scintillating of salty facts.

IN THE LAB

Texas Sealife Center, at the entrance to Packery Channel Park on North Padre Island, rescues and rehabilitates sea turtles and other wildlife. On guided tours, visitors learn about this important work as they stroll among tanks of



Above: Ocelots are one of 45 resident mammal species that call Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge home. Below left: A salt formation at *La Sal del Rey* in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Right: Sandbar sharks and a scuba diver at the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi.



swimming sea turtles, bird enclosures, and native vegetation. Inside, a colorful mural portrays the actual size of the five species of sea turtles, from the smallest, Kemp's ridley, to the largest, leatherback, whose shells reach lengths up to 6 feet. Another exhibit explains environmental hazards marine creatures face, including entanglement in debris, the subject of much scientific research. Volunteers share lots of turtle trivia, such as how a sea turtle can hold its breath for several hours while napping on the ocean floor.

Visitors to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Coastal Studies

Laboratory on South Padre Island get a glimpse of actual scientific lab work in addition to educational displays. Five to six tanks of varying sizes display native species collected by the lab's "floating classroom," a 60-foot vessel. "We run a trawl net that pulls up all sorts of things, maybe juvenile mangrove snappers, catfish, drum, sea trout, moon jellies, box jellies, and starfish," Program Manager Shelby Bessette says.

The lab's displays include some 2,000 seashells, skeletons of dolphins and manatees, a sperm whale skull, and mounted dolphin and sea turtle specimens.

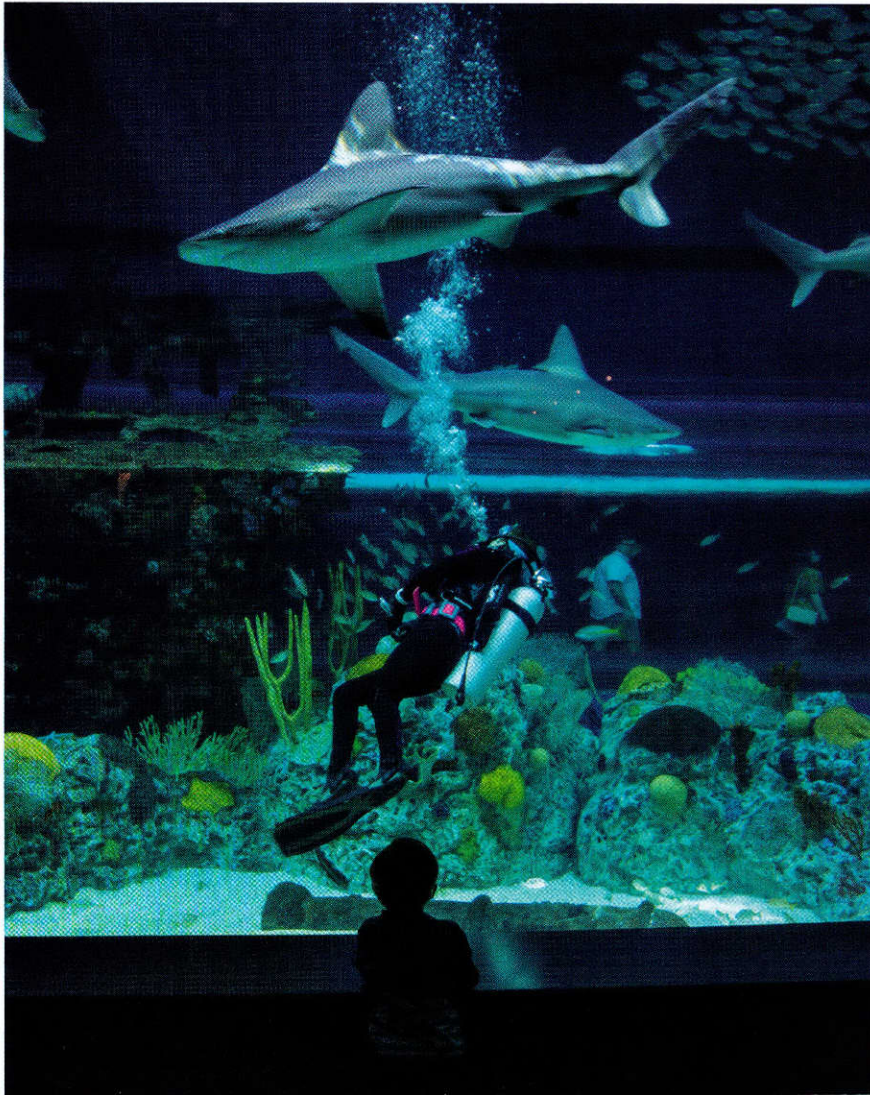
IN THE FIELD

Science often involves field work, or observation of scientific phenomena and data collection in the natural environment. Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge south of Houston offers a great place to get out in the field. The refuge protects remnants of Texas' mostly long-gone salt marsh coast—freshwater sloughs and native bluestem prairie uplands. In Big Slough Recreation Area's Discovery Center, exhibits chronicle local wildlife, including

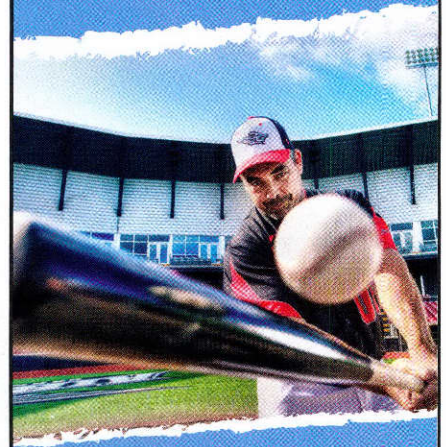
Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge's guided tram tours traverse coastal prairie and thorn scrub forests and offer the chance to spot birds, deer, and alligators.

an interactive display on frog choruses and a live oak tree populated by mounted raccoons, birds, and a bobcat. Brazoria's driving tours and walking paths provide opportunities to see animals in the wild, especially birds such as purple gallinules, great blue herons, roseate spoonbills, and wood storks.

Another in-the-field experience happens north of Brownsville at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge boasts more recorded species of birds than any other of its type. Three-hour guided habitat tram tours traverse coastal prairies and thorn scrub forests, and offer the chance to spot birds—including aplomado falcons, reintroduced here in the 1990s—as well as deer and alligators. The refuge's



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SALTY SCIENCE

Many towns on the Texas coast harbor aquariums and science centers that explore the local environment.

Texas Sealife Center, at 14220 South Padre Island Drive in Corpus Christi, opens Wed-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sun noon-4 p.m. Guided tours cost \$5 per person. Call 361-589-4023; texas-sealifecenter.org.

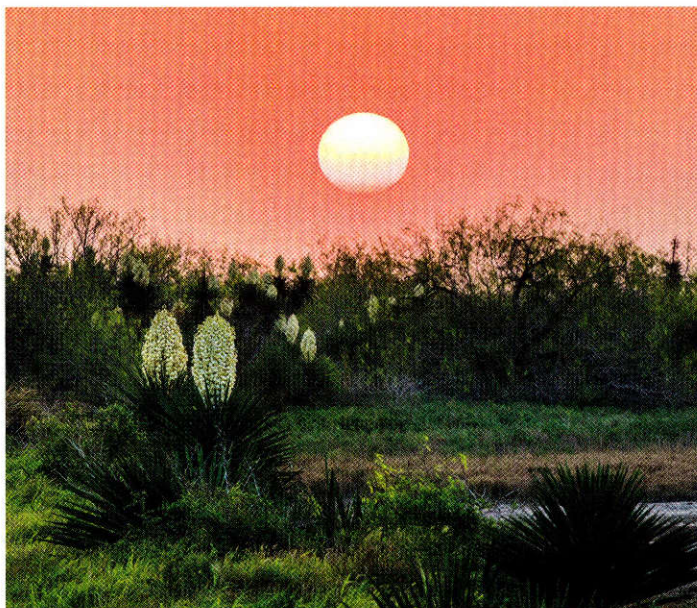
UT Rio Grande Valley Coastal Studies Laboratory, at 100 Marine Lab Drive in South Padre Island, opens for self-guided tours Mon-Fri 1:30-4:30 p.m. Call 956-761-2644; utrgv.edu/csl/visit/aquarium/index.htm.

The Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Big Slough Recreation Area, at 2022 CR 227, northeast of Freeport, opens daily sunrise to sunset. Call 979-964-4011; fws.gov/refuge/brazoria.

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, at 22688 Buena Vista Road in Los Fresnos, opens sunrise to sunset. The visitor center opens Thu-Mon 8-4. Call for a schedule of tram tours, 956-748-3607; fws.gov/refuge/laguna_atascosa.

Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, at 3325 Green Jay Road in Alamo, opens daily sunrise to sunset. Call 956-784-7500; fws.gov/refuge/lower-rio-grande-valley.

The Texas State Aquarium, at 2710 N. Shoreline Blvd., opens Mon-Sat, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sun 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 800-477-4853; texasstateaquarium.org.

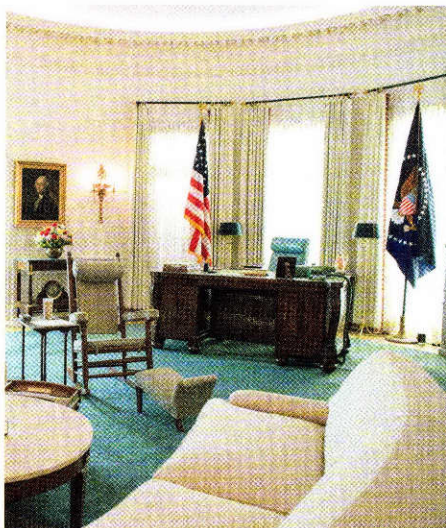


visitor center provides maps of walking trails and exhibits with a mounted ocelot, jaguar, and aplomado falcon. Also in the visitor center, a 30-minute video explores the topic of ocelots, an endangered species of spotted wildcat. Somewhere between 50 and 80 ocelots survive in the country.

“We have one of the last remaining ocelot populations in the U.S.,” Ranger Marion Mason says. “They live in thorn scrub forest, found only here in South Texas. The tours also have good views of the Laguna Madre, a rare hypersaline, or really salty, lagoon that’s important as a nursery for many fish in the Gulf.”

At the Texas-Mexico border, the

Left: A birding tour scouts for whooping cranes at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Below left: Yuccas bloom along Laguna Atascosa Lake at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Inset: A coral reef at the Texas State Aquarium.



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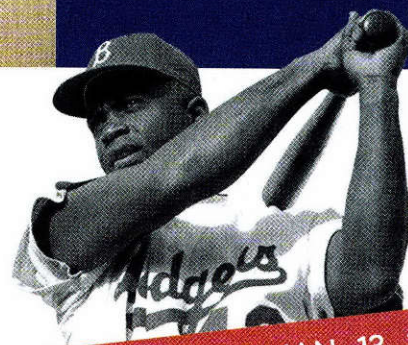


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Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge harbors a number of species rare in this country: a community of sabal palms populated by equally rare creatures such as the southern yellow bat, and century-old yuccas called Spanish daggers. Loggerhead shrikes, a resident bird species, impale insects and small reptiles on the yuccas' sharp points to dine on later. The refuge shares a visitor center with the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, which provides maps, brochures, wildlife checklists, and information on trails.

IN THE AQUARIUM

In Corpus Christi, the Texas State Aquarium offers lessons on



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everything from sandy environments and mangrove habitats to deep-water species like moon jellies and giant Pacific octopi, and Caribbean coral reefs found at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary 115 miles off the Texas coast. A tank with a replica of an offshore oil

Sharks suffer from more than a little misinformation and stigma, and a Texas State Aquarium exhibit titled *Saving Sharks* helps set the record straight.

platform shows how these underwater structures provide food and shelter for a variety of marine life, including sand tiger sharks, stingrays, and several species of fish.

Sharks suffer from more than a little misinformation and stigma,

and a Texas State Aquarium exhibit titled *Saving Sharks* helps set the record straight. “Sharks make great ambassadors for the oceans, because folks young and old are fascinated by them,” says Greg Stunz, who studies ocean health at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. “As scientists, we see the attraction as a good way to teach people about the importance of these predators in the oceans and the [importance of] oceans in all of our lives.”

The exhibit includes a life-size great white shark replica, the jaws of a giant prehistoric megalodon shark, and live sharks in a touch pool. Stunz says his favorite exhibit shows how scientists tag sharks and allows visitors to follow tagged animals in real-time on a large, interactive map of the world.



Other worthy stops on a science-by-the-sea road trip include **Sea Turtle Inc.** in South Padre Island (see Page 11), the **Texas A&M University Galveston Sea Life Facility Outreach Center**, **Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Austwell**, and the **University of Texas Marine Science Institute** in Port Aransas (currently closed for repairs).

Visitors watching tagged sharks navigate their watery world can't help but gain a deeper understanding of these animals, just as other stops on a science-by-the-sea road trip foster a greater connection to the Texas coast. More importantly, these educational spots make learning about the coastal environment fun. Even better, there won't be a test. 🐋

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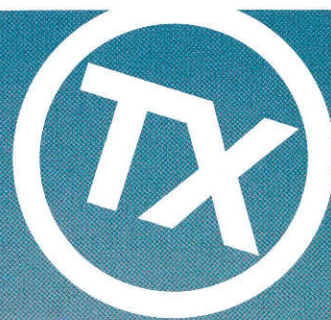
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Out on St. Jo

There's nothing but a beach, but
what more do you need?

Story by Wes Ferguson



With miles of undeveloped shoreline, **San José Island** offers room to roam.



WHEN HURRICANE HARVEY STRUCK last summer, it made landfall on San José Island, a coastal retreat where U.S. presidents have come to fish and fundraise, and everything but a broad and empty beach is owned by a family of billionaires.

San José, widely known as St. Jo, is one of seven barrier islands on the Texas coast. Unlike the state's more popular island destinations like Padre and Galveston, no bridges connect St. Jo to the mainland. There is no hotel or restaurant, or even a public restroom. The owners of the island have a private airstrip to get there. The rest of us have Jetty Boat.

For half a century, Jetty Boat has ferried passengers from Port Aransas, on the northern tip of Mustang Island, across Aransas Pass to St. Jo. Little more than grassy dunes and

The ferry to St. Jo Island is running again after months of rebuilding from Hurricane Harvey.

sandy beaches, the 21-mile-long strip of land shelters Aransas Bay from the tides of the Gulf of Mexico and ranges from about two-thirds of a mile wide at its southern end to nearly 5 miles across at the top. People seek out St. Jo for the fishing, beach-combing, surfing, swimming, and solitude. "The best way to describe it is if, in the summertime, we've got 20,000 people on the beach in Port Aransas, we'll have 200 on the beach on St. Jo, and that's high," said Bill Cofield, a Jetty Boat captain. "Most of the time we'll have less than a hundred."

For several months in 2017, however,

The century-old jetty on the southern edge of San José Island extends three-quarters of a mile into the Gulf of Mexico.



almost no one visited the St. Jo beach. The hurricane last August inflicted catastrophic damage on Port Aransas and nearby Rockport, and while there was not much to destroy on St. Jo, the storm knocked loose a massive drillship from a smaller island within the bay. The ship ping-ponged down Aransas Pass, wiping out the wooden dock where Jetty Boat unloaded its passengers on St. Jo.

It took about five months to build a new dock, but Jetty Boat reopened in mid-January to a long line of customers eager to see how the storm had reshaped the island and what curiosities may have washed ashore. They found that Harvey had flattened many of the tallest dunes; it widened the beach in some places but gashed the shoreline in others. Inland

from the beach, a few oil barges as long as football fields lay marooned among the sea oats and salt grass.

The barges, like most of the island, are off limits to the public. People can legally explore as much of the St. Jo shoreline as they wish, so long as they stay on the beach and don't wander onto the dunes, which are owned by the heirs of Sid Richardson, the rags-to-riches wildcatter who grew up in Athens and struck black gold in West Texas in the 1930s. Richardson purchased St. Jo in 1936 for \$25,000, equivalent to nearly \$450,000 today, and started a cattle ranch on the island. He also hired one of the Southwest's leading architects, O'Neil Ford,

to design a lavish hunting lodge and enlisted his nephew, Perry Bass, a recent Yale graduate with an engineering degree, to build it.



"When Sid bought it, St. Jo was a seldom-used sheep farm," said Bryan Burrough, an author who wrote about Richardson in his book *The Big Rich: The Rise and Fall of the Great Texas Oil Fortunes*. "This is just a strip of island

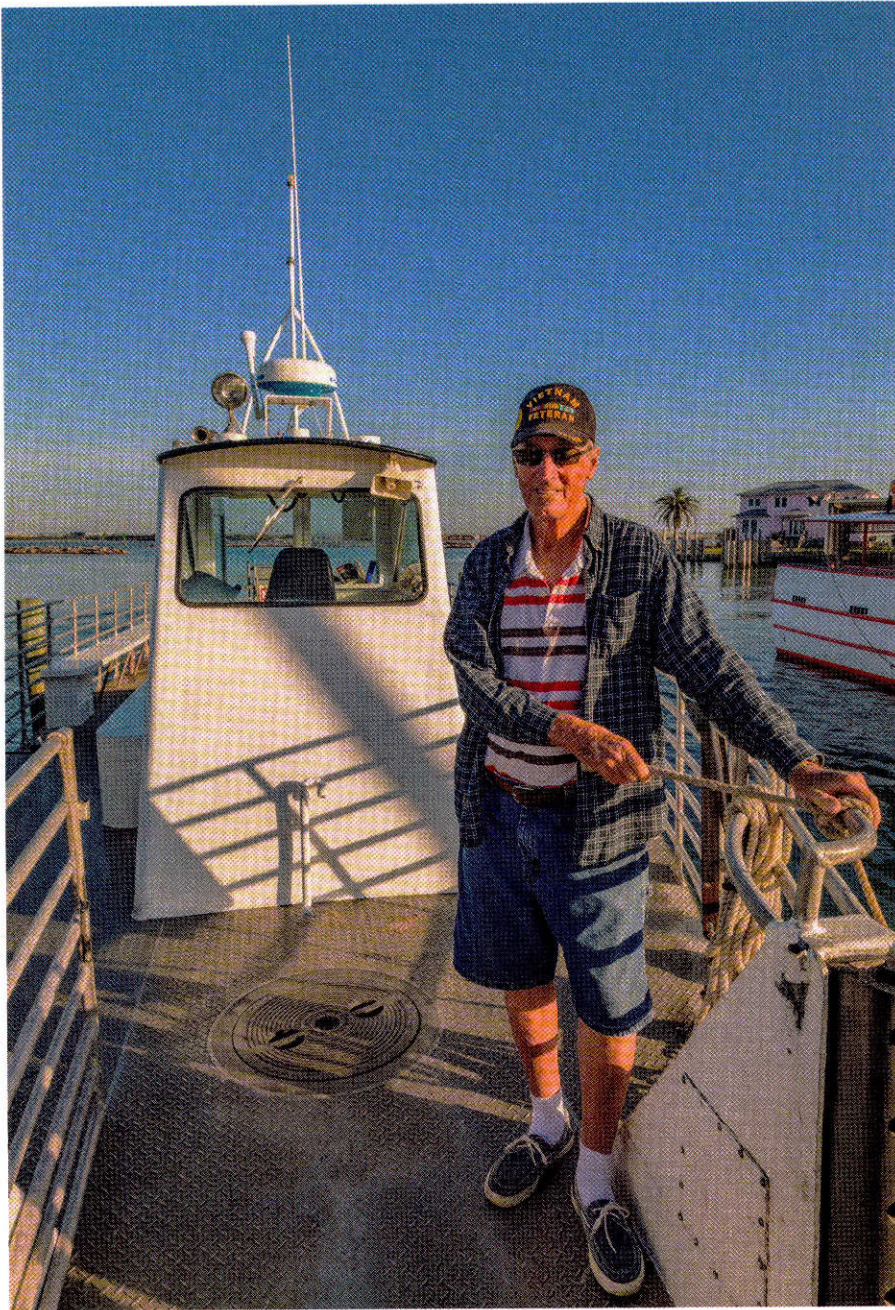
with beautiful beaches and nothing else but dunes and rattlesnakes. And Sid not only wanted to put a house there; he wanted to put an ultramodern, beautiful home there."

As Richardson's fortune grew, he turned to St. Jo when entertaining some of the most powerful politicians in Texas and the United States, from Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and

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Jetty Boat captain Bill Cofield ferries travelers from Port Aransas to St. Jo.

Dwight D. Eisenhower to Lyndon B. Johnson, who famously received campaign contributions from Richardson via paper bags loaded with cash. After Richardson's death in 1959, his nephew took ownership of the island, and it is still held by the Bass family of Fort Worth, whose philanthropic contributions include a performance hall in Fort Worth and concert hall in Austin, both bearing the family name.

Richardson built his island home with a stately, curving staircase and plenty of concrete to withstand the worst of Texas weather, and it has done just that. In a

**At day's end,
"either be there
at the dock,
or be a happy
camper" under
the stars on a
St. Jo beach.**

prepared statement, the security director for the Bass family said the property needed some repairs following the hurricane, but no one had suffered injuries when Harvey roared over the top of the island. The home is quite striking, Burrough said. "And what's more striking is almost nobody's ever seen it, because from the '30s to today, it's a private home," he said. "To my mind, it's got to be one of the most notable homes in Texas, ... this beautiful thing we all know is out there but so few of us will ever see."

You can't see the mansion from the beach, but the Jetty Boat passengers on a recent morning had different plans for their excursion anyway. After a 10-minute ferry ride across the pass, Tommy Parson Sr., a retiree from Minnesota, found a fishing spot on a rock jetty that extends three-quarters of a mile into the Gulf of Mexico. He used an unusual kind of live bait foraged from the jetty rocks, although he wouldn't say what: "I don't mean to be selfish," he said, but the supply is limited. By the end of his outing, Parson had hooked his daily limit of five sheepshead, whose mild flesh reminds him of the fish he eats back home in the Midwest.

"The winter Texans, the walleye crowd, if you will, we prefer sheepshead for the table over the redfish," which many native Texans consider the best eating, he said. Heavy, white fog had obscured the ocean view, but the anglers seemed too busy to notice as they reeled in plenty of trout, redfish, and drum on the jetty, which protects the ship channel from filling up with silt and has stood for more than a century.

When the fog burned off around midday, the welcome clarity revealed boundless ocean and beach. Two women were hard at work gathering sea shells, which they use to fashion jewelry and artwork. Rebecca Wilhite, a jewelry maker and sculptor from Waco, said she's been coming to the island for more than a decade.

Island History

French and Spanish colonists explored San José Island in the 1700s, and when Texas joined the United States in 1845, American troops are said to have planted the first U.S. flag in Texas on a San José dune. A seaport town called Aransas grew up on the southern end of the island between the Texas Revolution and the Civil War, but no evidence of the U.S. flag or the old town remains.

“Every time you go out to St. Jo, it’s a different beach,” she said. “Because of the currents as the waves come in, it brings in new sand, new shells, new stuff, and depending on the tide it can either be rebuilding the beach or taking it away.” (She also keeps an eye out for the trash that frequently washes ashore.)

Wilhite and her friend loaded a red wagon with conches, clam shells, bird skulls, and the bones of sail catfish, which resemble crucifixes. They made their way back to the dock, where Jetty Boat runs several times throughout the day. Before long, Captain Bill arrived to ferry them back to civilization.

“It runs like a bus system,” Cofield explained. “We take people over, and some will fish for a couple of hours and come back, but some people will stay all day, and some will camp. When we sell them a ticket, it’s for the ride over and the ride back, whether it’s one day or two days or three days, it doesn’t make any difference.”

The day’s final return leaves at 6 p.m. “We tell everybody that’s the last trip of the day and to either be there at the dock, or be a happy camper.”

There could be worse fates. **L**



San José Island sits across Matagorda Bay from Rockport. Cut off from Port Aransas by the Aransas Pass ship channel, the barrier island is privately

owned and closed to the public except for the beach. For \$12 a passenger (\$6 for children), Jetty Boat provides roundtrip ferry service to the island from Fisherman’s Wharf in Port Aransas, typically offering 10 trips a day from about 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 361-749-5448 or 361-749-5760.

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EVENTS



JUNE'S TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT:

BIG BEND COUNTRY > San Elizario

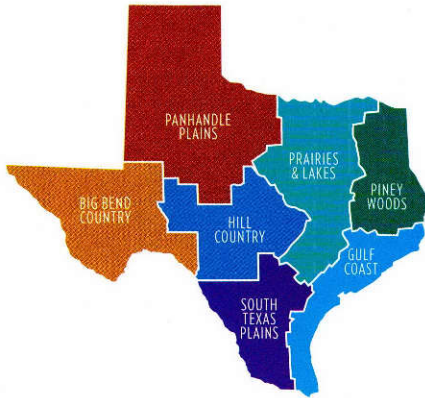
Billy the Kid Festival

story by **Mimi Faucett**

SEVERAL CITIES CLAIM A LINK TO BILLY THE KID, but the West Texas border town of San Elizario has the distinction of being the only place where the infamous gunslinger ever broke *into* the local jail. In celebration of Old West history, San Elizario's annual Billy the Kid Festival recalls the day in 1876 when Billy showed up to San Elizario's county jail—now the Old El Paso County Jail Museum—to liberate his friend Melquiades Segura. As the legend goes, Billy posed as a

Texas Ranger to gain entry, turned his gun on the jailer, and then he and Segura headed to Mexico. June 1-3, San Elizario relives the incident with stick-ups and storytelling. A Friday night ghost tour explores the history of the town, where Spanish soldiers first built a presidio in 1789, but the weekend's highlight is the re-enactment of the jailbreak on the Main Street Stage at 7 p.m. Saturday and 5 p.m. Sunday. Come dressed as your best Billy the Kid, and you'll fit right in. sanelizariohistoricdistrict.org

Want more? View the *Texas Highways Events Calendar* at texashighways.com/events.



BIG BEND COUNTRY

ALPINE: Alpine Cowboys Baseball May 28-July 18. Kokernot Field. alpine.pecosleague.com 432-386-3402

ALPINE: *Bleacher Burns* June 22-24, 29-30; July 1. Kokernot Outdoor Theatre. sulross.edu/section/2145/about-the-atre-big-bend

ALPINE: Fiesta del Sol June 23. Historic Murphy Street. murphystmercado.com

ALPINE: Alpine's Fourth of July Celebration June 29-July 4. Various locations. visitalpinetx.com

PECOS: Golden Girl of the Old West Revue June 22. Pecos High School Auditorium.

PECOS: West of the Pecos Rodeo June 27-30. Reeves County Civic Center.

SALT FLAT: Frijole Days June 2. Frijole Ranch. nps.gov/gumo 915-828-3251

VAN HORN: Frontier Days & Rodeo June 23. Downtown Broadway. vanhorn.texas.us 432-283-2682

GULF COAST

ANGLETON: Squeezebox Blow-Out June 8-9. Brazoria County Historical Museum. bchm.org 979-864-1208

ARANSAS PASS: Sandollar Summer Market June 30-July 1. Aransas Pass Civic Center. texasmarketguide.com

BEAUMONT: Gladys City Games June 9. Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. lamar.edu/spindletop-gladys-city/index.html 409-880-1762

BEAUMONT: *Experimenting with Wind* June

12-Sept. 9. Texas Energy Museum. texasenergymuseum.org/welcome.html 409-833-5100

BEAUMONT: Bubble Day June 15, July 11. Texas Energy Museum. texasenergymuseum.org/welcome.html 409-833-5100

BEAUMONT: *Selections from the Permanent Collection* June 16-Sept. 2. Art Museum of Southeast Texas. amset.org

BROWNSVILLE: La Lunada Artisan Market Festival June 16. Linear Park. cob.us/308/parks-recreation 956-542-2064

BROWNSVILLE: Ridley Rush 1 Mile Walk/Run June 23. Gladys Porter Zoo. gpz.org

BROWNSVILLE: Yappo Bands and Brewskis June 23. Gladys Porter Zoo. gpz.org

BROWNSVILLE: Yappo Kids Fest June 23. Gladys Porter Zoo. gpz.org

CLUTE: Planetarium Show June 5, 12, 19, 26. Center for the Arts & Sciences. brazosportcenter.org 979-265-3376

CORPUS CHRISTI: Orchid-ology June 7. South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center. stxbot.org 361-290-7429

EAST BERNARD: Czech Kolache Klobase Festival June 9. Riverside Hall. kkfest.com 979-335-7907

FREEPORT: Schuster Home Open House June 23. Schuster Home. 979-297-0868

FULTON: Texas Game Warden Fishing Tournament June 15-16. Fulton Navigation Park 402 N. Fulton Beach Rd. texasgamewarden.com 361-815-5752

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EVENT!
texashighways.com/
submitevent



AUSTIN: Bubblepalooza at The Long Center

Oceans Day Festival
June 8. Steward Beach.
artistboat.org

GALVESTON: Galveston
Cajun Festival June 15-17.
Beach Central. galveston
cajunfestival.com

GALVESTON: Jaston
Williams: *I'm Not Lying!*
June 23. The Grand 1894
Opera House. thegrand
.com 800-821-1894 or
409-765-1894

HOUSTON: *Big Bugs* May
26-Sept. 3. Houston Zoo.
houstonzoo.org
713-533-6500

HOUSTON: The Great
Age Movement Jazz
Luncheon June 3. Four
Seasons Hotel Houston.
thegreatage.org

HOUSTON: Immanuel &
Helen Olshan Texas Music
Festival June 9, 16, 23, 30.
University of Houston
Moore's Opera House.
tmf.uh.edu 713-743-3313

HOUSTON: *Guys and
Dolls* June 12-24. Theatre
Under the Stars. The
Hobby Center for the
Performing Arts. tuts.com
713-558-2600

HOUSTON: Zoo After
Dark June 21, July 19.
Houston Zoo.
houstonzoo.org

HOUSTON: Pollinator
Palooza June 23-24.
Houston Zoo.
houstonzoo.org

LAKE JACKSON: The
Slags in Concert June
1. Lake Jackson Civic
Center Plaza.
lakejackson-tx.gov
979-415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Movie
in the Park: *Despicable
Me 3* June 8. MacLean
Park. lakejackson-tx.gov
979-297-4533

LAKE JACKSON: The
Spinations in Concert

June 8. Lake Jackson
Civic Center Plaza.
lakejackson-tx.gov
979-415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: The Karz
in Concert June 15. Lake
Jackson Civic Center
Plaza. lakejackson-tx.gov
979-415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Bird
Banding June 16. Gulf
Coast Bird Observatory.
gcbo.org 979-480-0999

LAKE JACKSON: Pool
Daze of Fun June 18.
Lake Jackson Outdoor
Pool. lakejackson-tx.gov
979-297-4533

LAKE JACKSON: Movie
in the Park: *Coco* June
22. MacLean Park.
lakejackson-tx.gov
979-297-4533

LAKE JACKSON: Southern
Country Line in Concert
June 22. Lake Jackson
Civic Center Plaza.
lakejackson-tx.gov
979-415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: The
Rockafellas in Concert
June 29. Lake Jackson
Civic Center Plaza.
lakejackson-tx.gov
979-415-2600

ORANGE: *The World War
I Homefront: Orange Goes
Over the Top* Through
July 14. The W.H. Stark
House. starkcultural
venues.org/whstarkhouse
409-883-0871

PEARLAND: Concerts
in the Park June 1, 8, 15,
22, 29. Southdown Park.
visitpearland.com
281-997-5970

PEARLAND: Opry on the
Square June 23. Pearland
Town Center.
visitpearland.com

PORT ARTHUR: Garden
Festival June 9-10. Buu
Mon Buddhist Temple.
buumon.org

PORT ARTHUR: Crabbing
101 at Sea Rim State
Park June 16.
tpwd.texas.gov/state-
parks/sea-rim
409-971-2559

PORT LAVACA: All-
Children's Theatre Pro-
duction June 8-10, 14-17.
Port Lavaca Main Street
Theatre. plmainstreet.org
361-649-6116

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND:
Summer Longest
Causeway Run/Walk
June 2. Port Isabel
Cultural & Events Center.
portisabelchamber.com
800-527-6102

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND:
Great Texas Catamaran
300 (South Padre Island
to Galveston) June 13-16.
South Padre Island Con-
vention Centre. sopadre
.com 800-651-2373

SUGAR LAND: *The Yellow
Boat* June 1-3. Sugar Land
Auditorium.
inspirationstage.com
713-302-5329

SUGAR LAND: Giving
Spirits Concert Series
June 1. Sugar Land Town
Square. sugarlandtown
square.com 281-242-2000

SUGAR LAND: The
Illusionists: Live from
Broadway June 6. Smart
Financial Centre at Sugar
Land. smartfinancialcen
tre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Movie
under the Moon June 9.
Sugar Land Town Square.
sugarlandtownsquare.com
281-242-2000

SUGAR LAND: Timbiriche
in Concert June 9. Smart
Financial Centre at Sugar
Land. smartfinancial
centre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Sugar
Land Superstar Round 1
June 16. Sugar Land Town
Square. sugarlandtown

square.com 281-242-2000

SUGAR LAND: Yanni in
Concert June 16. Smart
Financial Centre at Sugar
Land. smartfinancial
centre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: *Heathers
The Musical: High School
Edition* June 22-24. Sugar
Land Auditorium.
inspirationstage.com
713-302-5329

SUGAR LAND: Diana Krall
in Concert June 23. Smart
Financial Centre at Sugar
Land. smartfinancial
centre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Summer
Family "Campout" June
23. Sugar Land Town
Square. sugarlandtown
square.com 281-242-2000

SUGAR LAND: NOLA
Nights June 29. Sugar
Land Town Square.
sugarlandtownsquare
.com 281-242-2000

TEXAS CITY: Texas
City Kite Festival
June 9-10. Texas City
Dike. facebook.com/
events/789269847939970
281-508-6485

TEXAS CITY: Texas City-
La Marque Jaycees Tackle
June 29-July 8. Texas City
Dike.

THE WOODLANDS:
Waterway Nights June
2, 15, 23, 30. Waterway
Square. 281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS:
Poison with Cheap Trick
in Concert June 3. The
Cynthia Woods Mitchell
Pavilion. visitthewood
lands.com 281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Wine
and Food Week June
4-10. Various locations.
wineandfoodweek.com

THE WOODLANDS: Styx
& Joan Jett and the Black
Hearts in Concert with
Tesla June 9. The Cynthia
Woods Mitchell Pavilion.
visitthewoodlands.com
281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Post
Malone in Concert with
SOB X RBE June 15. The
Cynthia Woods Mitchell
Pavilion. visitthewood
lands.com 281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Kesha
and Macklemore in Con-
cert June 23. The Cynthia
Woods Mitchell Pavilion.
visitthewoodlands.com
281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Wee-
zer in Concert with the
Pixies & The Wombats
June 29. The Cynthia
Woods Mitchell Pavilion.
visitthewoodlands.com
281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Chi-
cago & REO Speedwagon
in Concert June 30. The
Cynthia Woods Mitchell
Pavilion. 281-210-3800

VICTORIA: Victoria Bach
Festival June 2-9. Various
locations. victoriabach
festival.org 361-570-5788

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: *Rodeo! The
Exhibition* Through Jan.
27, 2019. Bullock Texas
State History Museum.
thestoryoftexas.com
512-463-6485

AUSTIN: *An American in
Paris* May 30-June 3.
Bass Concert Hall.
austin.broadway.com
800-731-7469

AUSTIN: *Sunday in the
Park with George* May
30-June 24. ZACH
Theatre. zachtheatre.org
512-476-0541

AUSTIN: Rob Lowe: *Sto-
ries I Only Tell My Friends
LIVE!* June 1. Paramount
Theatre. austintheatre.org
512-472-5470

AUSTIN: Paul Simon in
Concert June 4. Frank
Erwin Center. uterwin
center.com 512-471-7744

AUSTIN: ATX Television
Festival June 7-10. Down-
town Austin. atxfestival
.com 512-551-1330

AUSTIN: Austin Black
Pride Celebration June
7-10. Various locations.
austinblackpride.org

AUSTIN: Republic of Texas
Biker Rally June 7-10.
Travis County Exposition
Center and Sixth Street.
rottrally.com 512-252-9768

AUSTIN: Shania Twain
in Concert June 7. Frank
Erwin Center. uterwin
center.com 512-477-6060

AUSTIN: Bubblepalooza
June 9. Long Center.
thelongcenter.org

AUSTIN: *Heisenberg*
June 20-July 22. ZACH
Theatre, Kleberg Stage.
zachtheatre.org
512-476-0541

AUSTIN: Gregory Porter:
Nat King Cole & Me June
20. The Long Center
for the Performing Arts.
thelongcenter.org
512-474-5664

AUSTIN: African Ameri-
can Book Festival June
23. George Washington
Carver Museum & Library.
facebook.com/aabookfest

AUSTIN: City-Wide
Garage Sale June 23-24.
Palmer Events Center.
cwgs.com

AUSTIN: Fun Stop 5K
and Festival June 23.
Downtown Austin.
funstop5k.com

AUSTIN: *The Cooking
Light & Health Fit Foodie
Festival & 5K* June 23.
Mueller Lake Park. fitfood
ierun.com/austin-texas
.html 619-312-1212

BANDERA: Bandera
Summer Rodeo June 1, 8,
15, 22, 29. Mansfield Park
Rodeo Arena.
banderacowboycapital
.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Bandera Mar-
ket Days June 2. Bandera
County Courthouse
Lawn. banderacowboy
capital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: The Old
Timers Trading Post
June 2. The Old Timer.
banderacowboycapital
.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Cowboy Cap-
ital Opry June 5. Silver
Sage Community Center.
banderacowboycapital
.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Frontier
Times Museum 85th
Anniversary June 16.
Frontier Times
Museum.
banderacowboycapital
.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Third Thurs-
day Cowboy Camp June
21. Bandera Beverage
Barn RV Park.
banderacowboycapital
.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Bandera River-
fest June 30. Bandera City
Park. banderacowboy
capital.com 830-796-3045

BLANCO: Blanco
Lavender Festival June
8-10. Blanco Town Square.
blancolavenderfest.com
830-833-5101

BOERNE: Hot Rod Night
June 2, 23. Soda Pops.
visitboerne.org

BOERNE: Abendkonzerte
June 5, 19. Boerne Main
Plaza. visitboerne.org

BOERNE: Kuhlmann-King
Museum Tour June 9.
Historic Kuhlmann-King
House. visitboerne.org

BOERNE: Boerne Ber-
ges Fest June 15-17. Kendall
County Fairgrounds.
visitboerne.org

BROWNWOOD: Brown
County Rodeo May
31-June 2. Brown County
Fair Grounds. brown
countyfairandrodeo.com
325-646-6365

BROWNWOOD: Heartland
Rod Run June 1-2. River-
side Park. heartland
crusers.org 325-642-2101

BROWNWOOD: Robert E. Howard Days at Greenleaf June 9-10. Greenleaf Cemetery. 325-646-6919

BROWNWOOD: Riverfest June 29-July 1. Riverside Park. brownwoodjcs.com

BURNET: Burnet County Fair June 8-9. Burnet Community Center. burnetcountyfair.com 512-525-1289

BURNET: Summer Concert Series June 9, 23. Haley Nelson Amphitheater. cityofburnet.com 512-756-4297

COMFORT: Music in the Park June 12. Comfort Park. comfort-texas.com 830-995-3131

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Sunday Matinee with 3 Chord Rodeo June 10. Mercer Street Dancehall. mercerstreetdancehall.com 512-858-4314

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Tomato Round-Up: Home-Grown Tomato Contest June 23. Veterans Memorial Park. cityofdrippingsprings.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Masonic Open Car Show June 2. Marktplatz. fredericksburgmasons.com/carshow.html 830-992-3333

FREDERICKSBURG: *The Music Man* June 15-July 1. Steve W. Shepherd Theater. fredericksburgtheater.org 830-997-3588

FREDERICKSBURG: WWII Pacific Combat Zone June 16-17. National Museum of the Pacific War. pacificwarmuseum.org

FREDERICKSBURG: Hill Country Food Truck Festival June 23. Luckenbach Texas. luckenbachtexas.com 830-997-3224

FREDERICKSBURG: PCAA Concert in the Park June 24. Marktplatz. fredericksburgfestivals.com 830-997-8515

GEORGETOWN: Music on the Square June 8, 15, 22, 29. Downtown Square. visit.georgetown.org 800-436-8696

HUNT: Criders Rodeo & Dance Hall June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Criders Rodeo & Dance Hall. crider.srodeoanddance.com 830-238-4441

INGRAM: Texas Watercolor Society Annual National Exhibit Through June 28. Hill Country Arts Foundation. hcaf.com 830-367-5120

INGRAM: *The Lion, the*

Witch, and the Wardrobe June 8-23. Hill Country Arts Foundation. hcaf.com 830-367-5121

JOHNSON CITY: Market Days June 23-24. City Park. lbjcountry.com 830-868-7684

JOHNSON CITY: Art Walk June 30. Nugent Avenue and Main Street. lbjcountry.com

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival May 24-June 10. Quiet Valley Ranch. kerrvillefolkfestival.org 830-257-3600

KERRVILLE: Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show May 24-June 24. Kerr Arts & Cultural Center. kacc.kerrville.com 830-895-2911

KERRVILLE: Shakespeare in the Park: *As You Like It* June 1-2. Louise Hays Park. playhouse2000.com 830-896-9393

KERRVILLE: National Get Outdoors Day June 9. Louise Hays Park. kerrvilletx.gov 830-257-7300

KERRVILLE: *Impossible Marriage* June 15-July 1. Playhouse 2000 VK Garage Theater. playhouse2000.com 830-896-9393

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Skate Competition June 16. Singing Wind Park. kerrvilletx.gov 830-257-7300

KERRVILLE: Summer Concert Series June 22; July 20. Louise Hays Park. kerrvilletx.gov 830-257-7300

KERRVILLE: Car Show June 30. Kerr County Courthouse. dietertcenter.org 830-792-4044

KYLE: Kyle Market Days June 9. City Square Park. cityofkyle.com/recreation 512-262-3939

LAMPASAS: ATLAS Ride June 2. Campbell Park. atlasride.org 737-300-2318

LAMPASAS: Lampasas Trade Days June 2-3. Marigold's Antiques & More. marigoldsantiques.com 512-734-1294

LLANO: Llano Open Pro Rodeo June 1-2. John L. Kuykendall Events Center. llanochamber.org 325-247-5354

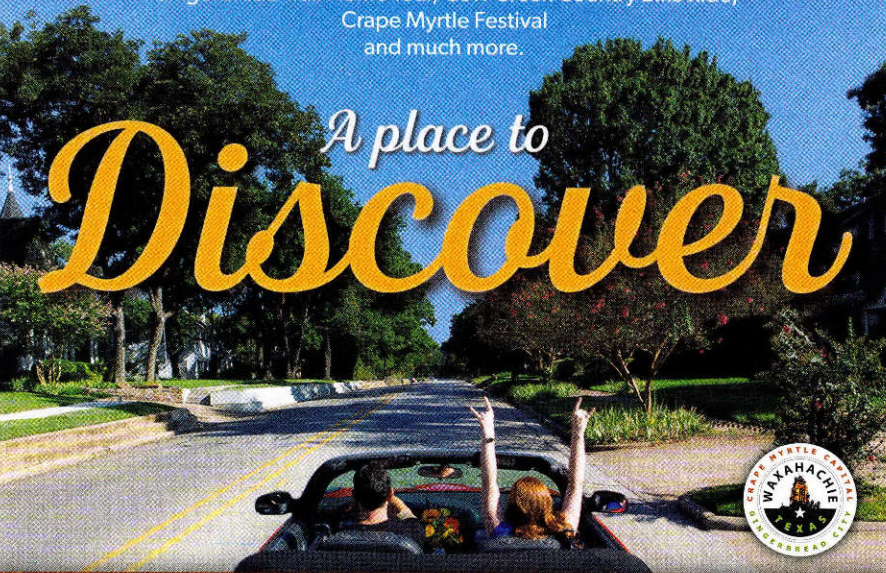
MARBLE FALLS: Market on Main June 2. Main Street. marblefalls.org 830-693-2815

NEW BRAUNFELS: *War Stories: New Braunfels in*

From antiques to boutiques or one-of-a-kind creations, treasures are found at every turn in downtown Waxahachie. Every street has a café, and your every step will be carefree.

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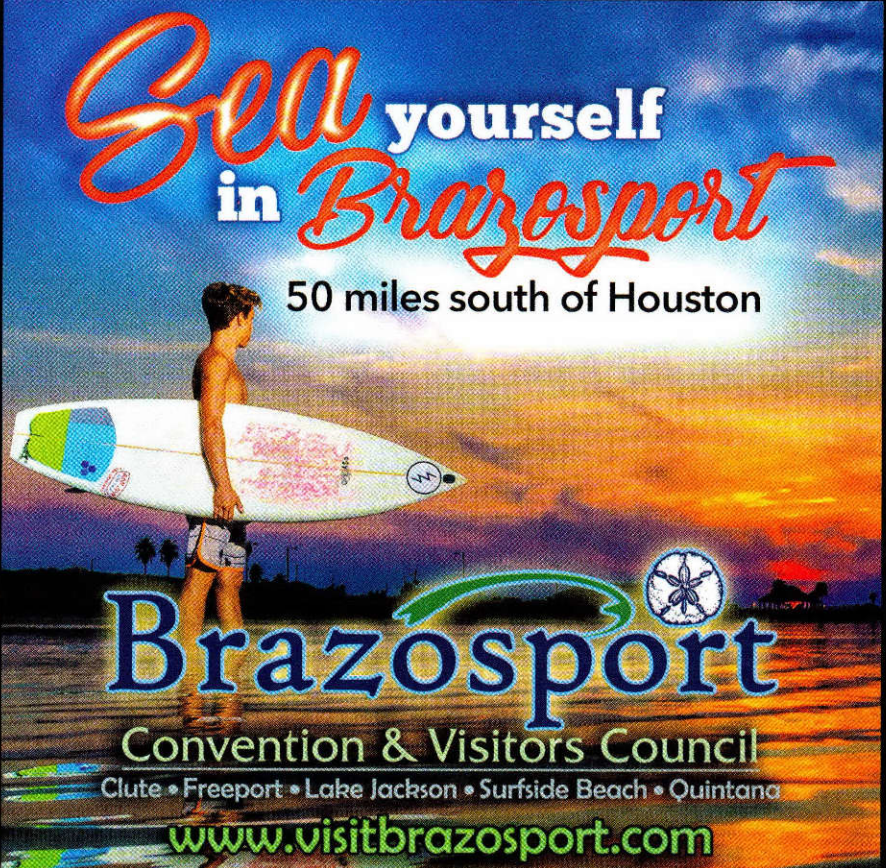


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www.visitbrazosport.com

EVENTS

World War I Through Jan. 31. Sophienburg Museum & Archives. sophienburg.com 830-629-1572

OZONA: *Vintage Hat Happenings* Through Sept. 30. Crockett County Museum. ozonamuseum.com 325-392-2837

OZONA: GI Joe 5K Walk/Run June 30. Ozona's Historic Town Square. ozona.com/events/calendar 325-392-2827

ROUND ROCK: *Much Ado About Nothing* May 31-June 23. Round Rock Amphitheater. penfoldtheatre.org 512-850-4849

SAN MARCOS: International Piano Festival June 2-10. Texas State Performing Arts. 512-245-3390

SAN MARCOS: Wine & Art Walk June 8. Downtown San Marcos. smtxwinewalk.com 512-393-8430

SAN MARCOS: Texas Water Safari June 9. Meadows Center. texaswater.safari.org 512-738-6607

STONEWALL: LBJ Fishing Day June 2. Lyndon B. Johnson State Park & Historic Site. tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson 830-644-2252

STONEWALL: Stonewall Peach JAMBoree & Rodeo June 15-16. stonewalltexas.com 830-644-2735

TAYLOR: Jimmy Heap at the Moody Museum June 2. Moody Museum. moodymuseum.com

UVALDE: Annual Fishing Derby June 2. fws.gov 830-278-2419

UVALDE: Four Square Friday June 9. Historic Downtown Uvalde. visitualde.com 830-278-4115

UVALDE: Uvalde County Star Gazing June 15. Historic Ft. Inge. visitualde.com 830-278-4115

WIMBERLEY: *The Little Mermaid* June 1-July 1. EmilyAnn Theatre and Gardens. emilyann.org 512-847-6969

WIMBERLEY: Market Days June 2. Lions Field. shopmarketdays.com 512-847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Second Saturday Gallery Trail June 9. Various locations. gallerytrail.com 512-722-6032

WIMBERLEY: *Little Shop of Horrors* June

29-30, July 1, 6-8, 12-15, 19-22. The Wimberley Playhouse. wimberleyplayers.org

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Stars over Abilene Regional Quilt Show June 8-9. Abilene Convention Center. 325-733-9335

ALBANY: *Cross Collection* June 2-Aug. 25. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325-762-2269

ALBANY: *Helen Altman: Jailbird* June 2-Aug. 25. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325-762-2269

ALBANY: *Two Worlds* June 2-Aug. 25. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325-762-2269

ALBANY: 80th Anniversary of the Fort Griffin Fandangle June 22-23, 29-30. Fort Griffin Fandangle. fortgriffinfandangle.org 325-762-3838

ALBANY: Fort Griffin Fandangle Parade June 23. Downtown Albany. fortgriffinfandangle.org 325-762-3838

AMARILLO: Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo June 1-2. Tri-State Fairgrounds. coorsranch.rodeo.com 806-376-7767

AMARILLO: Drag Racing—Funny Car Chaos! June 1-2. Amarillo Dragway. funnycarchaos.com 806-414-7363

BIG SPRING: Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo June 21-23. Big Spring Rodeo Bowl. bigspring.rodeo.com 432-267-5053

BIG SPRING: Funtastic Fourth June 29-30. Downtown Big Spring. bigspringdra.com

CANADIAN: Music in the Park June 7, 14, 21, 28. Chamber of Commerce. canadiantx.com 806-323-6234

CISCO: Cisco TX Pie Fest June 15. Downtown Cisco. ciscotxpiefest.com

COLEMAN: Coleman PRC A Rodeo June 7-9. Coleman Rodeo Grounds. colemanrodeo.com 325-625-2163

CROSS PLAINS: Robert E. Howard Days June 8-9. Robert E. Howard Pavilion. 254-725-4993

DALHART: Dalhart Cruzers Show June 1-2. Rita Blanca Coliseum. dalhart.org

DALHART: The Purpose Market June 9, 23. Purpose Coffee Co. purposecoffee.co.com

DALHART: Rank Lil Buckers June 30-July 1. XIT Rodeo Arena. dalhart.org

DUMAS: Dumas Noon Lions Dogie Days June 13-16. McDade Park. dumaschamber.com 806-935-2123

EDEN: Bruce Robison & Kelly Willis in Concert June 16. Green Apple Art Center. greenapplemusic.com

EDEN: AJRA Rodeo June 22-23. Ray Dockery Arena. ajra.org

GRAHAM: Food Truck Championship of Texas June 2. Graham Downtown Square. foodtruck.championshipoftexas.com 940-549-0401

GRAHAM: World Series Team Roping June 7-10. Young County Arena. wstroping.com 505-898-1755

JACKSBORO: Jacksboro TNT Fest June 30. Jacksboro Lake. jacksborochamber.com

LUBBOCK: *Columbia: 15 Years After* Jan. 30-June 17. Silent Wings Museum. silentwingsmuseum.com 806-775-3049

LUBBOCK: Buddy Holly Center Summer Showcase Concert Series May 24-Aug. 23. Buddy Holly Center. buddyhollycenter.org

LUBBOCK: *Crafts—Repurposed* May 25-July 22. Buddy Holly Center. buddyhollycenter.org 806-775-3560

LUBBOCK: West Texas Watercolor Society Spring/Summer Show June 1-29. Lubbock Municipal Garden and Arts Center. wtws.org 806-794-4655

LUBBOCK: D-Day Remembrance June 2-3. Silent Wings Museum. silentwingsmuseum.com 806-775-3049

LUBBOCK: Summer Stampede Western Art & Gear Show June 2. National Ranching Heritage Center. ranchingheritage.org/stampede 806-834-0469

LUBBOCK: *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* July 13-14, 20-21, 27-28. Moonlight Musicals Amphitheatre. lubbockmoonlightmusicals.org 806-638-5706

LUBBOCK: *The Music Man* June 15-16, 22-23, 29-30; July 6-7. Moonlight Musicals Amphitheatre. lubbockmoonlightmusicals.org

POST: Old Mill Trade Days June 8-10. Old Mill Trade Days. oldmilltrade.days.com 432-934-1479

ROSCOE: Fourth of July Celebration June 30. Downtown Roscoe. roscoetx.com 325-766-3871

SAN ANGELO: Richard and Pam Salmon Sculpture Competition Through Aug. 18, 2019. Sunken Garden Park. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo National Ceramic Competition Through June 24. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Art Thursday June 7, 14, 21, 28. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Putting It Together* June 8-24. Angelo Civic Theater. angelotheater.com 325-949-4400

SAN ANGELO: Family Day—Shakespeare June 9. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo Lions Balloonfest June 15-17. John Glenn Jr. High Football Field. sanangeloballoonfest.com 325-374-9775

SAN ANGELO: *American Plains Artists Show* June 28-Aug. 5. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. fortconcho.com

SNYDER: Western Swing Festival June 6-9. The Coliseum. snyderchamber.org

SNYDER: *Petticoats on the Prairie* June 22-23. The Coliseum. petticoats.ontheprairie.com

STANTON: Old Sorehead Trade Days June 9-10. Historic Downtown Streets and Community Center Complex. stanton.tx.com 432-756-2006

VEGA: Thursday Night Music at the Magnolia June 7, 14, 21, 28. Magnolia Filling Station. oldham.cofc.org 806-267-2828

VERNON: MRCA Rodeo June 9-10. Events Center. mrca-rodeo.com 580-916-5729

VERNON: District 3 4-H Horse Show June 20-22.

Wilbarger County Events Center. d34-h.tamu.edu

WICHITA FALLS: Legends of Western Swing Music Festival June 14-16. Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall. thelegendsofwesternswing.com 318-792-3303

WICHITA FALLS: Oil Bowl All-Star Football Game June 16. Memorial Stadium. oilbowl.com 940-720-3039

WICHITA FALLS: Art & Soul June 23. Downtown Wichita Falls. downtownwf.com/calling-all-artists 940-322-4525

WICHITA FALLS: Animania June 28-29. Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall. animaniawf.com

PINEY WOODS

CONROE: *Bloomin' Crazy for Quilts* Quilt Show June 22-23. Lone Star Convention Center. waqq.org

JASPER: Reel United Fishing Tournament June 16. Umphrey Pavilion Lake Sam Rayburn. unitedwaymsjc.org

JEFFERSON: Jefferson Flea Market June 1-2, 15-16. Jefferson Flea Market. jeffersonfleamarket.net 903-431-0043

KILGORE: Fridays After 5 Concert Series June 1. World's Richest Acre. kilgoremaintstreet.com 903-988-4117

KILGORE: Texas Shakespeare Festival June 28-July 29. Anne Dean Turk Fine Arts Center. texasshakespeare.com

LIBERTY: Liberty Opry June 2, 9, 23. Liberty Opry. libertyopry.com 936-336-5830

LUFKIN: Hot Peas 'N Butter June 2. Temple Theater. angelinaarts.org 936-633-5454

LUFKIN: Neches River Rendezvous June 2. North Boggy Slough. visitlufkin.com 936-634-6644

LUFKIN: Lufkin's Farm Feast June 12. Downtown Lufkin. visitlufkin.com 936-633-0359

LUFKIN: Main Street Market Days June 16. Downtown Lufkin. visitlufkin.com

MARSHALL: East Texas Taco Fest June 23. Downtown Marshall. 903-927-5984

NACOGDOCHES: Blueberry Bluegrass Concert

in the Park June 8. Festival Park. Downtown Nacogdoches. tbfnacogdoches.org 936-560-5533

NACOGDOCHES: Texas Blueberry Festival June 9. Historic Downtown. texasblueberryfestival.com 936-560-5533

TYLER: Texas State Federation of Square and Round Dancers May 31-June 2. Rose Garden. squareandcetcx.com

TYLER: Dallas Dressage Club—Spring Horse Show June 2-3. Texas Rose Horse Park. texasrosehorsepark.com 903-439-7717

TYLER: Hit the Bricks: Second Saturday Downtown June 9. Downtown Tyler. visittyler.com/secondsaturday 903-592-1661

TYLER: NTHJC/WW Hunter Jumper Horse Show June 9-10. Texas Rose Horse Park. texasrosehorsepark.com 903-882-8696

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: Summer Series June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. Beckert Park. visitaddison.com 800-233-4766

ADDISON: *The Last Five Years* June 8-July 1. Water Tower Theatre. watertow theatre.org

ADDISON: Vitruvian Nights Live June 14, 28. Vitruvian Park Amphitheater. vitruvianpark.com

ARLINGTON: *Footloose: The Musical* May 11-June 3. Theatre Arlington. theatrearlington.org 817-275-7661

ARLINGTON: *CUT! Costume and the Cinema* May 17-Aug. 12. Arlington Museum of Art. arlingtonmuseum.org

ARLINGTON: International Folk Art Market June 14-16. The Green at College Park at the University of Texas at Arlington. folkartmarket.org/arlington 817-271-5809

ARLINGTON: The Eagles in Concert with Chris Stapleton June 23. AT&T Stadium. attstadium.com

BASTROP: Bastrop Patriotic Festival June 29-30. Fisherman's Park. bastropchamber.com

BELLVILLE: Texas Bluegrass Music Fourth Saturday Show & Jam June 23. Couchatte

Recreational Ranch.
txbluegrassmusic.com

BELTON: City-Wide
Garage Sale June 9-10.
Bell County Expo Center.
cwgs.com

BELTON: 4th of July Cel-
ebration & PRCA Rodeo
June 29-July 7. Downtown
Belton. rodeobelton.com

BONHAM: Highway
82 Yard Sales June 1-2.
Downtown Bonham, US
82. visitbonham.com
903-583-9830

BONHAM: Wine Down
on Willow June 15.
Creative Arts Center.
creativeartscenterbonham
.com 903-640-2196

BREMOND: Bremond
Polish Festival Days June
22-23. Main Street. bre
mondtxas.org/polish_day

CAT SPRING: Cat Spring
Agricultural Society Fest
June 2. Cat Spring Agri-
cultural Hall. catspringag
society.org 979-865-2540

CLARKSVILLE: Gateway
to Texas Get*A*Way
Bicycle Tour June 20-24.
Historic Red River County
Chamber of Commerce.
redrivercoc.com
903-427-2645

CLIFTON: Legacy Park
Glow Run June 2. Clifton
City Park. visitclifton.org

CUERO: *Notable Women
of Cuero* June 1-30. Cuero
Heritage Museum.
cuero.org 361-275-2112

CUERO: Art Month June
1-30. City of Cuero Main
Street. cuero.org
361-275-2112

DALLAS: *The Power of
Gold: Asante Royal Regalia
from Ghana* April 15-Aug.
12. Dallas Museum of Art.
dma.org

DALLAS: *Sterling Ruby:
Sculpture Through
Aug. 19.* Nasher
Sculpture Center.
nashersculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: Safari Nights
June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Dallas
Zoo. dallaszoo.com/safari
nights 469-554-7500

DALLAS: Standup Round
Up Comedy Festival June
3-5. Hyen's Comedy
Club. standuproundupfest
.com 469-426-1148

DALLAS: Alonzo King
LINES Ballet June 9.
AT&T Performing Arts
Center Winspear Opera
House. attpac.org

DALLAS: Butterfly Tea
Party featuring "Bonjour
Butterfly" June 14-19.
Texas Discovery Gardens.
txdgd.org

DALLAS: *Ultimate
Dinosaurs* June 23-Jan. 6.
Perot Museum.
perotmuseum.org

DALLAS: Da-Bang
Reloaded June 29.
American Airlines Center.
hibaentertainment.com

DALLAS: Mindfulness
and Meditation June
30. Bishop Arts Theatre.
bishoptarttheatre.org

DECATUR: Eighter
from Decatur Barbecue
Cookoff June 1-2. Joe
Wheeler Park. wcchallen
ger.org 940-627-8767

DECATUR: Cruise Nights
on the Courthouse Square
June 2. Historic Down-
town. decaturmainstreet
.com 940-399-9558

DECATUR: JW Hart PBR
Challenge June 2. Wise
County Fairgrounds.
wcchallenger.org
940-627-8767

DENISON: Temporary
Exhibit: *The Birth of
NASA* Through Aug. 13.
Eisenhower Birthplace.
visiteisenhowerbirthplace
.com 903-465-8908

DENISON: "Lost
Neighborhood" Self-
Guided Tours June 16-17.
Eisenhower Birthplace.
visiteisenhowerbirthplace
.com 903-465-8908

DENTON: Twilight Tunes
Concert Series May 3, 10,
17, 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21,
28. Downtown Denton
Courthouse on the
Square. dentonmainstreet
.org 940-367-7321

DESOTO: DeSoto Cham-
ber Golf Tournament
June 11. Thorntree Coun-
try Club. desotochamber
.org 972-224-3565

ELGIN: Elgin Western
Days Festival June 19-23.
Downtown Elgin.
elgintxchamber.com

ELGIN: Juneteenth Street
Dance June 8. Depot
Street. elgintx.com

ELGIN: Juneteenth Parade
& Celebration June 9.
Veteran's Memorial Park.
elgintx.com 512-963-2721

ELGIN: Western Days
June 18-23. Elgin
Memorial Park & Historic
Downtown Elgin.
elgintxchamber.com

ENNIS: *Anatomy of Gray*
June 7-10. Ennis Public
Theatre. ennispublic
theatre.com 972-878-7529

ENNIS: *Hyer House* June
8-9, 15-16, 22-24. Theatre
Rocks! theatrerocks.com
972-878-5126

ENNIS: *The Stinky Cheese*



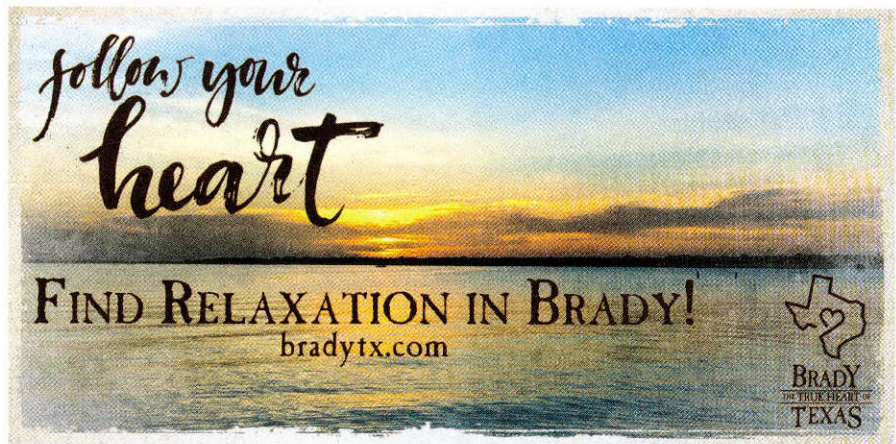
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EVENTS

Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales June 28-30, July 1. Ennis Public Theatre. ennispublictheatre.com

FLATONIA: 90 Miles on US 90 Yard Sales June 8-9. Various locations. flatoniachamber.com 361-865-3920

FORT WORTH: Plaza Palooza June 1-2. Sundance Square. sundancesquare.com

FORT WORTH: Texas Indy 600 June 8-9. Texas Motor Speedway. texasmotorspeedway.com 817-215-8500

FORT WORTH: *Takashi Murakami: The Octopus Eats Its Own Leg* June 10-Sept. 16. Modern Art Museum. themodern.org 817-738-9215

FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Symphony Concerts in the Garden June 1-July 4. Fort Worth Botanical Garden. fwsymphony.org

GARLAND: *My Fair Lady* June 15-24. Granville Arts Center—Brownlee Auditorium. garlandartsbox.office.com 972-205-2790

GATESVILLE: Gatesville Shivaree June 1-2.

Downtown Gatesville. gatesvillesshivaree.com 254-865-2617

GRAND PRAIRIE: Thoroughbred Racing Through July 22. Lone Star Park. lonestarpark.com 972-263-7223

GRAND PRAIRIE: Jay Johnson's *Two and Only* June 2. Uptown Theater. uptowntheatergp.com 972-237-8786

GRAND PRAIRIE: Philippine Republic Day Celebration June 2. Traders Village. tradersvillage.com/grand-prairie 972-647-2331

GRAND PRAIRIE: Timbiriche in Concert June 10. Verizon Theatre. verizontheatre.com 972-854-5050

GRAND PRAIRIE: The Comedy Get Down June 15. Verizon Theatre. verizontheatre.com 972-854-5050

GRAND PRAIRIE: Country Concert feat. Deryl Dodd & The Homesick Cowboys June 16. Traders Village. tradersvillage.com/grand-prairie

GRAND PRAIRIE: Yanni

in Concert June 17. Verizon Theatre. verizontheatre.com

GRAND PRAIRIE: *West Side Story* June 22-24, 29-30; July 1. Uptown Theater. uptowntheatergp.com

GRAND PRAIRIE: Brit Floyd in Concert June 23. Verizon Theatre. verizontheatre.com

GRAND PRAIRIE: Summer Kick-Off Tejano Music Festival June 23. Traders Village. tradersvillage.com/grand-prairie

GRAPEVINE: *Grapevine Rails: Rolling Through Time* May 18-Sept. 16. grapevinetexasusa.com 817-410-3185

GRAPEVINE: SummerBlast May 25-Sept. 3. Various locations. grapevinetexasusa.com 817-410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Cotton Belt Route Train Ride to The Historic Fort Worth Stockyards June 1-Aug. 26. Grapevine Vintage Railroad. gvr.com 817-410-3185

GRAPEVINE: First Fridays at The Farm June 1. Nash

Farm. nashfarm.org 817-410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Dairy Day June 9. Nash Farm. nashfarm.org 817-410-3185

GRAYS PRAIRIE: Diana Krall in Concert June 19. Verizon Theatre. verizontheatre.com

GREENVILLE: Cotton Boll ArtFest June 9-10. Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum. amacmuseum.com

HALLETTVILLE: *Texas in World War I* Through Nov. 30. Friench Simpson Memorial Library. hallettsvillelibrary.org 361-798-3243 ext. 208

KERENS: Barbecue on the Bricks & Summer Bash June 22-23.

LEXINGTON: Lee County Relay for Life June 8. Lexington ISD's Eagle Stadium. giddingstx.com/event-701025

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup June 7-9. Lockhart City Park. chisholmtrailroundup.com 512-398-2818

LULING: Luling Watermelon Thump June 21-24. Downtown Luling.

watermelonthump.com

MADISONVILLE: Madisonville Downtown Shop & Stroll June 8. Downtown Madisonville. madisoncounty.chamberofcommerce.com 936-348-3591

MCKINNEY: Date Night at the Heard June 2. Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary. heardmuseum.org 972-562-5566

MCKINNEY: Native Texas Butterfly House & Garden June 2-Sept. 30. Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary. heardmuseum.org/butterflies 972-562-5566

MELISSA: Celebration of Freedom June 23. Zadow Park in Melissa. melissatx.org

MESQUITE: Mesquite Championship Rodeo June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Mesquite Arena. mesquiterodeo.com 972-285-8777

MESQUITE: Music in the Park June 4, 11, 18, 25. Mesquite Arts Center. mesquiteartscenter.org 972-216-6444

MESQUITE: Jazz

Breaks June 5, 12, 19, 26. Mesquite Arts Center. mesquiteartscenter.org 972-216-6444

MESQUITE: *The Dixie Swim Club* June 8-10, 15-17, 22-24. Mesquite Community Theatre. mesquitetheatre.com 972-216-8126

MESQUITE: Summer Sizzle June 9. Paschall Park. cityofmesquite.com/1751/summer-sizzle 972-216-6260

MESQUITE: Summer Nationals—Lucas Oil ASCS Sprint National Tour June 12. Devil's Bowl Speedway. devilsbowl.com 972-222-2421

MESQUITE: Fireworks Extravaganza June 30. Devil's Bowl Speedway. devilsbowl.com 972-222-2421

NOCONA: Chisholm Trail Rodeo June 8-9. Chisholm Trail Arena. nocona.org

PALESTINE: Texas State Railroad Summer Excursions May 4-Sept. 29. Texas State Railroad Palestine Depot. texasstaterailroad

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.net 855-632-7729

PALESTINE: Market Days at the Palestine Farmers Market June 15-16. Palestine Farmers Market Pavilion. visitpalestine.com 903-731-8437

PALESTINE: Dogwood Jamboree: Lone Star Country June 16. Palestine High School Auditorium. dogwoodjamboree.org 903-729-7080

PARIS: Cruisin' on the Plaza June 1. Downtown Paris Fountain Plaza. paristexas.com 903-784-2501

PLANO: Night Out on 15th June 3. Historic Downtown Plano. visitdowntownplano.com 972-468-1588

PLANO: Summer Concerts in the Park June 4, 18. Haggard Park. planoband.com

PLANO: Ham-Com Amateur Radio and Electronics Show June 8-10. Plano Event Center. visitplano.com

PLANO: Downtown Plano Art & Wine Walk June 14. Historic Downtown Plano. visitdowntownplano.com/

winewalk 972-468-1588

PLANO: Ten-Minute Play Festival June 21-30. Rover Dramawerks. roverdramawerks.com 972-849-0358

PLANO: Holistic Festival of Life and Wellness June 24. Plano Event Center. holisticfestivaloflife.com 972-750-1419

ROUND TOP: Round Top Music Festival June 3-July 15. Round Top Festival Institute. festivalhill.org

SEALY: Millheim Harmonie Verein's Father's Day Barbecue June 19. Millheim Harmonie Verein Hall.

SEALY: KC June Music Fest June 23-24. Sealy Knights of Columbus Hall. sealykofc.org

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Hopkins County Dairy Festival June 8-16. Various locations. hopkinscountydairyfestival.com

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Texas Championship Ice Cream Freeze-Off June 9. Shannon Oaks Church. hopkinschamber.org 903-885-6515

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Inde-

pendence Day Celebration June 30. Celebration Plaza, Downtown Sulphur Springs. sulphurspringssymphonyleague.org

TEMPLE: First Friday June 1. discovertemple.com 254-298-5378

TEMPLE: Explorer Family Day June 2. Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum. templerrhm.org 254-298-5175

TEMPLE: Main Street Market June 23. Downtown Temple. discovertemple.com

THE COLONY: The Colony Summer Clubhouse June 15-Aug. 10. The Colony Recreation Center. thecolonytx.gov/841/the-colony-summer-clubhouse 972-625-1106

WACO: Faces of the Southern Ocean Through Nov. 25. Mayborn Museum Complex. baylor.edu/mayborn 254-710-1110

WACO: Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit June 2-Jan. 6, 2019. Mayborn Museum Complex. baylor.edu/mayborn

WACO: Stars over Texas

Jamboree June 7. Lee Lockwood Library and Museum. wacoheartof texas.com 254-755-7257

WACO: XTERRA Games June 9. Cameron Park. racerevolutions.com/events/xterra-off-road-triathlons 512-751-8940

WAXAHACHIE: Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour June 2-3. Ellis County Museum. gingerbreadtrail.net 972-937-0681

WAXAHACHIE: Pancake Breakfast Fly-In June 2. Mid-Way Regional Airport. mid-wayregional.com 972-923-0080

WAXAHACHIE: Waxahachie Cow Creek Country Classic Bike Ride June 23. Waxahachie 9th Grade Academy. cowcreekcountryclassic.org

WEATHERFORD: Chandor Gardens Foundation: Papapaloolza June 17. Chandor Gardens. chandorgardensfoundation.org

WYLIE: Bluegrass on Ballard June 30. Historic downtown Wylie. wylitetexas.gov/bluegrass

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

SAN ANTONIO: Night of Artists Through June 6. Briscoe Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Andy Warhol: Cowboys and Indians May 25-Sept. 3. Briscoe Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Billy Schenck and the Roots of

Western Pop Art May 25-Sept. 3. Briscoe Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Art in the Dark June 19. Sheraton Gunter Hotel. salighthouse.org/event/art-in-the-dark

SAN ANTONIO: Bud Light Stars, Stripes, & Lights June 29-July 4. San Antonio River Walk. thesanantonioriverwalk.com/events

WANT MORE? VIEW THE TEXAS HIGHWAYS EVENTS CALENDAR AT texashighways.com/events.

For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, go to texashighways.com/freepubs; write to Texas Highways Events Calendar, P.O. Box 149249, Austin, TX 78714-9249; or call 800-452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central.

For Texas travel questions, call 800-452-9292 to reach a TxDOT Travel Information Center, where a professional travel counselor will provide routing assistance, advise you of road conditions, and send brochures (including the official Texas State Travel Guide, Texas Official Travel Map, and quarterly Texas Highways Events Calendar).

To submit event information, visit texashighways.com and go to Events, Event Submission form; email: texasevents@txdot.gov; or mail: Texas Highways Events Calendar, Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. Listing deadlines: Spring (March, April, May) Dec. 1; Summer (June, July, Aug) March 1; Fall (Sept., Oct., Nov) June 1; Winter (Dec., Jan., Feb) Sept. 1.


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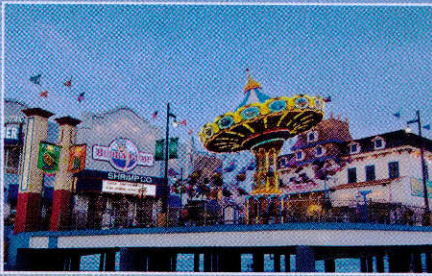
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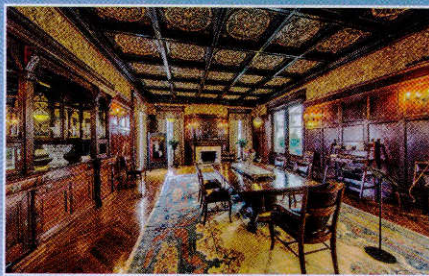
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Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier

Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier is a Gulf Coast destination featuring family-oriented attractions including 16 rides, midway games, waterfront dining and retail shops. From the extreme steel coaster, the Iron Shark to our 5D Theater Ride, kids of all ages will relish in the excitement.

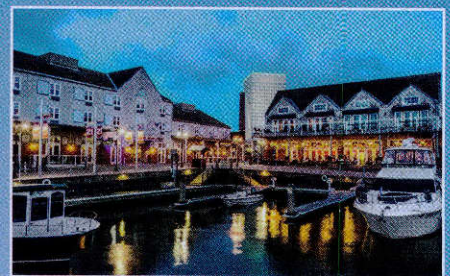
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Moody Mansion

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Visit moodymansion.org for photos and events.



Pier 21

Pier 21 is a waterfront entertainment and dining area located on Galveston's historic harbor in the Historic Strand Seaport area. Pier 21 offers a variety of attractions, restaurants, and lodging at the Pier's exclusive hotel, Harbor House Hotel & Marina. Mitchell Historic Properties, Inc. owns and preserves approximately one-fourth of the buildings in the National Historic Strand District including Pier 21.

For more information about Pier 21 visit www.pier21galveston.com. Pier 21 is located at 2100 Harborside Drive, Galveston, Texas 77550.



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409-740-5300



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409-744-5000

Q: *How long have you been in Texas?*

A: I was born in Mississippi, but I love Texas. My father moved us here when I was about 5 years old. I was in Dallas from then until I was 31, when I came down to Houston. I like Dallas. I went to school there, and I have a lot of friends there. Dallas is a great place—it's in Texas! Not that Mississippi was bad. I'm just a Texas guy.

Q: *What do you love about Houston?*

A: The spirit of free enterprise. Houstonians and Texans are self-reliant. We have a dynamic, get-it-done culture. I support the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and I like to go to Minute Maid Park to watch the Houston Astros. Houston is a friendly, welcoming place, with great restaurants and hotels.

Q: *What places do you recommend to out-of-town visitors?*

A: I like all the Pappas restaurants: Pappasito's Cantina, Pappas Seafood House, Pappas Bar-B-Q. And there's Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse—I like the salmon there. Houston has the Texans, the Rockets, and of course the Astros. And there's great arts and culture in the Museum District. I welcome people to the city of Houston to help us rebuild.

Q: *Where do you travel in Texas when you're not working?*

A: Occasionally I'll go to Austin to visit my daughter [Laura McIngvale Brown], who lives there. I enjoy eating at her steakhouse, Vince Young Steakhouse on San Jacinto Boulevard at Third Street. My main recreation is work. Work is life's greatest therapy.

Q: *What did you learn from Hurricane Harvey?*

A: It was a flood of biblical

proportions. The aftermath still goes on. We have to rally to help the community and not forget those who are still hurting. I learned we are much better as a community when we forget about right-wing and left-wing politics and worry about people.

And there's a can-do spirit in Houston that can overcome any problem. There's a tremendous amount of unity and community here.

Q: *Why did you feel compelled to help?*

A: It was the way I was brought up. You can't watch people suffering and not do anything about it. We started sending out delivery trucks on Sunday night to pick people up. People called me, texted me, emailed me, and said, "Come get us, we're drowning." So we went and got them.

Q: *Why do you think they called a furniture store?*

A: They called me because I'm visible. They know I'm here, they know that we like to step up and help the community. We have a slogan around here that we all have a responsibility for the well-being of our community. We take it very seriously. We try to live it.

Q: *How did your stores serve as shelters?*

A: The showrooms of two of the Gallery Furniture stores served as shelters. Each showroom is about 140,000 square feet, and people stayed for weeks at a time. We had between 200 and 300 people staying at each location. That went on for two or three weeks, and we continued to hand out cleaning and building supplies for months.

Q: *The last displaced dog to be adopted from Houston Pets Alive after the hurricane was named in your honor. What do you think of that?*



MATTRESS MACK

Learn about Mattress Mack and his career in the furniture business at galleryfurniture.com.

A: I think it's great. I hope he doesn't bite too hard.

Q: *What can people learn from your example?*

A: I want to be part of the community, and I enjoy being out here every day and making Houstonians happy by providing them with solid American-made furniture, and helping my employees achieve the American dream. Hopefully, people can learn to never give up and to put people above profits. There's hope for a better tomorrow; we just have to keep working at it.

Q: *You wagered a bet against customers, promising to refund their money if the Astros won the World Series. How much did you lose?*

A: We refunded about \$15 million, but it was great for Houston. It was cathartic for the whole city for the Astros to win the World Series. I'm a big Astros fan. [In April, the Astros presented McIngvale with a World Series championship ring.]

Q: *What are you looking forward to this year?*

A: I'd like for the city to rebuild and for the Houston Astros to win the World Series again.

Q: *Are you going to make another bet on the Astros?*

A: I already have. The promotion is running now. **L**

Texas Highways (ISSN 0040-4349) is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, 150 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704; phone 512-486-5858, fax 512-486-5879. The official travel magazine of Texas encourages travel within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world.

Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Highways* Circulation, P.O. Box 8559, Big Sandy, Texas 75755-8559.

THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



A Shore Thing

FEW KNOW THAT the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world is just beyond Corpus Christi. And while its southern counterpart may get more attention, North Padre Island provides the perfect mix of fun and middle-of-nowhere abandon. I followed the sun in search of a little bit of both.

6:30 a.m. My morning started bright and early as I crossed into the **Padre Island National Seashore**. Run by the National Park Service, PINS (as it's affectionately called by the public) is one of our country's greatest treasures. I arrived at dawn to witness something truly special—a baby sea turtle release. The crowd gathered on the beach as the park rangers set down more than 100 tiny Kemp's ridley sea turtles. The hatchlings flopped toward the crashing waves as we collectively let out a giant "awww." Everyone cheered as the last turtle made it through the surf.

8 a.m. With the morning entertainment over, I cruised back to civilization in search of breakfast. The developed part of North Padre Island (which is Corpus Christi by address) is a typical mix of surf shops and tourist attractions. However, for a bite of the unexpected, I grabbed a slice of apple strudel and a cup of fresh-roasted coffee at **JB's German Bakery & Cafe**. This authentic old-world bakery was already packed

with sandal-sporting tourists fueling up for the day. After one bite, I understood why they were willing to wait in line so long.

9:30 a.m. With a fresh coat of sunscreen, I headed back to the beach and straight to the **Malaquite Visitors Center** at PINS. There, I learned

a barrier island is a thin stretch of sand built by nature that serves to protect the mainland. The ecosystem provides oceanfront for animals like turtles, dunes for coyotes and deer, and a bayside for fish and birds. I was eager to see all of it.

10:30 a.m. On the bayside of the park, I met up with the folks of **Worldwinds Windsurfing**. PINS is one of the top windsport destinations in the world due to the constant breeze, so I signed up for a windsurfing lesson. My first few tries left me very, very wet as I repeatedly face-planted into the water.

Chet Garner is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS. To view the North Padre Island episode visit thedaytripper.com.

Eventually I learned how to harness the breeze and zipped off into the bay. I was having so much fun that I could have stayed out on the water all day.

1:30 p.m. As a bonafide surfer (yeah, right), I headed back into town to join my brethren at the **Surfside Sandwich Shoppe**. Specializing in hand-crafted sandwiches stuffed with everything from roasted pork to salmon, this joint does "coastal Texan" just right. I opted for seared ahi tuna tacos topped with coleslaw and a spicy sauce.

2:30 p.m. I was ready to get adventurous and see just how "undeveloped" this barrier island was, so I topped off the gas tank and headed back into **PINS**. Birds and beachgoers lined the beach as I drove south. Soon the cars and trucks faded away, and I was left with the beach all to myself. I pulled over and dove into the waves. It was crazy to be the only person in sight, but it made for a mighty relaxin' nap by the dunes.

4:30 p.m. Back in my car, I kept trekkin' to see what else I could find. Around **Mile Marker 25**, I noticed the sand had turned to shells beneath my tires, which meant I had arrived at the famed **Big Shell Beach**. Not only is it a great spot to find rare shells, but it's also an ideal spot for fishing. I dropped a line into the ocean. Within a few

hours, I had nabbed a speckled trout. It was time to find a place to cook it!

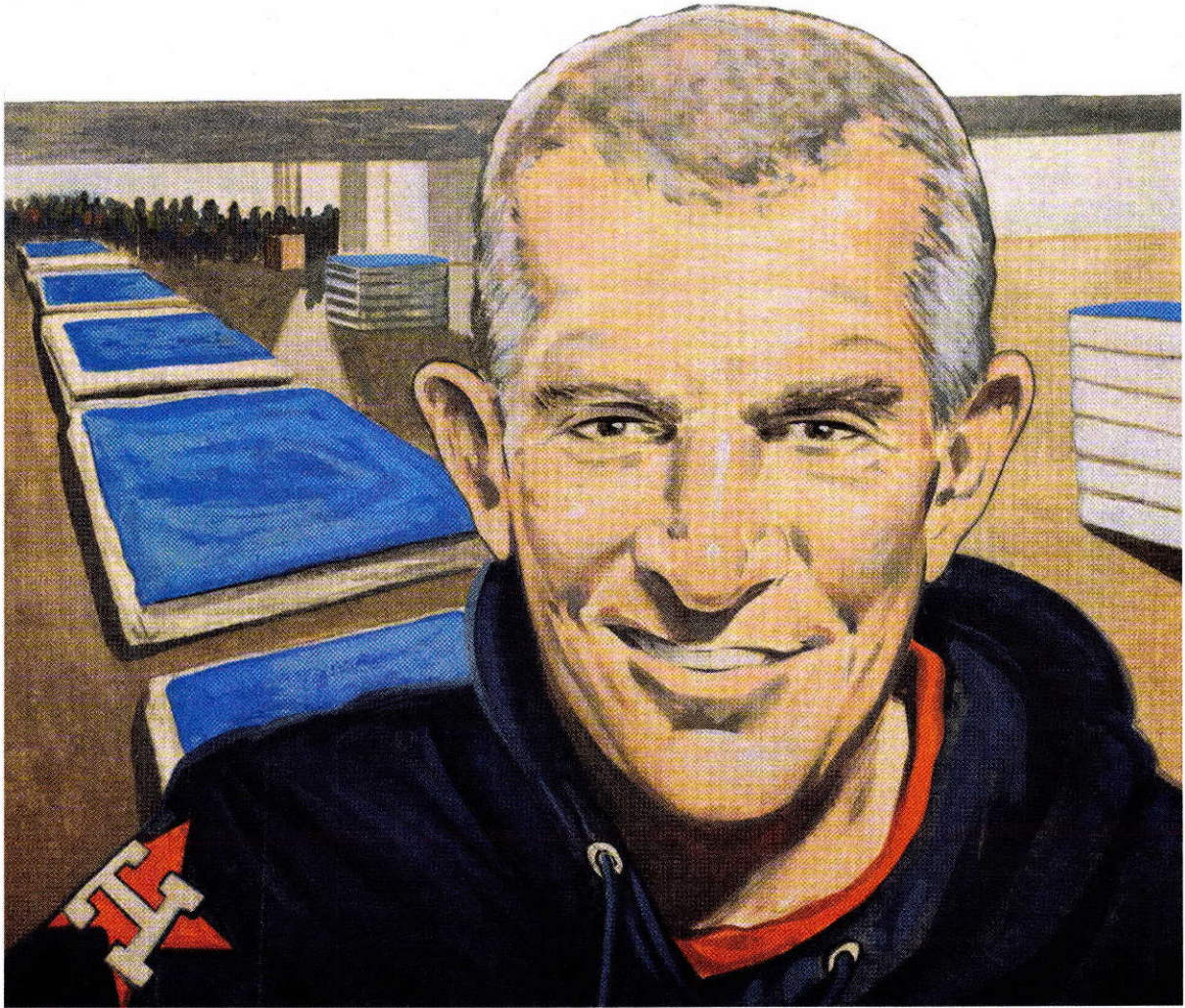
7:30 p.m. I headed to **Doc's Seafood and Steaks**, known for whipping up some of the best seafood on the island. Best of all: they'll cook the fish you catch. I grabbed a seat overlooking the intra-coastal waterway, sipped my cold beer, and munched on my blackened trout with sautéed veggies.

As the sun set over the water, I couldn't have imagined a better closing to the day. I was a little sunburned and tired, but happy. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

Contact the Corpus Christi Visitor Information Center at 361-561-2000; visitcorpuschristitx.org

TRAVEL MATTERS

TRAVEL TALK WITH TRUE TEXANS



Couches and Community

Furniture mogul “Mattress Mack” on Houston, Harvey, and healing

story by Heather Brand

JIM MCINGVALE MOVED TO HOUSTON IN 1981 with \$5,000 and a dream to build a furniture empire. Within a few years, the founder of Gallery Furniture had become a local household name as “Mattress Mack,” the pitchman featured in the retailer’s zany low-budget commercials. Whether his props were mattresses, bunny suits, Corvettes, or livestock, McIngvale always stole the scene with his exuberance and catchphrase, “Gallery Furniture will save you money!”

McIngvale initially plied his wares under a tent along Interstate 45 north of Loop 610 before opening a brick-and-mortar store nearby. Over the years, his business has grown along with the city, expanding to two additional locations on the west side of town. Gallery Furniture is now the largest independent furniture retailer in the state.

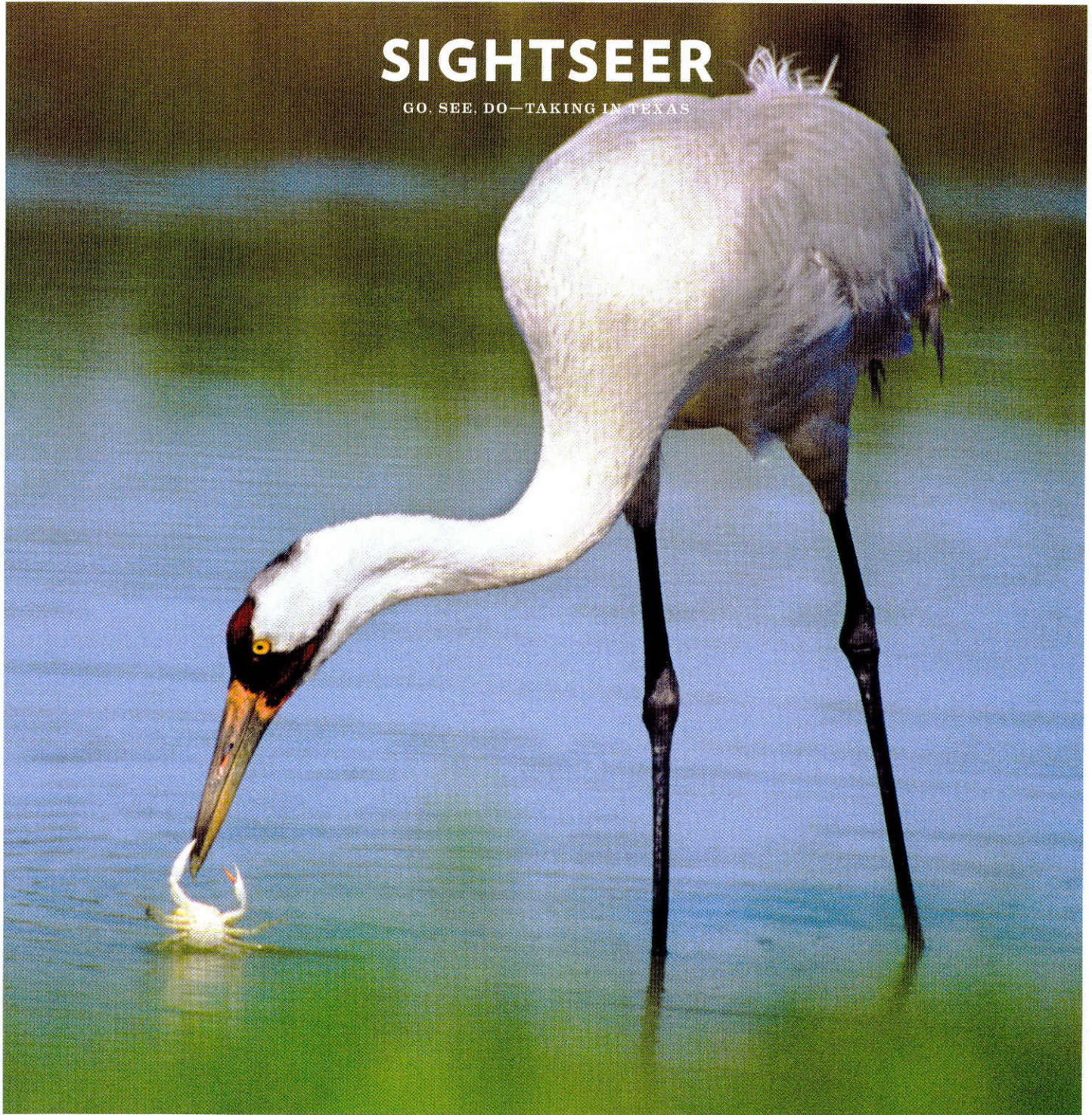
“We started sending out delivery trucks on Sunday night to pick people up. People called me and said, ‘Come get us, we’re drowning.’”

While a fixture in Houston for decades—the 67-year-old is also known for his philanthropic support of organizations including the Menninger Clinic, the Texas Heart Institute, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo—McIngvale took a turn in the national spotlight last year during Hurricane Harvey. As floodwaters swallowed up neighborhoods, McIngvale dispatched his fleet of delivery trucks to retrieve the stranded. He also opened two of his Gallery Furniture stores to shelter people displaced by the storm. For weeks, hundreds camping out in the showrooms made themselves at home on the beds, sofas, and recliners. Nearly a year after Harvey, McIngvale looks back on that time and ahead to the coming year.

> continued on page 94

SIGHTSEER

GO. SEE. DO—TAKING IN TEXAS



WHAT: WHOOPING CRANES **WHERE:** ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE **WHEN:** TYPICALLY MID-OCTOBER THROUGH MID-APRIL

Winter Texans

A rare bird finds seasonal refuge on the Gulf Coast near Rockport

Whooping cranes, as you might guess, are pretty noisy. With their slender, snow-white bodies and black-tipped wings, they're also the tallest birds in North America, standing nearly 5 feet from toe to crown. "Whoopers" almost went extinct in the mid-1900s; today, only one natural flock remains in the wild, though others have been reintroduced. Each fall, the wild ones leave their marshy breeding grounds in Canada and fly 2,500 miles to the Texas coast, where they spend the winter whooping it up and hunting for blue crabs, frogs, clams, and other treats in and around Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Just to the south is Rockport, a family-friendly town, but the refuge is decidedly for couples: whoopers mate for life. [fws.gov/refuge/aransas](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/aransas)

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